PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

snap shots

Volume 26 Number 1 September 2020

Vladimir Khazan Presents a Program About the Minox Camera At an Online PHSNE Meeting on Zoom

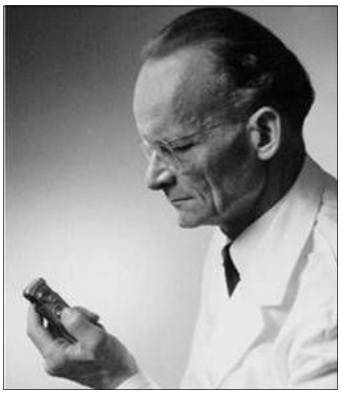
Rescheduled for October 4 2020. Time to be announced by email and website.

This is an opportunity for members outside the New England area to enjoy an interesting presentation by a fellow photo historian and collector

Members who attended the January, 2020 meeting were treated to an overview of the history of photography by fellow PHSNE member Vladimir Khazan. Thanks to Zoom, all members, regardless of location, will be able to access his new presentation about the Minox Camera and its inventor, Walter Zapp, at the online meeting to take place on ~~September 13th, at 7:30 P.M. EDT.~~ If you are not in the eastern time zone of the U.S., please adjust the time accordingly.

Note that the date is the second Sunday of the month, to avoid the Labor Day weekend, and the time has been changed to make the presentation more accessible to members outside the New England area. RSVP invitations will be emailed to members. The link to attend the meeting will be emailed to those who respond that they will attend.

Khazan writes, "I like to study the history of Photography, and am currently working on the history of Zeiss Ikon. I always like to illustrate Power Points with cameras from my collection.



Minox Inventer Walter Zapp 1905-2003

This presentation is about the history of the Minox camera and its inventor, Walter Zapp. Minox belongs to the subminiature group of cameras. I will demonstrate four Minox cameras and others that were considered small and miniature at different times.

Minox is a German company, but that was not always true. The camera was designed, prototyped and tested by Latvian German Walter Zapp in 1936. Before 1943 it was manufactured in Riga, Latvia at the VEF factory. I lived in Riga and worked at that factory from 1979 – 1991."

PHSNE Remembers Georgia Litwack

With sadness, PHSNE announces the passing of long-time member Georgia Litwack at the age of 98, a victim of COVID-19, in May. Even at that advanced age, she was preparing for a new exhibition and planning to write a book when she was stricken by the virus.

Self Portrait, Georgia Litwack

Litwack was known for her photographs of prominent women in the arts and sciences, taken over a twenty-year period. Her work was displayed in museums, galleries, and in various publications. She founded the photography program at the DeCordova Museum which holds some of her portraits.

Initially a writer, she began to use a camera to save the cost of hiring photographers. Litwack hoped the interviews of her subjects would inspire women to achieve. "Many of these women spoke quite candidly of how hard they had to work to get into their field and be successful. . . . I wanted to give women an example of the work these women do in medicine, science, and engineering, They're daunting fields, and this might encourage women to put their toe in" (*https://tinyurl.com/y9p64kze*).

PHSNE Membership

New members are invited to join for half the rates for the first year. Regular PHSNE membership (U.S. and Canada) is $20 for students, $40 for individuals and institutions, and $45 for a family; foreign membership is $50. Join or renew online at *www.phsne.org/join* or *www.phsne.org/renew*, or send a check in U.S. dollars, drawn on a U.S. bank or dollar denominated international money order. Please 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, 47 Calvary St., Waltham MA 02453. (Call: 617-826-9294; email: *membership-chair@phsne.org;* or use the Web form at *phsne.org/application*).

snap shots**,** edited by Beverly Regelman, is published monthly, September through June, by the Photographic Historical Society of New England, Inc., 47 Calvary St., Waltham MA 02453. It is available at *http://phsne.org/member-services/archives/* within a few days of mailing. Articles and exhibition/book reviews are always welcome. Send to *snapshots@phsne.org* .
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In Memoriam: Elsa Dorfman, 1937- 2020

Elsa Dorfman, legend in the world of photography, died in May 2020 at the age of 83. Recognized in the photographic world particularly for her large color Polaroid portraits, she became more widely known through a 2017 documentary *The B-Side: Elsa Dorfman's Portrait Photography.*

An article about *Me and My Camera,* Dorfman's exhibition at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, appeared in the March 2020 *snap shots.* The exhibit was to run from February 8th to June 21st, 2020 but was interrupted when the museum closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elsa_Dorfman

In reviewing *The B-Side* in the *Boston Globe,* Ty Burr wrote that, "A Dorfman portrait may be the closest one can come to an embrace from your Nana: It's fast and fierce and loving and uncritical, and the perfume lingers long after the moment is gone." Her own interpretation was that "I somehow have this misguided therapeutic idea that it's my role in the universe to make people feel better" ((*https://tinyurl.com/y874ec8b*).

