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CONTAX IIIa

INSTRUCTION BOOK

ZEISS IKON

ZEISS IKON AG. STUTTGART

The CONTAX IIIa is a precision miniature camera in all-metal construction equipped with photo-electric exposure meter, coupled view and rangefinder, all-metal focal-plane shutter, and interchangeable bayonet-mounted lenses. It will meet every photographic need because of the wide range of attachable photographic accessories. The CONTAX IIIa can be loaded with standard cartridges for black and white film or colour film as well as with standard rolls in cassettes. 36 24×36 mm pictures can be made from 1.60 m (5 ft. 3 ins.) of film.

DESCRIPTION OF PARTS

1 Leather-covered light metal body
2 Winding knob
3 Release button
4 Setting ring for shutter speeds
5 Frame counter
6 Focusing wheel
7 Infinity stop of focusing wheel
8 Infinity stop of lens
9 Lens
10 Diaphragm setting ring
11 Distance scale
12 Depth of field scale
13 Spring catch for lens
14 Outside bayonet mount
15 First window of combined view and rangefinder
16 Second window of combined view and rangefinder

Description of parts continued on page 38

The CONTAX

manufactured by ZEISS IKON AG. STUTTGART, is a deluxe precision miniature camera enabling its user to solve almost any photographic task. It will be the steady companion of the scientist, the technician, the professional as well as the advanced amateur photographer. The vast experience and knowledge of the ZEISS IKON camera technicians have been fully employed in designing the CONTAX. Its dimensions are somewhat reduced compared with the former model, and its operation has been further simplified. The scientist will use it daily in his painstaking work; the news photographer and reporter will obtain his pictures with it under the most dif-

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ficult conditions; the professional photographer will be delighted with the sharpness and perfection of his CONTAX photos and the amateur photographer will be able to record the most unusual situations. Complete information on these subjects is contained in the CONTAX literature and handbooks. The booklet is intended to furnish the owner of the CONTAX with essential and accurate instructions on how to operate his camera.

It is recommended to make a thorough study of these directions and to practice the various mechanical manipulations before loading the camera.

Before reading on, turn out the inner leaves of the cover for future references!

The technical development may require slight changes on the camera as compared to the description.

THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE CONTAX IIIa

The new CONTAX *represents a further development of its preceding models. All the essential advantages of more than 100 000* CONTAX *cameras in use have been employed and further developments have been introduced. Here are a few details of the main features of the new* CONTAX:

Die-cast body of light alloy guaranteeing the extreme mechanical precision characteristic of ZEISS IKON products.

Built-in photo-electric exposure meter with one measuring range and colour corrected cell.

Combined view and rangefinder permitting sighting and focusing through one eye piece.

Choice of incomparable ZEISS lenses, factory-coated and in light-weight mounts especially designed for the CONTAX. All are interchangeable by means of their bayonet-type mount, insuring rapid use and precision fit.

All scales can be read off at a glance from above.

All-metal focal plane shutter having speeds from 1 sec. to 1/1250 sec., "B" and "T", all of which can be set by means of one dial.

35 mm perforated cine film is used, which is available in various types such as 35 mm cartridges, daylight loading spools, ready-cut lengths of film, etc.

CONTAX cassettes permitting interchange of various kinds of 35 mm negative material in daylight without rewinding.

Detachable camera back, which is advantageous not only during loading and unloading but also when thoroughly cleaning the camera.

A wide range of accessories, extremely well designed and easy to use, enables the CONTAX owner to cover almost any field such as close-up work, photomicrography and tele-photography as well as reproduction and copying work.

Highest possible precision in its mechanical functions and unexcelled quality of its Zeiss lenses as well as the absolute dependability of the built-in exposure meter make the CONTAX *a first-class camera for every professional, scientist and technician, as well as for every advanced amateur photographer.*

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MANIPULATION OF THE CAMERA

STEP I

PREPARATIONS TO BE MADE BEFORE TAKING THE PICTURE:

THE LEFT HAND

Take the camera in the left hand in such a way that the thumb rests on the viewfinder shoe (19) and the other fingers grasp it from underneath.

THE RIGHT HAND

Then use the thumb and the index finger of the right hand to set the desired diaphragm and shutter speed as well as to wind the shutter itself.

THE DIAPHRAGM

is set by turning diaphragm ring (10).

