

# Light Leaks

Issue 8 Low Fidelity Photography

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## *Almost Perfect*

**INTERVIEW:** ANNETTE FOURNET

**GALLERY:** "ALMOST PERFECT"

**REVIEW:** DIANA+, VOLTRON, "THE DEATH OF PHOTOGRAPHY?", "WHAT THE DUCK"

**SHOWCASE:** WORLD TOY CAMERA DAY, CHRISTIAN ARRECIS, JERRY GOLAB

# Light Leaks

Low Fidelity Photography

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# THE FIRST WORD

By Steph Parke

**A**fter successfully using three different Holgas for three years with the only snafu being an occasional lens cap being left on, I was surprised to run into trouble this week. I loaded my beloved Holga/PinHolga hybrid from Randy at Hologamods and went out to shoot a roll with the intention of getting something new to accompany this message. I put on a fleece jacket and a beanie, consciously left the lens cap on the kitchen counter, and ventured into my backyard and into the cool autumn air. With my four ginseng trees alight in buttery yellow leaves and the sky a dazzling morning blue, I was certain I'd get some wonderful new shots.

I blazed through the roll, trying my hand at some double exposures, a short pano, some macro shots, and a couple of unadorned, regular shots. I couldn't stop staring up through the glowing tunnel of yellow and smiling. Autumn, color film, a Holga: happiness! Imagine my surprise when, the next evening, I returned to the local lab to pick up my wonderful new shots and the man behind the counter proclaimed, with a hint of unnecessary amusement, "blank roll!"

I frowned and simply said, "Huh. My shutter mustn't have fired." He then proceeded to explain to me how blank rolls happen, as if I didn't know, and then asked what camera I was shooting with.

"A Holga," I said with a smile.

He immediately frowned and much too empathetically and loudly said, "Oh no! That's such a shame. I'm so sorry about that."

Now, I don't know if he was sorry I was shooting with a camera that his digital ilk refused to recognize or because he had no idea what a Holga was and assumed it was of the same persuasion as a Hasselblad. I collected my blank roll, gave him a funny look and walked out.

Long story short, despite perfect lighting and subject opportunities, a new roll of color film and my favorite camera, I ended up with results that were only almost perfect. Had that favorite camera of mine actually worked, that roll wouldn't have been blank and would have been perfect. Lucky for me, I ran a roll through my new-to-me SuperSampler and got at least something of my lovely ginseng leaves. I guess a good rule of thumb



is that if you're expecting perfection, always have a backup!

Here's wishing you many moments of varying degrees of perfection both in your photo lives and your upcoming holidays. Let the jolly mayhem ensue! 📷

*Steph*



# TRIPPIN' TIBET

-By Scott Sporleder

Tibet, the “Roof of the World”, is a place shrouded in mystery, which was closed off to the Western world until the turn of the 20th century. With its jagged peaks, turquoise lakes, and dedicated Buddhist patrons, Tibet is still a country that sparks curiosity in a Westerner’s eye; particularly the eye of a photographer. With much of its ancient culture still intact, taking photos with a Holga seemed to be the most authentic way to capture the true spirit of the country and its people. Nearly every corner turned produced a scene which looked today much as it probably looked hundreds of years ago. You might see young Tibetan boys leading yaks to pastures located at 18,000 ft. elevation, or devout Buddhists wearing their long-sleeved sheepskin cloaks called “chubas”, prostrating as they approach the most sacred temples in Lhasa. In the background you hear the sounds of singing and dancing echoing in the distance at a local Horse Festival, or the sounds of chanting. The Tibetan people are nomads and farmers and their skin shows years of exposure to the strong high altitude sun.

Nearly every image I took looked as if it could have been taken by one of the first Westerners to enter the country in 1903.



