



An Introduction to Visual Culture

Nicholas Mirzoeff

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This is a wide-ranging and stimulating introduction to the history and theory of visual culture from painting to the computer and television screen. It will prove indispensable to students of art and art history as well as students of cultural studies.

Mirzoeff begins by defining what visual culture is, and explores how and why visual media - fine art, cinema, the Internet, advertising, performance, photography, television - have become so central to contemporary everyday life. He argues that the visual is replacing the linguistic as our primary means of communicating with each other and of understanding our postmodern world.

Part One of the *Introduction* presents a history of modern ways of seeing, including:

- * the formal practices of line and colour in painting
- * photographys claim to represent reality
- * virtual reality, from the nineteenth century to the present.

In Part Two, Mirzoeff examines:

- * the visualization of race, sexuality and human identity in culture
- * gender and sexuality and questions of the gaze in visual culture
- * representations of encounters with the other, from colonial narratives to Science Fiction texts such as *The Thing*, *Independence Day*, *Star Trek* and *The X-Files*
- * the death of Princess Diana and the popular mourning which followed as marking the coming of age of a global visualized culture.

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