Beginning in 1980, Dorfman used a large Polaroid 20 x 24 camera that weighed over 200 pounds. Only six similar cameras are known to exist. Early in her career, she charged $50 for a portrait; at the end a Dorfman portrait would cost in the neighborhood of $5,000.

Dorfman's prints characteristically have white backgrounds and white borders with visible black roller lines. She wrote captions at the bottom, using India ink, and signed the prints.

The Cambridge City Council honored Dorfman twice, passing resolutions in 1998 and 2014. Her work is included in collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, the National Portrait Gallery, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Dorfman's website is still up at *http://www.elsadorfman.com*.

Ten Unusual Cameras

In 2016 photographer Alex Cooke compiled a list of what he considered *10 of the Weirdest Cameras Ever Made.* Several of the cameras have previously been described in *snap shots.*

Cooke wrote, "The history of camera gear is rich, storied, and well, weird. Camera design has evolved in many different directions over time, sometimes in magnificent arcs of ingenuity and design, others in pit stops of absurd creativity or questionable judgment. Today, we're celebrating some of the strangest stops along that journey" and added "We'll limit our list to serious consumer or professional cameras; spy, toy, and gadget cameras could take us down quite a deep rabbit hole!" (*https://fstoppers.com/originals/10-weirdest-cameras-ever-made-128047*).

The website offers descriptions and photographs of each of the cameras on the list. Highlights include the following:

10. The Fujifilm GA645 looks and, having similar features, acts like other Fujifilm medium format cameras. Its unusual feature is that it shoots in portrait format despite a shape that suggests landscape orientation.

9.Cooke writes about the Apple Quicktake 100, "The first time I saw one of these, I thought it was a projector." Apple's first digital camera was a commercial flop, and the line was discontinued in 1997.

Apple Quicktake 100

8. Featured in the April 2020 issue of *snap shots,* the unusual feature of the Sony Digital Mavica MVC-FD5 was the floppy disk for storage, compatible with most computers of its time.

7. A video shows how the side of a truck was transformed into a giant wet plate camera.

Leica Digital Module R

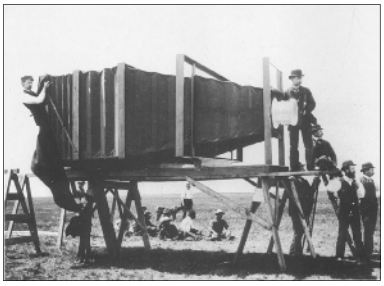
6. "In many ways, though not actually a camera, the Leica Digital Module R was the holy grail of the film/digital transition era: an insert that turned a film SLR (a Leica R8 or R9) into a DSLR." It came at a Leica-like price tag of $6,000. "You could buy a full-frame DSLR with more capabilities from another manufacturer and get an adapter for much less, but then again, shooting Leica has never been about economic practicality."

5.The Fujifilm GX670 has bellows usually found only on large format cameras. "While the bellows on this camera aren't functional in that sense, they serve to make the Fujifilm GF670 remarkably compact and portable for a 6x7/6x6 medium format camera by allowing the lens to fold into the camera when not in use" making it a portable camera that didn't sacrifice quality.

4. The popular Rollei 35 series offered the smallest 135 cameras when they were introduced in 1966. Cooke describes his 35SE as "an utterly strange device. It's neither a rangefinder or an SLR; nay, it's a true zone-focusing camera, with distances marked on the lens barrel. Speaking of the lens, it retracts to a nearly flush position with the body, making it all the more portable." He notes that, "loading film requires removing the entire back of the body. The design, while perplexing, somehow works."

3."Its resolution is measured in megarays, not megapixels. It has a fixed aperture. It focuses from 0 mm to infinity. Focus can be adjusted after image capture, as can perspective. The Lytro Illum is nothing if not unique."

