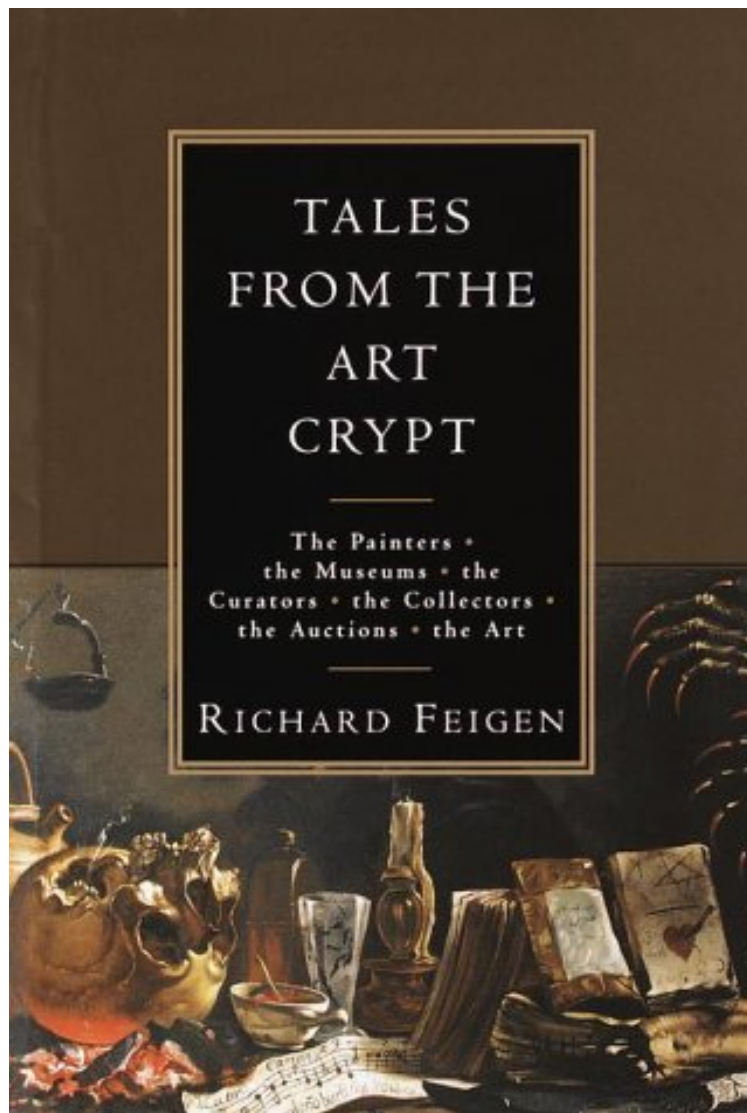


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## Tales from the Art Crypt: The painters, the museums, the curators, the collectors, the auctions, the art

*Richard Feigen*

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#884994 in Books 2000-06-20 2000-06-20Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF #1 1.27 x 6.58 x 9.53l, #File Name: 039457169X320 pages | File size: 60.Mb

**Richard Feigen : Tales from the Art Crypt: The painters, the museums, the curators, the collectors, the auctions, the art** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tales from the Art Crypt: The painters, the museums, the curators, the collectors, the auctions, the art:

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Worthy criticismBy Marc SalzI found Richard Feigen's book to be

a mostly worthy criticism of the current art world. I am the son of Sam Salz who is mentioned in a short passage in the book as a legendary art dealer. I think Mr. Feigen's description of his method of dealing is accurate even though my father's German-Jewish accent is slightly overdone. My father may have been a shrewd and sometimes ruthless negotiator but he always sought a good home for "his pictures" and could judge a great one from a "postage stamp". The rest of the book deals very well with the gradual takeover of large corporate interests in the museums. Sometimes Mr. Feigen has a tendency to portray himself as the sole savior in a corrupt system but more than a few of his shots are right on target. 8 of 22 people found the following review helpful. Name Droppings - Views from the Bottom of the Cage By Harry L. Stille Gossip and other matters previously reported by others. Too bad the author did not say more about modern art. 14 of 20 people found the following review helpful. stories of how wonderful I am By A Customer Mr. Feigen is a well known art dealer who has written a disjointed series of stories related in that they all involve him and some noble act or great art find by him. In many of the stories Mr. Feigen is critical of collectors, dealers, and administrators of art museums who are now dead and unable to defend themselves. Richard the Great emerges as the only noble and knowledgeable person who always does the right thing and always barely misses the gold ring of finding and acquiring a lost art treasure. If you are interested in an egomaniac's view of his life and the shortcomings of others, written in the guise of stories about art this is the book for you. The editor should be fired for not catching the number of duplications of facts and typographical errors.

