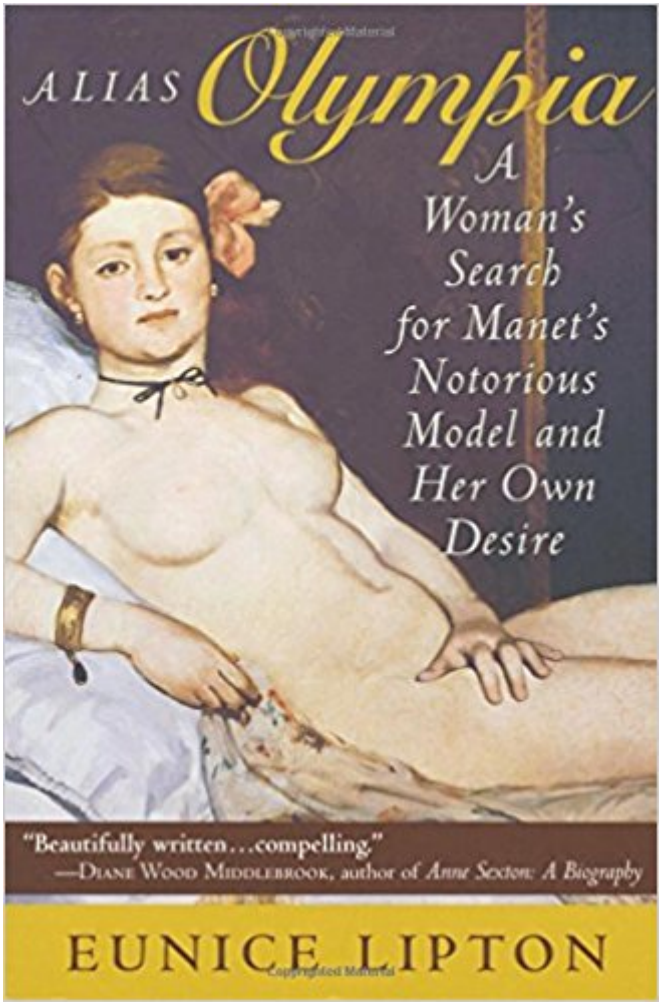
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Alias Olympia: A Woman's Search For Manet's Notorious Model And Her Own Desire



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Synopsis

Eunice Lipton was a fledging art historian when she first became intrigued by Victorine Meurent, the nineteenth-century model who appeared in Edouard Manet's most famous paintings, only to vanish from history in a haze of degrading hearsay. But had this bold and spirited beauty really descended into prostitution, drunkenness, and early deathÃ¢â ¬â ¢or did her life, hidden from history, take a different course altogether? Eunice Lipton's search for the answer combines the suspense of a detective story with the revelatory power of art, peeling off layers of lies to reveal startling truths about Victorine MeurentÃ¢â ¬â ¢and about Lipton herself.

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Customer Reviews

By combing through libraries and archives in Paris and New York, Lipton (Looking into Degas) hoped to reconstruct the life of Victorine Meurent and prove that this mysterious 19th-century woman, an artist in her own right as well as the model for the famous nudes of Manet's Olympia and Dejeuner sur l'herbe, was more than the pathetic alcoholic who appears in academic studies by male art historians. Even though the results of her quest were meager--she found little about Meurent's life and was unable to locate any of her paintings--Lipton's account of her search is as exciting as a good detective story. Using reminiscences of her own troubled childhood as a catalyst and projecting her feelings and desires onto her elusive subject, she fleshes out the story and constructs a highly original portrait of Meurent, for whom she invents colorful monologues. The model emerges as a strong and independent woman who defies all efforts by traditional scholars to

patronize and degrade her. Lipton’s iconoclastic, feminist approach is refreshing and intriguing. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Haunted by the steadfast gaze of the nude peering from the canvas of Manet’s controversial "Olympia," art historian Lipton (Looking into Degas: Uneasy Images of Women and Modern Life , Univ. of California Pr., 1986) documents her relentless effort to unravel the model’s life. Lipton’s scant archival findings indicate that, in marked contrast to the lowly, depraved, alcoholic figure depicted by writers and artists, model Victorine Meurent was a recognized painter and a member of a distinguished society of artists. In the course of her research, Lipton imagines the thoughts of Meurent in some beautifully moving passages, and her own life begins to take on new meaning. She raises disturbing questions about the validity of much art historical scholarship concerning the role of women. A mesmerizing narrative recommended for women’s studies, art history, and general collections.- Joan Levin, MLS, ChicagoCopyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A very entertaining and insightful story of Ms. Lipton’s relationship with her mother and life in general, wrapped around her research on Victorine Meurent. As noted by other reviewers, if you’re looking for a biography of Victorine, this isn’t it (really because there isn’t enough factual information known about her for a biography), but it’s still more informative than "Paris Red". As a story of a woman coming of age in the second half of the 20th century, it’s a wonderfully written and provocative.

Fabulous book--especially for people who are interested in artists, women artists and art history.

This book is more autobiography than the "art history mystery" I had expected, but it’s an engaging story, and well worth reading. When the missing diary, or some such document, which will tell all about the real life story of Victorine Muerant fails to materialize, a fictional version is inserted in chapters. I was dissappointed by this because it gives more weight to the story Ms Lipton invented and hoped to prove, than to the facts she worked so hard to reveal. The research is tedious and discouraging, and the results will not rock the art history world. The true reward for the author is not the tidbits of information she aquires about her subject, but in her own growth both as a blossoming writer and a woman. Her finest writing is in the descriptions of the things she knows best and

experiences first-hand: the great food in Paris, her past life, her present feelings, her beliefs and self-realization. It's encouraging that Ms Lipton has chosen now to be a writer, and not an art historian, and I will look forward to her next effort.

'Well, I'm a redhead now, and people are saying, "You know, you look like Victorine." 'Perhaps I do.' Oh please. Elsewhere Lipton slips into the 'voice' of the model Victorine Meurant and seems to allege that she was an undiscovered or overlooked genius -- this in a time when such female artists as Suzanne Valadon, Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot achieved reasonable, lasting success. But most of the book is autobiography, telling Lipton's side of her first divorce or how she was unjustly fired from Hunter College, and so on. It's dreadful.

This is a memoir of Lipton's search for something - her mother probably. You can find the info at Wiki. Lipton did go to some lengths to find a wee tad more and probably didn't want to waste the paper she used.

As an art lover and as I writer, the author's style of blending fact with conjecture was very well done. I thoroughly enjoyed the book.

I suspect that this is a book one either loves, as I do, or just doesn't resonate with, like those who give it a poor review. I have read it three times, and know that I will read it again. So little is actually known about Victorine Meurent, who was an artist herself and wanted to be part of the inner circle of painters of which Manet was a leader. But being a woman was the first strike against her, and needing to earn a living kept her from being able to devote herself to painting full time. I truly appreciate Eunice Lipton's attempt to give her a story of her own, without idealizing her, or making her into a victim, or giving her a persona only as she relates to Manet. As much as was possible in the life she had to inhabit, she lived her life on her own terms. I read somewhere that she actually had one of her paintings exhibited in an art show of some credibility and that is proof of her perseverance and talent. If she were a man, I believe the 'mythology' surrounding her would be quite different.

Very entertaining book. A mystery explored. Interesting blend of art history and detection. I read the book with no particular expectations. I think the people who did not like the book perhaps had too many preconceived ideas about the book and were disappointed when they did not find what they

expected. I am not a professional in the field. just enjoyed a good read.

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