5

THE EXPOSURE METER OF THE CONTAX IIIa

First of all set the sensitivity of the loaded film on the disc within the measuring ring (20). Turn the disc by the two little knobs until the sensitivity, DIN or ASA rating, resp., is opposite the cuneiform setting mark. The lid of the exposure meter will spring open upon slightly pressing the knob (30). When taking a picture, hold the CONTAX with the open exposure meter pointing in the direction of your object. By turning ring (20) adjust the indicator of the instrument to the rhombic mark in the upper aperture of the exposure meter. Then you can read the exposure time required for any given lens aperture from the opposite scale of the ring (20) as

well as from the inner ring. Black engravings on the setting ring indicate fractions of a second (100 for instance, means $^1/_{100}$ second), the red engravings indicate full seconds.

Owing to the perfectly corrected measuring angle of incident light and owing to the colour-corrected photo-electric cell, the required exposure times obtained through the exposure meter may under all circumstances and without further corrections be used for the setting of diaphragm and shutter speed.

RE-ADJUSTMENT OF EXPOSURE METER OF THE CONTAX IIIa

Upon closing and covering the lid of the exposure meter and upon turning the setting ring (20) counter-clockwise as far as possible, the needle of the instrument should point to the dot beside the rhombic mark. Any deviations may be corrected with the adjusting screw (29).

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7

THE EXPOSURE TIME

is set on ring (4). This can be done before or after the shutter is wound. The disc (4) is lifted and turned until the desired exposure time is opposite the setting mark. At this point it is dropped into position.

The fact that one ring is used to set all shutter speeds makes the operation of the CONTAX convenient, easy and sure. Setting the shutter speeds and verifying them is at all times possible either before or after winding the shutter.

The engraved numbers on the speed setting ring indicate fractions of a second. Example: 100 means 1/100 sec. exposure time.

The CONTAX shutter has a range of speeds from 1 second to 1/1250 second in addition to "B" and "T". At "B" the shutter is opened by pressing the release button down and is closed by relaxing the pressure upon the release button (3). At the setting "T" the shutter is opened by pressing the release button down, and by turning the shutter speed setting ring slightly in the direction towards "B" it is closed again. For this, it is not necessary to lift the setting ring.

The film and shutter winding mechanism are coupled in order to be able to wind the film and cock the shutter simultaneously, thereby eliminating the danger of double exposures. The shutter winding knob (2) is turned clockwise until a definitive stop is felt.

NOTE: *It is not suggested that thumb and index finger of the right hand wind the shutter in the manner of turning a screw. It is advisable to turn the camera in such a way as to divide the movement between the right and left hand for greater convenience.*

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9

10

STEP II

MAKING THE EXPOSURE

The shape of the CONTAX and the arrangement of its controls are adapted to the human hand and are designed to hold the camera securely. The following description of the manipulation guarantees utmost safety when taking pictures.

THE LEFT HAND

holds the CONTAX from below with the thumb and the index finger.

THE RIGHT HAND

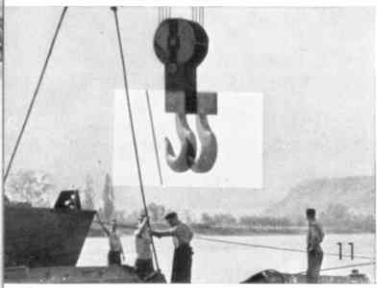
grasps the CONTAX from the side. The middle finger is placed on the focusing wheel (6) and the index finger on the shutter release button (3). The thumb rests on the back of the camera and the other fingers on the front. The right lower corner of the CONTAX rests in the palm of the right hand.

THE ELBOWS

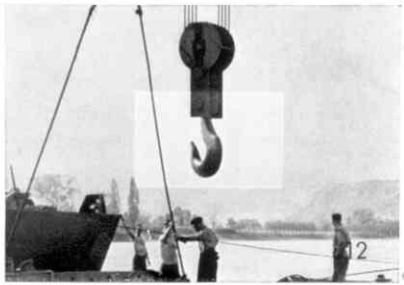
are held at the side of the body for better support.

FOCUSING

By looking through the eyepiece (23) of the combined view and rangefinder one will see the viewfinder field for the standard 2 inch lens. In the center of the viewfinder field there is a somewhat lighter and yellowish field in which the object to be photographed usually appears with double contours. By turning the focusing wheel (6) with the middle finger of the right hand these contours will coincide, which means that the lens is accurately focused at the distance of the object seen in the rangefinder portion of the combined view and rangefinder. The focusing wheel operates the rangefinder and the lens focusing mechanism for 2 inch lenses simultaneously. The combined view and rangefinder of the CONTAX permits the control of composition and the accurate checking of the focus at a glance. The other CONTAX lenses which are provided with outside bayonet mount are focused by turning the lens mount. They are also coupled to the rangefinder with the exception of the long focal length lenses.



