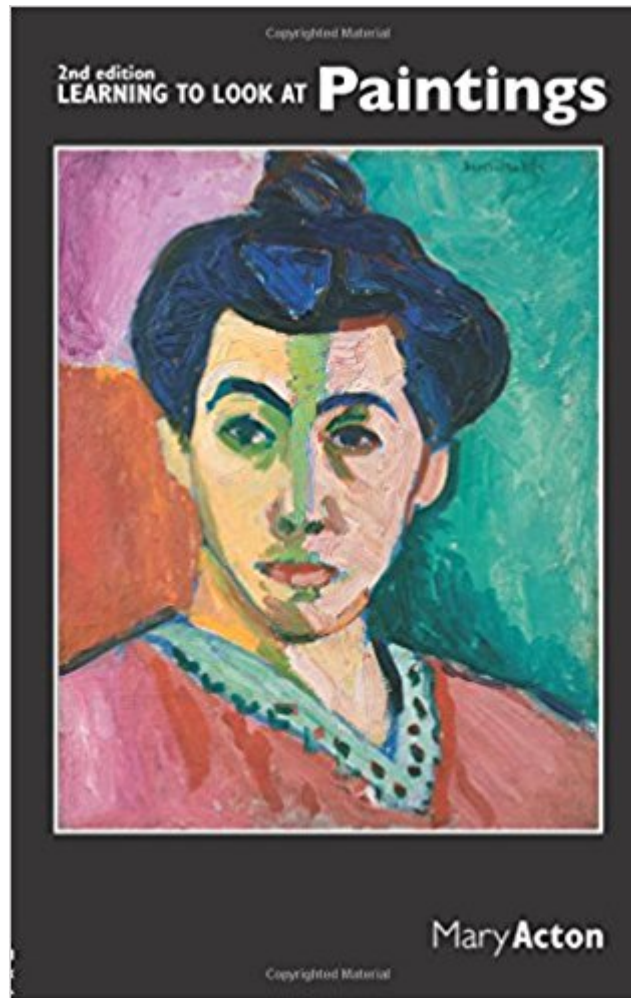




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Learning To Look At Paintings



Synopsis

Learning to Look at Paintings is an accessible guide to the study and appraisal of paintings, drawings and prints. Mary Acton shows how you can develop visual, analytical and historical skills in learning to look at and understand an image by analysing how it works, what its pictorial elements are and how they relate to each other. This fully revised and updated new edition is illustrated with over 100 images by a wide range of Western European and American artists, ranging from Rembrandt, Van Gogh and Botticelli to Picasso, Matisse and Rothko, and now includes modern and contemporary artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe, Anselm Kiefer, Tacita Dean and Marlene Dumas. In addition, Mary Acton presents new examples highlighting the survival and revival of painting in recent years. A new introduction situates the book in the wider context of recent changes in the approach to Art History. A glossary of critical and technical terms used in the language of Art History is also included, with an updated but still selective reading list.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'Each of the six chapters has a succinct introduction and a short but useful summary...

Recommended.' [5.0 out of 5 stars](#) - [CHOICE](#)

Mary Acton was Course Director of the Undergraduate Diploma and Advanced Diploma in the History of Art at Continuing Education, University of Oxford. She continues to teach at Oxford University and works as a freelance lecturer, and Learning to Look at Paintings is based on her experience over many years as an art historian and teacher. She is the author of Learning to look at

Modern Art (2004)

Excellent discussions for understanding techniques used by artists in their paintings. Anyone interested in learning what the masters were trying to accomplish through the use of paint should find this book interesting.

I'm training to be a docent in an art museum. This was recommended reading and I'm really glad to have purchased it because it gives me standard tools to use when looking at any piece of art.

Great book to have in any artists library. Lot's of great information. Something you go back to again and again. Very good book.

Don't remember it too well but I learned from it.

Mary Acton organizes her technique of appreciating art well. Breaking the parts down to Composition, Space, Form, Tone, Color and Subject Matter, the reader is taken on a systematic course to discerning a work of painted art. With plenty of examples to illustrate her points, and the clear, straightforward manner of writing, it is easy to understand and follow. I have 2 issues with this book -- neither of which targets the writer. (1) I appreciate the handy size, making this book very portable, but it is too small to properly show the works of art. Reproducing master works on offset printing with any appreciable quality is already a tremendous challenge without the size compromise. And more grievously, (2) there are only 29 color pages, with 1 image per those pages. For a book on Art, that is woefully under par. Mary discusses points on color against black and white images, many of which lack contrast data, especially in shadow regions, rendering her notes impossible to grasp. I had to refer to other books and the Internet to supplement this publication. Frankly, at the prices that Routledge charge for their books, I'd expect more than what I got. Yet, the content more than made up for the production shortcomings. So much so that I also ordered Mary's other book -- Learning to Look at Modern Art. I'd recommend this to anyone who is interested to learn how to better appreciate art. Just keep the Google Images page open. ;)

Composition, space, form, tone, color, subject-matter, and other pictorial elements of the plastic arts are considered and their interrelationships explained in this handy introduction, with over ninety well-chosen illustrations, some in color. The author, an experienced art teacher, has also included

illuminating essays on drawing and its purposes, looking at prints, a handy glossary of art terms, and references for further reading. Highly recommended as eminently suitable for an Introduction to Art course, and for anyone else interested in learning to see more in paintings. (The "score" rating is an unfortunately ineradicable feature of the page. This reviewer does not "score" books.)

I enjoyed this book on the principles and elements of design. I think she selected exemplary pictures to illustrate her point. I especially enjoyed the chapter on "subject matter". The only drawback of this book was having to flip back and forth from the reading to the painting. Also, she talked about some of the paintings color combinations that were printed in black and white. In the paperback version some of the details of the paintings were lost because they were reproduced on a small scale. Overall, though I would recommend this book to anyone interested in learning about design elements.

I know how to look at paintings better. writer Gintaras Kavarskas

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