

PRODUCTS OF
VIS/ION



The Zeiss Ikon Company & Its Cameras

CMP BULLETIN

Volume 7 Number 2

CALIFORNIA MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE, CA 92521

Copyright © 1988
Regents of the University of California
ISSN 0731-2377

This project is partially supported by a grant from the California Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. In addition, the California Museum of Photography receives general operating support from the Institute of Museum Services.

The *CMP Bulletin* is a benefit of membership in the California Museum of Photography. Each issue reports on aspects of the Museum's collection, exhibitions, and research. For membership information write: California Museum of Photography, University of California, Riverside, CA 92521.

Front cover: From a Zeiss Ikon brochure, 1930

Back cover: Zeiss Ikon advertisement, 1932

Chancellor's Committee

Rosemary Schraer, Chancellor, UCR
Eileen Ashwal
Robert Bingham
William P. Carroll
Henry Coil
Tony Culver
Donald Dye
Donald Ecker
Howard H. Hays, Jr.
Dallas Holmes
Sue Johnson
Tomi Hadfield
Mead Kibbey
Douglas A. Magnon
Beth B. Mast
Gifford Mast
David C. Ruttenberg
Jay Self
John Tavaglione

CMP Members' Board

Sant Subagh K. Khalsa, President
Kathryn Crane, Vice President
Judith Lehr, Secretary
Robert Markovich, Treasurer
Keith Butler
Rosalie Winesuff

Staff

Charles Desmarais, Director
Roseanna Barron-Lopez, Admin. Asst.
Kevin Boyle, Exhibit Designer
Carol Dye, Receptionist
Edward W. Earle, Curator
Deborah Klochko, Curator of Education
Dan Meinwald, Curator of Collections
Concha Rivera, Development Officer
Cathleen Walling, Asst. Director, Administration

Museum Assistants

Dorothy Barton
Inka Bujalski
Julie Frisch
Marlene Osa

Design

Ruth Lucas-Hill, UCR Publications

Printing

Haddad's Fine Arts, Inc.
Anaheim, CA

Products of Vision:

The Zeiss Ikon Company and its Cameras

In 1985 and 1986, Mead Kibbey of Sacramento, California donated his collection of Zeiss Ikon cameras and equipment to the California Museum of Photography. The collection is extraordinary, not only because it represents the camera production of the Zeiss company so well, but because the company's camera production was itself so remarkable. (Zeiss, though still very much in business, is not currently producing cameras.)

The company made cameras for nearly fifty years, from the mid-1920s to the early 1970s. During that time it created hundreds of camera designs of an extremely wide variety, from the simplest of snapshot cameras to the most sophisticated of professional machines. Very few companies, from the invention of photography to the present, have sought this kind of completeness in the presentation of picture-making devices to the public, and fewer yet have done so on such a scale. The only company, in fact, which has surpassed Zeiss in scale—speaking strictly of the manufacture of cameras—is Eastman Kodak.

Most Zeiss Ikon cameras are characterized by a high degree of mechanical quality. The engineering of the more advanced designs often reached an almost incredible level of attention to detail and expertness in the solution of technical problems. Even the humblest of Zeiss cameras will have something in its construction that makes it unusual. Zeiss, in other words, stood for a kind of excellence which is hardly seen nowadays, and was rare even at the time.

Ironically, this sometimes worked to the detriment of the company rather than its benefit. One of the most fascinating aspects of the history of Zeiss Ikon is the frequency with which the quality of its engineering interfered with the success of its designs. In example after example, especially with the more advanced models, so much attention was devoted to technical niceties that the resulting camera—a tour-de-force of engineering, to be sure, but complicated, weighty, and expensive—failed to achieve significant success

in the market. When Zeiss aimed high, it tended to overshoot the mark. Its simpler cameras were often much more successful in meeting market needs.

The text and illustrations represent some of the highlights of the Kibbey collection. No attempt at completeness has been made, nor would the attempt be of interest to any but Zeiss specialists. (It was, for instance, a common practice for Zeiss to produce a dozen versions of the same camera, in different formats and with a wide selection of lenses. It should be noted that the Kibbey collection often represents many or all variations of a single camera.) On the other hand, every attempt has been made to include both representative and exemplary designs, and to provide a useful overview of one of the most important commercial entities in the history of photography.

This *Bulletin* is also an expression of gratitude to Mead Kibbey. Mr. Kibbey has been an important supporter of the California Museum of Photography from its inception, and a member of the CMP's Chancellor's Committee since its formation in 1981. The presence at the museum of two of its most significant sub-collections—the Keystone-Mast Collection and the Setzer/Alexander Collection—are due in large part to his foresight, energy, and perspicacity. Mr. Kibbey has also made many personal gifts to the museum; the Zeiss collection is merely the most recent.

—Dan Meinwald

Bibliographic Note

There are very few sources of information on Zeiss Ikon, and those few are widely scattered. Among the useful primary sources are the annual catalogs of the Zeiss company, a good selection of which can be found in the Kibbey collection. Others include:

"Carl Zeiss: 75th Anniversary of his Death," *Zeiss*

Information, No. 50 (New York: Carl Zeiss, Inc., 1963)

Die Carl-Zeiss-Stiftung Steht (Stuttgart: Zeiss Ikon AG., n.d.)

Die Leistung: 25 Jahre Zeiss Ikon Aktiengesellschaft 1926-1951 (Stuttgart: Zeiss Ikon AG., 1951)

"The History of Carl Zeiss and Zeiss Ikon" (reprint from *Popular Photography*, May 1956) (New York: Carl Zeiss, Inc., 1958)

Descriptions of several Zeiss cameras can be found in:

Kuc, Hans-Jurgen. *Contax-Geschichte* (Hamburg: Hans-Jurgen Kuc, 1981)

Lothrop, Eaton S., Jr. *A Century of Cameras From the Collection of the George Eastman House*, Revised & Expanded Edition (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Morgan & Morgan, 1982)

Rifkind, Eugene H. and the Delaware Valley Photographic Collectors Association. *Cameras of the 1930's* (Delanco, New Jersey: Delaware Valley Photographic Collectors Association, 1977)

Schneider, Jason. *Jason Schneider on Camera Collecting*, Book Two (Des Moines, Iowa: Wallace-Homestead Book Company, 1982)

The entries for Zeiss in James M. and Joan C. McKeown, *Price Guide to Antique & Classic Cameras*, Sixth Edition (Grantsburg, Wisconsin: Centennial Photo Service, 1987) were contributed by Mead Kibbey, and provide basic descriptions of all Zeiss cameras.