Double contours in combined view and rangefinder field



Coincidence of contours in combined view and rangefinder field

RELEASING THE SHUTTER

By pressing down the shutter release button (3) with the index finger of the right hand, the shutter will be operated and the picture taken. This can either be done with the tip or top joint of the index finger (illustrations Nos. 13 and 14). It has been found by experience that the greatest security in holding the camera steady during the exposure is given when the uppermost joint of the index finger is pressed downward. (See illustration No. 14.)

If the winding knob (2) has not been turned until a definitive stop is felt, it follows that the shutter is not completely wound and the film not advanced for a full frame; in this position it will be impossible to release the CONTAX focal-plane shutter. Under no circumstances is it possible to make overlaps and double-exposures.

There are no external rotating shutter parts on the CONTAX which might, if inadvertently touched, interfere with the normal operation of the camera.

HOLDING THE CONTAX CAMERA

When taking vertical pictures, manipulate as described under Step II. (Page 15). The right hand grasps the camera above and is suitably curved for this purpose. The left hand is used as a support. The same procedure is followed with the right hand below, and the left hand above, if found more convenient.

If the left eye is used for focusing, the right eye can remain open. If the right eye is employed for focusing, the left eye should be closed.

The various ways of sighting and holding the camera are shown in the illustrations. The user of the CONTAX should select the method which suits him best.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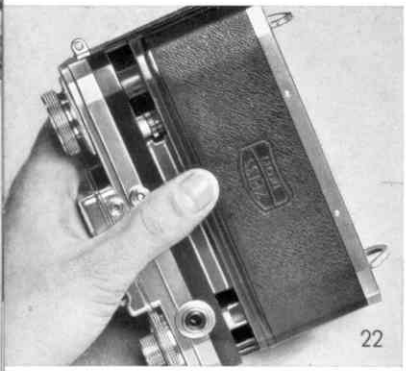
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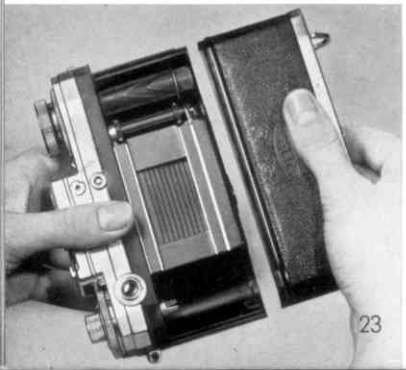
23

STEP III

LOADING AND UNLOADING

THE OPENING

The lens of the CONTAX is held between middle and ring fingers of the left hand. The top of the camera is next to the chest. The thumb is placed on the back of the camera (ill. 21).

With thumb and index finger of the right hand, turn locks (26) on the bottom, right and left respectively. The left thumb can now lift the back off (ill. 22).

Then the right hand lifts the back from the housing of the camera (ill. 23).

As a first step, attach the beginning of the film to the take-up spool by hooking it to nose underneath the triangular lip of the spool (ill. 24). 35 mm cartridges are supplied by the manufacturer with the beginning of the film ready-cut to proper shape. No special cutting is required on a standard roll of 35 mm film (ill. 25). The cartridge is then placed into the feeding spool chamber in such a way that the rewind prong engages with the hollow end of the cartridge (cassette). The empty spool is fitted into the take-up spool chamber (ill. 26). Now the

THE LOADING

The open CONTAX shows the all-metal focal plane shutter, a famous technical achievement.


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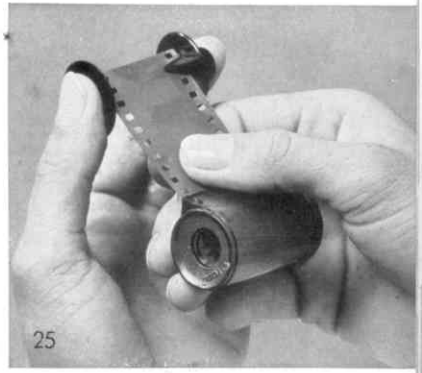
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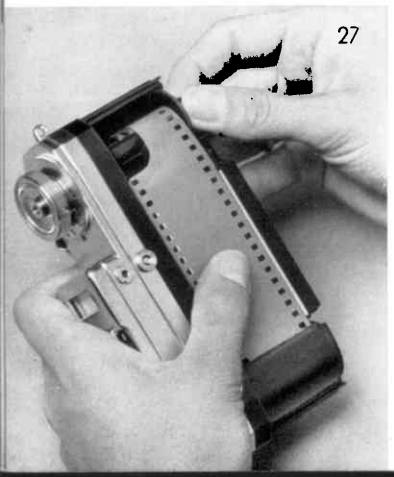
26

