

**Museum
Leuven**




**BRING AN
ARTWORK
INTO YOUR
HOME!**






Over the next few weeks, we will only be able to admire this painting digitally.


Normally the painting is never alone: every day hundreds of people come to see it. And they've been doing that for years. But when you read this,



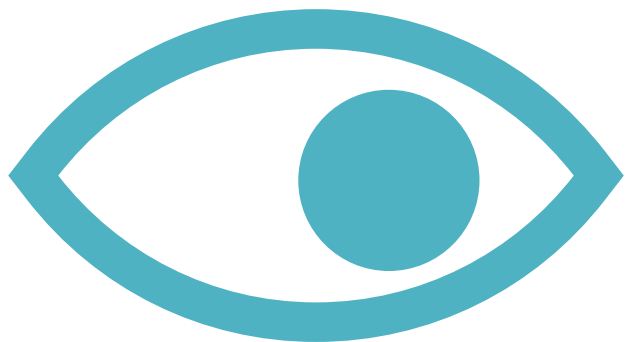
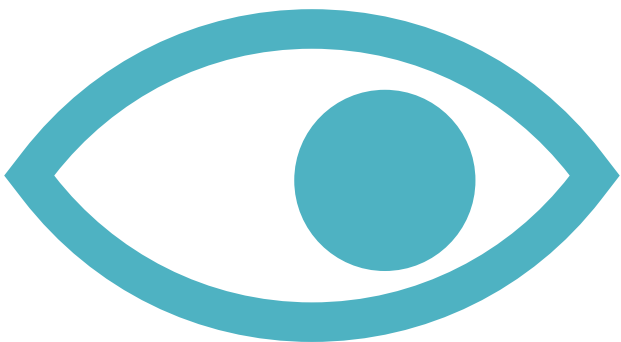
it will hang there unseen and
in total silence. No selfies,
compliments, tears, surprised
looks or questions for this
work of art.



That's a pity, but don't worry
too much, because now it
can visit you! Will you give
the painting a little love and
attention today?



The only things you need
(for now) are **your eyes**.
Artworks love inquisitive eyes.
The more the merrier, as far as
they're concerned.





1. Can you find these things in the artwork?

a horse – an angel – a pointed hat –
a child – a tower – a glass – a chandelier –
a bread roll – a sword – the longest beard
– a tiled floor – a radiant sky – a bald
head – folded hands – someone walking
– a knife – the craziest hat – a weary-
looking person – the most attractive
bare feet





2. I spy with my little eye....

Found everything?

Then you will have got your eye in!

Time to get some **paper and a pencil**.

Look for a detail in the painting and keep it secret. It can be something very small like a shoe, a tree in the distance or a hand gesture.





2.

Tug a member of your household by the sleeve and have him or her look for your detail in the painting.

Found it?

Then you can swap roles, as many times as you like.





3. But who are all those people?

You have explored every nook and cranny of the painting.

So can you find an answer to these questions?

You are allowed to use your imagination!

How many men are sitting at the table?

.....

Have they already eaten?

.....

Is it breakfast, brunch, lunch or dinner?

.....





3.

What was on the menu?

.....

Who left his bread roll?

.....

Who farted?

.....

Does someone urgently need to go to the toilet?

.....

What must just have happened?

.....

What are they looking at?

.....

Are they friends?

.....



3.

Which person can fly?

.....

Where would you most like to go on holiday?

.....

How many beards can you count?

.....

Who is the best dressed?

.....



3.

Who is the worst dressed?

.....

Who is being given a present?

.....

Who can sword fight?

.....

Who did the cooking?

.....



3.

Artworks always tell a story.

When they are as old as this work (555 years old), those stories are almost always religious. The painting was made to hang in St Peter's Church and it is still there today.

It is called 'The Last Supper' and it depicts one of the most important episodes in the life of Jesus Christ. That's what you see in the panel in the middle. Jesus is celebrating with his apostles for the last time.