Prewar

All items are manufactured by Zeiss Ikon AG., and are part of the Kibbey Zeiss Collection, unless otherwise noted. Zeiss Ikon identification numbers, if applicable, are in parentheses following the model name. (For two-part numbers, the first number indicates the model and the second the film format.)



Minimum Palmos
Ca. 1905
Carl Zeiss, Jena
9x12cm plates;
Tessar 15cm f4.5 lens

The Minimum Palmos was a product of the Zeiss company's earliest entry into camera manufacture, beginning in 1902 with the purchase of the Palmos camera company and ending in 1909 with its sale to Ica. As the name suggests, the design of the Minimum Palmos originated with the earlier company, and was taken over by Zeiss. This procedure was again followed after the formation of the Zeiss Ikon consortium, when Zeiss, for a time, perpetuated many of the designs of the Ernemann, Ica, Goerz, and Contessa-Nettel companies.



Box Tengor (54/15)
1926-1928
6.5x11cm exposures on 116 film;
Goetz Frontar f11 lens



Box Tengor (54/2)
1928-1934
6x9cm exposures on 120 film; Goetz
Frontar f11 lens



Box Tengor (54)
1934-1939
4.5x6cm exposures on 120 film;
Goetz Frontar f11 lens



Baby Box Tengor
(54/18A)
1931
3x4cm exposures on
127 film; Goetz
Frontar f11 lens



Baby Box Tengor
(54/18E)
1931-1934
3x4cm exposures on
127 film; Novar
f6.3 lens in focusing
mount



Box Tengor (54/14)
1928-1934
5x7.5cm exposures on 127 film;
Goerz Frontar f11 lens



Box Tengor (54/2)
1934-1938
6x9cm exposures on 120 film;
Goerz Frontar f11 lens



Baby Box Tengor
(54/18)
1934-1939
3x4cm exposures on
127 film; Goerz
Frontar f11 lens

The earliest models of the Box Tengor were the first cameras to bear the Zeiss Ikon name. The Box Tengor line was one of the company's longest lived, no doubt because of its low cost and simplicity. The first models were essentially identical to a design borrowed from Goerz, which had begun to manufacture a Box Tengor camera a short time before joining the Zeiss consortium. Though the design changed over the years, the Box Tengor was always a very basic camera with a decent glass lens. A smaller version, the Baby Box Tengor, was made between 1931 and 1938 in three different versions, one of which was distinguished by having a focusing lens, something almost unheard-of for a box camera. The only way to determine the focusing distance, however, was to guess.



Ermanox (858)
1927-1931
4.5x6cm plates;
Ernemann Ernostar 8.5cm f1.8 lens



Ermanox (858/7)
1927
9x12cm plates;
Ernemann Ernostar 16.5cm f1.8 lens

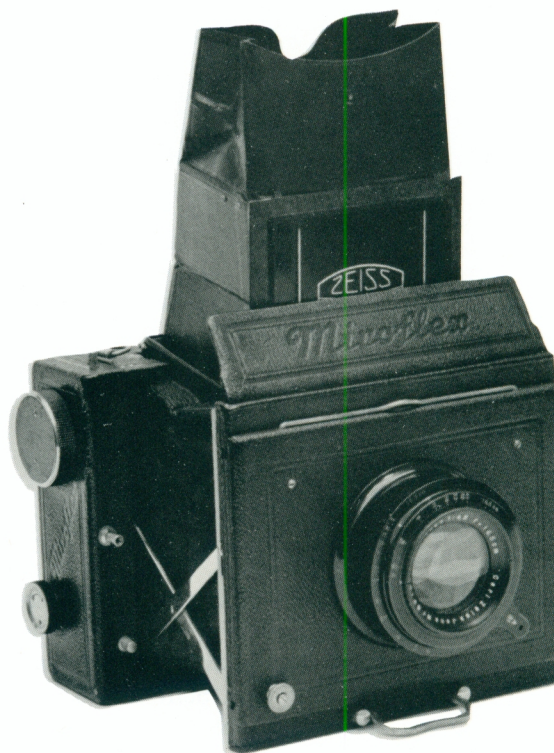
The Ermanox camera, made by the Heinrich Ernemann company from around 1924 until it was absorbed by Zeiss in 1926, is well known as the first "candid camera" because its small size and fast lens made it suitable for clandestine picture making. In the early years of Zeiss Ikon, the company's usual procedure was to continue to produce the designs of the predecessor companies with minor modifications (sometimes simply the addition of the Zeiss logo). In the case of the Ermanox a mirrored Albada finder was substituted for the simpler one on the earlier camera; Zeiss also made the camera available with an f1.8 lens, even faster than the f2 lens on the Ernemann version.

The Zeiss Ermanox was produced for a very short time, making this a rare camera. The 9x12cm version, which by comparison could hardly qualify as a candid camera—but which retained the advantage of having a fast lens, and was a useful hand camera—is even rarer.

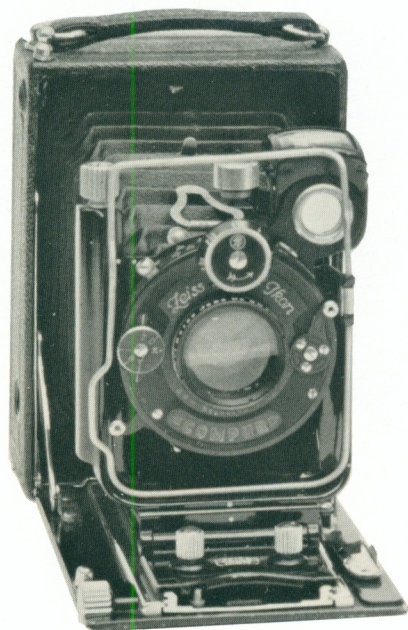
The Miroflex, a Contessa-Nettel design first produced in 1924, was a sturdy professional press camera which competed with the widely-popular Graflex. One of its most attractive features was its compactness: though a large-format reflex camera, it folded, very cleverly, into a relatively small package. Also attractive to the professional were its ground-glass and frame viewing systems. The focal plane shutter had single-knob setting and winding and a top speed of an unprecedented 1/2000 of a second. It was available in two models: the Miroflex A, in 6.5x9cm format, and the Miroflex B, in 9x12. Both were available with a choice of standard lenses; the lenses could be interchanged, but only with a certain amount of difficulty.



