

THE ART WORLD

ARCHIVAL

True to Life

BACK in 1981, the painter David Hockney agreed to participate in a program at the National Gallery in London entitled "The Artist's Eye," in which he was invited to select a group of Master paintings from the museum's bounteous collections and, serving as guest curator, explain in a brief catalogue essay why those particular paintings mattered so much to him. He chose a Piero della Francesca, a Vermeer, a van Gogh, and a Degas. In the course of his essay, he celebrated the richness of the experience of looking at such paintings—especially when compared with the poverty of the experience of looking at most ordinary photographs. With a certain irony, he suggested that the only thing photography was much good at conveying—or, at any rate, conveying truthfully—was another flat surface, as in the reproduction of a fine painting. "About sixty years ago, most educated people could draw in a quite skillful way," he concluded. "Which meant they could tell other people about certain experiences in a certain way. Their visual delights could be expressed . . . Today people don't draw very much. They use the camera. My point is, they're not truly, perhaps, expressing what it was they were looking at—what it was about it that delighted them—and how that delight forced them to make something of it, to share the experience, to make it vivid to somebody else. If the few skills that are needed in drawing are not treated seriously by everybody, eventually it will die. And then all that will be left is the photographic ideal which we believe too highly of."

Many New Yorkers will find these comments surprising, because—having in the meantime seen not just one but two highly successful gallery exhibitions of the results—they will realize that about the only thing Hockney has been doing since he wrote that manifesto is taking photographs. In fact, over the past three years Hockney has taken tens of thousands of photographs and deployed them in increasingly intricate collages. This fall, Knopf will release a book surveying the results of that passion. During the past year, as Hockney has been supervising the production of that book, I've had several occasions to talk with him

about this curious detour in his career.

The first time we met, I was calling on him at his home and studio in the Hollywood Hills, just off Mulholland Drive, overlooking Los Angeles, and the first thing I asked him was what, given his previously documented prejudices, he was doing taking photographs at all. "Ah, well," he replied impishly. "You mustn't over-interpret those comments." Hockney is only forty-eight years old—disarmingly young for an artist who has maintained a world-level following for nearly twenty-



five years. His mild Yorkshire accent betrays his English origins, although he sports a yellow-and-red checkered cap across which is emblazoned the word "CALIFORNIA"—in homage to the state that has been his adopted home for almost twenty years. His face is genial, his round features emphasized by round glasses (the left frame gold, the right one black). Blond hair shags out from beneath the cap. Every time I met with him, his socks were mismatched (now purple and green, now yellow and red), always with a casual but seemingly self-evident authority. He is of medium height, but it takes a while to realize this, because he usually lumbers about with the comfortable slouch of a tall man. "It's not that I despised photography *ever*," he continued. "It's just that I've always distrusted the claims that were made on its behalf—claims as to its greater reality or authenticity. Actually, I've taken photographs for years. Snaps, I'd call them—pictures of friends and of places we'd visit. When I'd get back here, I'd put the pictures in albums. Since the mid-sixties, I've managed to fill several each year. During some periods, I was more involved than others. I mean, clearly, all along I've had an *ambivalent* relationship to photography. But as to whether I thought it an art form, or a craft, or a technique—well, I've always been taken with my curator friend Henry Geldzahler's answer to that question when he said, 'I thought it was a *hobby*.'"

Beginning in 1968, Hockney often used photography as an *aide-mémoire* in his painting. Several of his most famous portraits—for example, that of Ossie Clark and Celia Birtwell—were preceded by dozens of photographic studies, along with many pen-and-ink

sketches. He'd photograph the furniture, the walls, the way light fell across the room at different times of the day; details of faces, hands, limbs; impressions of stances and postures. Photo-realism had come very much into vogue around that time, but Hockney wasn't interested in achieving a photographic likeness—a painting that would look "as real as a photograph." (Many photo-realist paintings were, in fact, slavishly traced onto the canvas from the projected slide of a photograph.) Rather, he was using the photographs to jog his memory; the confluence of dozens of discrete recollections and observations would form the eventual painting, which would achieve a sort of distillation of the essence of all the studies that had preceded it. If anything, by using photographs in this manner he came to distrust their purported reality all the more.

"I mean, for instance, wide-angle lenses!" Hockney exclaimed that first afternoon. "After a while, I bought a better camera and tried using a wide-angle lens, because I wanted to record a whole room or an entire standing figure. But I hated the pictures I got. They seemed extremely untrue. They depicted something you never actually saw. It wasn't just the lines bending in ways they never do when you look at the world. Rather, it was the falsification—your eye doesn't ever see that much in one glance. It's not true to life."

To get around this problem, Hockney began making "joiners." For example, when he needed a photograph of his friend Peter Schlesinger standing, gazing downward, as a study for his "Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)," in 1972, he took five separate shots of Peter's body—head and shoulders, torso, waist, knees, feet—and spliced the prints together, effecting the closest possible overlap. "At first, I was just going through all this because the result—the depiction of the particular subject—came out looking clearer and more true to life than a single wide-angle version of the same subject," Hockney explained. "However, fairly early on I noticed that these joiners also had more presence than ordinary photographs. With five photos, for instance, you were forced to look five times. You couldn't help looking more carefully."

Throughout the seventies, Hockney continued to take photographs as studies or mementos but with little interest in the medium itself. Dutifully, he'd

The King said he anticipated no difficulty in finding enough instructors for his program—thanks, ironically, to the Socialist government of France, which is encouraging more and more people to retire at fifty-five. “A lot of people don’t want to retire at fifty-five,” said His Majesty, who turns fifty-five this month. “So I can have all the teachers I need to call on, by offering them housing, a small salary, and a place where French is spoken. Also, many Canadians are available, who not only speak French but, as a bonus, could teach Moroccans English. I’ve been promised by my Minister of Education that after my plan gets under way there won’t be any more universities built here before the year 2000.”

At that point, a servant came in and muttered something to the King, and the King said he would have to excuse himself—he had an ailing elbow, and a doctor was waiting to treat it. “I hurt it playing golf,” the King said. “It was a bunker shot.” I gathered that, aside from some passing discomfort, he had got himself out of that bunker all right; and he gave me no reason to think that he had any qualms about just as neatly extricating himself, and his children, from all their other troubles. —E. J. KAHN, JR.

4,411,924

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Michael R. Sevenants, Forest Park, Ohio,
assignor to The Procter & Gamble Co.,
Cincinnati, Ohio

Continuation of Ser. No. 299,701, Sep. 8,
1981, abandoned. This application
Mar. 18, 1983, Ser. No. 476,650
Int. Cl.³ A23L 1/226

U.S. Cl. 426—534 33 Claims

1. A cream flavor composition, which
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- (a) a carboxylic acid component in an amount of from about 0.0025 to about 350 ppm selected from the group consisting of 8-nonenic acid, 9-decenoic acid, 10-undecenoic acid, and mixtures thereof; and
- (b) a higher methyl ketone component selected from the group consisting of 2-undecanone in an amount of from about 0.0014 to about 600 ppm, 2-dodecanone in an amount of from about 0.0014 to about 600 ppm, 2-tridecanone in an amount of from about 0.0085 to about 800 ppm, 2-tetradecanone in an amount of from about 0.0085 to about 800 ppm, 2-pentadecanone in an amount of from about 0.0800 to about 1000 ppm, 2-hexadecanone in an amount of from about 0.0080 to about 1000 ppm, and mixtures thereof.

