

False Impressions: The Hunt for Big-Time Art Fakes

By Thomas Hoving

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Delving into one of the most sacrosanct areas of culture--fine art collecting--Thomas Hoving presents a gallery of art fakes, fakers, and the suckers who fell for the scams. From the shroud of Turin to pre-Colombian pottery, Hoving reveals the biggest, the best, the most embarrassing, and the most costly forgeries in history--many of them unknown until now. photos.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Take care if you're planning to buy a Renoir landscape or a Manet?there are art fakers who can convincingly simulate the former in two hours, the latter in three, according to Hoving in this wry guide to the world of art forgeries. Hoving (Making the Mummies Dance), former director of New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art, devotes the first several chapters to a chronological history of art faking; some readers may find this section too detailed and anecdotal. The livelier part of the book involves Hoving's reminiscences about his experiences as a student at Princeton, his apprenticeship at the Met and his sleuthing to detect art fakes. He covers such intriguing topics here as forgers who have "tricked them all," what makes an ideal fake-buster and the "sin" of labeling genuine artifacts as fakes. Noting that art forgery is as old as art, the author warns that "the art world we are living in today is a new, highly active, unprincipled one of art fakery," which he attributes to "raw commercialism" and the "get-rich quick attitude of the times." But Hoving, who enjoys showing off, leads us to believe that with him on the case, no fraud is safe.
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From Library Journal
The former Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art here discloses shocking details of major art forgeries and the intricate chicanery of con artists who have duped the world's most prestigious art institutions, art experts, and collectors. Hoving (Making the Mummies Dance, LJ 11/1/92) traces the earliest art deceptions from the time of the Phoenicians, through ancient Roman forgeries of Greek artifacts and the innumerable crucifixion relics of the Middle Ages, to the phony sculpture, paintings, documents, coins, ivories, and gems created now largely for profit. Besides greed as the prime motivation, Hoving also tells wonderful tales of revenge by disgruntled employees aimed at the elitist, arrogant personalities that pervade the art world. As a "fakebuster," Hoving uses his sense of connoisseurship and gut reaction to distinguish originals, which he believes convey a lofty humanity that fakes lack. Museum lovers will find it disconcerting to learn that still undetected frauds are prominently on view. Recommended for general and museum collections.?Joan Levin, MLS, Chicago, Ill.
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From Booklist
Art maven Hoving, former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and author of *Making the Mummies Dance* (1992), is a magnetic storyteller, achieving just the right blend of humor and mettle. Here he chronicles his initiation into the world of forgeries and his commitment to being a "fakebuster." Hoving discovered early on that fakes abound; indeed, every imaginable art object has been successfully forged and profitably sold. In a look at forgery through the ages, Hoving identifies favorite targets, from Egyptian and Greek antiquities to the "pious frauds" of early Christianity. The painters of the Renaissance inspired a torrent of fakes and copies, as did the impressionists and postimpressionists. Hoving's take on all this is utterly fascinating, but his anecdotes about his own experiences positively sizzle, especially when he describes his friendship with an adept forger who could turn out a convincing Cezanne or Manet in a matter of hours. *Donna Seaman*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jamie Lundquist:

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have far more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent their particular spare time to take a go walking, shopping, or went to typically the Mall. How about open or read a book allowed False Impressions: The Hunt for Big-Time Art Fakes? Maybe it is to get best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time with the favorite's book, you can wiser than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have some other opinion?

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