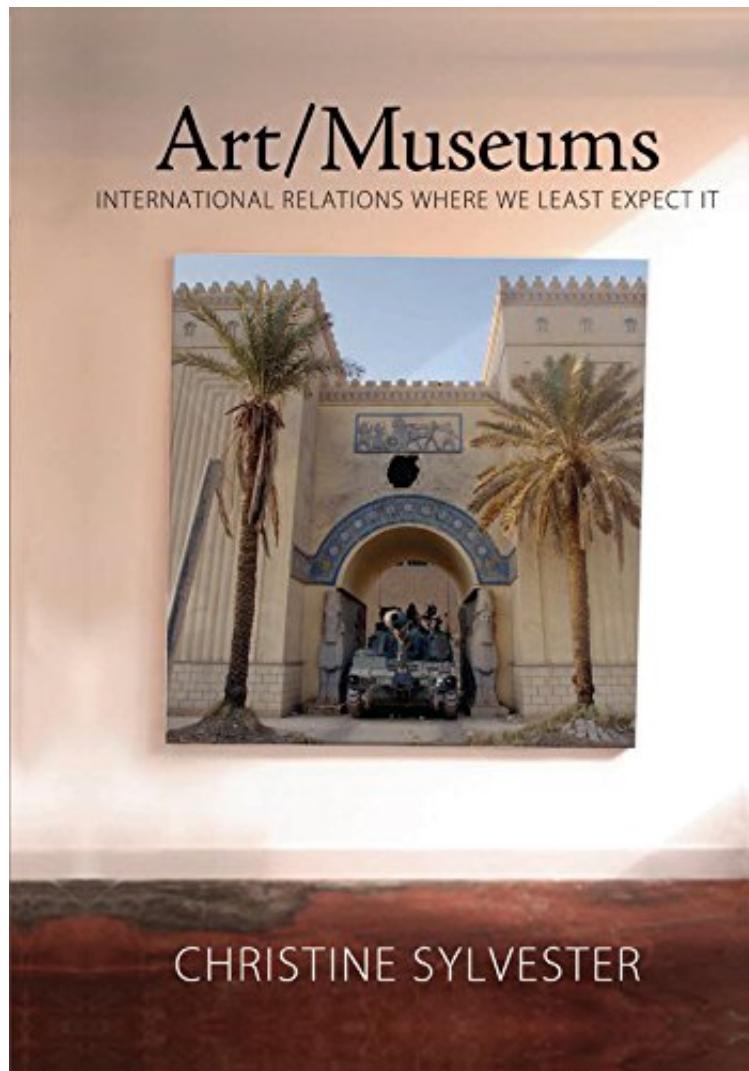


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## **Art/Museums: International Relations Where We Least Expect it (Media and Power)**

*Christine Sylvester*

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before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Art/Museums: International Relations Where We Least Expect it (Media and Power):

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Art/Museums takes the study of international relations to the art museum. It seeks to persuade those who study

international relations to take art/museums seriously and museum studies to take up the insights of international relations. And it does so at a time when both international relations and art are said to be at an end—that is, out of control and beyond sight of their usual constituencies. The book focuses on the British Museum, the National Gallery of London, the Museum of Iraq, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Getty museums, the Guggenheim museums, and "museum" spaces instantly created by the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001. The art includes works over which museums might struggle, acquire through questionable means, hoard and possibly lose, such as the Parthenon sculptures, Raphael's Madonna of the Pinks, the ancient art of Babylon, modern art, and the art/museum itself in an era of rapid museum expansion. Bringing art, museums, and international relations together draws on the art technique of collage, which combines disparate objects, themes, and time periods in one work to juxtapose unexpected elements, leaving the viewer to relate objects that are not where they are expected to be.

“Recommended.” *CHOICE* Over and above the book’s many intellectual, academic, and disciplinary merits, *Art/Museums* is a great read. Sylvester’s institutional histories are detailed and compelling, and she is a gifted and provocative writer. For anyone interested in the way IR is expressed and translated through cultural formations, this book is a must. But it is also of great value to the entire field of IR because it demonstrates how critical, challenging, and innovative research can come from embracing, rather than rejecting, the radical pluralisation of the discipline. “International Studies” This striking book takes as its point of departure certain views on the end of art, expressed in the mid-1980s by myself and Hans Belting, but it very quickly steers into undercharted seas. Centrally interested in museums and international relations, the author demonstrates, through vivid examples, how international relations inflects the mission of various museums and hence the ways their visitors experience the art they display. Christine Sylvester creates a vision of art, museum, and international relations as a complex of powers that moves the world today, and argues that we cannot understand the world or ourselves without taking this into account. “Arthur C. Danto, Columbia University (Emeritus)” This is an excellent introduction to the politics of major museums. Sylvester brings the methodology and interests of international relations to bear on a subject that is usually considered from within the art world. This book aims at more than an invigorating cross-pollination of academic disciplines. If given to every museum visitor and arts journalist, this book could change the reasons people go to museums. It would be possible, finally, to have a public conversation about the ways museums shape national and ethnic identity, project leadership, propose cosmopolitanism, and deflect explicit claims of superiority. Instead of the usual stories of scandal, theft, repatriation, and the usual gossip about directors and “starchitects”; the media would begin to discuss how we use museums for all sorts of crucial nation building. “James Elkins, School of the Art Institute of Chicago” *Art/Museums* is a book that unites antimonies. What possible relation could the power-seeking, violence, diplomacy, and conflict endemic to global politics have to art, or to the cultural exhibition of the museum? More than we think, answers Christine Sylvester in her inimitable, genre-rending style. From Iraq to Greece, this stylish and important book reveals hidden contours to the global that deserve our attention. “Anthony Burke, University of New South Wales” Christine Sylvester’s *Art/Museums* provides eye-opening and thought-provoking perspectives that force us to rethink the politics of art, museums, and international relations for today, yesterday, and tomorrow. “Timothy W. Luke, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University” About the Author Christine Sylvester is Professor of International Relations and Development at Lancaster University in England and author of numerous books including most recently *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era* and *Feminist International Relations: An Unfinished Journey*, both in the Cambridge Studies in International Relations series.