



Lost in the Museum: Buried Treasures and the Stories They Tell

Nancy Moses

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Few beyond the insider realize that museums own millions of objects the public never sees. In *Lost in the Museum*, Nancy Moses takes the reader behind the employees' only doors to uncover the stories buried—along with the objects—in the crypts of museums, historical societies, and archives. Moses discovers the actual birds shot, stuffed, and painted by John James Audubon, America's most beloved bird artist; a spear that abolitionist John Brown carried in his quixotic quest to free the slaves; and the skull of a prehistoric Peruvian child who died with scurvy. She takes the reader to Ker-Feal, the secret farmhouse that Albert Barnes of the Barnes Foundation filled with fabulous American antiques and that was then left untouched for more than fifty years. Weaving the stories of the object, its original owner, and the often idiosyncratic institution where the object resides, the book reveals the darkest secret of the cultural world: the precarious balance of art, culture, and politics that keep items, for decades, lost in the museum.

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