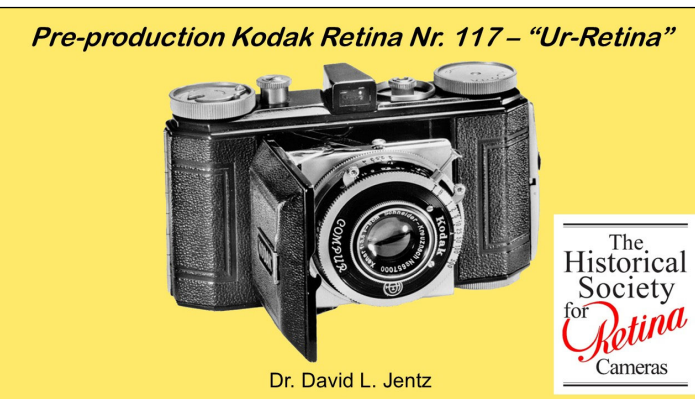




## Ur-Retina: Pre-Production Kodak Retina Nr.117

Presentation by Dr. David L. Jentz, Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 7:30 P.M. (EST), via Zoom

No other Kodak 35 mm camera has met with such admiration as the Kodak Retina. nor has any other had such a profound influence on the advancement of the use of 35mm film by amateur photographers in both Europe and the USA, Use of 35mm film began in the mid-1930s due to the simultaneous appearance of the Kodak Daylight Loading Magazine (135 Film) in the USA and the Kodak Universal-Patrone that was introduced in Germany.



Dr. Jentz will address the design of these two different 35 mm film cassettes and their early history in the presentation on February 1<sup>st</sup>. These film magazines were designed to retrofit existing 35mm cameras such as the Leica, Contax, and the lesser known Peggy camera. These original Kodak 35mm cassettes (film magazines) form the basis for the 35mm daylight loading film magazines we continue to use to this day.

The reason the first Kodak Retina has a model designation of "Nr. 117" will be discussed in a short history of the assignment of the "production code" designations by both Dr. August Nagel Fabrik fuer Feinmechnik (1928-1931) and Kodak AG Dr. Nagel-Werk (1931 and beyond). [Note Kodak AG is the German branch of the Kodak company.] Eastman Kodak Company's influence on Dr. August Nagel and Dr. Nagel-Werk will become apparent in this discussion.

The earliest identified Kodak Retina camera is a pre-production version of the Retina Nr. 117 which has been termed "Ur-Retina" by the Historical Society for Retina Cameras. The design history of this first model will be discussed in detail with a display of



American and German patents showing the unique features required in the design of this 35mm folding camera. The similarities of the patent drawings and the actual camera will be demonstrated.

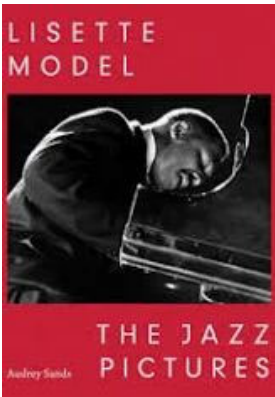
Images of the actual "Ur-Retina" which resides in the Deutsches Museum will be shown and details of how this camera differs from actual production Kodak Retina Nr. 117 cameras will be defined. Images of these pre-production "Ur-Retina" cameras, used in the announcements, marketing and instruction booklets in Germany, will be presented. Insights will be given about the use of pre-production Retina cameras occurring throughout the many years of Kodak Retina and Retinette production from 1934 to 1941 and from 1945 to 1969.

Dr. David L. Jentz is an internationally known expert on the history of Kodak Retina/Retinette cameras. He founded the Historical Society for Retina Cameras (HSRC) in 1992 and has written for multiple collector's guidebooks and HSRC Journals. Dr. Jentz has authored numerous articles about Kodak Retina/Retinette Cameras in American, German, and French photographic historical literature and has been a speaker at *PhotoHistory X* and *PhotoHistory XV* held in Rochester, New York.

Dr Jentz had a short segment in the October program about Dr Nagel.

