

Eye for an Eye

Lawrence Weschler's lucid description of David Hockney's insights into painting ["Vanishing Point," *Folio*, June] emphasizes the indirect use of optics: "*Even just to see [a projection] was to use it.*" Although the optical evidence shows that some artists (including Van Eyck and Caravaggio) made notational marks directly from portions of projected images, simply seeing a two-dimensional projection in the fifteenth century was transformative. As for the stronger claim that some artists traced features directly from projected images, scientists almost universally accept our optical evidence for that also. In the fifty-some public lectures I've given, I have found most artists to be receptive as well.

A notable exception is a group called the Art Renewal Center, which published online articles by David Stork (mentioned in the article): they picketed the Metropolitan Museum last year, denouncing Hockney and me for "defaming" the old masters. That seems to me a distressing way of settling a scientific debate.

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