



Fireworks: Pyrotechnic Arts and Sciences in European History

Simon Werrett

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Fireworks are synonymous with celebration in the twenty-first century. But pyrotechnics—in the form of rockets, crackers, wheels, and bombs—have exploded in sparks and noise to delight audiences in Europe ever since the Renaissance. Here, Simon Werrett shows that, far from being only a means of entertainment, fireworks helped foster advances in natural philosophy, chemistry, mathematics, and many other branches of the sciences.

Fireworks brings to vibrant life the many artful practices of pyrotechnicians, as well as the elegant compositions of the architects, poets, painters, and musicians they inspired. At the same time, it uncovers the dynamic relationships that developed between the many artists and scientists who produced pyrotechnics. In so doing, the book demonstrates the critical role that pyrotechnics played in the development of physics, astronomy, chemistry and physiology, meteorology, and electrical science. Richly illustrated and drawing on a wide range of new sources, *Fireworks* takes readers back to a world where pyrotechnics were both divine and magical and reveals for the first time their vital contribution to the modernization of European ideas.

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