

Thank You for Visiting *The Louvre and the Masterpiece*

This selection of treasures was assembled by twenty-nine curators at the Louvre to illustrate the changing nature of what ranks as a masterpiece. Sometimes artists themselves characterized their work as “fit for the gods”; sometimes technical standards were the measure; sometimes political agendas determined whose work would be commissioned for great public spaces. In recent times, daring and the expression of individual genius have been considered hallmarks of great art.

Every object in this exhibition has a fascinating story. When its story is known, we can see the work of art against the background of its history

and the hopes and aspirations of the artist who created it. Evolving knowledge and changing tastes influence what we are receptive to, what we value, and what we will call a masterpiece at any given moment.



Henri Matisse in the Louvre, looking at the Lady of Auxerre, 1932, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

Photo: The Pierpont Morgan Library / Art Resource, NY