film is wound on the take-up spool until its perforation engages the teeth of the sprocket on both sides (ill. 27). Then replace the back of the camera, inserting it from above into the corresponding grooves (ill. 26) and holding the film strip down with the thumb of the left hand in order to keep the perforation well attached to the teeth of the sprocket. Then lock the keys (26) on the under side of the CONTAX and fold them. This can only be done when the back is placed correctly on the camera.

After winding and releasing the shutter twice to allow for the piece of film exposed during loading, the unexposed film will be in the picture field of the CONTAX.

Attention should be given to the rewind knob (21) which should turn in the opposite direction of the arrow engraved on it; this is an indication that the film winds properly. By means of the knurled ring, turn the frame counter (5) either left or right up to 0. After winding the shutter once more, the CONTAX is ready for the first exposure.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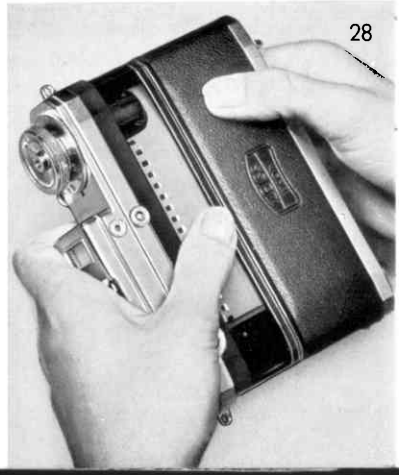
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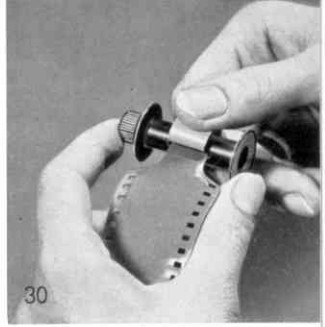

30

If it is intended to feed the film from a cartridge into a cassette or even from cassette to cassette, the film should be attached to the core of the cassette on the take-up side.

The CONTAX cassette consists of two slotted containers and a core. By pressing down a small button the two containers can be turned until their apertures overlap. In this position the cassette can be pulled apart. It can be loaded with ready-cut lengths of film, day-light loading lengths, or with film from a standard roll of 35 mm film. When two cassettes are used the film may only be hooked on the nose of the feeding core.

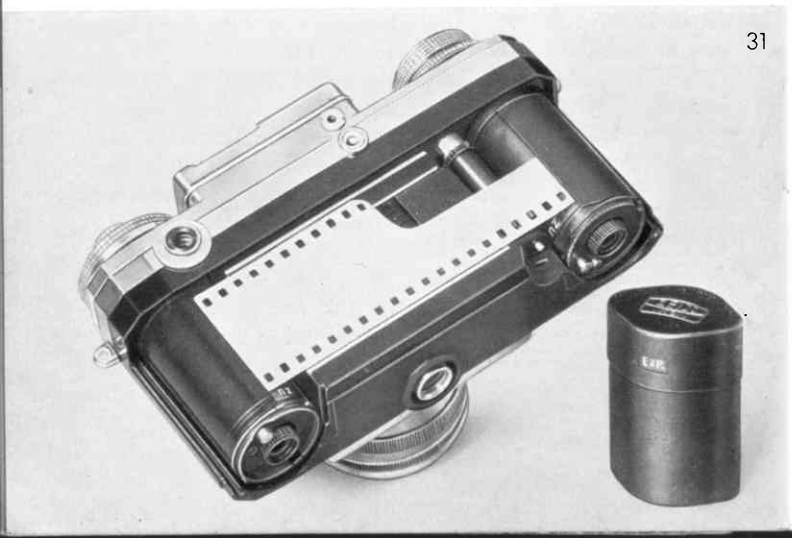
Only if it is desired to rewind the film should the end of the film be firmly attached to the core of the feeding cassette. It is not necessary that the leader and the trailer of the film be cut in a certain shape, because it can be hooked on the nose of the core. Ready-cut lengths of 35 mm film have a special cut on the end of the film similar to the shape of a tongue. This is to be attached to the feeding core by threading it through the small slot in the center of the spool, turning it over, pulling it again through the same slot, thus securing it tightly on the feeding core (ill. 30). The core with the film wound on it is placed in the inner container of the cassette and the other container is slid over it, with

the leader of the film outside. By turning the containers in opposite directions the cassette is locked. The word „ZU" (= shut) should then be visible.

