

# Bronica SQ-A

**TYPE:** 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 in. (6x6 cm) single-lens reflex camera.

**LENS:** 80mm f/2.8 Zenzanon-S in interchangeable bayonet mount, apertures to f/22, focusing to 2 ft., 7 1/2 in.

**SHUTTER:** Electronically-controlled Seiko #0 leaf type in each lens with speeds of 8-1/500 sec. plus T, mechanically-controlled 1/500 sec. speed usable without battery power.

**VIEWING:** Interchangeable waist-level finder with light-excluding hood, built-in magnifier, user-interchangeable viewing screen, standard screen has central split-image rangefinder surrounded by micro-

prism collar, full-focusing matte outer area with vertical and horizontal orientation lines.

**OTHER FEATURES:** Interchangeable 120, 220 and 35mm film magazines incorporate ASA 25-3200 dials and electric contacts for automatically keying film speed into optional SPD AE Prism Finder S, providing aperture-preferred auto exposure or manual metering, contacts on the back of each lens, in camera body, and above front of finder screen relay set shutter speed and metering information, built-in mechanical interlocks prevent lens removal without cocking shutter, film mag-

azine removal without inserting dark slide, shutter cocking without film in magazine, LED outside screen area in finder lights as exposure is completed or when battery check button is pushed, multiple-exposure control, spring-loaded depth-of-field preview lever on each lens, shutter-release and mirror locks.

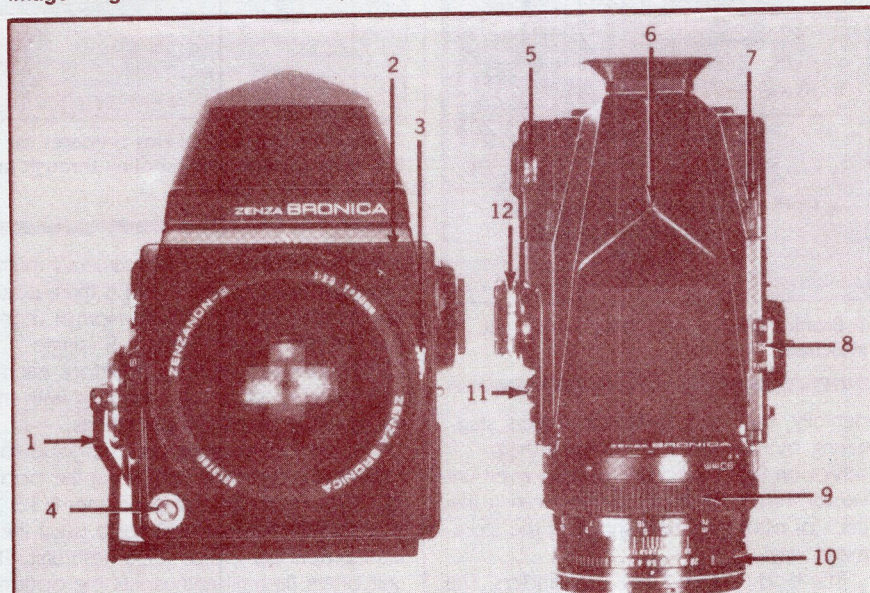
**PRICE:** \$1,599 with 80mm f/2.8 lens, waist-level finder, 120, 220 or 35mm back.

