



20x20 Vision for walking in 2040 from Matthew Beaumont - Transcript

Hi my name is **Matthew Beaumont** and I am a professor of English at University College London, author of a couple of books about walking. I suppose better known for being the author of ***Night Walking: a nocturnal history of London*** and I'm currently working on a book about London: London and literature. I've just published another book about walking this one called ***The Walker*** and it is subtitled: *finding and losing yourself in the modern city*.

Matthew's Vision of the world of walking in 2040!

So what is my vision for walking in 2040, well in my book *The Walker* I complain a great deal about "distracted walking", at least in the introduction, in which pedestrians on the streets of our cities in particular, wander around with their phone in front of their faces: doing emails, making texts, making phone calls, blocking out, as I see it, the exciting sensorium of the city. Which is something that we should open ourselves up to. Not least because if we stop looking at the city, if we stop experiencing it, we will be vulnerable to the capture of the city, by as I see it, by undesirable forces: the privatisation of bits of the city, the surveillance of the city, which we need to reclaim as pedestrians, as our own.

So my vision and 2040 is for a city, for a culture, in which "distracted walking" is unacceptable, is banned. It should be as unacceptable to walk with your phone as it is to drive with your phone. I think if in 2040 people could walk without electronic devices then we would be far more healthy psychologically, physically and sociopolitically.