



Missing Masterpieces: Lost Works of Art 1450-1900

Gert-Rudolf Flick

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In this ground-breaking study of missing masterpieces, Gert-Rudolf Flick presents detailed case histories of great works of art that have simply vanished. None of them is known for certain to have been destroyed; all of them are recorded in the form of copies, drawings, studies, or engravings. Tantalizingly, any of them might turn up at any time...The fate of the masterpieces discussed in this book remains a mystery. Everyone knows of Michelangelo's David in Florence, but what happened to the famous bronze of the same subject? It was last heard of in a chateau in France, after its aristocratic owner went to the guillotine. Officials of the French Revolution identified it as worthy of inclusion in the national museum, but it has not been seen since. And what of Jacques-Louis David's Lepeletier on his death-bed, pendant to his famous Death of Marat? Nineteenth-century gossip suggested that it was burned by Lepeletier's devoted daughter, but if so, how could it later have been passed on in a disputed will? And what of the fate of David's drawing of this composition, which the same daughter had kept locked in a secret box? The story of these works and many more are traced in minute detail, bringing to life some of the most famous art collectors of all time, such as Charles I, Queen Christina of Sweden, and Archduke Leopold Willem. Hitherto obscure but no less avid collectors are introduced to the reader for the first time, such as the English barrister Robert Roupell, no fewer than seven of whose paintings now adorn the walls of the National Gallery in London. Missing Masterpieces is a milestone in the history of collecting - and losing - great works of art.

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