U.S. Camera

COMBINED WITH *TRAVEL* AND *CAMERA*

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Richard Avedon
PHOTOGRAPHIC PRODIGY

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HASSELBLAD CAMERA

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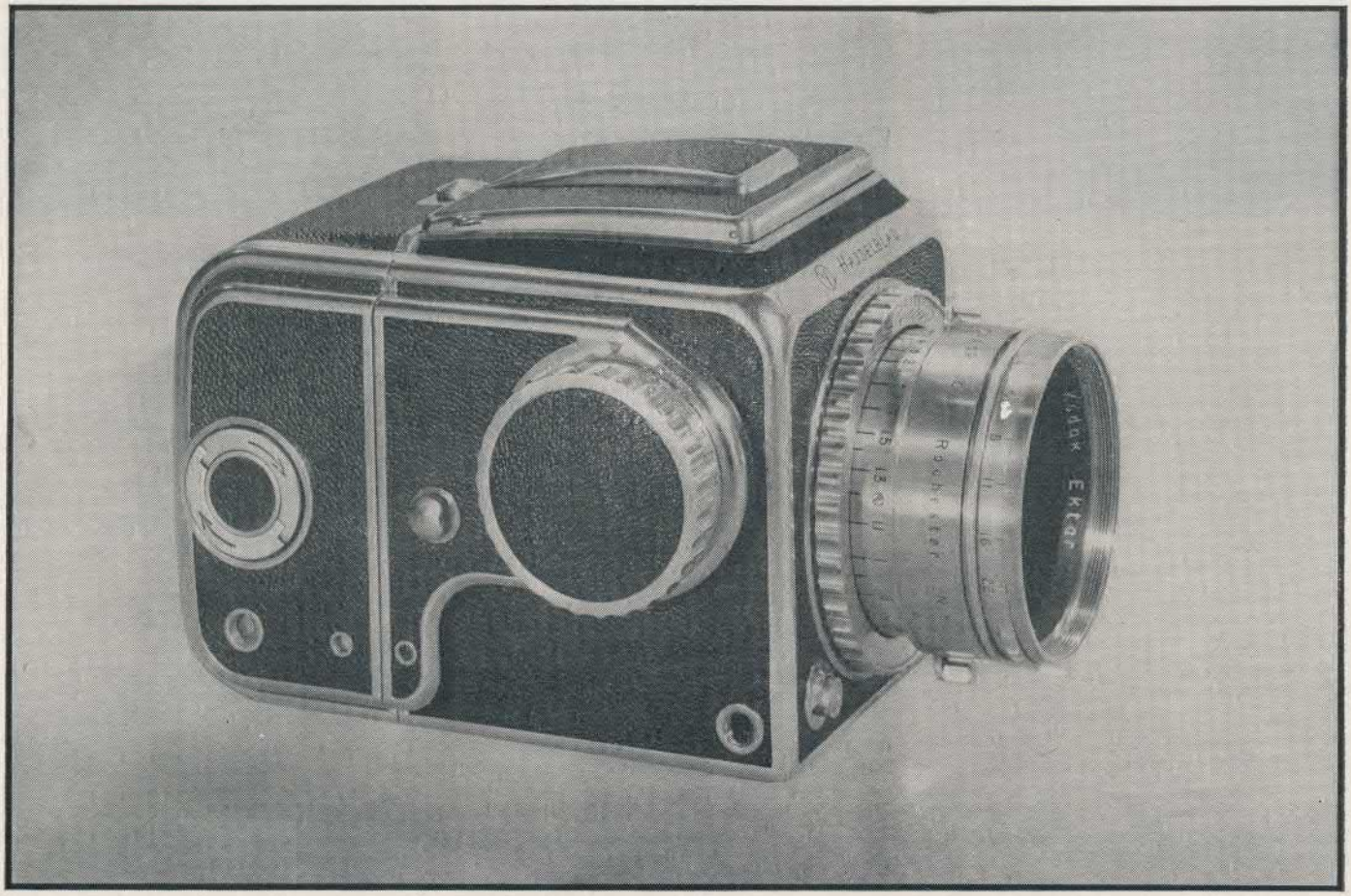
ROBERT FLAHERTY'S
"LOUISIANA STORY"

KODACHROME By RICHARD AVEDON, Courtesy Harper's Bazaar.

