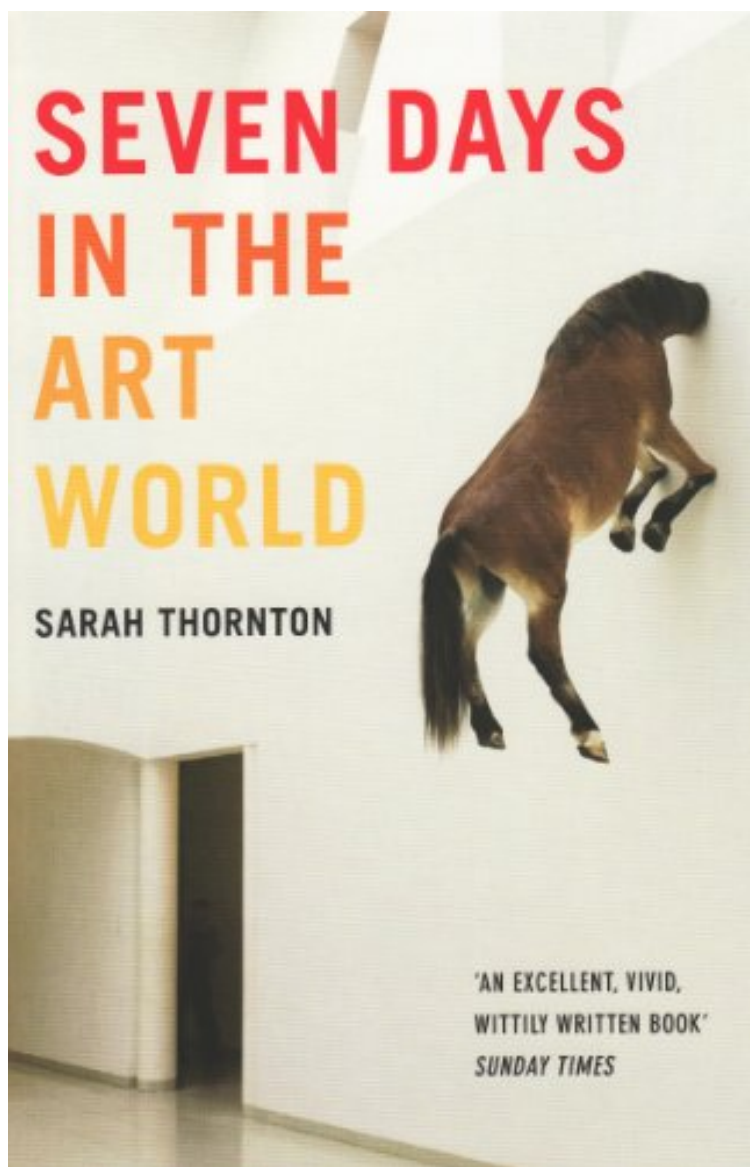


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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurContemporary art has become a mass entertainment, a luxury good, a job description and, for some, a kind of alternative religion. Sarah Thornton's shrewd and entertaining fly-on-the-wall narrative takes us behind the scenes of the art world, from art school to auction house, showing us how it works, and giving us a vivid sense of being there.From Publishers WeeklyStarred . The hot, hip contemporary art world, argues sociologist Thornton, is a cluster of intermingling subcultures unified by the belief, whether genuine or feigned, that nothing is more important than the art itself. It is a conviction, she asserts, that has transformed contemporary art into a kind of alternative religion for atheists. Thornton, a contributor to Artforum.com and the New Yorker, presents an astute and often entertaining ethnography of

this status-driven world. Each of the seven chapters is a keenly observed profile of that world's highest echelons: a Christie's auction, a crit session at the California Institute of the Arts and the Art Basel art fair. The chapter on auctions (where one auction-goer explains, [I]t's dangerous to wear Prada.... You might get caught in the same outfit as three members of Christie's staff) is one of the book's strongest; the author's conversations about the role of the art critic with Artforum editor-in-chief Tim Griffin and the New Yorker's Peter Schjeldahl are edifying. Thornton offers an elegant, evocative, sardonic view into some of the art world's most prestigious institutions. 8 illus. (Nov.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Presentation de l'diteur Contemporary art has become a mass entertainment, a luxury good, a job description and, for some, a kind of alternative religion. Sarah Thornton's shrewd and entertaining fly-on-the-wall narrative takes us behind the scenes of the art world, from art school to auction house, showing us how it works, and giving us a vivid sense of being there.