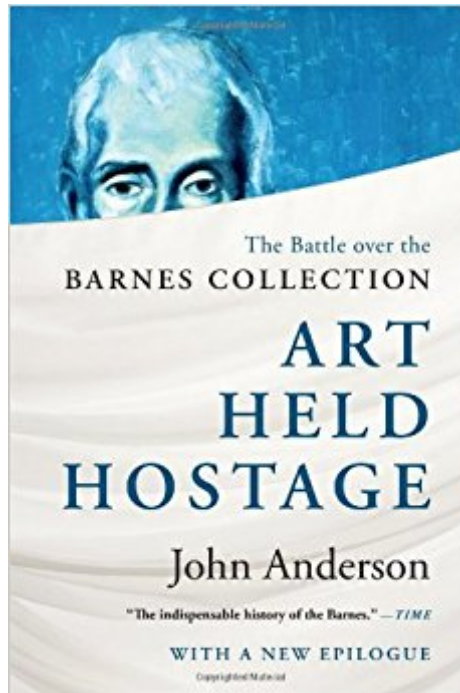




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# Art Held Hostage: The Battle Over The Barnes Collection



## Synopsis

“Money, pretension, horrid behavior by cultured people” (New York) John Anderson’s tale delivers it all in fabulously juicy detail. This is the story of how a fabled art foundation—the greatest collection of impressionist and postimpressionist art in America, including 69 Cézannes, 60 Matisses, and 44 Picassos, among many priceless others—came to be, and how more than a decade of legal squabbling brought it to the brink of collapse and to a move that many believe betrayed the wishes of the founder, Dr. Albert C. Barnes (1872–1951). *Art Held Hostage* is now updated with a new epilogue by the author covering the current state of this international treasure and the endless battle over its fate. 8 pages of photographs

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

*Art Held Hostage* reveals the messy inside story about the most infamous world-class art museum that you’ve probably never heard of. The saga begins with the life and times of Albert C. Barnes, a Philadelphia business magnet who, after making his fortune during the Depression, becomes one of America’s most important collectors of impressionist and post-impressionist art. The collection includes famed paintings by such luminaries as Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso, and Renoir. Barnes became well known for his harsh personality and instigated a problematic invitation-only policy to his museum, located in a Philadelphia suburb. Strangely, even after Barnes’s death the museum continued to become embroiled in financial, legal, and community disputes. The story gets uglier during the 1990s with a series of lawsuits for the foundation’s

high-profile president, including a racial discrimination suit and eventually near-bankruptcy for the collection. Author John C. Anderson, a contributing editor of *The American Lawyer* magazine, spares no cynical detail in his investigation into this truly American tale of power, litigiousness, and boardroom antics. This is a book for those interested in the dark underbelly of the business side of the art world. -- J.P. Cohen --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Dr. Albert Barnes pulled himself out of poverty at a young age, eventually becoming a pharmaceutical tycoon and snapping up art treasures during Depression fire sales. At the end of his combative life, Barnes, who changed his will to match his mercurial moods, left the collection not to his alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania, but to Lincoln University, a once-acclaimed African-American institution that had produced graduates such as Langston Hughes before seeing its reputation and enrollment decline. Located in the Main Line suburb of Philadelphia, the collection is currently worth more than \$6 billion and contains masterworks by Picasso, Renoir and Matisse. A deputy editor of *American Lawyer* magazine, Anderson turns his keen eye to the struggle for power over the collection that has been waged since Barnes's death in 1951. At the center of the conflict is lawyer Richard Glanton, who as president of the Barnes during the 1990s launched a costly lawsuit alleging racial discrimination against the township that houses the collection, put paintings from the collection on tour despite Barnes's "no tour" clause to his gift and pondered the once unthinkable tactic of selling paintings from the collection to raise additional funds. Glanton's one-time ally in behind-the-scenes power plays, Lincoln University president Niara Sudarkasa, found herself helming an institution unprepared for the responsibilities of the collection and was later embroiled in her own legal troubles stemming from spending practices at the university. Through detailed storytelling and insightful interviews with key players (shown in 16 pages of b&w photos), Anderson vividly depicts the downfall of now-enemies Glanton and Sudarkasa and the devastating financial impact of their power struggles on the foundation itself. Anyone interested in the intersection of art, race and power politics will find this tale engrossing-and depressing. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Behind most great art collections are fools, poseurs and heroes. The emergence of Van Gogh, as the genius he was, depended on his courageous sister-in-law who took his paintings back home to Holland, protected them and marketed his genius. Gifts to the National Gallery of Art and the Yale Center for British Art arose through the generosity of Andrew and Paul Mellon as detailed in David Cannadine's biography "Mellon." Calvin Tomkins, and others, have written well about the

Metropolitan Museum of Art and its benefactors. Then, there are the fools and poseurs in John Anderson's excoriating expose "Art Held Hostage" which details the breach of trust to the Barnes Collection by the leaders of Lincoln University outside of Philadelphia. Add in the stench of Pennsylvania politics, the toxic brew of race and out comes a tragicomedy, a farce, until the adults mercifully remove the fabled collection from the kids' sandbox on Latches Lane in Lower Merion Township to Philadelphia where maturity reigns. Anderson does an admirable and thorough job in this short critique by holding the story line together amidst a welter of names, characters, quotes and counter-quotes and bizarre events occurring over a decade of tomfoolery committed by the stewards of Lincoln University. Paging through the exquisite catalogue accompanying the 1993 multi city international tour of the French Impressionists, it is so obvious that Lincoln University, bequeathed one of the great art treasures by the eccentric Albert Barnes, utterly failed in its responsibility to art, to its place as an educational institution of higher learning and to posterity. Anderson's book should be the starting point for the soon to be released movie called "The Art of the Steal," whose title in and of itself hints on which side of the debate it comes down upon.

I heard about Art Held Hostage on a radio talk show and had to head straight to to get it. I was fortunate to get to see the Barnes Collection when it came to Fort Worth years ago and to read of the real history of the collection was like completing the full circle of knowledge. I have read another book of some art collections but this one really stands above others, being specifically of a collection I really enjoy. The background maneuvering to build the collection was interesting and obtaining the various pieces of art makes for an intriguing read

It was an amazing history of an extraordinary art collection, an eccentric collector, and litigious directors. That the collection is now housed in an beautiful space and more available to the public is a good resolution. It is an exquisite collection and the book a valuable insight to a national treasure born of wealth and politics.

After seeing the documentary The Art of the Steal i wanted to read about the details. This book is excellent and dives even deeper on this shocking situation. I recommend seeing the documentary first and then reading the book.

Great story about the fighting around the Barnes Collection, with numerous details, cases, etc. Not so much about the collection itself. Still, an easy and enjoyable read.

For anyone interested in art collections, the story behind the Barnes and its recent history make fascinating reading. Kept me interested.

Very interesting true story . History that is more interesting than anything you learned in school.an art lovers must read!

A detailed and eye opening account of what really happened to the Barnes.

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