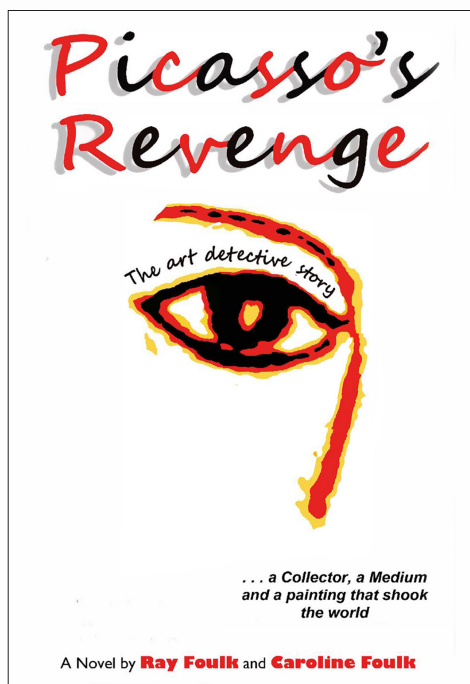




Media Pack



Picasso's Revenge

By Ray and Caroline Foulk

Available 25 September 2019

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232mm x 150mm Portrait

Hardback

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Fiction, Art, Historical Figures

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Occult, modern art at its most raw, and sexual depravity.

As the 20th century unfolds, amid massive upheaval – scientific, political and technological – an artistic revolution explodes in Paris. Avid collector Jacques Doucet and young Pablo Picasso, from opposite sides of the tracks, have parallel struggles – but when the troubled doyen of supreme taste, haunted by his own past, buys Picasso's most shocking painting, he creates chaos in his elegant world. Picasso relies upon Doucet to be champion of his future legacy to the world, but this cannot be achieved without uncovering some of the artist's darkest secrets.

When modern art was born it caused an eruption of seismic proportions. Nothing would ever be the same again. The look of the twentieth century was cast.

These traumatic events are mirrored in the life of Jacques Doucet who travelled from 'pillar of the establishment' to principle patron of the radical avant-garde. This is the remarkable story of a refined and immaculate gentleman who descends into the world of the occult, modern art at its most raw, and sexual depravity.

When Doucet buys Picasso's monumental brothel painting, *Les Femmes d'Alger*, is he ready for his final transformation?

Contents

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Biography – Ray Foulk

Short Bio

Ray Foulk is a renowned festival promoter, art collector and author on French Art Deco masters and twentieth century decorative art.

Medium Bio

Ray Foulk is a renowned curator and author on French Art Deco masters and twentieth century decorative art. Ray founded the Isle of Wight Festivals of Music in 1968 with his brother Ronald Anthony (Ron) and has also written on the 1960's counterculture and rock festivals rock music charting his days as a festival promoter and organiser. Originally from Chesterfield, Derbyshire, Ray now lives and works in Oxford.

Long Bio

Ray Foulk is an architect and graduate of Christ's College, Cambridge. He is a renowned curator and author on French Art Deco masters and twentieth century decorative art. Titles include three hardback ribbon tied folio catalogues: *Ruhlmann Centenary Exhibition: Centenary Exhibition, Emil-Jacques Ruhlmann - 1879-1933*; *The Extraordinary Work of Süe et Mare: La Compagnie des Arts Français, Marie-Louise Süe (1875-1968), André Mare (1887-1932)*. *Betty Joel: Celtic Spirit from the Orient (1894 -1985)*. He has worked in a writing partnership with his daughter Caroline Foulk for many years.

Ray founded the Isle of Wight Festivals of Music in 1968 with his brother Ronald Anthony (Ron) and has written on the 1960's counterculture, rock festivals and rock music, charting his days as a festival promoter and organiser. Titles including, *When the World Came to the Isle of Wight: Stealing Dylan From Woodstock*; *The Last Great Event*; and *the Isle of Wight Festival Experience*. Originally from Chesterfield, Derbyshire, Ray now lives and works in Oxford near his four grown up children and grandchildren. *Picasso's Revenge* is his debut novel, written with Caroline Foulk.

