

Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between viewer and artwork in terms of spatial representation and narrative. It discusses the nature of subjectivity from a theoretical and historical perspective, particularly as it applies to art and spectatorship, and focuses on specific works from the fields of visual art and cinema. The author's own visual work, a record of which follows the main body of the thesis, is structured around differing interpretations of the ideas and examples discussed in the text. It explores how the picture or artwork can *position* the viewer and how this positioning affects their perception of the spatial and narrative dimensions of the work. Taking Duchamp's assertion that 'the spectator makes the picture' as an organizing principle, a means of plotting a course through the subject area, the thesis discusses the notion that representational pictures of a particular kind *anticipate* or *incorporate* their spectator such that the picture is not properly complete until perceived. Linear perspective is seen as a pivotal model for the viewer/image relation in that it not only enables the creation of a unified, systematic pictorial space but also, in its classic definition, defines the spectator's position in relation to both picture plane and represented space. The viewpoint implied by such a picture can have a narrative function and requires the viewer to actively participate in the construction of meaning through the interpretation of its visual and narrative clues. This interpretation is particular to the individual spectator and reflects the initial difference between an artist's intention and the latter's realization in the work. A work's significance, therefore, is to be found neither in the work itself, nor in the artist's intention or the viewer's perception. It is apparent only in the space or the *difference* between them.