

Matthew Wilson

Author

Matthew Wilson is a writer, art historian and educator who specialises in how we interpret and understand visual culture. He has written four books: *The Art of Happiness* (forthcoming) *Art Unpacked*, *The Hidden Language of Symbols* and *Symbols in Art*. His writing has appeared in *BBC Culture*, *The Economist*, *The Spectator*, and *Aesthetica Magazine*, and he is an accredited lecturer for *The Arts Society*.



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Publications

Non-Fiction

Publication Details	Notes
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**ART
UNPACKED**
2023
Thames and
Hudson Ltd.

An engaging, visual primer in art history for the general reader and educators. Matthew Wilson's straightforward approach uses established art historical methods and enables the reader to discover the fundamentals of art history, from considerations of function, historical context, iconography, and artists' experience to broader issues of identity, including feminism, gender, and postcolonialism. The resulting book is a dynamic visual resource that will inspire and spark enjoyment of art in all its forms.

"Wilson looks at the truly fine points, leaving readers astonished that they missed these details before ... [a] masterful mix of analytical precision and perceptive commentary."

Ed Voves

"Wilson expertly illuminates technical details without losing sight of art's visceral pleasures ... an excellent resource for those looking to get the most out of their next trip to the museum."

Publishers Weekly

"[A] unique study ... Highly recommended."

E. M. Hansen

**THE HIDDEN
LANGUAGE
OF SYMBOLS**
2022
Thames and
Hudson Ltd.

The Hidden Language of Symbols covers a wide-ranging selection of visual culture and art under one unified theme: symbols. Often not immediately apparent, our day-to-day lives abound with symbols of various kinds, from national emblems to emojis, allegories to logos, all of which have a fascinating story. Drawing on artistic examples from the imaginary, natural, physical, and religious worlds, from dragons to eagles, butterflies to labyrinths, and rainbows to wheels, author and art historian Matthew Wilson discusses the lives of these different types of symbols, explaining how symbols are markers of identity, that is, how they gain the power to unite and divide societies.

"With an immensely stimulating amount of insight and verve, Matthew Wilson makes us appreciate just how rich in symbolic meanings the history of art turns out to be."

Richard Cork

"Remarkably entertaining... Wilson takes a compelling, unique approach to the subject ... Highly recommended."

Choice Magazine

"Lavishly assembled ... the signs are everywhere with this book as a guide"

Vogue

"A valuable resource for anyone intrigued by the use of symbols in worldwide art history"

The Arts Society Magazine

"The fateful journey of the swastika from Ice Age carving to Nazi emblem merits a book in itself. Reading symbols in art, says Wilson, our brains are 'performing sophisticated acrobatics': regard this book as warm-up."

Laura Gascoigne, RA Magazine

**SYMBOLS IN
ART**

2020

Thames and
Hudson Ltd.

Iconography, the study of symbols - be they animals, artefacts, plants, shapes or gestures - is an essential element of art history. This guide unravels over fifty of the most common and intriguing visual symbols from across the globe from 2300 BCE to the present day. Matthew Wilson explores symbolism's subtle implications and overt and covert meanings, providing an indispensable tool for interpretation. "Masterly ... the perfect introduction to a subject that can only heighten the general appreciation of art"
Christopher Lloyd, former Surveyor of The Queen's Pictures
