
The Power of Pictures

The final exhibition of the Beinecke's 50th anniversary celebrations, The Power of Pictures, draws upon the Library's collections to consider our visual heritage, a record of image-making that began at least 40,000 years ago.

In the digital era our daily lives are awash in pictures: still and moving, personal and public, realistic and fantastic. Images, and the means by which we share them, have proliferated. They hang on our walls and refrigerators; glow on our flat-screen televisions, tablet computers, and smartphones; confront us on billboards as we travel to work or play. We live in what may be the most image-saturated culture ever, but the collections of the Beinecke Library remind us that our contemporary experience has deep historical roots.

At least since the time of the oldest surviving cave paintings, humans have created pictures to record their experiences, depict their emotions, and express their ideas. Pictures have been a basis for defining communities—positively and negatively, autonomously and by imposition. They have inspired passions and provoked contemplation. They represent the world as encountered and as imagined. Learning to write did not diminish our fascination with visual images. Since then, artists and writers have collaborated to develop an astonishing variety of techniques which place images and words in play with each other. Together, they achieve more than either medium can by itself and sustain a never-ending process of reimagining our world and ourselves.

The Power of Pictures seeks to expose the Beinecke Library's abundant visual resources and to encourage faculty, students, and visiting scholars to explore the collections more fully than this temporary exhibition can. We hope our selections will excite your curiosity and stir your imagination.

The exhibition will be on view until December 16 in the Beinecke Library and is free and open to the public.

External link: http://www.library.yale.edu/librarynews/2013/09/the_power_of_pictures.html [1]

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