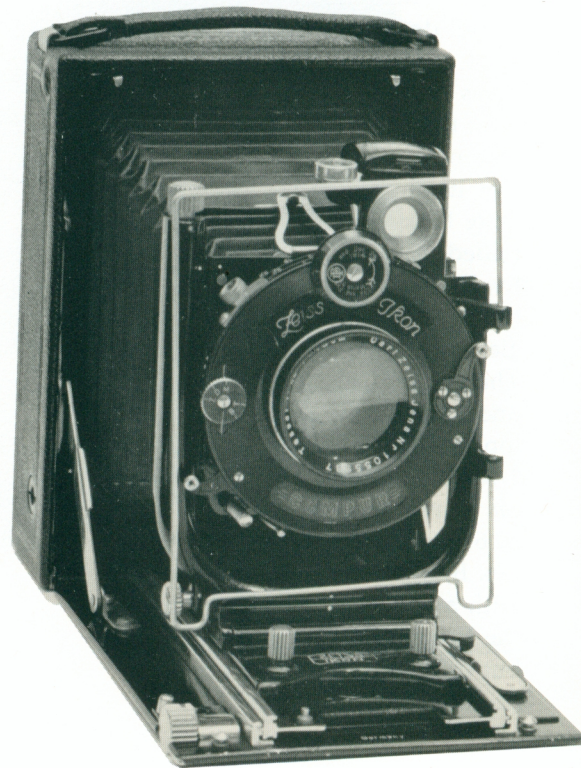
Miroflex A (859/3)
1927-36
6.5x9cm plates;
Biotessar 13.5cm f2.8
lens



Miroflex B (859/7)
1927-1936
9x12cm plates; Tessar
16.5cm f4.5 lens



Ideal (250/3)
1927-1938
6.5x9cm plates; Tessar 12cm f4.5
lens in Compur shutter



Ideal (250/7)
1927-1938
9x12cm plates; Tessar 15cm f4.5 lens
in Compur shutter

The Ideal, originally an Ica design, was a versatile, well made, reasonably-priced, workaday folding plate camera—not very fancy, but certainly very dependable. It was available in 6.5x9cm, 9x12cm, 10x15cm, and 13x18cm formats, and offered double extension bellows and a variety of lens/shutter combinations. On all but the smallest version, the lens/shutter combinations were interchangeable.

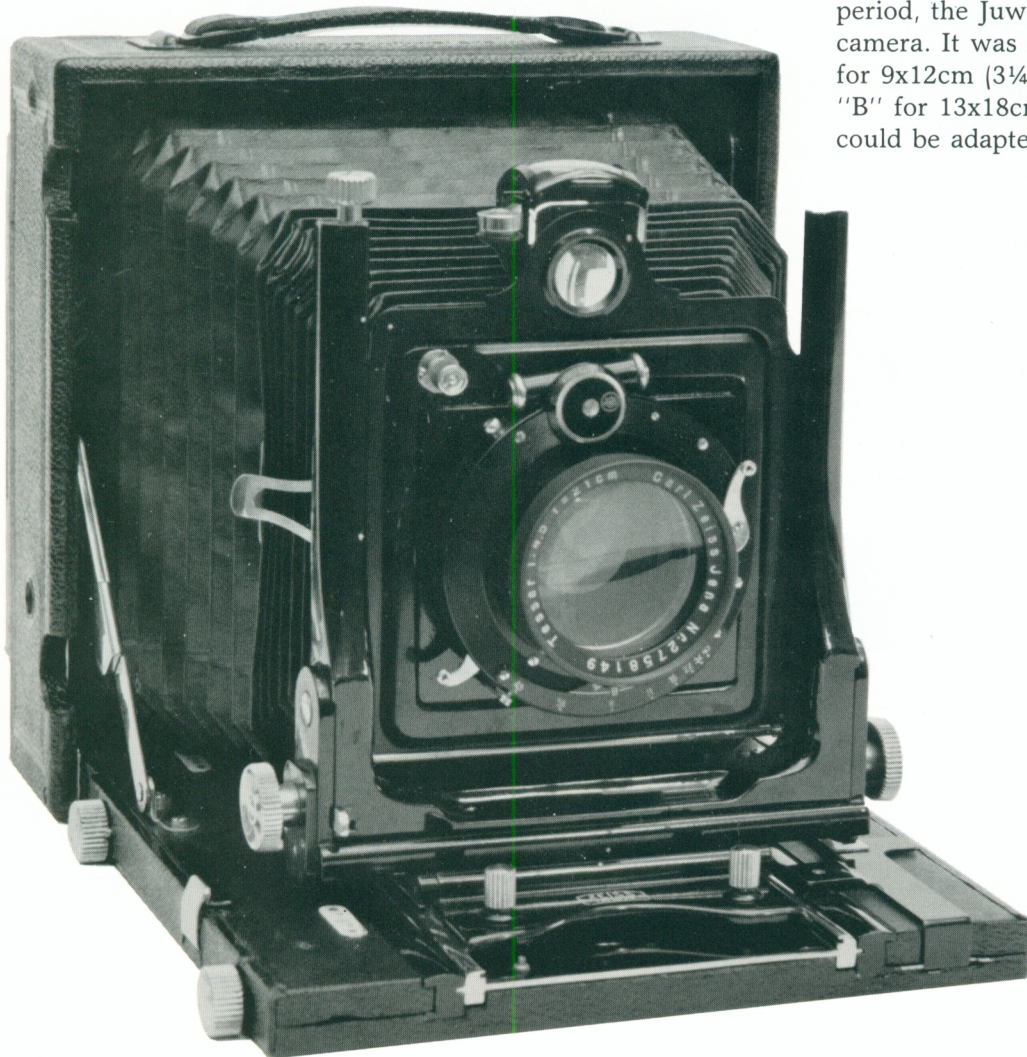


Ideal (250/9)
1927-1938
10x15cm plates; Tessar 16.5cm f4.5
lens in Compur shutter



Ideal
Ca. 1920-1926
Ica AG., Dresden
13x18cm plates;
Huttig Doppel-Anastigmat 180mm
f6.8 lens in Compound shutter

