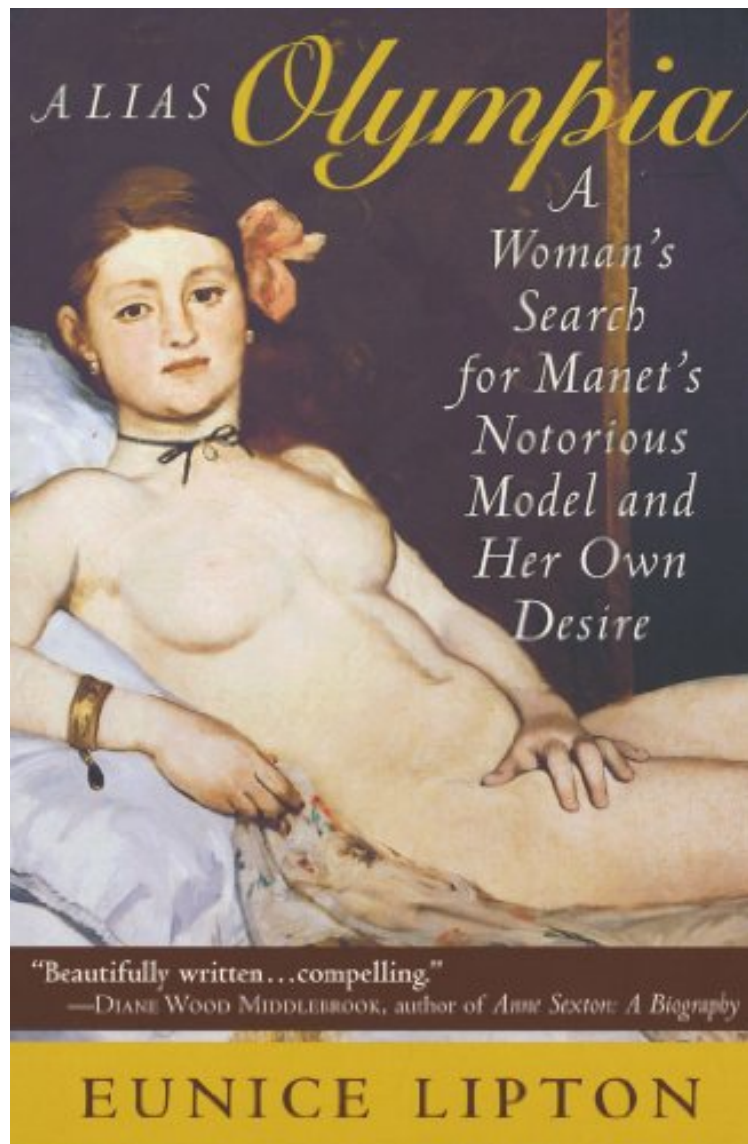


Alias Olympia: A Woman's Search for Manet's Notorious Model and Her Own Desire

Eunice Lipton

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Eunice Lipton : Alias Olympia: A Woman's Search for Manet's Notorious Model and Her Own Desire before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Alias Olympia: A Woman's Search for Manet's Notorious Model and Her Own Desire:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. it's a wonderfully written and provocativeBy DJH Oakland CAA very entertaining and insightful story of Ms. Lipton's relationship with her mother and life in general, wrapped around

her research on Victorine Meurent. As noted by other reviewers, if you're looking for a biography of Victorine, this isn't it (really because there isn't enough factual information known about her for a biography), but it's still more informative than "Paris Red". As a story of a woman coming of age in the second half of the 20th century, it's a wonderfully written and provocative. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Mary Lou Dauray Fabulous book--especially for people who are interested in artists, women artists and art history. 9 of 13 people found the following review helpful. An inspiring story with a reward at the end. By The Ornamentalist This book is more autobiography than the "art history mystery" I had expected, but it's an engaging story, and well worth reading. When the missing diary, or some such document, which will tell all about the real life story of Victorine Muerant fails to materialize, a fictional version is inserted in chapters. I was disappointed by this because it gives more weight to the story Ms Lipton invented and hoped to prove, than to the facts she worked so hard to reveal. The research is tedious and discouraging, and the results will not rock the art history world. The true reward for the author is not the tidbits of information she acquires about her subject, but in her own growth both as a blossoming writer and a woman. Her finest writing is in the descriptions of the things she knows best and experiences first-hand: the great food in Paris, her past life, her present feelings, her beliefs and self-realization. It's encouraging that Ms Lipton has chosen now to be a writer, and not an art historian, and I will look forward to her next effort.

Eunice Lipton was a fledgling art historian when she first became intrigued by Victorine Meurent, the nineteenth-century model who appeared in Edouard Manet's most famous paintings, only to vanish from history in a haze of degrading hearsay. But had this bold and spirited beauty really descended into prostitution, drunkenness, and early death--or did her life, hidden from history, take a different course altogether? Eunice Lipton's search for the answer combines the suspense of a detective story with the revelatory power of art, peeling off layers of lies to reveal startling truths about Victorine Meurent--and about Lipton herself.

