



# The Shape Game

Books Reviewed:

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Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

This is the classiest introduction to Tate Britain that you could hope to buy. It stems from Browne's period as illustrator in residence there. It introduces us to a family visiting the gallery for the first time, guiding and provoking us with Browne's familiar techniques of visual jokes and games, pictures within a story and stories within pictures. It's the same family that visited the Zoo in Browne's earlier title, but this time from the point of view of the younger brother. He also appears, much older, at the opening of the book, as the story's narrator and illustrator, remembering a day that 'changed my life forever'. At the outset, all the family are wary and intimidated, except mum who is enjoying her birthday treat. But Browne's eccentric transformations of the Tate's forbidding architecture and ambience make it immediately more welcoming to the reader who looks over their shoulders. One by one, the other members of the family are engaged by the paintings. The connections that they make with their own lives release the pictures from their frames and free their imaginations. Napoleon wears a cat on his head; blood leaks down the wall from a Stubbs' painting of a lion savaging a horse; and Dad takes all the parts in a Hockney scene. At the end of their visit, all they need to take away from the Gallery shop is a pad and some pens, and they are ready to play the shape game for themselves. If you know some of these paintings, this book will make you want to go back and look at them again. If you know someone, child or adult, who's never thought of going to the Tate or any other art gallery, this is the book you want to show them. It's that good. For everyone from five upwards.

Running Order:

50

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