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Collecting Stories: A Collection of American Paintings

Tom Davies
Laynfaroh
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Paging through Davies' book is akin to ambling through a vast private American Art collection, with the added benefit of the collector's personal commentary and without the drawback of tired legs. Not only does the author introduce his 400 paintings, he also provides anecdotes as to how he acquired each of them.

Davies has collected American Art for forty years, and is the author of numerous exhibition catalogues and articles for art magazines. Included in this volume is nineteenth- and twentieth-century work, representing the Hudson River School, Tonalism, and Impressionism, with a special fondness for artwork from Cape Ann, Massachusetts. The Hudson River School landscapes include the panoramic, sunlit *An October Afternoon, Kauterskill Falls* painted by Sanford Gifford in 1868.The less sweeping tonalist works are exemplified by works such as J. Francis Murphy's *Early Snow*, depicting a few barren branches with intermittent patches of snow. The impressionists are highlighted by the Cape Ann artists, such as Frederick Mulhaupt.

Readers also will enjoy Davies' remarks, which range from factual and historical to the personal and downright funny. On the one hand, the author duly informs us how expatriate George Oberteuffer developed his vigorous brushwork and colorful palette from fifteen years spent in France. On a later page he then chuckles over purchasing Jonas Lie's *Cape Ann Street Scene* by robbing his family's food account. "This painting is a masterpiece in my eyes," he states. "But I was subjected to a barrage of abuse and tears from the back seat of the car for the next two hours while driving home."

Davies has created an original means of showcasing his entire collection and making it accessible to a public. The thorough bibliography hints that his personal library must be quite impressive as well. Not only lovers of art, but collectors of all sorts will take pleasure in meandering through the volume.