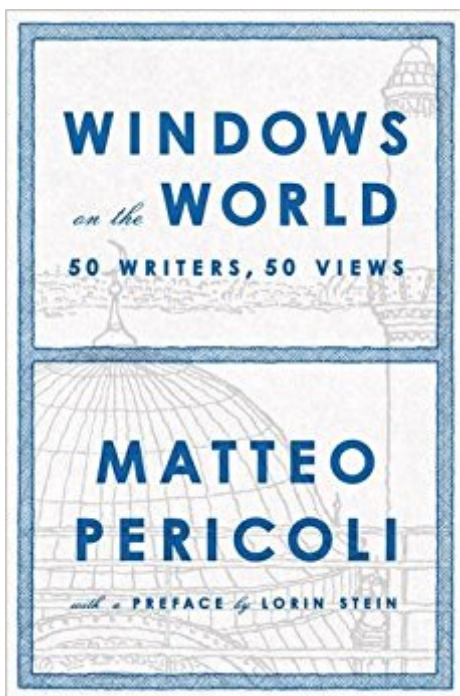


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Windows On The World: Fifty Writers, Fifty Views



Synopsis

Fifty of the world's greatest writers share their views in collaboration with the artist Matteo Pericoli, expanding our own views on place, creativity, and the meaning of home. All of us, at some point in our daily lives, have found ourselves looking out the window. We pause in our work, tune out of a conversation, and turn toward the outside. Our eyes simply gaze, without seeing, at a landscape whose familiarity becomes the customary ground for distraction: the usual rooftops, the familiar trees, a distant crane. The way of life for most of us in the twenty-first century means that we spend most of our time indoors, in an urban environment, and our awareness of the outside world comes via, and thanks to, a framed glass hole in the wall. In *Windows on the World: Fifty Writers, Fifty Views*, architect and artist Matteo Pericoli brilliantly explores this concept alongside fifty of our most beloved writers from across the globe. By pairing drawings of window views with texts that reveal "either physically or metaphorically" what the drawings cannot, *Windows on the World* offers a perceptual journey through the world as seen through the windows of prominent writers: Orhan Pamuk in Istanbul, Daniel Kehlmann in Berlin, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in Lagos, John Jeremiah Sullivan in Wilmington, North Carolina, Nadine Gordimer in Johannesburg, Xi Chuan in Beijing. Taken together, the views "geography and perspective, location and voice" resonate with and play off each other. Working from a series of meticulous photographs and other notes from authors' homes and offices, Pericoli creates a pen-and-ink illustration of each window and the view it frames. Many readers know Pericoli's work from his acclaimed series for *The New York Times* and later for *The Paris Review Daily*, which have a devoted following. Now, *Windows on the World* collects from Pericoli's body of work and features fifteen never-before-seen windows in one gorgeously designed volume, as well as a preface from the *Paris Review*'s editor Lorin Stein. As we delve into what each writer's view may or may not share with the others, as we look at the map and explore unfamiliar views of cities from around the world, a new kind of map begins to take shape. *Windows on the World* is a profound and eye-opening look inside the worlds of writers, reminding us that the things we see every day are woven into our selves and our imaginations, making us keener and more inquisitive observers of our own worlds.

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Customer Reviews

Los Angeles Review of Books: "At their best, the drawings and texts in *Windows on the World* make writers real and human while still leaving room for mystery and fantasy." Shelf Awareness: "A diverse, fascinating collection." Library Journal: "[*Windows on the World*] is a great read for those interested in the lives of writers, lovers of memoir, and anyone with a touch of wanderlust. A fun conversation starter and introduction to writers from around the world."

Matteo Pericoli was born in Milan, where he graduated from the Polytechnic School of Architecture. He moved to New York in 1995, where he has worked as an architect, illustrator, author, journalist, and teacher. He now lives with his wife and daughter in Turin, Italy, where he teaches architecture to creative writing students at the Scuola Holden. His books include *Manhattan Unfurled* and *The City Out My Window*.

Beautiful book with gorgeous illustrations. I love hearing about people's (particularly writer's) homes/spaces/views so this was a fun book.

This unique approach introduces the reader to views (both written and visual) put forth by renowned international writers who have succinctly described their private, secluded havens where creativity flows for us, as readers, to appreciate and enjoy.

Not my favorite book. Ok but not as great as expected.

A pleasure doing business with!!!!!!! Highly recommended!!!!!!!

I am a big fan of all of his books.

beautifully drawn and beautifully put together.

The premise is simple: 50 writers from around the world submitted photographs of window views from their respective work spaces, accompanied by a page or two of text inspired by what they observe. Pericoli, a trained architect, created pen and ink drawings from the photos (a time-honored practice of more than a few artists to this day). But these are far from soulless, academic CAD-like renderings. There's an organic vitality to Pericoli's lines that's never lost, however finely detailed. Pen and ink is a famously unforgiving medium requiring patience and a calm hand. It invites the eye to scan slowly, taking in the rhythmic sway of lines and filling in imagined shadings and textures in hatched space. Immersing myself in these drawings reminded me of Japanese woodcuts: there's a wonderful contrast between stillness and motion where solid structures vibrate with a life force that our direct vision can often miss in our daily existence. It's unclear whether any of the writers saw the finished drawings before submitting their text (I suspect not). Yet I felt Pericoli's choice of medium serves not just as perfect accompanying illustrations but as equal partners in the final work - not unlike the piano parts of Beethoven's violin sonatas - more active duets than fixed primary and secondary roles. The windows themselves are wonderfully varied rectangular assemblages of glass and frame: triptychs, tall and narrow, classically-proportioned, ornately trimmed, Mission-style, Lloyd Wright-influenced, utilitarian suburban - reflecting local and regional touches as well as a more generic worldly cosmopolitanism. And the scenes beyond the windows are just as varied, coastlines, gardens, city streets, skylscapes as well as landlocked, sparse flora, the dense, the modern, the banality of simple furnishing, the majesty of grand skies and vistas. The texts are as individual as you'd expect from such a worldly, cross-cultural group, yet a number of common threads emerge: Some writers focus on literal description and historical context, others treat the view as a jumping off point for biographical or fictional vignettes, and most tend to float between the philosophical and their practical existence and work habits. They're all short-enough that it was an easy and pleasant read to take in the varied voices. I'll confess that, of the 50 writers, I'm familiar with just a handful including, Nadine Gordimer, T.C. Boyle, Elmore Leonard and Ryu Murakami. But that's beside Pericoli's point. 'Windows on the World' is meant to encourage all of us to reflect upon the inherent richness of our surroundings - however humble or majestic - and examine how our inner and outer worlds intersect. Just be sure to ratchet down your over-stimulated

senses a notch or two beforehand; otherwise it's just too easy to gloss over what this gentle and reflective book has to offer.

When I began reading the preface I feared the net effect of the book would be boredom with the pretentiousness of the concept (I ordered the book on a whim knowing little about it except the blurb). However I was soon charmed by the book's simplicity and humility. The book is a collection of essays by authors who have windows in their studios. They write about what they have seen through those windows or what they imposed through their imaginations. The opposing page is an illustration of those windows. The illustrations are simple but evocative and I found myself wishing that the stories were all one page so I could see the illustrations while I read (some of the essays run to a page and a half). The author claims that recording the windows in photos didn't work and I have to agree with him. The line drawings are perfect for the theme. The stories are poetic, just the right length, diverse, yet uniformly interesting. An unexpectedly fun and rewarding book.

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