

Beate I. Allert

G. E. Lessing: Poetic Constellations between the Visual and the Verbal

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How to articulate ideas so that they become visually effective? How to turn readers into spectators? How to perform texts on stage so that the audience is drawn into the illusion? How to promote catharsis? In this monograph Beate I. Allert interprets Lessing's works as poetic experiments between the verbal and the visual. Words and Images are interpreted neither as mere juxtapositions, nor as fluid transformations from one mode of representation to another but in terms of their intricate dynamics. Lessing evokes poignant moments and his works illustrate a variety of effects through rhetorical features, arrested movements, silences, cutting devices, and framed images. Lessing aims to evoke compassion to make people think about what they see. The book consists of three parts: First, Lessing's approach to Ekphrasis and implied difficulties, his approach to fables, his preference for sketches over paintings, and his *Laokoon* and the *Paralipomena* which suggest a new genre of "musikalische Bilder" while interlacing spatial and temporal dimensions. Part two interprets Lessing's experiments with poetic constellations as a playwright between 1748–1772 reflecting on his attempts to make arbitrary signs in language appear as if natural. The third part focuses on Lessing's late works that link aesthetics with ethics and illustrate how Lessing searches for an immanent visualcy while avoiding sheer didacticism.

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