



Jan Brueghel the Elder: The Entry of the Animals into Noah's Ark (Getty Museum Studies on Art)

Arianne Kolb

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Born in Brussels and trained by his grandmother, Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568-1625) was called "Velvet Brueghel" for his skill at painting rich and delicate textures. The story of Noah's ark provided a subject well suited to Brueghel's abilities. In his painting, a few curious villagers stand beside a stream, which foreshadows the coming deluge, and watch as Noah herds ostriches, goats, camels, and other exotic animals toward the ark. Next to a prancing white stallion, a lion and lioness chase each other's tails, while a pair of leopards frolic under the watchful eye of a bull. Brueghel has created a delightful scene celebrating the beauty and variety of creation.

This monograph takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Brueghel's fascinating paradise landscape, exploring Renaissance zoology, religious views on nature, and the culture of collecting and cataloguing animals and natural specimens. The volume is brilliantly illustrated with paintings of landscapes and animals by artists such as Albrecht Dürer, Peter Paul Rubens, and Lucas Cranach the Elder as well as by Brueghel himself. It presents an overview of the tradition of this type of painting and discusses both the cultural context and the artist's background, crucial to understanding Brueghel's approach to nature.

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