



Additional Resources:

This program, slideshow, and links below can be found at Rosenberg Library
www.rosenberg-library.org

For additional web resources, please visit:

<http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2014/07/goldfinch-donna-tartt-literary-criticism>

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/moviesnow/la-et-mn-donna-tartt-goldfinch-warner-bros-pulitzer-20140728-story.html>

<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/carel-fabritius>

AUTHOR BIO

Born in 1963, novelist Donna Tartt grew up in the small town of Grenada, Mississippi. Her love of literature was evident at an early age, with her first sonnet published at age thirteen. She enrolled the University of Mississippi in 1981, and made an immediate impression on her professors. Recognizing her talent, they encouraged her to transfer to the writing program at Bennington College, a liberal arts school in Vermont. It was there that she began writing her first novel, *The Secret History*. The book was published in 1992 and became an overnight sensation, making Tartt a literary celebrity at just 28 years old. Her second novel, *The Little Friend*, was published in 2002, and it too received critical acclaim. Tartt's much-anticipated, 800-page third work, *The Goldfinch*, was released in 2013. It received the 2013 National Book Critics Circle Award, the 2014 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction, and the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. Donna Tartt was named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in 2014.

PROGRAM AGENDA

Spring 2015

April 8 · May 21

12:00 noon

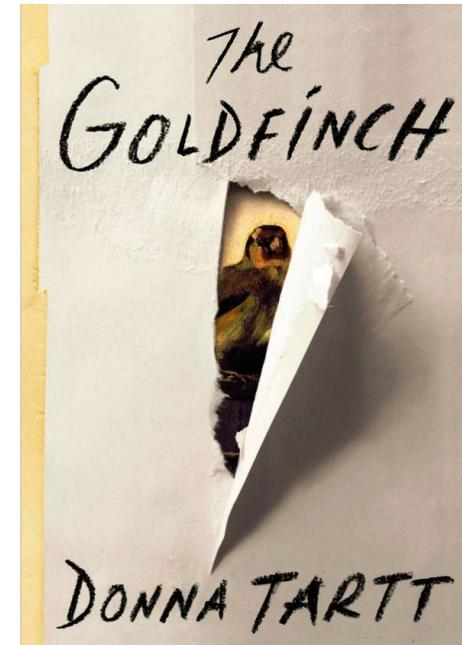
Welcome & Introductions

12:00-12:20

Screening of Author Interview

12:20-1:00

Book Discussion



**Rosenberg Library's
Museum Book Club provides a forum for
discovery and discussion, linking literary
selections with art from our permanent
collection.**



"The Goldfinch" is a rarity that comes along perhaps half a dozen times per decade, a smartly written literary novel that connects with the heart as well as the mind. I read it with that mixture of terror and excitement I feel watching a pitcher carry a no-hitter into the late innings. You keep waiting for the wheels to fall off, but in the case of "The Goldfinch," they never do.

-author Stephen King from his New York Times review of The Goldfinch

CAREL FABRITIUS (1622-1654)

[artist's self-portrait; image courtesy of National Gallery of London]

"Its tone, language, and story belong in children's literature...Tartt's consoling message, blared in the book's final pages, is that what will survive of us is great art, but this seems an anxious compensation, as if Tartt were unconsciously acknowledging that the 2013 'Goldfinch' might not survive the way the 1654 'Goldfinch' has."

"I think that the rapture with which this novel has been received is further proof of the infantilization of our literary culture: a world in which adults go around reading *Harry Potter*."

-critic James Wood in The New Yorker



A GOLDFINCH IN FLIGHT

Discussion...

Author Donna Tartt has said that a good book should captivate readers page by page, in part because they care about the characters.

Has she accomplished this in *The Goldfinch*? Were you concerned about what happened to the characters, and did the story engage you? Which characters did you feel most connected to?

Discussion...

Many readers feel that portions of the novel should have been cut. Did you enjoy the detailed information about Carel Fabritius and his painting of the goldfinch? What about Hobie's antique restorations?

Discussion...

What do you think about the Barbour Family? Do you believe they were pleased or resentful to take Theo in after the death of his mother? Were you surprised by their reactions when Theo re-enters their lives as an adult?

Discussion...

As an alcoholic and a compulsive gambler, Theo's father is negligent and irresponsible. Does he possess any redeeming qualities? Does his girlfriend?

You know, the fun thing about writing a book is that it really is a different life, just as reading it is like a different life for the reader. I don't want to write about my own life, I want to write about someone else's, to live someone else's life.

-author Donna Tartt



DONNA TARTT

(image courtesy of salon.com)

Discussion...

Many readers consider Boris to be the most colorful and vividly portrayed character in the novel. Do you find him captivating as Theo and others around him do? Was his influence over Theo a good thing or a bad thing?

What do you think will happen to Theo in the future? Will he end up with Kitsy or Pippa? Why do you think Tartt left this open ended?