We test the HASSELBLAD

Swedish single-lens reflex incorporates features that herald it as *the* dream camera

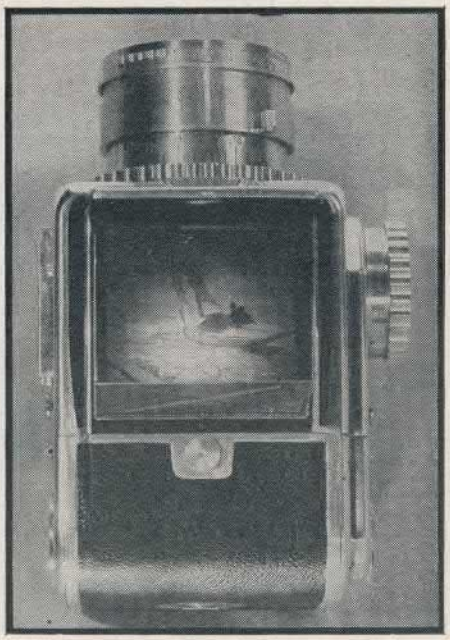


SIDE VIEW of the Hasselblad Camera shows remarkably few controls for such a precision instrument. Picture is three-fourths actual size.

A CAMERA designed by a photographer to master shortcomings he found in most existing cameras; engineered and built by some of the finest craftsmen in Europe—this is the widely acclaimed Hasselblad Camera. The Hasselblad is already known in this country, due to year-old rumors and some news reports from the recent Master Photo Dealers Convention in Cleveland, where it was introduced. Now we can present to *U. S. Camera* readers a detailed picture, after actual tests of this remarkably versatile camera.

The camera used by us was one of two pilot models brought to this country by Victor Hasselblad, the designer and manufacturer. It uses 120 size roll film; makes 12 negatives 2¼" x 2¼" per roll. The Hasselblad is a single lens reflex—this alone is unique in a camera of its size, but other features are even more revolutionary in camera design.

An extremely thin (6/10,000-inch), corrugated stainless steel focal plane shutter has 11 speed selections from 1 second to 1/1600-second and Bulb. There is only one slit in the curtain—speed is governed solely by its passage across the film. The type of shutter and the materials used in its construction were carefully tested before the actual mechanism was built. One of the most important parts of any camera, the shutter of the Hasselblad is a miracle of workmanship—a credit to the camera.



THE CAMERA looks this way to the operator; all controls are within easy reach.

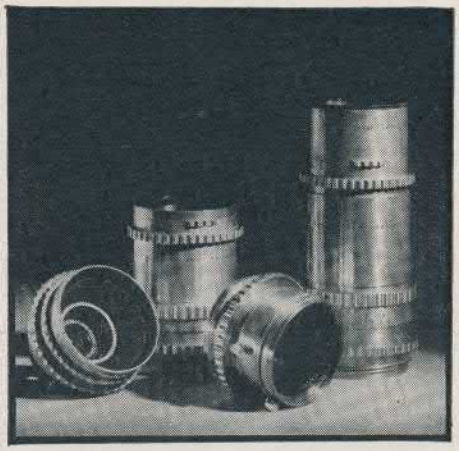
Shutter settings are made with the large knob on the right side of the camera body. When pulled out, the knob may be turned forward or back to any shutter speed desired, and at any time before exposure, whether or not the mechanism is wound.

The same knob that sets the shutter speed is used to wind the shutter and transport the film; both actions are performed simultaneously, making double exposures impossible. After each exposure, the knob is given one turn. It stops automatically when the shutter is set and the next frame is in position. By giving three operations to one control—operations which are performed from the normal shooting position—the use of the camera is greatly simplified.

On the right side of the camera, there are placed two small windows, side by side. The rear one is the film signal, which shows

IN USE, the left hand supports the camera; left index finger controls shutter release.

HOOD raised, the camera has a neat, trim look. Note magazine on rear of camera body.



BATTERY of lenses includes: 55mm, 80mm, 135mm, 254mm Eastman Kodak coated Ektars.

white for unexposed, and red for exposed film. The one nearer the front is the shutter indicator, which is white when the shutter is wound; red when it has been released. The photographer is always informed by these windows when the camera is set for the next exposure.

These indicator windows are necessary, because the operator may change from black and white to color film, or from one emulsion to another, *at any time during operation*. This is achieved by one of the camera's outstanding features: a magazine containing the roll film. The magazine is attached to the rear of the camera body. When a metal slide is inserted between the magazine and the camera, a tripper may be actuated which allows the back to be removed. Film is loaded or unloaded in the magazine, which is replaced on the camera. By having magazines (which are interchangeable) the photographer may load one with black and white, one with color, and change over after every exposure if he wants to, by merely inserting the light-tight slide and removing the magazine. When the slide is inserted, the camera may not be worked, and conversely, when the slide is out, the magazine may not be removed. These safeguards protect the photographer from blank or fogged film.

