

*Exa*

## Exa Black Flange - 1952 - #201981



Exa, Version 1, #201981, This Exa with 1/150 speed (previous cameras, a small batch, not more than 200, had 1/250). Pay attention to the body number (I do not know a Black Flange Exa over #204000), it is easy to replace the black flange! This camera works and it is in fine condition. Comes with a leather case.



Exa, Version 1, #201981, Il tempo più veloce è 1/150. In precedenza le prime Exa, non più di 200, avevano 1/250. Fate attenzione al numero di serie (non ho mai visto questa versione con un numero di serie superiore a 204000) poichè è facile sostituire la flangia. Questa macchina funziona è bella ed ha la sua borsa di cuoio.

# Exa

## Black Flange Exa - Something about

In early 1998 I saw an advertisement for an Exa from a Boston antique dealer, who illustrated his ad with a picture of a black flange Exa from a factory manual. I immediately

Trioplan 2.9/50mm lens serial 1082967 calibrated in meters and a hooded viewfinder version 2. Its lens mounting flange is of black-lacquered aluminium, with a filled



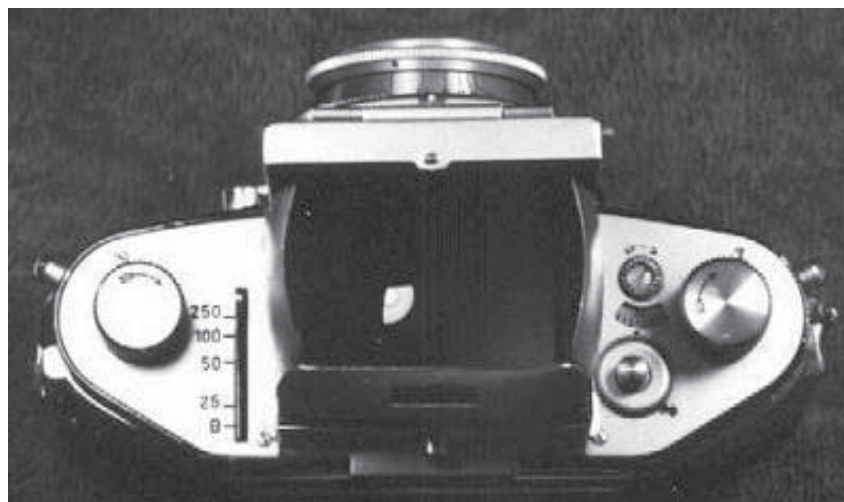
bought both manual and camera over the phone. On receipt it proved to be an original Exa with a top shutter speed of 1/250.

Not a day later I encountered another black flange Exa advertised, and bought it over the telephone. On receipt it proved to be a first-change version with a serial number only slightly higher.

The original Exa (pictured) bears serial number 200056. It has a Meyer

pinhole at the 10:00 position. Its top shutter speed is 1/250. It has two pairs of bipolar flash contacts marked "V" and "E". It is covered in black ribbed synthetic material. It is provided with strap lugs. It conforms to Wichmann's Type 1 Variant A. It bears strap lugs, but it otherwise resembles Hummel's 040 specification. It is fully operable and in good cosmetic condition, with some burnishing on the magnifier cover and slight chipping of the black enamel trim, intact leather

### The early black flange Exas Louis Emmet Mahoney writes about his rare Exas



throughout, and no visible dents. The lens appears to bear some slight cleaning marks, and its metal shows patina without scratches or corrosion. An apparently original user's manual accompanied this camera. This bears a Leipzig printer's date of 5 July 1952. Its illustrations show unserialised cameras (probably prototypes) with the top shutter speed retouched to "150". The serial numbers on the Trioplan lenses pictured are higher than the lens on this camera. None of the pictures show strap rings. I

conclude this camera is a 1951-production original Exa with its original lens and a manual modified for the first-change versions. It is probably the fifty-sixth production camera.

