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Very Rare Antique Prototype Camera Baudry Isographe Stereo. France, 1938-39

2 800 EUR



Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Length : 15 cm (5.91 in).

Height : 5,5 cm (2.17 in).

Description

The camera we present is an extraordinarily rare Baudry Isographe Stereo 6×13 prototype, manufactured in France circa 1938-1939, an experimental camera created prior to the regular production of the model. The front retains the original ISOGRAPHE plate, mounted on hand-machined aluminum. The screws, the texture of the metal, and the way the elements are integrated reveal handcrafted execution typical of a pre-series example. The bellows, flexible and in excellent condition, remains completely light-tight, a highly valuable aspect in folding cameras of this period. The metal body, reinforced by upper and lateral rods, further strengthens the impression of solidity and functional design made to last.

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The camera is fitted with a matching pair of Berthiot Paris Olor Serie II f/5.7 75 mm lenses in magnificent condition. These high-quality French professional optics were present in high-end stereoscopic cameras during the 1920s and 1930s, and are documented in 6×13 configuration in period literature. The front shutter mechanism operates correctly. The camera is marked CP 145, visible on the underside of the body. The set is presented with four 6×13 metal plate holders, an antique box containing Bauchet plates, and the original instruction sheet.

The overall condition is superb: well-preserved optics, fully operational mechanisms, intact structure, and light-tight bellows. An ideal piece for a collection dedicated to pre-war French photography, stereoscopy, or handcrafted optical instrumentation.

An extraordinary opportunity to acquire an experimental Baudry Isographe Stereo prototype, fully functional, extremely rare, and of outstanding historical and mechanical interest.

Measurements: 15 × 5.5 cm, 5.91 × 2.17 in.

### History of Lucien Baudry

The Baudry workshop was founded in France at the beginning of the 20th century under the direction of Lucien Baudry, an artisan from Angers trained in fine watchmaking and precision mechanics. His expertise in micro-adjustments, gears, and metal structures led him to develop photographic cameras in limited production, created for demanding users and specific technical requirements. This was not an industrial factory, but a handcrafted workshop where each device was individually constructed, incorporating proprietary solutions and execution that prioritized mechanical stability and precision fitting.

Interwar French photography included numerous workshops of this type, specializing in professional or experimental apparatus. In this context, Baudry Isographe cameras, including the stereoscopic versions, gained recognition for their solidity, precision, and excellence of materials. Short production models existed, as well as experimental variants developed as testing platforms for optical and mechanical systems. Documentation is scarce due to the artisanal nature of the workshop and the fact that many of these pieces were never commercialized in large numbers.

The Isographe models combined robust metal bodies, well-calibrated extension mechanisms, carefully designed viewfinders, and high-grade French optics such as Berthiot and later Boyer Saphir. The different combinations of lenses and structures help date the surviving examples. The fact that this prototype uses a pair of Berthiot Olor Serie II lenses, predating the final configurations, confirms that it was employed during the development phase preceding the commercial model.

Today, Baudry cameras represent one of the most interesting and least documented chapters of French photography. Their rarity, experimental character, and handcrafted nature make them highly desirable among advanced collectors, and each surviving unit constitutes a direct source of information about pre-war French optical engineering.

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