



Reading Guide:

Old Masters, New World: America's Raid on Europe's Great Pictures by Cynthia Saltzman

1. In the introduction, two of the United States' famous 19th-century expatriates, Mary Cassatt and Henry James, both expressed disappointment on the lack of a "good picture" or "culture" in the U.S. Is this an unfair assessment of the young nation?
2. How did this buying spree introduce the art boom we still see today? What does this say about the relationship between art and business?
3. What surprised you about the descriptions of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the late 19th century?
4. Was there one collector you felt most connected to? Why?
5. Have you visited any of these collections in your travels? Did reading this book make you see them through a different lens?
6. How do you think King Edward VII felt while visiting J. Pierpont Morgan and seeing artwork that once hung in his friends' homes?
7. Most of us are familiar with Houston's great collectors—Audrey Jones Beck, Caroline Law, Ima Hogg, and Carroll Sterling Masterson and Harris Masterson III. From what you know of their lives and interests, did you see similarities to the subjects in this book? Differences? Is there a personality of the collector?
8. Did you appreciate Cynthia Saltzman's tone in telling this story?
9. Besides being seen as patrons of the arts, what other benefits did people like Henry Clay Frick, John Pierpont Morgan, and Henry Osborne and Louisine Havermyer gain by indulging in this art-building pursuit?
10. Are there parts of the story you feel are missing? Were there aspects of Saltzman's research on which you feel she could have elaborated and reported more?

Author Biography

Cynthia Saltzman is the author of *Portrait of Dr. Gachet: the Story of a Van Gogh Masterpiece, Money, Politics, Collectors, Greed, and Loss* (Viking, 1998) and *Old Masters, New World: America's Raid on Europe's Great Pictures* (Viking, 2008). She also selected the letters and wrote an introduction for *Vincent van Gogh Letters*, published in 2010 by Einaudi in its *I Millenni series*. During her Guggenheim Fellowship year (2017), she worked on a book to be published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, tentatively titled *Plunder: Napoleon and Veronese's Feast, about Napoleon's theft of Paolo Veronese's Wedding Feast at Cana from Venice*. Her work has focused on art in the late 19th century—in Europe and America—its creation, acquisition, and migration—its interplay with the economics, politics, and cultural ambitions of that time. She holds a BA from Harvard University in Fine Arts; an MA from the University of California, at Berkeley, in the History of Art (1975); and an MBA from Stanford University (1977). She lives in New York.

Hear from the author:

Smithsonian Magazine, 2008, smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/cynthia-saltzman-7885419/

Bayou Bend/Rienzi Book Club

Join us for the next selection of the Bayou Bend/Rienzi Book Club: *A Revolution in Color: The World of John Singleton Copley* by Jane Kamensky. Kamensky's book is an "intimate portrait of the artist and his extraordinary times," integrating Copley's biography with the story of the complex age in which he lived and painted and telling the story of the American Revolution from an unusual perspective. For more information, visit mfah.org/historybookclub.

MFAH Book Club

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