

On Looking: Eleven Walks with Expert Eyes

By Alexandra Horowitz

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From the author of the #1 *New York Times* giant bestseller *Inside of a Dog* comes an equally smart, delightful, and startling exploration of how we perceive our surroundings.

From the author of the giant #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Inside of a Dog* comes an equally smart, delightful, and startling exploration of how we perceive and discover our world.

Alexandra Horowitz's brilliant *On Looking: Eleven Walks with Expert Eyes* shows us how to see the spectacle of the ordinary—to practice, as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle put it, “the observation of trifles.” *On Looking* is structured around a series of eleven walks the author takes, mostly in her Manhattan neighborhood, with experts on a diverse range of subjects, including an urban sociologist, the well-known artist Maira Kalman, a geologist, a physician, and a sound designer. She also walks with a child and a dog to see the world as they perceive it. *What* they see, *how* they see it, and why most of us do *not* see the same things reveal the startling power of human attention and the cognitive aspects of what it means to be an expert observer.

As the million-plus readers of *Inside of a Dog* have discovered, Alexandra Horowitz is charmingly adept at explaining the mysteries of human perception. Trained as a cognitive scientist, she discovers a feast of fascinating detail, all explained with her generous humor and self-deprecating tone. *On Looking* presents the same engaging combination, this time in service to understanding how human beings encounter their daily worlds and each other.

Page by page, Horowitz shows how much more there is to see—if only we would really look. *On Looking* is nutrition for the considered life, serving as a provocative response to our relentlessly virtual consciousness. So turn off the phone and other electronic devices and *be* in the real world—where strangers communicate by geometry as they walk toward one another, where sounds reveal shadows, where posture can display humility, and the underside of a leaf unveils a Lilliputian universe—where, indeed, there are worlds within worlds within worlds.

Alexandra Horowitz's *On Looking* confirms her place as one of today's most

illuminating observers of our infinitely complex world.

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Editorial Review

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It is charming to take a walk with Horowitz. Engaging, amusing, and relatable, the psychology professor guides readers through 11 urban walks in the company of various experts. Beyond simply looking, this is about what makes up the world around us and the foundations of human perception. Horowitz brings the same attention to the human brain as she brought to our canine companions in *Inside of a Dog* (2010). She makes cognitive functioning eminently understandable by unraveling the role expectation plays in limiting what we see. The experts she walks with, from scientists to a toddler and a dog, reveal the underpinnings of a wide range of urban phenomena, such as the uncanny ability of rats to avoid traps. The descriptions of the walks are detailed but not overlong, with just enough information to give a taste of a geologist's or typographer's expertise. Even when relying only on your own inexperienced eyes, you will look at the world with more attention after reading these fascinating essays, though it's likely you still won't be able to find millennia-old worm tracks or recognize the fishlike behavior of pedestrians. --Bridget Thoreson

Review

"Supplemented by recent research in cognitive psychology and biology, her book is an informative and often charming 21st-century Thoreauvian guide on how to transform physical transport into mental and sensory transportation -- and 'be here now.'"

- Glenn C. Altschuler, *The Oregonian*

"In this elegant, entertaining book, Horowitz exhorts readers to learn, or to re-learn, how to see what we pass as we walk through our cities and towns."

- *Boston Globe*

"Horowitz writes like a poet, thinks like a scientist, and ventures like an explorer. Her book will have you looking in a new way at the world around you, and make you glad you did." (Susan Orlean *Rin Tin Tin*)

"These eleven exquisite, clever and and tenderly recounted small adventures remind me of something I learned back when I lived in India: the need to perceive "the scent behind the smell." Alexandra Horowitz has attempted much the same thing with her eyes - much aided by the seeing of others - and has in consequence become increasingly successful in perceiving what one might call "the sight behind the scene." Her resulting epiphanies are available to us all, if we take care to learn from her, in this lovely book, just how it is done." (Simon Winchester *author of The Map that Changed the World and Krakatoa*)

"Alexandra Horowitz's new book is as wonderful as her first. *Inside of a Dog* helped us to imagine the worlds of our beagles, collies, greyhounds and mutts. *On Looking* teaches us that the world is just as rich, strange and charmed when seen through the eyes of our local artists, doctors, architects and toddlers. *On Looking* also teaches us that Alexandra Horowitz is a writer to watch." (Jonathan Weiner *author of Beak of the Finch and Long for this World*)

About the Author

Alexandra Horowitz is the author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Inside of a Dog: What Dogs See, Smell, and Know* and *On Looking: A Walker's Guide to the Art of Observation*. She teaches at Barnard College, where she runs the Dog Cognition Lab. She lives with her family and two large, highly sniffy dogs in New York City.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lewis Lin:

The reserve untitled On Looking: Eleven Walks with Expert Eyes is the reserve that recommended to you you just read. You can see the quality of the guide content that will be shown to a person. The language that writer use to explained their ideas are easily to understand. The article writer was did a lot of investigation when write the book, and so the information that they share to you personally is absolutely accurate. You also might get the e-book of On Looking: Eleven Walks with Expert Eyes from the publisher to make you far more enjoy free time.

Leticia Brewster:

Precisely why? Because this On Looking: Eleven Walks with Expert Eyes is an unordinary book that the inside of the e-book waiting for you to snap that but latter it will zap you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who have write the book in such amazing way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining method but still convey the meaning fully. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book get such as help improving your expertise and your critical thinking means. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

Ana Smith:

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Barbara Kyle:

In this particular era which is the greater person or who has ability to do something more are more important than other. Do you want to become among it? It is just simple method to have that. What you need to do is just spending your time little but quite enough to get a look at some books. One of many books in the top listing in your reading list will be On Looking: Eleven Walks with Expert Eyes. This book that is qualified as The Hungry Hillside can get you closer in growing to be precious person. By looking upward and review this publication you can get many advantages.

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