## Globe Reviews Five Photo Books

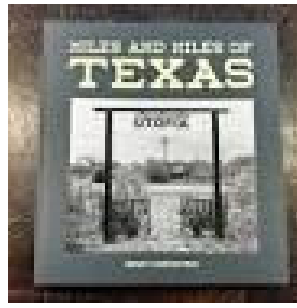
The headline in the Arts section of the December 7th *Boston Globe* announced “Five new photo books that are not what you expect.” The sub-heading claimed, “They show what happens when photographers go outside the box—or aren’t even photographers.” For more detailed descriptions and a review of the five books, read Mark Feeney’s *Boston Globe* article at <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/12/04/arts/photo-books-jazz-christmas-texas/>.



When Vienna native Lisette Model came to the United States, she developed a deep interest in jazz music, and she photographed the jazz scene. Audrey Sands’s book *Lisette Model: the Jazz Pictures* contains almost 300 jazz themed photographs, most taken during the 1950s. “Many of her subjects remain on a first-name basis with the culture: Miles, Dizzy, Duke, Louis, Ella,

Count, Sarah.”

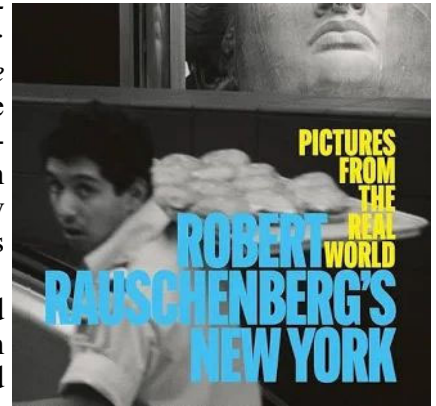
*Miles and Miles of Texas*, written by the born-in-New Bedford non-Texan Henry Horenstein, features images of major Texas cities—Austin, Houston, and El Paso— along with lesser-known Texas places such as Uncertain, Leakey, Dime Box, Crisp, and Waxahachie. Weird signage complements the strange place names.



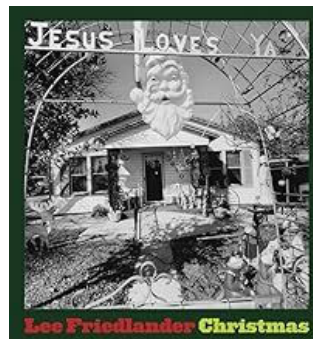
Horenstein states he “was looking for humor, sadness, history, stories, emotions.”

The non-Texan has ties to New England: he studied with Harry Callahan and Aaron Siskind at the Rhode Island School of Design, where he has taught for years, and lives in Boston.

*Robert Rauschenberg’s New York: Pictures from the Real World* is the catalog of an exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York that runs through April 19<sup>th</sup>.



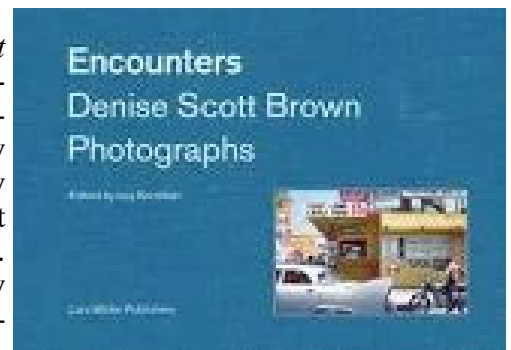
“Rauschenberg did photography both for its own sake and for incorporation into other of his works. What attracted his camera tended to be outdoors.”



As its title promises, Lee Friedlander: Christmas consists of photos related to the holiday, everything from a discarded tree to a sign for Christmas loans. The book contains scenes from fourteen states taken over a period of time that spans nearly six decades.

Reviewer Mark Feeney commented, “Odd things are often going on in various corners within the frame, things easily missed by the average present-buying passerby, hurrying along on his or her way.”

*Encounters: Denise Scott Brown Photographs* contains nearly 350 photos by the architect and urbanist. Settings vary from her native South Af-



rida to European countries, the American west, and Philadelphia where she lived for 60 years. “The most photographically memorable is Las Vegas.”