Since the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950 there has been much change in the cities of Tibet, but life for the most part has remained the same, particularly in the countryside. The primitive character of the Holga images, mixed with the remarkable culture of the Tibetan people and the stark landscape, created images



that were so descriptive that I felt as though I was reading a book rather than taking a photograph. To look into a Tibetan’s eyes is like being told a story of the perseverance of their people against the elements and against years of oppression by the Chinese. You can

also see the hope in their eyes as they continue to dream and dedicate their lives to the beliefs they have held for centuries. 📷

*Scott Sporleder lives in Laguna Niguel, California and toys with the Holga.*

[www.sporlederart.com](http://www.sporlederart.com)



# A REVIEW: THE DIANA+



This is an exciting time for toy camera enthusiasts. A new breed of toy cameras is emerging from dark shaded places around the world, a place where strange people must actually think that film cameras still can sell. But of course these aren't your regular film cameras, they are toy cameras—targeted to the young, hip rebels of the photography world.

The one that has gotten the biggest buzz is Lomography's "update" on the Diana camera. Did Lomography find the infamous Great Wall Plastic Company factory, brush off the dust and get the plant rolling again? No, but they have taken the original Diana camera and emulated it very well and thrown in some new features that will be welcomed by most enthusiasts.

The overall build and design of the Diana+ is meant to imitate the original design as close as possible. From a few feet, one wouldn't be able to tell the difference between a Diana and a Diana+. Upon closer inspection, you notice some of the Lomography branding on the top of the winding knob and a red logo on the bottom of the camera, but certainly nothing that ruins the overall design for the original Diana lovers.

The lens barrel name plate reads "Diana+" in the same font as the original, except thinner. The distance icons have changed a little, and the measurements on my test model were using meters

as its measurement.

One of the first things that caught my attention as I opened the bubble wrap was the entire lens housing was loose when I picked it up, and actually fell off! Luckily I was holding it over the table at the time and no damage was done.

The Diana+ has a completely removable lens that twists off, similar to removable lenses on an SLR camera; it even has dots that line up for you. I had difficulties with this at first because unlike a heavier SLR lens, the plastic is very light and fragile so a delicate handling is required. It actually seemed to fit together quite well, the final twist when attaching the lens will give you a definite "snap" affirming the lens is locked in place.

The removable lens serves the best feature of this camera, a pinhole function. Remove the lens and activate the "P" on the aperture lever and presto! You're pinholing! Just remember to not leave the lens housing on when using the pinhole feature (unless you're in an experimental mood).

The removable lens and pinhole feature is most likely the suspect to a slightly elongated distance from the shutter to the end of the lens, about an eighth of an inch. I wonder if this effects the optics in any way as there doesn't appear to be any correction for this...



# WORLD TOY CAMERA DAY FIFTH YEAR ANNIVERSARY

October 20th, 2007 marked the fifth anniversary of World Toy Camera Day. We invited photographers from around the world to celebrate with their toy cameras and get out to celebrate the event. Here are how some of our readers spent World Toy Camera Day on the fifth anniversary.

## **VANCOUVER, CANADA—RACHAEL ASHE**

I live in Vancouver, Canada, and this year it has been an especially rainy fall. Because I knew ahead of time that WTCD would be dark and rainy, I decided to invite two toy camera-shooting friends over to my place for a few hours. We goofed around and shot each other using my studio lights. The attached shot is a diptych of my friends Kirsti and Christopher taking turns posing with the jaw of a small shark, brought over by Kirsti.

Their WTCD photos can be found here:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/mimsybee/tags/worldtoycameraday> - Kirsti Wakelin

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/czarf/tags/wtcd2007/> - Christopher Evans

[http://www.flickr.com/photos/goddess\\_spiral/tags/worldtoycameraday2007/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/goddess_spiral/tags/worldtoycameraday2007/) - Rachael Ashe



# LANGUAGE OF THE PLASTIC LENSES

## AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNETTE FOURNET

BY A. SASKA MUTIC



**A**t our first class meeting she said “Don’t ever be late, I have no time or patience for students that aren’t dedicated.” I turned around and noticed frowns and puzzled looks; but for me her approach was neither new nor shocking, coming from a socialist country where professors were tough but well respected. Annette Fournet taught me almost everything I know about photography. There were days when I hated her for sending me back to the darkroom over and over again, to burn some more or to reduce a contrast, just to get her final opinion in our critique sessions that the entire photo wasn’t that special. So why wouldn’t she stop me from struggling in the darkroom over a print that wasn’t that special? I learned a harsh lesson: how to edit my own work, how to be my own most rigorous censor. Apart from academic and technical knowledge,