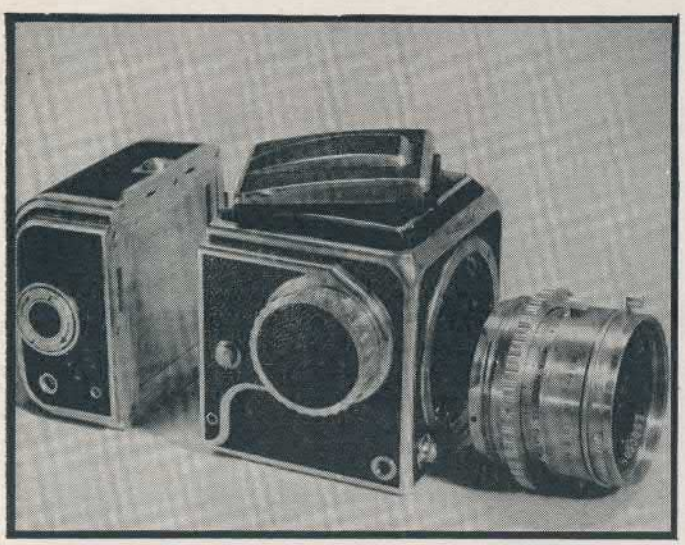
The lenses for the Hasselblad Camera are made by Eastman Kodak Company. A battery of four Ektar lenses provides complete picture coverage in quality, speed and focal lengths. The standard lens is an 80mm Ektar f/2.8; in addition there is a 55mm wide field Ektar f/6.3; a long 135mm Ektar f/3.5, and an extra-long 254mm (10 inch) Ektar f/5.6. All of the lenses are coated, and all are fitted with quick-change mounts, permitting simple and fast switches from one lens to another. The lens mount is a combination screw and bayonet type, for secure fastening and easy operation, and has a lock on the front of the camera to prevent accidental removal of a lens.

Stopping down before taking a picture with the Hasselblad is a new experience, for the diaphragm has a patented preselector. This means that the actual diaphragm setting for the proper exposure can be set at full diaphragm, then a trigger sets the diaphragm just before the exposure is made; the photographer need not look at the diaphragm scale again.

Two wiring systems are built into the camera; one for flash bulbs, and one for speed lamps of the Kodatron type. Long peak flash bulbs synchronize with all shutter speeds, between-the-lens types synchronize from 1 second to 1/25 second. There are two contacts on the flash-accessory shoe —one meets the contact on the flash gun, the other the contact on the speed light.

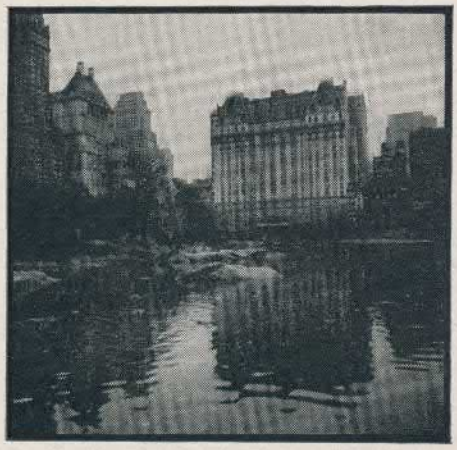
Those are the principal characteristics of the "dream camera." The man who designed it, Victor Hasselblad, merely has this to say about it: "I have used practically all types of cameras, none of which filled all my needs. So I sat down and began to draw what I thought the ideal camera should look like." It sounds as simple as that! Mr. Hasselblad is well-suited to foster this camera, for he is the third head of the Hasselblad Photographic Company, founded by his grandfather. They are distributors and makers of many types of photographic equipment, but this is the *first* actual camera that they have built for the market! During the war the company started to work on cameras by building aerial types for the RAF.

The photographs at the top of the next page were made with the Hasselblad in



BROKEN DOWN into its major parts, camera details, film magazine, and lens may be clearly seen. Metal slide is in magazine.

ROLL FILM travels toward camera front from spools, against the natural curl of the film, has an extremely flat focal plane.



WIDE ANGLE 55mm lens was used for first shot in series. Note amount of field covered.

STANDARD 80mm lens shows good quality, even in picture made on a dark, cloudy day.

EXTRA LONG 254mm lens shows fraction of first picture area with good detail, quality.

Central Park, New York. By describing the steps in taking the pictures, a clearer idea of the camera's operation may be given.

The slide was in the magazine when the camera was taken out of its case, so the button was pressed to release the magazine. The film is put in its socket, and the leader inserted in the take-up spool. The procedure varies from normal here: film is led "backwards" across the pressure plate, *against* the curl of the roll. (The manufacturer claims that the film plane is flatter than with any other roll film camera made.) The magazine is replaced on the camera body, the slide withdrawn, and the take-up knob turned until resistance is felt. At that point, a great many things happen. Number "1" appears on the film counter window, as the first frame goes into place; the white indicator pops into place in *its* window; the shutter is wound, and the shutter indicator window shows white. The camera is ready for the first exposure.

