

On 21 August 1911, the *Mona Lisa* was [stolen](#) from the Louvre.^[53] The theft was not discovered until the next day, when painter [Louis Béroud](#) walked into the museum and went to the Salon Carré where the *Mona Lisa* had been on display for five years, only to find four iron pegs on the wall. Béroud contacted the head of the guards, who thought the painting was being photographed for promotional purposes. A few hours later, Béroud checked back with the Section Chief of the Louvre who confirmed that the *Mona Lisa* was not with the photographers. The Louvre was closed for an entire week during the investigation

French poet [Guillaume Apollinaire](#), who had once called for the Louvre to be "burnt down", came under suspicion and was arrested and imprisoned. Apollinaire implicated his friend [Pablo Picasso](#), who was brought in for questioning. Both were later [exonerated](#).^{[54][55]} Two years later the thief revealed himself. Louvre employee [Vincenzo Peruggia](#) had stolen the *Mona Lisa* by entering the building during regular hours, hiding in a broom closet, and walking out with it hidden under his coat after the museum had closed.^[19] Peruggia was an Italian patriot who believed Leonardo's painting should have been returned for display in an Italian museum.

In 1956, part of the painting was damaged when a vandal threw acid at it.^[59] On 30 December of that year, a rock was thrown at the painting, dislodging a speck of pigment near the left elbow, later restored.^[60]

In April 1974, a woman, upset by the museum's policy for disabled people, sprayed red paint at it while it was being displayed at the [Tokyo National Museum](#).^[61]

On 2 August 2009, a Russian woman, distraught over being denied French citizenship, threw a ceramic teacup purchased at the Louvre; the vessel shattered against the glass enclosure.^{[62][63]} In both cases, the painting was unharmed.

The use of [bulletproof glass](#) has shielded the *Mona Lisa* from subsequent attacks







The *Mona Lisa* on display in the [Uffizi Gallery](#), in [Florence](#), 1913. Museum director Giovanni Poggi (right) inspects the painting.