**MANUFACTURER:** Zenza Bronica Industries, Inc., Tokyo, Japan.

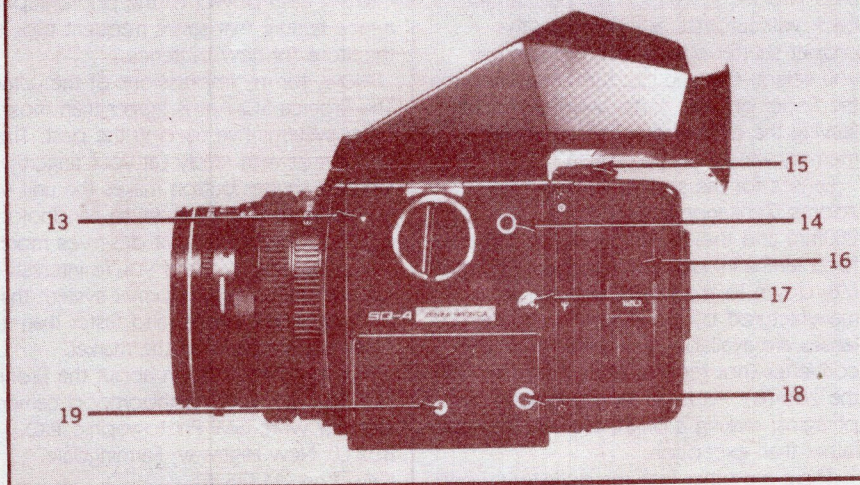
**IMPORTER:** G.M.I. Photographic, Inc., Farmingdale, NY 11735.

**PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS:** 4 3/4 in. wide, 4 1/4 in. high, 7 1/2 in. deep.

**WEIGHT:** 3 lb., 4 3/4 oz. with normal lens.



1. Folded film-wind crank. 2. Flash sync contact. 3. Depth-of-field preview lever. 4. Shutter release. 5. Frame counter. 6. ASA dial. 7. Back cover release (left). 8. ASA info. transfer contacts. 9. Shutter-speed dial/scale. 10. Folded waist-level finder. 11. Focusing ring. 12. Aperture ring. 13. Finder-release button. 14. Battery check button. 15. Film-spool holders. 16. Neck-strap eyelet. 17. Film-back release button. 18. Cable-release socket.



Two small but significant additions distinguish the new Bronica SQ-A from the still available SQ—a pair of additional gold-plated contacts (there are now 10) in front of the finder screen allow aperture-preferred auto-exposure or manual metering with the new AE Prism Finder S, and there's now a dual-mode mirror lock-up which lets you lock the mirror up for one shot, or leave it up for shooting sequences. As if that were not enough, there's now a motorized version of the SQ-A, dubbed the SQ-Am, with integral motor and battery-containing right-hand grip providing 3-shot-per-2-sec. firepower, and new 35mm backs for both models.

In its general layout, the Bronica SQ-A is undeniably similar to the Hasselblad 500 C/M or, for that matter, to the Bronica ETRS, which can be viewed as a scaled-down and electrified version of same. It centers around a boxy main body section to which lenses bayonet in at the front, film magazines snap on at the back, and viewing hoods and finders slide and click in place on top. However, there are many important differences which make operating the SQ-A noticeably more convenient.

When you align the raised red dot on the lens with the orange dot above the camera lens mount, insert the lens, and turn it counterclockwise until it clicks in position, the six contacts on the back of the lens mate with the spring-loaded contacts in the body. This enables the electronic shutter releasing and timing signals originating in the camera's electronic circuitry to control the action of each inter-lens shutter and to provide auto exposure or match-diode metering with one of the optional meter finders in place.

The view through the Bronica's finder is one of the brightest and most contrasty we've seen on any 2 1/4 square SLR. It is brilliant to the corners, and its central focusing aids, a split-image rangefinder surrounded by a thickish microprism collar, are large enough to be really useful.

In addition to its technically astute and well executed design, we're pleased to report that the Bronica SQ-A is a camera that handles exceptionally well in the field. We would expect it to be as reliable as the previous SQ, which has proven to be very dependable.



# THE MEDIUM FORMAT

## The Fastest Gun To Come West— Bronica's SQ-Am Rod Long

Probably the best place to test the fastest motor-driven camera of medium format design was right where I planted the Bronica SQ-Am, tripod and my tired feet: lane one—the U.C.L.A. track-and-field facility. Sweat-oriented men and women gather here to run (even backwards) around the track until dizzy; then up and down the grandstand steps—before collapsing somewhere along the infield grass. I felt right at home—trackside and behind the AE Prism Finder S of the Bronica.

The sister camera of the SQ and later SQ-A models, the SQ-Am is built for speed and comfort, thanks largely to the incorporation of the pistol grip and body into one. The design of the camera is heavy on the "modular," with electronics in the metering and motor-drive systems making it state-of-the-art for a number of photographic applications.