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have his assistants enter the prints in his ever-expanding shelf of albums (by the early eighties these numbered over a hundred and twenty volumes), but he was utterly careless with the negatives, tossing them unsorted into boxes. His apathy notwithstanding, other people were becoming quite interested. "The Pompidou Center in Paris kept nattering away at me for years to do a show of the photos, and I kept putting them off," he recalled. "I wasn't interested: most photo shows are boring—always the same scale, the same texture. But they kept insisting. They said they wanted to do it *because* I was a painter, and so forth. Finally, in 1981, I gave in, but I told them they'd have to come and make the selection themselves, because I didn't have a clue. So, early in 1982, the curator Alain Sayag arrived here in L.A. and spent four days looking through the albums, making his selection, and for four nights we sat here arguing about whether photography was a good medium for the artist. My main argument was that a photograph could not be looked at for a long time. Have you noticed that? You can't look at most photos for more than, say, thirty seconds. It has nothing to do with the subject matter. I first noticed this with erotic photographs, trying to find them lively: you can't. Life is precisely what they don't have. Or, rather, time—lived time. All you can do with most ordinary photographs is stare at them—they stare back, blankly—and presently your concentration begins to fade. They stare you down. I mean, photography is all right if you don't mind looking at the world from the point of view of a paralyzed cyclops—for a split second. But that's not what it's like to live in the world, or to convey the experience of living in the world.

"During the last few years, I've come to realize that it has something to do with the amount of time that's been put into the image. I mean, Rembrandt spent days, weeks painting a portrait. You can go to a museum and look at a Rembrandt for hours and you're not going to spend as

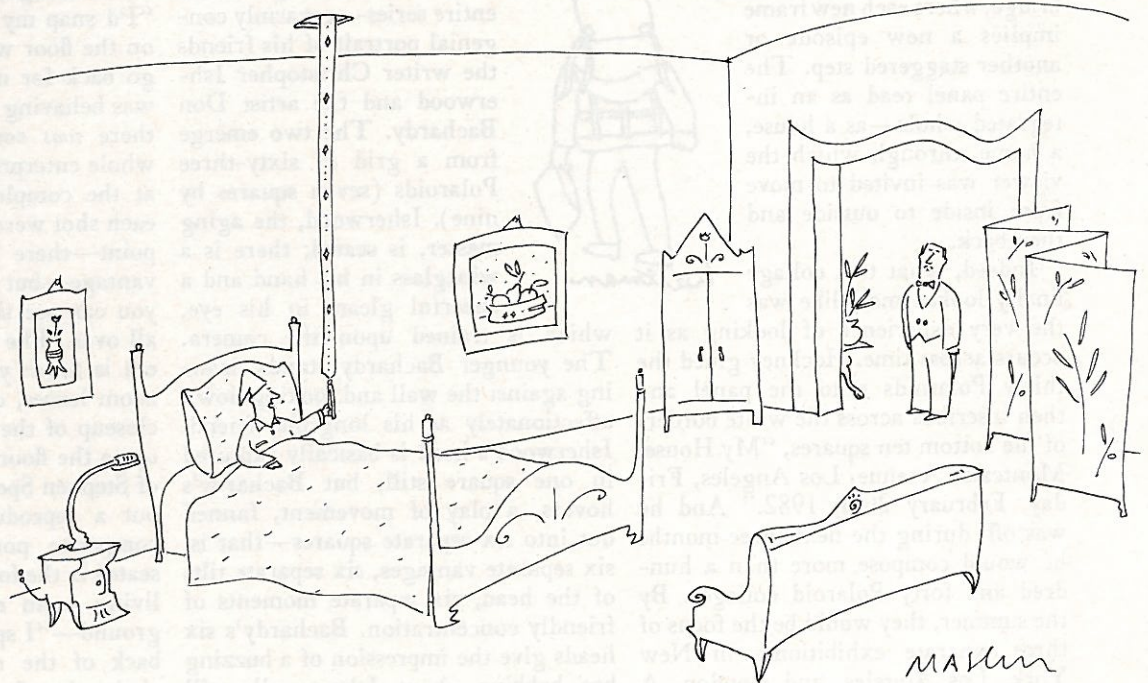
much time looking as he spent painting—observing, layering his observations, layering the time. Now, the camera was actually invented long before the chemical processes of photography. It was being used by artists in Italy in the sixteenth century in the form of a camera obscura, which is Latin for 'a dark room.' The device consisted of a dark box with a hole in it and a lens in the hole which projected an image of the outside world onto a flat surface at the far side of the box. Canaletto used one in his paintings of Venice. His students would trace the complicated perspectives of the Grand Canal onto the canvas, and then he'd paint the outline in, and the result would appear to confirm the theory of one-point perspective. But, in terms of what we've been talking about, it didn't really matter, because the entire process still took time, the hand took time, and though a 'camera' was used there's no mistaking the layered time. At a museum, you can easily spend half an hour looking at a Canaletto and you won't blank out.

"No, the flaw in the camera comes with the invention of the chemical processes in the nineteenth century. It wasn't that noticeable at first. In the early days, the exposure would last for several seconds, or even longer, so that the photographs were either of people, concentrated and still, like Nadar's, or of *still-lives* or empty street scenes, as in Atget's Paris. You can look at those a bit longer before you blank out. But,

as the technology improved, the exposure time was compressed to a split second. And the reason you can't look at a photograph for a long time is because there's virtually no time *in it*—the imbalance between the two experiences, the first and second lookings, is too extreme.

"Anyway," Hockney concluded, "Sayag and I spent four nights having these arguments, and in the daytime he made his selection." The trouble came when it was time to find the negatives amid the many boxes, so that proper reproductions could be made. "There was no way they were going to find them in four days, so instead we went down to a store and bought several cases of Polaroid SX-70 film and came back up here and photographed the prints Sayag had selected, so that he could go back to Paris and prepare the show." The curator left, the negatives were eventually ferreted out, and by the summer of 1982 the Pompidou Center was indeed running a highly successful show entitled "David Hockney, Photographer."

Meanwhile, back in Los Angeles, Hockney was left with several dozen packs of unused Polaroid film. The morning after Sayag departed, Hockney loaded his Polaroid and started on a tour of his house, snapping details. Beginning in the living room—the very room we were now talking in—he cast three views of the floor, moving left to right, then three views of the middle distance, and then three



"Chalmers, you may usher in the day."

views of the ceiling, with its lovely skylight. There was no attempt to effect the sort of exact matching which had characterized his joiners. (Chairs and tables were repeated from shot to shot, from slightly different vantages.) The third middle-distance view included a sliding glass door and, through it, the blue of a deck. He now went out onto the deck, repositioned himself, and shot another series of images, with new perspectives but similar repetitions. In the corner of the rightmost of these middle-distance images could be seen the top of a blue staircase leading downward. Repositioning himself once again, leaning out over the edge of the balustrade, he shot still another series—this time of the blue steps and the garden and pool toward which they led. Already, as he was shooting the individual Polaroids, he was arranging them into a composition, laying the square SX-70 prints side by side, reshooting perspectives where the images didn't quite meld or where the articulation of space became confused. By the time he was through, he'd created a rectangular panel consisting of thirty individual square images arranged in a grid—three squares high and ten wide—which uniquely conveyed the experience of walking through that house from the living room onto the deck, down the stairs, and toward the pool. And yet this movement was not conveyed in traditional comic-book style or in the staccato-cinematic mode of Eadweard Muybridge, where each new frame implies a new episode or another staggered step. The entire panel read as an integrated whole—as a house, a home, through which the viewer was invited to move from inside to outside and then back.

Indeed, what this collage finally looked most like was the very experience of looking as it occurs across time. Hockney glued the thirty Polaroids onto the panel and then inscribed across the white borders of the bottom ten squares, "My House, Montcalm Avenue, Los Angeles, Friday, February 26th, 1982." And he was off: during the next three months he would compose more than a hundred and forty Polaroid collages. By the summer, they would be the focus of three separate exhibitions—in New York, Los Angeles, and London. A couple of them would even be included in the show at the Pompidou Center.

"From that first day, I was exhilarated," Hockney recalled as he showed me a reproduction of the house collage. "First of all, I immediately realized I'd conquered my problem with time in photography. It takes time to see these pictures—you can look at them for a long time, they invite that sort of looking. But, more important, I realized that this sort of picture came closer to how we actually see—which is to say, not all at once but in discrete, separate glimpses, which we then build up into our continuous experience of the world. Looking at you now, my eye doesn't capture you in your entirety. I see you quickly, in nervous little glances. I look at your shoulder, and then your ear, your eyes (maybe, for a moment, if I know you well and have come to trust you—but even then only for a moment), your cheek, your shirt button, your shoes, your hair, your eyes again, your nose and mouth. There are a hundred separate looks across time from which I synthesize my living impression of you. And this is wonderful. If, instead, I caught all of you in one frozen look, the experience would be dead. It would be like—it would be like looking at an ordinary photograph."

