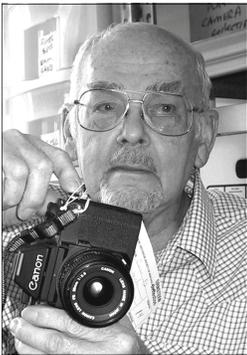


snap shots

Volume 17 Number 10

June 2012

Cameras: The Wonderful, the Weird, and the Worthless **Bud Midgley: June 3rd, Americal Center, Wakefield, MA**



Bud Midgley

Show me a camera and I'll show you a piece of equipment that evokes many emotions. It may make you lust after it, wonder what went through the mind of the person who designed it, or stand in awe of the engineering needed to build it.

The camera can reflect the most intricate workmanship or mass production gone wild. Parts may appear to be added as an afterthought or may be the total integration of form meeting function.

Operating the camera could be as simple as pointing and shooting or may require complete knowledge of a many-paged operator's manual and a substantial measure of luck. Loading film could be a simple task easily mastered by a trained circus monkey or one that bewilders a graduate of the finest school of mechanical engineering.



Fotron Electronic Camera - Wonderful, weird, and worthless!

Cocking the shutter (if it has one) occurs in some cases automatically, when the film is advanced for the next exposure. In other instances, it may require going through a sequence of events including, but not limited to, twirling knobs, flipping levers, and pulling or pushing assorted protuberances of odd-ball shapes and sizes.

Many cameras have lenses that must be focused. If we are lucky, simply taking a wild guess at the distance our subject is at and selecting this on a fairly simple scale may work. Or it may not. If it doesn't, there are myriad ways to get focused. Perhaps looking through a viewfinder and aligning two images is

the answer, or simply adjusting the lens until the viewfinder picture is sharp. Maybe juggling the lens focal point to coincide with the film plane will suffice, having been accomplished by sliding, ratcheting, gear driving, and who knows what else.

If this sounds complicated, you are paying attention. But don't despair. Very early into photography, cameras had few, if any, methods to adjust anything.

Not content with what was good, improvements were sought to make it better. Cameras became increasingly complex, so complex in fact that it became necessary to simplify them. Enter the Point and Shoot. It was back to the days of "You press the button, we do the rest," the slogan popularized by Kodak in the nineteenth century. Progress had completed the great circle; what goes around comes around.

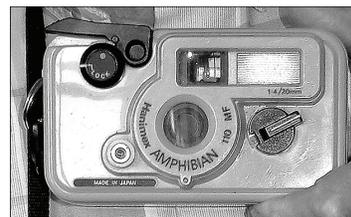
Now we're in the digital age. Cameras require a lot of electrical power, but not a lot of mental power, and if things go wrong, there is a program to solve the problem with a click of the mouse on the right icon.

Most cameras are wonderful, a few are weird, and I've been trying to find one that is worthless. Eureka!! I've found one. I'll bring it to the June meeting.

~Bud Midgley; photos by Lew Regelman



Canon AE1 with motor drive - Wonderful



Hanimex AMPHIBIAN 110 MF Underwater Camera—Worthless

PHSNE Supports Schools, Students

As part of its outreach to a new generation of collectors and photographers, PHSNE has encouraged students to attend *Photographica* shows by offering free admission with student ID. Many have taken advantage of this opportunity. At the last show, schools represented range from Maine to Utah and include UMass, Hampshire College, Clark University, University of Rhode Island, Art Institute of Boston, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Sarah Lawrence, Boston University, Cambridge College, Brandeis, and the University of Utah.

A Bessler professional enlarger was donated to PHSNE a while back. With interest in enlargers dwindling, this very large piece of equipment sat in our warehouse for an extended time. We placed it on a special table at *Photographica*. A group of students and an instructor attending from the Maine College of Art were elated to find such a complete professional quality enlarger, with all accessories, packed and ready to be taken to the school. We are happy that it found a good home.



Photo by Adrian Levesque

PHSNE Membership

PHSNE membership is \$15 for students, \$35 for individuals and institutions, \$40 for a family, and \$45 for foreign membership. Join or renew online at phsne.org/paypal or send a check in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar denominated international money order.

