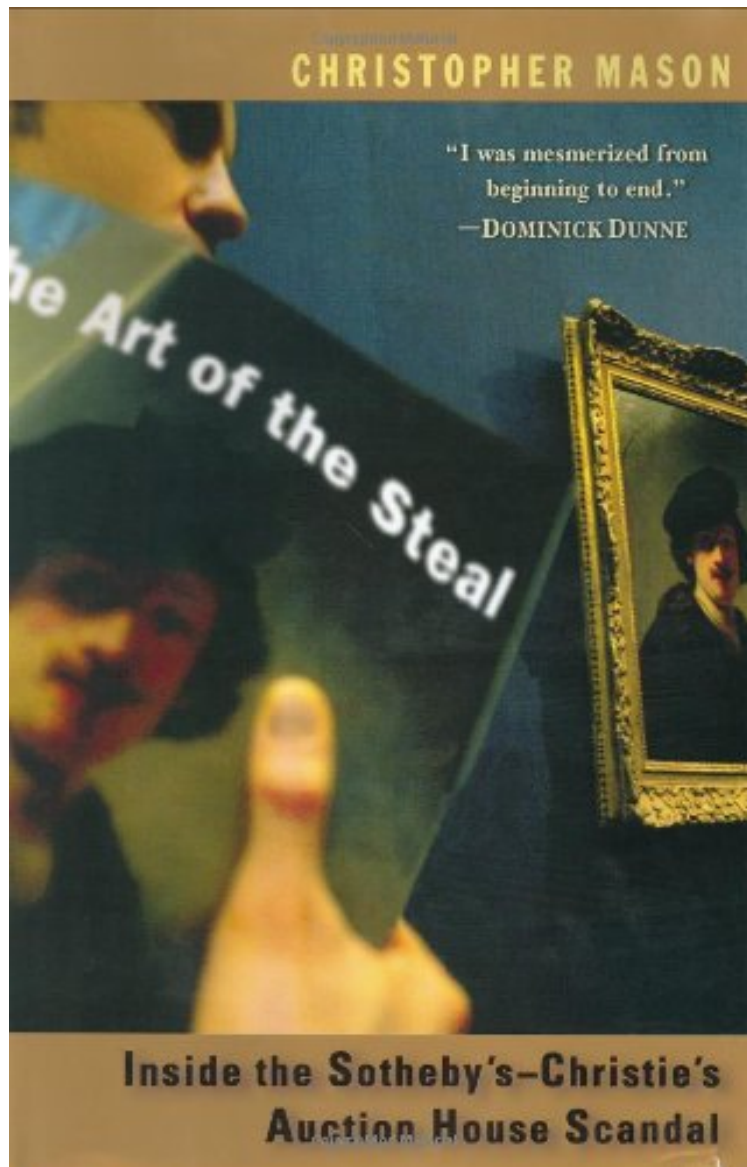


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The Art of the Steal

Christopher Mason

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Christopher Mason : The Art of the Steal before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Art of the Steal:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Christopher Mason adroitly traces a riveting scandal of price-fixing between ...By Vincent A. Steel Christopher Mason adroitly traces a riveting scandal of price-fixing between Sotheby's and Christie's, the two largest auction houses which exploited during the mid to late nineties the duopolistic nature of