No sooner had Hockney achieved his breakthrough with his tour-of-the-house collage than he began training his Polaroid on people. By the end of his first week of voracious experimentation, he had achieved what would prove one of the most fully realized collages in the entire series—a warmly congenial portrait of his friends the writer Christopher Isherwood and the artist Don Bachardy. The two emerge from a grid of sixty-three Polaroids (seven squares by nine). Isherwood, the aging master, is seated; there is a wineglass in his hand and a cheerful gleam in his eye,



which is trained upon the camera. The younger Bachardy stands, leaning against the wall and looking down affectionately at his longtime friend. Isherwood's head is basically captured in one square still, but Bachardy's hovers, a play of movement, fanned out into six separate squares—that is, six separate vantages, six separate tilts of the head, six separate moments of friendly concentration. Bachardy's six heads give the impression of a buzzing bee bobbing about Isherwood's still flower of a face. And yet the six vantages read, immediately, as one head.

And, indeed, a head no larger than Isherwood's. If anything, Isherwood's face is the center of attention, the fulcrum of the image.

"In this case, at first they were both looking at me," Hockney explained as we examined a reproduction of the collage. "But as the minutes passed I noticed that Don spent more and more time gazing down at Christopher with that fond, caring look that so characterizes their relationship. So the piece changed as I was making it."

By way of contrast, back in 1975 Hockney had snapped a photo of his friend Henry Geldzahler, cigar in hand, making a point in conversation with Andy Warhol. The two were seated, facing each other, and a Great Dane stood guard at Warhol's side, facing the camera. Behind them was a mirror, in which you can see Hockney standing, taking the picture. Behind him was another mirror, where, again, you can see the conversationalists and the dog. Strangely, it's only in the second reflection that you notice that the dog isn't real: it's stuffed. And, looking back at the figures of Geldzahler and Warhol, you can't really tell the difference. "That's the whole point," Hockney told me. "In ordinary photographs, *everybody's* stuffed." In this new portrait, however, Isherwood and Bachardy are anything but stuffed. Theirs is a living relationship: it's living right there before your eyes.

"It took me over two hours to make that collage," Hockney continued. "I'd snap my details, spread them out on the floor while they developed, and go back for more. Christopher said I was behaving like a mad scientist, and there *was* something mad about the whole enterprise. When you look back at the completed grid, it looks as if each shot were taken from one vantage point—there is, as it were, a general vantage—but if you look more closely you can see that I was moving about all over. The lens on a Polaroid camera is fixed: you can't add closeup or zoom lenses, or anything. So to get a closeup of the floor I had to get *close up* to the floor. In this other one here, of Stephen Spender"—Hockney pulled out a reproduction of a remarkable composite portrait with the writer seated in the foreground and Hockney's living room receding into the background—"I spent so much time in the back of the room, *behind* Stephen's chair, that finally he exclaimed, 'Are you still taking *my* picture, David?'"

The three exhibitions of these Po-

laroid collages, when they were mounted a few months later, would go under the rubric "Drawing with a Camera"—essay and correction, approximation and refinement, venture and return. "The camera is a *medium* is what I suddenly realized," Hockney told me. "It's not an art, a technique, a craft, or a hobby—it's a tool. It's an extraordinary drawing tool. It's as if I, like most ordinary photographers, had previously been taking part in some long-established culture in which pencils were used only for making dots—there's an obvious sense of liberation that comes when you realize you can make lines!" And, for all their beauty as color-saturated objects (Hockney, as ever, is an extraordinary colorist: he somehow manages to coax colors out of Polaroid film you'd never have imagined were in there), these collages are principally about line. An inner sleeve crease, for example, aligns in the next frame with the outer sleeve contour, and contours generally jag from one frame to the next—a series of locally abrupt disjunctions merging to wider coherence. But there is also, in some of these collages, as in some of Hockney's finest pencil drawings, a remarkable psychological acuity at work. In the Spender combine, for example, the face itself develops out of six squares—three tall and two wide. Those aspects to the left are alert, inquisitive, probing; those to the right are weary, resigned. Spender, Hockney seems to be suggesting, is both. Around the same time, Hockney contrived a poignant study of his housekeeper, Elsa, with her four children grouped around the kitchen table. Little Diana peers out at the camera, adorably, from her mother's lap. Her mother meanwhile is looking over to the side at her second-oldest son, who is looking back benignly at her. Her youngest son is looking calmly out into space, with a hint of a smile. Each of the faces exists serenely whole, centered in its square: a great, soft, uncomplicated calm circulates lovingly among them. Only the oldest son, standing in the middle, his lean body taut and his hands shoved in his pockets, seems to exist apart: his face is divided between two squares, and his gaze seems more complex, anxious, intent—as if in growing he were growing out of this simple household. He seems as divided as his face.

For a while, Hockney's collages

got bigger and bigger. (The biggest—consisting of some hundred and eighty-five squares—took more than three hours to complete and involved seven models.) By the end of the Polaroid series, however, Hockney had so mastered his technique that he could radically reduce the scale of the collages while sustaining the complexity of the images at a level he'd attained in the largest works. The masterpiece of the series is arguably one of the last collages, a forty-nine-square composite of the late British photographer Bill Brandt and his wife, Noya, who are portrayed seated as they gaze down at the floor before them, where their own composite is slowly coming into being. The piece becomes an intimate celebration of their intense concentration.



"I think some of the most effective collages in both the Polaroids and my more recent series involve the theme of looking—of looking at people looking," Hockney commented as we examined the Brandt collage. "There's a kind of doubling, an intensification of the experience. For that matter, looking itself has been the central subject of all these collages. Ordinary photography, it seems to me, is obsessed with subject matter, whereas these photographs are not principally about their subjects. Or, rather, they aren't so much about things as they are about the way things catch your eye. I don't believe I've ever thought as much about vision—about how we see—as I have during the last few years." And Hockney's collages are, in turn, a school for vision. In ordinary photographs, a whole is presented from which details can be elicited. Hockney seems to suggest that this is the opposite of how we actually see the world. For him, vision consists of a continuous accumulation of details perceived across time and synthesized into a larger, continuously metamorphosing whole. "Working on these collages, I realized how much thinking goes into seeing—into ordering and reordering the endless sequence of details which our eyes deliver to our mind," he explains. "Each of these squares assumes a different perspective, a different focal point around which the surroundings recede to background. The general perspective is built up from hundreds of micro-perspectives. Which is to say, memory plays a crucial role in perception." Looking, for Hockney, is interesting: it is the continual projection of

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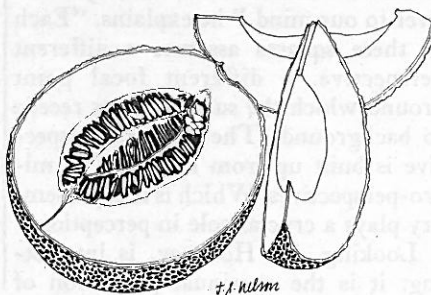
interest. "These collages work only because there is something interesting in every single square, something to catch your eye," he told me. "Helmut Newton, the photographer, visited me up here the other day, and I said, 'Everywhere I look is interesting.' 'Not me,' he replied. 'I bore easily.' Imagine! I've always loved that phrase of Constable's 'I never saw an ugly thing.' Doing these collages, I think I've come to better understand what he means: it's the very process of looking at something that makes it beautiful."