Members should check the expiration date on the *snap shots* mailing label before sending in dues.

Send payments, changes of address, and other contact information, to Joe Walters Jr, PHSNE Membership Chair, P.O. Box 650189, West Newton, MA 02465. (Call: 617-826-9294; email: membership@phsne.org; or use the Web form at phsne.org/contacts).

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Three Special Exhibits in NYC

If you live in the metropolitan New York City area or are planning a spring or summer visit to the Big Apple, there are several exhibits you might want to take in, all under one roof at the International Center of Photography and all running through September 2, 2012.

President in Petticoats! Civil War Propaganda in Photographs: As the Civil War ground to a dispiriting end after the surrender of rebel forces and the assassination of President Lincoln, Confederate States President Jefferson Davis became a fugitive. At dawn on May 10, 1865, he was captured outside Irwinville, Georgia.



Jeff Davis and His Last Ditch, 1865; unknown photographer

In his haste to flee, Davis grabbed his wife's coat rather than his own. Reports circulated that he had been apprehended in women's clothes, attempting to disguise himself as a woman. Northern artists and caricaturists created wildly inventive images, some using photomontage, to sensationalize the story. Photographers circulated dozens of photographic cards; many used a photographic portrait of Davis on a hand-drawn body in a woman's dress, hat, and crinoline, but wearing his own boots,

the detail that supposedly betrayed him to his captors.

A Short History of Photography: From the ICP Collection Honoring Willis E. Hartshorn, Ehrenkranz Director: In honor of its retiring Director, the ICP presents an engaging survey of its vast collection of over 100,000 photographs ranging from the 1840s to the present that includes well-loved classics as well as little-known works by anonymous photographers. One of the hallmarks of the collection is a focus on unusual aspects of photography, including marginalized social practices as well as popular and nonart approaches to the medium. Eugène Atget, W. Eugene Smith, Cindy Sherman, Walker Evans, and André Kertész are among the photographers included in this wide-ranging exhibition.

Christer Strömholm: Les Amies de Place Blanche: Strömholm (1918–2002) was one of the great photographers of the 20th century, but he is little known outside of his native Sweden. This exhibition presents his most powerful and acclaimed body of work: *Les Amies de Place Blanche*, a documentation of transsexual "ladies of the night" in Paris in the 1960s. Strömholm's photo-essay raises profound issues about sexuality and gender; as he wrote in 1983, "It was then—and still is—about obtaining the freedom to choose one's own life and identity."

~From icp.org Website

Something New:**Special PHSNE—Skinner Auction**

PHSNE has teamed up with Skinner Auctions Inc. to offer cameras and equipment, twenty-nine lots in all, from the Ornstein Collection. The June 2nd Science, Technology and Clocks Sale will be posted online by May 15th at *skinnerinc.com*. Cameras/photography are lots 157-181. The sale begins at 10 AM and lot 157 should be sold approximately 11:30-12:00. Guests are welcome to attend at the Marlborough, MA gallery at no cost, unless they leave their paddles in the air! Interested bidders can leave a bid for Skinner to execute, or they can bid live, by phone, fax or online. Information on all avenues is posted on the site.

Multi-Purpose Sept Camera*Sept camera, 1920's*

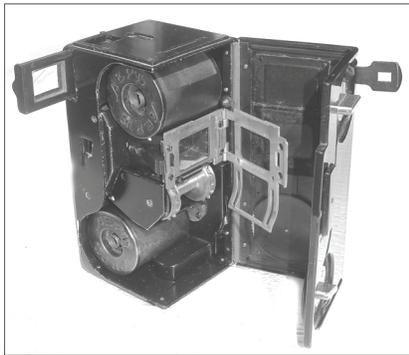
Most people think of the Leica as the world's first successful 35 mm still camera; however, as many collectors are aware, that is not so. Some examples of earlier versions are the American Tourist Multiple, the Simplex, the Swiss made Sico, and the camera featured here, the Sept,

manufactured in France.

Originally patented by F.A.I.T. of Italy, they manufactured about 150 prototypes, but none exist today. The patent was sold in 1922 to Andre Deberie of Paris which manufactured and sold the camera as the Sept until 1930.

