



In Pursuit *of a Masterpiece*

As the title of this exhibition suggests, the acquisition of a masterpiece is an exciting process for museums. This is as true today as it was in 1914 when James J. Hill gave the Minneapolis Institute of Arts Courbet's *Deer in the Forest*, on view in this gallery.

Curators in all of the collecting departments of the MIA chose the works for this exhibition from the vast number of masterpieces included in our museum's permanent collection. In gathering this small selection, they picked works that fit the organizing themes of *The Louvre and the Masterpiece*: the changing definitions of "masterpiece"; connoisseurship; and taste and the evolution of knowledge. These themes are somewhat arbitrary, since there are many ways to define and categorize masterpieces. They do, however, provide an interesting intellectual framework for examining our collection.

Where are Rembrandt's *Lucretia* and Nicolas Poussin's *Death of Germanicus*? These magnificent paintings remain hanging in the permanent collection galleries. The curators avoided some obvious masterpiece choices and instead surveyed the collection with an eye to illuminating works sometimes overlooked.