



A Feast for the Eyes: Art, Performance, and the Late Medieval Banquet

Christina Normore

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To read accounts of late medieval banquets is to enter a fantastical world where live lions guard nude statues, gilded stags burst into song, and musicians play from within pies. We can almost hear the clock sound from within a glass castle, taste the fire-breathing roast boar, and smell the rose water cascading in a miniature fountain. Such vivid works of art and performance required collaboration among artists in many fields, as well as the participation of the audience.

A Feast for the Eyes is the first book-length study of the court banquets of northwestern Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Christina Normore draws on an array of artworks, archival documents, chroniclers' accounts, and cookbooks to re-create these events and reassess the late medieval visual culture in which banquets were staged. Feast participants, she shows, developed sophisticated ways of appreciating artistic skill and attending to their own processes of perception, thereby forging a court culture that delighted in the exercise of fine aesthetic judgment.

Challenging modern assumptions about the nature of artistic production and reception, *A Feast for the Eyes* yields fresh insight into the long history of multimedia work and the complex relationships between spectacle and spectators.



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