



The Nation's Mantelpiece: A History of the National Gallery

Jonathan Conlin

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Ever since its conception in 1824, the National Gallery has been part of British national life to an extent unmatched by any other great museum. The first history of the Gallery ever published, this unique account traces the development of an institution whose superlative collections often set the pace in art history, but whose dependence on parliamentary funding regularly implicated it in political debates surrounding education, social cohesion, and national heritage. The story of the Gallery's holdings offers an intriguing opportunity to follow the changes in taste and connoisseurship that have helped create the Old Master canon; and the design, history, and location of the building itself also receive close attention. Copiously illustrated with 60 of its most significant paintings, as well as previously unpublished architectural plans, cartoons, and other images, this is an insightful account of a British treasure.

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