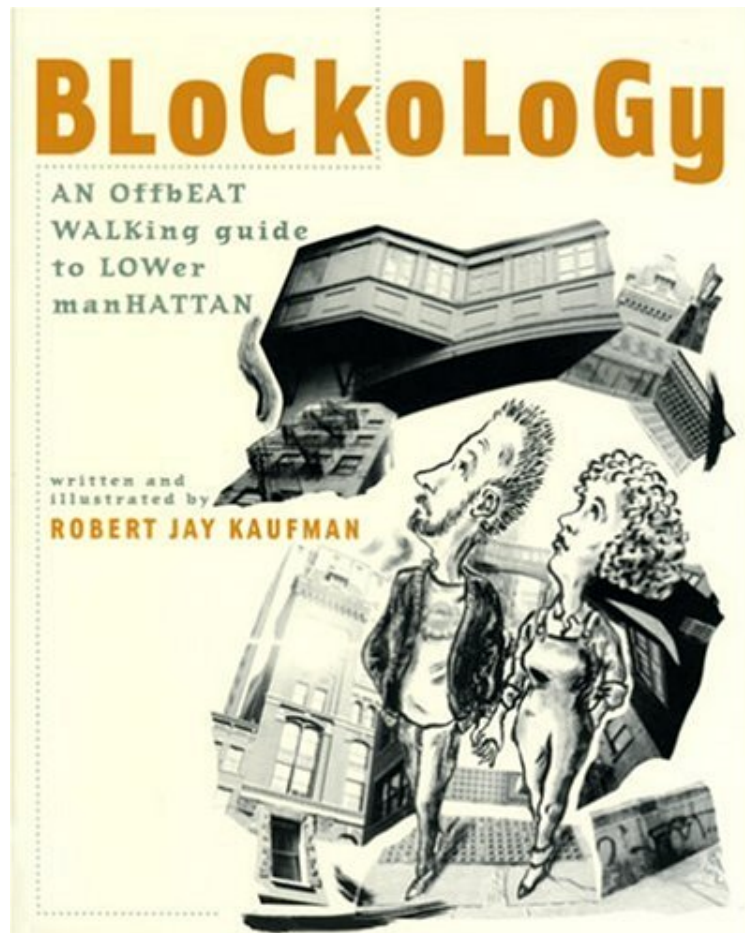


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Blockology: An Offbeat Walking Guide to Lower Manhattan

Robert Jay Kaufman

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Robert Jay Kaufman : Blockology: An Offbeat Walking Guide to Lower Manhattan before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blockology: An Offbeat Walking Guide to Lower Manhattan:

5 of 7 people found the following review helpful. AnalysisBy Marjuzium WALKING with Robert Jay Kaufman after lunch is not good for the digestion. He is tall and has long legs that speed up when something engages his interest. He constantly jaywalks. He never takes more than a few steps before stopping to consider some element in the cityscape. And inclement weather, like the mini-monsoon that drenched the city a couple of weeks ago, is a minor inconvenience. On Franklin Street in TriBeCa, between Greenwich and Hudson, for example, in the midst of that downpour, he ordered a halt. "Look at the Renaissance details - the arches and the verticals," he said of several buildings on the north side of the street. "You can see the egos of people who put up the buildings, all of which were built probably within 20 years of each other. Each one tried to do something different, to get noticed." Crossing the street, Mr. Kaufman pulled out a credit card, squinted along its edge to check the alignment of the window casements

