



The Neural Imagination: Aesthetic and Neuroscientific Approaches to the Arts (Cognitive Approaches to Literature and Culture)

By Irving Massey

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Art and technology have been converging rapidly in the past few years; an important example of this convergence is the alliance of neuroscience with aesthetics, which has produced the new field of neuroaesthetics.

Irving Massey examines this alliance, in large part to allay the fears of artists and audiences alike that brain science may "explain away" the arts. The first part of the book shows how neuroscience can enhance our understanding of certain features of art. The second part of the book illustrates a humanistic approach to the arts; it is written entirely without recourse to neuroscience, in order to show the differences in methodology between the two approaches. The humanistic style is marked particularly by immersion in the individual work and by evaluation, rather than by detachment in the search for generalizations. In the final section Massey argues that, despite these differences, once the reality of imagination is accepted neuroscience can be seen as the collaborator, not the inquisitor, of the arts.

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Review

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About the Author

IRVING MASSEY is Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Adjunct Professor of French, Emeritus, at the State University of New York's University at Buffalo.

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