The name, a word that means seven in French, derives from its seven different functions: It was a still camera, rapid sequence camera, 35 mm motion camera, still projector, motion picture projector, enlarger, and cine transfer machine which enabled you to make a contact positive from the negative. The logo was an image of a devil with its tail wrapped around the number seven.

The Sept used perforated 35mm film in reloadable cassettes that came in five-metre rolls capable of taking 250 exposures in 18×24mm format. The camera came with a leather case that held four additional cassettes, providing the possibility of 1,250 exposures. Easy removal of the spring motor made it possible to install the projection module.

*Open camera with film spools*

With a body made entirely of brass, the camera weighed a hefty 4 lb. 4 oz., and winding the spring loader required considerable strength. The viewfinder also presented challenges; it required the photographer to hold the camera away from his/her face to see the very small image.

With a price tag of \$225 in 1923, the camera was very expensive. Nevertheless, it sold well, and production economies reduced the price to \$150 and eventually to \$100 in 1928.

The Septs occasionally appear for sale to collectors, but the brass plated cassettes are fairly rare and difficult to find.

~Photos by Lew Regelman

*Brass film spools***Treasure Trove of NYC Images**

Visit the New York City Municipal Archives Online Gallery at nyc.gov/html/records/html/gallery/home.shtml. This ever-expanding gallery is your entry point into the vast visual holdings of the Archives. The Online Gallery provides free and open research access to over 800,000 items digitized from the Municipal Archives' collections, including photographs, maps, motion-pictures and audio recordings.

The holdings are arranged by collection; or you may search "All Collections" by keyword or any of the advanced search criteria. Patrons may order prints or digital files, and license images or film clips for commercial use. Some of the images in the Online Gallery may be subject to third-party rights such as copyright and/or rights of privacy/publicity. Before using any images from this site, please review the Terms and Conditions.

~From nyc.gov website

History of Kodak Roll Films

You may wonder when a particular film was introduced or discontinued. The list below was issued by the Eastman Kodak Company in a 1987 pamphlet (AA-13).

Roll Film No.	Introduced	Discontinued
101	1895	1956
102	1895	1933
103	1896	1949
104	1896	1949
105	1897	1949
115	1898	1949
116	1899	1984
117	1900	1949
118	1900	1961
119	1900	1940
120	1901	*
121	1902	1941
122	1903	1971
123	1904	1949
124	1905	1961
125	1905	1949
127	1912	1995
128	1912	1941
129	1912	1951
130	1916	1961
135	1934	
220	1965 estimate	
616	1932	1984
620	1932	1995
828	1935	1985

*Introduced in 1901, 120 film has been around for 111 years and is still being manufactured. If you're planning to shoot with an old camera, the best bet is to find one that uses 120 film.

PHSNE Meetings

Meetings are usually held on the first Sunday of each month, September to June, at 1:30 p.m. at the Americal Center, 467 Main St., Wakefield, MA, preceded by a mini trade fair at 12:30 and an open meeting of the PHSNE Board at 11:00 a.m.

Upcoming meetings:

September 9– At Digital Silver Lab, Belmont, MA
September 22, 23– Photographica 78

Driving directions to Americal Center:

I-95 to exit 39, North Ave. toward Reading/Wakefield (right turn on North from the south; left turn from the north). Drive approximately 1.5 miles, then turn left at Main St. Destination is on the left: 467 Main St., Wakefield, MA 01880.

Parking available next door at the school, behind the building, and on Main St.

Public transportation:

The Wakefield station of the Haverhill rail line is within 1/2 mile of the Center, and a bus line stops in front of the building. Details are available at mbta.com.

PHSNE Online

PHSNE's Web site is online at phsne.org. George Champine is the Webmaster.

Join the PHSNE Forum online discussion moderated by Joe Walters; sign up and log in at phsne.org/forum. For an archive of back issues of *snap shots* and meeting presentations, visit phsne.org/archive.

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Photographic Historical Society of New England
 Next Meeting: Sunday, June 3, 2012
 Americal Center, 1:30 P.M.
 Bud Midgley: The Wonderful, the Weird, and the Worthless

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