

World's most valuable artwork covered in soup

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Bad taste: Pollsters say such protests alienate 46% of people from the cause in question.

Is this morally defensible? Protesters claiming to support French farmers have targeted the Mona Lisa. Many consider it a shameful act of vandalism and a publicity stunt too far.

What's happening?

The visitors to the **Louvre** watched in horror. The yellow soup sailed through the air and splashed against the **Mona Lisa**.

Two women caused a scene by throwing soup at a famous painting in France, saying it was for "Food Response". They argued about the importance of art versus the right to healthy food. The painting was safe behind glass, and the **protesters** were arrested.

Find out more

French farmers have been protesting unfair pricing and climate rules, claiming they are struggling to make enough money.

Similar attacks on other paintings have taken place in different countries by various groups. Some believe attacking art is the best way to draw attention to **climate change**.

However, others say these actions actually hurt important causes. It angers art lovers — people who might otherwise have supported the protesters. They suggest focusing on those **responsible** for the problems rather than damaging art that is there for everyone to enjoy.

Is this morally **defensible**?

Some say

Yes! The only way that protests will work is if people take notice of them. Now, people around the world know about the French farmers' worries. And the art was not damaged at all anyway.

Others think

No! There is no reason to attack art — something which the whole world can enjoy. It will only make people angry — and this will not help any cause.

Some people say

"It is a sin to be silent when it is your duty to protest."

**Abraham Lincoln (1809 – 1865),
American statesman**

What do you think?

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - Do you have a favourite piece of art?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: How old is the *Mona Lisa*?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain and one thing we cannot say for sure from this story.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - You notice that someone standing next to you in a gallery has taken out a can of soup. Think about what you would say.

5. Express

What do others believe? - Can a picture make your life better? Talk about it with your classmates.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Imagine that you witnessed the soup being thrown at the *Mona Lisa*. Write a diary entry describing what you saw.

Glossary

Louvre - A famous art museum in Paris, France.

Mona Lisa - Also known as the *Giaconda*, a portrait by the Italian artist Leonardo da Vinci. It became one of the world's most famous paintings after a successful robbery in 1911.

Protesters - People who complain publicly about something or call for change.

Climate change - Long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Human action is a major cause of climate change.

Responsible - Ofcom, the UK communications regulator, will be able to issue fines of up to £18m or 10% of a company's global turnover. They will also have the power to block access to sites in the UK.

Defensible - Justifiable. Or something you can defend morally.