The Art Forger
Reading Map

Author

B.A. Shapiro

(photo by Lynn Wayne)

Biography

I am the author of six novels (The Art Forger, The Safe Room, Blind Spot, See No Evil, Blameless and Shattered Echoes), four screenplays (Blind Spot, The Lost Coven, Borderline and Shattered Echoes) and the non-fiction book, The Big Squeeze. In my previous career incarnations, I have directed research projects for a residential substance abuse facility, worked as a systems analyst/statistician, headed the Boston office of a software development firm, and served as an adjunct professor teaching sociology at Tufts University and creative writing at Northeastern University. I like being a novelist the best.

I began my writing career when I quit my high-pressure job after the birth of my second child. Nervous about what to do next, I said to my mother, "If I'm not playing at being superwoman anymore, I don't know who I am." My mother answered with the question: "If you had one year to live, how would you want to spend it?" The answer: write a novel and spend more time with my children. And that's exactly what I did. Smart mother.
After writing six novels and raising my children, I now live in Boston with my husband Dan and my dog Sagan. And yes, I'm working on yet another novel but have no plans to raise any more children.  ([http://bashapirobooks.com/bio](http://bashapirobooks.com/bio))

Official Website: [http://bashapirobooks.com/](http://bashapirobooks.com/)

Blog: [http://bashapirobooks.com/blog](http://bashapirobooks.com/blog)

Bibliography: [http://bashapirobooks.com/books](http://bashapirobooks.com/books)

**The Book**

Overview: [http://bashapirobooks.com/books/the-art-forger-overview](http://bashapirobooks.com/books/the-art-forger-overview)

Book Trailer: [http://youtu.be/uaLmTPOzdHQ](http://youtu.be/uaLmTPOzdHQ)

Reviews:


“The catalyst for Shapiro’s classy and pleasurably suspenseful debut is the legendary art heist of 1990, in which 13 masterpieces were stolen from Boston’s strange and wonderful Isabelle Stewart Gardner Museum. Claire, a superb but frustrated painter who, like art collector Gardner, has been the target of scandal, supports herself by creating high-quality reproductions of Degas paintings for an online art retailer. So when Boston’s most prominent and sexiest gallery owner brings one of the missing Gardner paintings, a Degas, to her studio and offers her a veritable deal with the devil, Claire cannot resist. But she detects the painting’s stunning secret and turns out to be as fine a sleuth as she is an artist. Shapiro dramatizes Claire’s creation of a perfect forgery in fascinating detail and performs some elegant fabrications of her own in the form of risqué letters allegedly written by Gardner. The result is an entracingly visual, historically rich, deliciously witty, sensuous, and smart tale of authenticity versus fakery in which Shapiro artfully turns a clever caper into a provocative meditation on what we value most.” -- Seaman, Donna (Reviewed 09-01-2012)  *(Booklist, vol 109, number 1, p47)*

“Shapiro’s new novel (after The Safe Room) is filled with delightful twists, turns, and ruminations on what constitutes truth in art. Broke and painting copies of famous artists’ work for a reproduction site, artist Claire Roth is enticed by gallery owner Aidan Markel’s request to forge a painting by Degas that was stolen from the Isabella Gardner Museum in 1990 (in the largest unsolved art heist in history). As Claire works, she wonders if the painting she’s forging is legitimate. Meanwhile, Claire steps in when her blocked artist lover can’t finish his work for a deadline,
essentially painting what becomes something of an art world sensation. Her lover slips into denial about her contribution and Clair weighs the repercussions of going public, knowing that it will damage her reputation even more badly than her heart. An intricate shell game exploring the permutations of the craft and ethics of art, Shapiro’s novel is a lively ride, melding Claire’s discoveries with fictionalized 19th-century letters from Gardner that hint at even deeper complexities. The wit, Claire’s passion for her work, what it takes to create a piece that can pass modern scrutiny, and the behind-the-scenes look at the lives of working artists and the machinations of the art world overcome an ending that ties things up too neatly. The choice of present tense for much of the book keeps the reader at a remove from the action, but Shapiro’s research, well-integrated into a strong premise, captivates.” Agent: Ann Collette, Rees Literary. (Oct. 23) --Staff (Reviewed August 13, 2012) (Publishers Weekly, vol 259, issue 33, p)

