



# Food in Painting: From the Renaissance to the Present

*Kenneth Bendiner*

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## **Food in Painting: From the Renaissance to the Present** Kenneth Bendiner

From the hearty meals being devoured by peasants on a Bruegel canvas to the lush and lifelike fruits of a *trompe l'oeil*, food has enjoyed a central place in painting for centuries. These two great sensory pleasures come together in the sumptuously illustrated *Food in Painting*. Here Kenneth Bendiner journeys from the Renaissance to the present day—through the works of artists from Rembrandt to Manet to Warhol—to make the case that, though understudied, paintings of food are so important that they should be considered a separate classification of art, a genre unto themselves.

Bendiner outlines the history of these paintings, charting changes in both meaning and presentation since the early Renaissance. The sixteenth century saw great innovations in food subjects, but, as Bendiner reveals, it was Dutch food painting of the seventeenth century that created the visual vocabulary still operative today. Alongside paintings that feature food as the central subject, he also considers topics ranging from Renaissance menus to aphrodisiacs to bottled water to the portrayal of dogs at the table—always with an eye towards how the meaning of food imagery is determined by such factors as myth, religion, and social privilege. Bendiner also treats purely symbolic portrayals of food, both as marginal elements in allegorical paintings and as multi-layered sexual references in Surrealist works.

Packed full of images of markets, kitchens, pantries, picnics, and tables groaning under the weight of glorious feasts, *Food in Painting* serves up a delicious helping of luxuriously painted meals certain to win a spot on the shelves of art lovers and gastronomes alike.

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