

The Girl with the Gallery

Lindsay Pollock

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"A refreshingly candid view of the mundane realities and strategies behind the art business at a time when New York was becoming the art world's capital." —The New York Times Book Review

THE GIRL WITH THE GALLERY

Edith Gregor Halpert and the Making of the Modern Art Market

LINDSAY POLLOCK

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Lindsay Pollock : The Girl with the Gallery before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Girl with the Gallery:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The Sale of American ArtBy Christian SchlectA solid biography of a woman, who, from the early to middle part of the last century, was at the commercial center of American art.The deceased and almost forgotten Edith Gregor Halpert, an immigrant with drive, is blessed with a thorough and admiring biography by Lindsay Pollock, a knowledgeable writer on things related to the New York art scene.If you want to know more about how a small commercial art gallery actually operated; big money collectors, such as Mrs. Rockefeller and son Nelson; artists, such as Alfred Stieglitz, Georgia O'Keefe, and Jacob Lawrence; and such

important threads of the art world as early American primitives--buy and read this book. It is a tribute to the power of one focused person, who made a difference in what were hard times for American artists. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A rich account of Edith Halpert's life and gallery from behind the scenes By Nichole BI'm not quite finished with this book yet - I am reading it a little at a time over my lunch breaks - but I love it immensely. The detail is amazing, from the many correspondences quoted to the accounting of Halpert's inventory of artists and artworks. I'm just now getting through Halpert's delve into American Folk Art and the purchase of her summer cottage, about halfway through the book. Ms. Pollack's rich account of Halpert's life and business is a great read, and I only have two regrets: (1) that I didn't choose art as a career when I was young, and (2) that I will be finished with this book in about two weeks. If you are looking for a quick read about the general life of a gallery owner, move along. Whether you are an artist, gallerist, or simply an appreciator of fine art, this book will transport you to Edith's world of art in New York. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Well written look at an art gallery pioneer. By Jill Meyer Art historian and blogger, Lindsay Pollock, takes a good look at the life and times of Edith Gregor Halpert, a pioneer in the selling of modern American art in the first half of the 20th Century. Born with the new century in Odessa, Edith Halpert emigrated from Russia with her widowed mother and older sister in the year 1906. Settling in New York City, the trio had the usual immigrant troubles, but Edith - a go-getter almost from birth - made her way in the 1910's and 1920's, establishing an art gallery "downtown", devoted to selling the work of American artists. After marrying and divorcing one such artist, Sam Halpert, Edith spent the remainder of her long life, chasing the artists, the collectors and patrons, and the museums, all of who - together - make the "art world". Edith was helped out early by the patronage of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller - wife of John Jr and mother of Nelson - who saw the value in collecting American art. She was adept at selling and promoting "her" artists even in bad economic times. "The Downtown Gallery" eventually moved "uptown" but never changed its name or its championing of American artists. But after WW2 when a new generation of artists took over the art scene - including Jackson Pollock - Edith Halpert and her gallery were left behind. Her last few years in the business were on a down trend, but she maintained her reputation for presenting good art. Lindsay Pollock - no relation to Jackson, I assume - is an excellent writer. Her biography of Edith Halpert is also an in depth look at the American art scene from 1920 to 1960. Halpert was in the middle of it and Pollock explains it quite well.

In an era when American artists didn't count and women were expected to stay home, Edith Gregor Halpert burst onto the fledgling New York gallery scene, defying all cultural and societal rules. In 1926, Halpert, just twenty-six years old, opened one of the first art galleries in Greenwich Village and set about turning the art world upside down. Her Downtown Gallery, which she ran for forty-four years, laid the groundwork for the art market's modern era, and its aggressive promotion and sales tactics. Halpert cultivated the most illustrious art collectors of the day, invented the market for folk art, and pushed the first group of American artists working in a modern vernacular into the history books, including Stuart Davis, Jacob Lawrence, Georgia O'Keeffe, Ben Shahn, and Arthur Dove. Despite all this, Edith Halpert herself has been lost to history. Until now. In *The Girl with the Gallery*, journalist Lindsay Pollock brings Halpert and her era vividly back to life, tracing the story of how this remarkable woman, who started out a penniless Jewish immigrant, made it her mission to fight for American art and artists. Illustrated with eight pages of full color photographs, this is biography at its finest, an unforgettable story of class, money, vanity, jealousy, and tragic loss.

From Publishers Weekly Pollock, who reports on the art market for Bloomberg News, retrieves a uniquely American story: a plucky heroine escapes Russia with her parents, grows up in New York poverty and ends up owning one of the most influential and successful art galleries of the 20th century, one that virtually created the market for American art. Startlingly young when she embarked on her career in 1926, Edith Gregor Halpert (1900–1970) was one of the few gallery owners with an eye for the American avant-garde of the '20s, '30s and '40s. She recognized genius in Stuart Davis, made folk art trendy during the Depression and rescued from obscurity such classic artworks as Raphaelle Peale's *After the Bath*. She was prickly and often defensive, assertive and opinionated. These qualities brought her independence and financial security; they also led to loneliness and an ungraceful decline. Most interesting in Pollock's account are Halpert's difficult interactions with others in the business and with her artists, particularly Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O'Keeffe. It's surprising that Halpert, who paved the way for women in a male-dominated field, is so little known today; this book is long overdue. 8 pages of color photos, 28 bw photos. (Nov. 6) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist *Starred * Without visionary art dealers, radical artists would remain starving artists. Edith Gregor Halpert was one such champion. In her resounding first book, art journalist Pollock tells for the first time the story of Halpert's life, a tale of conviction and chutzpah that is by turns charming, historically significant, and sad. Born in Odessa in 1900, Edith grew up in New York mad about art and utterly disinterested in convention. Determined to help struggling artists, this trailblazer traded on her beauty, moxie, keen eye, and entrepreneurial genius to open the first modern and politically charged art gallery in Greenwich Village in 1926. Advocating for the likes of Stuart Davis, Charles Sheeler,

and Jacob Lawrence, Edith formed an unlikely but fruitful alliance with art lover Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. Instrumental in fostering serious appreciation for American folk art, Edith discovered many overlooked masterpieces, including the paintings of Edward Hicks. She also worked herself into exhaustion, especially during the Depression years, never found love, and infuriated many. Framed by a fresh and lively chronicle of the coalescence of New York's art world, Pollock's riveting portrait celebrates an inspired defender of artistic freedom. Donna Seaman Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved "The Downtown Gallery depended, at different times, on the market, on patrons and on the state, to fund its roster of artists. Pollock does a wonderful job of showing how Halpert appealed to each in turn. She makes the business of running a gallery as interesting to the reader as to its owner, and part of the charm of the book lies in its description of the Greenwich Village bohemianism that drew Halpert to the art world." "Pollock has built up a picture of a brilliant businesswoman who was a prime orchestrator of the increasing success of avant-garde American art in the first half of the 20th century." Daily Telegraph"