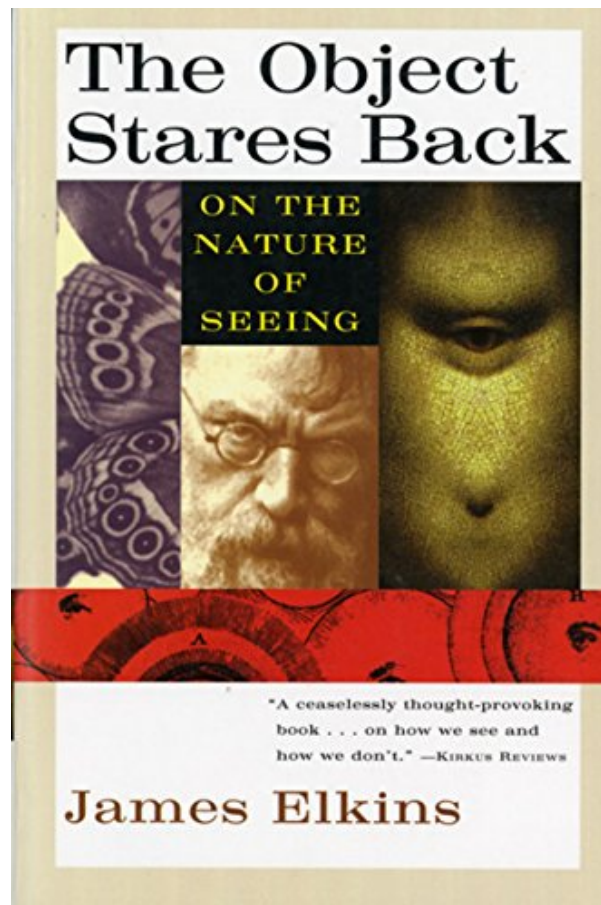


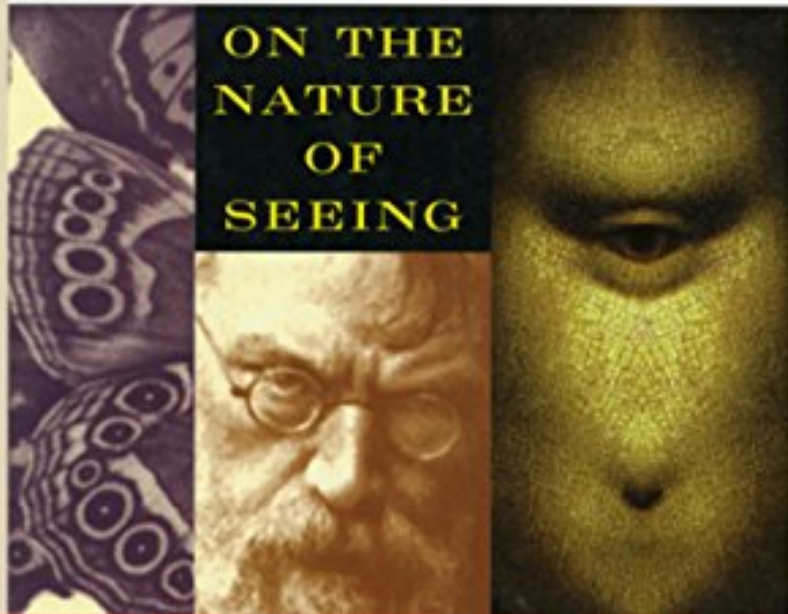
THE OBJECT STARES BACK: ON THE NATURE OF SEEING BY JAMES ELKINS



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The Object Stares Back



ON THE
NATURE
OF
SEEING



"A ceaselessly thought-provoking
book . . . on how we see and
how we don't." —KIRKUS REVIEWS

James Elkins

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Review

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THE OBJECT STARES BACK: ON THE NATURE OF SEEING BY JAMES ELKINS PDF

In this "remarkable tour de force" (Publishers Weekly)-a "ceaselessly thought-provoking book" (Kirkus Reviews)-art historian James Elkins marshals psychology, philosophy, science, and art history to show how seeing alters the thing seen and transforms the seer. Black-and-white photographs.

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26 of 27 people found the following review helpful.

thinking about seeing

By Ian A. MacDonald

Elkins succeeds in making the reader rethink what it means to see, to be seen, to be blind. He argues that vision is a dynamic interaction between the observer and the observed that invariably transforms both parties--even when one is inanimate. He's an art historian, but marches confidently through animal behavior, philosophy, sociology and other subjects in pursuit of the meaning of vision. The resulting meditations are provocative, and usually quite rigorous, but remain clear and personal in tone and studiously avoid learned jargon.

While I felt moved by the book, quite powerfully at places, I'm not sure that I actually went anywhere. Elkins avoids all mechanistic discussion of vision--even though there is much in the physiology of seeing and the quantum physics of observation which support his thesis. Consequently, the overall discussion lacks a certain fiber even though it's fully persuasive in parts. Still, if you care about vision and imagery, you can't go wrong by reading this eloquent, passionate book. It's guaranteed to make you think before you look.

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

Not what I expected but still a good and interesting read!

By A Customer

I agree with the other reviewers, however I do not feel that the book deserves a low review because people's expectations were not met. I expected a more scientific explanation of seeing, but this book is not about that. I was impressed by the writing of Elkins because it is very thought provoking and insightful. I would recommend this book to someone who is interested in seeing the world in a different way, because this book will encourage you to look at things a little more carefully and realize there is much we see, do not see, try not to see and try hard to see but fail to do so. Very interesting book!!!

16 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

A post-modern view of visual perception

By A Customer

This book offers a thoughtful and disconcerting view of visual perception that runs counter to the usual modernist view that we all perceive alike, which many of us grew up with. As a graphic designer and educator, I appreciated Elkins' point of view, his approachable writing style, and even the disturbing images he uses to make his point. I recommend this book to other designers and visual communicators.

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