

David Hockney

Painter, Draughtsman, Printmaker, Stage Designer, Photographer, and writer of *The Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters*

The Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters

David Hockney collaborated with Charles Falco, a condensed matter physicist and expert in optics, in this book.

They analyzed the work of the Old Masters and questioned their ability to depict their subjects with such accuracy.

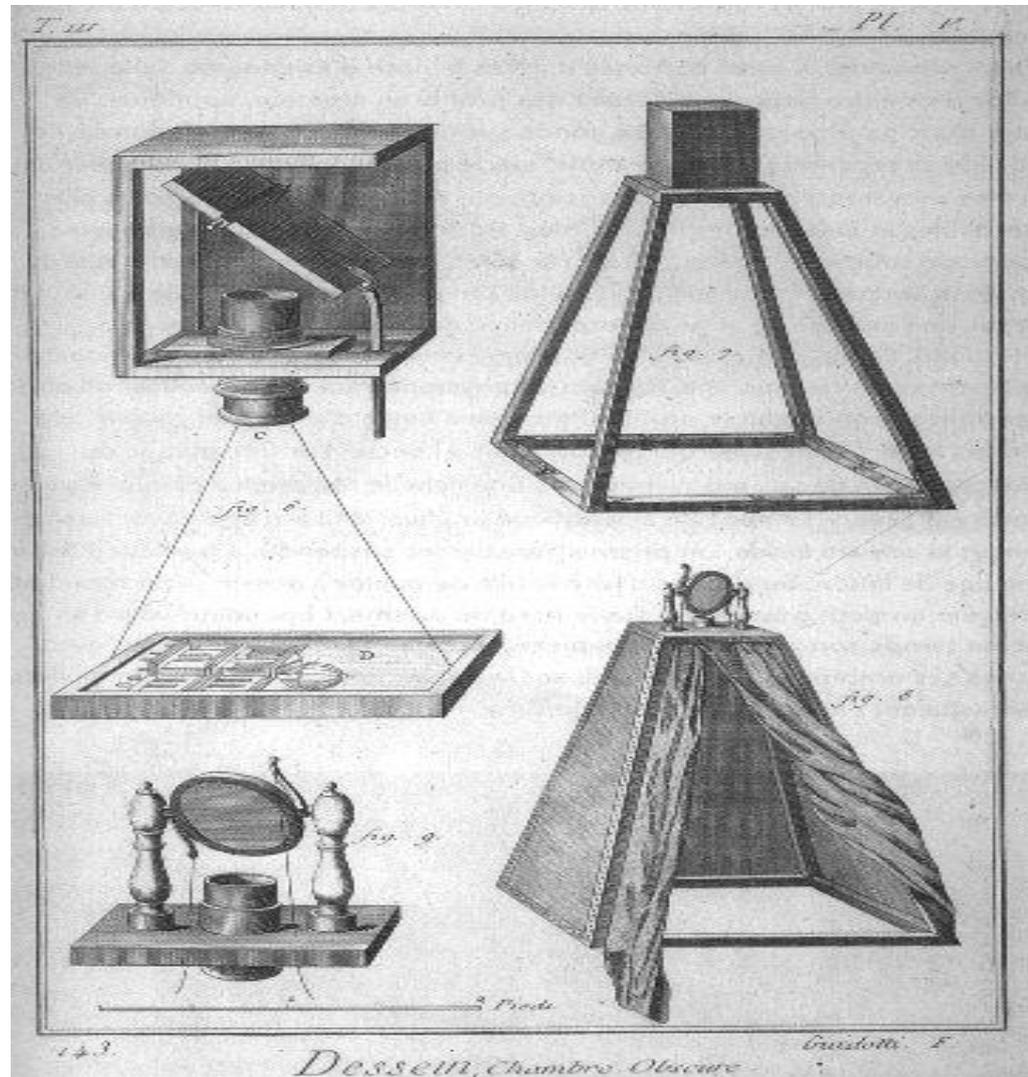
They developed the Hockney-Falco Thesis.

