PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.

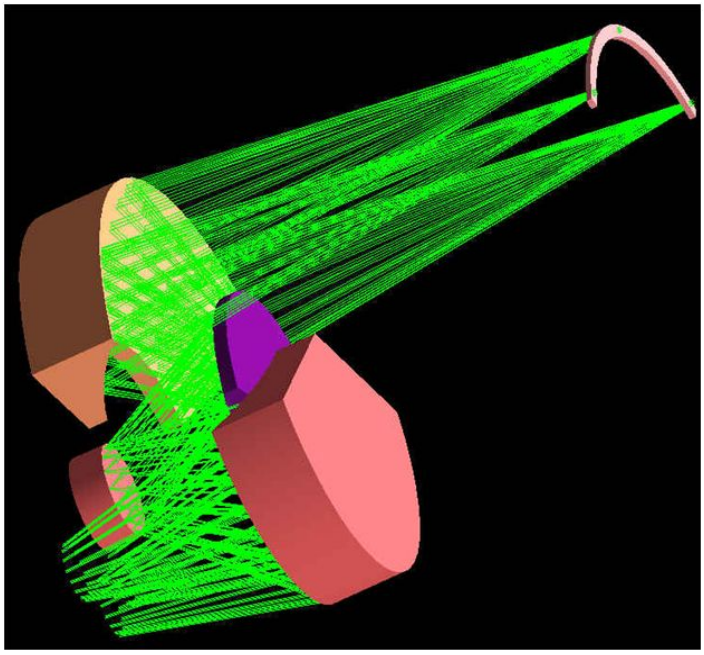
snap shots

Volume 27 Number 5 January 2022

Engineer and Designer Lev Sakin Will Discuss Camera Lens Design
January 9, 2022, 7:30 P.M., via Zoom
Zoom Link Will Be Emailed to Members in Timely Manner

Soviet-born Lev Sakin was educated as an optical engineer and optical systems designer. He emigrated to the United States in 1990 with his wife and son and has worked in his field in this country for over 30 years.

Before arriving in the United States, Sakin worked for more than 15 years at the Opto-Mechanical Corporation (LOMO) in Leningrad. as an optical systems designer. He has been involved in the development of a wide variety of systems with many applications, including military and commercial use. One of his achievements was a design of photo lens for the Russian photo camera LOMO-compact.



4 mirror projection system for flat panel display

In the United States he was employed by General Scientific Corporation, a small optical company in Ann Arbor, MI. Then in 1992 he joined Silicon Valley Group Co. in Wilton, CT.

With a partner, Sakin launched Optical Design Associates, Inc. (ODA), an engineering consulting company in 2003. ODA provides optical design, mechanical design, optical engineering and fabrication services for high tech companies, R&D laboratories and government contracts companies. The company holds over forty U.S. and foreign patents and has published numerous technical papers. Recent patents include *Advanced Illumination System For Use In Microlithography, Optical Systems For Maskless Lithography, Off-Axis Catadioptric PO For Maskless Lithography*, and *High Numerical Aperture Projection Lens For Microlithography*.

The PHSNE program will offer an opportunity to hear directly about interesting aspects of the design of the photo lens. For more information visit *http://www.odaoptics.com/*.

A Very Happy and Healthy New Year To All

Analog Photography is Alive and Well In New England

Brooke Flanagan Portrait by Jason Lane
Photo by Angela Walsh

The Photo Retro Center, a destination for film photographers, opened in November in Amherst, N.H. It offers classes and workshops, two film photography darkrooms, a large format photo studio, and a gallery to exhibit photographers' work; the Center will sell film photo supplies.

The two darkrooms have everything a film photographer needs to develop color and black and white film and print the images — three enlargers in each darkroom, safelights, sinks, washing and drying facilities. Each darkroom has an enlarger that can be used for large format film, the others are for 35 millimeter and medium format film. The Center's photo studio features special lights and backdrops. Founder Jason Lane said, "Film wasn't replaced by digital, it's another medium, like oil paint." He adds, "Film photography has seen a resurgence of interest over the past few years, and the center will cater to that growing demand."

Visit *www.photoretro.biz* for more information.

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 *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. 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 PHSNE Membership Chair, 47 Calvary St., Waltham MA 02453, email *membership-chair@phsne.org*, or use the Web form at *https://phsne.org/application*.