Hockney paused, suddenly very tired. "Of course," he said, "thinking intensively about looking forced me to think more carefully about Cubism, because looking—perception—was the great theme of Cubism. But let's talk about that some other time. I'm afraid I'm getting sleepy. My friends have been amused at my pace these past several months—they say I've become like a child, playing for hours on end and then just suddenly conking out. The truth is, I'm not sleeping very well: I keep waking myself up with ideas!"

WHEN I came over again a few days later, the front door was open, and I walked into the living room, where I found Hockney hunched over a proof sheet, peering intently. For a long while, he didn't even notice my presence. "Ah," he said finally, looking up. "Hallo." He set the proof sheet aside. "Have you ever noticed," he asked, as if there hadn't been the slightest interval since our last conversation, "how when you look at things close up, you sometimes shut one eye—that is, you make yourself like a camera? Otherwise, things start to swim. It becomes difficult to hold them in visual space. The Cubists, you know, didn't shut their eyes. People complained about Picasso, for instance—how he distorted the human face. I don't think there are any distortions at all. For instance, those marvellous portraits of his lover Marie-Thérèse Walter which he made during the thirties—he must have spent hours with her in bed, very close, looking at her face. A face looked at like that *does* look different from one seen at five or six feet. Strange things begin to happen to the eyes, the cheeks, the nose—wonderful inversions and repetitions. Certain 'distortions' appear, but they can't be distortions, because they're reality. Those paintings are about that kind of intimate seeing."

Among Hockney's Polaroid collages, there's an especially luscious portrait of his friend and frequent model Celia Birtwell, which seems intended as an homage to those Picasso portraits of Marie-Thérèse. Celia is wearing a white, lacy blouse, and one arm is thrown languorously behind her head. Her cheek rests calmly against the other hand. Her eyes seem to float—there are three of them. Two mouths. Two noses. A frond of curls drifts away from her forehead into the dark surround—a smoky wisp, a whisper of desire.

"Analytic Cubism in particular was about perception—about the difficulty of perception," Hockney continued, referring to the work Picasso and Braque undertook between 1909 and 1912: paintings characterized by especially dense visual composition, usually in monochrome grays or browns. "I've recently been reading a lot of books about Cubism, and I keep coming upon discussions of intersecting planes, and so forth, as if Cubism were about the structure of the object. But really it's rather about the structure of *seeing* the object. If there are three noses, that is not because the face has three noses or the nose has three aspects but because it has been seen three times and that is what seeing is like. And, yes, it's hard, but it's also tremendously rewarding. I mean, no Cubist painting jumps off the wall at you—you have to go to it. There was recently a remarkable 'Essential Cubism' show at the Tate, and I spent hours and hours there during my last trip to London. That show *forced* you to slow down. If you just glanced quickly, you didn't see anything. But, when you did slow down, the paintings just grew and grew. Your eyes darted in and out, forward and back, just like in the real world. At times, you almost forgot you were looking at pictures on a wall! Coming out of those galleries, it just happened that I was confronted with my own painting of Ossie and Celia and, right near it, a Francis Bacon triptych. The Cubist paintings had been mainly still-lives,



and here these ones of Bacon's and mine were fairly dramatic paintings of people. You'd have thought they would have stood up. But, on the contrary, following the intensity of the experience of the Cubist studies, those two paintings—based as they were on a pretty standard one-point perspective—seemed strangely distant, flat, and one-dimensional."

Hockney's love of Picasso is longstanding, although it only recently has taken on this sort of urgency. On several occasions in the last year, he has delivered a lecture he calls "Major Painting of the Sixties." Audiences are invariably surprised when he starts out by proclaiming that the most important art of the sixties did not occur in New York or California or London, nor was it a part of any Abstract Expressionist, Minimalist, or Pop movement; rather, it came into existence over a period of just over a week in March, 1965, in the South of France, in an eruption of creativity during which Pablo Picasso created thirty-three variations on the theme of the artist and his model. (Hockney himself owns one of these pieces; he discovered the others while researching his own in an exhaustive Picasso catalogue raisonné.) The claim is doubly heretical: not only are other artists usually considered to have been doing much more interesting work during the sixties but Picasso himself is thought to have been doing much more important work earlier in his career. "The sophisticated art world tends to act as if Picasso died about 1955, whereas he lived for almost twenty years after that," Hockney argues. "Common sense tells you that an artist of that calibre (the only people you can compare him to are Rembrandt, Titian, Goya, Velázquez)—that an artist of that calibre does not spend the last twenty years of his life repeating himself. It's harder to see what he's doing, perhaps. But he remains to the end far and away the greatest draftsman of the twentieth century—the artist with the most sensitive and inquiring eye and the most supple and inventive hand. Those thirty-three paintings are simply richer and more engrossing than anything else that was being done at the time. Still, at that age—at eighty-four—Picasso was finding new ways to see, new ways to express his vision!"

Hockney's Polaroid collages came into being very much in the thrall of Picasso. The portrait of Celia is but one example. Another portrait—this

one of Henry Geldzahler seated on a rickety stool, his legs outspread, as he cleans his glasses—echoes Picasso's 1910 portrait of the art dealer Ambroise Vollard. There are allusions to "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" in other collages, and there are even two still-lives—witty riffs on the old Cubist themes of guitar, tobacco can, wine bottle, and daily journal (in this case, the *Los Angeles Times*).

By mid-May of 1982, however, Hockney had stopped producing his Polaroid collages. This was partly, perhaps, because the passion had simply spent itself. It was partly, no doubt, because he now needed to redirect his energies from making collages to preparing them for exhibition—the three "Drawing with a Camera" shows were on the verge of opening. But there was an additional factor: Hockney was beginning to sense an interior flaw in the Polaroid medium. Just as cubes were not the point of Cubism, squares were not the point of Hockney's activity. But the square matrix-grid seemed an insurmountable requirement in making these collages: one cannot cut the white border from a Polaroid picture the way one might cut the crust from a slice of bread. (With Polaroids, if you cut into the tile the picture literally comes apart in your hands: the various layers of chemical pigment come unfixed.) While the vision evoked in these grids seemed more true to life than ordinary photography, the white grid itself was constrictive of that burgeoning life. It wasn't just that people began focussing on the grid (seeing Hockney's as yet another in a series of modernist variations on the grid theme—Eva Hesse, Sol LeWitt, Agnes Martin, and so forth). Rather, it was that the rectangular grid remained trapped in the window aesthetic that had been one of the principal targets of the Cubist movement.

"It can't just be a coincidence that Cubism arose within a few years of the popularization of photography," Hockney surmises. "Picasso and Braque saw the flaw in photography—all the sorts of things about time and perception which I've only recently begun to appreciate: the flaw in the camera. But in doing so they also recognized the flaw in photography's precursor, the camera obscura. Now, the camera obscura essentially *was* a dark room. It had a hole in it, and the hole was a window. You're looking out a window—that was the idea. In fact, that's why you get easel painting,

which arose around the same time: the canvas was meant to be a kind of window you could slot into your own wall. This idea of looking out a window dominated the European aesthetic for four hundred years. Interestingly, by the way, Oriental art never knew the camera obscura, and their art instead looks out of *doors*. Many important works of Oriental art take the form of a screen, which, like a door, stands on the floor. The difference between a window and a door is that you can walk through a door toward what you are seeing. You cannot do that with a window: a window implies a wall—something between you and what you're looking at. A lot's been written about the influence of Oriental art during the last half of the nineteenth century—Manet's appropriation of Japanese motifs, van Gogh's use of the bold solid colors, Monet's gleanings of atmospheric perspective, and so forth—but I suspect the Oriental alternative was especially important for the Cubists. Because what they were up to, in a word, was shattering that window. Cézanne was getting there: in his still-lives he observed that the closer things are to us the harder it is for us to place them—they seem to shift. But he still looked through a window at those cardplayers grouped around that café table. Whereas, as has often been said, Picasso and Braque wanted to break down that window and shove the café table right up to our waist, to make us part of the game."

For all that the Polaroids had taught Hockney about time and vision, they weren't going to be able to help him break down that window: on the contrary, the quaint white grid made the collages look even more window-like than most paintings.