Biography – Caroline Foulk

Short Bio

Caroline Foulk is a playwright and teacher and has worked alongside her father Ray on various projects in art, environment and architecture.

Medium Bio

Caroline Foulk is an author and has worked alongside her father Ray on various projects in art, environment and architecture. Graduating from Northampton University with an arts degree and the knowledge that her strengths lay in painting and writing, she trained as a school teacher where her English lessons were a hit with spirited teenagers. While scripting and managing the Schools *Blue Planet Day* project Caroline wrote a multi-media play and had her renewable energy workshop filmed as a national resource for schools. She co-wrote Ray Foulk's memoirs of promoting the original Isle of Wight Festivals. Born on the Isle of Wight, Caroline, mother of three now lives in Oxford with her partner and daughter.

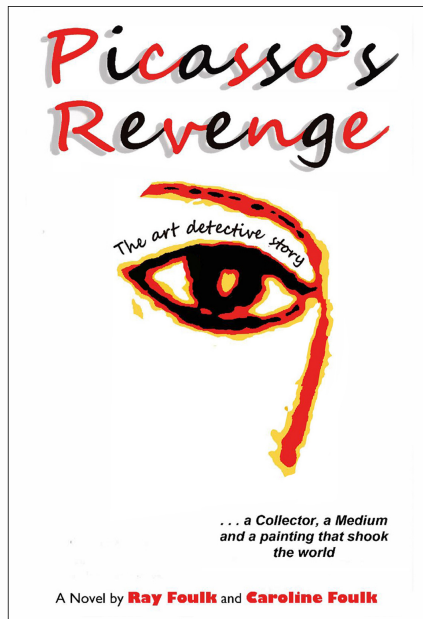
Long Bio

Caroline Foulk is a playwright and teacher and has worked alongside her father Ray for many years on various art, environmental and architectural projects. After winning a national painting competition at age six and attending special classes for the literary elite at high school it was clear that Caroline's strengths lay in painting and writing. Graduating from Northampton University with a degree in Combined Arts, she trained as a school teacher. Her English and Media Studies lessons were a hit with spirited teenagers, which in turn helped her to overcome a reserved nature.

As a passionate environmentalist and an advocate of climate change education, Caroline has been a director of the *Millennium Debate* Charity and organised and managed the schools *Blue Planet Day* project including writing a multi-media play. Her flagship renewable energy workshop was chosen for national screening for the benefit of school teachers. She is also the co-writer of Ray Foulk's two volume memoir, [*When the World Came to the Isle of Wight*](#) (*The Last Great Event*), and [*Stealing Dylan From Woodstock*](#).

Born on the Isle of Wight, Caroline, mother of three now lives in Oxford with her partner, musician Johnny Hinkes and daughter Bonnie.

Images Available for Download



Cover Image

1770px x 2737px

599 dpi



Ray & Caroline Foulk

1080 x 1111 px

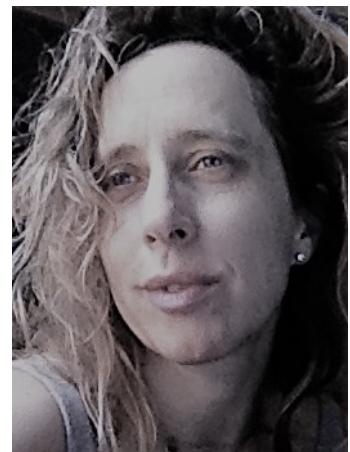
96 dpi



Ray Foulk

666 x 855 px

72 dpi



Caroline Foulk

261 x 348 px

72 dpi



Les Demoiselles at Doucet's

1260 x 1681 px 220 dpi

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Les Demoiselles 4924 x 5100

px 300 dpi

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Synopsis

In 1924 the Parisian couturier-collector Jacques Doucet buys Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* (O.J.). Soon afterwards the collector finds his wife Jeanne organising the removal of the giant 'brothel' painting from their home, deeming it obscene. For Doucet the painting's resonance is profound. He believes it has an ethereal connection with his former lover Mme Sonia Roux, who died 14 years earlier. His agony over this loss erupts. Jeanne also knows of Sonia's connection and walks out, vowing not to return until the painting has gone.