From one of today's most influential art collectors and dealers: a lively, revealing, sometimes blasphemous, always knowing look into the world of art. Richard Feigen's fifty years in the art world have given him a unique perspective on its inhabitants and habits. He writes about the painters he has known and represented (among them James Rosenquist, Jasper Johns, Jean Dubuffet, and Joseph Cornell), and about others whose work he has collected. He writes about his galleries in Chicago and New York City, and about his fellow dealers, including Julien Levy and Leo Castelli. He talks about the "eye" that allows a dealer to recognize a fine painting. He discusses the great art-owning families, art historians, scholars, and conservators. He recounts the story of the debacle at the Barnes Foundation that resulted in the undoing of Albert Barnes's vision for his museum, and reveals the fate of the artworks that belonged to Gertrude Stein. He dissects the art boom of the 1980s and its effects, and takes on the commercialism plaguing American museums today: blockbuster exhibitions and the replacement of great directors with "professional administrators." Feigen has given us an intimate, engrossing portrait of the great art game as it has been played in the twentieth century.

.com In *Tales from the Art Crypt*, Richard Feigen, a veteran of nearly 50 years as an art dealer, offers not a conventional memoir but rather a series of highly polished anecdotes adding up to an illuminating dissection of art-world practice and politics. The opening chapter, aptly titled "Detective Stories," makes attributing an old master painting or unearthing a forgotten portrait of Thomas Jefferson as exciting as a murder mystery. Feigen's acid comments on the provincialism of his hometown, Chicago, explain his relocation to New York in the mid-1960s. His depictions of fellow dealers like Leo Castelli and Sam Salz are amusingly candid without seeming mean-spirited; affectionate portrayals of collectors such as Morton and Rose Neumann are equally vivid. Also memorable is a juicy account of his stint on the board of the Barnes Foundation, whose decision to deaccession works and permit a traveling exhibit of fragile paintings he deplores. Feigen, who has studied and sold everything from surrealist works and pop art to 17th-century Italian paintings, displays an infectious zest for art as both aesthetic pursuit and business. His comments on the conflicts between museum directors and their newly revenue-conscious boards of trustees explain much about the increasing commercialization of once scholarly institutions. His delightful book fulfills the mission museums once took for granted: to entertain and educate. --Wendy Smith From *Publishers Weekly* Veteran art dealer Feigen offers up some salty tales from his decades of wheeling and dealing in the vicious and malicious world of the international art market. Feigen represented a number of artists, notably Francis Bacon, before they were considered salable, let alone successful, and was present during some heavy-duty deals in recent decades. His short chapters read like occasional essays, presented without any special order or continuity and containing accounts of meetings with artists from Miró to Matta that have the convincing ring of someone who delights in minutiae and idiosyncrasy. (Sometimes the negotiations are described in such detail that they'll confound those not themselves involved in running art galleries.) On the downside, Feigen has a weakness for some of the lesser art produced in Chicago (where he was born), and makes too confident pronouncements on complex attribution questions involving artists like Poussin. (Sometimes he seems to prefer asserting the scandalous over the provable, as when he claims that the Italian Renaissance artist Sodoma "possibly" had sex with a zoolful of pet animals.) These are relatively minor points, however, considering Feigen's willingness to tell all (or much) of what he knows, and his clear and disarming manner of doing so. Given the vast smoke screens raised by legendary dealers like Duveen about their sometimes dubious activities, this frank, detailed account by a mover and shaker in today's booming art market is sure to be discussed over many a downtown dinner. (June) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* New York-based art dealer Feigen offers an intimate and gossipy glimpse into the sometimes tawdry world of art. In his

over 40-year career, Feigen mingled at the highest levels of the art world, buying from and selling to well-known collectors and major museums. In addition to the stories (some only now made public) behind the sales of individual works, Feigen digresses into fascinating portraits of some of the most influential collections of the last 50 years. These glimpses into the lives of such people as Rose and Morton Neumann, Mary and Leigh Block, and others bring to life the often-overlooked names on museum wall labels. Feigen also expresses his less-than-sanguine view of the museum world, asserting that commercialism and showmanship have surpassed connoisseurship as the requisite for directors and top curators. Recommended for collections with an interest in the art world."Martin R. Kalfatovic, Smithsonian Inst. Libs., Washington, DC Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.