

New Year's Resolution: See More Art

By Kathleen McShane

Every year, people make New Year's resolutions and often promptly break them. I thought it would be fun to compile the most common resolutions, then pair each one with a work of art. Here are the results.

Lose Weight



Fernando Botero, *Mona Lisa*, 1978

Fernando Botero (1932-2023) was a Columbian painter and sculpture whose signature style, also known as "Boterismo", depicts people and figures in large, exaggerated volume, which can represent political criticism or humor. Botero's *Mona Lisa* is a pastiche, or imitation, of the original by Da Vinci, rendered with Botero's keen sense of humor.

Exercise More

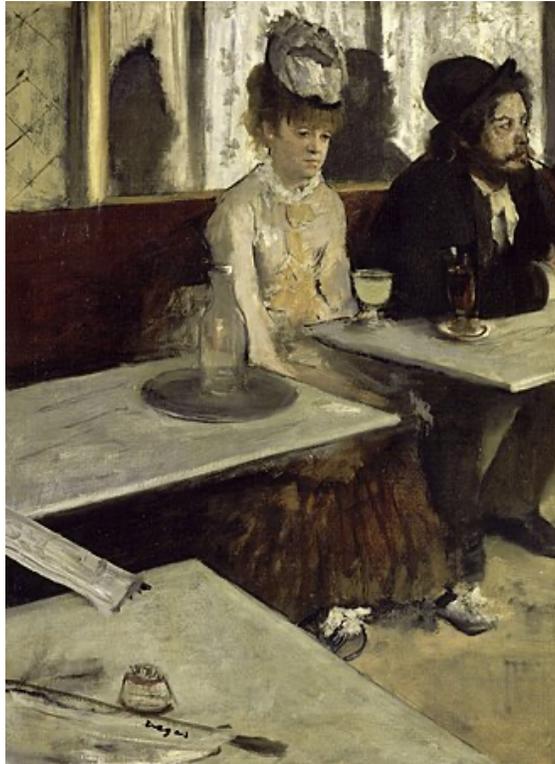


Henri Rousseau, *The Football Players*, 1908

Henri Rousseau (1844-1910) was a French artist who painted in the Naïve or Primitive style. With no formal art education, he was ridiculed by critics during his lifetime, but eventually became hailed as a self-taught genius. In his own opinion, he was a great realist artist. In fact, he considered Picasso and himself to be the only two great living artists.

According to the Guggenheim Museum, which owns the painting, "It is to his credit that we still have no adequate words to describe a painting in which rugby players look like pajama-clad twins."

Give up Drinking



Edgar Degas, *The Absinthe Drinker*, c. 1875-76

The original title of this painting was *In a Café*. The painting portrays a couple seated side by side in a café, looking the worse for wear, she drinking absinthe. Absinthe (The Green Fairy or the Green Witch) was a favorite drink of artists and writers, known for its hallucinogenic properties.

The café pictured in the painting, La Nouvelle Athènes in Place Pigalle, was a hangout for artists and intellectuals. Degas, a French impressionist painter and sculptor, frequented the café, along with Matisse and Van Gogh. When first exhibited in both France and England, *L'absinthe* was panned by critics who called it “ugly and disgusting” and “degraded and uncouth”.

Travel More



Duane Hansen, *Tourists*, 1970

Duane Hansen (1925-1996) was an American painter and sculptor. He is known for his life-sized hyper realistic sculptures of people. He cast the works based on human models in various materials, including polyester resin and fiberglass. He then adorned them with clothes sourced from second-hand stores, bruises, varicose veins, body hairs, all the attributes of human likeness. Hansen's sculptures are in the collections of many major museums worldwide, including the Smithsonian Museum of American Art and the Whitney Museum.

