

Tourist damages priceless painting because of selfie

26th June 2025



Tourists can do silly things when they want a selfie. One tourist in Italy damaged a valuable painting after he asked his girlfriend to take a photo of him. The man was visiting the world-famous Uffizi Gallery in Florence, which is full of priceless paintings.

He wanted a photo of himself in front of a portrait by the Italian painter Anton Domenico Gabbiani, who died in 1726. The man lost his balance and fell backwards. When he tried to stop himself from falling, he put his hand through the bottom of the painting. Museum staff reported him to the police for causing damage to the priceless artwork. Experts are now repairing the painting. They say that luckily, there was not a lot of damage.

The tourist's careless action has angered many people in Italy. Simone Verde, the director of the Uffizi Gallery, told the UK's "Telegraph" newspaper that selfies are becoming a headache. He said: "The problem of visitors coming to museums to create memes or take selfies for social media is now out of control. We put in place very precise rules to try to stop behaviour that is not compatible with respect for our cultural heritage." Vanessa Carlon, director of Italy's Palazzo Maffei Museum, commented on a similar incident that happened in her gallery. She said: "Sometimes we lose our minds to take a picture, and we don't think about the consequences."

Sources: dailymail.co.uk / artnews.com / bbc.com

Writing

Cameras should be banned in museums and galleries. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

tourists / silly things / selfies / valuable paintings / photo / museum / staff / experts / careless actions / headache / memes / social media / rules / respect / heritage / Italy

True / False

- 1) The article says tourists who take selfies are silly. T / F
- 2) A tourist asked his girlfriend to take a photo of him in front of a painting. T / F
- 3) The damaged painting was painted in 1726. T / F
- 4) Experts say there wasn't much damage to the painting. T / F
- 5) A museum director gets a headache when he takes a selfie. T / F
- 6) The museum has rules that say no selfies are allowed. T / F
- 7) The museum asks all visitors to respect Italy's culture. T / F
- 8) Another museum director said people lose their minds over selfies. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1. silly | a. suited |
| 2. damaged | b. fortunately |
| 3. priceless | c. mindless |
| 4. repairing | d. harmed |
| 5. luckily | e. problem |
| 6. careless | f. go crazy |
| 7. headache | g. foolish |
| 8. rules | h. fixing |
| 9. compatible | i. guidelines |
| 10. lose our minds | j. invaluable |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Are you a good tourist?
- c) What's your favourite painting?
- d) What do you think of people who take selfies?
- e) What do you think of people putting selfies on social media?
- f) What do you think of your country's cultural heritage?
- g) Do you think people 'lose their minds' to take photos?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the man?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Tourists can do silly things when | a. or take selfies |
| 2. One tourist in Italy damaged | b. paintings |
| 3. full of priceless | c. repairing the painting |
| 4. The man lost his balance | d. our minds |
| 5. Experts are now | e. they want a selfie |
| 6. The tourist's careless action has | f. heritage |
| 7. create memes | g. angered many people |
| 8. out of | h. a valuable painting |
| 9. cultural | i. control |
| 10. Sometimes we lose | j. and fell backwards |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of tourists?
- What do you think of paintings?
- What do you think of selfies?
- Should cameras be banned in museums and galleries?
- What's your favourite museum or gallery?
- What do you think of photos of yourself?
- What should happen to the man?
- What advice do you have for museums to protect artwork?

Spelling

- One tourist in Italy damaged a valuablae painting
- full of eeclsrps paintings
- a roapitr by the Italian painter
- The man lost his lanbcae
- reported him to the police for causing medaga
- srtpxee are now repairing the painting
- The tourist's sclaeesr action
- dnaereg many people in Italy
- create emesm or take selfies
- compatible with respect for our cultural grteehia
- commented on a similar tiiecnn
- we don't think about the neceoesusqnc

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. j	4. h	5. b
6. c	7. e	8. i	9. a	10. f

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	Who does the article say can do silly things?
2.	When did the Italian painter Anton Domenico Gabbiani die?
3.	What did the man lose when his girlfriend was taking a photo?
4.	Who did museum staff report the tourist to?
5.	Who said there was not a lot of damage to the painting?
6.	Who is angry because of the action of the tourist?
7.	What did a museum director say selfies were becoming?
8.	What did the director say was out of control?
9.	What does the director want people to respect?
10.	What did another museum director say people are losing?

Speaking – Tourism

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst effects of tourism at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| • Effect on locals' lives | • Overcrowding |
| • Water shortages | • Noise |
| • Carbon footprint | • Pollution |
| • Increased trash | • Bad behaviour |

Answers – True False

1 F	2 T	3 F	4 T	5 F	6 F	7 F	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.