

**ART: A  
COMMODITY.  
PP.11-57**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649301065

Art: A Commodity. pp.11-57 by Sheridan Ford

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**SHERIDAN FORD**

**ART: A  
COMMODITY.  
PP.11-57**



15

# ART: A COMMODITY

3997

BY SHERIDAN FORD

---

- I. THE MIDDLEMAN
- II. MOUNTEBANKS AND PAINT
- III. THE VOICE OF THE AUCTIONEER
- IV. FORGERY BY BRUSH
- V. PICTURE SHOWS AND SHAMS
- VI. THE MAN OF LETTERS



NEW YORK:

1888

I INSCRIBE  
THESE SKETCHES TO  
A GROUP OF PAINTERS WHO BEAR  
TO-DAY UPON THEIR BRUSH-TIPS THE HONOR  
OF

AMERICAN ART:

INNESS	TRYON	MURPHY	DEWEY
WALKER	WEIR	DEWING	BRUSH
CHASE	BLUM	FITZ	MOWBRAY
LAFARGE	PEARCE	DAVIS	WHISTLER
DANNAT	CURRIER	SARGENT	HARRISON
VEDDER	VAIL	MOSLER	ALEXANDER

THE PICTURE BUSINESS AS DAILY HANDLED SEEMS TO BE  
MISSING ITS RIGHT AIM AND DEFEATING ITS OWN CHANCES.  
IN SAD PROPORTION TO ITS BROAD DISTANCES IS ITS PRESENT  
FOREGROUND CRUDE WITH CONFUSION AND CLAMOR.

# CONTENTS

---

## I

### THE MIDDLEMAN

**I** NCREASING COMPETITION—FOREIGN HOUSES BATTLING FOR A FOOTHOLD—  
THE AUCTIONEER THE ADJUNCT OF THE DEALER—RISE OF THE BUSINESS—  
AMERICA ONLY FAIRLY ENTERED ON ITS LARGER AND PERMANENT PICTURE  
BUYING ERA—THE DEALER—THE COLLECTOR—TRADE ETHICS—A LOWER  
MORALE THAN THAT OF THE BOOT AND SHOE BUSINESS—ART DEGRADED—THE  
SALESMAN—A PROFITABLE CUSTOMER—MR. GEORGE I. SENEY AND "THE HELP-  
ING HAND"—A SWINGING PROFIT MARGIN—THE NEWSPAPER AND INFLATED  
PRICES—COLLECTORS WHO WANT NOTORIETY AND ARE WILLING TO PAY FOR IT  
—INFORMED BUYERS OF THE INCREASE.

## II

### MOUNTEBANKS AND PAINT

**T** HE PAINTER APPEALS TO THE SHOWMAN—REPUTATIONS MADE WITH PRINTER'S  
INK—THE GENESIS OF THE IDEA—MR. FRITH AND THE ADVANCE AGENT—  
THE THOUGHT VS. THE THING—A PHASE OF CURRENT ART DEMORALIZATION—  
IMPUDENT ASSERTION AND BLATANT PRETENCE—GENIUS BEGGING—THE HOME  
OF THE MOUNTEBANK—SPECIALS IN LONDON—PARIS CUSTOMS—MR. WHISTLER'S  
OPINION OF M. PETIT—"A GRASPING NATURE THAT APPROACHES THE INDECENT"  
SALACIOUS BOULEVARD SHOWS—INDECENCY AT THE SALON—AMERICAN METHODS  
—A GROWING NEW YORK CUSTOM—WHERE EXTREMES MEET—AN OVERLOOKED  
FUNCTION OF THE SPECIAL—THE DANGER OF MASSES OF MEDIOCRITY—SELF-STYLED  
ART PROMOTERS—THE "CRESCENT" EXHIBITION—AN APPEAL TO PATRIOTISM—



MEN WHO WANT TO HELP A GOOD CAUSE AND DON'T KNOW HOW—AMERICAN ART  
IN NO NEED OF A WET NURSE—THE TARIFF—SOME SHARP PRACTICE—  
CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAMS—A BLEAK OUTLOOK FOR REMEDIAL LEGISLATION  
—“OF WHAT USE ARE THESE FLOWERS TO ME AND MY CONSTITUENTS?”

