

AUTHENTICATION IN ART

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Heart-stopping: man has heart attack in front of Botticelli

Another tourist had an epileptic fit in front of the artist's Venus in 2016

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Beauty is in the eye of the defibrillator © Franco Origlia/Getty Images

An Italian tourist visiting the Uffizi Galleries in Florence on 15 December had a heart attack while admiring Botticelli's sublime allegorical painting, the Birth of Venus (around 1485). Four visiting doctors used one of the Uffizi's defibrillators on the tourist, who was quickly taken to hospital and is now recovering. Museum director Eike Schmidt told the Corriere della Sera newspaper that there have been numerous such incidents: "Somebody recently fainted in front of Caravaggio's Medusa," he said. And, in 2016, another tourist had an epileptic fit in front of Botticelli's Venus. When asked if he believes in Stendhal Syndrome, a disorder causing overwhelming feelings when viewing great works of art, Schmidt said: "I'm not a doctor...all I know is that visiting a museum like ours, which is so full of masterpieces, can certainly cause emotional, psychological and even physical stress."

