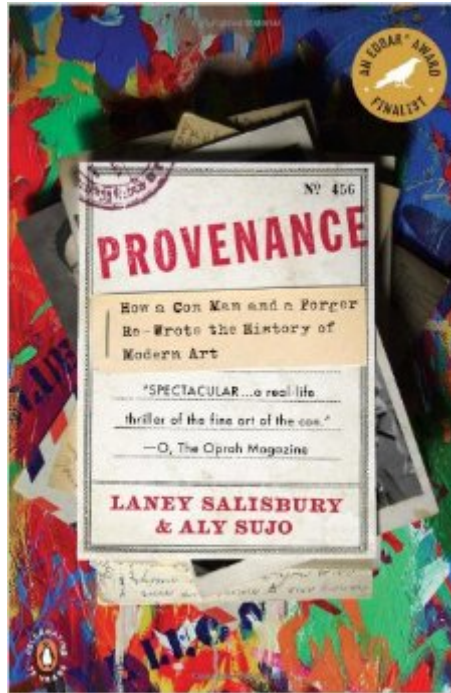


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Provenance: How A Con Man And A Forger Rewrote The History Of Modern Art



Synopsis

The true story of one of the twentieth century's most audacious art frauds. Filled with extraordinary characters and told at breakneck speed, *Provenance* reads like a well-plotted thriller. But this is most certainly not fiction. It is the astonishing narrative of one of the most far-reaching and elaborate cons in the history of art forgery. Stretching from London to Paris to New York, investigative reporters Laney Salisbury and Aly Sujo recount the tale of infamous con man and unforgettable villain John Drewe and his accomplice, the affable artist John Myatt. Together they exploited the archives of British art institutions to irrevocably legitimize the hundreds of pieces they forged, many of which are still considered genuine and hang in prominent museums and private collections today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Provenance" is the account of one of the greatest cons in the history of art. About 240 forged paintings were produced, many selling for hundreds of thousands of dollars, and netting overall about 2 million pounds over nine years. Many are still considered genuine and hang in prominent places. The authors reveal that museums not only display art, but also assemble and maintain a chain of ownership for the works of the authors they display; funding this effort, however, is difficult and became key to the fraud detailed in the book. The action begins with a museum reception for Dr. John Drewe, professor of nuclear physics and art connoisseur, who has just donated two 'valuable decades-old' paintings to the museum. Dr. Drewe is accompanied by his 'research assistant' John Myatt, who is shocked to realize that he had just finished painting the valuable donated paintings. Myatt strongly protests to Drewe that the subterfuge will certainly be discovered by the museum's

curators, and gets Drewe to withdraw the donation on the grounds that he'd just learned of potential problems with their documentation. Dr. Drewe instead substitutes a \$20,000 donation, with promises of another \$500,000 later for the museum's provenance work. The point of Dr. Drewe's generosity was to gain access to the museum's records. Dr. Drewe and Myatt had met four years prior when Drewe responded to Myatt's ad for reproductions. Myatt had just been abandoned by his wife, along with two babies in diapers, and was short of money. Dr. Drewe commissioned a copy, and their relationship grew over time. Meanwhile, world art prices began soaring.

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