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Not your Father's Medieval Art: Contemporary Medieval Inspiration and Interaction

“**Medievalism** is the system of belief and practice characteristic of the Middle Ages, or devotion to elements of that period, which has been expressed in areas such as architecture, literature, music, art, philosophy, scholarship, and various vehicles of popular culture.¹

It's surprising how medievalism shows up in contemporary art. Some, such as fashion designers Dolce & Gabbana's Fall 2013 line was inspired in a number of creative ways by Byzantine mosaics from Monreale. Portions of haloed heads, adorned in gold and padded “jewels” stare out from the dresses, shifts, and blouses. If you've ever fancied a pair of jewel-encrusted shorts, this is your opportunity. Jewelry, handbags, and shoes, too, get the Byzantine treatment. An orange, crushed-velvet shoe perches on platform wedges seemingly made of a filigreed gold reliquary with enamel work.



Not all contemporary takes on medieval art are medieval inspired. Rather, sometimes contemporary ideas, such as installation art, take over true medieval works. Last summer, in preparation for the Queen of England's Diamond Jubilee, the nave of York Minster was covered with 1500 square metres of real grass. A grand dinner was held on the lawn, so to speak, raising funds for the church. Even an indoor lawn, though, requires maintenance.



¹ (Eds.) J. Simpson and E. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn., 1989), c.f. "Medievalism." For further information on the Fashion Collection, see <http://www.tomandlorenzo.com/2013/03/dolcegabanna-fall-2013-collection.html> and on the York lawn, see http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2012/06/07/york-minster-gets-grassy-makeover-jubilee-dinner_n_1576891.html