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Sargent: Portraits Of Artists And Friends



Synopsis

WINNER of the W. E. Fischelis Award from the Victorian Society in America. Accompanying a major exhibition, this is the first book devoted to the career of this renowned American painter through his brilliant portraits. John Singer Sargent (1856–1925) was one of the leading painters of his generation, whose captivating portraits are universally admired for their insight into character, radiance of light and color, and painterly fluency and immediacy. This unprecedented book showcases Sargent's cosmopolitan career in a new light—through his bold portraits of artists, writers, actors, and musicians, many of them his close friends—giving us a picture of the artist as an intellectual and connoisseur of the music, art, and literature of his day. Whether depicted in well-appointed interiors or en plein air, the cast of characters includes many famous subjects, among them Claude Monet, Auguste Rodin, Gabriel Fauré, Vaslav Nijinsky, W. B. Yeats, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Henry James. Structured thematically and according to the places Sargent worked and lived—Paris, London, New York, Italy, and the Alps—this book unites informative essays by noted scholars with a wealth of imagery to offer fresh insights into Sargent's life and work.

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Customer Reviews

This is the first review I have ever written on this site. People are being way too kind about this book. The reproductions are TERRIBLE. I live in NYC, and the show is going on right now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. All of the paintings from this book are in the show. The show is so amazing, that I went one day, and woke up the next morning and went back. I will probably go again.

in a couple of days. At the show they have all of these astonishing paintings hanging, the most Sargent paintings I have seen in one area. Being a crazed Sargent fan, I almost wept. They have this table at the show with 4 of these books there so you can flip through them and read the text associated with the images. I was disgusted! I didn't see a single painting in the book that was well reproduced, or even acceptable. The color management was terrible, they made no effort against glare, the value levels were way off, some of the pictures were remarkably undersaturated or over saturated. For example, Sargent's portrait of Edwin Booth looks like they took a picture of it, then put it in photoshop and dropped a yellow/red saturation filter over it. The painting "a gust of wind" which is one of the most beautiful paintings I have ever seen face to face is printed in this book maybe a couple shades darker on the value scale, and it's printed REVERSE horizontal. How the hell does that even happen? It's disrespectful. Sargent would have been outraged. I don't think painters collect images for books like this. I almost laughed out loud sitting there in the show surrounded by all of the real paintings flipping through this book. I was taking better photo reproductions with my iPhone 5S. I wish I was kidding. I wish I was just saying that for dramatic effect. If you saw the show, then you know what I am talking about.

John Singer Sargent, an American born and nurtured in Europe, moved from country to country in a shifting cocoon of friends and family. We follow in his footsteps through these wonderful portraits. His sitters are diplomats, poets, novelists, painters, Spanish and Javanese dancers, theater people, his painting teacher, his sister — "people with whom he traveled, visited, corresponded, and made music (he was an accomplished pianist), artists and musicians whose talents he generously promoted. Sargent was particularly gifted at capturing the outer form and inner spark of creative personalities. Some of his sitters are famous, like Henry James and Monet. Others are lesser known today, but it's intriguing to read about their lives and accomplishments and their personal quirks. This book gives us a picture of the highly artistic circles Sargent lived in and his own remarkably cultured character. The text is lively and extremely well written. There are ninety-two catalogued paintings, and the color reproductions are large and lavish. Sargent's luminous style and vibrant brush strokes reproduce beautifully. The individual write-ups about the paintings reveal a lot about the experience of sitting for Sargent. There are fun episodes amusingly recounted. Like the time a hostile poodle kept biting Sargent while he painted the dog's elegant master. Or the time Sargent painted a singer and made him stand on a platform and sing Wagner straight through every sitting. (Sargent was passionately fond of Wagner). The text also analyzes Sargent's methods. We learn which paintings were meticulously planned and which were more spontaneous. We read about the

artistic intention behind Sargent's often eccentric placement of figures.

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