Annette gave me another precious gift; she introduced me to Diana. Ever since she showed us her dreamy forest pathways, dancing scarecrows and forgotten hallways of Austro-Hungarian architecture I knew that I had found my media. Annette taught me the language of the plastic lenses, which is her true mother tongue. Annette Fournet isn’t just a great teacher; she is, first and foremost, a dedicated and extremely talented artist.

Despite her tough love and no-nonsense attitude, Annette is adored by many of her students and I am lucky enough to be friends with several of them. Out of the gang of her students that I met, I am the only one that uses a Diana as a primary tool, but several others are hooked too. It is a great honor to interview Annette for Light Leaks Magazine, and hopefully introduce her to the readers who haven’t yet heard of her.

*Please tell us about your professional background, education and career as a photographer.*

I have a BFA in photography from the Memphis College of Art and an MFA in Graphic Design from the University of Memphis. I borrowed my first camera, a Baby Brownie Special, from my parents at age seven. I learned to develop and print in an X-ray darkroom that belonged to the father of my high school boyfriend. Murray Riss, once a student of Harry Callahan, was my teacher at MCA. He was a wonderful teacher and a great influence on how I think about making images and on my teaching methods. Over the years I have done photo illustrations for editorial and advertising accounts but I have never really been a commercial photographer. My work is now represented by Corbis, an international stock agency. My fine art photography is represented by Joseph Bellows Gallery in La Jolla, CA; AfterImage Gallery in Dallas, TX; and Mason Murer Gallery in Atlanta, GA.

*Who were your photo influences, and why?*

There are so many photographers whose work inspired me as a student: Cartier-Bresson, Kertesz, Diane Arbus, Emmet Gowin, Imogen Cunningham. The works of Clarence John Laughlin, Eugene Atget and Josef Sudek have been particularly influential. I loved Atget's ability to compose an image with elegant simplicity. He photographed the same streets in Paris over and over and always found something beautiful and new in a familiar environment. Sudek is the master; his use of light, his choice of subject matter and ability to create metaphoric images is unsurpassed. From Clarence John Laughlin I learned to look "for the mystery of the ordinary". His work definitely deals with the aesthetic of wabi-sabi that is so important in my own work. I often think of Atget and Sudek when I photograph in Prague. Fortunately I don't have to carry a heavy large format camera, I have my extremely light plastic Dianas. The contemporary photographers that I most admire are Michiko Kon, Gabriela Iturbide, Josef Koudelka and Michael Kenna. I think the common element is their ability to create extraordinary images that have a sense of solitude and timelessness.





# Almost Perfect

Almost Perfect. That's how I think of images made with toy cameras. Far from being a criticism, however, it's a celebration; a celebration of their uniqueness and individuality in this digital age where bigger is better and perfection is the ultimate goal.

Today, anyone can produce critically exposed, pin sharp, super-saturated photographs. With the latest cameras, lenses, scanners and printers, it's easier now than ever before to achieve technical perfection. But technical perfection is nothing without meaning, without atmosphere, without character, creativity and imagination.

Toy camera images have all these things in spades. The only thing they lack is technical perfection. But as this latest stunning gallery of images shows, you don't need technical perfection to create a work of art. In fact, the less 'perfect' an image, the more interesting and expressive it's likely to be and the more attention it's likely to attract.

Who needs perfect sharpness from corner to corner anyway? Sharpness is totally overrated.

What's wrong with a bit of fogging between friends?

And surely vignetting has to be a good thing because it helps to frame the subject?

Yes?

Anyway, enough of my ramblings. I'll leave you now to admire the images selected for this issue's gallery under the theme Almost Perfect. Whittling down over 100 submissions was hard – each and every one deserved to be included. But I had my orders! In the end, I just went for the images that caught my eye, made me take a second look and stimulated my imagination.

Enjoy.

