



Modern Art Desserts: Recipes for Cakes, Cookies, Confections, and Frozen Treats Based on Iconic Works of Art

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Taking cues from works by Andy Warhol, Frida Kahlo, and Matisse, pastry chef Caitlin Freeman, of Miette bakery and Blue Bottle Coffee fame, creates a collection of uniquely delicious dessert recipes (with step-by-step assembly guides) that give readers all they need to make their own edible masterpieces.

From a fudge pop based on an Ellsworth Kelly sculpture to a pristinely segmented cake fashioned after Mondrian's well-known composition, this collection of uniquely delicious recipes for cookies, parfait, gelées, ice pops, ice cream, cakes, and inventive drinks has everything you need to astound friends, family, and guests with your own edible masterpieces.

Taking cues from modern art's most revered artists, these twenty-seven showstopping desserts exhibit the charm and sophistication of works by Andy Warhol, Cindy Sherman, Henri Matisse, Jeff Koons, Roy Lichtenstein, Richard Avedon, Wayne Thiebaud, and more. Featuring an image of the original artwork alongside a museum curator's perspective on the original piece and detailed, easy-to-follow directions (with step-by-step assembly guides adapted for home bakers), *Modern Art Desserts* will inspire a kitchen gallery of stunning treats.

Modern Art Desserts: Recipes for Cakes, Cookies, Confections, and Frozen Treats Based on Iconic Works of Art Details

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Author : Caitlin Freeman

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From Reader Review Modern Art Desserts: Recipes for Cakes, Cookies, Confections, and Frozen Treats Based on Iconic Works of Art for online ebook

Brandy says

Compelling photos of delightful desserts

I just loved this book! The pairing of the pieces of modern art, and the reveal of the confection created to honor it, was so magical. I chose it for that reason, but a side bonus was reading about the author's journey to her calling. While I wasn't interested in attempting the recipes, I enjoyed reading some of them as they let me imagine the remarkable flavors these elegant treats offered. I smiled while I turned the pages--what a lovely little diversion!

Rosa says

I only wish I had the materials, space, and time to recreate the Thiebaud cakes within. And the Mondrian cake, and the delicious-sounding drinks. Maybe someday.

Heather says

really cool, interesting and absolutely beautiful pieces of food art but not very practical and some of the recipes appear incredibly complicated.

Lisa Vegan says

Well, it's been a couple decades since I've bothered to read any but 100% vegan cookbooks (given that there are many hundreds and probably over 1,000 of them) but the cover of this book just called to me.

I figured that almost all desserts are now easily veganized, and I love art. This book is on my San Francisco bookshelf because it's very San Francisco, particularly as regards our modern art museum, local bakeries/eateries, etc. etc.

Well, as the recipes are presented, much to my surprise they're not easily made vegan, though it would be very, very easy to make vegan recipes that look exactly like these. Even with those (for me necessary) changes, these take too much work, and many hours/even days. Re the recipes: some require TONS of heavy cream and just egg yolks or just egg whites. Experienced vegan bakers would know what to do, but I wouldn't.

I enjoyed the book as an art book. There is some good information and photos about the artists, their lives and work.

The highlight of the book for me turned out to be the cake on the cover, and it is fun.

The rest are hit & miss, though all were creative. These desserts mimicking art remind me of the Fine Art Museums of San Francisco annual Bouquet to Arts festival, where floral artists create floral arrangements that mimic/reflect art pieces in the museum(s). As with that exhibit, the desserts I enjoyed most here were those that most closely showed the art, with the possible exception of Thiebaud's cakes, which simply copied them, and so didn't strike me as that creative, but paired up with the art are rather striking. Some good ones of Diebenkorn's work.

There are many fun extras such as San Francisco photos, and instructions for making your own sea salt, etc. etc.

Anyway, as a cookbook, I can't recommend it. As a book to give bakers/cooks/artists ideas of how to make artistic foods and to use art to make other creative things, it's an enjoyable resource. As a fun novelty, well, it was fun.

For artists and particularly bakers/cooks, it might give them some ideas, and vegan bakers and cooks, including some who've written many of my favorite cookbooks, I'd love to see some of what they might glean from this. I'd love to see (and eat) what they might create from ideas they'd get from this book.

5 stars for the cover and the premise. 3 1/2 stars for some of the included information about the original art & artists, 2 1/2 stars for the background information about this book, 1 star for the actual recipes, and not just because I'm vegan and wouldn't eat any of them, though if I wasn't vegan, honestly, I might give them 2 stars or even 3.

Megan says

This cookbook was very interesting. It's more of an art book to me rather than a cookbook, and it evoked the same type of feel as *Ace of Cakes: Inside the World of Charm City Cakes*. I first picked up the book because I saw the Mondrian cake on *The Best Thing I Ever Ate*. My view of the book may be swayed by the fact that I am not a fan of some of the art at the SFMOMA (I don't understand what a black wall can tell me), but I found the different take interesting all the same.

