

Seven Days in the Art World, by Sarah Thornton, W.W.Norton and Company, Inc, 274 pages

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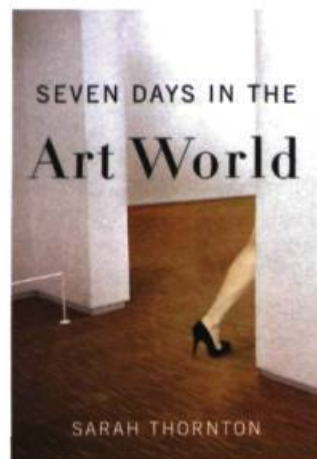
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SEVEN DAYS IN THE ART WORLD

By Sarah Thornton



W.W.Norton and Company, Inc
500 Fifth Avenue New York,
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Castle House, 75/76 Wells Street,
London, England, W1T3QT

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Jean-Paul Sartre wrote, that the duration spent within the pages of a book should yield back knowledge that is at least equal to the knowledge that could be gained by living in the *real* world.

Seven Days in the Art World by Sarah Thornton is worth the time spent.

Divided into seven art exposures, each takes place in one day, one chapter. The chapters are sufficiently segregated in order to enable pleasant illuminations and even a bleed-through of characters. Like a walk through a city of many ethnici-

ties, the reader will be familiar with some areas while others will freshen curiosity as exoticism accelerates the ascent up a steep learning curve to transcendence.

An artist, for instance, who reads the book, might have experienced a 'crit' (day two) when he was an art student but likely has not had the more exclusive privilege of being nominated for the Turner Prize (day four) or understand the complexities of the art magazine that the 'insider' finds quotidian. He might have a studio but *The Studio Visit* (day six) takes place in the pristine, slippered, clinical, methodical, business world of Murakami's Japanese production center rather than the expected environment of emotive seclusion often associated with a studio. Furthermore, to have the role of 'artist' ethnographically researched and then translated into a text by an 'outsider' might yield results that are not in tune with our sample artist's immersed understanding of his role. Thornton conducts her ethnographic research with feet perched on opposite sides of the chasm of the unknown, one foot well placed within the world of art and the other in sociological studies as a participant observer. This precarious position enables a translation of the research subject without the protectionism of the subject studied which could enable a receptive artist to find questions long left unanswered finally revealed, especially as he reads the chapters which are more foreign to his own position.

In *The Magazine*, the chapter closest to Thornton's own discipline, she relates a conversation with Roberta Smith (NY Times) and Jerry Saltz (The Village Voice). These married art writers have commented on the city's vivid art scene for years, sparking interest veering on religiosity and similar to the fix of a good sermon. Thornton writes on the writers, rather than that which they have written granting access to the back room.

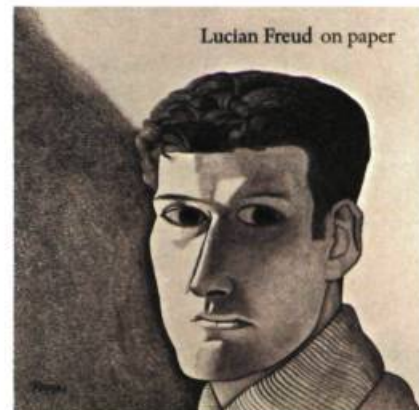
It takes an extremely effective ethnographer to access, process and give back an informed, up-to-date impression of such a mysterious, vague, evasive and elusive nonentity as 'the art world'. To penetrate the upper echelons of collectors, eminent dealers, museum luminaries, protected fame and yet also be sufficiently low key to be able to hang out at a marathon 'crit' takes a chameleon's adaptability backed up by authenticity. Thornton has afforded each of her subjects respect and it has won for her their confidence. And charm can't have hurt as well.

Caught within our own chapters where self-absorption occupies attention, *Seven Days in the Art World* offers a greater vista as it opens more doors than we have time, or perhaps inclination, to knock upon. Currently being translated into nine languages, we should see the French version in the bookstores soon.

Julie Oakes

LUCIAN FREUD ON PAPER

Rizzoli, New York, Can\$98.00



While many are familiar with Lucian Freud's fleshy paintings, and the like, early works on paper, and notably his early drawings, many of them in this book dedicated to works on paper, are seldom, if ever, seen. Born in Berlin, and the son of Ernest Freud the architect, and grandson of Sigmund Freud, Lucian Freud abandoned drawing for painting in the early 1950s. As he comments in this book, "People thought and said and wrote that I was a very good draughtsman but my paintings were linear and defined by my drawing... (They said) you could tell what a good draughtsman I was from my painting. I've never been that affected by writing, but I thought if that's at all true, I must stop." One of the darlings of the contemporary art market, Lucian Freud pursued the ink or pencil line with remarkable skill as we can see from the private pages of his early Freud-Schuster book, and other sketch materials, some carefully preserved by his