Doucet reflects on life in Paris 1900, as a celebrated couturier and when teenager Pablo Picasso arrived in Paris as a Spanish immigrant. The preeminent, if thwarted, society figure Doucet was engaged to catholic Jeanne Roger, but in 1906 they separated, (eventually marrying 12 years later). In the interim, married archaeologist Mme Sonia Roux became his secret lover and muse. She was a spirit medium and occultist with friends at Picasso's *Bateau-Lavoir* studios. Sonia Roux opened Doucet's eyes to adventure.

Upon buying *Les Femmes d'Alger*, Doucet pledges to Picasso to bequeath the painting to the Louvre upon his death, believing he can persuade the museum to accept avant-garde art. He seeks immediate approval from the museum to demonstrate the painting's merit to Jeanne. Unfortunately, the bequest is rudely rejected.

The controversy inflames Doucet's latent grief, triggering alarming psychological symptoms and obsession with the painting. He fervently seeks information about its origins and links to Sonia. Through a torturous endeavour, undertaken while seriously ill, he interrogates witnesses from the time, uncovering further tragedy. He clashes with Picasso in face-to-face confrontations and locates Sonia's husband Serville Roux (previously believed dead). Jacques discovers that Roux regarded his wife's love of disreputable art and occult practices as 'madness' or witchcraft and had treated her with a fatally poisonous medicine.

Doucet foregoes his quest with the Louvre and creates a private studio which becomes known as his 'Temple of Arts', around *Les Femmes d'Alger*, balanced with other supreme contemporary and primitive artworks. It costs him his finances and health.

Approaching death Doucet hallucinates, conjuring the dead Sonia. He solves his enigma, connected with tragedies in the painter's life. Doucet pieces together the clues and disparate information. In a visionary revelation he uncovers Picasso's heart-rending anguish at the root of the picture. It seems Picasso's rage is so resonant it radiates from the work contaminating all around it.

On his deathbed Doucet lays to rest his own demons, realising he has toiled for an illusion. He is greatly sorry for his 'life unlived' and for not knowing himself (his homosexuality). He reconciles with his wife, and she with the painting, taking his secrets and discoveries to the grave.

He has found his answers as well as new self-knowledge and pride - from his quest into art's greatest moment in the modern era – and in the acquisition of possibly the most influential painting in the entire history of art.

The epilogue records how years later, MoMA in New York acquired Les Demoiselles d'Avignon – becoming No.1 in their collection of more than four million items.

Note: Picasso's story is told with due regard to the published history of his life. Doucet's story is partially fictionalised for dramatic purposes, as little is known about this period of his life. He destroyed all his papers and records before dying.

Reviews

Updated: September 2019

A luscious, historical novel depicting Belle Epoch Paris at the rupture point when the old regime breaks down and is replaced by modernity in both life and art. Picasso is the rock god of the age. Multi-layered and full of surprises – Doucet’s mystery unlocked, like “the Painting” itself provides a prism of vibrant and tragic tales. Featuring many key characters of the era, *Picasso’s Revenge* is a cultural masterpiece.

Claire Palmer, Editor, *International Times*

The astonishing fact is that the world’s most influential painting is little known. Even Picasso himself seemed afraid of it and hid it away for 10 years after painting it. When dressmaker Doucet bought the first cubist painting and relentlessly pursued its dangerous mystery he found the holy grail of art – the question of how modern art ever came about. This extraordinary novel re-brands Picasso no less. Rich, mysterious and splendid. A cultural masterpiece.

Sylvia Vetta, novelist/art specialist

This book is a rare diamond found in a gold mine. The history is so rich and told in such a way that a reader can learn much from its pages. The characters are real people and this adds to the mysticism of the novel. Explained exquisitely, the setting brings Paris to life.