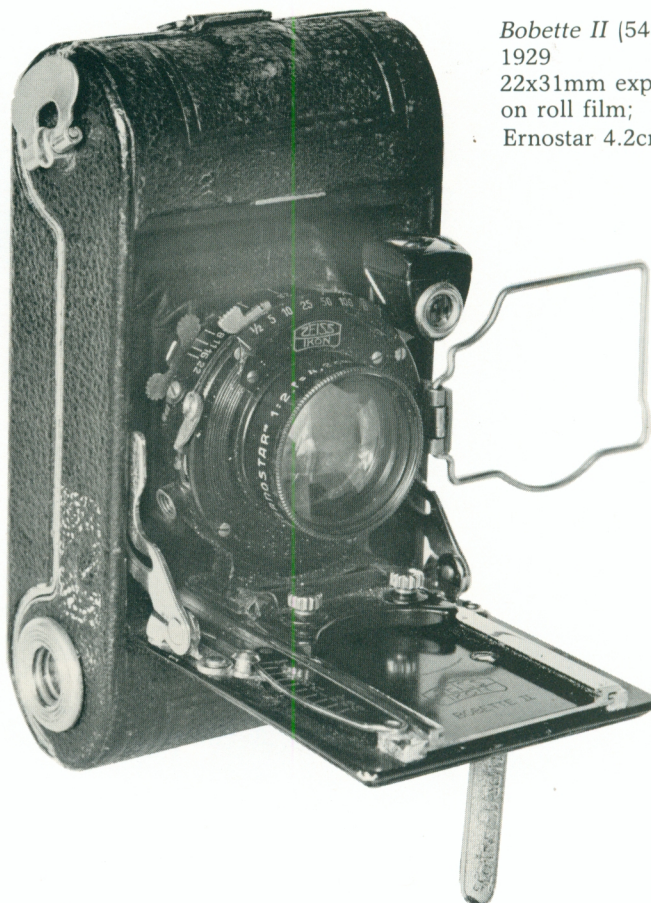
The Juwel, another Ica design, was one of the most sophisticated plate cameras ever made. It featured a rotating back, rising and falling front bed, swings and tilts, triple extension bellows, and interchangeable lenses. Manufactured throughout the prewar period, the Juwel was Zeiss' most expensive camera. It was made in two sizes, the "A" for 9x12cm (3½x4¼-inch) plates, and the "B" for 13x18cm (5x7-inch) plates; both could be adapted for film packs.



Juwel B (275/11)
1927-1939
13x18cm plates; Tessar
21cm f4.5 lens in
Compound shutter

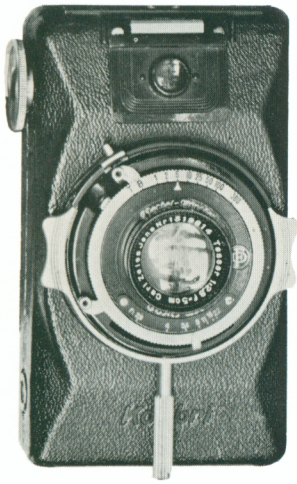


Bobette I (549)
1929
22x31mm exposures on roll film;
Ernoplast 5cm f4.5 lens



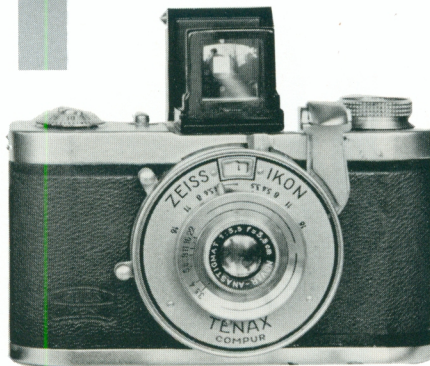
Bobette II (548)
1929
22x31mm exposures
on roll film;
Ernostar 4.2cm f2 lens

The Bobette cameras, introduced by Ernemann around 1925, were reintroduced by Zeiss in 1929. Both made 22x31mm exposures on paper-backed 35mm film. Neither were radical designs. The Bobette I had a simple strut construction, the Bobette II a slightly more complex folding bed. The Bobette II with f2 Ernststar was the first miniature camera with a high-speed lens.



Kolibri (523/18)
1930-1935
3x4cm exposures on 127 film;
Tessar 5cm f2.8 lens in
Compur shutter

The Kolibri was one of the first cameras to be exclusively designed by Zeiss. It made 16 half-frame exposures on a roll of 127 film, in a format slightly larger than 35mm, and indeed the camera was meant to compete with the Leica. Though nicely designed and compact, the Kolibri was not a triumph in the market, probably because customers preferred the convenience of the 35mm format. Its fate was sealed with the success of the Contax.



Tenax I (570/27)
1939-1941
24x24mm exposures on 35mm film;
Novar Anastigmat 3.5mm f3.5

The Tenax I, another early Zeiss design (the name, though not the design, was borrowed from Goerz), was a very simple camera for 24x24mm exposures on 35mm film. This was unusual—most 35mm cameras produce a 24x36mm negative—but it had the advantage of allowing more exposures per roll. Another unusual feature was a rapid-fire film advance/shutter resetting lever next to the lens. (Even more unusual was the fact that the Tenax I was introduced after the Tenax II.)



Tenax II (580/27)
1938-1941
24x24mm exposures on 35mm film;
Sonnar 4cm f2 lens

The Tenax II, which shared the format and the rapid-fire lever, was a much more sophisticated camera, offering a coupled rangefinder and a set of four interchangeable lenses. The system's capabilities, behind-the-lens shutter, and format of the Tenax II made it useful for scientific work; the camera was in fact adapted for use in X-ray work during World War II.



Goin' to places?

ZEISS IKON

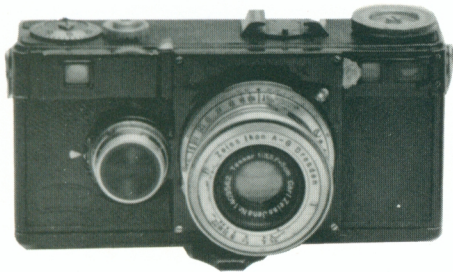
No matter where you go, a Zeiss Ikon Camera will assure you dependable, carefree vacation photography.

ZEISS IKON CAMERAS



The advertisement features a background map of the world with a compass rose in the center. The compass rose has a circular center with the words 'ZEISS IKON' inside. The map shows continents and oceans, with a line of latitude or longitude passing through the compass. In the top left corner, there is a small inset image showing a group of people on a beach or near a body of water. At the bottom, four different Zeiss Ikon camera models are displayed: a small box camera, a Contax rangefinder, a rangefinder with a bellows, and a large bellows camera.