P.S. I've just put together a book of black & white toy camera images entitled Almost Perfect. It will be limited to 500 casebound copies, each numbered and signed by myself. For a sneak preview go to [www.leefrost.co.uk/almostperfect](http://www.leefrost.co.uk/almostperfect). If you would like to pre-order a copy at a special discounted rate, email [info@leefrost.co.uk](mailto:info@leefrost.co.uk)



*Guest Photo Editor,  
Lee Frost*





*Rat's Eye View Bicycle*

Federico Ferrari

Udine, Italy

Holga 120N

ilferro\_ud@yahoo.it





*Number Eight*

Smith Chomdee

London, UK

Diana+

<http://www.flickr.com/chomdee>





*Rush*

Drasko Bogdanovic

Toronto, ON, Canada

Holga

[www.draskobogdanovic.ca](http://www.draskobogdanovic.ca)





*Still Life: Death*

Lena Källberg

Stockholm, Sweden

Debro plus plastic magnifier

[www.kallbergimages.com](http://www.kallbergimages.com)



*Steps to Nowhere*

Angela Petsis

Tallahassee, FL, USA

Holga 120 S

[www.angelapetsis.com](http://www.angelapetsis.com)





*Kiss*

Warren Harold

Houston, TX, USA

Shakey's Pizza—Diana Clone

[www.thatwasmyfoot.com](http://www.thatwasmyfoot.com)





*2 X Cyclops (Two Times Cyclops)*

John Silverstone

Tucson, Arizona, USA

Holga

[johnsilverstone@gmail.com](mailto:johnsilverstone@gmail.com)



*Stickwalk*

Robin Renee Hix  
Wimberley, TX, USA  
Holga B&W photo hand painted  
[www.RobinReneeHix.com](http://www.RobinReneeHix.com)





*Venice, Once Remembered*

Aline Smithson

Los Angeles, California, USA

Diana pinhole

[www.alinesmithson.com](http://www.alinesmithson.com)



*Circle Swing*  
Meg Birnbaum  
Somerville, MA, USA  
Holga with red plastic filter  
[www.megbirnbaumphotography.com](http://www.megbirnbaumphotography.com)



*Black Rock Cottage, Glencoe, Scotland*

Stuart Griffin

Edinburgh, Scotland

Diana Clone, Tri-X 400

<http://stuartgriffinphotography.com/>



# *Christian Arrecis*



*Act of Sedition*



*Annunciation*



*Ascension*



*Lessons in Flying*



*The Gathering*

## ARTIST STATEMENT

The thought of inanimate objects coming to life in the nighttime, crossing over from the dream world has always intrigued me. As a child I was always concerned with the welfare and stewardship of animals, believing that their welfare would ultimately be tied to our own salvation.

In the photographs in *Myth Making*, animals engage in mimicry and collaboration, in other photographs there is conflict and outright confrontation, and they speak to the concerns I had as a child.

Although nothing more than garage sale finds and thrift store cast-offs, they take on a mythic status and become metaphors not only for real animals but also our own limitations, desires and wishes.

By using a pinhole camera, details are suppressed, which detaches these animals from reality and places them in the realm of dreams. I want viewers to feel they have happened upon a theatrical and strange event.

## BIO

*Christian lives in DeKalb, Illinois, and is an M.F.A. candidate at Northern Illinois University. He teaches Beginning and Intermediate Photography at Kishwaukee College. He has worked extensively with pinhole cameras and has been named one of Illinois' Emerging Artists 2007.*

More of his work can be viewed at [www.christianarrecis.com](http://www.christianarrecis.com). 



# ❧ JERRY GOLAB ❧







# PAINT YOUR HOLGA

I used to think that black was a great color for a camera. Every camera I have ever owned has been black, but deep down I have always wanted a red camera. That's when I looked at one of my many Holgas with a sly grin and knew that my wish for a red camera would come true.