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Conversation Corner

After reading the article about photographs from Afghan studios, PHSNE member Joe Marlin sent the following email to the editor of *snap shots:*

"I was puzzled by these cameras being referred to as 'box' cameras. Were they called that when used in a studio? On the street, similar cameras, whether hand-made or modified factory made cameras, were referred to as street cameras. They were factory made in Europe and the United States by many companies in the later part of the 19th century and part of the 20th. But in the 'third world,' modified and hand-made cameras were used in many countries.

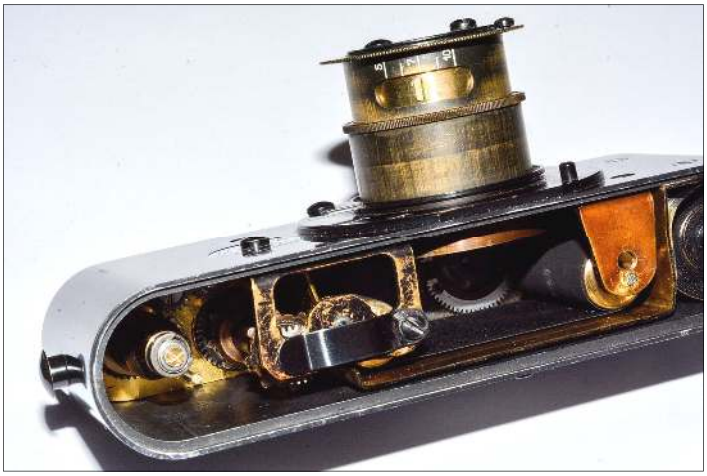
Ethan Lothrop, a deceased PHSNE member, was a major collector of factory made street cameras. Zilmo de Freitas traveled around the world some years ago photographing street camera users (using 'box' cameras), as illustrated in *Street Photographers,* a book he co-authored that was published in 3 languages in 2001. He sent me two pictures he took in Kabul that year that do not appear in his book."

Responding to Marlin's comments, another PHSNE member commented, "Marlin is certainly correct that in Europe and the US we have referred to this type of photography as street photography and to the specialized cameras as street cameras. That said, it appears that the Afghans usually refer to them as box cameras or 'instant cameras' (kamra-e-faoree). He notes, "Wikipedia avoids the issue by calling them 'street box cameras' (*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Street_box_camera*).

A Google search turns up many lists for 'Afghan box camera.' I found an interesting site that offered history and instructions on how to make an Afghan camera that included a video of a local carpenter producing one in his shop (*https://www.afghanboxcamera.com/*). (Clever fellow, but his shop would not pass an OSHA inspection. He also had a gas or diesel generator which he had to startup to use his band saw to back up the poor power grid situation.) As a further note, the 'classic' box camera actually only used paper prints. So the initial photograph was a negative image which was re-photographed to make a positive." He concludes, "Most likely the photos left behind and used in the article were taken using different cameras and processes; the author found and used the interesting story of the 'box camera.' "

Mark Kronquist, PHSNE Member, Builds a Leica

The December issue of *snap shots* featured an article about the Ur Leica. PHSNE member Mark Kronquist shared a story about his DIY Ur replica.



"I have been using Leicas since my college days. In 2000, Leica introduced a limited edition of O Series replicas; the original O series came after the Ur as a market test with somewhere between 20 and 31 units produced. Results were mixed, but Dr. Leitz went ahead and subsequent cameras were developed.

Initially I purchased a Leica O 2000 replica, which was awesome, but I also wanted to experience the Ur. I don't think the Leica on Loan Program includes the priceless Ur. Plan B was to build one. After much research, I found Ur Replica 82 top and Ur Replica 28 base. Finding the 42mm Milar lens was a challenge, but I found one on a Leitz Astrophot Unit discarded by the University of Oregon.

Sadly, ancient Leitz cameras are not Lego cameras so my project was going to need expert help.I reached out to my friend, Leica author and expert James Lager who put me in touch with George Furst in Korea. Off the bits and pieces went for George to convey to master craftsman Mr. Kim. A donor SM camera was found and cannibalized for curtain drums and such.