Zeiss Ikon advertisement, 1939



Contax I (540/24)
1932-1936
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film;
Tessar 5cm f3.5 lens
Gift of Dr. Robert Bingham (1730)



Contax II (543/24)
1936-1942
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film;
Sonnar 5cm f2 lens
Gift of Emil L. Van Deventer
(82.35.29)

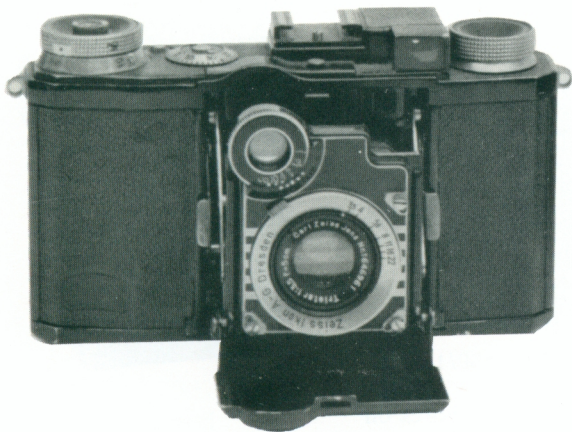


Contax III (544/24)
1936-1942
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film;
Sonnar 5cm f1.5 lens
Gift of Robert L. Gach (81.67.1)

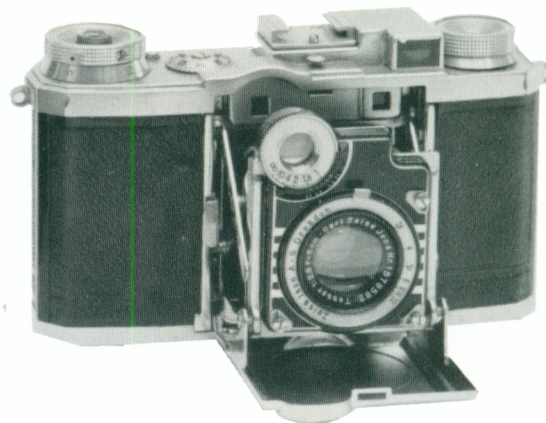
The Contax, the 35mm flagship of the Zeiss Ikon line, was introduced in 1932 to compete directly with the Leica. The first model was produced for four years with continuing refinements, the most overt of which was the addition of shutter speeds below 1/25 second. In 1936 the Contax I was replaced with models II and III, which offered a more streamlined shape and a combined range-finder/viewfinder; the Contax III also incorporated an uncoupled exposure meter.

Production ceased during World War II. When it resumed in 1950, the Contax II had become the IIa and the III the IIIa, though little else had changed. The Contax again ceased production in 1961, when its rangefinder design (and flagship status) gave way to the single-lens-reflex Contarex. The Contax line nevertheless continues to this day, though the camera has become a modern, electronic single-lens-reflex produced under Zeiss supervision by Yashica in Japan. This Contax is the only camera currently being produced with a Zeiss trademark.

The Contax was a system camera from the beginning, with a huge variety of lenses and accessories that allowed for any possible contingency, and any conceivable whim of the professional or advanced amateur user. Since Zeiss also manufactured microscopes, the company engineers were particularly concerned with the adaptability of the Contax to microphotography.



Super Nettel (536/24)
1934-1937
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film; Tessar 5cm
f3.5 lens



Super Nettel II (537/24)
1936-1938
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film; Tessar 5cm
f2.8 lens

The Super Nettel, for 35mm film, was a less sophisticated, more economical alternative to the Contax. Its advantages included a shutter and rangefinder similar to those on the Contax, and an identical Tessar lens. The lens, though not interchangeable, was contained in a drop-bed front, which made the camera extremely compact when folded. A second model—the Super Nettel II—made between 1936 and 1938, had a chrome finish and a faster lens.

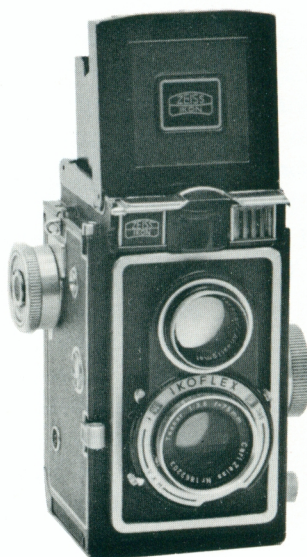
As the Super Nettel used the basic body shape of the Contax II, and incorporated a number of its design features, it appears to have been, in part, a trial run for the more advanced camera.



Ikoflex (850/16)
1934-1937
6x6cm exposures on
120 or 620 film;
Novar-Anastigmat
8cm f4.5 lens



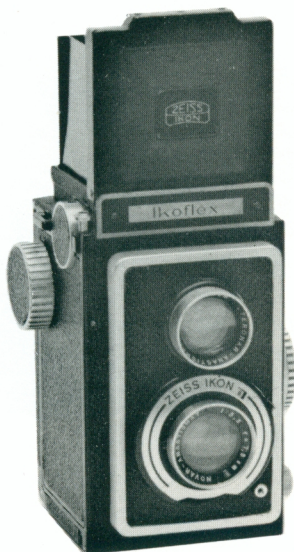
Ikoflex IIa (855/16)
1950-1952
6x6cm exposures on
120 film; Tessar 75mm
f3.5 lens in Compur-
Rapid shutter



Ikoflex Ic (886/16)
1956-1960
6x6cm exposures on
120 film; Tessar 75mm
f3.5 lens in Prontor
shutter



Ikoflex II [original model] (851/16)
1936-1939
6x6cm exposures on 120 film; Triotar 7.5cm f3.5 lens in Compur-Rapid shutter



Ikoflex I [II] (850/16)
1939-1951
6x6cm exposures on 120 film; Novar-Anastigmat 7.5cm f3.5 lens in Compur shutter

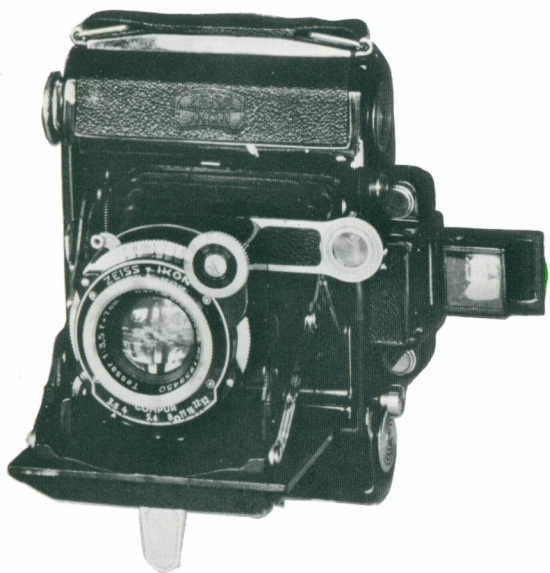


Ikoflex III (853/16)
1939-1940
6x6cm exposures on 120 film; Tessar 8cm f2.8 lens in Compur-Rapid shutter

The Ikoflex line of twin-lens reflex roll film cameras was one of Zeiss's most popular. It offered a less expensive alternative to the Rolleiflex and, moreover, one that used the same optics. Beginning in 1934 with the charmingly Art Deco-designed original model (known to collectors as the "coffee can"), the company offered one or more models of the Ikoflex until 1960. Whatever the model, the Ikoflex was a simple and inexpensive but solidly-constructed camera, which also helps to explain its popularity.