### PHSNE Membership

*New members are invited to join for half the rates for the first year.* Regular PHSNE membership (U.S. and Canada) is \$30 for students, \$50 for individuals and institutions, and \$55 for a family; foreign membership is \$60. Join or renew online at <https://phsne.org/join> or <https://phsne.org/renew>, or send a check in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar denominated international money order.

Send payments, changes of address, and other contact information, to PHSNE Membership Chair, 47 Calvary St., Waltham MA 02453, email [membership-chair@phsne.org](mailto:membership-chair@phsne.org), or use the Web form at <https://phsne.org/application>.

*Snap shots*, edited by Beverly Regelman, is published monthly, September through June, by the Photographic Historical Society of New England, 47 Calvary St., Waltham MA 02453. Volumes 11-29 are available at <https://snapshots.phsne.org>. The current volume is only available to members.

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## Nikon F—Nikon’s Original System Camera



Original Nikon F with Nikkor-S 50mm f/1.4 lens

Introduced in 1959 by the Nippon Kogaku Company, the Nikon F came with “a comprehensive range of high quality lenses and accessories. During its lifespan, new items were continuously added, comprising bulk film magazine, electrical motor drive, viewfinders, focusing screens, close-up and scientific attachments, flash units, remote controls, and even a Polaroid back, the Speed Magny, as well as a wide variety of exposure meters, both separately available or as part of the finder prism, the latest of those being TTL meters, known as the Photomic” ([https://camera-wiki.org/wiki/Nikon\\_F](https://camera-wiki.org/wiki/Nikon_F)).



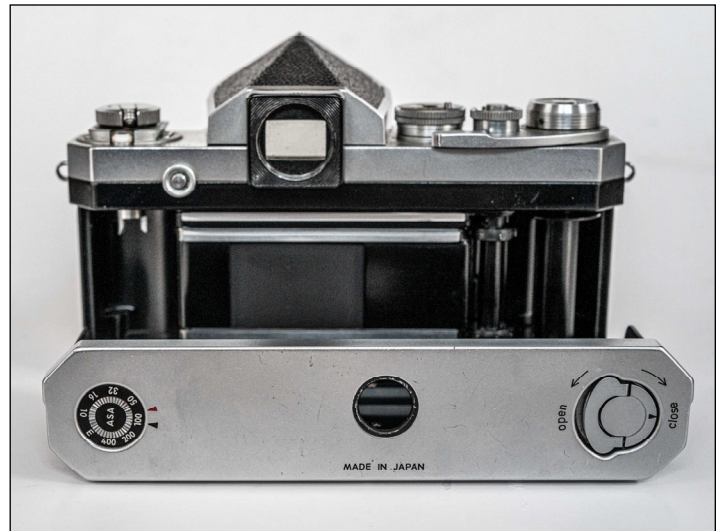
Viewfinder without light metering  
Viewfinder interchangeable with light meter

Initially, Nippon Kogaku was producing rangefinders, but when they recognized that the SLR format was the wave of the future, they developed the Nikon F system. The Nikon F wasn’t the first Japanese 35mm SLR, and probably not the best, but given the company’s reputation, it was quite successful.

There was a certain amount of patchwork involved. The body was built from the rangefinder. The finder attachment was similar to that of the Exakta Varex. “As it turned out, the system was not the best choice and it has been the cause for several afterthoughts. The most important attachment, however, is the lens. Nippon Kogaku developed a bayonet mount still

found on their digital cameras. It is made of stainless steel and just sufficiently wide to accept all internal connections that have been added ever since its inception.”

The placement of the exposure meter was problematic, and camera manufacturers approached it differently. “Connecting the meter to the shutter speed dial was obvious, but including the aperture ring was not so clear, most relied on manually transferring the meter reading to the lens aperture ring. The Nikon Selenium meter connects to the shutter speed dial, and the reading must be transferred manually. It is attached to the nameplate in front of the finder, surely looked upon as a temporary solution.”



Back removed for loading film

The Phtomic CdS meter, introduced in 1962, dealt with the problem by linking meters to the lens with “an external fork on the aperture ring and a pin reaching down into it from the meter above.” It was sturdy and durable, though far from ideal. This system prevailed for decades but was rather clumsy and far from perfect.

