



Narrating the Visual in Shakespeare

Richard Meek

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This book examines Shakespeare's fascination with the art of narrative and the visuality of language. Richard Meek complicates our conception of Shakespeare as either a 'man of the theatre' or a 'literary dramatist', suggesting ways in which his works themselves debate the question of text versus performance. Beginning with an exploration of the pictorialism of Shakespeare's narrative poems, the book goes on to examine several moments in Shakespeare's dramatic works when characters break off the action to describe an absent, 'offstage' event, place or work of art. Meek argues that Shakespeare does not simply prioritise drama over other forms of representation, but rather that he repeatedly exploits the interplay between different types of mimesis - narrative, dramatic and pictorial - in order to beguile his audiences and readers. Setting Shakespeare's works in their literary and rhetorical contexts, and engaging with contemporary literary theory, the book offers new readings of Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece, Hamlet, King Lear and The Winter's Tale. The book will be of particular relevance to readers interested in the relationship between verbal and visual art, theories of representation and mimesis, Renaissance literary and rhetorical culture, and debates regarding Shakespeare's status as a literary dramatist.



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