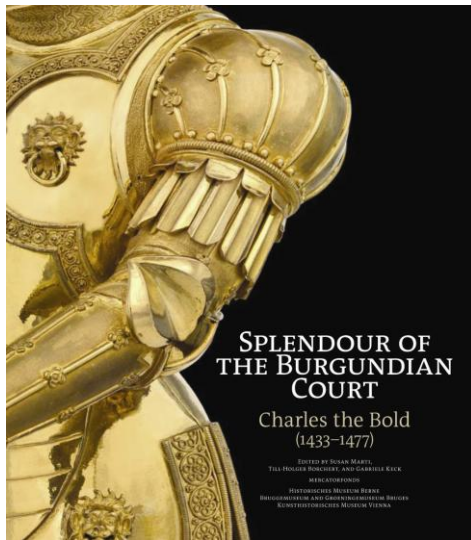


**Splendour of the Burgundian Court: Charles the Bold (1433-1477)**, ed. by Susan Marti, Till-Holger Borchert, and Gabriele Keck. Mercatorfonds, dist. by Cornell University Press, 2009. 384 p. col. ill. ISBN 9780801448539 (cl), \$80.00.



This exhibition catalog is a visual document of the role the Dukes of Burgundy played in the rise of the Hapsburg's as a major European power. Featuring works of art lying in the zone between splendor and propaganda, the exhibition is presented in the context of family and European history. It was published in conjunction with the traveling exhibition *Charles the Bold (1433-1477)*.

The catalog is divided into four sections. An introduction establishes the historical arena of the Burgundian playing field illustrated through maps, biographies and a family tree. In section two, specialists lend their expertise to essays about Charles the Bold. The essays serve to document the current state of research, elucidating political aims and achievements, courtly style, the liturgical vestments of the Order of the Golden

Fleece, and portraiture. The section following the essays is comprised of eighty-four plates detailing the objects discussed. The final section or catalog chronicles the exhibition. It is lavishly illustrated and arranged thematically into six groups.

The splendor of the Burgundian Court was legendary and the high quality of illustrations matches the sumptuousness of the works on display. Artists and artisans represented in the catalog portion are among the greatest of the late Middle Ages and are harbingers of emerging Renaissance culture. Their virtuosity testifies to the political power, wealth and self-confidence of Charles the Bold. This catalog clarifies the interrelationship between genres of art on exhibit (illuminated manuscripts, textiles, goldsmith's work, armor, etc.) and the political, ceremonial and religious spheres of society. These correlations are exemplified by a masterpiece of Early Netherlandish painting - Jan van Eyck's *The Virgin with Joris van der Paele*. It served as a model for the court goldsmith Gerard Loyet's votive *Reliquary of Charles the Bold with St. George*, also included in the exhibition. The armor clad St. George, the red of the Virgin's mantel and the tapestry lining her throne, Saint Donatian's brocaded cope and the illuminated book in van der Paele's hands find kinship with the parade armor of Emperor Frederick III, the exceptional preservation of a red satin court tunic, and the *Prayer Book of Charles the Bold*.

This catalog includes large-format color illustrations, double-page spreads on important topics, bibliographical references and a topographical index of the 179 works exhibited. It is highly recommended for its accessibility, organization and currency of scholarship documenting an historic gathering of works of art at the crossroads and in the crosscurrents of history.

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