“By page two of this novel, the reader is fully engrossed into the world of struggling artist Claire Roth, nicknamed "The Great Pretender" who copies famous paintings for a website called . When Aidan Markel, the handsome owner of a prestigious gallery, offers her a show of her own work in exchange for forging a painting, she reluctantly agrees. He brings two paintings to her studio, a supposedly original Degas called After the Bath and a work by an obscure painter of the same size and age. A Degas expert, Claire determines that the Degas in her studio is itself a forgery, and she’s the only who knows. Stripping the paint off of the lesser-known work, she creates another forgery, doing such a good job that art authenticators think it is the original Degas, missing from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum since 1990. (Thirteen works worth over $500 million were actually stolen from the museum at that time.) Aidan lands in jail when the copy is seized by the FBI, and Claire will be too unless she finds the original Degas. In this enthralling intrigue, the yearning to own an original work of art is thoughtfully explored, and the text is interspersed with letters from Gardner herself, describing her relationships with the artists whose work she collected. VERDICT This well-researched work combines real elements (though After the Bath never existed) with the understanding that the art world is as fragile and precarious as the art itself, particularly for young hopefuls. A highly recommended debut that would be great for book discussion groups.” — Lisa Rohrbaugh, Leetonia Community P.L., OH --Lisa Rohrbaugh (Reviewed August 1, 2012) (Library Journal, vol 137, issue 13, p88)

“A cleverly plotted art-world thriller/romance with a murky moral core. That nobody knows anything seems to be Shapiro’s (The Safe Room, 2002, etc., as Barbara Shapiro) assessment of art authentication, given the number of misdetected paintings strewn through her engrossing if unlikely story. In Boston, painter Claire Roth has spent three years dealing with the guilt and scandal of her involvement with Isaac Cullion, whose breakthrough work, 4D, she painted for him when he was blocked. After the picture became a success, Cullion refused to acknowledge Claire’s involvement, and her objections plus the attendant rumors led to his suicide and her vilification. Since then, she has survived financially by painting reproductions, so when influential gallery owner Aiden Markel arrives with a bizarre proposal--her
own show if she will forge a copy of a Degas, one of the pictures stolen from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum--she says yes. As she works, Claire and Aiden become lovers, but she doesn’t tell him about her discovery that the stolen Degas is itself a copy. This knowledge is Claire’s lifeline when the finished forgery is discovered, Aiden and then Claire are both arrested, and only she can save them. Despite a shaky premise, this is convincingly researched, engaging storytelling. Intelligent entertainment.”(Kirkus Reviews, September 15, 2012)

New York Times:  http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/30/books/review/the-art-forger-by-b-a-shapiro.html?_r=0


USA Today:  http://books.usatoday.com/book/%27the-art-forger-is-the-real-thing/r848517

Read-Alikes

1. Dead Line – Brian McGrory
   https://pikp.ent.sirsi.net/client/PPLD/search/results?qu=&qu=TITLE%3Ddead+line+&qu=AUTHOR%3Dmcgrory+

2. The Forgery of Venus – Michael Gruber
   https://pikp.ent.sirsi.net/client/PPLD/search/results?qu=&qu=TITLE%3Dforgery+of+venus+&qu=AUTHOR%3Dgruber+

3. Gone for Good – Harlan Coben
   https://pikp.ent.sirsi.net/client/PPLD/search/results?qu=&qu=TITLE%3Dgone+for+good+&qu=AUTHOR%3Dcuben+

4. Stealing Mona Lisa – Carson Morton
   https://pikp.ent.sirsi.net/client/PPLD/search/results?qu=&qu=TITLE%3Dstealing+mona+lisa+&qu=AUTHOR%3Dmorton+
**Book Themes**

*Gardner Museum Heist & Art Thefts*

**Research / Databases**

**America's News**

**Biography in Context**
http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/bic1/searchResults2/actionWin?faiFallOverType=npbs&resetBreadCrumb=&query=BS%20art%20theft&prodId=BIC1&windowstate=normal&contentModules=&display-query=BS%20art%20theft&mode=view&limiter=&totalSearchResultCount=786&displayGroups=&action=e&catId=&activityType=BasicSearch&scanId=CSh&userGroupName=pike&jsid=7ba00a17e2c04072a9bdd17ce9013942

**Dictionary of American History**
http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CCX3401803630&v=2.1&u=pike&it=r&p=GVRL&sw=w

**Masterfile Premier**

**Newspaper Source**

**U.S. History in Context “Gardner Museum Heist”**
http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/uhic/searchResults2/actionWin?faiFallOverType=&resetBreadCrumb=true&query=BS%20gardner%20museum%20heist&prodId=UHIC&windowstate=normal&contentModules=&display-query=BS%20gardner%20museum%20heist&mode=view&limiter=&totalSearchResultCount=48&displayGroups=&action=e&catId=&activityType=BasicSearch&scanId=CSh&userGroupName=pike&jsid=09cde773236ebb5665c75e5f8daa80fd
U.S. / World History in Context

