Antique Kodak Autographic No.3 Model H Camera With Red Bellows. Usa, C. 1916



325 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Length : 11,5 cm (4,53 in).

Height : 19,5 cm (7,68 in).

Description

This Kodak Eastman Autographic No.3 Model H with red bellows, luxury edition, manufactured between 1916 and 1917 in Rochester (New York, USA), was one of the most advanced cameras of the World War I era and represents a pinnacle in the evolution of portable photography. This model was designed to use Autographic 118 film, which produced negatives measuring 3¼ × 4¼ inches (8.3 × 10.8 cm), ideal for portraits and medium-format landscapes. Its distinguishing feature is the rear autographic window, accompanied by its original metal stylus, perfectly preserved in its holder, allowing the photographer to write notes or dates directly onto the negative's emulsion.

This example immediately stands out for its

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IberAntiques
Antiques and Collectibles
Tel : +34 976 45 39 31
Mobile : +34 617 46 85 03

Calle Juan Cabrero, 18 Local AA
Zaragoza 50007

beautiful red leather bellows, a finish reserved for special or luxury export editions, produced in very limited quantities, barely 5% of total production. This feature places it among the most sought-after cameras by international collectors, since the vast majority of surviving Model H units feature black bellows.

Equipped with a Kodak Ball Bearing Kodamatic lens, patented in 1909 and improved in 1914, it offers an exceptional combination of mechanical precision and durability. The shutter system provides exposure times from Bulb to 1/100 s, with clear and reliable settings. The variable diaphragm allows depth-of-field control through a front ring graduated from f/8 to f/45. This assembly, together with the rack-and-pinion focusing system on the front rail, ensured superior sharpness, capable of rivaling studio plate cameras of the same period.

The body, covered in black grained leather, retains its full original appeal. The nickel hardware shines evenly, and the levers and springs move smoothly. The shutter works perfectly at different speeds, and the bellows are solid, with no light leaks or cracks. On the back, the inscription "USE AUTOGRAPHIC FILM NO.A-118" confirms exact compatibility with the film format and authenticity of the set. The camera is complete, with its winding roller included.

Few cameras so clearly illustrate George Eastman's ambition to democratize photography without sacrificing technical refinement. The Model H combined elegance, portability, and such precise mechanics that it was adopted by explorers and field photographers at a time when every exposure demanded skill and patience.

Because of its rarity, excellent working condition, and the detail of its original red bellows, this camera is today a high-level collector's piece,

worthy of inclusion in a display dedicated to Kodak's history or early twentieth-century photography. Its formal beauty, together with the balance of innovation and craftsmanship, makes it a highly decorative piece, capable of captivating both the technical collector and the lover of classic design.

This is an exceptional opportunity to own a historical Kodak piece in outstanding condition. It is extremely rare to find such a complete example, with original red bellows and intact autographic stylus. Perfect to stand out in a refined collection or as a centerpiece in a cabinet dedicated to the history of photography.

Dimensions: 19.5 × 11.5 cm (7.68 × 4.53 in).

History of the Kodak Autographic No.3 Model H

The Kodak Autographic series was introduced in 1914 and transformed photography for amateurs and travelers alike. The autographic system, patented by Henry J. Gaisman, allowed users to inscribe information directly onto the negative through a small rear door. This simple yet brilliant innovation was quickly adopted by Eastman Kodak, which launched an entire family of cameras featuring this functionality, from the 1A and 2A models to the larger 3A and 3 Model H.

The Model H appeared in the 1916 catalog as an improved version--more compact and robust--adapted for 118 film. It incorporated the Kodak Ball Bearing shutter, considered one of the most reliable of its time, and offered a high-precision photographic experience in a still portable format. In many respects, it represented the transition between the handcrafted bellows cameras of the nineteenth century and the automated modern photography of the 1920s.

During World War I, Kodak promoted these

models as ideal cameras for travelers, explorers, and correspondents. Their generous format and light weight made them essential tools for early photojournalism. Over time, the Autographic cameras became symbols of American ingenuity and industrial design applied to photography.

Today, examples with original red bellows are especially coveted. They were produced in small numbers for select markets, and their preservation in perfect condition, with original stylus, is extraordinarily rare. The Kodak Autographic No.3 Model H thus represents one of the most beautiful and technically refined chapters in the history of Eastman Kodak.

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