III

THE VOICE OF THE AUCTIONEER

THE HOME OF CHEAP AUCTIONS—PICTURE TRAMPS—ORDAR STREET SCENES—A  
SALON CANVAS THAT HAS TRAVELLED—THE LEARNED APPRAISER—NO USE  
FOR A VENUS DE MILO WITHOUT ARMS—DOESN'T KNOW COBOT PERSONALLY—  
THE AUCTION DEFINED—TRICKS OF THE TRADE—A TYPICAL SALE—A BERLIN  
PAINTER WITH A PEDIGREE—THE VERY LATEST KINK—AN AUCTION'S TRUE  
FUNCTION—PAUPER PICTURE IMMIGRATION—AMERICA THE DUMPING-GROUND  
FOR FRANCE, GERMANY AND ITALY—COL. SELLERS' OPPORTUNITY.

IV

FORGERY BY BRUSH

FRAUDULENT WORK IN AMERICAN GALLERIES—THE RUN ON FRANCE—PICTURE  
FACTORIES IN NEW YORK—THE MARE'S NEST OF THE EVENING POST—SOME  
CURRENT FALLACIES—AN UNRECOGNIZED QUAKER CITY GENIUS—FOREIGNERS  
CHIEFLY TO BLAME—MR. AVEBY'S AUTHENTIC GUARANTEE—M. GREVILLE'S  
CONCLUSIONS—AN HONEST DEALER'S DUTY—CERTAINTY NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE—  
MM. DUPRÉ AND VAN MARCKE—HOW THE FORMER WAS DECEIVED—PARIS THE  
HOME OF PICTURE FRAUDS—A MORAL IDIOT—THE STORY OF A DE NEUVILLE—  
M. PETIT ESCAPES THE LAW—HOW DUMAS FILS DID NOT BUY A COBOT—VAN  
BREERS' SHAMELESS SWINDLES—FORGERIES COMMON IN CONTINENTAL ATHLETES.

V

PICTURE SHOWS AND SHAMS

THE PASSION PLAY CONDEMNED—MUNKEACX'S LOUD-VOICED PROPHECY—A  
VERY SOUL-STIRRING SPECTACLE—THE ART OF TRADING ON RELIGIOUS  
SENTIMENT—PHILADELPHIA PHILANTHROPY—ALL RECORDS BROKEN—SUCCESS

FOLLOWED UP—AN IMPRESSIONABLE MILLIONAIRE WHO SCORNS CHEAP PICTURES  
—SENSATION SHOWS THE FASHION—ATROCITIES YET TO COME—AMERICA A  
FERTILE FIELD FOR WARY SPECULATORS.

VI

THE MAN OF LETTERS

ART SOPHISTICATED—UNLETTERED CRITICISM—THE PICTURE FETTER—W. M.  
HUNT AND THE BARBIZON SCHOOL—THE TRUE ART LOVER—THE CRITIC  
HERE TO STAY—SIR JOHN MILLAIS DENOUNCES THE GUILD—ART AND THE  
DAILIES—FACT-MEN NOT WANTED—LITTLE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE HERALD  
AND TIMES—MR. JOSEPH PULITZER'S MERCANTILE METHODS—KINDERGARTEN  
JOURNALISM—THE DREARY DISSEMINATIONS OF THE EVENING POST—THE  
PERIODICAL PRESS—IS TRUTH COMMERCIAL?—THE WRITER SACRIFICED TO THE  
LITHOGRAPHER—PICTURE PAPERS VS. NEWSPAPERS—THE CRITIC'S WORK—  
CONDUCTING EDITORS IGNORANT OF ART—THE ADVERTISER THE REAL EDITOR—  
THE DEMOCRATIC VISTA.

1000