“Art Theft”

http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/uhic/searchResults2/actionWin?failOverType=&resetBreadCrumb=true&query=BS%20Art%20thefts&prodId=UHIC%3AWHIC>windowstate=normal&contentModules=&display-query=BS%20Art%20thefts&mode=view&limiter=&totalSearchResultCount=1205&displayGroups=&action=e&catId=&activityType=BasicSearch&scanId=CSH&userGroupName=pike&jsid=18307dca13b4c7d45b147d2bdb3517b3

“Art Heist”

http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/uhic/searchResults2/actionWin?failOverType=&resetBreadCrumb=true&query=BS%20art%20heist&prodId=UHIC%3AWHIC>windowstate=normal&contentModules=&display-query=BS%20art%20heist&mode=view&limiter=&totalSearchResultCount=140&displayGroups=&action=e&catId=&activityType=BasicSearch&scanId=CSH&userGroupName=pike&jsid=1896e1d947374e709343c3c561a60

Books

Nonfiction

Gardner Museum
https://pikp.ent.sirsi.net/client/PPLD/search/results?qu=%22gardner+museum%22&te=&lm=PPLD

Art Thefts
https://pikp.ent.sirsi.net/client/PPLD/search/results?qu=Art+thefts.&qf=LOCATION%09Shelf+Location%091%3ANONFICTION%09Non-Fiction&lm=PPLD

Fiction

Art Thefts
https://pikp.ent.sirsi.net/client/PPLD/search/results?qu=Art+thefts.&qf=LOCATION%09Shelf+Location%091%3AFICTION%09Fiction+%7C%7C+1%3AMYSTERY%09Mystery+%7C%7C+1%3ATEENFICTION%09Teen+Fiction&lm=PPLD

Films / Video

Art Theft
https://pikp.ent.sirsi.net/client/PPLD/search/results?qu=art+theft&qf=ITYPE%09Material+Type%091%3ADVD%09DVD+%7C%7C+1%3ADVDSET%09DVD+Sets&lm=PPLD
The Great Gardner Heist (NPR)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84iJDlWfXaE

Websites

Art Theft - FBI
http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/vc_majorthefts/arttheft

The Gardner Heist – Boston Globe Special Report

The Gardner Heist and Stolen Art (NPR)
http://onpoint.wbur.org/2010/02/24/stolen-art

Greatest Heists in Art History (BBC)
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/3590106.stm

The Isabella Gardner Museum Heist (CNN)

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Theft (FBI)
http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/vc_majorthefts/arttheft/isabella

Isabella Gardner Museum Theft Overview
http://www.gardnermuseum.org/resources/theft

Ripped from the Walls (and the Headlines)
http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/ripped.html

Stolen – The Film
http://www.stolenthefilm.com/index.html

Art Forgery

Research / Databases

Academic Search Premier
Newspaper Source
“Art Forgery”
http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nfh&bquery=%26quot%3bart+forgery%26quot%3b&type=0&site=ehost-live

“Art Forger”
http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nfh&bquery=%26quot%3bart+forger%26quot%3b&type=0&site=ehost-live

U.S./World History in Context
“Art Forgeries”
http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/uhic/searchResults2/actionWin?failOverType=&resetBreadCrumb=true&query=BS%20art%20forgeries&prodId=UHIC%3AWHIC&windowstate=normal&contentModules=&display-query=BS%20art%20forgeries&mode=view&limiter=&totalSearchResultCount=161&displayGroups=&action=e&catId=&activityType=BasicSearch&scanId=CSH&userGroupName=pike&jsid=376fd547d64a7097401d9bfe7b36c085

“Art Forger”
http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/uhic/searchResults2/actionWin?failOverType=&resetBreadCrumb=true&query=BS%20art%20forger&prodId=UHIC%3AWHIC&windowstate=normal&contentModules=&display-query=BS%20art%20forger&mode=view&limiter=&totalSearchResultCount=67&displayGroups=&action=e&catId=&activityType=BasicSearch&scanId=CSH&userGroupName=pike&jsid=51493b722f8e20bb41731e3bcd971a60

Books

Nonfiction

Art Forgeries
https://pikp.ent.sirsi.net/client/PPLD/search/results?qu=art+forgeries&qf=LOCATION%09Shelf+Location%091%3ABIOGRAPHY%09Biography+%7C%7C+1%3ANONFIC%09Non-Fiction&lm=PPLD

Art Forger
http://tinyurl.com/o4r9lm5
Fiction

Art Forgeries
https://pikp.ent.sirsi.net/client/PPLD/search/results?qu=art+forgeries&qf=LOCATION%09Shelf+Location%09FICTION%09Fiction+%7C%7C+LOCATION%09PRINT%09Large+Print+%7C%7C+LOCATION%09MYSTERY%09Mystery+%7C%7C+LOCATION%09PAPER%09Paperback+%7C%7C+LOCATION%09YOUNG+FICTION%09Teen+Fiction&lm=PPLD

