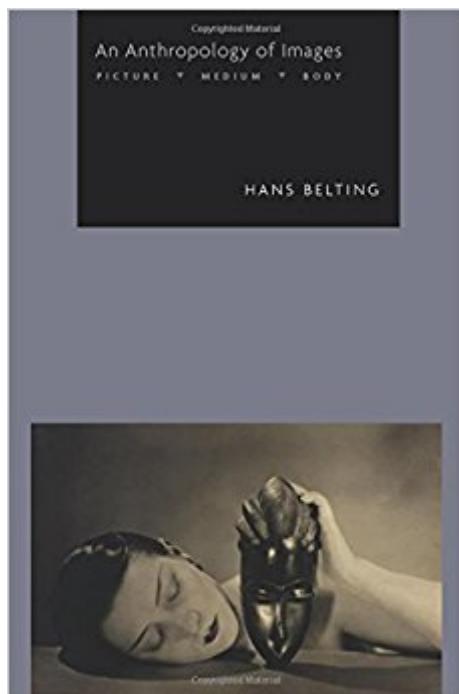


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An Anthropology Of Images: Picture, Medium, Body



Synopsis

In this groundbreaking book, renowned art historian Hans Belting proposes a new anthropological theory for interpreting human picture making. Rather than focus exclusively on pictures as they are embodied in various media such as painting, sculpture, or photography, he links pictures to our mental images and therefore our bodies. The body is understood as a "living medium" that produces, perceives, or remembers images that are different from the images we encounter through handmade or technical pictures. Refusing to reduce images to their material embodiment yet acknowledging the importance of the historical media in which images are manifested, *An Anthropology of Images* presents a challenging and provocative new account of what pictures are and how they function. The book demonstrates these ideas with a series of compelling case studies, ranging from Dante's picture theory to post-photography. One chapter explores the tension between image and medium in two "media of the body," the coat of arms and the portrait painting. Another, central chapter looks at the relationship between image and death, tracing picture production, including the first use of the mask, to early funerary rituals in which pictures served to represent the missing bodies of the dead. Pictures were tools to re-embody the deceased, to make them present again, a fact that offers a surprising clue to the riddle of presence and absence in most pictures and that reveals a genealogy of pictures obscured by Platonic picture theory.

Book Information

Paperback: 216 pages

Publisher: Princeton University Press; Translated by Thomas Dunlap ed. edition (July 21, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0691160961

ISBN-13: 978-0691160962

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.5 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #510,345 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #227 in Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Themes > Human Figure #2362 in Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Criticism #4136 in Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > History

Customer Reviews

"Belting is one of the most brilliant and most prolific art historians."--Choice "[A] fascinating if not

revolutionary look at the way we interact with other 'embodied' images such as sculptures, photographs, films, paintings and more. . . . Brilliant."--William Yeoman, *West Australian*"An Anthropology of Images is a wonderful insightful account of a new anthropological theory for interpreting human picture-making."--Joanna Rak, *Anthropological Notebooks*

"The case for an anthropology of images is very compelling. Belting's insistence on thinking across the received divisions between mental and physical images, virtual and real images, and technical and nontechnical images is refreshing and provocative. He is rightly skeptical of current dogmas about 'new media' as a radical historical break that renders the concept of the image obsolete. Again and again, he rejects rigid antitheses and presentist rhetoric as he argues for a much more nuanced, complex history of images."--W.J.T. Mitchell, *University of Chicago*"Highly original and provocative, *An Anthropology of Images* is integral to today's contentious debates about the nature, history, and domain of images. The book's insights ripple far across the field of art history."--Michael Leja, *University of Pennsylvania*

HANS BELTING IS A WORLD FAMOUS ART HISTORIAN AND I SIMPLY WANTED TO READ SOME OF HIS BOOKS.

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