



Look! Body Language in Art

Books Reviewed:

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

The author is Head of Education at Dulwich Picture gallery and has produced a number of other books for children on the subject of art. Here she makes a wide-ranging and eclectic selection of paintings featuring a variety of expressive human gestures. The imagery ranges from seventeenth-century Italian religious painting through overblown Victorian sentimentality, Japanese Kabuki, Cubism and late twentieth-century irony. And of course Grant Wood's lugubrious, iconic 'American Gothic' puts in an appearance. The young reader is invited to analyse each picture through gently prompting questions that never patronise, but offer a helping hand with the demanding activity of reading pictures. Naturally enough, many of the choices are narrative paintings which offer an opportunity for the reader to speculate about the 'before and after' as well as on the thoughts and emotions of the players, but the writer also shows a nice economy in describing artistic movements such as cubism and in discussing the preoccupations of individual artists. At the back of the book, each painting is set in context with a helpful potted biography of the artist. This is a book that may genuinely ignite in children an interest in art and perhaps more importantly, drawing, in the doing rather than merely observing sense.

Running Order:

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