

25 January 2005

Hockney and tracing row

Sir: Tom Anderson's article (23 January) cites a computer analysis of light and shadow by David Stork as evidence that David Hockney's book 'Secret Knowledge' is incorrect. Unfortunately, Stork's analysis is both wrong, as well as irrelevant. Stork selectively ignored over two-thirds of the shadows in this painting to arrive at his incorrect conclusion that there is only one light source represented. It is very easy to show the shadows he omitted represent at least two light sources. As for the pinpricks recently found in the van Eyck drawing, there is simply no way to know when over the past 500 years they were made, even if their purpose somehow could be deduced. To claim they were made by van Eyck himself using a compass is no more than unsubstantiated speculation.

CHARLES M. FALCO
University of Arizona