One of the most interesting things about the Ikoflex line is its nomenclature. The original model

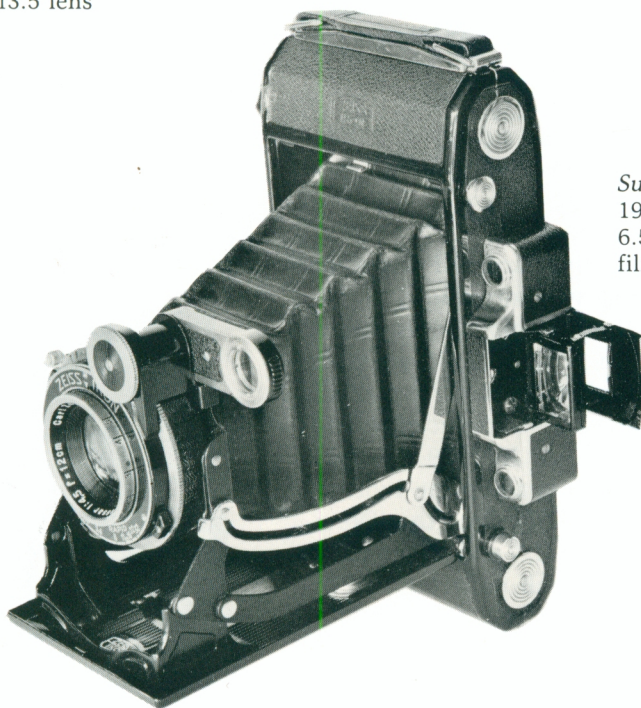
was renamed Ikoflex I when the Ikoflex II was introduced in 1936; the first model was discontinued in 1937. In 1938 a slightly more sophisticated version of the Ikoflex II was introduced, called the Ikoflex III. In 1939, the Ikoflex II was renamed the Ikoflex I, the model III became the "New Style Ikoflex II," and a completely different, much more advanced model was introduced, named (of course) the Ikoflex III. Possibly because of the confusion, the model III was discontinued in 1940, but various versions of the I were produced through 1960, and the II survived through 1956.



Super Ikonta A (530)
1934-1937
4.5x6cm exposures on 120
film; Tessar 7cm f3.5 lens

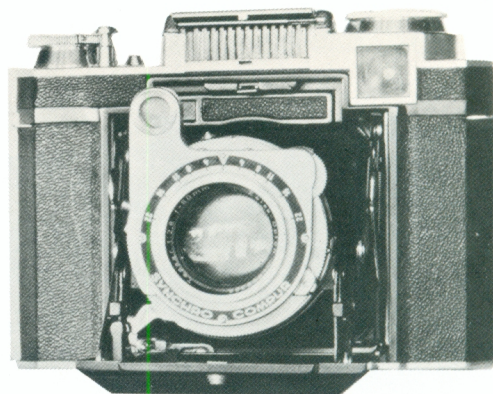


Super Ikonta B (532/16)
1937-1956
6x6cm exposures on 120
film; Tessar 8cm f2.8 lens



Super Ikonta D (530/15)
1936-1939
6.5x11cm exposures on 120
film; Tessar 12cm f4.5 lens

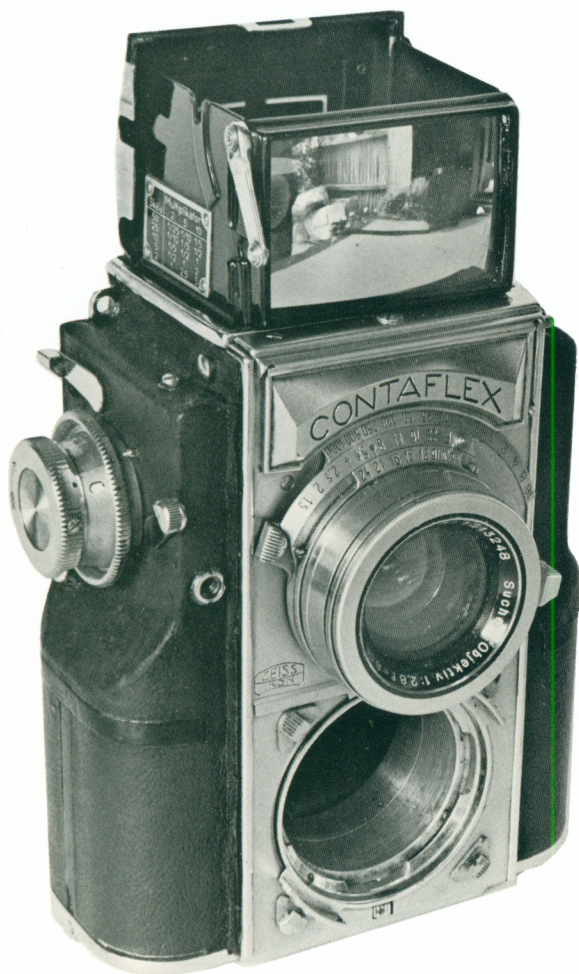
The Super Ikonta cameras evolved from the Ikonta line (called Ikomat in the United States). Both lines of sturdy, useful roll film cameras shared format designations ("A" meaning 4.5x6cm, "B" 6x6cm, "C" 6x9cm, and "D" 6.5x11cm), but while the Ikontas had simple viewfinders (or, in some of the 1950s models, uncoupled rangefinders), the Super Ikontas had very cleverly designed rangefinders that coupled to the lens via an external set of rotating prisms. (The very last models, the III and IV, used a swing wedge rangefinder like that on the Contax II.) The BX model also offered an uncoupled exposure meter. Super Ikontas are currently in high demand in Japan, as usable cameras.



Super Ikonta BX [post-war version] (533/16)
1952-1957
6x6cm exposures on 120 film; Tessar 8cm f2.8 lens



Super Ikonta IV (543/16)
1956-1960
6x6cm exposures on 120 film; Tessar 7.5cm f3.5 lens



Contaflex (860/24)
1935-1940
24x36mm exposures on
35mm film; Sonnar 5cm f2 lens



The Contaflex twin-lens reflex, the first camera of the Contaflex line, is the only 35mm TLR ever made. It incorporated many of the mechanisms of the Contax (therefore the name, *Contax reflex*), including its metal, vertically-traveling focal plane shutter, though not, of course, its rangefinder. It is also unusual among twin-lens designs for being a systems camera, offering a range of eight interchangeable lenses (some of which required special viewers), close focusing capability, a copy stand, a microscope adaptor, and a plate back. The Contaflex was the first camera of *any* kind to have a built-in exposure meter, which was, however, not coupled—readings indicated by a pointer next to the reflex hood had to be manually transferred.

The Contaflex was not a great success, possibly because of its weight and its complex and expensive design, and examples in good condition are hard to find. The Kibbey collection contains one of each variant of the camera (of which there were four), and all of the lenses and accessories.