Spend More Time with Your Family



Francisco Goya, The Family of Carlos IV, 1800-01

Francisco de Goya (1746-1828) is considered to be the most important Spanish artist of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, often referred to as the last Old Master and the father of Modern Art. The Romantic School artist was commissioned to paint this royal family portrait after being appointed first painter to the king. Goya is sometimes thought to have intended this painting as a critique of the royal family, but it seems unlikely that he would have endangered his position by doing so. The influence of Goya's predecessor, Velázquez, includes inserting himself in the painting as Velázquez did in *Las Meninas*.

Quit Smoking



Vincent Van Gogh, *Head of a Skeleton with Burning Cigarette*, c. 1885-86

This Van Gogh work was painted while the artist was enrolled at the Academy of Art in Antwerp, where he found the drawings he saw were far too traditional and “hopelessly bad”. *Skull of a Skeleton with Burning Cigarette* (in the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam), which has been interpreted as a satirical comment on traditional conservative academic practices.

Eat Healthier

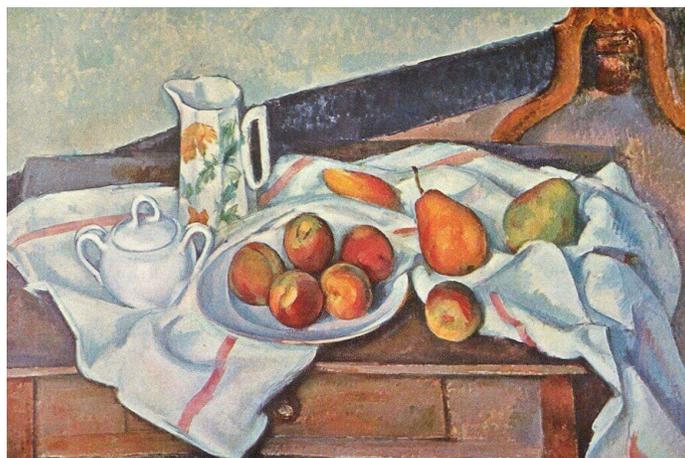
Go from this...



John Paul Rubens, *The Feast of Herod*, c. 1635-1638

John Paul Rubens (1577-1640) was a Flemish artist, perhaps the most influential artist of the Flemish Baroque period. According to the Museo del Prado, “No other 17th-century European painter combined artistic talent, social and economic success, and a high cultural level like Rubens.” In this painting, Salome presents the head of John the Baptist to King Herod. Salome’s father, Herodias, had granted her any wish she desired. He convinced her to demand John the Baptist’s head as revenge for the latter’s criticism of her marriage to Herod.

To this:



Paul Cézanne, *Still Life with Peaches and Pears*, 1888-1890

December 22, 2025

Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) was a French post-Impressionist artist who fell somewhere between Impressionism and Cubism. After a short period, he found that he did not quite fit in with the avant-garde group of artists in Paris, and he returned to his home in Aix-en-Provence, where he lived for most of the rest of his life, working in relative isolation. Both Picasso and Matisse acknowledged their debt to Cézanne.

Save More Money



Victor Dubreuil, *Barrels of Money*, c. 1897

Victor Dubreuil (c. 1842-c. 1910) was a French-American artist specializing in depicting money. He moved to the United States in 1882, possibly to escape charges that he had stolen money from the bank where he was employed as a clerk. Counterfeiting was rampant during the late 19th century; Dubreuil's highly detailed trompe-l'oeil replicas of money aroused suspicion among government officials. At least two of Dubreuil's paintings were confiscated by the Secret Service in 1890.

Learn a New Skill



Édouard Manet, *The Spanish Singer*, 1860

French modernist artist, Édouard Manet (1832-1883), is considered a pivotal figure in the transition from Realism to Impressionism. He was one of the first artists to portray modern life, such as street and bar scenes. His work often drew the ire of art critics, leading him to become the de facto head of the avant-garde.

This painting above was Manet's first popular and critical success. Although the painting depicts realistic detail, the left-handed singer holds a guitar strung for a right-handed player.