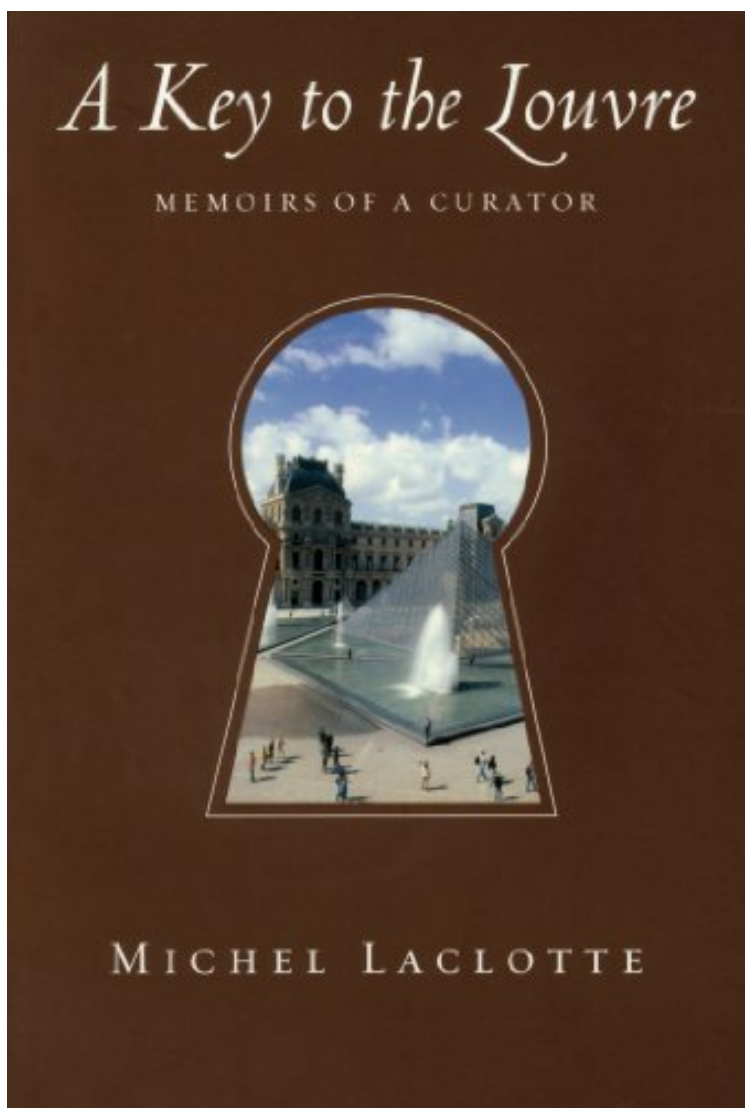


## A Key to the Louvre: Memoirs of a Curator

*Michel Laclotte*

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**Michel Laclotte : A Key to the Louvre: Memoirs of a Curator** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Key to the Louvre: Memoirs of a Curator:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Former Director of the Louvre takes you on a 30 year OdysseyBy Richard of ConnecticutOne of the finest minds I have ever encountered, a Noble prize winner said to me one day, "If you could live not one life over, but three lives, what lives would you live." It's interesting because most of my time is spent with an involvement with Wall Street and international finance, but my passion is art and learning. I couldn't put this book down. I read every page, cover to cover, while on a business trip to Texas.Art is timeless, and makes us aware of the all too short a period that represents our own time on earth. The author Michel Laclotte has spent his

entire life in the art world, moving through various positions in his native France and finishing up as Director of the world's most important art museum - The Louvre. If you read this book, you will gain an understanding of the art world that simply cannot be obtained any other way, unless like the opening sentence of my review states, you are able to live your own life over in the art world. The author takes us on a journey of what it's like to run a museum with the outsized egos that are involved. What's it like to bid on paintings, and pay \$50 million or a \$100 million for an object that you can hold in your hand? Laclotte was instrumental in both the reshaping of the Louvre utilizing the skills of world-renowned architect I.M. Pei, and the building of the Musee d'Orsay, which was done under the direct guidance of the author. There is a religious saying that says that "nothing is owned, everything is borrowed, and we are merely the custodians." This is certainly true of great art objects that have passed down through the ages, and Laclotte speaks with a poetical beauty through his words about the objects that he has been the custodian of, for his entire lifetime. There is an appreciation that is gained by reading this book for all that has come before us. A lady I know is reputed to have the highest IQ of anyone on the planet. One day she told me that she doesn't read books anymore because they are merely the author's subjective opinion regardless of topic. Instead she said she uses her time to go to museums, because there she is directly in touch with TRUTH. She doesn't need anyone to explain what she is looking at. She lets her own brain do the work. When you read Laclotte's book, you will have an understanding what she means. The lives of the great artists, the works they created, thousands of years of art history, it's all here. It's in a tightly woven tale about one man's commitment to art, and the life he lived guided by that commitment. Read this book, you will love it. Regards, Richard Stoyeck

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Off Key By Christian Schlect

To me, this book too often is a vehicle to mention and thank the many museum colleagues and associated art scholars from Mr. Laclotte's long and distinguished career rather than an exciting view into the politics and work of a world treasure house. If you have a deep interest in the Louvre and the Musee d'Orsay, you may well enjoy this book. However, I do not see this memoir as being a classic of its type. (One example of what I think to be a well-written and enduring art memoir is Kenneth Clark's "Another Part of the Wood.")

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Great Book By Tamdiego

I got this book while writing a research paper on the Louvre and found myself reading it just for fun - I am a Art History and Curatorial Studies student planning on doing this as my career so I may be biased, but It was so interesting to hear Laclotte's experiences. I love the sections where he gives his own personal reactions to experiences such as I.M. Pei's plan for the glass pyramids. So good! Anyway, fun read, interesting cultural information.

An art world insider provides a witty and penetrating account of fifty years at the center of international culture. Art historian, curator, and museum director Michel Laclotte has been at the forefront of French cultural life over the past half century. This informal autobiography sheds light on his brilliant career with warmth and directness. Highlights include twenty years as chief curator of painting and sculpture at the Musee du Louvre, heading the team that created the Musee d'Orsay, and taking the reins of the Louvre to lead the effort that culminated in the museum's transformation into the "Grand Louvre," one of the world's preeminent cultural attractions. Raising the curtain on fifty years of Western art scholarship, intrigue, and achievement, Laclotte introduces an extraordinary cast of characters who set France's cultural direction in the postwar period from Charles de Gaulle and Andre Malraux in the 1950s to Francois Mitterand in the 1980s and 1990s. His story overlaps with virtually every major scholarly figure in French art history of the last half-century, as well as Laclotte's mentors and colleagues throughout and beyond Europe, from Roberto Longhi and Anthony Blunt to Sir John Pope-Hennessy and Millard Meiss. An incomparable testament to a period of seismic change in the museum world, this volume will be essential reading for art world aficionados and all students of art and modern culture.

About the Author Michel Laclotte, Director of the Musee du Louvre from 1987 to 1995, also served as Chief Curator in the museum's Department of Paintings beginning in 1966. He specializes in French and Italian painting of the 14th and 15th centuries. Laclotte served as the Editorial Director for Abbeville's masterwork, *The Art and Spirit of Paris*.