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Insisting On the Impossible : The Life of Edwin Land

Victor K. McElheny

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If a single life exemplifies the inner drive that fires a great inventor, it is the life of Edwin Land. The major innovations that he was able to achieve in photography, optics, industry, and science policy carry priceless lessons for readers today.Insisting on the Impossible is the first full-scale biography of this Magellan of modern technology. Victor McElheny reveals the startling scope and dating spirit of Land's scientific and entrepreneurial genius. Second only to Edison in the number of patents he received (535), Land build a modest enterprise into a gigantic "invention factory," turning out not only polarizers and the first instant cameras, but also high-speed and X-ray film, identification systems, 3-D and instant movies, and military devices for night vision and aerial reconnaissance. As a scientist, Land developed a new theory of color vision; as a science advisor to Eisenhower during the Cold War he spearheaded the development of the U-2 spyplane and helped design NASA.Behind these protean achievements was a relentless curiosity, a magical public presence, and a willful optimism that drew him again and again to conquer "the impossible." In an era when these qualities are needed more than ever, this masterly biography will speak to anyone involved or interested in business, science, photography, educational reform of government.

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