and decorative details of a tiny two-story brick house, recently restored, and pointed out where the builder had intentionally varied the scheme. It is that attention to symmetry and proportion, he suggested, that makes the little structure feel so right to a passer-by. Manhattan has 1,544 blocks below 14th Street, or so Mr. Kaufman says. That number, like many things about the city's oldest precincts, is debatable; it depends, among other things, on how one defines "block." The City Planning Department, for example, estimates that Manhattan has 3,450 blocks, 1,100 of which are below 14th Street. Still, Mr. Kaufman has earned the right to his opinion. Mr. Kaufman's day job, so to speak, is heading the illustration and animation department at the Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University. But in the spring, summer and fall of 2003, this 54-year-old urban adventurer spent 52 days wandering back and forth over every one of those blocks. His circuitous ramble covered roughly 300 miles, during which he ran through three pairs of walking shoes and developed, he said, "legs of steel and feet of clay." The tale of this trek along what he describes as "my Appalachian Trail with restaurants" is told in words and pictures in "Blockology: An Offbeat Walking Guide to Lower Manhattan," a new book that Mr. Kaufman wrote, illustrated and published through the aptly named Turning Corners Press, of which he is both proprietor and sole employee. The book's theme is experiencing the essential downtown New York through the close, leisurely observation of the architecture and ambience of its blocks. It is a mission he regards as both humble and noble. City dwellers tend to take the block for granted, despite the fact that it is the fundamental element of urban space. Or as Mr. Kaufman puts it: "The block integrates society. It's the true marketplace." "Blockology," though, is less a work of scholarship than of love. It is a work Mr. Kaufman felt compelled to create, and it exists as a testament to the hold that the city can exercise over the imagination, especially the imagination of an artist. It is also a valentine to the city that gave Mr. Kaufman a name and whose publishing industry gave him a profession as an illustrator. Not surprisingly, given his romantic attachment to the place, it was also here that Mr. Kaufman met his future wife - a graphic designer named Susan Scott - at the Port Authority Bus Terminal, of all places. No one knows what Mr. Kaufman's forebears were called before they immigrated to New York from Russia in the 19th century. Like many greenhorns, they swapped their old-country name for one that sounded more American. What is known is that the family thrived in the city and developed a fierce loyalty to it. When he was a boy, in the 1960's, "there were tremendous fiscal and crime problems," Mr. Kaufman recalled the other day in a pouring rain, "and everybody seemed to be leaving for the suburbs." Even his own family had migrated to Chatham Township, N.J. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. a guide to lower Manhattan By Margaret W. Cleghorn If you're wondering how to plan a brief excursion around lower Manhattan this is a delightful guide. I found it eased my burden as a visitor on a tight schedule. I chose my streets among the clever full-page illustrations because I enjoy looking up at the great old buildings. You miss a lot when you don't slow down at gaze on these wonderful facades. There was advice about choice places to shop and eat which are known only to the locals and little tidbits about past history. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Explore Manhattan and have fun!! By Marilyn I saw a review of this book in the New York Times. Knowing we were soon to relocate to the city, I thought it would help us get to know the different neighborhoods. What a great book. It is so easy to follow and the maps are great. We intend to explore lower Manhattan and use this book as a guide. I had planned to give this book as a gift to my husband but it never arrived on time. I was disappointed in the mailing process, but none the less, we are thrilled with the book.

Blockology: An Offbeat Walking Guide to Lower Manhattan a one-of-a-kind guide that celebrates the experience of exploring Lower Manhattan through its history, people and architecture. Author Robert Jay Kaufman has selected 36 intriguing and unique city blocks to visit in depth. Each block comes with a detailed map, description of its history and character, and a full-page illustration featuring a scavenger hunt of images. In addition, you'll discover 200 "cant-miss blocks" which have been highlighted on the maps for your investigation along the way. With the help of easy-to-read maps, wander through the neighborhoods of Lower Manhattan as you make your way on a journey of personal discoveries. Pick and choose and return again, until you experience all of Lower Manhattan for yourself.

About the Author Robert Jay Kaufman is an illustrator, whose work has appeared in major publications such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Sports Illustrated, Travel and Leisure, Games, and Science, including the children's book, Count-A-Saurus. He divides his time as chair of the Illustration/Animation Department at the Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University, with walking blocks in Boston and New York City. For the record, it took him 52 days and some 300 miles, moving as deliberately as possible, to walk every single block below 14th Street.