In this short, brilliant book, Viktor Shklovsky enunciates the function of the arts: what they are and, just as importantly, what they are not. In the course of defining what art is, by implication he also quietly lays to waste the theories and people who view art as a means of representing "the real world" and a method of communication. His views of the other arts then lead him into his speculations about the art of cinema photography, new at the time that Shklovsky composed his polemic in 1923.

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