


Loves me, LOVES ME NOT

*In this season of gooey chocolates and sentimental cards, this tour reminds you of what love is really made of: **passion, devotion, treachery, tears.** No wonder artists throughout time have depicted this rich and provocative subject.*



GALLERY 213

Cupid Chastised (1605/10) by Bartolomeo Manfredi 

This dynamic painting represents the consequences of illicit love in a spicy moment from Greco-Roman mythology. Venus, goddess of love and beauty, is married to Vulcan, the homely but crafty god of fire, but she has been having an adulterous affair with Mars, god of war. In this scene, the lovers have been discovered, and Mars punishes Venus's son Cupid, whose arrows created the amorous attraction. Bartolomeo Manfredi, a follower of the innovative work of Caravaggio, used intense contrasts of dark and light and zigzagging motion to underscore the emotional contrast between Mars's wrath and Cupid's vulnerability.



GALLERY 214

Bireno and Olimpia (1640/50) by Ferdinando Tacca 

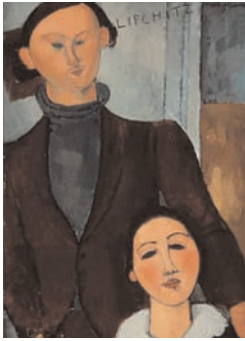
This Baroque sculpture takes its subject from Ariosto's fantastical epic poem *Orlando Furioso*, a European best-seller from the time of its first publication in the early 16th century. The noblewoman Olimpia has been seduced by the knight Bireno, who now abandons his sleeping lover. (She has the last word later in the poem when she marries a king who slays Bireno in revenge.) As a sculptor to the Medici court, Ferdinando Tacca continued the tradition of Florentine elegance, but the striking contrast between Bireno's stealthy twisting and the supine form of Olimpia creates a dynamic Baroque tension.



GALLERY 225A

The Lovers (1855) by William Powell Frith 

Unlike today's demonstrative Romeos who pop the question in front of entire football stadiums, Victorians were not ones to flaunt their romantic feelings publicly. Restraint ruled the day. In this painting, the artist presents an intimate glimpse of Victorian courtship. With hat in hand, the man leans forward, gazing at his companion as if waiting for her response. The absence of a chaperone indicates that he has popped the question, and, by holding a pink rose—a symbol of love—in her ungloved hand, she signals her acceptance.



GALLERY 231

Jacques and Berthe Lipchitz (1916) by Amedeo Modigliani ❤️

Perhaps there was a little bit of envy involved when Amedeo Modigliani accepted the commission of his colleague sculptor Jacques Lipchitz on the occasion of his recent marriage. He declared the painting finished after only two days of work and had to be bribed, as Lipchitz recalled, with “ten francs per sitting and a little alcohol” to properly complete the picture. Nonetheless, he created a sensitive portrayal of the couple, capturing the strong connection between the two in the way in which the husband protectively envelopes his wife.



GALLERY 135

Shiva with Uma and Skanda, (c.1400). India ❤️

Once again a god with a love-inducing arrow made his mark. This time it was the Hindu god Kama who targeted the major god Shiva, rousing him out of a meditative state to witness the beautiful image of the goddess Uma. As a good ascetic, Shiva had practiced many years of abstinence, and his first union with Uma produced a very powerful offspring, Skanda, the god of war. Bronzes like this one were made for public processions, where they were carried in great wooden chariots.



GALLERY 155

Loutrophoros (c. 365 B.C.) by the Varrese Painter ❤️❤️

Loves me not...loves me! Those words and a forthcoming proposal can transform an otherwise sensible woman into a self-absorbed bride-to-be. And women of ancient Greece were no different. Shown on this vessel are doting attendants preparing a bride with mirrors, a fan, jewelry, garlands, and fragrant oil. Even the function of this container played to a bride's needs. Called a *loutrophoros*, it carried ritual waters for bathing the intended. This larger version was used to mark the graves of the young who died unwed.