My second black flange Exa -- a "first change" version -- bears serial number 201152. It has a Meyer Trioplan 2.9/50mm lens serial 1080517 calibrated in feet, and a hooded viewfinder version 2. Its lens flange is of black-lacquered

aluminium, with a filled pinhole at the 10:00 position. Its top shutter speed is 1/150. It has two pairs of bipolar flash contacts marked "V" and "E". It is covered in black ribbed synthetic material, probably synthetic. It is provided with strap lugs. It conforms perfectly to Wichmann's Type 1 Variant B. It bears strap lugs, but otherwise resembles Hummel's 041 illustration. It is fully operable and in very good cosmetic condition, with some burnishing on the magnifier cover only,

excellent paint and leather, and no visible dents or other damage. The lens appears clean and undamaged. This camera is accompanied by an apparently original russet

shutter cocking and film transport. Rewind mechanism and adjustable exposure counter. Button rewind release. A pair of flash contacts for Vakublitz synchronisation.



leather everready case in good condition.

Richard Hummel, in his book Spiegelreflexcameras aus Dresden, described the original "Exa Varex" as a

"simplified, low-price camera as a counterpart to the Exakta Varex. Changeable viewfinders and objectives like for the Exakta Varex. Special metal hinged shutter with adjustable settings of 1/25, 1/50, 1/100, and 1/250 seconds and Bulb set by a lever. Knob-wind for

Shutter release with safety catch blocked when the viewfinder is closed. An attached back. A light metal camera body with polished trim and black lacquered parts, covered with black leather." [Original in German] Hummel wrote that about 40 such cameras were produced in February 1950. The design was then modified to add a second pair of flash contacts for electronic flash. The upper sockets were labelled "V" (Vakublitzanschluss) for M-class bulbs, and the lower "E"



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(Elektronenblitze) for electronic flash. Hummel wrote that about 100 of this variant (Hummel 039) were produced during March of 1950 before the factory decided to do away with the "Varex" markings. One could infer these were pre-production models, as Hummel records no production between March 1950 and February 1951. Another 1,150 cameras were then produced between February and August 1951, differing only in the absence of the "Varex" marking (Hummel 040). At this point it was decided that the top speed of 1/250 was unreliable. The top speed was recalibrated to 1/150. Some unknown number of cameras were produced to this specification between August 1951 and February 1952 (Hummel states 11,817 for this "first change" variant, usually designated Hummel 041). At that time the labels on the flash contacts were modified from the German "V" and "E" to the more international "M" and "X" ("second change," Hummel 042, Hummel's production figures 6,980). At some time about May

of 1952 the black-lacquered lens bayonets left over from Exakta II production were exhausted, and further Exas were furnished with bayonet mounts of chrome-plated brass ("third change," Hummel 043, Hummel's production figures 13,852). There is some question how many black flange Exas were produced. Hummel's book describes these variants at his Figures 038 through 042. His production figures would lead one to believe that about 140 "Exa Varex" versions were produced, among as many as 18,000 black flange Exas in all. Serial numbers, however, suggest far fewer. Exa serial numbers start at 200000. Several examples demonstrate that serial numbers above 209000 have chrome flanges. The highest black-flange serial number I know is 203444, in Maurizio Frizziero's

collection. Klaus Wichmann's book illustrates an example with a serial number of 202375. The Ebay electronic auction recently offered a black flange Exa serialled 202483 with a