2. George Lawrence's 1900 Mammoth Camera weighed 900 lbs. Only one exposure, 8 x 4.5 feet, has ever been taken due to the logistics of moving the camera.



1900 Mammoth Camera

1. With 16 lenses and 16 sensors, the Light L16 makes it to the top of Cooke's list. "Using five 35mm lenses, five 70mm lenses, six 150mm lenses, and a lot of computational photography, the Light L16 aims to replicate DSLR quality in a miniscule package. While we've yet to see it in action, it's an intriguing concept."

Do you have an unusual camera in your collection? Please share it with fellow PHSNE members. Send a jpeg and brief description to *snapshots@phsne.org*.

Black Photographers Document Protests

Seeing a need for black history to be told by black Americans, a group of local black New England photographers have been documenting local protests and marches in support of Black Lives Matter as well as everyday life in the African American community.

Harry Scales. Young Man Raises the Revolutionary Fist
Taken on May 29, 2020 at Boston Police Headquarters

Harry Scales, "a member of the last graduating class from the New England School of Photography, is among the local Black photographers who have shot a multitude of demonstrations in recent weeks. Some say they are looking to build a portfolio. Others say it's their calling, or are chasing an iconic shot. Underpinning the various motivations is a sense of duty to chronicle this current moment, to tell their stories." Scales noted, "Me being a Black man from Boston, I definitely feel responsible and obligated to contribute to the narrative, given the tool set I have'' (*https://tinyurl.com/y3yfo9m6*).

OJ Slaughter, another black photographer working on this project, photographed dozens of demonstrations. "Slaughter thinks civil rights-era photos of Black people being beaten by police has the effect of stripping the victims of their humanity. In those images, Slaughter sees hurt instead of triumph. [The photographers] hope their coverage of the protests helps people understand the narrative of the struggle from a different place." He avoids photographing demonstrators unless they consent and is careful not to post photos in which rioters can be identified. For their protection. "For Slaughter, photography and activism are not separate entities. They are fused."

Slaughter is selling posters that depict or suggest excessive police force and donating a portion of the proceeds to Black Lives Matter Boston.

PHSNE Meetings

Timing of meetings may vary during the COVID restrictions. The September meeting will take place online at 7:30 P.M. on September 13th.

Upcoming meetings:

November- *Photography in Industrial Settings,* Steve Dunwell

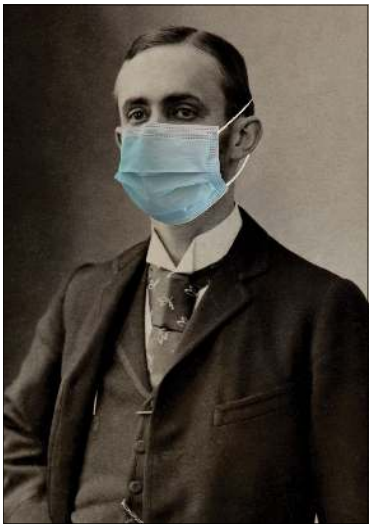
Connect to PHSNE Online and by email:

PHSNE's Web site is online at *http://phsne.org*. See *https://www.facebook.com/PHSNE/* for items of PHSNE interest. Comments are welcome, so join the discussion of photo history. Visit *http://phsne.org/member-services/archives/* for PHSNE history and *snapshots* issues. Scheduling changes due to weather conditions or other factors will be posted on this website.

Stay connected to PHSNE via our emails: a *snap shots* e-copy, and *Photographa* show announcements. Sign up at *http://phsne.org/emails*.

Who Is That Masked Man?

A photoshopped image of George Eastman helped launch the reopening of the Eastman Museum on July 26th following the COVID related mandatory shutdown on March 13th. The reopening was delayed from its original scheduled date because of construction at the Visitor Center (*https://www.eastman.org/plan-your-visit*).



Instructions for visitors accompanied the photo on what is literally a sign of our times.

VERY IMPORTANT NOTICE

Unfortunately, we are forced to reschedule the September meeting due to unforeseen circumstances. That meeting is now scheduled to take place on October 4th, but the time has yet to be determined. All PHSNE members will receive an email with the updated details and Zoom meeting code.

We are working to adapt procedures to the new COVID reality. Thank you for your patience and understanding.