



Image Science: Iconology, Visual Culture, and Media Aesthetics

W. J. T. Mitchell

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Almost thirty years ago, W. J. T. Mitchell's *Iconology* helped launch the interdisciplinary study of visual media, now a central feature of the humanities. Along with his subsequent *Picture Theory* and *What Do Pictures Want?*, Mitchell's now-classic work introduced such ideas as the pictorial turn, the image/picture distinction, the metapicture, and the biopicture. These key concepts imply an approach to images as true objects of investigation—an "image science."

Continuing with this influential line of thought, *Image Science* gathers Mitchell's most recent essays on media aesthetics, visual culture, and artistic symbolism. The chapters delve into such topics as the physics and biology of images, digital photography and realism, architecture and new media, and the occupation of space in contemporary popular uprisings. The book looks both backward at the emergence of iconology as a field and forward toward what might be possible if image science can indeed approach pictures the same way that empirical sciences approach natural phenomena.

Essential for those involved with any aspect of visual media, *Image Science* is a brilliant call for a method of studying images that overcomes the "two-culture split" between the natural and human sciences.

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