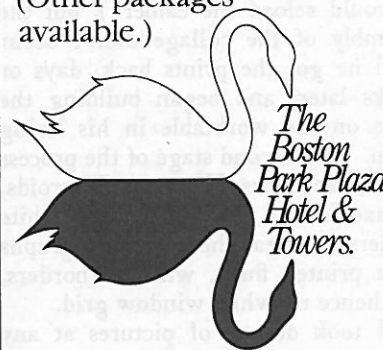
FOR a time, it seemed Hockney had sworn off photography altogether—or, at any rate, had reverted to a decidedly off-again mode. In mid-May, he drove up to San Francisco. On the way, he veered briefly into Yosemite Valley, where, using a 35-millimetre camera, he took one sequence of nine shots of Yosemite Falls—not nine separate shots of the entire waterfall but nine segmented sections in vertical sequence, starting with the sky, trailing down the falls through the far valley, across a river, up the near shore, all the way down to his own foot (clad in a tennis shoe). Coming back to the car, he threw the camera into his pack, and he didn't

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even bother to have the film developed until the fall. During the summer, he visited England, and then, returning to the United States in early September, he travelled by car through the Southwest, to Zion and Bryce Canyons and the Grand Canyon, where he resumed taking pictures. They weren't Polaroids (Polaroids are notoriously inadequate for capturing distant vistas), although, as in the Polaroid collages, he was compiling dozens of details rather than any single wide-angle swaths. He wasn't sure what, if anything, he was up to, and he wouldn't have an inkling, really, until he returned to Los Angeles and had the film developed. Once he'd got the prints back, however, he quickly assembled a few collages and realized, with a great new surge of excitement, that he was on the verge of another breakthrough.

These new pieces were different from the Polaroids in many ways: with the Polaroids, Hockney had established a general perspective but in fact had had to move all over the room to compile the details. With the new collages, he could stay in one spot, using the camera's lens to zoom in for details at various distances. (He now alternated between a Nikon 35-millimetre camera and a much simpler Pentax 110 camera. He preferred the Pentax—a machine not much larger than a cigarette pack, which nevertheless has remarkable optical sophistication, and which he could slip into his pocket and carry around all the time, pulling it out whenever the fancy took him.) The Polaroids took hours to make, but when he'd finished shooting he'd also finished the collage. With the new pictures, the actual shooting could be completed in a few minutes (as fast as he could reload the camera), but the assembly of the collage didn't occur until he got the prints back, days or weeks later, and began building the piece on the worktable in his living room. This second stage of the process could take hours. With the Polaroids, he had had to deal with those white borders, whereas the new photographs were printed flush, with no borders, and hence no white window grid.

"I took dozens of pictures at any given site," Hockney explained, the afternoon we got around to reviewing this more recent series. "And then I just took the exposed rolls to one of the local places here, down in the flatlands, to have them developed—usually I'd go to this Speed Cleaning & One-Hour Processing place. It took

me a long time to convince them that I truly wanted them to 'Print Regardless,' and I still get these wonderful standardized notices back with my batches of prints, patiently explaining what I am doing wrong—how I should try to center the camera on the subject, focus on the foreground, and so forth. Once I got the prints, I'd start building the collages, keeping to one strict rule: I'd never crop the prints. Somehow that seemed important to the integrity of the enterprise: things would get all messed up whenever I trimmed them. The evenness of time seemed to be tied up with a regularity in the print size. This, in turn, forced me to be aware of how I was framing the shots as I took them. In effect, I ended up 'drawing' the collages twice."

Given the dissimilarity of the two processes, it is striking how similar the earliest of these new photocollages were to their Polaroid antecedents. (For the sake of convenience, I will refer to all the collages in this later series as "photocollages," as opposed to the "Polaroid collages," of the earlier phase.) Indeed, they seemed to come as close as one could imagine to the original rectangular grid of the Polaroids; only the white borders were missing. There was very little overlap of prints. (Later, it would be rare not to find overlaps.) It seemed that, given a vista—say, the Grand Canyon, looking north—Hockney had simply framed a detail, taken a shot, moved the viewfinder over to the side of the previous detail, refocused, taken a new one, and again, and again, and then down, zigzagging in rows, back and forth. The collage formed a perfect rectangle and, still, a sort of window.

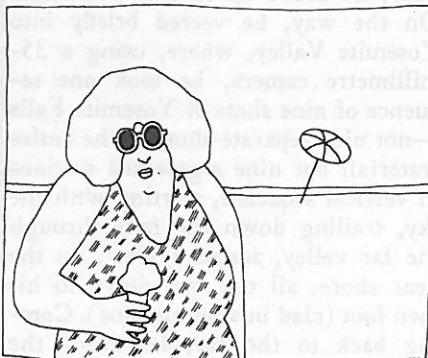
"It's incredible how deeply imprinted we are with these damn rectangles," Hockney commented as we looked at one of the early Grand Canyon collages on its cardboard panel. "Everything in our culture seems to re-

inforce the instinct to see rectangularly—books, streets, buildings, rooms, windows. Sam Francis once told me how odd American Indians initially found the white settlers—'these people who insist on living in rectangular-shaped buildings.' The Indians, you see, lived in a circular world.

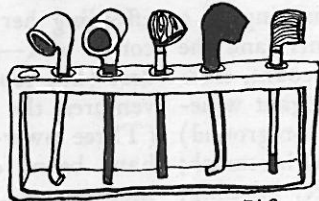
"But these early collages were really more like studies. You did them, just as you do a drawing sometimes, to teach yourself something. It doesn't matter what it looks like when you're finished—that's not why it was made. In this case, in retrospect, I realize I was training my visual memory, and this took a lot of time." Since these prints weren't developing right before his eyes, like the Polaroids, Hockney had to be aware of which areas he'd already covered and which ones he hadn't. Even in a rectangular format, this exercise required intense concentration. Tilting the camera and anticipating intricate overlaps would require still greater skill.

Within a few days of putting together the first of the new collages and realizing he was on to something, Hockney was on the road again, back to Utah and the Grand Canyon. He took thousands of pictures during the next three or four days—enough to compose twenty-five collages. (It would take over a month to do the actual assembling once he got home.) Most of the collages from this trip concerned wider vistas, portrayed with astonishing clarity. Ordinarily, the photographer of such an expanse has to choose one point of focus, with the result that things closer or farther or to the sides are progressively more out of focus. This, according to Hockney, is another way in which photography falsifies the experience of looking. "Everything we look at is in focus as we look at it," he explains. "Now, the actual size of the zone the eye can hold in focus at any given moment is relatively small in relation to the wider visual field, but the eye is always moving through that field, and the focal point of view, though moving, is always clear." The experience of this kind of looking is preserved in collages where each frame of distant butte or nearby outcropping is in focus and comprises just about as much of the field as the eye itself could hold in focus at any one moment in the real world.

The pictorial rigor and clarity of these panels are reminiscent of the treatment of space in paintings by van Eyck, say, or Piero della Francesca—



two of Hockney's favorites. Those artists, too, went to great lengths to record each "object" at its moment of clearest focus—every object on the canvas, "near" or "far," can bear the weight of focussed attention, just like the real world, and precisely unlike the world as it is portrayed in conventional photography. "I've always loved the depiction of space in early Renaissance pictures," Hockney told me. "It's so clear. I think that clarity is something that has to exist in all good pictures. The definition of a bad picture for me is that it's woolly—those paintings aren't ever woolly, no matter what's portrayed. If it's a mist, it's a clear mist, and not a woolly mist.



DLG

There has to be this clarity, which is the clarity of the artist who did it—the clarity of his vision, his sense of being."

