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Picture This: How Pictures Work



Synopsis

Everyone knows that a picture tells a thousand words. But what about the elements that make up a picture? Using the tale of Little Red Riding Hood as an example, Molly Bang uses boldly graphic artwork to explain how imagesâand their individual componentsâwork to tell a story that engages the emotions: Why are diagonals dramatic? Why are curves calming? Why does red feel hot and blue feel cold? First published in 1991, *Picture This* fans will welcome the new edition's striking redesign and introduce its insights to many other artists and art appreciators alike.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is for anyone interested in the visual arts. Using the story of Little Red Riding Hood, Molly Bang explores visual communication by playing with simple geometric shapes and discussing their effect. For example, Molly creates Red as a small triangle but experiments with Red as a square, circle, or amorphous shape. Later, Molly creates the wolf as as a longer, sleeker triangle with sharper angles that create a sense of danger. She turns the angles into curves to see the impact of angles. She changes the color of the wolf from black to muave. She adds different shapes and colors of eyes; and teeth. In other words, she constantly experiments - and shows you the experiments - of different composition values and the mood they create. At the end, she summarizes what she learned as rules for composition. Whether you draw, paint, or take pictures, this book will help you with composition.

Using the story of Little Red Riding Hood this book is focusing on the basic principles of composing images. Reduced to the maximum and using simple colors and arrangements of basic elements like circles or triangles, the drawings as well as the short, precise text within this book are pointing out, how simple and complex arrangements within pictures work, transfer obvious (and hidden) messages, how philosophy and psychology within pictures works. Therefore it's a book telling the story why pictures may lie, may influence, may manipulate an observer even though obviously just showing "reality". Whether you are taking photographs, drawing or designing - this book is an absolute must! A photo/image tells more than thousand words - here you will find the answer how and why. Great to read and watch, easy and fast to understand - even though dealing with a most complex matter. Finally a personal statement and hint for an esthete: if you like to possess a book with an outer shape and appearance that promises, what the contents keeps, then you have to buy the nice hard cover version instead of the cheaper soft cover version - it will pay off for sure.

I've never encountered such a precise simple book on composition. When I was in art school, we experimented with composition with our teacher saying "just draw shapes". It was very frustrating because I didn't know why certain shapes worked and others didn't, and so I never got anywhere. For years I struggled with composition and knew something had to be done about it. After reading this book, I finally understand composition! When you first open it it looks so simple you get worried you already know everything in it, but Molly explains everything so perfectly, showing you both examples of what works and what doesn't, and most importantly, why. There are also exercises at the very end of the book to put your knowledge to the test. This book should be mandatory in any art major!

I love this book and using it for teaching basic design ideas...a fellow teacher uses it in Psychology! The simple story of Little Red Riding Hood serves as the basis for discussion how line, color, shape, etc. work in art. Such a great idea...wish there were others of this type. I will be using it to teach the elements of art in Art History this fall.

I can't say I'm overly well versed in composition, namely because most books on the subject are so dense. But in *Picture This*, the author has found an easily understandable way to show the basic fundamentals of art. Rather than teach composition with diagrams drawn over old master paintings like some books, Molly Bang uses simple bits of paper to demonstrate how shape, color and placement can affect the mood of a picture. And once you understand these principles, it's easy to

see how they can be applied to more complex artwork. Bang's pace is very deliberate. Every change to her construction paper compositions is well documented and explained. It's that simplicity and directness that allow her to communicate such a large amount of knowledge in only 96 pages. And don't let the short page count and the fact that this book is recommended for grade schoolers fool you. This is a book every artist should have on her shelf.

Don't be misled by the simple pictures and storybook style into thinking this is just a book for children. I have given this book to several adult friends, including some who are professional artists. We all learned something from Molly Bang's clear and compelling explanations of the principles of visual composition.

This book is one person's opinion on how triangles and such, in pictures, make one FEEL. I thought it would give more of a break down on composition. If you can decipher what the author is saying, you come to the conclusion that all she is saying is, big things are more dominant, in a picture, than little things. Round things are softer than pointy things. Big things look scarier than little things. That's it in a nutshell. There is no "art" in this book, unless you want to find the deep meaning of a third grader's cut outs. I lost interest in this book almost immediately, the cover sums up the whole book. So, if you want to pay to read about how big things are scarier and more dominant than little things, this book is for you.

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