



# Pictures and their Use in Communication: A Philosophical Essay

*David Novitz*

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## **Pictures and their Use in Communication: A Philosophical Essay** David Novitz

Ours is the age of the picture. Pictures abound in our newspapers and magazines, in storybooks and on the glossy pages of instruction manuals. We find them on billboards and postage stamps, on the television screen and in the cinema. And in all of these cases pictures inform us: they explain, they clarify, they elucidate - and at times, too, they entertain and delight us. Images on the television screen have all but replaced the printed word as a source of information about the world; and nowadays, too, picture books and comic strips are consulted much more readily, and with much less intellectual effort, than the printed word. There can be little doubt but that pictures have come to play a very important role in communication. It strikes me as odd that, in what is nothing less than a visual age, philosophers have had so little to say about the visual image and its use in communication. Hardly anything has been done to explain the way in which pictures are used to inform us; the way in which they influence our thinking, our attitudes and our perception of the world. My aim in this work is to fill this gap, and in so doing to provide a viable account of pictorial communication.

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