

Focus on

Alla scoperta della collezione

The **Focus on** is a thematic study developed around one or more art objects from the Museum's collections, an opportunity to view their history from a different perspective.

The *Science of Vision* opens in concomitance with the temporary exhibition *Marcello Dudovich. Fotografia tra arte e passione*, at the Scuderie del Castello.

The **Focus on** exhibition is included in the Miramare Castle entrance ticket.

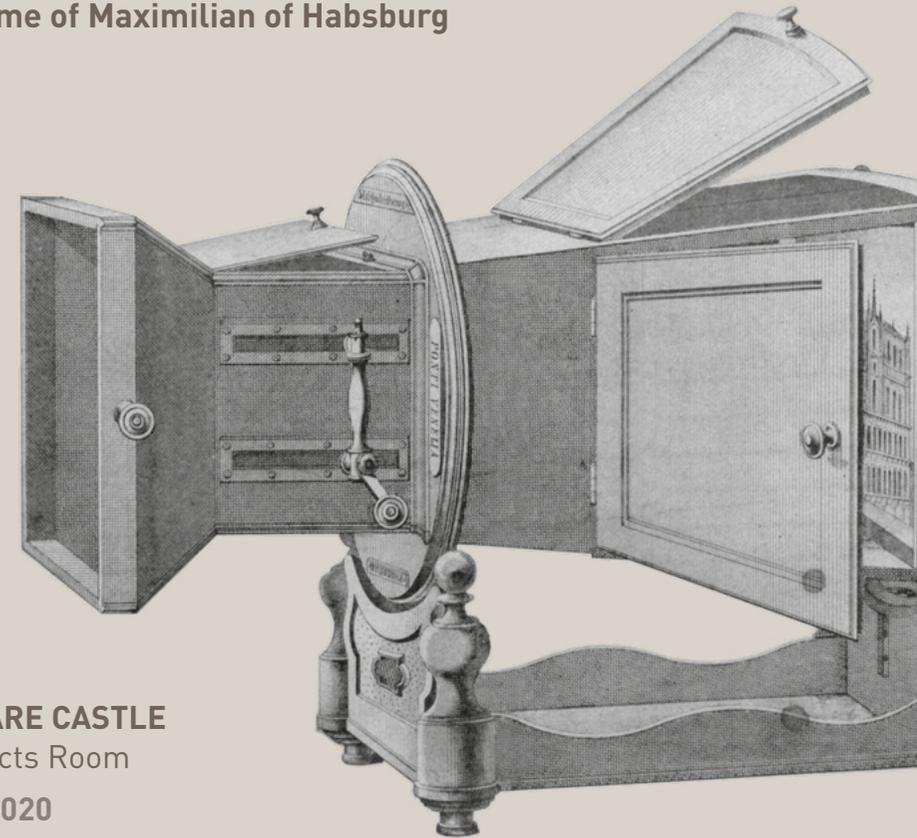


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The Science of Vision

Photography and optical instruments at the time of Maximilian of Habsburg



Next appointment with *Focus On*

RAPHAEL AND THE 19th CENTURY

A domesticated Renaissance in the Collection of Maximilian of Habsburg

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Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare



Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e per il turismo

Diorama photograph for the megalithoscope. Seagulls Room, first floor. Photograph by G. Sebastianutti. After 1872.

Megalithoscope. After 1862.



A new vision of reality

Around the mid-nineteenth century, when photographic techniques were being fine-tuned to offer a truer, more objective rendering of reality, interest was growing in the study of optical phenomena and the construction of instruments that exploited this new technology to develop vivid, spectacular forms of expression. These new instruments aimed to enhance depth, perspective or movement, reconstruct colour, and create fantastic pictures while amazing the viewer. At the centre of this exhibition, it is possible to admire one such instrument: the megalithoscope.

Purchased by Archduke Maximilian, this recently-restored apparatus is one of the most telling testaments to his interest in the latest technological innovations of the era.

This photograph-viewing device embodies the heritage of centuries of optical studies. The first optical instruments, invented to provide a more faithful representation of reality, such as the camera obscura, evolved during the 19th century into instruments for a new vision, in which depth and time began to become part of representation, eventually developing into the invention of cinema.

The Megalithoscope: an instrument for a new vision

The megalithoscope is a viewer designed to display printed photographs with various light effects devised by optician Carlo Ponti in 1860. It was an evolved version of the alethoscope, another of Ponti's inventions.

To use it, spectators look through an opening, revealing a printed photograph, which has been mounted on a special, slightly concave plate. Thanks to the mirrors on the lateral and upper openings, natural light is reflected onto the image to create a 'day effect'.

By closing the windows, the print can be backlit with a lamp or lantern, surprising the viewer with a 'night effect': the image is resplendent and colourful, featuring the flames of a candle or the stars in a night sky.

With a series of images to admire in day and night mode, the owner of the house would seek to awe his guests with this new impressive light show.