The camera needs to be darkroom loaded and feeds from spool to spool. The best feed and take up spools are from a Fed as they have a hook on them to retain the film rather than having to double tape every roll. Fed spools from the 1930s were eventually found, but then COVID brought transit disruptions and lockdowns which brought the project to a year-long standstill. The project was more challenging, expensive, and time-consuming than expected, but I now have one of the four working Ur Leicas on the planet: the original, the two George Fusrt has in Korea, and mine. I believe Mr. Kim can make perhaps one or two more.

Shooting is an experience, even for one used to screw mount Leicas. The film must be cut to about 30 exposure lengths (five feet) in the dark, spooled onto the feed spool with the leader trimmed using an ALBON or similar template, attached to the take up spool, and carefully loaded into the camera, with a few frames shot as you feel the base of the spools to be sure that film is advancing. The base plate is then screwed onto the camera, and you are ready to go.

The camera has a non self-capping shutter with two shutter speeds of about 1/100 and 1/200 and a lens that double collapses and needs to be fully extended. Using a fingernail, set the aperture to one of three indicated stops, about 3.5, 5.6, and 16. Uncover the lens by moving the metal flap, push the shutter release,, recover the lens, wind and repeat.

Shot with Leica Ur

The results are quite satisfying. The small camera attracts attention, especially from Leica devotees."

Two Book Reviews

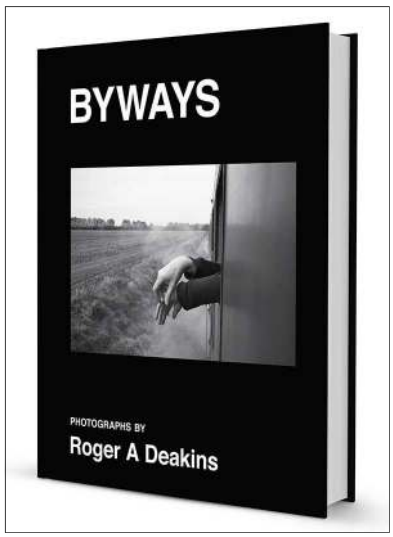
Byways, Roger Deakins

While well known as a cinematographer, with fifteen Oscar nominations and two Oscars, Roger A. Deakins is also a highly talented still photographer. Commenting on his recently released book *Byways,* he said, "My work as a cinematographer is a collaborative experience and, at least when a film is successful, the results are seen by a wide audience. On the other hand, I have rarely shared my personal photographs and never as a collection" (*https://rogerdeakins.com/byways/*).

Boston Globe reviewer Mark Feeney quotes Deakins as saying, "I am not a still photographer, and I won't pretend to be one at this stage in my career" (*https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/09/22/arts/an-excuse-spend-many-hours-just-walking/*).

The photographs are in black and white. Strong contrast is a consistent feature of Deakins' images.

The book includes a dramatic image of a lightning strike in New Mexico. Deakins explains how he captured the image: "I pressed the shutter and closed my eyes." As a hobby, photography provides "an excuse to spend many hours just walking, my camera over my shoulder and with no particular purpose but to observe."



Though he shunned the title, possibly to separate his work as photographer from that of cinematographer, his proper name is Sir Roger A. Deakins after being knighted by Queen Elizabeth last year.

Flash! Photography, Writing, & Surprising Illumination, Kate Flint

Often, the goal of flash photography is to make itself invisible. "Ever since Henri Cartier-Bresson disparaged the use of flash, it has held lingering negative associations for supposedly 'serious' photographers. Manuals advising on how to avoid those telltale reflections on shiny surfaces confirm the idea that the use of flash needs to be discreet if it is not to draw attention to its own vulgarity. The goal of flash technology for most of its users has been to make it possible to photograph subjects for which there is insufficient ambient lighting, and to do so in a way that makes itself as invisible as possible in the final product (*https://www.apollo-magazine.com/light-exposure/*).

Flint offers a different perspective. Her book "focuses on the experience of 'flashing', or being 'flashed', the distinctive features of the aesthetics of flash, and the cultural connotations of flash photography. Thus the cultural field is broadened out so that it covers not just specific technologies and the images they have helped to create – sometimes in unexpected contexts – but also the effects of those technologies and images on the imagination, on metaphor and on language." This sometimes takes her far afield as she writes of superhero Flash Gordon, a magazine called *Flash!*, a 1930's publication that was a 'journal of negro affairs," or describes nuclear explosions.

PHSNE Meetings

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

Upcoming meetings:

February 6—Terri Cappucci, photographic preservation work

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