



Structural Intuitions: Seeing Shapes in Art and Science (Page-Barbour Lectures)

By Martin Kemp

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"All great achievements of science must start from intuitive knowledge," wrote Albert Einstein. In *Structural Intuitions*, a fascinating exploration of the commonalities between two seemingly disparate realms, renowned art historian Martin Kemp applies Einstein's notion both to science and to art.

Kemp argues that in both fields, work begins at the intuitive level, curiosity aroused by our recognition of patterns or order. Kemp's "structural intuitions," then, are the ways we engage fundamental perceptual and cognitive mechanisms to bring order to our observed world. Through stimulating juxtaposition, Kemp considers connections between naturally occurring patterns, cognitive processes, and artistic and scientific expression, drawing on an array of examples from the Renaissance through the present.

Taking a broadly historical approach, Kemp examines forms and processes such as the geometry of Platonic solids, the dynamics of growth, and the patterns of fluids in motion, while placing the work of contemporary artists, engineers, and scientists in dialogue with that of visionaries such as Leonardo da Vinci and D'Arcy Thompson.

Richly illustrated, lucidly written, and wonderfully thought-provoking, *Structural Intuitions* is essential reading for anyone seeking insight into common ground in the arts and sciences.

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- Rank: #1833517 in eBooks
- Published on: 2016-03-08
- Released on: 2016-03-08
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Review

In this highly stimulating book, Martin Kemp offers an extremely fertile proposal for how science and art draw on cognitive processes that are closely allied. His novel thesis, drawing on a deep knowledge of both art history and scientific research, does a great deal to illuminate the interactions and interrelations of the two disciplines, and provides a timely challenge to our habitual determination to keep them apart.

(Philip Ball, author of *Nature's Patterns: A Tapestry in Three Parts*)

The idea of 'structural intuitions' as uniquely devised and defined by the author remains radical and unique, presenting a paradigm shift in thinking about the interconnections between art and science. Kemp has continued to develop an analysis of the phenomenon in a wide sweep across scholarly disciplines and over history. Here, he brings together a full, succinct, and even more considered elaboration of his theme.

(Siân Ede, author of *Art & Science*)

About the Author

Martin Kemp is Emeritus Professor of the History of Art at the University of Oxford and the author of *Seen/Unseen*, *Leonardo*, and *Christ to Coke*.

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