



# How to Use Your Eyes

*James Elkins*

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## How to Use Your Eyes James Elkins

"... visually stunning and mentally stimulating." *Scientific American*

"...the author of *What Painting Is* (1998) has written a fascinating new book filled with gorgeous illustrations that would inspire us 'to learn to see anything.' It's a tall order, to be sure, but one that the author pulls off admirably....*How to Use Your Eyes* is a wondrous visual tour that Elkins hopes will help us 'learn to use our eyes more concertedly until the details of the world slowly reveal themselves.' Readers will be inspired to stop and smell--nay, see--the roses."

*Booklist*

"Elkins invites his readers to extend perception beyond narrow specialties to see meaning in the mundane. He is ever curious, his mind seemingly in overdrive."

*Chicago Tribune Magazine*

"In that fascinating zone where creative imagination and scientific observation meet, Elkins shines a conceptual flashlight, aiming to illuminate in 32 short chapters a fraction of what we are missing daily. He asks us to use our eyes and our minds differently, to see the world as few of us bother to see it because we rarely make the effort." *Library Journal*

Grass, the night sky, a postage stamp, a crack in the sidewalk, a shoulder. Ordinary objects of everyday life.

But when we look at them?really look at them?what do we see?

In the tradition of John Berger's bestselling *Ways of Seeing*, James Elkins's *How to Use your Eyes* invites us to look at- and maybe see for the first time- the world around us, with breathtaking results. Here are the common artifacts of life, often misunderstood and largely ignored, brought into striking focus. A butterfly's wing pattern encodes its identity. A cloudless sky yields a precise sequence of colors at sunset. A bridge reveals the relationship of a population with its landscape. With the discerning eye of a painter and the zeal of a detective, Elkins also explores complicated things like mandalas, the periodic table, or a hieroglyph, remaking the world into a treasure box of observations?eccentric, ordinary, marvelous. *How to Use Your Eyes* will transform your view of nature and the mind.

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