

Camera Obscura

THE CAMERA OBSCURA

This year, in addition to using manufactured pinhole camera and student-made pinhole cameras (including one made from a round Altoids tin), the class took on the group project of creating a large camera obscura in Olin 314. The Camera Obscura, which predates photography by centuries, is essentially a completely darkened room with only a pinhole's worth of light entering from one side. The pinhole allows the outside world to be projected inside.

In this case, we used a science lab across from the Colby Art Museum and Bixler. We blacked out all windows and doors, leaving the only opening - a pinhole of about 1/8 inch. The resulting image was of an upside-down Bixler and Museum of Art. We selected a portion of this image (which was projected over the ceiling and the floor as well as the opposite wall) to record on photographic paper. This record, displayed here (right-side up), is a large paper negative of the projected image. The paper was light-sensitive paper was then wrapped up and taken back to the Bixler darkrooms for processing. Proving a bit too unwieldy to take the process one step further to reverse it into a positive or traditional print, we then digitally photographed the large paper negative and made the smaller digital print you see here.

