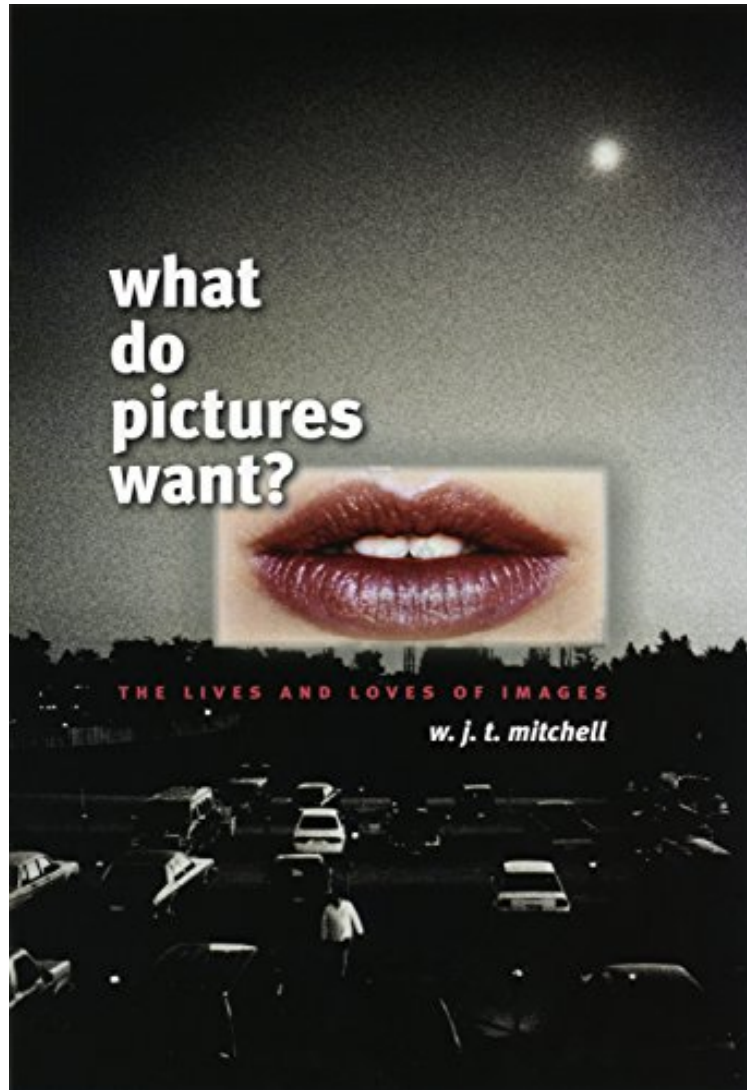


(Free read ebook) What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images

What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images

W. J. T. Mitchell

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W. J. T. Mitchell : What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great writer, tooBy Angelia GiannoneEssential for visual rhetoricians! Great writer, too.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy DIANA KUELLARGood!40 of 50 people found the following review helpful. Understanding how we really relate to imagesBy John A. GarganoProfessor Mitchell has put together an intriguing collection of essays that are distinctly devoid of the presumptuous art talk so often seen in the top periodicals and art blogs of our time - thank you sir! Since these essays are the work of an exceptional scholar, some of us mere mortals may have difficulty in following the

abstract constructs and thoroughly academic ponderings. That said, I believe Professor Mitchell poses an interesting fundamental question as to whether the experience of viewing images has evolved within our minds to the point where we actually wonder if they have a life or consciousness of their own. If this is the case, the next question one may ponder is, what do they want? Professor Mitchell is quick to point out that in taking on the exercise of this thought experiment, we are not to proceed as though we are engaged in finding a cure for cancer here - my words, not his - but to proceed on a path of open-ended exploration. In attempting to answer this question, the author guides us along an extensive path that deals with numerous invocations, comparisons, analogies, postulates, arguments and other worldly considerations. Not only are the considerations of the world, but they contain a sampling of nearly everything in the world as well, from biblical chapter and verse to Marx, Blake, Nietzsche, Chaucer, Freud, Dante, et al. In the first half of this book, Professor Mitchell has indeed composed a concerto of tribute to much of Western Civilization. There are worse things one could do. That said, I would encourage the good Professor, in his ninth book (this is his eighth) to forsake his colleagues in academe just enough (heaven forbid!) to leave the huddled masses with fewer more distinct concepts and a more consistent theme. A reduction in the scope of considerations may help the reader to come away with a perception that there is a more differentiated hierarchy of importance amongst the contents of the book. In all fairness, each chapter of this very worthwhile book deserves its own review. I would also submit that the educational potential of this subject matter would not suffer in the least if the Professor were to delete his political inclinations, which, as interesting as they may be, do not enhance the subject matter of this book in any way. Anyone who wants to understand how we really relate to images should read this comprehensive book.

Why do we have such extraordinarily powerful responses toward the images and pictures we see in everyday life? Why do we behave as if pictures were alive, possessing the power to influence us, to demand things from us, to persuade us, seduce us, or even lead us astray? According to W. J. T. Mitchell, we need to reckon with images not just as inert objects that convey meaning but as animated beings with desires, needs, appetites, demands, and drives of their own. *What Do Pictures Want?* explores this idea and highlights Mitchell's innovative and profoundly influential thinking on picture theory and the lives and loves of images. Ranging across the visual arts, literature, and mass media, Mitchell applies characteristically brilliant and wry analyses to Byzantine icons and cyberpunk films, racial stereotypes and public monuments, ancient idols and modern clones, offensive images and found objects, American photography and aboriginal painting. Opening new vistas in iconology and the emergent field of visual culture, he also considers the importance of Dolly the Sheep—who, as a clone, fulfills the ancient dream of creating a living image—and the destruction of the World Trade Center on 9/11, which, among other things, signifies a new and virulent form of iconoclasm. *What Do Pictures Want?* offers an immensely rich and suggestive account of the interplay between the visible and the readable. A work by one of our leading theorists of visual representation, it will be a touchstone for art historians, literary critics, anthropologists, and philosophers alike. “A treasury of episodes—generally overlooked by art history and visual studies—that turn on images that walk by themselves; and exert their own power over the living.”—Norman Bryson, *Artforum*

“Mitchell’s book is a treasury of episodes—generally overlooked by art history and visual studies—that turn on images that walk by themselves; and exert their own power over the living, from the resurrection of the dinosaur in the Victorian natural-history museum, to the quasi-animated statues of Antony Gormley, to the continuing vitality of the visual stereotype of racism. His account offers the most serious challenge in many years to the view that images are merely signs; asking only for interpretation or analysis or commentary. What images want from us is much more than that.”