



Exhibit Reads at the Haggin Museum

March 29, 2025 | 1:30 – 3 PM

Cracking the Case: Guiding Questions for *The Disappearing Gauguin*

These questions are designed to guide readers through the main concepts of *The Case of the Disappearing Gauguin: A Study of Authenticity and the Art Market*, exploring themes such as provenance, authenticity, the art market, and cultural heritage. For our gathering, you are not expected to answer all the questions; they are simply an aid to help you reflect on the book and spark meaningful discussion. We look forward to an engaging conversation!

Provenance and Historical Context

1. How does the painting's provenance, from Louis Roy to Sacha Guitry to the McKees, reflect broader themes of art's journey through private collections and the market?
2. What role does the absence of complete provenance play in shaping our understanding of *Flowers and Fruit's* authenticity?
3. How does the author use the history of auctions and art dealers to illustrate the relationship between art and commerce?
4. What social, economic, or cultural forces influenced *Flowers and Fruit's* transition from a private collection to the Haggin Museum?

Authenticity and Attribution

5. As explored in the book, what are the strengths and limitations of the three tools for authenticating art provenance, connoisseurship, and scientific analysis?
6. How does the story of the Greenhalgh family's forgery operation illuminate the vulnerabilities of the art world?
7. What does the discovery of Louis Roy's stamp on the back of *Flowers and Fruit* contribute to its authentication?
8. In what ways does the uncertainty surrounding *Flowers and Fruit* challenge traditional definitions of what constitutes an "authentic" work of art?

Gauguin's Life and Work

9. How does Paul Gauguin's background and artistic career shape the interpretation of works attributed to him?
10. What does the painting's inscription to Louis Roy suggest about Gauguin's relationships with his contemporaries and collaborators?
11. How does the cultural context of Gauguin's time (such as the Post-Impressionist movement) frame the analysis of *Flowers and Fruit*?

Art Market Dynamics

12. What does the book reveal about the art market's role in creating and perpetuating an artist's legacy?
13. How did figures like Etienne Bignou and Sacha Guitry use their networks to influence the perceived value and circulation of Gauguin's works?
14. What role does celebrity play in the art market, as demonstrated by Sacha Guitry's purchase and promotion of *Flowers and Fruit*?

Cultural Heritage and Museums

15. How does the story of *Flowers and Fruit* highlight the divide between regional museums like the Haggin and global art centers like Paris or New York?
16. What are the implications of *Flowers and Fruit* being labeled as "disparu" (disappeared) in the art world despite its visibility in Stockton?
17. How does the museum's broader mission to preserve local pioneer history interact with its stewardship of *Flowers and Fruit*?
18. What does the painting's journey into the Haggin Museum's collection say about the role of small museums in preserving art with complex histories?

Broader Reflections on Art and History

19. How does the history of *Flowers and Fruit* challenge traditional narratives about the permanence and prominence of famous works of art?
20. What does the story of *Flowers and Fruit* reveal about the intersection of art, memory, and the construction of cultural identity?