Art Forger
https://pikp.ent.sirsi.net/client/PPLD/search/results?qu=art+forger&qf=LOCATION%09Shelf+Location%09FICTION%09Fiction+%7C%7C+LOCATION%09PRINT%09Large+Print+%7C%7C+LOCATION%09MYSTERY%09Mystery&lm=PPLD

Websites

Art Attack (The Why Files)
http://www.whyfiles.org/081/art_sci/

The Art of Deception (Infoplease)
http://www.infoplease.com/spot/hoax5.html

The Art of the Fake: Egyptian Forgeries from the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology (Internet Public Library)
http://www.ipl.org/div/kelsey/

Association for Research into Crimes Against Art
http://art-crime.blogspot.com/

Catching a Copy (NOVA)
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/tech/art-authentication-fake.html

FBI Fine Art Forgeries

Museum Security Network: Sources of Information on Art Forgery
http://www.museum-security.org/forgery1.htm

Recognizing the Many Faces of Art Forgeries (Dummies.com)
http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/recognizing-the-many-faces-of-art-forgeries.html
What is Art Crime? (Damforst Museum)
http://www.damforstmuseum.org/what_is_art_crime.html

Isabella Stewart Gardner / Gardner Museum

Image


Research / Databases

Academic Search Premier

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http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/bic1/searchResults2/actionWin?failOverType=&resetBreadCrumb=&query=ACID%202013034450%20OR%202013034449&prodId=BIC1&windowstate=normal&contentModules=&display-query=ACID%20%22Gardner%2C%20Isabella%20Stewart%22&mode=view&limiter=&totalSearchResultCount=41&displayGroups=&action=e&catId=&activityType=PersonSearch&scanId=CSH&userGroupName=pike&jsid=e02f94bce0420b8079107862b92c7bb3

National Newspaper Index
http://infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/549/796/196489771w16/purl=rc2_NNI_1_isabella+stewart+gardner

Newspaper Source
Websites

*Isabella Stewart Gardner Biography (Answers.com)*
http://www.answers.com/topic/gardner-isabella-stewart

*Isabella Stewart Gardner (Boston Women’s Heritage Trail)*
http://bwht.org/isabella-stewart-gardner/

*Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum*
http://www.gardnermuseum.org/

*Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (National Park Service)*
http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/pwwmh/ma65.htm

Video

*Great Museums: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Webisode)*
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oL8FCQmIOPo
Edgar Degas

Image

http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/bic1/ImagesDetailsPage/ImagesDetailsWindow?total=3&query=&prodId=BIC1&windowstate=normal&mode=view&limiter=&displayGroupName=Images&currPage=1&sortBy=relevance%2Cdescending&action=e&catid=GALE%7C7CAA000040653&view=docDisplay&documentId=GALE%7CPC4205129899&userGroupName=pike&jsid=0e1b0b6093f63b3dcc167a7e81db676b

Research / Databases

Academic Search Premier
http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&bquery=PE+%26quot%3bDEGAS%2c+Edgar%2c+1834-1917%26quot%3b&type=0&site=ehost-live

Biography in Context
http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/bic1/person2/actionWin?resetBreadCrumb=&query=&prodId=BIC1&windowstate=normal&contentModules=&display=query=&mode=view&limiter=&showDisambiguation=false&displayGroups=&action=e&catid=GALE%7C7CAA000040653&scanId=&userGroupName=pike&jsid=7df456a7fa34f2a9b3dae67d6d4cc887

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World Book Online
http://www.worldbookonline.com/pl/referencecenter/article?id=ar152360&st=degas

World History in Context
http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/whic/searchResults2/actionWin?failOverType=&resetBreadCrumb=true&query=BS%20edgar%20degas&prodId=WHIC&windowstate=normal&contentModules=&display=query=BS%20edgar%20degas&mode=view&limiter=&totalSearchResultCou
**Books**

*Nonfiction*

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*Fiction*

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**Films**

https://pikp.ent.sirsi.net/client/PPLD/search/results?qu=edgar+degas&qf=LOCATION%09Shelf+Location%091%3ANONFIC%09Non-Fiction&lm=PPLD

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*Degas and the Dance (PBS)*

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/shows/degas/degas.html

*Edgar Degas (1834-1917): Painting and Drawing (Metropolitan Museum of Art)*

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/dgsp/hd_dgsp.htm

*Edgar Degas (Biography.com)*

http://www.biography.com/people/edgar-degas-9269770

*Edgar Degas (Norton Simon Museum)*


*Google Art Project – Degas*

http://www.googleartproject.com/search/?q=degas

*Khan Academy – Degas*

http://www.khanacademy.org/search?page_search_query=degas

**Video**

*Self-portrait, Edgar Degas (Getty Museum)*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwYfZHmB0A