eral view of representatives of the “spiritual avant-garde.” One finds biographical materials, scientific articles analyzing creative concepts and first publications of musical and literary pieces. With versatility and depth, the book looks at the creativity of N. Roslavé, from a survey of his milieu and friends to an analysis of his synesthesia musical technique, the predecessor of serial and modal techniques. The book examines Roslavé’s individuality through his theoretical works, such as his works on the educational role of music and its service to the proletariat, on Schönberg’s Päron Lumàar and on his own creativity. The reader’s attention will undoubtedly be drawn to sections devoted to constructivist sculptor Naum Gabo, painter Alfred Levit and writer L. Dobychin. Since these artists are less known at home than others in the book, information on their fate, pictures of their works, reminiscences of their contemporaries and the publication of pictures of Dobychin’s miniatures are of special significance.

Also among the materials is the brilliant literary criticism of Yuri Shegov, who examines Dobychin’s writing style, a synthesis of avant-garde techniques with an existential view of reality. This supplements materials on two of the most prominent representatives of the spirit of daring—Daniil Andreyev and Alexandr Chizhevsky. Andreyev was a poet and spiritual visionary while the latter was a scientist and poet. Both created unique cosmological theories that dramatically challenged common perceptions. Aware of the perception of these figures’ reputation in world culture, the book does not attempt any detailed analysis of their work. The author aims instead to demonstrate a kind of nucleus of such unique personages. The commentary on Andreyev is in the form of a dialog between a philosopher, a theologian, a literary critic and an artist, among others. Chizhevsky’s creativity, on the other hand, is represented in a monological description of his basic scientific and poetic achievements.

The final part of the book is a survey of modern art festivals held in Briansk since 1986. In general, the book provokes thought about the colossal potential of Russian spiritual life in spite of the circumstances of life in Russia. On reading the biographies of the outstanding figures of the Briansk region, it might seem that creativity could hardly be possible in such conditions; on the other hand, maybe it is because of such forces that people have been able to create virtual universes so unlike reality. This book again poses questions on this secret of the spirit and on issues of Russian creativity.

**THE DOMAIN OF IMAGES**


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For whatever reason, some of the most daring, experimental writing in the field of art history is now coming out of Chicago. Barbara Maria Stafford (who teaches at the University of Chicago) is one of the chief innovators, as is James Elkins, the author of this book, who teaches at the Art Institute of Chicago. Purely in terms of output, Elkins is phenomenal. In the past 5 years, he has published eight important books, all of which are worth looking into: *The Poetics of Perspective* (1995); *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing* (1996); *On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them* (1998); *On Beautiful, Dry and Distant Texts: Art History as Writing* (1998); *What Painting Is: How to Think about Oil Painting, Using the Language of Alchemy* (1998); *Why Are Our Pictures Puzzles?: On the Modern Origins of Pictorial Complexity* (1999); *Pictures of the Body: Pain and Metamorphosis* (1999) and this title, his latest. How is this even possible? The answer in part is that each of his books, while being unique, is more or less about the same range of issues: They are all about “art history on the edge,” about aspects of art and design that defy categorization and that easily fall through the cracks in doctoral research programs. Like Gyorgy Kepes (*The New Landscape in Science and Art*) and E.H. Gombrich (*Art and Illusion*), whom Elkins must surely be influenced by, he almost always argues (by example, if not by the actual words that he writes) that art historians should look beyond their traditional subject areas and focus as much on the images in science, technology, commerce, medicine, music and archaeology.

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**VISUAL ANALOGY**


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There is no mention in this book of Friedrich Froebel, the founder of kindergarten, who might have (or should have) been mentioned because the book’s subject—visual analogy, or, as Stafford defines it, the perception of similarity-in-difference—is the subject of the second educational toy (or “gift,” as Froebelians call it) that Froebel presented to children. The toy consisted of three simple shapes: A sphere, cube and cylinder. The sphere represented unity, the cube diversity, and the cylinder (which is spherical from one angle, square from another) was a synthesis of the two, a reconciliation of opposites. That simple toy, as Norman Brosterman said in *Inventing Kindergarten*, was “the dialectic incarnate—Hegel for tots,” for it taught children about analogical seeing, about similarity-in-difference and, as Froebel himself put it, that “all consequences lie dormant in their antecedents.”

This new book by the author of *Good Looking, Artful Science and Body Criticism* (she teaches art history at the University of Chicago) is a densely written but richly illustrated plea for the restoration of analogy (the perception of someone or something as like what it is not) in art and non-art visual forms, and also in everything else that we do. As a culture, we withstand the damaging daily effects of “an explosion of discontinuous happenings,” writes Stafford, brought on in part by the emphasis on “personal statements, irreducibly distinctive subjects, and contradictory opinions.” At the beginning of the new millennium, the “diversification of diversity” (David Hollinger) and the postmodern assault on analogical reasoning have left us “incapable of speaking across differences.”

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