



Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation

W.J.T. Mitchell

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What precisely, W. J. T. Mitchell asks, are pictures (and theories of pictures) doing now, in the late twentieth century, when the power of the visual is said to be greater than ever before, and the "pictorial turn" supplants the "linguistic turn" in the study of culture? This book by one of America's leading theorists of visual representation offers a rich account of the interplay between the visible and the readable across culture, from literature to visual art to the mass media.

Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation Details

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Dora says

Mitchell, as I expected, did not disappoint me with regards to the quality of his work. The examples he provides are extensive and clear, though some references are a bit too complex for my taste and would need a lot more either research or background knowledge (his style is usually a bit simpler than this - at least from my previous experience). Nevertheless, for anyone interested in the relationship between language and pictures, or as the title says "verbal and visual representation", this book is a great resource, but I would not recommend it for anyone just getting into this topic or anything similar to it. You'd better read up on your philosophy first (especially aesthetics and post-modern philosophers).

Dennis says

Reading this book is like walking into the middle of a heady conversation between two hoity-toity art historians who don't stop to brief you on what they discussed so far. You have to catch up on your own and even though you expend a lot of effort trying to do so, the two art historians try their best to ignore you. They may even sneer at you for being so unrefined. Ultimately, you regret joining this duo and try to gracefully walk away to another group where a lively debate is raging on a more accessible topic (e.g., comic books).

Michela C. says

A parte un paio di capitoli, che all'inizio mi hanno non poco spaventato, è piuttosto leggibile e interessante.

Jessica Zu says

Only read the required chapters. A turning reading experience.

Dan says

What's good in this book, is really good. Particularly, Mitchell's discussion of William Blake is astounding and I found myself captivated by it. Unfortunately, his language could go up for a "most unreadable theoretical discourse" award. I read this during grad school and it helped me to rethink several things about the relationship between the word and image (hence, the Blake piece), but ultimately I am having trouble remembering everything I read. The brilliant moments are brilliant, but the rest is almost too hard to decipher. Especially if you aren't up on what's happening in the art world.
