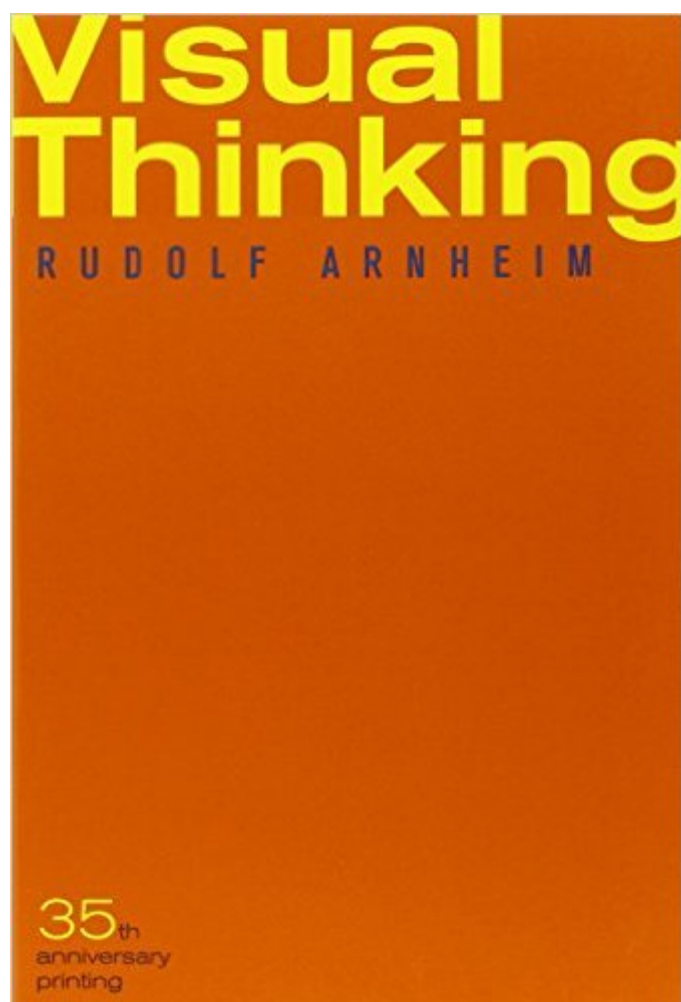


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# Visual Thinking



## Synopsis

For thirty-five years Visual Thinking has been the gold standard for art educators, psychologists, and general readers alike. In this seminal work, Arnheim, author of *The Dynamics of Architectural Form*, *Film as Art*, *Toward a Psychology of Art*, and *Art and Visual Perception*, asserts that all thinking (not just thinking related to art) is basically perceptual in nature, and that the ancient dichotomy between seeing and thinking, between perceiving and reasoning, is false and misleading. An indis-pensable tool for students and for those interested in the arts.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Rudolf Arheim's *Visual Thinking* makes a fine companion to his work *Art and Visual Perception*, even though the two books have widely varying aims. Arnheim states his thesis for *Visual Thinking* up front: "[V]ision is the primary medium of thought." (p. 18), and he devotes this text to providing support for and elaborating upon this thesis. Stating his thesis even more forcefully, he says, "[T]he arts are the most powerful means of strengthening the perceptual component without which productive thinking is impossible in any field of endeavor." (p. 3). Arnheim concedes that thought is possible without the use of visual imagery, that abstractions of thought are possible which do not necessarily involve visual imagery, but he insists that all such thinking has visual thinking at its roots. "[T]he cognitive operations called thinking are not the privilege of mental processes above and beyond perception but the essential ingredients of cognition itself." (p. 13). Put in even more direct terms, he says, "[P]erception and thinking cannot get along without each other." (p.

188). Arnheim realizes that his claim is a radical one, and he turns to the empiricists Locke, Berkeley, and Hume for support. He understands that abstract thinking might be the least amenable manner of thought to his central thesis, but he does a good job of persuading the reader that even abstract thinking relies on visual thinking at its core. "[V]isual perception lays the groundwork for conceptual formation," (p. 294) he says, adding that "every art work is a statement about something. Every visual pattern ... can be considered a proposition which, more or less successfully, makes a declaration about the nature of human existence." (p. 296).

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