Greetings to the IIC Book Club! Would you like to join?

The IIC Book Club offers an opportunity to read conservation literature in a distinct, direct and diverse way. Let us tell you how we plan on doing this…

Aim
We will begin reading the text together on the 12th of June. We will meet three times with the author and a specialist guest over the span of four months.

Our chosen text is: The Fate of the Masterpiece: How the Monuments Men Rescued the Mystic Lamb from the Nazis by Noah Charney

Join us on **June 20th at 19:00 BST** for an enlightening talk by renowned author Noah Charney, as he delves into his latest book "The Fate of the Masterpiece: How the Monuments Men Rescued the Mystic Lamb from the Nazis." In this captivating exploration, Charney uncovers the gripping tale of the Monuments Men and their heroic efforts to safeguard cultural treasures during World War II. Focusing on the iconic Mystic Lamb painting, Charney reveals the remarkable journey of this masterpiece and the individuals who risked their lives to protect it from the clutches of Nazi plunder. Gain insight into the broader context of art preservation amidst conflict and discover the profound significance of cultural heritage in times of turmoil. This talk promises to be a compelling journey through history, art, and the resilience of the human spirit. You can find more information about his research here.

On the **18th of July at 19:00 BST** we will then welcome guest speaker Gretchen Allen as she shares insights into the vital work being done with Blue Shield International in collaboration with the Irish National Committee for the Blue Shield and the Irish Defense Forces, alongside other EU and UN peacekeeping forces, to safeguard cultural heritage in war zones. Gretchen’s dedication to this cause highlights the significance of international cooperation and proactive measures in preserving our shared heritage. Get ready to gain a deeper understanding of the critical role cultural property protection plays in promoting peace, stability, and the preservation of human history as Gretchen shares her knowledge and expertise.

The programme will conclude on the **15th of August at 19:00 BST** with a panel discussion hosted via Zoom and recorded for the IIC Community Platform in which Noah Charney and
Gretchen Allen will deep-dive into the text and its broader themes.

**Method**
Those who are interested in joining the Club will be encouraged to purchase or borrow the text and “read along” with their peers. The group will be regularly updated on a fortnightly basis with set-goals for chapter progression, themes to consider in relation to the reading material and reminders to attend and participate in the presentation, discussion and final author panel. Whilst it’s useful to be able to access a copy of the book, it’s not mandatory to purchase the book in order to participate in the book club programme.

Updates, reminders and recordings will also be directed to the Community Platform. Otherwise, any questions or concerns can be shared on this platform or directly to with the Book Club co-ordinator, Alexandra Taylor who can be contacted via the following email address: ellie.sweetnam@iiconservation.org

**Noah Charney**
Dr. Noah Charney is the internationally best-selling author of more than a dozen books, translated into fourteen languages, including *The Collector of Lives: Giorgio Vasari and the Invention of Art*, which was nominated for the 2017 Pulitzer Prize in Biography, and Museum of Lost Art, which was the finalist for the 2018 Digital Book World Award. He is a professor of art history specializing in art crime, and has taught for Yale University, Brown University, American University of Rome and University of Ljubljana. He is also the founder of ARCA, the Association for Research into Crimes against Art, a ground-breaking research group (www.artcrimeresearch.org) and teaches on their annual summer-long Postgraduate Program in Art Crime and Cultural Heritage Protection. Charney writes regularly for dozens of major magazines and newspapers, including The Guardian, the Washington Post, the Observer and The Art Newspaper. His latest books on art include *The Devil in the Gallery: How Scandal, Shock and Rivalry Shaped the Art World*, *Making It: The Artist’s Survival Guide*, *The 12-Hour Art Expert: Everything You Need to Know About Art in a Dozen Masterpieces*, and *Brushed Aside: The Untold Story of Women in Art*, several of which were Amazon #1 best-sellers in their category. He also published the critically-acclaimed *The Slavic Myths* (Thames & Hudson) in the fall of 2023 and recently fronted an influencer campaign for Samsung, in 2022 he presented a BBC Radio 4 documentary, China’s Stolen Treasures. Charney’s TED Ed videos (some on art crime) have been viewed by millions, and he featured in a recent Amazon Prime documentary, *The Picasso of Thieves*. A course of his, “Lost Art,” featured this summer for The Teaching Company’s Great Courses/Wondrium, the first of several that are scheduled, and he teaches online courses for Atlas Obscura and Yale University on art theft and forgery. He lives in Slovenia with his wife, children and their hairless dog, Hubert van Eyck (believe it or not). Learn more at www.noahcharney.com.

**Guest speaker: Gretchen Allen**
Gretchen Allen is a book and paper conservator currently serving as Senior Conservator at the National Archives of Ireland. She is a member of the Irish National Committee for the Blue Shield and her academic work focuses on the conservator’s role in mitigating the harm done by the criminal elements of the art market. Allen has developed an interest in the darker aspects of the art market while studying and working in major colonial collections in California and the UK. Pursuant to these experiences she undertook a postgraduate certification in Antiquities
Her research has focused on the role of the conservator in addressing and mitigating the harm done by the criminal elements of the art market and by violent conflict. As a member of the National Committee for the Blue Shield, Ireland, she has participated in training and advocacy for cultural property protection in UN Peacekeeping situations and active conflict zones.

We do hope you decide to join us for a stimulating opportunity to stretch and challenge how you think about art crime and cultural heritage protection, alongside other IIC members. Please register your participation here: https://forms.office.com/e/4qYUsFfMyj

If you have any questions, then please contact Ellie Sweetnam at ellie.sweetnam@iiconservation.org.