



# Mistress of Modernism: The Life of Peggy Guggenheim

*Mary V. Dearborn*

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## **Mistress of Modernism: The Life of Peggy Guggenheim** Mary V. Dearborn

Peggy Guggenheim emerges in *Mistress of Modernism* as the ultimate self-invented woman, a cultural mover and shaker who broke away from her poor-little-rich-girl origins to shape a life for herself as the enfant terrible of the art world. Peggy's visionary Art of This Century gallery in New York, which brought together the European surrealist artists with the American abstract expressionists, was an epoch-shaking "happening" at the center of its time.

Dearborn's unprecedented access to the Guggenheim family, friends, and papers contributes rich insight to Peggy's traumatic childhood in German-Jewish "Our Crowd" New York, her self-education in the ways of art and artists, her caustic battles with other art-collecting Guggenheims, and her legendary sexual appetites: her lovers included Max Ernst, Samuel Beckett, and Marcel Duchamp, to name a mere few. Here too is a poignant portrait of Peggy's last years as l'ultima dogaressa -- the last duchess -- in her palazzo in Venice, where her collection still draws thousands of visitors every year.

*Mistress of Modernism* is the first definitive biography of a woman whose wit, passion, and provocative legacy come compellingly to life.

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