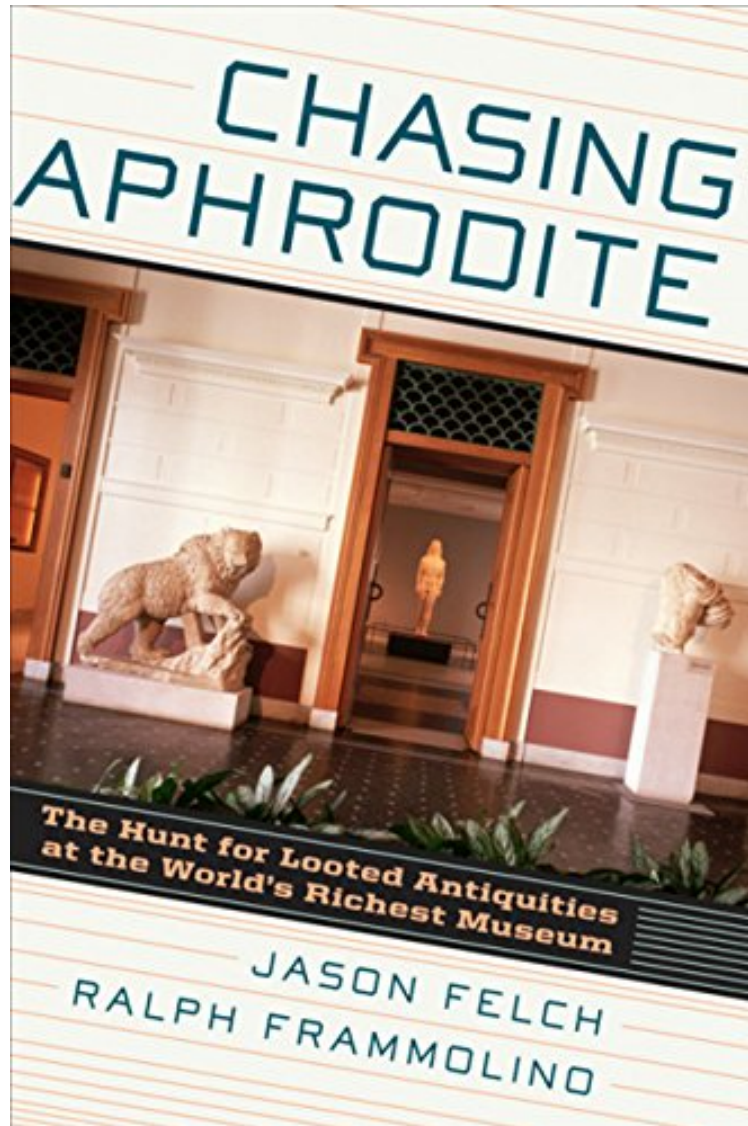


## Chasing Aphrodite: The Hunt for Looted Antiquities at the World's Richest Museum

Jason Felch, Ralph Frammolino  
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**Jason Felch, Ralph Frammolino : Chasing Aphrodite: The Hunt for Looted Antiquities at the World's Richest Museum** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chasing Aphrodite: The Hunt for Looted Antiquities at the World's Richest Museum:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Informative, entertaining, and exhaustively researched By Ava Lynn The stories of illegally excavated art investigated in this book span decades of smuggling, legal battles, and near

constant prevarication on the part of museums. It's a fascinating look at corruption and hypocrisies in museums, all the more interesting and surprising (to me, at least) because I wasn't familiar with these pieces of art or the Getty's legal woes before picking up this book. When one thinks about it, it's not remotely surprising that many of the antiquities displayed around the world in museums are looted or illegally exported, given the historical plunder of source countries. What's surprising is the complicity of museums, and the lengths to which the world's leading museums went to protect their acquisitions' veneer of legitimacy. The Getty and other museums used their missions of public education as an excuse to build prestige by acquiring looted antiquities, all the while declaring their devotion to legitimizing the antiquities trade. It's an amazingly well researched book. Complicated import/export laws, museum policies, and foreign legal proceedings are explained in a way that is easy for someone completely unfamiliar, such as myself, can easily follow. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. No wonder the museum signs say "please don't touch" ! By tleeminniemi I NEVER knew museums were into such skulduggery ! I always assumed that with their cultured airs they were cultured people of cultured tastes and impeccable standards. This book was an amazing education on how museums come by their valuable collections. This book centers on a particular scandal however, it is hard to imagine that this does not continue to some degree today. The looting of antiquities to fill the worlds' leading museums and the originating countries' fights to get the items back is a riveting read. Most museums required "incontrovertible " absolute proof of an item's being looted and sold through the black market before they would give it back to the requesting country. It was noted that this is tougher proof than is required for a murder trial ! Acquiring the treasured item...not so much proof needed. Giving it back.....more proof needed than to convict a murderer ! Amazing. It's a great read. Highly recommend it even if you're not a museum buff and familiar with all the antiquities being discussed. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Terrific and important read By RosierWow - reads like a thriller and packed full of information. Not only does the author expose the ugly history of looted antiquities, but he skillfully sets forth the historical conundrum. If some of the antiquities had not been preserved in American and European museums they might not have survived war and destruction. But shouldn't countries have a right to their patrimony? Even now, archeological and cultural items are being destroyed in Iraq and Syria. The brilliance of "Chasing Aphrodite" is that it puts the issues in historical context and doesn't settle for an easy answer. He tells the story through the characters and highlights moral failures of the characters. Bravo for telling the story, weaving a thrilling tale, and focusing on the broader issues. Thank you! I will never visit a museum again without thinking of this book.

In recent years, several of America's leading art museums have voluntarily given up their finest pieces of classical art to the governments of Italy and Greece. The monetary value is estimated at over half a billion dollars. Why would they be moved to such unheard-of generosity? The answer lies at the Getty, one of the world's richest and most troubled museums, and scandalous revelations that it had been buying looted antiquities for decades. Drawing on a trove of confidential museum records and frank interviews, Felch and Frammolino give us a fly-on-the-wall account of the inner workings of a world-class museum and tell the story of the Getty's dealings in the illegal antiquities trade. The outlandish characters and bad behavior could come straight from the pages of a thriller—the wealthy recluse founder, the cagey Italian art investigator, the playboy curator, the narcissist CEO—but their chilling effects on the rest of the art world have been all too real, as the authors show in novelistic detail. Fast-paced and compelling, *Chasing Aphrodite* exposes the layer of dirt beneath the polished façade of the museum business.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . In an authoritative account, two reporters who led a Los Angeles Times investigation, reveal the details of the Getty Museum's illicit purchases, from smugglers and fences, of looted Greek and Roman antiquities. In 2005, the Italians indicted former Getty curator Marion True for trafficking in looted antiquities, and by 2007, after protracted negotiations, the Getty agreed to return 40 of 46 artifacts demanded by the Italian government; Italy in turn agreed to loan the Getty comparable objects. One of the major pieces lost by the Getty was an Aphrodite statue purchased by True to put the Getty on the map. But still eluding the Italians is the Getty Bronze, a statue of an athlete hauled out of international waters in 1964 by Italian fishermen; it was the prized acquisition of the Getty's first antiquities curator, Jiri Frel, who brought thousands more looted antiquities into the museum through a tax-fraud scheme. The authors offer an excellent recap of the museum's misdeeds, brimming with tasty details of the scandal that motivated several of America's leading art museums to voluntarily return to Italy and Greece some 100 classical antiquities worth more than half a billion dollars. 8 pages of bw photos. (May) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.