The left hand supports the camera, in such a way that the left index finger falls on the shutter release. Only the right hand moves—to focus, set shutter speed, set diaphragm, and to move the diaphragm selector.

The image on the ground glass is brighter than with any other reflex camera, due to an extra lens, placed between the focusing screen and the mirror. This greatly increases the ease of focusing, especially in bad light.

In order to change to the long focus lens for the series above, the button opposite the shutter release is held down, and a half-turn removes the lens. The next lens is screwed in, and the camera is ready to go again. The exposure will have to be increased, however, and the setting is easily made with the knob, even though the shutter is wound. With the 254mm lens, there was a tendency for the nose of the camera to drop. The camera would seldom be used with that lens unless it was mounted on a tripod, however, so it does not make a serious difficulty. The neck strap also helps a great deal in holding the camera steady.

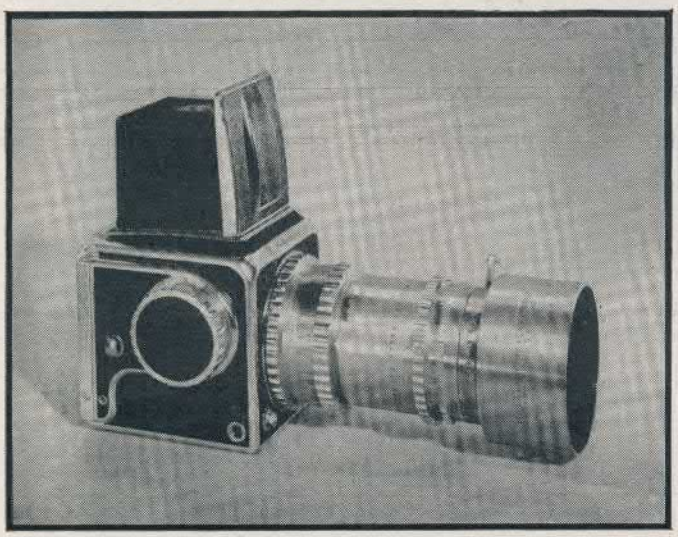
Foremost of the accessories for the Hasselblad is a cut film holder which clamps on the camera in place of the film magazine. The Eastman Kodak Company is producing 2¼" x 2¼" cut film for the camera.

Other accessories include a remote shutter release, which is placed in the cable release socket. There will also be available extension tubes of varying lengths for making greatly magnified closeups.

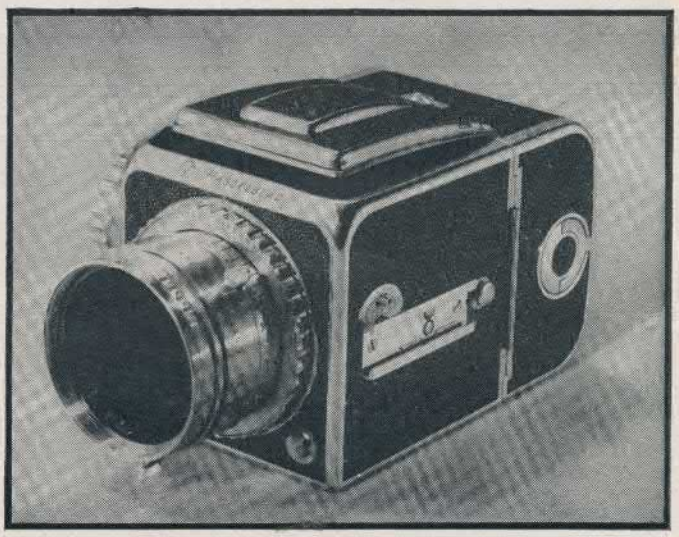
The camera will be marketed in the U. S. sometime in March, and will be distributed by Willoughby's, New York City. The price of the camera will be between $480 and $500 with the 80mm f/2.8 Ektar lens. Prices for accessories and other lenses will be announced at a later date.

A complete service department, with factory-trained mechanics, will be set up in this country to handle repairs.

"Versatile," according to Webster, means: "Turning with ease from one thing to another; having aptitude for new tasks, or facility in various subjects." The Hasselblad is truly a versatile camera. With its portability; the interchangeable lenses; its facility to switch from black and white to color, and all of this at any time, quickly and safely, the camera is widely useful and efficient in any phase of photography. Particular fields in which its features will be noticebaly advantageous are: pictorial, sport, nature, scientific, technical, documentary, candid and press photography. With few reservations, we have found this to be *the* dream camera.—*J.T.*



STUBBY APPEARANCE is due to the cut film holder in place of film magazine, the 135 mm long focus lens, and a lens hood.



LEFT SIDE of camera shows lens lock release on front, the flash-accessory shoe, control setting for different flash bulbs.