The specifications on the SQ-Am are impressive: 6×6 single-lens reflex with the option of a 6×4.5 negative with the interchangeable format back. The leaf shutter is electronically controlled by one six-volt battery, with a maximum shutter speed of 1/500 and subsequent increments down to a full eight seconds and a "T" mode for the even longer exposures. Flash synchronization is possible at all shutter speeds.

The exclusively designed film backs accept 120- and 220-roll film, and Polaroid Land Pack film, as well. Improper film loading alerts an overload warning LED system, and the motor automatically shuts down.

Film loading is simple, with a drive button atop the pistol grip motoring your film to frame number one, once you're properly loaded. Upon exposing the last frame, the film is completely rewound, leaving you to pop open the back, remove the exposed film, reload, and shoot away again.

I said earlier this is the fastest motor-driven camera on the medium-format market today, and that's undeniable. Up to three frames per two seconds are possible at the faster shutter speeds (keep fresh batteries in the motor—six "AA").

There are three modes for the motor drive, all located on the top of the pistol grip. The OFF mode cuts all power from the circuits, locking the shutter tight.

SM is single mode, and keeps you eyeball to eyeball with your subjects as the mirror returns instantly after each frame is exposed.

CM is continuous mode and exposes consecutive frames: A good mode, inci-



1. Bronica SQ-Am with Philips flash unit attached.

dentally, by which to freeze joggers staggering by, hurdlers low-bridging themselves on the higher hurdles, and even university maintenance personnel clearing the track of photographers shooting the aforementioned.

The body accepts five viewfinders: The AE Prism Finder S, which I used; ME Prism Finder S; Prism Finder S; a MF Finder S; and the Waist Level Finder S.

The intricate metering system is through the lens, with the shutter speed visible in the viewfinder by depressing the shutter button before making any exposures. If you've decided to use the camera in the AUTO mode, whatever ASA you've dialed into the ASA/ISO dial on the film back will automatically give you the proper shutter speed, per the aperture you select. Or, you can turn the power on the finder off and go to MANUAL mode, leaving the calculations to your meter or memory—and not the camera.

Lenses for the system include two zooms: Zenzanon-S Variogon's 140–280mm and the 75–150mm f/5.6. Other focal lengths include the maximum 500mm f/8, down to the 40mm wide-angle, all manufactured by Zenzanon. In all, ten lenses are available, as well as a 2X tele-converter (not recommended for use with the zooms). All have fully automatic diaphragms, making a bright viewfinder a rule rather than exception.

There are other features definitely worth



2. Decathaloner Ray Jenkins prepares for the 1984 Olympics by hurdling through my hastily focused frame.

a mention, specifically the camera's multiple-exposure capability and a three-position mirror-lock switch with Normal (normal shooting—mirror return), S (single frames exposed—mirror up before each shot), and C (continuous shooting with mirror lock after each frame) settings.

For my testing purposes, the good folks at GMI Photographic sent along the body, AE Prism Finder S, and the 50mm f/3.5 and 150mm f/3.5 lenses. I also used the ultracompatible Philips P536 flash unit. The unit offers flash-fill enthusiasts the option of using a separate mini flash for fill, and the main flash for bounce. It also has the exclusive ESS (Energy Saving System) which features three red LED's that light up to indicate full (1),  $\frac{3}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  power.

Invaluable when it comes to shooting with a motor drive and using a flash, the Philips has a green test light that indicates correct exposure, and the LED's convey the remaining flash power to the photographer—a nice feature that saves frequent trips to the store for new batteries.

Now, for my impressions of the camera. The Bronica SQ-Am is lighter than most other systems I've used in the past. The pistol grip with ready (at your fingertips, literally) shutter button makes the unit very comfortable and a natural to hold. It's a good looking unit that deserves more than a passing glance if you're interested in a versatile medium-format system that is light, easy to operate, and faster than its other counterparts on the market.

For more information about the Bronica SQ-Am, visit your neighborhood camera store or write GMI Photographic, P.O. Box U, New Highway, Farmingdale, New York 11735. □