FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

General

Gold Marilyn
Lia Skidmore
Vivisphere Publishing
978-1-892323-03-3
(November 30, 1998)

Author and gallery owner Lia Skidmore treats readers to an insider's tour of the art-dealing world, where millions of dollars are routinely wagered on painted canvas. The protagonist is Nick Ryder, a lackadaisical gallery assistant who through his own 15 minutes of fame is propelled by a media fluke into the position of art dealer.

Like a feather blowing in the wind, Nick is a weak character who doesn't make things happen, but rather allows events to control him. He advances from a pawn to a player among the art elite by means of a little savvy and the right connections.

There is an amusing parallel between the Madonna in the tree and Andy Warhol's Gold Marilyn pop art painting which inspired an almost icon-like devotional following. Just as art is illusion, art prices are pulled out of the air and deals are struck amid lies and deceit; the commercialization of art as a hot commodity of the '80s and '90s is the basis for all the wheeling and dealing.

Nick's ethics are called into question when he is implicated in dealing possible forgeries, forcing him to choose between family loyalty and saving his own reputation. Once the puppet of the unscrupulous dealer, Chandler, Nick finds the roles become reversed and he involuntarily begins to take on the persona of his competitor to beat him at his own game.

The reader feels privy to insider deals; the innumerable references to specific artistic works adds a level of realism akin to a walk through the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Loaded with symbolism and wry commentary about human nature and values, Lia Skidmore's shining art does imitate life.

Cindy Patuszynski