

## **Winner**

Gilberto Pérez

## **Title**

*The Eloquent Screen: A Rhetoric of Film*

## **Citation**

Gilberto Pérez's *The Eloquent Screen: A Rhetoric of Film* (Minneapolis: U Minnesota P 2019) begins by suggesting "it is time that we develop a rhetoric of film" beyond our customary critical practices. Adapting for the purpose Kenneth Burke's understanding of rhetoric, Pérez argues that film's persuasiveness rests on the forms of identification it enables, forms both similar to and different from those of literary fictions. The book develops its theses by accretion through its patient, original, and often moving analyses of a range of works, classic and contemporary, from European, North American, and Asian cinemas. Piercing and provocative commentary on many films, from John Ford and Terrence Malick to Pedro Almodóvar, from Luis Buñuel to Alfred Hitchcock to Abbas Kiarostami, is framed by a vast range of critical and theoretical references. What Pérez says of Burke and other theorists can thus apply to *The Eloquent Screen* itself: "Rhetoric deals in specifics. It is a theory of practice. Its generalizations particularize." Informing its exemplary interpretations of specific films is a lifetime's intimate study of the cinematographic image. Its readings convey a sense of joy not dissimilar to the delight Pérez's admired masters take in their productions.