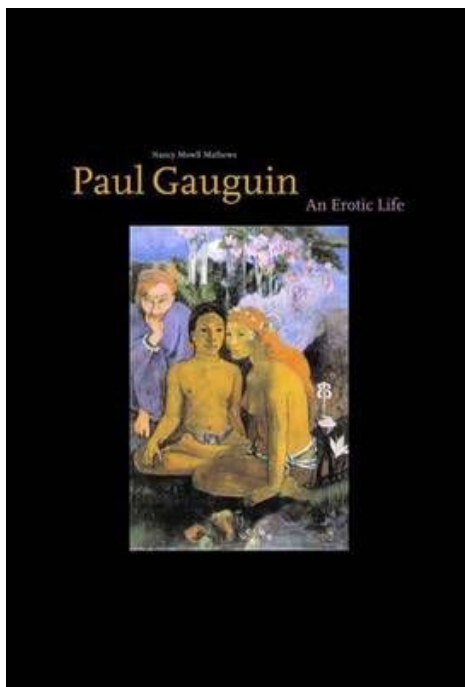


Paul Gauguin : An Erotic Life

Nancy Mowll Mathews



In this penetrating and daring biography of Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), Nancy Mowll Mathews traces the themes of sex and violence through the artist's life, from the near-murderous quarrels of his grandparents, to his abusive treatment of his wife, to his sexual encounters in French Polynesia in the 1890s. The book examines how Gauguin used these complex themes in his art and writings and how he carefully presented his erotic life in the autobiographical treatises *Noa Noa* (1893) and *Avant et Apres* (1903). The central drama of Gauguin's adulthood, his marriage to Mette Gad Gauguin, is assessed in detail, and with the inclusion of some of Mette's previously unpublished letters, both sides of the Gauguin marriage are presented for the first time. Mathews also provides fascinating new insights into understanding Gauguin's relationships with men and women and the roles that sexuality and aggression played in shaping his art. She also illuminates his homosocial, if not homoerotic, relationships with Vincent van Gogh, Emile Schuffenecker, and Charles Filiger. Gauguin's genius resided not only in his forging of new artistic paths, Mathews concludes, but in his ability to bring his sexual fantasies alive for a large audience.

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