The cassette should be placed in such a way into the spool chamber that the small projecting piece lies in the channel provided for it in the spool chamber. When the camera back is replaced and the locking buttons are turned, the cassette is opened automatically.

Every cassette is supplied in a protective container having a lid with an aperture. In case the container carries a cassette with an exposed film, the lid can be placed on the container in such a way that the word "Exp." appears.

When the CONTAX camera is loaded with film, it will only be possible to turn the rewind button (21) for a short stretch or not at all in the direction of the arrow engraved on top of housing.



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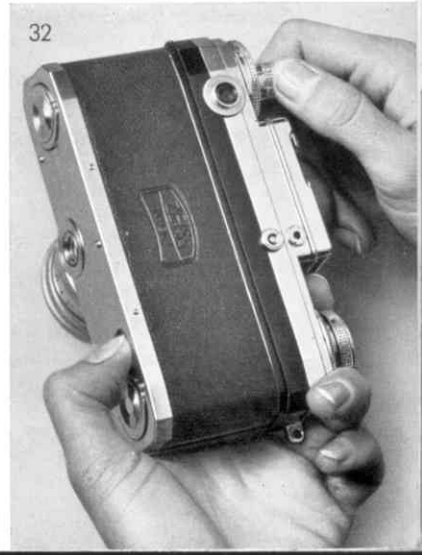
THE UNLOADING

If you use a standard film cartridge the film must be rewound before unloading. For rewinding, press button (28) at the bottom of the camera. Then rewind the film into the cartridge in the direction of the arrow by turning the rewind knob (21). In order to facilitate rewinding, the knob (21) can be pulled out about 1 cm (0.4 ins).

Using a 35 mm film cartridge in the feeding chamber and a CONTAX cassette on the take-up side, or two cassettes on both sides, it will not be necessary to rewind the film. In such cases it is possible to change from one kind of film to another by winding and releasing the shutter twice in order to transport the exposed film into the cassette.

As described under Step III, the CONTAX ist then opened and the cartridge or cassette removed. *Particles of the film that might come off when the end of the film should be torn off, must immediately be removed from the camera.*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33


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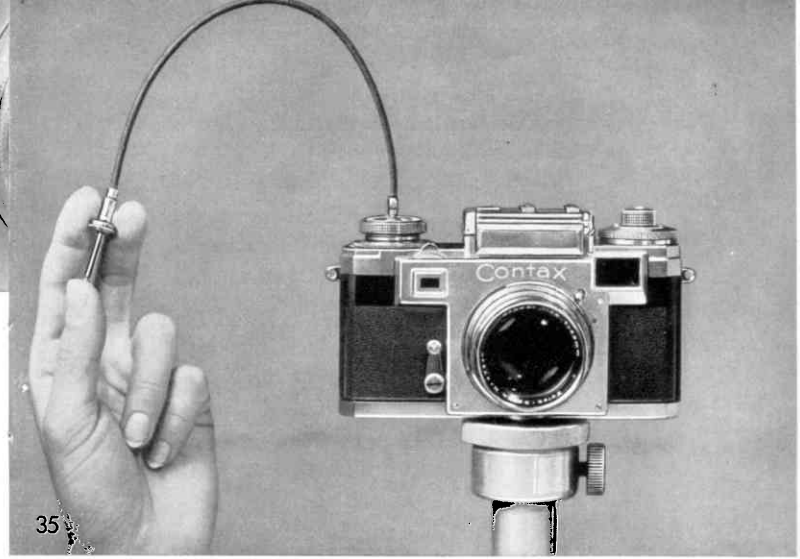

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DELAYED ACTION SHUTTER RELEASE

By pressing down lever (17) the delayed action mechanism is wound up. After having wound the shutter also, the self-timer can be set in action by releasing button (3); the shutter will be operated as soon as the delayed action mechanism has run off. If lever (17) is cocked completely (approximately a 90° turn from its original position), the delay will be approximately 12 seconds. Intermediate settings for a shorter delay can also be made.

If the shutter is not wound when operating the delayed action mechanism it will, of course, not release. The delayed action mechanism cannot be used when shutter is set on "B" or "T" or $^1/_{500}$ or $^1/_{1250}$ second.