Nettax (538/24)
 1936-1938
 24x36mm exposures on 35mm
 film; Tessar 5cm f2.8 lens

The Nettax fell between the Super Nettel and the Contax II in both design and price, and was meant to fill the market niche between the two cameras. Basically a Super Nettel with interchangeable lenses, only three lenses were actually made for it—two 50mm and a 105mm—and the camera was not a success. (As is typical in collecting, an item that fails in the marketplace becomes highly prized for its rarity. In 1936, a Contax II cost around \$200, depending on lens, while a Nettax was \$165; today, a Nettax can be worth four times as much as a Contax II in similar condition.)

The Nettax name was reintroduced in 1955, for a 6x6cm roll film camera that had no other similarity to the original. The later Nettax featured a built-in, though uncoupled, exposure meter.

Postwar

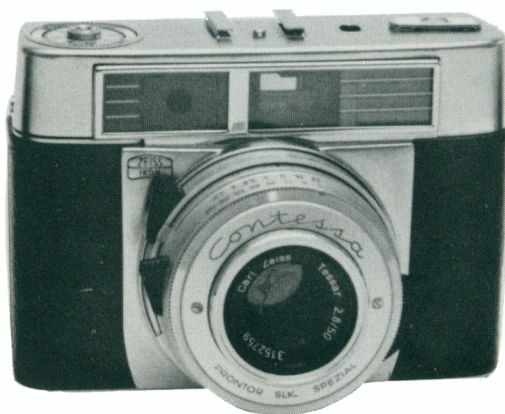


Contessa 35 [second version] (533/24)
1953-1955
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film;
Tessar 45mm f2.8 lens in Synchro-
Compur shutter



Contessamat SE (10.0654)
1963-1965
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film;
Color-Pantar 45mm f2.8 lens in
Prontomatic shutter

A number of cameras were given the Contessa name; the name itself was a carry-over from Contessa-Nettel. The Contessa 35, one of the first cameras produced after World War II by the reorganized West German Zeiss, was a well-made 35mm rangefinder camera with a fixed lens and an uncoupled meter. The Contessa and Contessamat cameras of the 1960s, also fixed-lens 35mm rangefinder cameras, were of simpler and more economic design with (typically for Zeiss) far better lenses than those usually found on entry-level cameras.



Contessa E (10.0645)
1960-1963
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film;
Tessar 50mm f2.8 lens in Prontor
SLK Spezial shutter



Contina III (529/24)
1955-1958
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film;
convertible Pantar 45mm f2.8 lens in
Prontor-SVS shutter

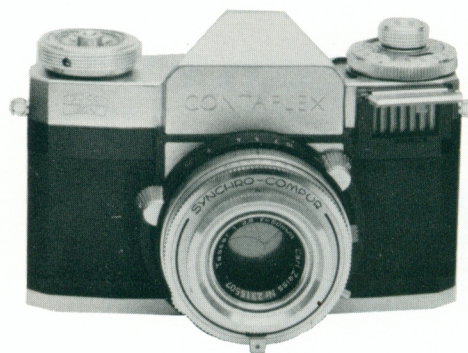


Contina LK (10.0637)
1963-1965
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film;
Color-Pantar 45mm f2.8 lens in Prontor
250LK shutter

Various versions of the Contina, an inexpensive 35mm rangefinder camera, were made between 1952 and 1965. The most unusual was the Contina III, produced between 1955 and 1958, which had interchangeable front lens elements, thereby offering the amateur user far more flexibility than most cameras of its type. The built-in finder provided the view for the normal (45mm) lens; the 30mm wide-angle and 75mm telephoto required separate finders. A stereo attachment was also available.



Contaflex I (861/24)
1953-1958
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film;
Tessar 45mm f2.8 lens in Synchro-
Compur shutter



Contaflex IV (864/24)
1957-1959
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film:
convertible Tessar 50mm f2.8 lens in
Synchro-Compur shutter



Contaflex Rapid (10.1261)
1959-1961
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film:
convertible Tessar 50mm f2.8 lens in
Synchro-Compur shutter

The second-generation Contaflexes were simple, entry-level single-lens-reflex cameras for the amateur market. The first model, introduced in 1953, did not have interchangeable lenses, nor did the Contaflex II of a year later, which had an uncoupled exposure meter. All subsequent Contaflexes had interchangeable front lens elements, allowing for a limited range of focal lengths. The basic design never changed, but later models offered improvements like



Contaflex Super [second version]
(10.1271)
1962-1967
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film:
convertible Tessar 50mm f2.8 lens in
Synchro-Compur-X shutter



Contaflex 126 (10.1102)
1970-1973
28x28mm exposures on 126 cartridge
film; Tessar 45mm f2.8 lens

film advance levers, coupled meters, and even magazine backs. Zeiss offered one or more models of the Contaflex until the withdrawal of the company from the camera business in 1972.

The Contaflex 126, introduced in 1970, departed from the established pattern in several ways. It used 126 (Instamatic) film, and had a focal plane shutter and fully interchangeable lenses. It was built far better—and had much better lenses—than most cameras

using 126 format, but was a market failure. This was probably because the Instamatic format, though more convenient than 35mm, could not compete with it in quality. The camera, in other words, was better than the film for which it was made. Along with the Kodak Instamatic Reflex, a similar attempt at an upscale 126 camera, the Contaflex 126 was a classic example of engineering overkill.



Contarex (10.2401)

1958-1967

24x36mm exposures on 35mm film; Planar 50mm f2 lens

[Shown with Biogon 21mm f4.5, Sonnar 85mm f2, Sonnar 135mm f4, and Sonnar 250mm f4 lenses]



Contarex Super (10.2600)
1968-1972
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film; Planar 50mm f2 lens

The Contarex, introduced in 1958, was one of the first 35mm single-lens-reflex cameras geared toward professionals. Its lenses and its overall construction were of the very finest quality, and the camera was designed to offer an unsurpassed level of adaptability. Among its features was an instant-return mirror and a built-in meter coupled to the lens diaphragm; later models had interchangeable focusing screens, interchangeable film magazines (which allowed users to change film in the middle of a roll), and data backs which made it possible to inscribe information on the negative. The Contarex Special, also available, had no meter but offered interchangeable finders.

The Contarex design was modernized in 1967; the first restyled model to be introduced was another meterless model, the Professional. The Super, introduced a year later, added through-the-lens metering; in 1970, the Super Electronic offered (arguably ahead of its time) complete electronic exposure control, both in-camera and remote.

