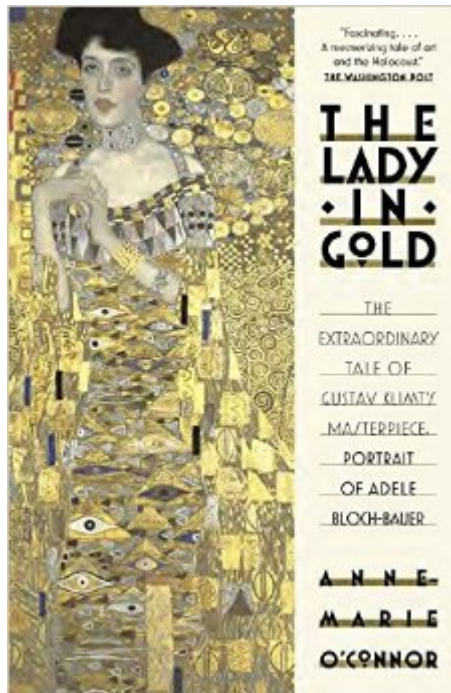


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The Lady In Gold: The Extraordinary Tale Of Gustav Klimt's Masterpiece, Portrait Of Adele Bloch-Bauer



Synopsis

National Bestseller
The true story that inspired the movie *Woman in Gold* starring Helen Mirren and Ryan Reynolds.
Contributor to the *Washington Post*
Anne-Marie O'Connor brilliantly regales us with the galvanizing story of Gustav Klimt's 1907 masterpiece "the breathtaking portrait of a Viennese Jewish socialite, Adele Bloch-Bauer. The celebrated painting, stolen by Nazis during World War II, subsequently became the subject of a decade-long dispute between her heirs and the Austrian government. When the U.S. Supreme Court became involved in the case, its decision had profound ramifications in the art world. Expertly researched, masterfully told, *The Lady in Gold* is at once a stunning depiction of fin-de siècle Vienna, a riveting tale of Nazi war crimes, and a fascinating glimpse into the high-stakes workings of the contemporary art world. One of the Best Books of the Year: *The Huffington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*.
Winner of the Marfield National Award for Arts Writing. Winner of a California Book Award.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars See all reviews (724 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This is the story of Adele Bloch-Bauer and Gustav Klimt's portraits of her in fin de siècle Vienna, which were looted by the Nazis, taken by Austria, and returned to Bloch-Bauer's heirs in the 21st century. The book captures the richness and liveliness of the lives of wealthy and cultured Jews of Vienna, as O'Connor calls it, the "equivalent of a 1960s happening." The cast of characters wandering through the story includes Arnold Schoenberg, Alma Mahler, Gustav Mahler, Oskar Kokoschka and even Freud. Bloch-Bauer, the self-proclaimed atheist and socialist resides in the middle of this privileged life smoking cigarettes and spending long periods posing for Klimt. The

exquisite painting, The Lady in Gold was created in those sittings. This Utopia is shattered by Hitler's march into Vienna and although both Klimt and Adele are dead, their friends and relatives are confronted with a dystopia no one could imagine. As various Bloch-Bauer relatives are escaping, hiding or dying, the Nazis are looting massive amounts of art, homes, businesses and personal possessions, including The Lady In Gold. Adele's niece, Maria Altmann, comes onto the scene as a Holocaust survivor from Vienna, a dress shop owner in Beverly Hills and one of the real heirs to the Klimt paintings. Next, Randol Shoenberg enters the picture as Maria Altmann's lawyer who fights to get the paintings returned. Skillful writing makes the transition from cultured and wealthy Vienna, to the Holocaust, to new life in California surprisingly smooth and it seems perfectly natural that another generation of Schoenbergs and Bloch-Bauers from another country and another century figure into this well researched history.

"The Lady in Gold", by Anne-Marie O'Connor is a remarkable achievement. O'Connor brings the reader back in time to pre-WWII Vienna, into the silken salons of the assimilated Jewish population, where lilting German voices discuss art and philosophy while sipping dark Viennese coffee with thick cream. She then tells us the story of the enigmatic artist Gustav Klimt and the women he bedded and painted. While the reader never knows if Adele Bloch-Bauer, subject of the painting later renamed by Austria as "The Lady in Gold" was one of Klimt's lovers, we come to know Adele and her family intimately, and we care deeply about what happens to them. O'Connor vividly portrays the devastation caused by the Nazi party in Austria, even to those as wealthy as Adele's family, as we follow them in their struggle to survive. And then, O'Connor tells another story entirely; how the Nazis systematically stole millions of dollars in homes, furniture, silver, businesses, and artwork from their Jewish victims and, after losing the war, brazenly tried to keep everything they had stolen. In Austria, when Adele's family tried to reclaim their homes and valuable works of art, the government simply refused. People found that history was being re-written. Austrians were no longer part of Hitler's killing machine, but were portraying themselves as his victims! One woman, the great-niece of Adele, was not willing to accept the status quo. Maria Altmann found an attorney who also had ties to pre-war Vienna who had the courage to fight to reclaim the family's stolen art.

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