

# Mashable

## 200-Year-Old Device Makes Comeback With Kickstarter's Help

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A device that was developed over 200 years ago is making a comeback, thanks to Kickstarter. Patented in 1806, the camera lucida was a common optical drawing tool that helped artists accurately sketch objects, but later fell out of use.

[According to Encyclopaedia Britannica](#), here's how it works:

"It consists of a four-sided prism mounted on a small stand above a sheet of paper. By placing the eye close to the upper edge of the prism so that half the pupil of the eye is over the prism, the observer is able to see a reflected image of an object situated in front of the prism, apparently lying on the paper. He can then trace the image with a pencil.

Now updated for the 21st century, the NeoLucida works much like its predecessor, but features a simpler design and lower price point. While a quick survey of [eBay shows a vintage camera lucida can cost hundreds of dollars](#), the modern version costs \$30.

"Our device is the first portable, authentic camera lucida to be manufactured in nearly a century — but we like to think of it as a disruption to widespread assumptions about art-making and art history," creators Pablo Garcia and Golan Levin write on their [Kickstarter page](#).

To use the NeoLucida, artists must clamp the device to a table or drawing board — including a piece of paper directly below the prism — and place their subject in front. Then, they just look down into the prism, and start drawing.

With 31 days left in their Kickstarter campaign, Garcia and Levin have already raised over \$94,000 — surging past their original goal of \$15,000.

Would you use this portable camera lucida? Tell us in the comments, below.

*Image courtesy of Kickstarter, [NeoLucida](#)*

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