



The Man Who Made Vermeers: Unvarnishing the Legend of Master Forger Han van Meegeren

Jonathan Lopez

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It's a story that made Dutch painter Han van Meegeren famous worldwide when it broke at the end of World War II: a lifetime of disappointment drove him to forge Vermeers, one of which he sold to Hermann Goering, making a mockery of the Nazis. And it's a story that's been believed ever since. Too bad it just isn't true.

Jonathan Lopez has done what no other writer could--tracking down primary sources in four countries and five languages to tell for the first time the real story of the world's most famous forger. Neither unappreciated artist nor antifascist hero, Van Meegeren emerges in *The Man Who Made Vermeers* as an ingenious, dyed-in-the-wool crook--a talented Mr. Ripley armed with a paintbrush, who worked virtually his entire adult life making and selling fake Old Masters. Drawing upon extensive interviews with descendents of Van Meegeren's partners in crime, Lopez also explores the networks of illicit commerce that operated across Europe between the wars. Not only was Van Meegeren a key player in that high-stakes game during the 1920s, landing fakes with powerful dealers and famous collectors such as Andrew Mellon (including two pseudo-Vermeers that Mellon donated to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.), but the forger and his associates later offered a case study in wartime opportunism as they cashed in on the Nazi occupation.

The Man Who Made Vermeers is a long-overdue unvarnishing of Van Meegeren's legend and a deliciously detailed story of deceit in the art world.

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