



# Infinite Jest: Caricature and Satire from Leonardo to Levine (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

*Constance C. McPhee, Nadine M. Orenstein*

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From Leonardo's drawings of grotesque heads to contemporary prints lampooning American politicians, The Metropolitan Museum of Art has a vast but largely unknown collection of caricatures and other satirical works. This handsome book offers 165 examples, dating from about 1500 to the present, that reflect the age-old tradition of using exaggeration and humor to convey personal, social, or political meaning. The selection of images is notably broad, ranging from the elevated to the rudely humorous: renowned writers and decidedly unhygienic cooks; elegantly dressed noblemen and victims of outrageous fashion fads; Napoleon as a tidy Lilliputian and Boss Tweed as a bloated Roman emperor.

Stressing the continuity of certain artistic approaches, *Infinite Jest* examines the development of the genre across centuries and cultures. The essential visual components of caricature are discussed and illustrated, as are recurring motifs, including exaggerated faces and bodies, people depicted as animals or objects, and processions of bizarre figures. One section is devoted to social satire (eating and drinking, gambling, fashion, several of the Seven Deadly Sins), another to various aspects of political life (British, French, Mexican, and American). Artists as diverse as Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, William Hogarth, Francisco de Goya, Thomas Rowlandson, Eugène Delacroix, Honoré Daumier, and Al Hirschfeld contribute their distinctive talents to this fascinating, informative, and very amusing volume.

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