

# The Parrot in Art

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Parrots have long been a favourite subject for artists. Ever since Julius Caesar was greeted by a parrot with the words 'Ave Caesar', the bird has been indelibly linked with the Virgin Mary (Ave Maria) and become the subject of innumerable works of art from the 15th to the 17th centuries, including examples by Durer, Schongauer and Rubens. With the Age of Exploration in the 16th and 17th centuries, parrots were imported into western Europe and became the favoured accompaniments of the aristocracy, where their innately human behaviour led to them being depicted as 'stand-ins' for people, especially in scenes mocking or commenting on the follies of human behaviour (Jan Steen's "Allegory of Temperance"). This fascination with parrots as impersonators of people continued into the 19th century, culminating in such Victorian masterpieces as Henry Stacy Marks' "A Select Committee". Concurrently, parrots were seen as symbols of exoticism, East meeting West (Tiepolo's "Woman with a Parrot") and as household pets (Sir Edward Landseer's "Islay, Tilco, a Macaw and Two House Birds").

Underpinning all this is the quest to categorise and better understand parrots as depicted in the work of the natural history illustrators: John Gould, Edward Lear and Elizabeth Butterworth. Published to accompany an exhibition in January 2007 at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham, this beautiful book draws on examples of paintings, drawings and prints from the finest art collections in the world, demonstrating how one of the most beloved of all creatures has succeeded in taking on new identities throughout the ages, whilst never losing its perennial fascination for artists. The artists include: Jan Steen, Frans van Mieris the Elder, Jan Fyt, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Henry Tonks, William Roberts, Sir Edwin Landseer, Albert Eckhout, Edward Murphy, G.B. Tiepolo, Henry Stacy Marks, Jacob Jordaens, Joseph Southall, Jacob Franz van de Merck, Johannes Siegwald Dahl, Durer, Goya, Ferdinand Bauer, Sarah Stone, Edward Lear, and Elizabeth Butterworth.

作者介绍:

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