The descriptions of the artwork give the reader the feeling as though they are right in front of the works, taking in the glory of every brush stroke and feeling the cool marble of the sculptures. The plot is exciting as well as adventurous. An avid lover of history or art will find much to love about this book.

My solitary complaint is that some chapters are too long. This is a personal preference due to my strange need for instant gratification that comes from similar sized chapters. Yet, this in no way detracts from the beauty or the message of the novel. I could not have asked for a more wonderful story.

Thus, I award this book 5 out of 5 stars. Lovers of the mystery genre will find this book much to their taste. History and art rule the day in this fantastic narrative and it has been my pleasure to read and write a review of this magnificent work.

www.kimberlysbooknook.com

Sample Feature Article

Picasso's Revenge and the Explosive Birth of Modern Art

By Caroline Foulk

Ray and Caroline Foulk write together and have already documented in a two volume set Ray's life as a music biz impresario (Ray promoted the original Isle of Wight festivals in the late sixties – including the really big one of 1970), catapulting himself onto the world stage as a promoter. Simply being a father and daughter team is unusual and because they have just written a novel together they are even more remarkable. Given that a novel is usually written in one voice and judging the content of their new work, it seems astonishing that they have made it through and have a date for the publication of *Picasso's Revenge*. "We wrote this because it is the greatest art story not out there," they both insist. Ray is 73, exactly twenty years Caroline's senior, so that they are more like brother and sister and it is just as well considering the sauciness of some of their writing. "The sexy parlour game was my creation, while Dad concentrated on the action inside Madame Greta's brothel," says Caroline of the story, which is set in La Belle Époque Paris.

Their tome is a tour de force. If you wanted twitter hashtags of the novel's content you would be spoiled for choice - #Art shock ... unrequited love, mysterious death, protracted grief, early Picasso life, séances, sexual depravity, avant-garde art, impotency, obsession, suicide, scandal, the painting that killed painting, or pact with God ... The authors are keen to stress that although they have written about Picasso and his greatest painting, the story is told through the eyes of a man on an urgent quest – Jacques Doucet, celebrated couturier and 'patron of the arts' (1851-1929). As an historical novel it is very much based on real life, following research that has spanned 30 years. Caroline has even gone to the trouble of learning French. So why Jacques Doucet?

Couture in its origins was a lowly trade. Descended from an entrepreneurial family with a lingerie emporium, Doucet began life a step away from the birthplace of the first great house of haute couture – the eminent House of Worth. As an ambitious young man he expanded the family business to encompass elite dressmaking. *Maison Doucet* became a top ranking establishment geared to cater to the needs of the aristocracy and celebrities of the day. It was soon an important destination on the society calendar with noble women spilling through the shop doors from their carriages in advance of special events, excited for the presentations of myriad outfits. Each item was exquisitely handcrafted and modelled by the latest innovation - live girls or 'mannequins.'

Doucet's refined bearing was regal, his snowy beard clipped as carefully as a French garden and clothing as crisply perfect as if woven by elves. In time he distinctly tired of dressing his rich clientele, who refused to see him as anything other than a tradesman. He concentrated on adorning the walls of his fashion house with French masterpieces of the eighteenth century. In addition he commissioned society architect Louis Parent to fashion a mansion house for him on Rue Spontini, which he richly endowed with wondrous art treasures. Paintings formerly in Doucet's collection continue to command vast sums in the salerooms. A Boucher *Allegory of poetry* sold at Sotheby's recently for \$340,000, and in 1987 the world record was broken for a painting in auction with van Gogh's *Irises*, for \$53.9 million – provenance, Jacques Doucet. While he operated from Rue de la Paix, Paris (Mayfair on the Paris Monopoly board) his various sobriquets included, 'Prince of Paris.' It was here where he excelled, especially thanks to the stars of the runway of the day – the

stage, among whom Rejane and Sarah Bernhardt were most prominent. Yet he was coy about his profession, preferring instead the role of Mécène – sponsor of contemporary artists and writers.

