

The Art of Scandal: The Life and Times of Isabella Stewart Gardner

Douglass Shand-Tucci



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The Art of Scandal: The Life and Times of Isabella Stewart Gardner Douglass Shand-Tucci Immortalized by Henry James in print and by John Singer Sargent on canvas, Isabella Stewart Gardner has remained an elusive original whose independent life and work shocked the Boston aristocracy she married into. Based on extensive new research, this is the first biography of Isabella Gardner in 30 years. It reveals the many strands of her life as a cultural maverick and as muse and mentor, friend and patron to writers, musicians and artists such as James, Sargent, Lady Gregory, Bernard Berenson, Elsie De Wolfe, Martin Loeffler, Julia Ward Howe, Okakura Kakuzo, Henry Adams, T.S. Eliot and Paul Manship.

The climax of her life came after her husband's death in 1898, when she designed and built an innovative museum in the form of a Venetian palazzo and, with the legendary art historian Bernard Berenson, created America's first great private art collection.

The Art of Scandal is the story of a striking woman of great force and character and of the Boston she lived in, from the Brahmins of Beacon Hill to the newly emerging ethnic communities and the little-known gay subculture. Isabella Gardner emerges as one of the most evocative figures of America's gilded age.

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