From Publishers Weekly By combing through libraries and archives in Paris and New York, Lipton (Looking into Degas) hoped to reconstruct the life of Victorine Meurent and prove that this mysterious 19th-century woman, an artist in her own right as well as the model for the famous nudes of Manet's Olympia and Dejeuner sur l'herbe, was more than the pathetic alcoholic who appears in academic studies by male art historians. Even though the results of her quest were meager--she found little about Meurent's life and was unable to locate any of her paintings--Lipton's account of her search is as exciting as a good detective story. Using reminiscences of her own troubled childhood as a catalyst and projecting her feelings and desires onto her elusive subject, she fleshes out the story and constructs a highly original portrait of Meurent, for whom she invents colorful monologues. The model emerges as a strong and independent woman who defies all efforts by traditional scholars to patronize and degrade her. Lipton's iconoclastic, feminist approach is refreshing and intriguing. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Haunted by the steadfast gaze of the nude peering from the canvas of Manet's controversial "Olympia," art historian Lipton (Looking into Degas: Uneasy Images of Women and Modern Life , Univ. of California Pr., 1986) documents her relentless effort to unravel the model's life. Lipton's scant archival findings indicate that, in marked contrast to the lowly, depraved, alcoholic figure depicted by writers and artists, model Victorine Meurent was a recognized painter and a member of a distinguished society of artists. In the course of her research, Lipton imagines the thoughts of Meurent in some beautifully moving passages, and her own life begins to take on new meaning. She raises disturbing questions about the validity of much art historical scholarship concerning the role of women. A mesmerizing narrative recommended for women's studies, art history, and general collections.- Joan Levin, MLS, Chicago Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. "In this wonderfully digressive blend of art history and autobiography, Eunice Lipton chronicles her search for Victorine Meurent, the model for two of Edouard Manet's most famous paintings, 'Olympia' and 'Dejeuner sur l'Herbe.' In the end, and much to the reader's delight, Lipton has done what she set out to do: rescue Victorine Meurent from history. It is a marvelous recovery."?New York Times Book "Beautifully written?brisk, poignant and humorous. . . . A witty critique of the art historical profession and a sexy, sad memoir with a happy ending. Alias Olympia is the most original art book to emerge from my feminist art generation."?Lucy R. Lippard, Women's of Books "A rare alchemy . . . a melding of art history and autobiography."?Village Voice "Scholarly research-as-usual is converted into a cliffhanger . . . a pioneering attempt to fashion a counter?or post-academic self in print. . . . Alias Olympia will Liptonize art historians in the popular imagination."?Art in America "The elegance and clarity of Lipton's prose make Alias Olympia a joy to read. . . . Significantly advances our knowledge about lesbians in the visual arts."?Lambda Book Report "Think of Alias Olympia as a Canterbury Tale; a life-story told on a pilgrimage. It is an exploration in a dizzying variety of senses, from her laborious attempt to unearth the real life of her subject to reflections on her own childhood and career to the igniting effect of the feminist movement to musings on the fact that Victorine and Eunice have a common etymology, both signifying 'triumph.' Alias Olympia stands for part of the truth . . . but its humanity is entire."?Richard Eder, Los Angeles Times "Beautifully written . . . compelling."?Diane Wood Middlebrook, author of Anne Sexton: A Biography "Eunice Lipton's remarkable study combines personal history and archival history in a literate and provocative way. in

this story of a nineteenth-century painter-model, or rather, the search for the woman who posed for Manet's most famous painting, Lipton combines the search for self in the Bronx with the search for documentation about this most intriguing of models. It is the conjunction of these intertwined quests that makes the book at once poignant and to the point."?Linda Nochlin, New York University, Institute of Fine Arts "Eunice Lipton's *Alias Olympia* is the one book I would give a non-academic friend or lover or a U.S. Senator to explain the rigors and rewards of art historical investigation, as well as research in other esoteric humanities fields. Lipton's reading from it at the University of Virginia (where I previously taught) is the only time I have ever seen graduate students weep during a public lecture. It's hard to write anything smart, significant, and new about a central icon of the modernist canon. It's amazing that Lipton has done all of the above and revealed an emotional life that scholarship conventionally conceals."?Judith Wilson, Yale University "I greatly admire both the energy and revelations of Eunice Lipton's private-eye pursuit as she searched for traces of Victorine Meurent. Inscribing her own history as well as imaginatively elaborating upon fragments of this unknown woman artist's life gave Lipton's work a profound subjectivity that added to the pleasure of reading an excellent 'detective story' on desire, always alas poignant for women who want to be themselves. Lipton's book touched me personally."?Julia Kristeva, Universiteacute; de Paris, VII "Alias Olympia is an inspiration, to art historians and to students of art history at any level. Lipton's revelations about the profession of art history and the particulars of her engagement in it as a human being, as a woman, and as a feminist are a pleasure, poignant at many times, to read. The writing is direct and vivid, and the reader gets a fascinating view of the terrors and rewards of research, the scholar's insecurities and skills, and the interweaving of an individual's life and her work. Lipton's book is of great value because much of what she says as well as the way she says it?personally, humanly?goes publicly unsaid in academia, in art history, and in feminist scholarship. *Alias Olympia* dismantles the all too often deadening conservatism of art history and offers new ways of thinking and writing about the history of art."?Joanna Frueh, The University of Nevada "Suspenseful as a detective novel by Simenon, *Alias Olympia* rewards the reader at every turn."?Harriet Shorr, SUNY Purchase