the luxury art market. Mason displays formidable narrative ability in his supple depictions of complex and hubristic characters whose downfalls and escapes weave a Shakespearean tapestry of betrayal, folly, disgrace and tragedy. Moreover, while the *Art of the Steal* focuses primarily not on the machinations of complex financial instruments but rather on human vice in the form of venal business leaders, the author succinctly presents the economic volatility and financial incentives which culminated in the collusion of two fundamentally divergent yet financially wedded firms. One must admire the dignity with which Dede Brooks has accepted the disgrace of her professional and personal reputation – hers shall forever be a life marred. Nonetheless, Brooks remains conspicuously absent from public view, instead appearing to seek redemption through self-imposed exile. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A page turner. By Kindle Customer I completely loved this book from the minute it hit my kindle until the minute I started reading it for the second time. No, it is not at all confusing as one reviewer has stated. Is it a little like a *Vanity Fair* article; yes, but a very good one that you wish was 400 pages instead of 12. With this book you get your wish. Mason is a fantastic writer in my book and I loved his style and verve. It is an incredible story of greed, foolishness and a little bit of stupidity thrown in. Careers and reputations were destroyed and the sad thing is that they didn't have to be. I highly recommend this book if you like art, culture, law and business. It has a little of everything. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Christopher Mason. By UTex I'm not particularly an art lover and don't go to auctions, but I developed a liking for the author as he introduced the tv series 'Behind Closed Doors', much like the old Alfred Hitchcock tv shows. So when I saw this book, I was drawn to it for that reason. I enjoyed what I learned about the art world.

The definitive book on the price-fixing scandal that roiled the art world, from the reporter who Dominick Dunne says "knows more about the ins and outs of this story than anyone else" (*Vanity Fair*). *The Art of the Steal* is the explosive inside story—the only book to tell the whole truth and dish the dirt—of one of the most fascinating big-business trials of the new century—the price-fixing scandal that rocked the auction world and put one of the richest men in America behind bars. Brilliantly written and reported, it tells the story of larger-than-life figures—the billionaire tycoon Alfred Taubman; the most powerful woman in the art world, Diana "DeDe" Brooks; and the wily British executive Christopher Davidge—who quaffed champagne and dined on caviar while conspiring to cheat clients out of millions of dollars. The book also offers an unprecedented look inside this secretive, gold-plated industry, describing just how Sotheby's and Christie's grew from clubby, aristocratic businesses into slick, international corporations and showing how the groundwork for the most recent illegal activities was laid decades before the perpetrators were caught by federal prosecutors. Christopher Mason is the only reporter who has persuaded all the key figures (and hundreds more) to spill the beans. He has followed the trail of this story wherever it has led—from galleries and boardrooms in London, Paris, and New York to parties in Palm Beach and courtrooms in lower Manhattan. Evoking the best-known investigative narratives like *Barbarians at the Gate* and *Den of Thieves*, the hidden lives of the very rich described in *Philistines at the Hedgerow*, and the crime-and-high-society reporting of Dominick Dunne, *The Art of the Steal* is destined to become the hottest—and most entertaining—gossip-starter of the season.

From *Publishers Weekly*. Veteran art writer Mason does a good job separating the bad guys from the slightly less bad guys in his lively, anecdote-packed saga about how the world's two leading auction houses, Sotheby's and Christie's, conspired to fix prices on everything from famous paintings to antique furniture. Alfred Taubman, the shopping-mall king who bought Sotheby's in 1983 to keep it from falling into the hands of a couple of carpet salesmen, became the only principal in the case to actually do jail time—apparently due to what some courtroom observers labeled "the worst defense money can buy." It didn't help that Diana "DeDe" Brooks, who started her career as an unpaid intern and whose workaholic habits persuaded Taubman to make her Sotheby's CEO, became one of the government's chief witnesses against Taubman. On the Christie's side, the lineup features a number of snobbish Brits, including Christie's CEO, Christopher Davidge, who seems to have sold everyone else down the river. It would have made for smoother reading if Mason (or his editor) had done some pruning: how many times do we need to be told that Brooks is six feet tall or that Taubman's wife, Judy, is a glamorous former beauty queen? But in the end, it's the story that carries the day—an amazing and depressing chronicle of greed in the name of culture that should (but probably won't) keep art buyers from ever walking into an auction house again. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. About the Author Christopher Mason is a frequent contributor to *The New York Times* and *New York* magazine, and has been writing for more than a dozen years on the worlds of art, society, fashion, and design.