VISUAL ORDER
the nature and development of pictorial representation
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Edited by

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge
London  New York  New Rochelle
Melbourne  Sydney
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PREFACE

There has been a vast amount of recent research in the field of picture production. Yet much of it seemed to us to be dispersed across a number of different topics and subject areas. The published work is in many different journals and books. We felt that the many ideas and studies should be gathered together in one place, so that picture production could be shown to be a major and fertile topic of research in its own right, and a most useful one. And so the idea of this book was born.

An open letter expounding some of the puzzles in the field of picture production was sent to a number of people who were either writing wide-ranging books which they might be willing to tell us about, or who had done a series of experiments on a specific topic and had come to novel and interesting conclusions. The response was marvellously encouraging. It would have been easy to gather twice as many authors as we actually did; but then the book would have been editorially uncontrollable!

As it was, to lessen the danger that the book would lack all coherence, a conference was held at York, organised by Maureen Cox, which half the book contributors managed to get to, as did an equal number of active researchers who were not planning to write chapters. It quickly became obvious that far more discovery was going on behind the scenes than one would possibly have guessed from reading the journals. From out of the exciting controversies which arose at the conference the book finally took shape in our minds. The book is intended both as a contribution to experimental psychology and as a contribution from psychologists to other practitioners and interested parties. Not all the authors are professional academic psychologists: the input from other teachers and educationists and from practising artists also played an important role in giving the book its shape. All that remains is for us to thank the contributors for their tact, patience and responsiveness, as we cajoled them to revise a passage yet again. They treated us better than we deserved.

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Preface

We are particularly grateful to Kathleen Dixon, Barbara Levy, Anne Merriman, Mike Pugh and Jean Webber for their help in preparing the material, words and pictures. They gave their help willingly when it was most needed. So did Susan Milmoe and Penny Carter of Cambridge University Press: they were a pleasure to work with.

N.H.F. and M.V.C.