TAKING PICTURES WITH THE AID OF A TRIPOD

A tripod socket (27) is provided on the under side of the CONTAX for screwing it on any standard tripod. It is recommended to use the special locking cable release to be screwed into the thread inside the shutter release button for all pictures taken with the CONTAX from the tripod.

It is important to note that the tripod socket is not mounted on the camera back but is part of the camera body, thus guaranteeing a firm attachment of the camera to the tripod.

EXPOSURES WITH FLASH LIGHT

The fully synchronised focal-plane shutter of the CONTAX can be coupled to any flash equipment on the market. Contact is made automatically by setting the exposure time. Thus any type of flash light, flashbulb, flash capsule or electronic flash will be fired at just the right time and with all the shutter speeds.

The exposure times marked on the setting disc in different colours should be strictly adhered to:

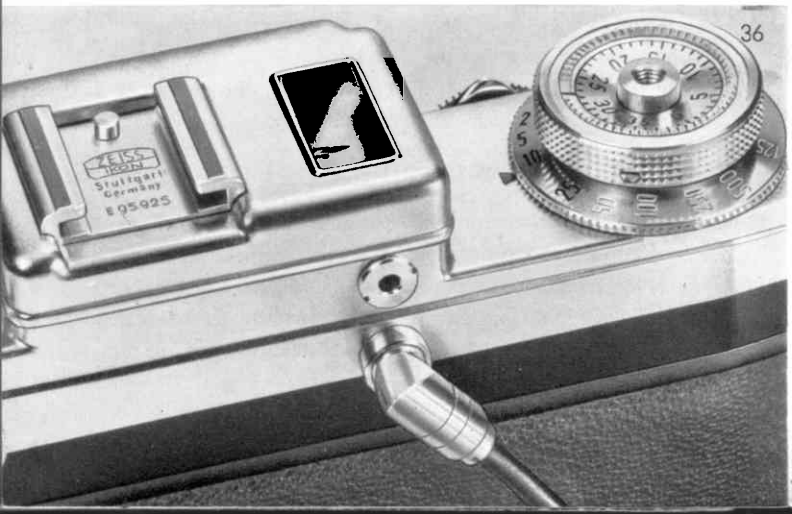
Red (for exposure time from 1/1250 second to 1/100 second): For firing flashbulbs, a long flash duration especially designed for focal-plane shutters (so-called F. P.-class).

Yellow (1/50 second): For firing electronic flash tubes.

Black (1/25 second to 1 second, as well as B and T): For firing flashbulbs with or without a small delay to peak as they are used for between-lens shutters with X-setting, as well as for electronic flash.

The delayed action device can be used only with exposure times from 1 second to 1/50 second when flash photographs have to be taken.

The stop for use with the different types of flashbulb is indicated in the table furnished with them.



The flash lead of the flashgun must be inserted into the socket at the back of the CONTAX. The use of the ZEISS IKON angle plug (order No. 1340) is advisable. After the shutter has been tensioned by means of the film advance knob, the camera is ready for the flash exposure. This knob must be turned until it stops. If this is not done properly, the focal-plane shutter will run down closed, when released. This prevents double-exposures and overlapping of frames.

VIEWFINDER SHOE

The viewfinder shoe (19) accommodates special viewfinders needed for interchangeable lenses as well as the optical near-focusing device, the CONTAMETER.

EVEREADY CARRYING CASE

The lined eveready carrying case, made of top grain cowhide leather, protects the CONTAX while carrying it and also when taking photographs. The CONTAX is held in the case by means of a screw fitted in the case which fastens to the tripod socket on the camera. The CONTAX is ready for action when the lid of the case is opened and all controls can be operated.

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CHANGING THE LENSES

The interchangeability of the CONTAX lenses is achieved by the bayonet mounting on the lens and on the front of the camera. All lenses of 2 inch focal length are to be fitted into the inner bayonet mounting of the camera and all the other lenses, in the outer mounting. Changing the lenses is always done when range-finder and lens focusing mechanism are locked at infinity (Step I). The lenses having outside bayonet mount have to be set at infinity.

Removing the 2 inch lenses is done by pressing with the left thumb on spring (13) and turning the lens slightly with the right hand in a clockwise direction. This will release it from the helical focusing mount. It may then be carefully lifted from the camera body.

Replacing the 2 inch lens is effected by fitting it into the focusing mount in such a way that the red dot on the lens mount is opposite the red dot on the camera body. By turning it to the left (counter-clockwise) the catch spring (13) snaps back into place.