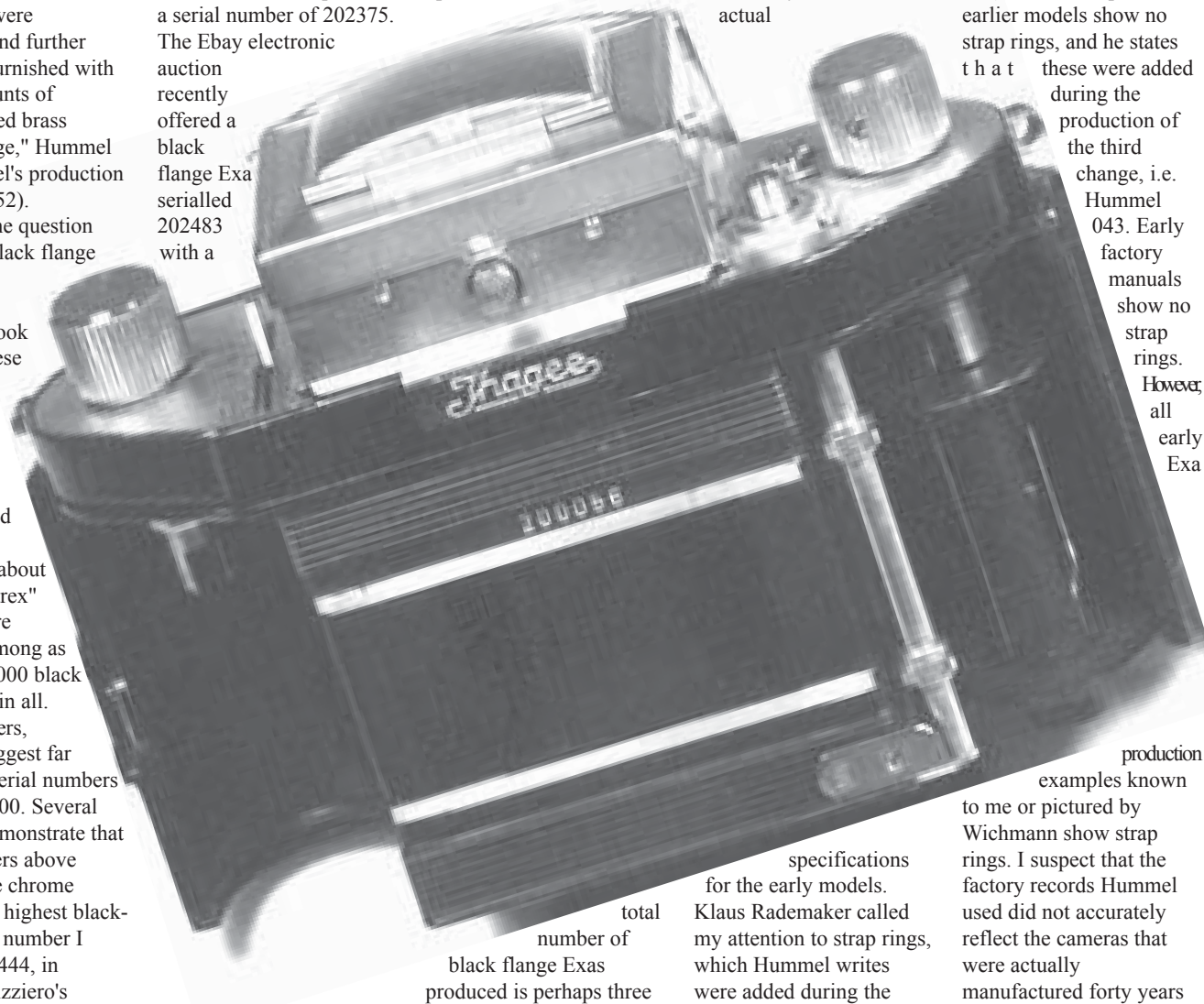
bizarre Russian snakeskin cover. I am of the opinion the

to four thousand in all. There is also some controversy as to the actual

production run of third-change Exas (Hummel 043). Hummel's photos of earlier models show no strap rings, and he states that these were added during the production of the third change, i.e. Hummel 043. Early factory manuals show no strap rings. However, all early Exa

previously. Aguila and Rouah's book Exakta Cameras 1933-1978 contains little information on early Exas. More information is available to those who can read German. I suggest that collectors interested in Exas should obtain a copy of Klaus Wichmann's book Exa, die Preiswerte Kleinbildreflex. It is currently available from Lindemanns Verlag in Stuttgart. Another valuable German reference for Exaktas, Exas, and most other East German single lens reflexes (now out of print) is Richard Hummel's Spiegelreflexcameras aus Dresden, written by the former chief engineer of Ihagee Dresden. [Louis Emmet Mahoney, 18 Jan 1999]

(Note by MF: I wish to thank the author, Louis Emmet Mahoney, for his efforts to make our knowledge grow. I hope to receive more articles like this one from other Exakta collectors!)



total number of black flange Exas produced is perhaps three specifications for the early models. Klaus Rademaker called my attention to strap rings, which Hummel writes were added during the

production examples known to me or pictured by Wichmann show strap rings. I suspect that the factory records Hummel used did not accurately reflect the cameras that were actually manufactured forty years