The smaller panels on the left and right illustrate stories that have a connection with this festive meal: all four have something to do with 'food'.



4. Break the silence

This group of friends is eating and drinking together for the very last time.

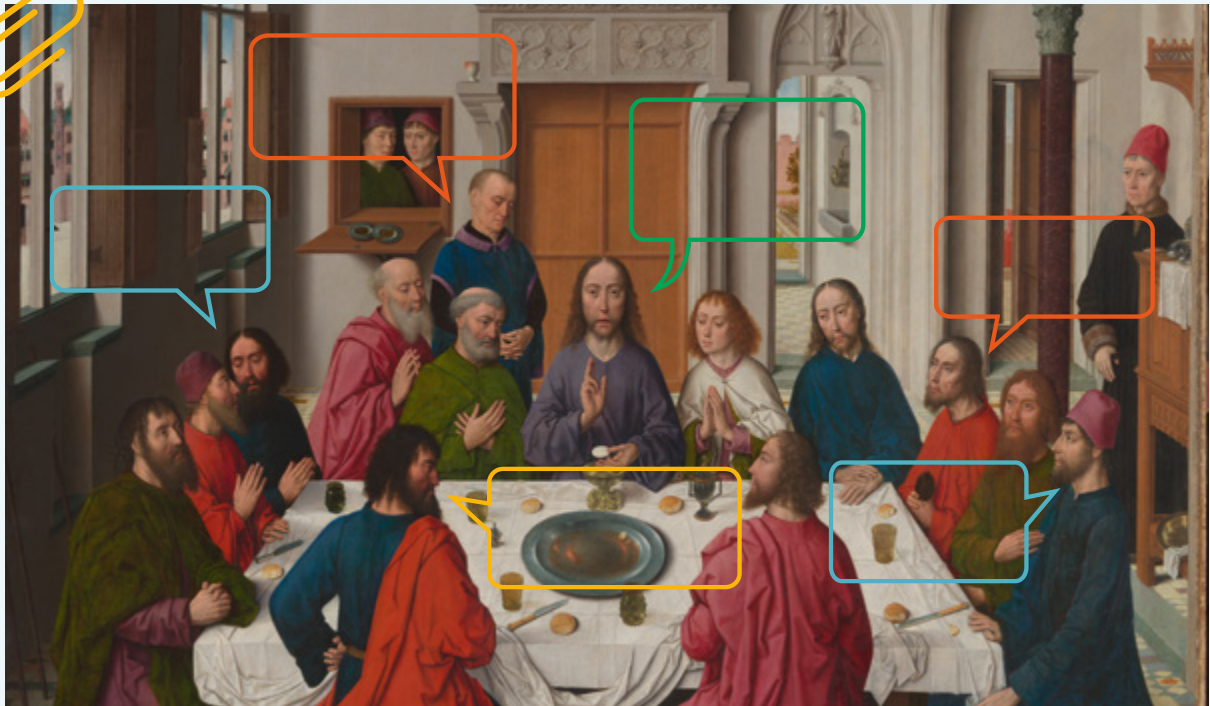
Do you sense that something important, something climactic has just happened?

Some men are fidgeting restlessly on their chair, others seem to be whispering. You could hear a pin drop on the tiled floor. Nothing worse than an embarrassing silence during a meal!

Can you break the silence?



4. What are they saying to each other?



And what do they prefer to keep to themselves?



5. 'Starstruck'

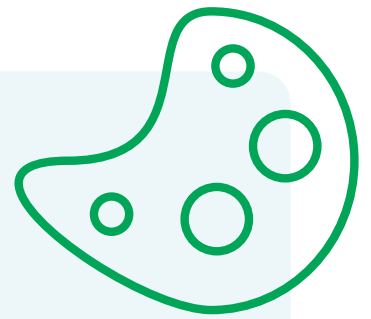
You may not have realized it yet, but you have just been looking at a MASTERPIECE.