By Brian Schiele

## THE THINGS YOU'LL NEED TO PAINT YOUR HOLGA INCLUDE:

1. Your Holga camera
2. A plastic primer. I like Rust-Oleum's "Plastic Primer". You can find this at most hardware stores in the spray paint area
3. A multi-purpose enamel spray paint, in the finish of your choice (I like glossy). While I have never used plastic model paint, I have heard that it comes off easily, so using this method the paint will last a good long while
4. Masking tape or blue painter's tape, in whatever width you have available; two inch works best
5. An all purpose cleaner, to remove duct tape residue if your Holga is an older one
6. An X-acto knife with a fine point blade to cut away some of the masking tape on the smaller areas
7. A ball point pen



The first step is choosing the right color for your Holga. As you know, each Holga's characteristics are different, so choosing the right color is very important.

If your Holga is an old favorite it probably has a lot of duct tape residue, which I would suggest cleaning up before you begin. I have found that "Thoro" works well and doesn't harm the plastic. If your Holga is brand new then cleaning it isn't necessary, although you should remove the two stickers that are usually on the bottom of a new Holga. I would recommend that you remove the metal clips that keep the back on, by using a fingernail to pop the smaller clip and slide it up.

Taping your Holga is probably the most tedious, but also the most important step. A



well-taped camera will mean the difference between a good paint job and a sloppy one. Typically, I tape the upper portion of the Holga, to include the lens barrel, as well as the aperture

indicator (the sun or overcast icons), the tripod hole (if you have an "N" model), and the film counter window. Remember that the taped parts of the Holga will be black. Pay close attention to the viewfinder, especially when taping the back side. I have found

# GARY'S TOY BOX

## Voltron Star Shooter Camera



WELCOME TO THE TOY BOX. IN EACH ISSUE OF *LIGHT LEAKS* WE HOPE TO BRING YOU SOME UNUSUAL TOY CAMERAS AND TAKE THEM FOR A TEST DRIVE. OUR REVIEWS WILL BE BASED ON YEARS OF EXPERIENCE USING THE WORST CAMERAS THE WORLD OF PHOTOGRAPHY HAS TO OFFER. OUR HIGH TECH TESTING METHODS INCLUDE: FIGURING OUT WHERE THE FILM GOES, POINTING THE CAMERA AT A SUBJECT AND TRIPPING THE SHUTTER. THIS ISSUE WE REVIEW THE VOLTRON STAR SHOOTER CAMERA



### VOLTRON STAR SHOOTER LOW-DOWN

Manufacturer: Made in Macau for Impulse LTD

Date: 1985

Format: 110mm

Price: \$50-\$75 US

#### SUMMARY:

- **Plastic construction resembling a robot**
- **Technical Details:**
- **Single element lens**
- **Simple thumbwheel film advance**
- **Flash socket for Magicubes**

#### ATTRIBUTES:

- **No noticeable vignette**
- **Slight peripheral blurring**
- **Relatively sharp lens on center**
- **110mm film produces small negatives**



# BOOK REVIEWS

## THE DEATH OF PHOTOGRAPHY?

Andrew Smale, UK, 2007. 113 pages, full-color interior, 7½x7½”.

With the advent of digital photography and its subsequent mass appeal, the new age-old debate has become whether digital is killing film photography. In his appropriately-titled



book *The Death of Photography?*, Andrew Smale explores his reborn love for film-based image capture and his beloved Holga toy camera as he struggles with the allegations that film photography is experiencing its demise at the hands of “Utopia with megapixels”.

*The Death of Photography?* is a thoughtfully-crafted essay

arguing the merits and follies of both film and digital while showcasing over 50 beautifully-toned and printed photographs made by Smale himself with his Holga or Zero 2000 Pinhole camera, while wandering Bristol, Bath, and the Cotswolds. The images are a joy to peruse and help the flow of the essay. Some may also find Smale’s tutorial on developing film with Rodinal an unexpected and welcome addition. With the masses being quick to jump on the digital bandwagon, Smale aims to bring folks back into the film fold and to help them learn for themselves if digital is in fact causing the death of photography.

Available at Lulu.com for \$30.83 US + shipping for the full-size version, or for \$23.58 US + shipping for a smaller 6x9” edition containing unabridged text but fewer photographs.

