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How to Read a Painting: Lessons from the Old Masters

Patrick De Rynck

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Clues to the meaning of many of the masterpieces of art history lie in a rich system of symbols, themes, and motifs that often eludes modern museum-goers. The intimate knowledge of Christian theology, Greek and Roman mythology, and folklore that was so vivid in the minds of viewers during the Renaissance is rarely part of the preparation the contemporary viewer brings to a painting. This insightful, anecdotal, portable book-with 1,000 gorgeous color illustrations-helps to fill in those gaps by decoding the imagery of more than 150 of the most influential and admired artworks of all time.

Covering the works of the Italian, Netherlandish, German, and Spanish Old Masters, from 1450 to 1750-paintings by artists such as Giotto, Botticelli, El Greco, Bruegel, Holbein, Rubens, and Vermeer, all held in public collections-*How to Read a Painting* not only helps the viewer to understand the significant details of a picture but also explains the relationship with similar imagery in other works. The guide to Old Master paintings that every art lover has always wanted, this indispensable museum companion will open the reader to a whole new experience of Western art's most praised and visited paintings.

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