



***PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN LADY***

**By María Gainza**

**Translated by Thomas Bunstead**

**pISBN:9781646220328**

**On Sale March 22nd, 2022**

**Early rave reviews from *THE WASHINGTON POST*, *NEW YORK TIMES*  
Translation Preview, WNYC's "ALL OF IT"**

**February excerpt in print edition of *Harper's***

**Starred and boxed reviews by both *Publisher's Weekly* and *Kirkus***

**Most Anticipated title by The Rumpus, Lithub and The Millions**

**An Indie Next Pick for April**

**Review coverage confirmed at *New York Times Book Review*, *New York Review of Books*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Words Without Borders***

**Strong interest from NPR's Weekend Edition, *Ms.*, *The New Yorker*,  
*Airmail*, *Vox*, *TIME*, and more**

**ADVANCE PRAISE**

"A sometimes lush, sometimes minimally inflected—Camus's *The Stranger* comes to mind— tale of a master art counterfeiter named Renee and her bohemian disciples (including the narrator) paints a colorful picture of the Buenos Aires art world of the past century." —Richard Lipez, *The Washington Post*

"Gainza weaves a fascinating, often confounding story about beauty, obsession and authenticity . . . Like Bolaño, she writes stories within stories, each with its own melancholy mood and unsolvable mystery . . . A novel with many beautiful, confounding moments. Maria Gainza is sharp, modern and playful, a writer who multiplies the possibilities for fiction." —Johanna Thomas-Corr, *The Guardian*

"A truly exquisite novel... moving, clever and written with a wry precision."  
—Stuart Kelly, *The Scotsman*

"The mutable, esoteric art world is again the setting for award-winning Argentinian Gainza's latest, deftly translated by British writer-editor Bunstead . . . Shrewd audiences will surely enjoy the engrossing challenge of an unpredictable pursuit." —*Booklist*

"The work of an author in full command of her talents. The result is an exploration of identity and authenticity that asks what it means to be 'real,' as the term is applied either to a work of art or to a life . . . Subtle, incandescent, and luminous—a true master's work." —*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

"Intelligent and tensile . . . A loose investigation into the nature of art and of memory, scattered with gems of intrigue and insight." —Emily Temple, *Lit Hub*, One of the Most Anticipated Books of the Year

"Vividly detailed and saturated with intricate feeling, Gainza's novel is an engrossing exploration of authenticity, obsession, and the enveloping allure of art." —Alexandra Kleeman, author of *Something New Under the Sun*

"This captivating work is one to savor." —*Publishers Weekly* (boxed and starred review)

"There are many pleasures to be had in reading *Portrait of an Unknown Lady*: its sublime, transcendent sentences, its arch and shadowy figures. Most of all, the zone to which you are transported, which is a Buenos Aires of canvases, trap doors, and dreams." —Amina Cain, author of *Indelicacy*

### **Advance Bookseller Praise**

"It's books like this that make me so thankful for publishers like Catapult. *Portrait of an Unknown Lady* is challenging, complex, quiet, and a little maddening at times. There were moments when I thought I might even abandon it, and yet, I didn't. I couldn't. I just knew that the end would tie it up in a fascinating and satisfying way. Maria Gainza is concerned with authenticity in both life and art, and *Portrait of an Unknown Lady* grapples with possibility from beginning to end. Is an artist defined by the art they make? What if that art is forged? What makes a person authentic in a world that seeks to commodify everything? And what happens when searching for authenticity becomes an obsession, subsumes the self in the other?" —Margaret Leonard, Dotter's Books (Eau Claire, WI)

“An utterly mesmerizing story about authenticity and authority in the contemporary art world. Gainza's voice and her ability to plumb the psychological depths of her characters are unmatched. I couldn't put it down.” —Lesley Rains, City of Asylum Books (Pittsburgh, PA)

“Maria Gainza takes readers on a thought-provoking quest for truths about forgery in an atmospheric neo-noir novel. Just what an artist--and an art market--should aspire to are questions that loom over the narrator's obsessive quest to learn about a largely forgotten past, and an entirely lost artist.” —Keith Mosman, Powell's Books (Portland, OR)

“I defy anyone to read this without a smile creeping out on their face. It's just so smart, quick, sly and very quietly, insidiously funny. Respectfully playful with ideas of art, philosophy, literature - it is an amazing accomplishment. You can't help but care for the characters while knowing they are possibly not what any of them seem to be or think themselves. This is just the kind of high art fun that we need right now; not to be missed.” —Anne Whalen, Brown University Bookstore (Providence, RI)

“Oooohhh, new delicious fun. A mystery out of Buenos Aires, translated just for us! We've got the art world (forgery can be big business, you know), a forger who seems to be a woman, a group of artists who meet regularly and may be connected to our artist-of-fakes, and an art critic/ auction-house worker who is plunged into the fray as an amateur sleuth out to find the culprit. You'll love this, especially if you're into art and a story told with literary flare!” —Linda Bond, Auntie's (Spokane, WA)