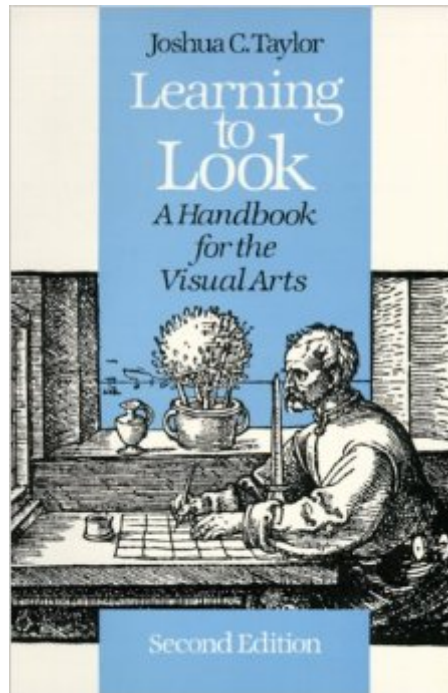


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Learning To Look: A Handbook For The Visual Arts (Phoenix Books)



Synopsis

Sometimes seeing is more difficult for the student of art than believing. Taylor, in a book that has sold more than 300,000 copies since its original publication in 1957, has helped two generations of art students "learn to look." This handy guide to the visual arts is designed to provide a comprehensive view of art, moving from the analytic study of specific works to a consideration of broad principles and technical matters. Forty-four carefully selected illustrations afford an excellent sampling of the wide range of experience awaiting the explorer. The second edition of Learning to Look includes a new chapter on twentieth-century art. Taylor's thoughtful discussion of pure forms and our responses to them gives the reader a few useful starting points for looking at art that does not reproduce nature and for understanding the distance between contemporary figurative art and reality.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have used this textbook a number of times in teaching Art Appreciation classes. The choice of chapter topics works fairly well with beginning students: one chapter discusses the structure, composition and style of two specific paintings in contrast with one another; another chapter makes a study of the work of one artist. There is even a chapter devoted to modern art (a tough sell with some first-time students). I only fault the highly specific and somewhat tedious chapter discussing all aspects of color. I tend to skip over this one and leave it for the independent reading of anyone

interested. Otherwise good, and I will use it again until something comes along with a better overview. Mostly black and white illustrations -- only two in color.

Interesting, accesible and ultimately enlightening but inclined also to be dry in an "Idiot's guide" kind of way, this renders the topic a little lack lustre which for me detracts from the point of veiwing art and getting any kind of personal, emotional experience from it. Excellent for making art accesible nonetheless and demystifying the nonsense that art glitterarty types surround the topic in so needlessly and prentiontiously.

I found this book to present a good introduction to understanding the visual arts. It covers painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, and architecture. In regard to these it addresses materials, techniques and theoretical aspects. This covers a great deal of territory so in 158 pages it is necessarily a very cursory presentation. The techniques and materials sections are dry, but that is the nature of the subject. It would take a real poet to make the preparation of etching plates exciting to read about, but that is usually not what is called for. The parts of the book I found most interesting were the more theoretical, analytical and philosophical ones. It begins with analyzing works, focusing on the immediate experience of seeing them - understanding what the experience is and how the work creates this experience. This covers formal(aesthetic)considerations and content(subject)of the works. There is an interesting section about the way artists think - how they are influenced by other artists and society at large and by their own circumstances and how their personal character is reflected in their work. There is also a section "The Eye and the Mind" about the relationship between the observed perceptions and the mental concepts of the artist and the many, often paradoxical, ways these have been made manifest in the works.Unlike many books dealing with art theory this one is not dogmatic and there are ample images to illustrate the points being made. Two things that make this a rather unusual and pleasant art book.

This book will change the way you think about art. I love the way the author take pictures of the same thing (i.e. the crucifixion) and then shows how very different they really are, and why. I'm just a beginner in art appreciation, but I can see why someone I know who is a profesional in the field refers to this book constantly.

Very condensed, dry, technical and not well organized. It didn't help me much to broaden my horizons. However, the comparison of the two crucifixions was interesting and I wish there was

more of that.

Fantastic for beginners to the visual arts. If you have a trained eye - as in, you were explained this in art school about how to look through viewfinders, how to think about contours and forms - then don't buy it, you already know this. I bought it for a class and didn't even have to read it b it was so basic. But yeah, beginners, buy away. It's a real introduction into sight and doesn't give you the cheap and easy route to art, aka drawing circles and and building up, but a real understanding.

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