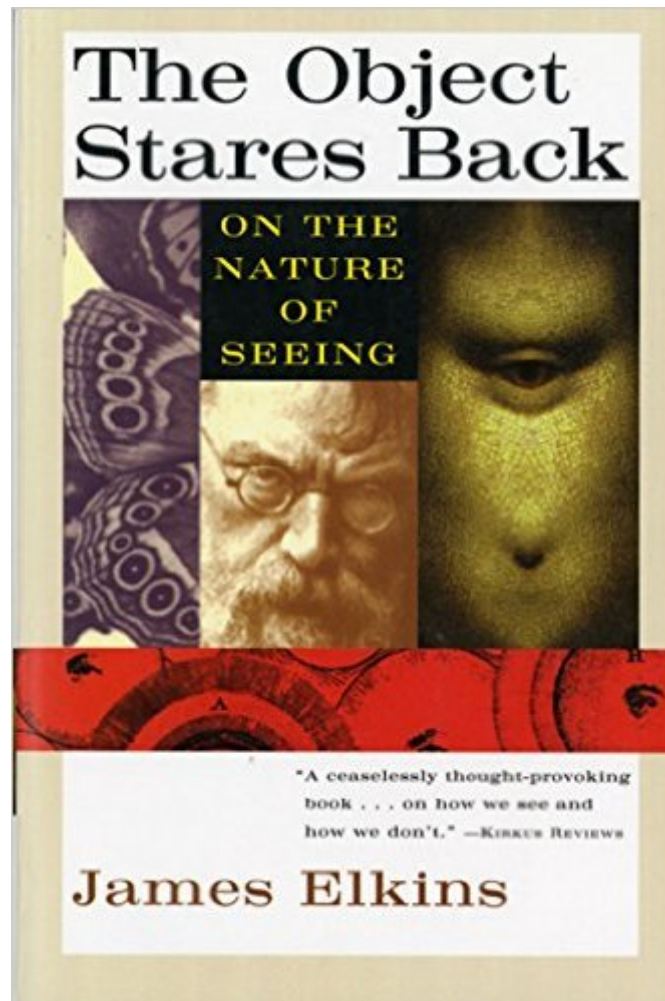


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The Object Stares Back: On The Nature Of Seeing



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I remember reading SOMEWHERE-- a textbook on psychology, perhaps??-- that humans absorb about 70% of their world through their eyes. After reading this work, I am convinced it is paradoxically that the real percentage is BOTH less *AND* more than this figure. LESS because we are so often "blind" or unaware of what we see and the very NATURE of what we see and how we see at all. MORE, because so much rests on our ability to see AT ALL, especially in the late 20th century, and especially in our culture, which places such high value on sight (though, perhaps, less value on HOW we see or WHAT is seen). But, again, LESS, because we really don't THINK about what we see or *how* we see... Mr. Elkins, an art historian-- someone TRAINED to see, if you will-- has done much thinking on the topic and theory of sight and what it REALLY means to see. I admit, when I first got this book, I was afraid it would be the sort of dry, academic drivel that one would need to plow through with a dictionary at one's side, coming to the end almost gasping for breath, "there!! I finished it!!" Not so at all. Mr. Elkins has written an extremely entertaining, thought provoking book on something we all do every day, often for every SECOND of the day (and isn't

dreaming a form of seeing, after all, in it's own fashion??), and done it without heavy emphasis on academia, abstract or unknown concepts, or the general feeling-- that I have had in other arenas-- that he clearly wishes us to believe that he is SMARTER than the average reader, and needs to prove it through the use of highly technical jargon or impenetrable metaphor. Again, I say, "not at all.

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