Following the death of his fiancé the mysterious Madame R., Doucet auctioned off in one dramatic stroke, all of his great antique collections in the world's greatest sale. He began to reinvent himself entirely as a modernist. It wasn't that Doucet merely bought things. He commissioned and assembled furniture and art pieces in exquisitely curated collections. He had enormous intuition for surrounding himself by talented people. His advisors included André Breton and chief designers – René Lalique, Eileen Gray, Pierre Legrain and Paul Iribe. It became apparent that he had the Midas touch.

After his terrible personal tragedy Doucet finally identified and promoted the one artwork that had a more profound effect on the era than all others when he acquired the first cubist painting – *Les Femmes d'Alger*. He set himself apart by securing Picasso's masterpiece. It was perhaps Doucet's most notable achievement and it simultaneously triggered an obsession. While the world at large barely noticed, it was the course of action which followed that is the most fascinating part of Doucet's story. The transaction occurred in the last years of his life and it was the most extraordinary and scandalous purchase possible for his art collection.

Les Femmes d'Alger was received with such opprobrium that it was hidden away by Picasso, says Ray, "but the geni was let out of the bottle. It influenced all contemporary artists at the time, and most of all Picasso himself. Ultimately cubism was born in that very painting. It changed the look of the twentieth century – in art, architecture, literature, design ... so many fields." And in the novel Doucet's brothel painting leads its buyer to some desperate confrontations. There is a satisfying solution to the end of the story as well as the suggestion of another mystery to linger over, (spoiler prevention necessary here).

Unwittingly Doucet became the model for all the great couturiers that followed him. In his own words he concluded, "I was successively my grandfather, my father, my son and my grandson." His protégé Paul Poiret, even more celebrated among the early twentieth century couturiers than his master, fastidiously modelled himself upon him. Doucet had recast the image of the dressmaker, by using lifestyle and incredible art as a route out of a rigid structure of social hierarchy. Poiret followed this path.

There are many other notable devotees of the Doucet model, including Yves Saint Laurent and the recently deceased Karl Lagerfeld, both of whom adopted Doucet's techniques for self-promotion. Each were not only men of exquisite taste but also surrounded themselves with more than simply beautiful men and women, amassing art collections of the highest order. Lagerfeld furnished a collection of apartments decorating them *à la Doucet* in the Art Deco, Modern and Rococo styles, while Saint Laurent collected avidly and widely from ancient Egyptian statues to Picasso paintings. Interestingly Saint Laurent valued pieces with Doucet provenance above all others. It is the Doucet strand of what was later called Art Deco that is most highly sought after.

Picasso's Revenge is about the man who bought a whole 'ism' of art: the painting that kicked off all of the great art 'isms' of the twentieth century. A little like Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* but more firmly rooted upon real characters, the novel shines a light on the origins of modern art and will be available from *Medina Publishing* on 4 June. It is said to rebrand Picasso!

Sample Q & A's

Can you tell us about your inspiration for Picasso's Revenge?

First and foremost - the painting. Every now and again a story comes along that is so powerful it has to be told and this is one of them. Additionally, in the late seventies and early eighties, Ray was a collector of art deco furniture - reaching great heights with his acquisitions and exhibitions of items by top French designers. The quality and value of French furniture from around this period is staggering. Ray discovered that the strand of art deco commissioned by and designed for Jacques Doucet, was prized above the rest. Doucet was the first buyer of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, which seems an astonishing achievement for any buyer of great art.

What was the most fascinating fact you discovered while writing the novel?

We estimated that 'Les Demoiselles' would cost about the same to buy as the Empire State Building. When you consider that modern art commands higher prices than old masters generally - Picassos are at the top of the tree – *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* is the top Picasso painting, as MOMA New York's number one item - it may well be the most expensive object ever made by one human hand (perhaps barring Mona Lisa). Equally extraordinary is the fact that this painting, although increasingly considered to be the most influential painting of all time is barely known to the general public.

Why did you centre the story around the couturier Jacques Doucet?

