

Meta Title: The History Of The Venus De Milo

Meta Description: The Venus de Milo is one of the iconic pieces of art that is housed in the Louvre. Carved out of marble, she was discovered on Melos in the Aegean Sea.

The Story Behind The Venus De Milo

Next to the Mona Lisa, the Venus de Milo is the piece of art which draws people to the Louvre in the heart of Paris. But what is the story behind this incredible work of art?

The Venus de Milo is commonly thought to represent Aphrodite although some scholars claim that the statue is of the sea-goddess Amphitrite. It was carved by [Alexandros](#), who was a sculptor of Antioch on the Maeander River, in about 150 BCE. Alexandros carved the iconic status from marble.

Technical Aspects Of The Venus De Milo

The statue measures [6 feet and 8 inches](#) and is in the classical S-curve. The figure's body consists of two blocks of marble. Her bust, legs, left arm and foot were sculpted separately. According to art historians, the Venus de Milo was likely to have been painted colourfully and adorned with jewellery as was the custom. However, there is no pigment or metal that remains on the marble.

It Wasn't Always In The Louvre

Venus de Milo was discovered in the early 1800s on the Aegean island of Melos. Olivier Voutier, who was an ensign in the French navy, is credited with the discovery. While his ship was anchored in the Melos harbour, Voutier decided to go ashore and search for antiquities. He was digging next to the ruins of an old theatre and saw a farmer – who was removing stones from a wall nearby – found the top half of the Venus de Milo.

With the farmer's help, Voutier found the lower half a short distance away. He recognised it as a significant example of sculpture and took it with him to France. He presented it to Louis XVIII, who donated it to the Louvre Museum.

Why Is The Venus De Milo Missing Limbs?

This is a debate that has long been considered by art historians. It was claimed that Venus de Milo's limbs were broken off in 1820 during a fight between French and Turkish sailors on the shores of Melos as they both vied for the statue. Other historians claim that the arms were already missing when it was found.

The Historical Significance Of The Venus De Milo

Napoleon Bonaparte is known for looting art from the territories that he conquered. For example, he looted *The Madonna of Saint Jerome* from Italy, which was painted by Antonio da Correggio as well as antiquities from Egypt. These priceless artefacts were destined for the new national museum at the Louvre.

When these – in addition to works of art from Germany and Austria - were returned to their countries of origin this left a gaping hole in French culture. The notable pieces which were lost included Rome's Laocoon and his Sons as well as Italy's Venus de Medici.

This void allowed the Venus de Milo to become an international icon and a piece of art that put the Louvre on the map, attracting millions of visitors from across the world to gaze in wonder at the sheer artistry that brought her into being.