The major innovation in the new photocollages had to do less with the early Renaissance, however, than with high Cubism. For the first time, on this return to the Southwest, Hockney was beginning to break down the window. Looking at the set of collages from his earlier trip, he had quickly realized what was wrong: there was an arbitrariness to the edge—particularly the bottom edge. To a great extent, conventional photography is about edges—about how to frame the object of vision. Indeed, that is the ordinary photographer's principal contribution to the moment of seeing: his sense of composition, how he chooses to frame the world within four perpendicular edges. "But I wasn't interested in that," Hockney told me. "Already, with the Polaroids, that sort of composition wasn't an issue. I could have added a strip of squares to the left or the right, or removed one, without really affecting the experience of seeing those collages. The Cubists had a lot of problems with their edges—sometimes they tried to solve them by creating circular paintings—and it's easy to see why: there are no edges to vision, and certainly no rectangular edges." For Hockney to stop at some arbitrary middle distance was alien to the kind of vision he was now attempting. Looking at those first collages of the Grand Canyon, he immediately realized that he had to bring the picture right up to the viewer, that he had to bring the distance right up to his own feet and include the ground

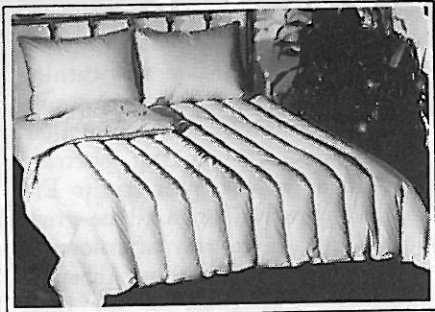
right in front of him as well as the canyon beyond.

"Cubism, I realized during those few days, is about our own bodily presence in the world," Hockney continued. "It's about the world, yes. But ultimately it's about where we are in it, how we are in it. It's about the kind of perception a human being can have in the midst of living." (A few months before this conversation, *Vanity Fair* had highlighted some of these collages, suggesting that they somehow

blended "NASA space-ship photography with cubism." And there was a certain similarity: just as Jackson Pollock's lush optical fields of the forties and fifties might be seen as having been influenced by the telescopic photographs of distant nebulae which were just then becoming popularly reproduced, so Hockney's work can be seen as having come into existence under the sign of NASA—the sequential shutter-streams of overlapping photographs recording lunar or Martian landscapes or Saturnian rings. But it's precisely the connection with Cubism which upends this false analogy. Hockney's collages, like Cubism, are a record of human looking. It's exactly the point that an automatic machine could not have generated them.) From this time on, Hockney usually included photographs of his own feet in the collages. In effect, his feet stood in for him; they planted him as they plant the presence of any subsequent viewer. Indeed, standing there, facing forward into the world before them, the world of vision, the feet seem transposed figures for the eyes themselves.

Several of the Grand Canyon collages are huge and spectacular, long banners of looking, made up of hundreds of prints. But one of the most noteworthy collages of this period was taken along the Merced River, in Yosemite Valley, which Hockney visited on his return drive. In this one, Hockney has managed to convey how the sound of a rushing stream looks. The rectangular grid of the earliest photocollages seems to shake apart before our eyes amid the onrush of cold, tumbling mountain water. The effect is bracing. For Hockney, it was liberating. Thereafter, his collage patterning was free to dash and dart, to arch and overlap, in a celebration of fresh vision.

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Hockney continued to record occasional landscapes. But increasingly, here again, his attention was turning back to people, and one of his preferred subjects proved to be his mother. In a particularly moving portrait, taken during a November trip to England, he portrays her in a blue-green raincoat on a slate-gray afternoon in the cemetery outside Bolton Abbey, in Yorkshire. The grass in the foreground is wet and marvellously described—a rich pelt of individual green blades. In the background rise ancient gravestones; his mother sits leaning against one of them. There is a blank rectangle, a lacuna in the middle of the collage, immediately above her head—an empty plot. Her consciousness, perhaps, of her own mortality? This is at any rate a portrait brimming with remembrance. Bolton Abbey, Hockney explains, is one of the places that she and his late father used to come to sixty years ago when they were first courting.

There were countless other portraits during the fall, the middle period of Hockney's photocollage passion—all the subjects from the Polaroid days, it seemed, were now being recast in Pentax. Throughout, his approach remained consistent: these middle photocollages constitute an exploration of how people are couched in space and how space is couched in time, the time of looking. The viewer, looking, experiences a living relationship in time, but it's strangely unreciprocated: the people in the picture, suspended—sitting, standing, staring, "posing"—don't quite live back at us. It was this fixity which Hockney, by mid-December, was seeking to shatter.

A poster commission for the 1984 Winter Olympics proved the occasion for one of his first efforts in the new direction. "I decided to do a study of an ice skater, and I invited a skater friend to join me at a rink out in New York City," he recalled. "I watched him for some time, and I noticed something very odd: you never see the blur. The convention of the blur comes from photography. It's what happens when motion is compressed onto a chemical plate. We've seen so many photos of blurs that we now think we actually see them in the world. But look sometime: you don't. At every instant, the rapidly spinning skater is distinct. And I wanted somehow to convey this combination of speed and clarity." The resultant collage has a lot of spin—legs flying,

skates scraping, shirt billowing, head turning, arms rising, everything converging on and moving out from the focussed center, the waist—but no blur. A series of studies Hockney undertook a few days later, back home in Los Angeles during a particularly *gemütlich* dinner with the film director Billy Wilder and his wife, Audrey, proved both simpler and more successful. At one point, following dessert, Hockney noticed that Billy Wilder was fixing to light his cigar, and he immediately reached for his Pentax. In a collage—a flourish consisting of a mere six overlapping prints (and the bottom one doesn't really count, since it simply describes two elegant wineglasses on the table in the foreground)—he shows Wilder striking his match; bringing it up to his face; inhaling, momentarily distracted from the conversation, which he already seems bent on rejoining; and, in the last print, looking up, puffing contentedly, obviously framing some repartee. The prints fan out, one on top of another: the entire piece reads as one carefree, casual gesture—a toss-off.

On the first day of the new year, Hockney, his mother, and his friend Ann Upton sat down at the wooden table in his living room to play a game of Scrabble, with their friend David Graves keeping score. The occasion constituted both a culmination and a new breakthrough. "The game lasted two hours, I was clicking away the whole time, and I still came in second," Hockney boasted as he showed me the result. "Naturally, my mother won." And, looking at the picture, you can see she's going to: her face appears a half-dozen times, in different degrees of closeup, and every shot captures the visage of a shrewd, veteran contender. "BOSS HEN," reads the bottom file of words as the board faces Hockney. (The words "SCOWLS," "SOBS," and "POOL" are also float-

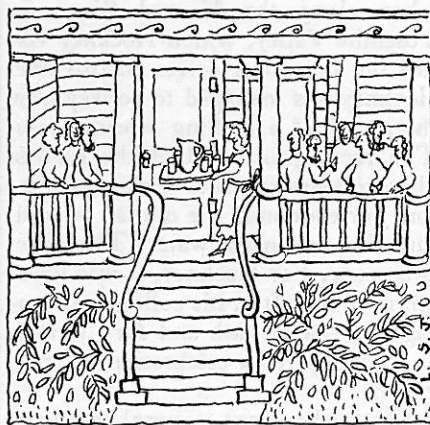
ing in there.) The plastic board is mounted on a spindle, so that it can be rotated from one player to the next. Hockney has taken details of the board at various moments and cleverly interwoven them in the center of the collage so that it's possible, with a little study, for the viewer to reconstruct the game, or at least its key moments. We watch as Mrs. Hockney concentrates and then scores a handsome windfall by centering "VEX" over a double-word square—a neat twenty-six points. The board comes round to Ann, affording her access to a triple-word corner slot—she ponders, and ponders (five separate faces), and finally ventures the truly pathetic "NET." (Three lower-scoring letters could not have been found.) David Graves, keeping score, looks over her shoulder, considers her predicament, and then breaks into a grin at her solution: three times one times three—nine points. A cat on the side of the table looks up, rummages around, and falls back to sleep. Hockney's own tiles are arrayed on their stand before him: LQUIREU.

"He was trying for 'LIQUOR,'" one cognoscente hypothesized the day in May, 1983, when this and the other collages in this series were first exhibited in New York. "Only he kept his 'Q' way too long into the game. You can't just hold on to those big letters endlessly waiting for the right vowels to come along."

