

HISTORY OF MEDIA

Topic: the early years of Photography
B.A. Hons. (Mass Communication)
1st year

LECTURE - 1

- Photography

INTRODUCTION

- Photography is so omnipresent today -whether in science, advertising, current events media, propaganda, or just our own snaps – it is hard to imagine a world without it.
- And yet 200 years ago it didn't exist.
- In the period between the two Napoleons experiments were underway both in France and in England, In 1852, photography was creating its own small revolution.

The photograph was the ultimate response to a social and cultural appetite for a more accurate and real looking representation of reality, a need that had its origin in the Renaissance.

What is Photography

- The word “photography” literally means “drawing with light”.
- The word was supposedly first coined by the British scientist Sir John Herschel in 1839 from the Greek words *phos*, meaning “light”, and *graphê* meaning “drawing or writing”.
- The technology which led to the invention of photography essentially combines two distinct sciences: optics – the convergence of light rays to form an image inside a camera – and chemistry, to enable that image to be captured and recorded permanently onto a photosensitive (light-sensitive) surface.

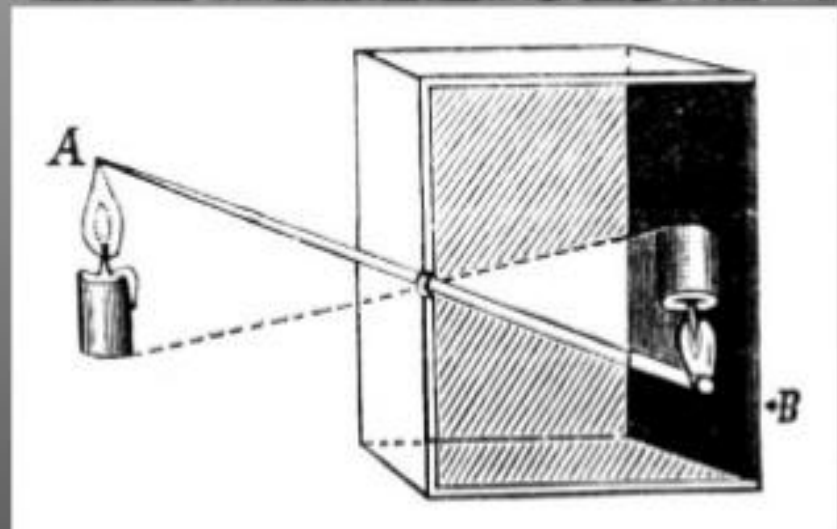
- Already during the Renaissance (several centuries earlier) artists had begun to use a sort of primitive “camera” called a *camera obscura*
- It is a latin term meaning literally “dark room” from which is derived our modern word “camera”.
- It was aimed to copy more accurately by means of drawing.
- This naturally-occurring optical phenomenon had already been observed for hundreds (even thousands) of years

- If a brightly lit scene or object is placed opposite a hole cut into the side of a darkened space (room or container), the rays of light reflected off that object, passing through the hole, converge into an upside-down image which can be seen to be “projected” onto the surface inside the container.
- But the *camera obscura* only allowed for the viewing of that image in real time.
- In order to record it permanently, artists still had to trace the image by hand inside the camera.

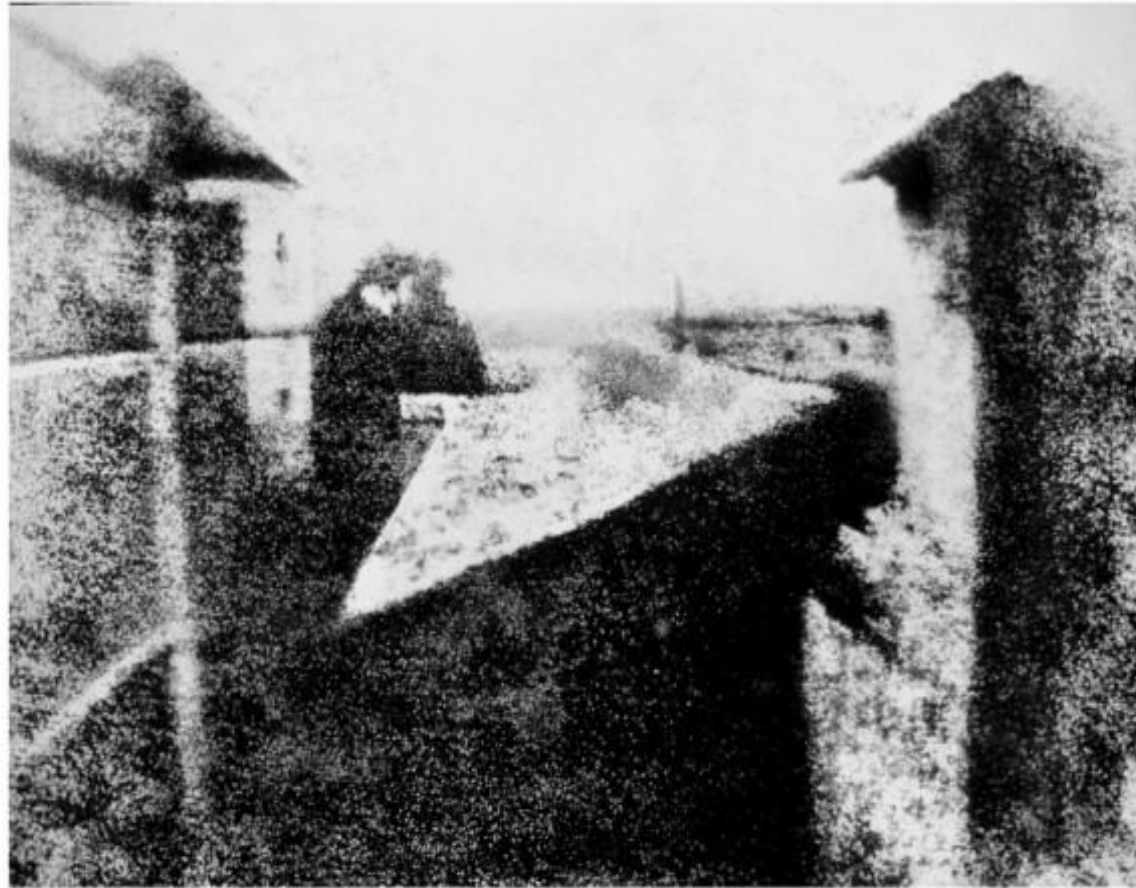
Camera Obscura

In order to achieve such realism, artists developed various instruments to assist them in their quest for the perfect perspective.

One such instrument used was the **camera obscura**, a dark room/space in which an inverted image was projected onto a surface.



THE FIRST PHOTOGRAPH



Themes

In the early years, many photographers were concerned with documentation and continued to focus on traditional fine art themes such as **portraiture** and **landscape**.

Over time this changed as photographers started to assert their own identity, separate to that of contemporary artists.



Antoine François Claudet
The Geography Lesson
1850

Department of Journalism & Mass Communication

Thank you