



## **The Lost Museum: The Nazi Conspiracy to Steal the World's Greatest Works of Art**

*Hector Feliciano, Tim Bent (translator)*

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Between 1939 and 1944, as the Nazis overran Europe, they were also quietly conducting another type of pillage. *The Lost Museum* tells the story of the Jewish art collectors and gallery owners in France who were stripped of rare works by artists such as Vermeer, Rembrandt, Degas, Cézanne, and Picasso. Before they were through, the Nazis had taken more than 20,000 paintings, sculptures, and drawings from France. *The Lost Museum* explores the Nazis' systematic confiscation of these artworks, focusing on the private collections of five families: Rothschild, Rosenberg, Bernheim-Jeune, David-Weill, and Schloss. The book is filled with private family photos of this art, some of which has never before been seen by the public, and it traces the fate of these works as they passed through the hands of top German officials, unscrupulous art dealers, and unwitting auction houses such as Christie's and Sotheby's.

## **The Lost Museum: The Nazi Conspiracy to Steal the World's Greatest Works of Art Details**

Date : Published April 25th 1998 by Basic Books (NY) (first published May 12th 1997)

ISBN : 9780465041916

Author : Hector Feliciano , Tim Bent (translator)

Format : Paperback 336 pages

Genre : History, Art, Nonfiction, Art History, War, World War II



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## **From Reader Review The Lost Museum: The Nazi Conspiracy to Steal the World's Greatest Works of Art for online ebook**

### **Angie says**

Hitler loved art and it was one of his goals to return many of the masters to Germany and to set up one of the best museums in the world. In order to do that he pillaged and plundered Europe. This book covers Paris and its stolen art and is based on an article written in France. I knew about the Nazi's agenda to steal art, but I didn't realize how systematic it was. Hitler and Goering were determined to find and send to Germany as much art as possible, most of which was taken from wealthy Parisian Jews. As in other areas during WWII, there was a lot of collaboration from the Paris art dealers. In fact the Paris art world was booming during this period. Art was going for outrageous prices (both high and low) and dealers were becoming really wealthy. None of the activities during the war really surprised me. What surprised me most was what happened after the war when the owners tried to get their possessions back. Barely half of the art stolen by the Nazis has been found and returned. There was a great deal of effort immediately after the war, but there was also a lot of stonewalling and dead ends. If the art ended up in Eastern Europe, it became the spoils of war or reparations for the Soviet Union. Most of that art has never been seen. If it ended up in Switzerland, a supposed neutral country, there was no recourse to get it back. Swiss law was such that it was almost impossible to claim stolen goods there even if you knew where they were. I think what really surprised me was the French museums and the auction houses. There are some 2000 pieces in French museums that are Nazi contraband and have never been claimed; however, the museums have made almost no effort to find the owners. The auctions houses are even worse. Places like Christie's and Sotheby's have sold stolen art repeatedly with little or no investigation into their provenances.

Of course all this information is from The Lost Museum. While I found the information really interesting, the book was not. It was not well written or easily readable. Part of this may be the translation, but that does not explain how boring it was in parts. I found myself skimming probably half of the book just to get through it. There are paragraphs long lists of paintings. The author also gives biographies of the Jews whose art was stolen, but spends very little time on the actual story of the theft. Instead of a laundry list of paintings, I would have preferred more on the actual story about the journey the art took and what happened to it after the war. There is some of this but not enough.

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### **Helena says**

This is an extremely interesting book and you get to know a side of the nazis not that very often explored. I give it four stars because the writing is, sometimes, a little bit confuse, but it can be a problem of the portuguese translation.

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### **Lauren says**

This was a fascinating book about the plunder of Europe's art by the Nazis. One so often hears about the holocaust and other atrocities against people, that it was interesting to see a fuller part of the overarching plan. The Nazi's destroyed or sold to non-arayans work they considered "degenerate", and kept for themselves, sometimes in personal collections, what they considered to be great art.

The author, however, had a bone to pick and that overshadowed the historic aspects of the book. It became very clear that this was an agenda driven book rather than one written purely out of interest in the subject.

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### **Israel Montoya Baquero says**

Metótico y realmente completo ensayo de investigación que aborda uno de los períodos más oscuros de la historia del arte: los saqueos, despiadados y sistemáticos, llevados a cabo por la maquinaria de guerra nazi de las diversas colecciones artísticas de la Europa ocupada.