"I don't know about that," replied a friend. "What about 'LIQUEUR'?" That would have given him a fifty-point bonus for using all his letters if he could have attached it to an 'S.'"

And the extraordinary thing about this collage is that it lends itself to that kind of second-guessing—it opens out onto that kind of storytelling. Indeed, it simultaneously tells a story and presents a group portrait. Dozens of hands, eyes, faces, a spinning board at countless angles: and yet at all times a recognizable picture of a group of three—implicitly four—individuals (five if you count the cat) engaged in an immediately recognizable activity.

In "The Scrabble Game," Hockney had achieved a level that he was able to sustain for several weeks—notably through a series of supple and elegant pieces that he composed on a February trip to Japan. But toward the end of that visit he began to press the terms of the challenge even further. With these late collages, he was becoming increasingly interested in the depiction of movement through space—not just



the movement of people's heads and limbs as they sat talking but their movement as they walked, the movement of cars and trains, and his own movement, walking or driving through the field of vision. In a collage taken from a bridge over a narrow canal in Kyoto, for example, he preserves the linear integrity of the various vertical posts and trees that recede into the distance between the canal and a parallel street to its right. The result is that the traffic on the street is minced into dozens of narrow, clipped details—car windows, fenders, hoods, headlights. This noisy jumble of traffic plays off against the imperturbable verticals, and details from the same cars seem to move forward in a sort of stutter-progression from one frame to the next. Similarly, in another collage, as his travelling companion Gregory Evans looks out the window of a train moving through suburban Kyoto he seems to be surveying a sprawling city: it takes a moment to realize that most of this "city" is made up of the same house seen over and over again, at different distances, as the train rolls by, and that this sleight-of-collage is one of the things that give the piece its internal sense of movement.

The increasingly complex depiction of movement through space becomes important in some of the most recent collages, in which Hockney has been endeavoring to compress a three-dimensional narrative into a two-dimensional plane. "At the time I did 'The Scrabble Game,'" Hockney recalls, "Ann said, 'It's better than a movie.' And in a way it was. You see, I think we overrate the cinema in much the same way we do photography. The increasing popularization of movies may have been one of the reasons for the lapse in the progress of Cubism after the First World War. The movie must have appeared to be the most vivid and accurate depiction of reality possible—it seemed to address many of the same concerns as Cubism (the need to include time, for instance), so that many artists just gave up the terrain of depiction and took off on this journey toward abstraction. The problem is that the movie, too, is flawed. For one thing, we're back with the camera obscura—now all of us literally sit inside the dark room, staring through the rectangular hole in the wall. Furthermore, a movie must traffic in literal time and can only go

forward. Even when it pretends to go back, the spool is moving forward, forcing us to keep to an established, dictated pace. There's no time for looking, as there always is in the world. I'm not saying that it's not a good medium—only that it's not what we think or thought it was. So I've recently been trying to figure out ways of telling stories in which the viewer can set his own pace, moving forward and back, in and out, at his own discretion."



As the occasion for one of these "line narratives" Hockney decided to photograph the noted photographer Annie Leibovitz, who had come out to California, on assignment from *Vanity Fair*, to photograph him. "She's a lovely, bright woman," he told me. "And we had some wonderful conversations about the issues I was grappling with. When it came time for her to take my portrait, she told me, 'I just want it to be natural. I don't want to lay anything on it.' Whereupon she packed me and her assistant into a station wagon and drove for two hours into the high desert: she wanted a plain, flat horizon. It turned out there was snow on the desert when we got there, but that didn't seem to matter. So we parked, and she and her assistant unloaded all these lamps and cables, opened the car's hood to attach the wires to the battery, dragged the equipment a few dozen yards into the desert, where they established this elaborate setup, and then finally took their supposedly spontaneous, natural pictures. Well, all the while I was snapping my snaps, and a few days later I put together this collage." He produced a board depicting the entire production—the parked station wagon, Leibovitz and her assistant deploying their paraphernalia, the open hood, the cables, the dirty footprints in the slushy snow, the huge arc lamps. And then, off to the right of the collage, Hockney included Leibovitz's portrait of him in his red pants, green smock, blue striped shirt, red polka-dot tie, and purple-and-black cap, his right hand extended, wielding the tiny Pentax. Click: counterclick! "I asked Annie if I could insert her photo of me in my collage, and she agreed. She came over a few days later to look at the result and said, 'Yeah, I had a feeling you got the picture that day.'"

While Hockney has exhibited all his Cubist innovations in the making of



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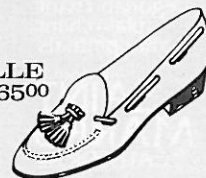
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these recent narrative pieces, the collages seem to draw even more directly on a much earlier source—the tradition of medieval painting in which one character moves through several incidents in his life across a single continuous landscape. Christ thus appears, for example, overturning the tables in the Temple, sharing the Last Supper with his disciples, being tried before Pontius Pilate, scourged in the streets, and then crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem—all on a single panel. In effect, Hockney is blending a narrative mode in common use before the invention of the camera obscura with a visual grammar developed some five hundred years later, one of whose principal ambitions was to break the hegemony of the camera obscura which had risen up in the meantime.

SOME weeks later, Hockney and I met once again, this time in New York, where he was calling on his dealer, André Emmerich. The two of them continued speaking for a few minutes, but presently Hockney walked over to me and asked if I'd like to join him for a brief visit to the Museum of Modern Art—he was going to be taking a midnight flight back to Los Angeles, and there were a few paintings he wanted to look at again before leaving town.

On our way to the museum, walking the few blocks, Hockney spoke about some of the larger issues raised by his photocollages. "What's at stake for me in this sort of work is the revitalization of depiction," he insisted. "The great misinterpretation of twentieth-century art is the claim advanced by many people, especially critics, that Cubism of necessity led to abstraction—that Cubism's only true heritage was this increasing tendency toward a more and more insular abstraction. But, on the contrary, Cubism was about the real world. It was an attempt to reclaim a territory for figuration, for depiction. Faced with the claim that photography had made figurative painting obsolete, the Cubists performed an exquisite critique of photography. They showed that there were certain aspects of looking—basically the *human* reality of perception—that photography couldn't convey, and that you still needed the painter's hand and eye to convey them. I mean, several paths led out from those initial discoveries of Picasso and Braque, and abstraction was no doubt one of them. In that sense, it's a legitimate heir. I've always felt that what was wrong

with Tom Wolfe's polemic against the American Abstract Expressionist movement in 'The Painted Word' was that he never did understand that those people were *sincere*. But still you have to ask yourself, 'Why didn't Picasso and Braque, who invented Cubism, ever follow that path?' And I suspect that it's because, sitting there in Paris back in the early nineteenth-century, playing out the various possibilities in their minds, they could already see that abstraction led into a cul-de-sac, and they didn't need to do it to find out.

"I mean, the urge to depict and to see depictions is very strong and very deep within us. It's a ten-thousand-year-old longing—you see it all the way back to the cave paintings, this need to render the real world. We don't create the world. It's God's world. He made it. We depict it, we try to understand it. And a longing like that doesn't just disappear in one generation. Art is about correspondences—making connections with the world and to each other. It's about love in that sense—that is the basis of the truly erotic quality of art. We love to study images of the world, and especially images of people, our fellow-creatures. And the problem with abstraction, finally, is that it goes too far inward, the links become tenuous, or dissolve, and it becomes too hard to make those connections. You end up getting these claims by some of the formalist critics of the last few decades that art just isn't for everybody—but that's ridiculous.