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Lenses with outside bayonet mount are placed into the CONTAX by bringing the red dot on the lens opposite the red dot on the camera body (ill. 40). The lens is then turned to the left until a stop is felt, and the catch will snap into position.

The removal of the lenses with outside bayonet mount follows the same procedure. The side catch must first be released and then the lens is turned until the two red dots are opposite each other. It is recommended for inserting and removing that the lens be grasped with the right hand in such a manner that the top of the right thumb rests on the red dot of the lens. This procedure will aid in interchanging the lenses rapidly, because by bringing the two thumbs together, the most favourable position of lens to camera can be obtained.

The CONTAX lenses are all fitted with the same inner or outer bayonet mounting, permitting their use on different CONTAX bodies. All lenses from earlier CONTAX models, with the exception of the Biogon, can also be fitted to the new CONTAX.

Removal and interchanging of the lenses on the CONTAX may be effected in full daylight without any extra precaution or any spoiling of film. The excellent focal plane shutter is completely light-proof and is not affected by heat or cold.


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COMPARATIVE TABLE

of film sensitivities

ASA Exp. Ind.	Scheiner Europe	Scheiner USA	Weston	DIN in / 10°
6	21	14	5	10
8	22	15	6	11
10	23	16	8	12
12	24	17	10	13
16	25	18	12	14
20	26	19	16	15
25	27	20	20	16
32	28	21	24	17
40	29	22	32	18
50	30	23	40	19
64	31	24	50	20
80	32	25	64	21
100	33	26	80	22
125	34	27	100	23
160	35	28	125	24
200	36	29	160	25
250	37	30	200	26
320	38	31	250	27

It is somewhat difficult to state the sensitivity of colour films, since according to their definition these systems of sensitivity can take into consideration only the conditions of black-and-white film. Film manufacturers therefore describe the sensitivity of colour films by using the phrase: "to be exposed like . . ." The results obtained by adhering to these instructions will generally be satisfactory. However, if you want to be quite sure it will be recommendable to ascertain for your own exposure meter the sensitivity of the film used by taking test photographs with varying exposure times.

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DEPTH OF FIELD SCALE

The depth of field, which is dependent upon the distance focused at and the lens aperture, is of great importance to the photographer. For this purpose the CONTAX has a depth of field scale (12) arranged symmetrically around the focusing mark. It is used in connection with the focusing scale (11), (range 3 feet to infinity), engraved on the helical focusing mount of the CONTAX.

For example: With a lens of 2 inch focal length focused at a distance of 12 feet, the depth of field at f/8 ranges from 8 feet to 28 feet.

THE CONTAX SYSTEM

In order to enable the owner of a CONTAX IIIa to make full use of his camera, ZEISS IKON has created numerous equipments, which reveal the wide scope of CONTAX photography. This chapter is intended to give a short survey of the most important accesssories of the CONTAX system.

THE INTERCHANGEABLE LENSES

TESSAR f/3.5, focal length 2 ins.

This Tessar, world famous for its optical performance, is the ideal lens for the photographer who does not require utmost lens speed. Having a matchless power of definition, it is especially suitable for reproduction and macro-photography.

List No. 543/00 L

SONNAR f/2, focal length 2 ins.

The all-purpose, high-speed, standard lens for CONTAX photography.

List No. 543/59 N

SONNAR f/1.5, focal length 2 ins.

A truly universal high-speed lens with which action photographs can be taken even under poor lighting conditions. Unrivalled sharpness and brilliancy even at full lens aperture.

List No. 543/60 J

BIOGON f/4.5, focal length $^{7}/_{8}$ ins.

The super-wide angle lens with the extremely wide angle of 90°.

List No. 563/013 A

BIOGON f/2.8, focal length $1^{3}/_{8}$ ins.

A high-speed wide-angle lens that is well suited also to action work owing to its great depth of focus.

List No. 563/09 T

PLANAR f/3.5, focal length $1^{3}/_{8}$ ins.

A low-priced wide-angle lens that meets all requirements of amateurs.

List No. 563/014 B

TRIOTAR f/4, focal length $3^{3}/_{8}$ ins.

Very moderately-priced tele-lens, the speed of which is sufficient for most photographs. The Triotar is especially suited for portraiture, landscape photography and for taking architectural detail.

List No. 543/02 K

SONNAR f/2, focal length $3^{3}/_{8}$ ins.