But what exactly is a **MASTER – PIECE**?

You need 4 things to make one:



5.



1. A master

Or rather, a master and his workshop. In the Middle Ages you rarely produced a painting all on your own.

In the workshop the master would teach his apprentices the basics, like making paint, drawing and painting. And when the apprentice had had enough practice, he would produce a 'masterpiece' as proof of his technical competence. If his masterpiece was approved, he could move up the ladder and become a ... journeyman.

As a journeyman you could work on important commissions like this Last Supper. The master painter would make the preparatory drawing and paint the most difficult bits himself like the hands



5.

and faces. The journeyman did the rest. The more important the commission, the greater the master's contribution.

How would you like to become a master and set up your own workshop? That's what **Dieric Bouts** did in Leuven.

Bouts soon became a notable Leuven citizen and his paintings were in great demand. Five centuries later that is still the case. In Leuven, buildings, streets and even beer have been named after him. And *The Last Supper* is one of the most famous paintings Leuven has ever produced (honestly!).

2. Plenty of time

Dieric Bouts spent four years working on this masterpiece. That sounds like



5.

a very long time, but he didn't make it easy for himself...

- He wanted everything to look realistic and he achieved this with a very precise painting style and lots of detail. Just look at all the folds in the clothes, the tiled floor and the fresh bread rolls.
- Have you counted how many people there are in the picture? Painting



5.

faces and hands is difficult and time-consuming, particularly if you want each character to look different. So the master had his hands full!

→ Bouts wanted to give people the feeling that they were stepping into the work and sitting down at the table. He did that by using perspective to create a sense of depth in the painting. The trees and the city, for example, are much smaller than the people at the front. And the dining room is a little box you can look into. He achieved that by making the furthest points narrower. The wooden ceiling is a good example.



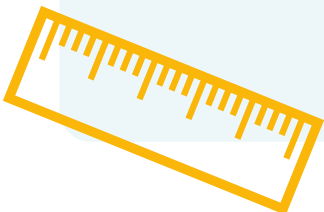
5.



3. Good materials

Bouts needed several things to make this masterpiece.

- He bought wood of the highest quality from a carpenter: painters love oak. The carpenter would also have made the frame round the panel. Clever stuff!
- You made paint simply by crushing stones, minerals, plants or insects. You then mixed these natural dyes with oil until it was a good liquid consistency, had a nice gleam and dried slowly. (If the painting was only ready after four years, that was very important!).
- You applied the paint with a brush. These ranged from very thick brushes



5.

to brushes consisting of just a few hairs for executing fine lines or detail. The hairs came from a squirrel, sable or hog.

4. A brilliant idea: something you want to show the world

Bouts was not the first to depict the story of The Last Supper, but he was the first to paint such a LARGE version. (His measures 150 cm by 180 cm.)

If you type '*The Last Supper*' into a search engine, it will come up with lots of pictures of friends seated at a table.

Choose one and compare it with Bouts' version. What is the same and what is different?

