



ART POWER MONEY

BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE GLOBAL ART MARKET

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Foreword

When people speak of "the art market," most picture beautiful paintings, gleaming auction halls, and the golden gavels of Sotheby's and Christie's. But the truth runs far deeper and far more complicated than that glittering surface. Behind every canvas, every sculpture, every sales contract — there is a world of power, money, ambition, and secrets.

This book is a journey into that hidden world: a journey through collectors whose names will outlast them, dealers who pull invisible strings from the shadows, and artists who search for immortality somewhere between dream and reality.

I did not write this book to hand you a formula for wealth. I wrote it to pull back the curtain — to show how art has become a universal language of power and permanence. This is a house whose walls were built with money and influence, but whose roof can only be made of time and memory.

Perhaps when you finish reading, you will look differently at a painting hanging on your wall. Perhaps behind the colors and forms you will begin to hear voices: the crack of a gavel in London, the murmur of a deal struck in Dubai, the laughter of a private dinner in Paris, even the heavy silence of a museum at midnight.

This book is an invitation to enter the House of Power — a house in which art is not merely a beautiful object, but a mirror of humanity: of our ambitions, our hunger for power and immortality, and the dream that something of us might last.

Introduction

On a winter evening in Helsinki, while snow settled quietly onto the old cobblestones outside, I stood inside a gallery watching the room. Men and women with wine glasses in hand spoke in low voices, their laughter occasionally cutting through the formality of the space. On the walls hung paintings that, just hours earlier, the artist had arranged with trembling hands. Now those same works — with nothing changed but the right lighting and the right gaze from the right buyer — held the power to alter the financial trajectory of a life.

That night, as one of the collectors leaned toward me and whispered, "This piece should triple in value within five years," I found myself thinking less about the painting and more about the game behind it. About the moment when art ceases to be simply "art" and becomes a kind of invisible currency — circulating through a strange institution called the art market. This is precisely where this book begins: at the blurred frontier between beauty and money.

The global art market is now worth nearly sixty billion dollars. But unlike the New York Stock Exchange or the real estate market, it operates without clear rules or transparent logic. Prices rise for reasons no one can fully explain.

Bubbles form and burst. An unknown artist becomes an international star overnight after a single show. And that same star quietly disappears. Behind all the noise, forces are at work that few ever speak of openly: galleries, auction houses, major collectors, and the quiet money that is always searching for a safe harbor.

This book is about those back rooms. About the relationships that carry an artist from a tiny studio to the palatial halls of a museum. About the decisions that propel a painting from five thousand euros to five million. About the moments when art is no longer art at all — but a tool for power, for influence, or for making money disappear. Over the years, sitting with artists, gallerists, collectors, and investors, I have witnessed scenes that felt less like straightforward transactions and more like scenes from a thriller: an artist selling work for the price of a meal, while across the room a collector spent millions in a single evening; a gallery director who shaped a young artist's entire future with a single quiet sentence: "They're not ready yet."

And yet, through all of it, what I have never been able to forget is the power of art itself. That image which can, in a single glance, take hold of someone's heart — or turn a cold room into something alive and warm. In the end, it is this eternal tension between beauty and money that makes the story of the art trade so compelling, and so impossible to look away from.

And perhaps, when you close this book, you will look again at the painting on your wall and ask yourself: Is this a work of art — or is it an investment?

CHAPTER ONE:
THE POWER OF THE IMAGE

The Image, Before the Word

When you walk into a new exhibition, the first thing you feel is not the price tags — not even the artist's name. Your eyes are pulled toward the image. Sometimes a few seconds is all it takes for something inside you to shift — not as a thought, but as a reaction. Like catching an unexpected scent that carries you back to a memory before you even understand why.

This is the moment artists spend their lives pursuing: the moment when an image captures its viewer.

But the instant that moment ends — or even while it is still happening — the mind reaches for another question: What is this worth? And that simple question is what pulls the world of art from pure enchantment into the territory of economics and power.

It is as though two people live inside each of us: one who wants to feel, and one who wants to know the number. One searching for meaning, one reaching for measurement. The art market is built precisely on the border between these two — on that thin, elegant fault line where the heart and the accountant sit side by side.

The image carries power because it reaches both the heart and the wallet. And this is not merely a twenty-first century phenomenon. Look back far enough, and you will find that the image has always been the language of power — not only the language of beauty.

Before reading and writing became widespread, before books and newspapers and social media existed, the image was the medium. A medium that required no translation.

You simply looked, and the message entered you. This directness — this refusal to be intercepted by language — is the secret of the image's authority. The image is not like a letter you must read, or a sound you can let pass. The image is a presence. A silent presence that can command, seduce, threaten, or console.

The Image and the Speed of the Mind

I sometimes think we are afraid of images because they move faster than reason. They know the mind's back roads. They enter before you have had time to build a defense. And only then does reason arrive, beginning its explanations: Why did that move me? Why did my mood change? Why does that face feel familiar?

The art market exploits precisely this delay. The image takes hold of you first. Then the number arrives and makes itself at home. This mechanism is more sophisticated than it appears. Psychological research consistently shows that humans make emotional decisions and then justify them with logic afterward. The art market understands this completely. Auction rooms, galleries, and exhibition spaces are all designed around this knowledge: first, provoke the emotional response. Then introduce the price.

The first time a painting catches your eye, it takes only a few seconds. But what unfolds behind those few seconds has been years in the making. Behind every work of art that commands an astronomical price at auction, behind every gallery whose quiet whiteness demands your attention, behind every collector who calmly measures its “future price” — an unseen world is at work. This book is a journey into that world: from the caves of Lascaux to the auction rooms of New York, from the Medici of Florence to modern oligarchs, from galleries that construct narratives to freeports where art is kept out of sight. *Art, Power, Money* reveals that the art market is neither a simple business nor a romantic world. It is a mirror of the human being — of our ambitions, our desire to leave something behind, and that rare moment when something inside us moves before we even know why.



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