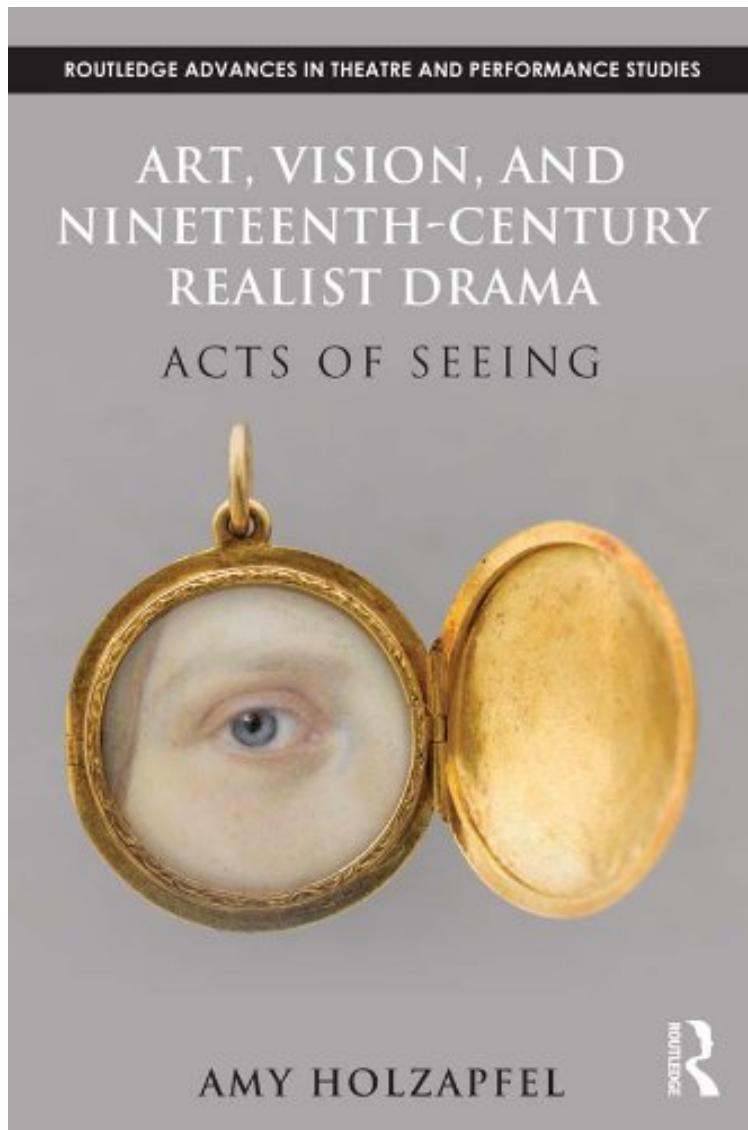


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Art, Vision, and Nineteenth-Century Realist Drama: Acts of Seeing (Routledge Advances in Theatre Performance Studies)

Amy Holzapfel

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Amy Holzapfel : Art, Vision, and Nineteenth-Century Realist Drama: Acts of Seeing (Routledge Advances in Theatre Performance Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Art, Vision, and Nineteenth-Century Realist Drama: Acts of Seeing (Routledge Advances in Theatre Performance Studies):

Realism in theatre is traditionally defined as a mere seed of modernism, a crude attempt to reproduce an exact copy of reality on stage. *Art, Vision Nineteenth-Century Realist Drama* redefines realism as a complex and under-examined form of visual modernism, one that positioned theatre at the crux of the encounter between consciousness and the visible world. Tracing a historical continuum of "acts of seeing" on the realist stage, Holzapfel demonstrates how theatre participated in modernity's aggressive interrogation of vision's residence in the human body. New findings by scientists and philosophers—such as Diderot, Goethe, Müller, Helmholtz, and Galton—exposed how the visible world is experienced and framed by the unstable relativism of the physiological body rather than the fixed idealism of the mind. Realist artists across media paradoxically embraced this paradigm shift by focusing on the embodied observer. Drawing from extensive archival research, Holzapfel conducts close readings of iconic dramas and their productions—including Scribe's *The Glass of Water*, Zola's *Before Sunrise*; and Ibsen's *A Doll House*, Strindberg's *The Father*, and Hauptmann's *Before Sunup*; alongside analyses of artwork by major painters and photographers—such as Chardin, Nadar, Millais, Rejlander, and Liebermann. In a radical challenge to existing criticism, Holzapfel argues that realism in theatre was never the attempt to reproduce an exact copy of the seen world but rather the struggle to make visible the act of seeing.

"Holzapfel's new ways of seeing realism are interesting and add a valuable new layer to understanding of the dramatic form. Summing Up: Recommended." -- S. J. Blackstone, University of Victoria, CHOICE "Grounding her impressive study of major realist playwrights in discussions of eighteenth and nineteenth-century scientific works on vision, painting trends, and early photography, Holzapfel argues that these playwrights "struggled to reveal . . . that seeing—and, by extension, knowing—are relative processes governed by the forces of a body moving in space and time," presenting readers with a thought-provoking book that combines her compelling arguments with reproductions of paintings and photographs that reveal connections between the visual arts and theatre." --Nevena Stojanovic, West Virginia University, *Theatre Journal*
About the Author Amy Holzapfel is Associate Professor in the Department of Theatre at Williams College, US.