



# Visual Literacy

*From James Elkins*

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What does it mean to be visually literate? Does it mean different things in the arts and the sciences? In the West, in Asia, or in developing nations? If we all need to become "visually literate," what does that mean in practical terms? The essays gathered here examine a host of issues surrounding "the visual," exploring national and regional ideas of visuality and charting out new territories of visual literacy that lie far beyond art history, such as law and chemistry. With an afterword by Christopher Crouch, this groundbreaking collection brings together the work of major art and visual studies scholars and critics to explore what impact the new concept of "visual literacy" will have on the traditional field of art history.

**Contributors:** Matthias Bruhn, Vera Dünkel, Jonathan Crary, Christopher Crouch, Peter Dallow, James Elkins, Henrik Enquist, W.J.T. Mitchell, Richard K. Sherwin, Susan Shifrin, Jon Simons, Barbara Maria Stafford, William Washabaugh

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## Visual Literacy From James Elkins Bibliography

- Rank: #1392140 in Books
- Brand: James Elkins
- Published on: 2007-10-13
- Released on: 2007-11-28
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .52" w x 5.98" l, .66 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 228 pages

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"*Visual Literacy* brings intellectual rigor to a concept that often passes as an unexamined cliché. This collection of essays explores how well the metaphor of 'reading' elucidates the viewing and interpretation of images, whether artistic, political, or scientific. The volume will find its place on the bookshelves of both serious scholars of vision and instructors who rise to the challenge of integrating diverse visual artifacts into the undergraduate curriculum."?James D. Herbert, University of California, Irvine

"Given that much university education is dominantly and sometimes entirely text-based, the central issue of whether there can and ought to be a stronger emphasis on the visual is a valuable, challenging, perhaps even threatening one, for denizens of academia."--Margaret Woodward, *Eureka Street*

#### About the Author

James Elkins is E.C. Chadbourne Chair in the Department of Art History, Theory, and Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is the author of *Pictures and Tears*, *How to Use Your Eyes*, and *What Painting Is* and, most recently, *The Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* and *Master Narratives and Their Discontents*, all published by Routledge.

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