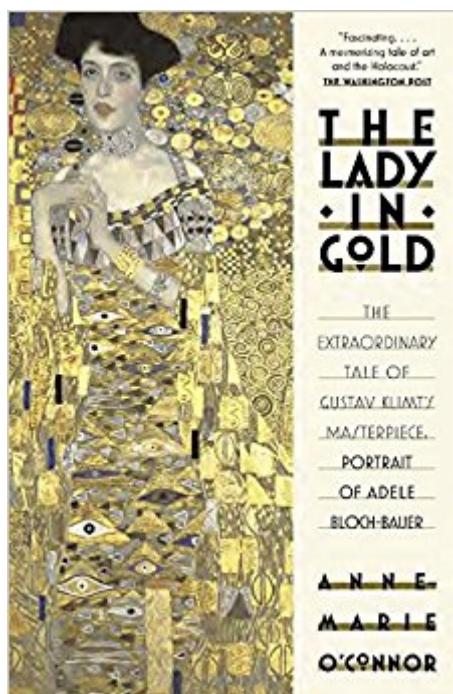


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# The Lady In Gold: The Extraordinary Tale Of Gustav Klimt's Masterpiece, Portrait Of Adele Bloch-Bauer



## 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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## Customer Reviews

“Fascinating. . . . A mesmerizing tale of art and the Holocaust.” The Washington Post “A celebration of art and persistence. . . . O'Connor's book brings Klimt's exceptional portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer home, broadening the meaning of homeland at the same time.” The Christian Science Monitor “Ms. O'Connor has told an important story.” The Wall Street Journal “O'Connor skillfully filters Austria's troubled twentieth

century through the life of Klimt's most beloved muse. . . . A nuanced view of a painting whose story transcends its own time. • Bookforum "Captivating." • MORE Magazine "Combines detailed reportage with passionate storytelling. . . . Unraveling the portrait's journey also reveals how global norms of art and war have changed, and the powerful roles that art plays in politics, society, identity and memory." • The Rumpus "A fascinating book." • The Dallas Morning News "Richly drawn. . . . Part history and part mystery, *The Lady in Gold* is a striking tale." • BookPage "The lusciously detailed story of Gustav Klimt's most famous painting, detailing the relationship between the artist, the subject, their heirs and those who coveted the masterpiece. . . . Art-history fans will love the deep details of the painting, and history buffs will revel in the facts." O'Connor includes as she exposes a deeper picture of World War II. • Kirkus Reviews "Intriguing. . . . Poignant and convincing. . . . Vividly evokes the intellectually precocious and ambitious Adele's rich cultural and social milieu in Vienna, and how she became entwined with the charismatic, sexually charged, and irreverent Klimt." • Publishers Weekly "Writing with a novelist's dynamism, O'Connor resurrects fascinating individuals and tells a many-faceted, intensely affecting, and profoundly revelatory tale of the inciting power of art and the unending need for justice." • Booklist (starred review)

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I want to thank the author for writing this book because it has taught me so much, opened my eyes, and enriched my experience of Klimt's work and of the splendor and loss that was Vienna. I have seen this painting in three very different places. I flew to Vienna just to see it. Then I saw it when it was in Los Angeles. Then once again in New York where I visit it every time I am there. This book was well written. Had so much new information and made so many meaningful connections for me. When I read about Austria turning the painting over to the heirs, I cried even though I obviously knew the outcome. So, Thank You Ms. O'Connor from a Secessionist obsessed never quite made it art historian. You gave me a great week of reading.

Like the intricate mosaic patterns on Gustav Klimt's Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer, this is a complex, absorbing tale of the painting, its subject, its artist and the turbulent and tragic events that surrounded them. From libertine turn-of-the-century Vienna, to the descent into the Nazi horrors of World War II, to the collective denial about those horrors that the Austrians embraced, this is a sweeping story laced with sensuality and sorrow. Anne-Marie O'Connor has done her homework well; this thoroughly-researched book takes us on an enlightening and compelling ride through the best of times and the worst of times in Vienna. And in the end, we learn that justice prevails and that a work of art can illuminate the dark corners of our history.

This is a fascinating book. It is not an easy read but is worth your time to persevere. The book is a promise to tell the story of Gustav Klimt and his best known painting of Adele Bloch-Bauer, who is a Vienna Jewish socialite. Fast forward 80 plus years and Klimt's painting, "The Lady in Gold" is auctioned at Christie's for the record price of 78.5 million dollars. In the beginning of this book we read about Klimt and Adele, their relationship and the history of the painting. However, the book is primarily about the city of Vienna, the great wealth and social life of the Jewish intelligentsia. Unfortunately, Hitler had a special interest in the city. Austria was his birthplace, and art was his obsession. At the time of the German occupation Vienna had the largest Jewish population of western Europe. The German soldiers and SS stripped the Jewish people of their wealth, possessions and many of their lives. Much of the book is about the German confiscation of the art treasures of Austria and finally the effort of the Jews to reclaim their possessions. Although the Bloch-Bauer family was the main group profiled, there were many pre and post war people in the story. There were too many extended family and friends to keep straight. O'Connor obviously did an excellent research job but the story was lacking in organization.

An excellent, detailed story of the Nazi invasion on Austria through the lens of its effect on one family - the Viennese Bloch-Bauer family - and the Klimt paintings they owned. "The Lady in Gold," originally known as "Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I," was confiscated by the Nazis along with all the other valuables of the Jewish Bloch-Bauer family during the war. What makes this story stand out is that portrait survived the war, was identified by the survivors of the family, and the Austrian government came up with justifications to keep it in Austria as a national symbol. "The Rape of Europa" provides a summary of Hitler's rapacious desire for art at any cost. There is a brief chapter about "the Lady in Gold," but nothing to the extent provided by this book, which gives a far more

detailed background on Klimt, his interaction with the women he painted, and the public reaction to his paintings. More importantly, this book gives a description of Austria's reception to Hitler, which is critical to understanding how the government and the people today view WWII - and why it was so hard for people in danger to leave. There is also a full story on individuals in the Bloch-Bauer family, and their treatment at the hands of steamrolling Nazis and their own countrymen. The ambiguity the Austrian government feels towards its history is palpable, and the treatment aged Maria Bloch-Bauer received at the hands of the museum and the Austrian government is amazing. A saddening, interesting, and eye-opening story of Austria's role in WWII, and a reminder of the return of not just money, but family possessions confiscated as spoils of war, that have yet to be returned 70 years after the Nazis were "defeated."

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