Though “sturdy and reliable,” the Nikon F is difficult to use. The unhinged back must be removed to change the film, and the detachable finder places the flash hot shoe “at the side, requiring special attachments.”

The iconic Nikon F, like the one photographed, along with its long list of successors, will be available for viewing and purchase at *Photographica 93*, PHSNE’s annual camera show, which will take place on Saturday, April 25, 2026 at Newton North High School.

~Photographs by PHSNE Treasurer Sid Chatterjee

## Should You Rent a Camera?

If you're going on a dream trip and want quality photos that you can't get from your phone or cheap digital, consider renting a very high-end expensive camera instead of buying one that you'll only use once or twice.

In the travel section of the December 14<sup>th</sup> *Boston Globe*, Doug Most explains why a rental served him so well on his two once-in-a-lifetime trips, a trip to the Grand Canyon and a safari. "Both times, I knew that I wanted to come home with photos worthy of blowing to poster size to hang on our walls. And both times I knew that neither my iPhone nor my 10-year-old Nikon D3400 would deliver the quality I needed" (<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/12/12/lifestyle/rent-perfect-camera-vacations/>).

Most rented a Tamron 28-75 wide-angle lens that he attached to his Nikon camera for the trip to the Grand Canyon and a Sony RG-10 with a 600mm zoom lens for the African safari.

He claims renting "is a win-win for the store and consumer" and suggests several things to consider for the rental: what kind of pictures you want to take, what you expect to do with them, and doing research to find the best quality equipment. Most suggests you acquire the rental with enough time in advance to experiment with it.

## Kodak Bounces Back

Despite recent rumors and postings about the likelihood of Kodak's imminent demise, the company seems to be taking strides towards a significant comeback. In addition to its recent launch of new 135 format Kodacolor 100 and 200 film, reported in the December 2025 *snap shots*, the digital cameras it



KODAK Pixpro FZ 55

markets are becoming quite popular.

Kodak is taking advantage of the renewed interest in point-and-shoot cameras, "The popular myth is that Kodak cameras were killed off by digital... but the truth is that Kodak

is now leading the rise of the pocket camera once again" (<https://tinyurl.com/2jvhumz7>).

The cameras are particularly popular in Japan where the Kodak Pixpro FZ 55, introduced in 2023, continues to be the best-selling compact camera. Other Kodak cameras that are top sellers are identified and described on the above website. "Nowadays, most of Kodak's best-selling models are low-cost digital ones - but they do still make some simple film cameras too."

## PHSNE Meetings

Meetings are usually held online on the first Sunday of each month, September to June.

### Upcoming meetings:

March 1—Addrienne Lundgren, Senior Photographer, Library of Congress

### Connect to PHSNE Online and by email:

PHSNE's Web site is online at <https://phsne.org>. See <https://www.facebook.com/PHSNE/> for items of PHSNE interest. Comments are welcome, so join the discussion of photo history.

Visit <https://snapshots.phsne.org> for *snap shots* issues Volume 11 (Sept 2005) to Volume 29 (June 2024).

Stay connected to PHSNE via our emails and show announcements. Sign up at <https://phsne.org/emails>.

## Corrections

Charles Baldwin, presenter at PHSNE's January meeting, sent comments and a correction about the photographs that appeared in *snap shots* prior to his presentation. While he states it's not a problem, he noted that the red truck is just that, photographed with his cellphone, a Google Moto G Power. The infra-red image is the black and white image of the Chute Falls in Ticonderoga and imaged in infra-red with the Pentax K500. He claims that it is an easy misunderstanding as the infra-red the Pentax K500 generates becomes black and white.

The caption Pentax K500 belongs under the black and white image of the Chute River Falls.

## PHSNE Election Results

The results of the 2025 election were announced at the December 7<sup>th</sup> PHSNE meeting. The new slate of board members and officers is as follows:

- President: Larry Woods
- Vice-President: Paul Roberts
- Treasurer: Sid Chatterjee
- Secretary: Gloria Poliziotti Greis

John Dockery

Brad Herman

Josh Heller

Joel Moses

Sabine Ocker

Ron Polito

Alan Reisch

Peter Schultz

Bernie Zelitch