

PAWSE

A woman with dark hair pulled back is sitting on a red staircase. She is wearing a red, strapless, form-fitting dress with large floral patterns and a blue sash. Her right arm is raised, and she is looking towards the camera. The background is a solid red color.

FESTIVE
SEASON!

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LE BAL

FETISHIZATION
OF LUXURY ACCESS

COUNTING ROSES
IN YOUR BOTTLE

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FW 2025



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Daisy Edgar-Jones poses in Boucheron's Winter Wonderland 2025 campaign



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The Fall of Phaeton by Rubens

Why the Old Masters **STILL RULE**

From Giotto's revolution to Rembrandt's soul, the Old Masters built the visual world we live in. Explore why their techniques, dramas, and timeless visions continue to command fortunes and define greatness in a hyper-modern age.

Short answer: A European artist active between the 14th and 19th centuries.

Long answer: Master thinkers, daring engineers, restless philosophers, and fearless storytellers, turning the brush into a tool of artistic revolution and cultural awakening.

Old is the time, not the relevance. The works of the Old Masters are easily recognized, their symbolism, compositions and storytelling are referenced across the pop culture landscape. At auctions, their scarcity, history and artistry fuel staggering bidding wars, with even minor works commanding millions simply because so few masterpieces remain in private hands. The excellence of their techniques are unmatched, as the study of Rembrandt's lighting, Leonardo's anatomy, and Raphael's composition remain the foundation and goals of artistic training.

The essence of the Renaissance

March 25, 1305, the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua was revealed to the public. The walls of the chapel are covered by Giotto's biblical frescoes, uniquely arranged like a comic book beneath a blue starry sky. Marking a shift from medieval symbolism to emotional realism, this masterpiece turned the page, where art is no longer a mere decorative craft but an intellectual endeavor grounded in anatomy, geometry, architecture, and classical philosophy.

The grand vision of fusing science and art into one radiant pursuit of beauty was realized more than a century later and 225 kilometres further from the Scrovegni. In the heart of the Renaissance, rigorous Florentine workshops carved out brilliance. From these crucibles rose the giants of Western art — artists who lived the truth of Michelangelo's insight that "a man paints with his brains and not with his hands."

Lives of the Legends

Adding to the allure of the Old Masters' exquisite artistry are the lives that shaped it. Their triumphs and tragedies continue to fascinate us, adding charm and depth to already captivating masterpieces.

Leonardo da Vinci remains the most mythic of all Old Masters, the artist who most completely embodies the spirit of the Renaissance. A famous procrastinator who once said "Art is never finished, only abandoned", Leonardo left behind numerous unfinished projects. One of those "abandoned" artworks is Mona Lisa, the most recognizable painting of all time. He is also responsible for the most expensive painting ever sold: Salvator Mundi, which shattered records at US\$450 million in 2017. Its dramatic rediscovery (after having been misattributed and sold for just £45 in 1958) ignited fierce debates over authorship, with some scholars insisting Leonardo painted only the blessing hand and face, and others noting that those very features may subtly echo the artist's own likeness.

His artistic genius did not overshadow his vision for mechanical design, anatomy, science and technologies — which were centuries ahead of their time. It was this extraordinary breadth that led Giorgio Vasari to marvel: "There is nothing in the universe Leonardo could not have learned to do."

Peter Paul Rubens stands as the unrivaled master of Baroque drama, celebrated for his voluptuous figures, explosive compositions, and radiant color. His canvases pulse with movement and sensuality, qualities that continue to captivate collectors — as evidenced in 2016, when *Lot and His Daughters* ignited a fierce bidding war and sold for nearly £15 million, reaffirming his enduring power in the Old Master market.

Beyond painting, Rubens was a diplomat and scholar fluent in multiple languages, navigating European courts with the same agility he brought to the studio. His legendary speed became part of his myth, contemporaries claimed he could complete a monumental canvas in mere days, leaving assistants to block in backgrounds before he swept in with his virtuosic final touches. A man of intellect and instinct, Rubens fused grandeur with surprising delicacy, embodying the paradox famously observed of him: a rare ability to unite apparent gracelessness with unmistakable grace.



Frescoes by Giotto at the Scrovegni



La Gioconda by Leonardo da Vinci

