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Crit Studio: Everyday Objects

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February 18, 2019

Mise En Scene

* 1. Collect background information and images.

This camera offered better control in its time with less knobs and levers making it easier for novice photographers to use. It was also is less prone to failing mechanically and contains an lens cap that inverts into a lens shade. It was originally olive green however later models were black.

* 1. Text about the object. Try to answer these questions:
     1. Who used it? Men, women, kids?

More or less it was used by anyone who knew how to operate a camera. This camera is very interactive and requires the photographer to be engaged in what they are doing. They were nicknamed the Volkscamera, meaning the people’s camera in German.

* + 1. What class? Rich, poor, employed, all-of-the-above?   
       Geography: Where was it used? America, Europe, Africa, Asia, etc.

The Werra 1 was a camera made in the German Democratic Republic in the town of Jena. The Zeiss company building was situated right next to the river Werra, hence the name of the camera. There is no specific information on what class used this camera, however given the nickname “the people’s camera” means that it was most likely used by people from all classes, maybe more specifically the working class.

* Where was it used, specifically? suburbs, offices, bathrooms, restaurants.

1. What can we know about the race or ethnicity of the users?

The Camera was sold throughout the Soviet Bloc. This includes Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. Therefore, all of these nationalities and nations were able to use the camera. Today the cameras can be sold on multiple websites and are circulating around the world.

1. And when? What year(s) and era? Note: is/was it used at a fixed moment or is it ongoing?

The Werra 1 was assembled in the 1950’s as a means of employment for factory workers who had been commissioned in Russia and were making their way home to Germany. The workers were a part of the Carl Zeiss Jena company, a manufacturer of optical systems.