"The revival of the figure with many of the young painters today testifies to the enduring longing for depiction, although the crude character of much of this so-called neo-expressionist drawing testifies to the deterioration in basic training which we've seen during the last couple of generations. I mean, training people to draw is basically training them to look. I'm convinced you can teach people to draw as well as Augustus John, although admittedly you can't teach them to draw as well as Picasso or Matisse. If you don't know how to draw, you end up drawing anxious-looking expressionist faces. The original Expressionists knew how to draw, and what they chose to draw was anxiety and anguish. Hence the drawing had an authority, a lasting power that is often missing in the work you see currently. The other trouble with not knowing how to draw is that you can draw yourself into cer-

tain highly mannered corners that you can't then draw yourself out of. I think a lot of work you see currently has drawn itself into those kinds of corners.

"The strange thing about the legacy of Cubism is that it did exert an influence on abstract artists during the thirties and forties and fifties but was virtually ignored by the realists. Its lessons are very hard: few people besides its originators—Picasso, Braque, Gris, Léger—have been able to deal with them successfully. Most mid-century realists went on as if Cubism had never happened. I mean, I don't mind things looking as though something never happened. In fact, there's a certain perversity in that which I sort of like. I just think that now—as the cul-de-sac of abstraction has become increasingly self-evident—for painting to go forward we have to go back to Cubism. It still has very important lessons left to teach us."

Hockney's passionate monologue had spirited us from the elevator at the gallery, across several bustling city blocks, all the way into an elevator at the Museum of Modern Art, whose doors now opened, delivering us into the temporary exhibition space in the museum's basement. Immediately before us were some Cézanne landscapes, and to the side a Picasso and a Braque. Hockney was suddenly struck speechless.

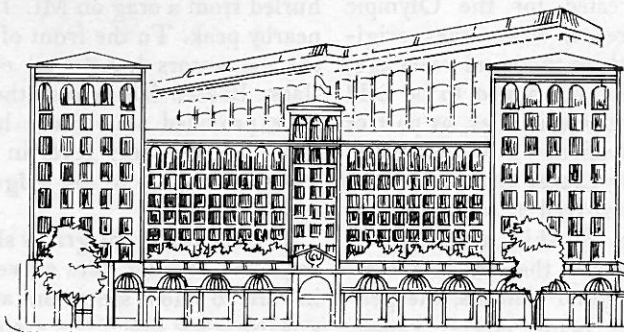
"Oh dear," he said finally, taking a deep breath. "I truly *must* get back to painting." —LAWRENCE WESCHLER

UP LIFE'S LADDER

[From *Advance*, the magazine of the University of Michigan Medical School, Hospitals, and School of Nursing]

LASER NIGHTSKY formerly David Rosen-sweet ('68M) of Mill Valley, California, is in private general practice and an attending physician at Marin General Hospital. He was recently hired by the New Mexico Health and Social Services Department to head health promotion and to write a paper on nutrition. "I give workshops around the country in holistic medicine and health," he writes. "I have been, for the last five years, involved with the Total Integration Institute's multidimensional research and expansion, a program committed as medical school, from which I have had enormous personal and professional gains in knowledge, healing, love, joy and ecstasy. I am a powerful healer, my most recent success being with multiple sclerosis. I am pioneering on a frontier of medicine and healing that goes beyond what is commonly known, believed, or accomplished. I am healthy, alive, and in love, and I have changed my name to Laser NightSky."

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THE ORIGINAL OLYMPIADS

EARLIER this year, the Reagan Administration proposed that, in order to avoid politically inspired boycotts, a permanent home should be created for the Olympic Games in Greece, where they originated almost three thousand years ago, and where they continued to be held for almost twelve centuries, as part of a religious festival—a circumstance that ultimately caused their end. Few institutions contrived by man have endured so long. A while ago, my wife and I journeyed to the site, in Olympia, of the original contests, the general area now being largely visible, thanks to archeological excavation. As we stood on the edge of the huge, grassy-sided bowl that had served as a stadium for the ancient Games, we felt we could almost see the shouting, chiton-clad spectators, forty-five thousand of whom could have been seated on the sloping turf, and almost hear, from the arena below, the labored exhalations of the athletes. We were alone in a spot that had never been a town—only a religious sanctuary. Around us spread a quiet vista. I could see a mellow quality and a botanical luxuriance highly uncharacteristic of Greece. Here—in this northwest corner of the Peloponnesus, anciently known as Elis—instead of rough mountains and remote valleys watered by trickles of rock-born springs, there was a flat and fertile plain crossed by two goodly rivers, the larger of which, anciently named the Alpheus, allowed ships of those days to ascend to the site. The land stretching back from its banks, and from those of its tributary, the Kladeus, bore lush groves of oaks, pines, planes, and wild olives, the presence of which has been noted in the earliest records.

The tract below us, where the athletes performed, was a long, narrow rectangle of hard-packed earth, some thirty-five yards by two hundred and thirty, out of which sprouted here and there a stray stalk or two of weed, like vagrant hairs on a bald man's head. This was where the eight athletic events took place—the four footraces, the pentathlon, the wrestling and boxing contests, and the pancratium. A third of the way down one of the long sides we could see the stone-paved area of the box where the judges had sat. Across from this had stood the altar of Demeter, the goddess of agriculture,

which was presided over by her priestess. This priestess was the only married woman permitted at the Games; the penalty for violators was to be hurled from a crag on Mt. Typaeon, a nearby peak. To the front of the altar, the excavators had found erect stone slabs. Boards laid across these would have provided seats for a handful of notables—the only seats in the place apart from those of the judges and the priestess.

We descended the grassy slopes, noting that the long sides curved slightly inward to allow spectators at the ends a better view down the arena. Still in place were the original starting and finishing lines for the footraces. The embedded lines were of yellowish stone about eighteen inches wide and eighty feet long, and two grooves, about seven inches apart, ran the entire length of each. Every four feet along the length of the stone strip there were square holes into which posts had been placed to form the runners' lanes—the same lane width that is used in the Olympics today. The length of the sweeping stone strip allowed twenty runners to compete.

The course for the footraces was not curved, as ours is; it was a straightaway of a little over two hundred yards. The Greeks believed that the distance had been laid out by Hercules, who had paced off the route, making it six hundred lengths of his feet. Hercules' feet therefore measured one and five one-hundredths English feet apiece—substantial appendages for a substantial person. About ten yards at either end of the course provided the required space for starting and finishing.

We know how the athletes performed in the ancient sports, because their actions have been depicted in art that has survived. Much of the procedure was different from today's. First place was everything; no second or third prizes were given. The competing city-states rang up no point

totals. Nor were there team events, such as relay races. In very early games, the contenders competed in short leather loincloths. But after a few Olympiads they discarded these and competed nude; the historian Thucydides tells us this was a mode introduced by the Spartans. One of the odder details, perhaps, was the placement of the judges' stand—not at the end of the course but yards away from it. I have never been able to learn the reason for this. Another oddity was the surface on which the races were run. It was a thick layer of sand on a subsurface of clay. In contrast to the low-cut, spiked shoes of today's runners, with which, at each stride, they push off from a hard track, the ancient competitors ran barefoot, the sand shifting under their feet with every step. The grooves in the embedded stone line at each end of the track served the same purpose as today's starting blocks. Although all but one of the races were short by our standards, the runners' position at the start was unlike the four-point starting crouch assumed by modern sprinters. Instead, it was a forward-leaning position like that of today's long-distance runners. The ancient competitors placed the toes of the left foot in the forward groove; those of the right, with which they pushed off, went in the rear. The Greek scholar K. Palaeologos, writing in an excellent history of the Games, "The Eternal Olympics," notes that the race began when the horizontal bars of the starting gate behind which the athletes stood dropped in unison, as an official pulled a cord to which the bars were connected.

All but one of the races were in track multiples of two, and finished at the same end of the track where they began. The shortest race, however, was a straight dash down the course. This was the one-stadium-length run, or, to use the old contraction, the one-stade run. The word "stadium" comes from the Greek *stadiion*, which in its primary sense was a measure of length; namely, the length of the track on which we were standing. The single-stade and the double-stade races corresponded roughly to our 220- and 440-yard dashes. The runners in the double stade, of course, lined up at the finish line of the single stade, using the starting blocks there in order to end at the customary finishing line. This explains the starting grooves at both ends. Instead of running with the

