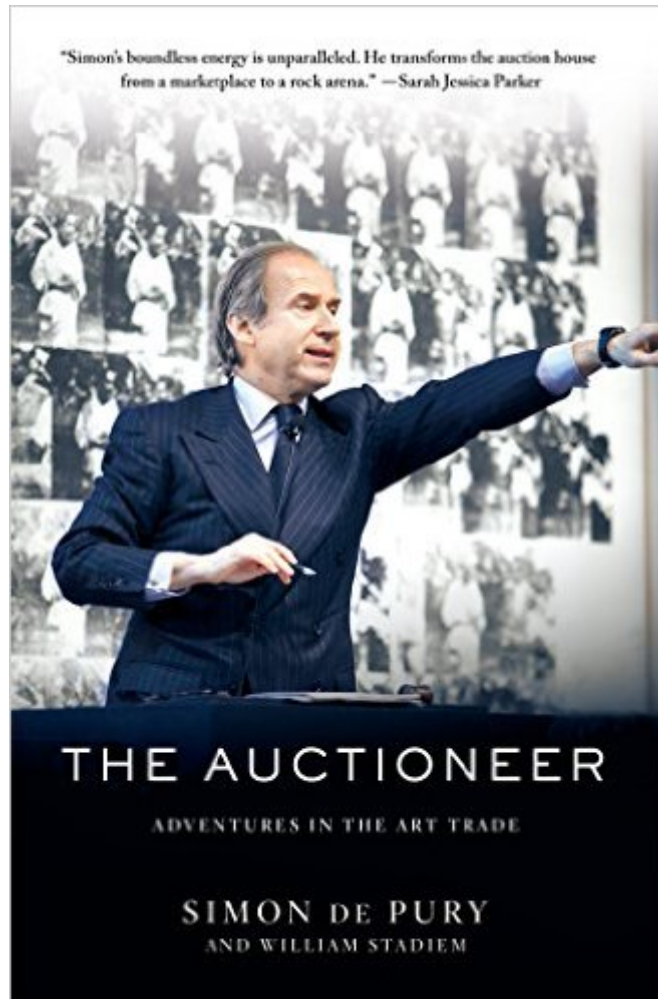


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The Auctioneer: Adventures In The Art Trade



Synopsis

Just as William Goldman, the ultimate screenwriter, took us inside Hollywood, Simon de Pury, the ultimate art player, will take us inside an even more secretive business, whose staggering prices, famous collectors, and high crimes are front page news almost every day. The former Chairman of Sotheby's Europe, the former owner of Sotheby's rival Phillips de Pury, and currently a London-based dealer and advisor to great collectors around the world, Simon has one of the highest profiles of any non-artist in the art world. Even though he has an ancient title and the aura of an elegant Swiss banker, Simon is famous as an iconoclast and is known as "The Mick Jagger of Auctions" for his showmanship and exuberance. His whole life in art has been devoted to bringing art to the public and to the juxtaposition of high and low. Movie stars, musicians, and athletes compete with hedge funders and billionaires for the great art, and Simon is their pied piper; he wants to turn the world onto art and this book will be his message.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Many books promise to dish, but few deliver like de Pury's "The Auctioneer: Adventures in the Art Trade." Some weeks back I heard de Pury interviewed on NPR, and having spent some time on the fringe of the world of high art, was curious as to how anyone could start an independent house, facing off against Sotheby's and Christie's who effectively owned the market for work of a certain caliber. I had a sense of the secrecy of the art market but really had misunderstood its nature. While much is on display in The Auctioneer, the focus is on the skills of the auctioneer, more than a salesman with a sense of drama, they are part connoisseur, part scholar, part advisor, part

handler. At some point he says that New Yorkers flock to Phillips to see wealth on display, as he describes the scene, while there may be many a well-heeled patron in the room, most of the action takes place behind the scenes, the highest bidders often represented by polished proxies bidding by phone. The real action takes place well before the auction. This is where the skill of the auctioneer comes into play. The few minutes of flying numbers the denouement of considerable behind-the-scenes drama. The number of zeros when the gavel lands becoming notches in a belt or, perhaps, epaulets, carrying the artist, art house and auctioneer to loftier heights. de Pury, himself a scholar and collector, was no stranger to this realm when he began his career in the world of high art. Part of the book describes how he came by his knowledge and understanding of art, but more focuses on the skills of the auctioneer, the personalities behind the scenes and on display at some of the events of the art world as well as on the road leading up to the auction.

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