



Modern Art Invasion: Picasso, Duchamp, And The 1913 Armory Show That Scandalized America

Elizabeth Lunday

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The story of the most important art show in U.S. history. Held at Manhattan's 69th Regiment Armory in 1913, the show brought modernism to America in an unprecedented display of 1300 works by artists including Picasso, Matisse, and Duchamp. A quarter of a million Americans visited the show; most couldn't make sense of what they were seeing. Newspaper critics questioned the artists' sanity. A popular rumor held that the real creator of one abstract canvas was a donkey with its tail dipped in paint.

The Armory Show went on to Boston and Chicago and its effects spread across the country. American artists embraced a new spirit of experimentation as conservative art institutions lost all influence. New modern art galleries opened to serve collectors interested in buying the most progressive works. Over time, the stage was set for American revolutionaries such as Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Roy Lichtenstein, and Andy Warhol. Today, when museums of modern and contemporary art dot the nation and New York reigns as art capital of the universe, we live in a world created by the Armory Show.

Elizabeth Lunday, author of the breakout hit *Secret Lives of Great Artists*, tells the story of the exhibition from the perspectives of organizers, contributors, viewers, and critics. Brimming with fascinating and surprising details, the book takes a fast-paced tour of life in America and Europe, peering into Gertrude Stein's famous Paris salon, sitting in at the fabulous parties of New York socialites, and elbowing through the crowds at the Armory itself.

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