Doucet is a fascinating character – an old man who becomes 'young' and a 'Midas,' in that all he touches turns to gold. He had the knack of surrounding himself with the most eminent names of his era. He is mysterious and a chameleon - never satisfied with being a mere tradesman to the rich, so that he fights with all his being to rise in a rigidly hierarchical society. He is a man at odds with himself and never fully fathomable.

What are the main themes of Picasso's Revenge?

Love lost. Man's struggle with God. Madness and the artistic struggle.

Which scene in Picasso's Revenge was your favorite to write and why? Which was the hardest?

There are many, some are quite saucy, but I particularly like the love scene in which neither party is actually sure whether or not there has been a kiss. It is not easy to write love scenes with your dad!

How does the novel rebrand Picasso?

Typically, fiction around Picasso sensationalises the artist's relationships with women, and depicts a cruel, tyrannical man. We portray the human being behind this image and celebrate his art, as well as acknowledging the 'demonic' power in it.

Why has the story been likened to the search for art's holy grail?

We can be left wondering what modern art is all about. The dense language of art history makes it an area for specialists. In 1906 after 600 years of conventional art - almost simultaneously with Einstein's Theory of Relativity in science - Picasso's brothel ruptured the world of painting. The story of Doucet's search shines a lens on the very root of new art, illuminating its essence. The painting is like the keystone - or the bit that's missing.

And why did Picasso hide the painting away for 10 years?

Picasso went to great pains to create this masterpiece, including making 800 sketches for it. He clearly felt it was to be his great work. When it was unveiled only to receive derision and scorn he was embarrassed and distressed. Although it remained in Picasso's studio, it was seen by most leading artists and critics during that time. Its influence was unprecedented by the person most influenced was Picasso himself.

What does the story say about Picasso's portrayal of women?

Some have regarded *Les Femmes d'Alger* as pornography, or 'an attack on women' but the brothel painting challenges us to think about the presentation of women as never before. Until this moment in art we are often, if not usually, invited to be titillated by art images of women. *Les Femmes d'Alger* are both grotesque and confrontational and are not belittled in the same way. These women are more likely to seem threatening to men looking at the painting.

What was unique about the period of the Belle Époque?

So much changed in the period of the setting of the novel. In the early 1900s when the story commences the western world was steeped in Victorian values. By the time of Doucet's death in 1929 the same moral codes were being seriously challenged. Modernity and mass commercialism had arrived. Even the street scene was unrecognisable, with the motor car replacing horses and carriages and ladies' legs visible for the first time and so on. It was a time of huge changes.

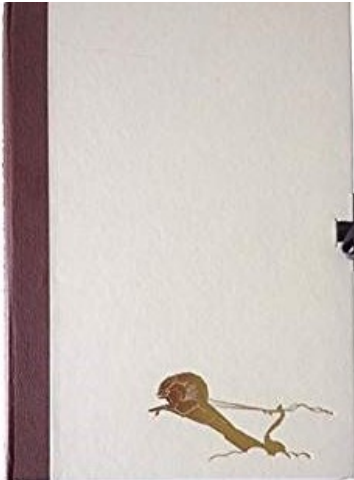
How true is the story?

We had to stay as faithful as possible to Picasso's story and to all that we knew of the 'real' characters from this time. Picasso's life in particular is very well documented and it was not appropriate to take liberties with the 'truth' just to fit a fiction. Jacques Doucet's story is more sketchily documented. We have had fun being creative with some of the unknown information, but at the same time have clung to well-founded hunches.

You call it art's greatest untold story. What makes you say that?

Arguably Picasso's brothel painting changed the look of the twentieth century. It influenced art, cinema, architecture, interior design, theatre and literature and so on. It was like an 'ism' on its own, but it has a rich and visceral story at the heart of it. Doucet reveals the greatest secrets of the twentieth century's greatest artist, who created it.