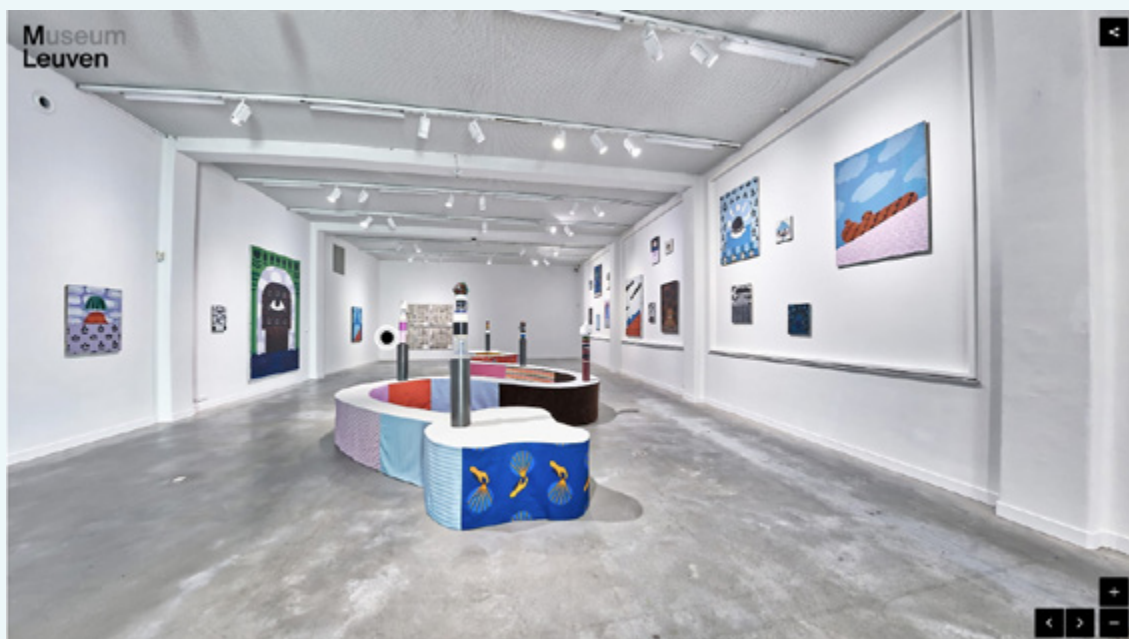


6. Breathtaking

A masterpiece is often something you can look at time and time again and never tire of because it is so beautiful, mysterious, complex, large or strange.

Perhaps you have a masterpiece hanging on your wall at home?

Don't worry if you don't (we don't either!) because you can [go for a virtual stroll round the museum](#) here and see more works of art.



7. Lay an extra place!

Our friends have just finished eating. Lamb with a bitter brown sauce, bread and wine were on the menu.

Bouts liked to see an empty plate: note there is nothing left of the lamb. Is it the same at your house?

Draw your favourite menu and hang it up in the kitchen. Perhaps it will inspire whoever cooks in your house to prepare it.



7.

This group also has an unusual way of dining: take a look!



→ No shoes

→ No forks



→ Bread rolls spread all over the table

→ A long tablecloth which they also use as a napkin



→ Eating with their hands



7.

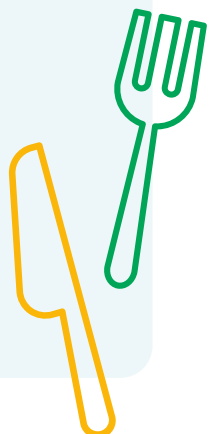
Can you spot other strange table manners?

.....
.....

No doubt the way you and your family eat together is unusual too. Every family has its own ways and rituals.

Over the next few weeks we will eat at home a lot. Make that memorable by taking a photograph of your meal every evening or... lay an extra place and invite someone to eat with you virtually.

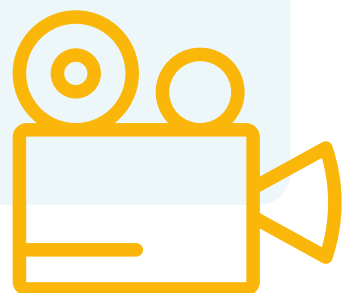
Choose what is on the menu together!



7.

We did that on February 11th for real!

Curious to find out what we had?



8. Three cheers for Bouts!

Are you a Bouts fan now? Then you are lucky because there are more masterpieces by him for you to discover in Leuven. The painting below will only hang at M for a few more weeks.

Much smaller and without a lavish meal, but look carefully and you'll see a familiar face.

Bouts portrayed Jesus Christ again, several days after '*The Last Supper*'. Has anything changed?

Which do you prefer?





Colophon

Text and concept: M Leuven

Design: Helena Vereycken

Visuals: M Leuven

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