The Contarex was part of an entire system of lenses and accessories. It was also expensive (\$500 for the original model in 1958 and around \$1100, depending on lens, for a Super Electronic in 1972). It therefore received stiff competition from Japanese firms like Nikon and Canon, who produced 35mm SLRs with just as much flexibility (if not quite as good optics) at considerably less cost.

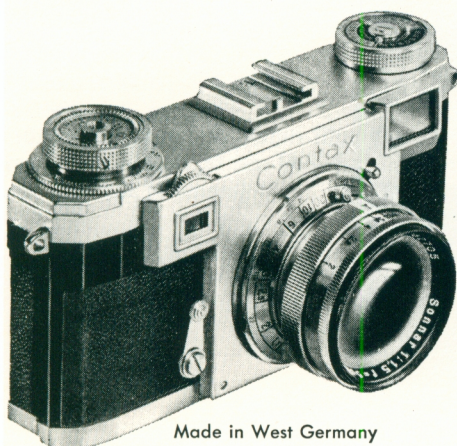


Contarex Super Electronic (10.2800)
1970-1972
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film; Planar 50mm f2 lens

*Hunts ferocious game
with a spear!*



*Thrilling adventures
with a*



Made in West Germany

SASHA SIEMEL, world-famous hunter and explorer, has amazed thousands with his illustrated lectures on jungle hunting with spear, bow-and-arrow and camera. Four books, best sellers—the latest called "Tigrero" (the tiger hunter)—have been written about his exploits.

His Zeiss Ikon cameras never failed.

The splendid pictures he has taken are added testimony of the outstanding performance you can expect from a Zeiss Ikon.

At leading dealers. Literature on request.

CARL ZEISS, INC., 485 Fifth Avenue, New York 17

CONTAX, choice of those who want the utmost in scope and dependability.

Zeiss Ikon advertisement, 1958



Icarex 35 (10.2200)
1967-1970
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film:
Color-Pantar 50mm f2.8 lens in
bayonet mount



Icarex 35S TM (10.3600)
1970-1973
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film:
Ultron 50mm f1.8 lens in thread
mount

The Icarex 35 was introduced in 1967 to fill the market niche between the professionally-oriented Contarex camera and the bare-bones Contaflex. The Icarex was quite sophisticated, offering interchangeable viewfinders and viewing screens and a range of well-made lenses. (It did not offer magazine loading like the Contarex, nor was its range of lenses and accessories anywhere near as extensive.) A version using universal threadmount lenses (the 35TM) was also marketed; either camera could be fitted with a through-the-lens metering viewfinder. The Icarex 35S, introduced in 1970, incorporated the metering system into the body of the camera, and eliminated the interchangeable finders and screens. It was also available in both bayonet and thread-mount versions.



SL706 (10.3700)
1972-1973
24x36mm exposures on 35mm film:
Ultron 50mm f1.8 lens

The SL706, introduced in 1972, was the last camera to be produced by the Zeiss company in its own factory. The camera was an update of the Icarex, and used the same lenses and accessories (thread mount only). In fact, the only major difference between the SL706 and its immediate predecessor was that the meter in the newer camera operated with the lens wide open, while the Icarex meter required that the lens be stopped down to the aperture to be used for exposure. This feature is a convenience to the user because it means that the viewing screen is never darkened.

As Zeiss decided to withdraw from camera manufacture soon after the introduction of the SL706, the camera is one of the company's shortest-lived designs.

Chronology

- 1846 Carl Zeiss applies to the head of the County Administration of Weimar for permission to found "an establishment for the production of advanced mechanical devices." He opens an optical workshop, and begins selling spectacles, laboratory equipment, scales, and optical instruments.
- 1848 Begins manufacture of simple microscopes.
- 1858 Begins manufacture of compound microscopes.
- 1866 Zeiss goes into partnership with physicist Ernst Abbe, who in turn recruits glass chemist Otto Schott into the combined firms Jenaer Glaswerke Schott und Genossen and the Optical Works of Carl Zeiss.
- 1888 Carl Zeiss dies. His son, Roderich Zeiss, becomes joint owner with Abbe and Schott.
- 1889 Abbe dissolves the partnership to found the Carl Zeiss Foundation, which establishes clearly defined legal rights for its workers: paid leave, no reduction of time pay once granted, extra pay for extra work, participation in profits by additional wages, claim to an indemnification in case of unmerited discharge, pensions, scaled wages, and health insurance. Schott joins Abbe in the Foundation; Roderich Zeiss is bought out.
- 1896 Introduction of first "anastigmat" (i.e., free of astigmatism) lens, later called the Protar.
- 1902 Introduction of the Tessar lens—one of the most widely imitated of lens designs. Zeiss enters camera manufacture through purchase of the Pamos Camera Works of Jena.
- 1909 Pamos sold to Ica AG.
- 1926 Zeiss Ikon is formed, uniting nearly all of the major photographic firms in Germany. The initial members of the consortium are the camera manufacturers Ica, Heinrich Ernemann, and Contessa-Nettel, and the optical firm of C.P. Goerz. Within two years they are

joined by the Hahn optical firm and the Goerz Photochemical Works.

- 1932 Introduction of the Contax 35mm camera.
- 1939-1942 Camera production continues until 1942 despite shift in wartime priorities toward production of military optical instruments like trench and submarine periscopes and binoculars; photographic equipment is sometimes introduced outside of Germany.
- 1946 Most (over 90%) of the Zeiss facilities, located within the Russian Zone of occupation, are dismantled. The majority of the top management, and the leading scientists and engineers, are transferred by the American Army to the Western Zone. A new Zeiss firm is incorporated, using the facilities remaining in West Germany.
- 1948 The Zeiss properties in East Germany are expropriated and merged into the U.S.S.R. economy as a national-owned plant. Production of cameras is begun, using the Zeiss name and a number of its trademarks.
- 1954 A Soviet suit is filed in West German court to extinguish the Zeiss firm in West Germany, withdraw its trademarks, and prevent it from using the Zeiss name.
- 1957 A countersuit is filed by the West German firm.
- 1960 The Soviet suit for extinction and prohibition is dismissed.
- 1961 The right of the West German firm to the Zeiss name and trademarks is confirmed. The East German company continues to produce cameras under the name Pentacon.
- Ca. 1971 Zeiss purchases the Voigtlander company, a long-time competitor; late-model cameras are labeled Zeiss Ikon Voigtlander for a short time.
- 1972 Zeiss ceases production of cameras.
- 1975 Use of the Contax name is licensed to the Yashica company in Japan; production of the cameras is supervised by Zeiss engineers. Manufacture of optics continues in Germany, along with microscopes (including electron microscopes), astronomical telescopes, planetariums, eyeglass lenses, and other items.

Choose the camera
with the
ZEISS-TESSAR



Printed in Germany