Maria says

I've been seeing this book around and was totally captivated by the cover. Finally got to browse it at Blue Bottle the other day. Looked at every single page. Each dessert is inspired by or responding to a piece of modern art. Some are very literal and some are more imaginative but all are beautiful conversations between visual and culinary arts. And inspiring to me in terms of drawing on diverse resources as inspiration for art-making. As far as using it for cooking, I think it is a few levels beyond my interest/expertise in the kitchen. But what a great way to get the creative juices flowing.

pianogal says

This cake on the cover is amazing! But much like a Soul Decision record, it is a one hit wonder. The rest of the recipes are cool, but without seeing them with their artwork, you'd never put the two together. It was such a stretch to take one great recipe and make it into a whole book. Buyer Beware...

Salvatore says

I'm making the Mondrian cake (featured on the cover). You'll see photographic evidence of that probably next weekend. My issue with that recipe was that doubling the cake batter in the Pullman loaf pan as suggested by the author actually was TOO MUCH (it overflowed, spilling to the base of the oven, burning and smoking up my oven). The 1/2 inch by 1 inch by 13 inch slices of the cake when covered with ganache also *très* fragile to move. I also now have three and a half cakes of various colours in the freezer right now.

There are a couple of other recipes I'd make from this, that actually seem reasonable. The Ruth Laskey lemon soda with bay ice cubes was a definite treat and I'd totally make that again.

In sum, the design of the book and the inventiveness of the desserts are wonderful. The recipes themselves are just taken from (my baking guru) Rose Levy Beranbaum's *The Cake Bible* (Rose does write the introduction to the cookbook.). A lot of these 'recipes' are not practical - see the Mondrian cake - but one doesn't get this book for practical reasons. Overall more of a coffeetable book more than anything else.

Laura says

She goes to some length to explain how to do these at home, but they are clearly aspirational desserts.

Ev says

Great book, as thoroughly illustrated as detailed. Many of the recipes are difficult to make (not practical for a weeknight menu), but Freemen decorates her pages with appreciated instructions on the how-to, and intricacies on the muse: modern art.

Elizabeth says

This was a pretty neat book, but I don't think I am the target audience for it. I think a pastry chef with an art background or an aficionado of modern art would get a lot out of it. I am neither. Not many people are going to reproduce the desserts in the book, either, so that part of the book is largely unnecessary. I just skimmed the recipe part of the book. I was interested in the artist information and the author's explanation of her process. I don't know how interesting a casual reader will be in this, but I thought it was at least good to look at.

My favorite recreations were "Kudless S'mores" and "Bradford Cheese Plate."

Emyrose8 says

This wasn't quite what I expected. I envisioned large photos of cakes made to look like famous paintings and also pictures of the art itself. If I would've read the title more closely, I would've seen that it says desserts instead of just cake (the cake on the cover fed into my assumption) and it says 'iconic' works of art instead of famous. The one on the cover is the most recognizable one for people not well versed in the art world, such as myself.

In reality, the book has stories and reminiscing from the author about where she got inspiration for the desserts. There's quite a variety in the recipes! I would've used the word 'inspired' by to describe the desserts instead of based on, but that's just me. Some of them are very loosely based on the art, keeping in theme of the colors or shape.

There are small photos of the original art, but some are blurry and hard to see since they're in the background of a picture of the dessert. The recipes are text heavy and I probably wouldn't try to make any of them, but that's just me.

Worth a look if you love art. For the people looking for a book with lots of pictures of art and cake, try elsewhere.

Miriam says

The Mondrian cake on the cover is the coolest. Some of the other desserts look pretty nifty, others plainer. I don't think I would get the artist reference for most of them without having it pointed out. And I must say I think the multiple Thiebaud cakes are cheating, since he was painting images of cakes in the first place.

You can watch Freeman construct a dessert here.

Lisa says

5 stars for originality. 2 stars for being a practical cookbook. I didn't read every word, but I can see how the author suspended belief to create cakes that complimented modern works of art. I will never make any of these desserts... but so glad that the public library bought it so I could take a long peek.

Evanston Public Library says

Considering that artist Wayne Thiebaud's paintings of cakes inspired Caitlin Freeman to embark on a career

as a pastry chef, perhaps it's not surprising that she has gone a step further and written a cookbook dedicated to desserts based on famous modern art. Some of the recipes so closely replicate the art that the casual observer can identify the work; others are a bit of a stretch, but creative nonetheless. The cover catches your eye because Freeman managed to replicate one of Piet Mondrian's geometric paintings with straight lines and bold color squares. I enjoyed skimming through the book, but it seems more of an art or craft book than a cookbook.

Shira S., (Reader's Services)