Having a long focal length and high speed, this lens is especially suitable for stage photography, portraiture, and press photography even under unfavourable lighting conditions. List No. 563/05 O

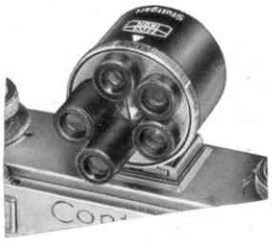
SONNAR f/4, focal length $5^{3}/_{8}$ ins.

A tele-lens for taking distant views, architectural details, pictorial landscape photographs, portraits and general photography requiring an angle of field not exceeding 19°.

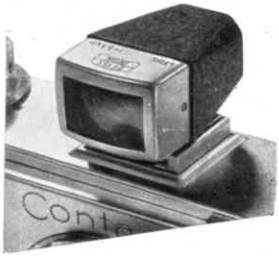
List No. 543/64 R

Please request details on 500 mm lenses.

CONTAX-ACCESSORIES



Universal finder for all focal lengths of CONTAX lenses.
List No. 440



Wide-angle finder
35 mm List No. 432/5
21 mm List No. 435

Multiple finder for focal lengths of 3³/₈″ and 5³/₈″
List No. 438

Range and viewfinder attachment for focal lengths of 3³/₈″ and 5³/₈″
List No. 563/03

HOW TO TAKE CARE OF THE CONTAX

The film track, the spool chambers, the back of the camera as well as the plexiglass parts of the exposure meter should be cleaned carefully from time to time with a soft hairbrush. If the lens surface is dirty, clean it carefully with lens tissue-paper or with a soft, washed-out, completely dry patch of linen. Dust particles should be removed beforehand with a soft hairbrush, in order to avoid scratching of the lens surface. The lens should only be cleaned if it is deemed absolutely necessary. The outside chromium-plated parts of the camera may be cleaned from time to time with a soft patch of linen.

As a branded product of highest quality, each CONTAX camera and each CONTAX lens bears a serial number. On the camera, the serial number is engraved on the finder shoe (convenient for customs purposes), and also inside the camera, visible when back is removed. The serial number of the lens will be found on the front of the lens mount.

It is recommended that a record be kept of these serial numbers which may be of valuable aid in tracing a loss or theft.

ZEISS IKON

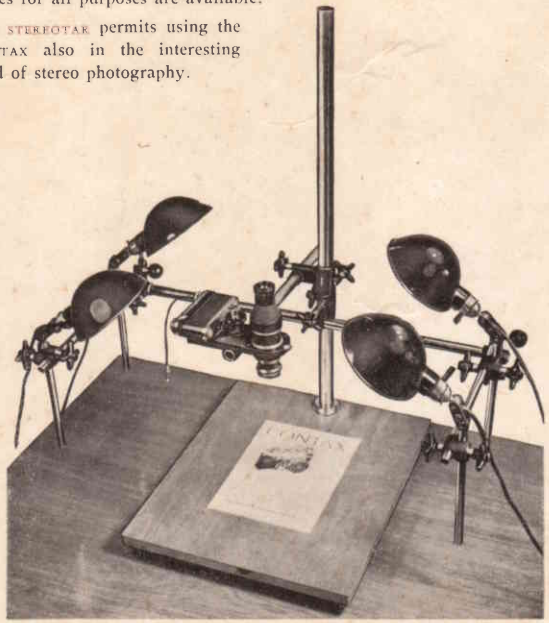
REPRODUCTION APPARATUS

For the reproduction of written or printed papers or pictures, materials and objects as well as for scientific photographs of small and even diminutive objects there are available the "Large Rreproduction Unit", the "Travel Reproduction Unit" and the "Table Reproduction Unit". Request special folder.

For close-ups, there are used the optical near-focusing devices CONTAMETER and CONTATEST, the tripod units for ground glass screen focusing CONTAPROX I and II and the mirror reflex attachment PANFLEX.

Filters, lens hoods, polarization filters ZEISS-BERNOTAR and supplementary lenses for all purposes are available.

The STEREOTAR permits using the CONTAX also in the interesting field of stereo photography.



DESCRIPTION OF PARTS

17 Lever for cocking delayed-action shutter release
18 Photo-electric exposure meter
19 Viewfinder shoe
20 Setting ring of exposure meter
21 Rewind knob
22 Eyelets for carrying strap
23 Eyepiece of combined view and rangefinder
24 Flash synchronization
25 Detachable camera back
26 Lock of camera back
27 Socket for tripod
28 Release button for rewinding of film
29 Adjustment screw of exposure meter
30 Knob for opening lid of exposure meter

Numbers refer partly to front-view on page 3

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