Hockney-Falco Thesis

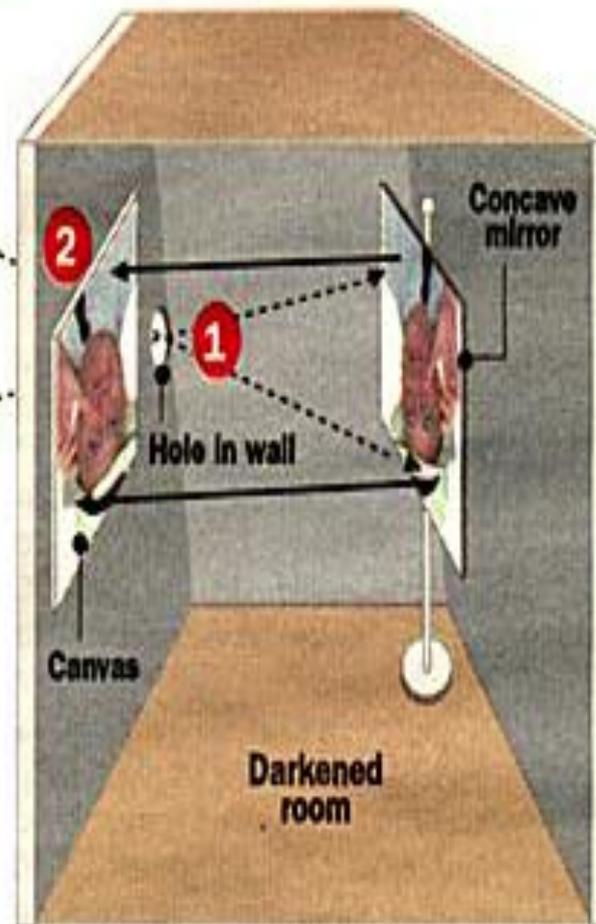
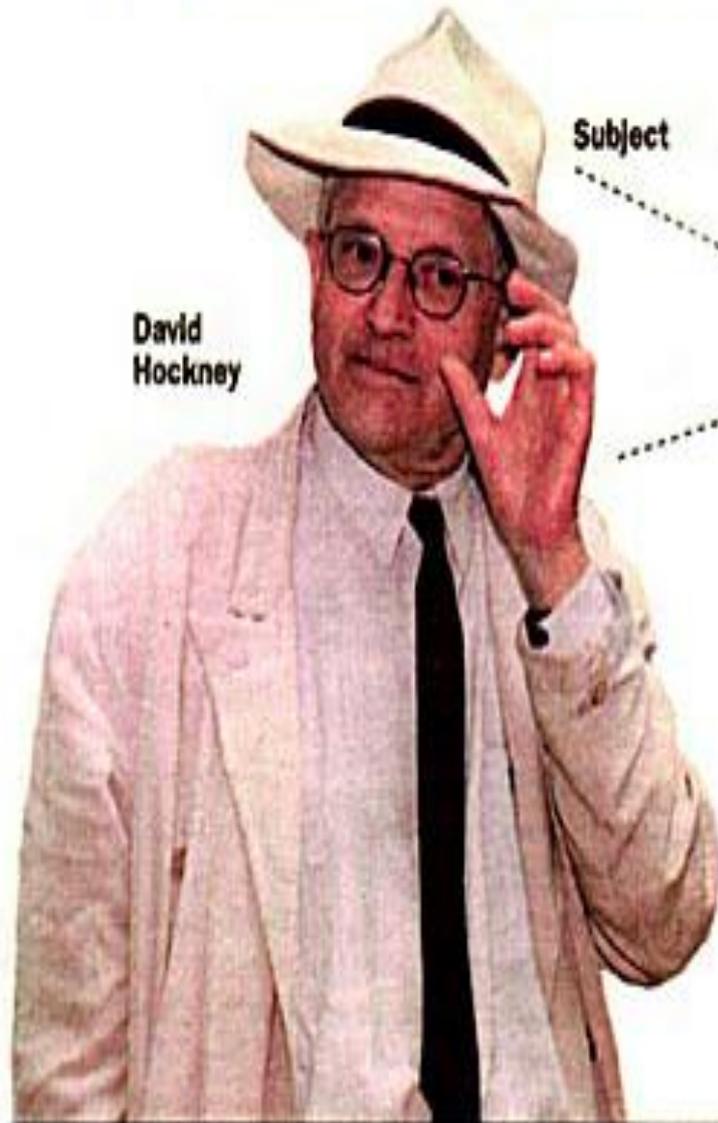
This theory suggests that advances in realism and accuracy in the history of Western Art since the Renaissance were primarily the result of optical aids such as the camera obscura, camera lucida, and curved mirrors, rather than solely due to the development of artistic technique and skill.

They have produced a number of publications providing supporting evidence of the use of optical aids as well as the historical plausibility of such methods.

Diagram of the Camera Obscura from 1772



How the Camera Obscura Works



1 In one approach, the image of a subject passes through a small opening in the wall of a darkened room onto a mirror.

2. The image is reflected off the mirror onto a canvas or piece of paper hung on the opposite wall. The image is now traced. Then the canvas can be turned right side up and the work finished from real life.

With the development of Photography came a new use for the lens.

The Artists' hand was no longer needed, chemical processes created photographs, and this spawned a new turn and purpose on art: such as Monet, Van Gogh, and the Impressionists, whose works could not be duplicated by a lens.

Claude Monet, *Soleil Levant, Impression: Sunrise*, 1872, Oil on Canvas



“200 years ago Constable would have thought the optical projection of nature was something to aim for. I now know that it is not—so stand in the landscape you love, try and depict your feelings of space, and forget photographic vision, which is distancing us too much from the physical world.”

- David Hockney, February 2007

Works Cited

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