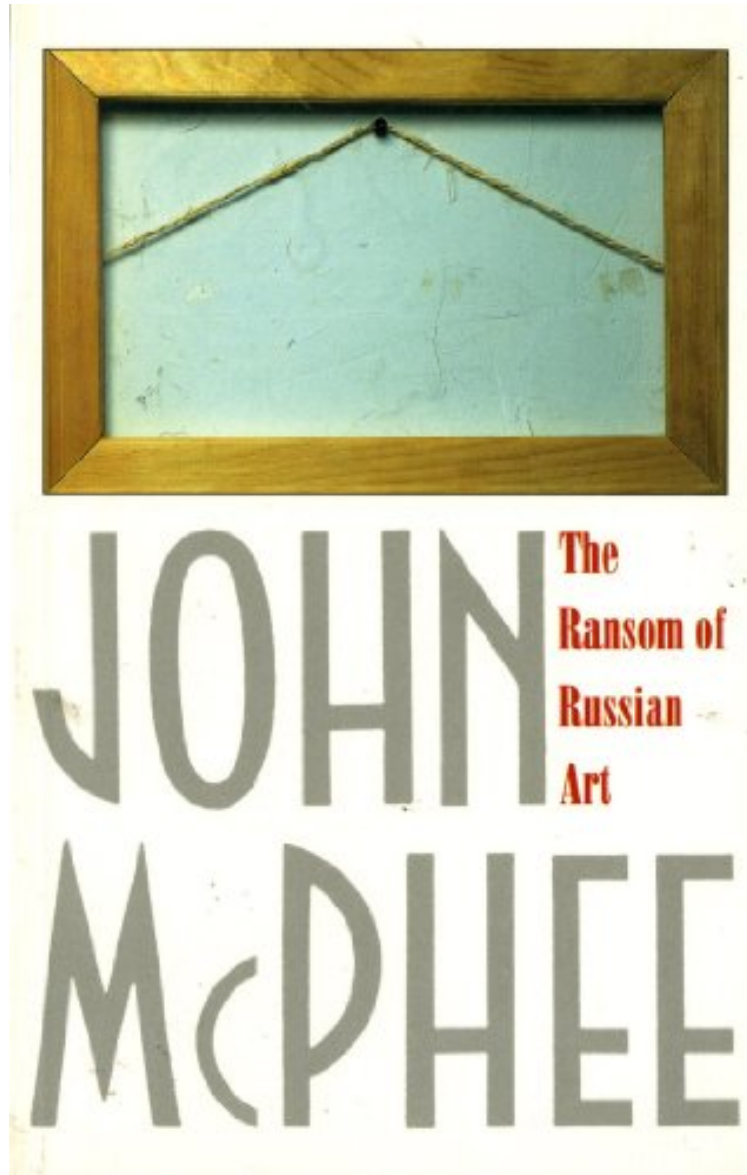


[Download] The Ransom of Russian Art

The Ransom of Russian Art

John McPhee

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John McPhee : The Ransom of Russian Art before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ransom of Russian Art:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating real life storyBy Jim StasheffFascinating real life story, well illustrated and McPhee's usual clear, prsonal writing'1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Living as an artist under communism, was worse than going to hellBy Edward KernI thoroughly enjoyed this book. The photos are fantastic , the story of avant garde artists under communism makes me realize who the real heroes were in the late

40-70's. It is a sad story but extremely well written. It is also a suspense read. I now want to visit the museum where the art is held . People must read this book1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I love John McPhee's booksBy JDI love John McPhee's books. This one provided a look at a time I don't know much about. The images of art that are included are intriguing to look at and add a lot to the story.

In the 1960's and 1970's, American professor Norton Dodge forayed on his own in the Soviet Union, bought the work of underground "unofficial" artists, and brought it out himself or arranged to have it shipped illegally to the United States. John McPhee investigates Dodge's clandestine activities in the service of dissident Soviet art, his motives for his work, and the fates of several of the artists whose lives he touched. *The Ransom of Russian Art* is a suspenseful, chilling, and fascinating report on a covert operation like no other.

From Publishers WeeklyDissident Soviet painters and sculptors-harassed and spied on by the KGB, their works shown clandestinely or in rare public exhibits-found an ally in Norton Dodge, a University of Maryland economics professor who smuggled their works to the West beginning in the early 1960s. On frequent trips to the Soviet Union, the awkward, gutsy Oklahoma-born art enthusiast visited the homes of underground artists and spent a fortune to buy some 8000 works by 600 artists. His collection, with styles ranging from Pop to abstract expressionism, was recently donated to Rutgers University. Interspersed with color art reproductions (not seen by PW), McPhee's engaging narrative sheds light on this suppressed creative milieu. The prolific author also tracked down emigre Soviet artists now living in the U.S., and he ponders the West's relative indifference to their rebellious art. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalDuring the Khrushchev and Brezhnev years, nonconforming artists in the Soviet Union were deemed "unofficial" artists, which prevented their works from being sold or exhibited. McPhee (*Assembling California*, LJ 1/93), a prolific author and staff writer for *The New Yorker*, recounts the surreptitious activities of U.S. economist Norton Dodge, who, during the 1960s and 1970s, slipped by the KGB and smuggled out of the Soviet Union 8000 artworks by 600 dissident artists. Dodge spent his days researching the roles of women and tractors in the Soviet economy, but after hours, this rumpled, eccentric, absent-minded figure penetrated the networks of the underground artists, purchasing their works, shipping their art to his Maryland barn, and exhibiting it-exactly what the Soviets did not want to happen. Based on conversations with Dodge, McPhee's suspenseful narrative and anecdotes will enthrall general audiences.Joan Levin, MLS, ChicagoCopyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.From BooklistMcPhee writes most often about the geology of certain dramatic regions. What, then, led him to write about art and profile a highly unusual collector? A chance meeting on an Amtrak train in January 1993. McPhee had no idea that the rumpled, mustachioed gentleman who sat down next to him would be the subject of his next book until the man introduced himself and began to talk. During a two-hour ride, Norton Townshend Dodge "uttered about forty thousand words," and McPhee was hooked. The story Dodge told, which McPhee followed up on in his typically thorough and energetic manner, is the astonishing tale of how he rescued two decades' worth of Soviet underground art from certain oblivion. A professor of economics, Dodge began traveling to Soviet Russia for research in the mid-1950s and soon assigned himself the mission of meeting "unofficial" artists and buying their work. Under Soviet rule, artists who refused to follow the party line risked imprisonment and death. Dodge became their biggest customer. A stereotypical absentminded professor who, his wife says, "couldn't fight his way out of a paper bag," Dodge somehow learned his way around Russia's forbidding cities, eluding his Intourist handlers and then smuggling thousands of drawings and paintings out of the country. Dodge ended up collecting an entire era of Russian dissident art. As McPhee relates Dodge's story, he also outlines the ignoble history of the Soviet persecution of artists and chronicles the life and tragic death of the painter Eugeny Rukhin. McPhee is both impressed with and puzzled by the eccentric Dodge, adding a bit of mystery to this thoughtful portrait. Donna Seaman