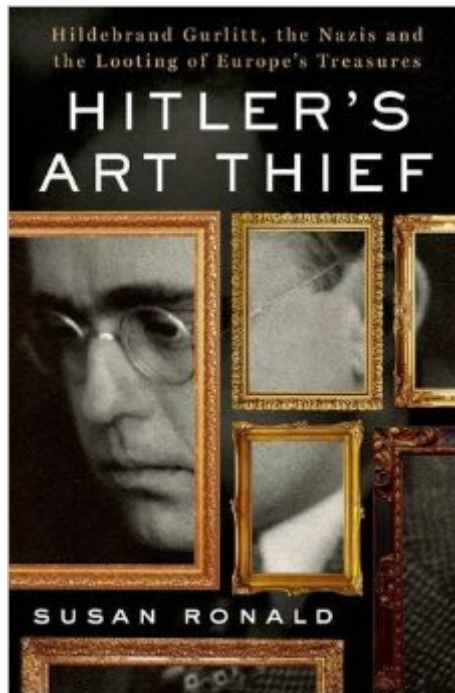


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# Hitler's Art Thief: Hildebrand Gurlitt, The Nazis, And The Looting Of Europe's Treasures



## Synopsis

The world was stunned when eighty-year old Cornelius Gurlitt became an international media superstar in November 2013 on the discovery of over 1,400 artworks in his 1,076 square-foot Munich apartment, valued at around \$1.35 billion. Gurlitt became known as a man who never was - he didn't have a bank account, never paid tax, never received social security. He simply did not exist. He had been hard-wired into a life of shadows and secrecy by his own father long before he had inherited his art collection built on the spoliation of museums and Jews during Hitler's Third Reich. The ensuing media frenzy unleashed international calls for restitution, unsettled international relations, and rocked the art world. Susan Ronald reveals in this stranger-than-fiction-tale how Hildebrand Gurlitt succeeded in looting in the name of the Third Reich, duping the Monuments Men and the Nazis alike. As an "official dealer" for Hitler and Goebbels, Hildebrand Gurlitt became one of the Third Reich's most prolific art looters. Yet he stole from Hitler too, allegedly to save modern art. Hitler's Art Thief is the untold story of Hildebrand Gurlitt, who stole more than art-he stole lives, too.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Susan Ronald's "Hitler's Art Thief" digs deep beyond the headlines of the 2014 Munich art find story which led to uncovering almost 1700 paintings and drawings of Cornelius Gurlitt, the son of Hildebrand Gurlitt, the target of her ambitious and overwrought history. The author's decision to weave in German history, focusing on the Third Reich, with Gurlitt's family history is a significant distraction and weighs on the book for more than half. This decision adds little to what attracts most

readers; the art and its provenance. Ms. Ronald, not an art historian, misidentifies Egon Schiele as part of the German Expressionist movement; rather, he was a member of the Austrian Secessionist movement. She repeatedly overreaches in her storyline, e.g., she claims Hitler and Hildebrand both saw the portrait of Klimt's world famous portrait of Adele Bloch Bauer when, in fact, it was in private hands for years, not on public display. She frequently intuits actions to Gurlitt which have no basis in her research but which add to her concept of his wrongdoing and evilness. Her book is helpful describing the chaotic "feeding frenzy" art market in Germany, Holland and France after 1939 which arose after the Munich Degenerate Art Show of 1938 when banned modernist German art flooded the market outside of Germany. She identifies Alfred Barr (MOMA) buying these banned artists through "front men" art dealers. Sloppiness may come from her rush to get the book published or because of the massive amounts of "seized" art and a writer's inability to grapple with its volume and to tell a concise story. Her more interesting later pages are clearly drawn from two post war investigations by American investigators.

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