Feliciano sigue el rastro de algunas de las más importantes colecciones de arte de la Francia ocupada por los nazis, poniendo de relieve la auténtica falta de escrúpulos, no solo de los grandes dirigentes alemanes (auténticos promotores del indiscriminado saqueo), sino también de algunos de los marchantes franceses de la época, colaboracionistas del régimen nazi, que vieron en los cuatro años que duró la ocupación alemana una oportunidad de oro para enriquecerse.

Igualmente sangrante es la actitud de marchantes, museos, galerías y casas de subastas en los años posteriores a la guerra. Todos ellos, con alguna honrosa excepción, decidieron mostrarse del todo ciegos a la procedencia de muchas de las obras que figuraban en sus catálogos, intentando, pero no consiguiendo, correr un tupido velo sobre uno de los momentos más bochornosos en la historia del arte universal.

Estamos ante un libro interesante, incluso para el público general, escrito de una manera distendida y sencilla, que hará las delicias de los aficionados a la Historia del Arte (y que les revolverá bastante las tripas al mostrar las tropelías realizadas durante, y después de, la II Guerra Mundial).

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### **Alexandra Cameron says**

Fascinating read and enormously helpful with research for my own book. Shocking subject. Still very controversial.

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### **Mae says**

This book, tells the story of the breaktrhough investigation and findings of all the art that was stollen by the Nazis. This guy is from Puerto Rico and his research has been only recognized by few experts. It is time that more people read about the guy behind this findings and the truth of what happened and is still happening.

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### **Alice Verberne says**

Excellent book for those interested in art and the history of WWII. Gives insight to Hitler and his dreams of being a great art collector. Exposes collaborators and others in the art scene at the time. Opens the reader's eyes to the underhanded methods of the Swiss bankers as art launderers.

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## **Dao says**

Interesting book that documents how great works of art were looted from occupied France during WWII. Parts of the book are too detailed for the general interest reader but overall, the book was an easy read on a very interesting topic.

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## **Patricia Cohen says**

Important book that helped focus attention on the problem of looted art from the Nazi era.

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## **Erik Graff says**

Feliciano is to be thanked for the years of sleuthing behind this book about art thefts during and after WWII. The Nazis were by far the worst of the culprits, but they did not lack for more-than-willing co-conspirators. Indeed, the objects of their greed, many of them, continue to circulate in the profitable world of fine art.

However, while the research represented in this book deserves praise and would have constituted a worthy doctoral dissertation, the text itself is dry and lifeless. What might have been an exciting story of investigation and discovery is instead a rather plodding account of results and conclusions. There is a great deal of name-dropping of artists, of works, of collectors and of experts--references which might be richly informative to readers immersed in the world of high culture, but which might well bore the average reader. There is relatively little about the Nazis themselves, their tastes in art and the reasons for their preferences--a discussion which would have made for a more interesting book.

For me the overwhelming impression was of how the rich are not like the rest of us. Again, unfortunately, this work offers no class analysis whatsoever.

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## **Melissa says**

Very compelling subject, but the format and writing style seemed more like a business report than a good non-fiction book.

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## **Martin Streetman says**

A great snow day allowed me to finish up this book from the random bookmarks shelf. It was good if you like the subject matter (Nazi looting of the art world during WWII). That being said it was a lot more dry than The Rape of Europa and Beautiful Loot, both of which I liked better.

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### **Beth says**

"The story of the systematic pillaging of Jewish-owned artwork during World War II. Between 1939 and 1944, the Nazi occupation of France enabled Germany to confiscate rare works from Jewish art collectors and gallery owners." From the back cover. Many works have not yet been returned though, according to Feliciano, the records exist to accomplish this task.

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### **Writerlibrarian says**

Which was fantastic and quite enjoyable. Also very informative. Anyone interested in art theft, how art is sold, pillage and how WW2 was the ultimate time to steal great works of art must find this book. I truly enjoyed it.

It's really, really good, well written and it made me look for 2 titles : one is already requested in ILL The Faustian Bargain and the second was ordered for the library The Monument Men.

A good introduction on the subject of spoiled art during WW2.

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### **Catarina says**

O livro é muito interessante, na medida em que estuda muito bem a ascensão do nazismo e o seu reflexo na vontade da Alemanha nazi se tornar um portento de arte. A par disso, a paixão ignorante de Hitler e de Goering pelos quadros, histórias de famílias ricas, cultas, despojadas de anos de investimento em arte pelo regime. Para quem estude arte, acho verdadeiramente muito interessante a leitura. Para quem se interessa pelo tema, como eu, de uma forma mais leiga, é interessante para ter uma perspectiva da guerra diferente e da História.

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