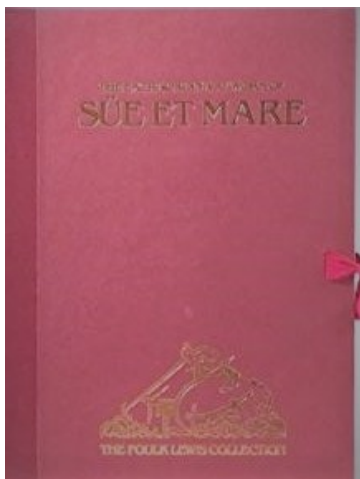
Previous Works



Ruhlmann Centenary Exhibition, Emil-Jacques Ruhlmann (1879-1933)

By Ray Foulk

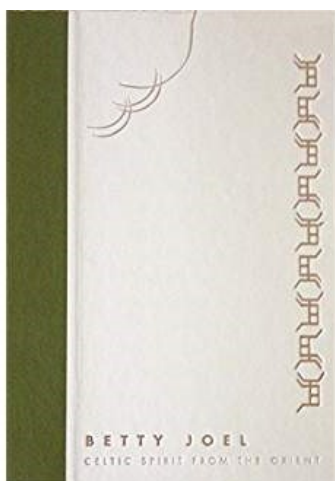
A hardback ribbon tied folio catalogue commemorating the centenary of the eminent French designer and cabinet-maker.



Extraordinary Work of Sue et Mare: La Compagnie des Arts Francais, Marie Louise Sue (1875-1968), Andre Mare (1887-1932)

By Ray Foulk

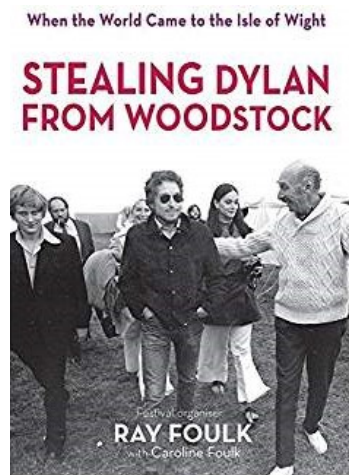
A hardback ribbon tied folio catalogue with text on architect Louis Sue and painter Andre Mare.



Betty Joel: Celtic Spirit from the Orient.

By Ray Foulk and Jenny Lewis

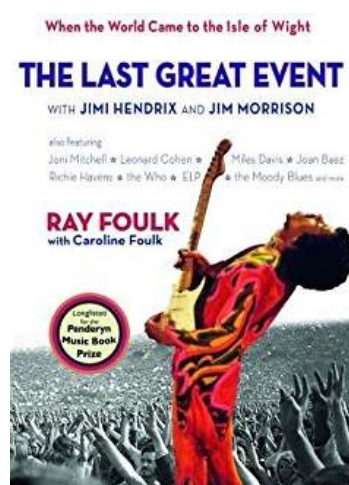
A hard backed ribbon tied folio catalogue with text on designer Betty Joel one of the few distinguished female furniture designers and manufacturers of the Art Deco movement.



Stealing Bob Dylan from Woodstock. (Volume I: When the World Came to the Isle of Wight, Illustrated June 2015)

By Ray Foulk with Caroline Foulk

Memoir of young Ray Foulk – the story of the legendary moment that changed rock history for the island and the UK, by bringing reclusive Bob Dylan to the Isle of Wight Festival 1969.



The Last Great Event. (Volume II: When the World Came to the Isle of Wight, Illustrated, June 2016)

By Ray Foulk with Caroline Foulk

Memoir of young Ray Foulk, promoting the iconic 1970 Isle of Wight rock festival - the largest in the world, which poignantly occurred in the last few days of Hendrix's life.



When the World Came to the Isle Of Wight Volumes One & Two

By Ray Foulk with Caroline Foulk

The complete two volume set telling the Isle of Wight Festival story.



Isle of Wight Festival Experience

By Ray Foulk and Nigel Grundy with Caroline Foulk

Companion to the Isle of Wight Festival Exhibition at the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

Looking for something that isn't here — or interested in doing something new?

Please get in touch.

Thank You