



Using Medium Format Cameras with a Laptop Computer

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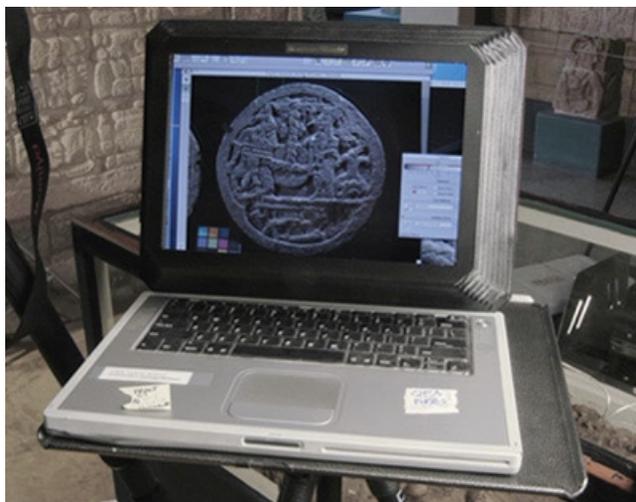
Using Medium Format Cameras with a Laptop Computer

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The Leaf Valeo 22 wireless is the first truly portable medium format camera of 17 or 22 megapixel size. By truly portable we mean no cables anywhere. The Kodak ProBack 645 was the first portable at 16 megapixel size, but that camera back is no longer made.

When photographing outside on location with the Leaf Valeo I prefer to use the wireless feature with the PDA as the viewer. This way I can work alone without needing a costly assistant. But sometimes it is more practical to have a portable computer monitor so you can see the images at larger size.

It may sound ironic to take the most portable medium format camera in the world and hook it up to a computer, but for shooting in museums, and even photographing out on location, I now prefer to use a laptop in all situations where I am not moving constantly. Everything about shooting is easier when you can see each and every image clearly, without squinting at a mini-sized monitor which, even in the best of conditions, is not very visible.

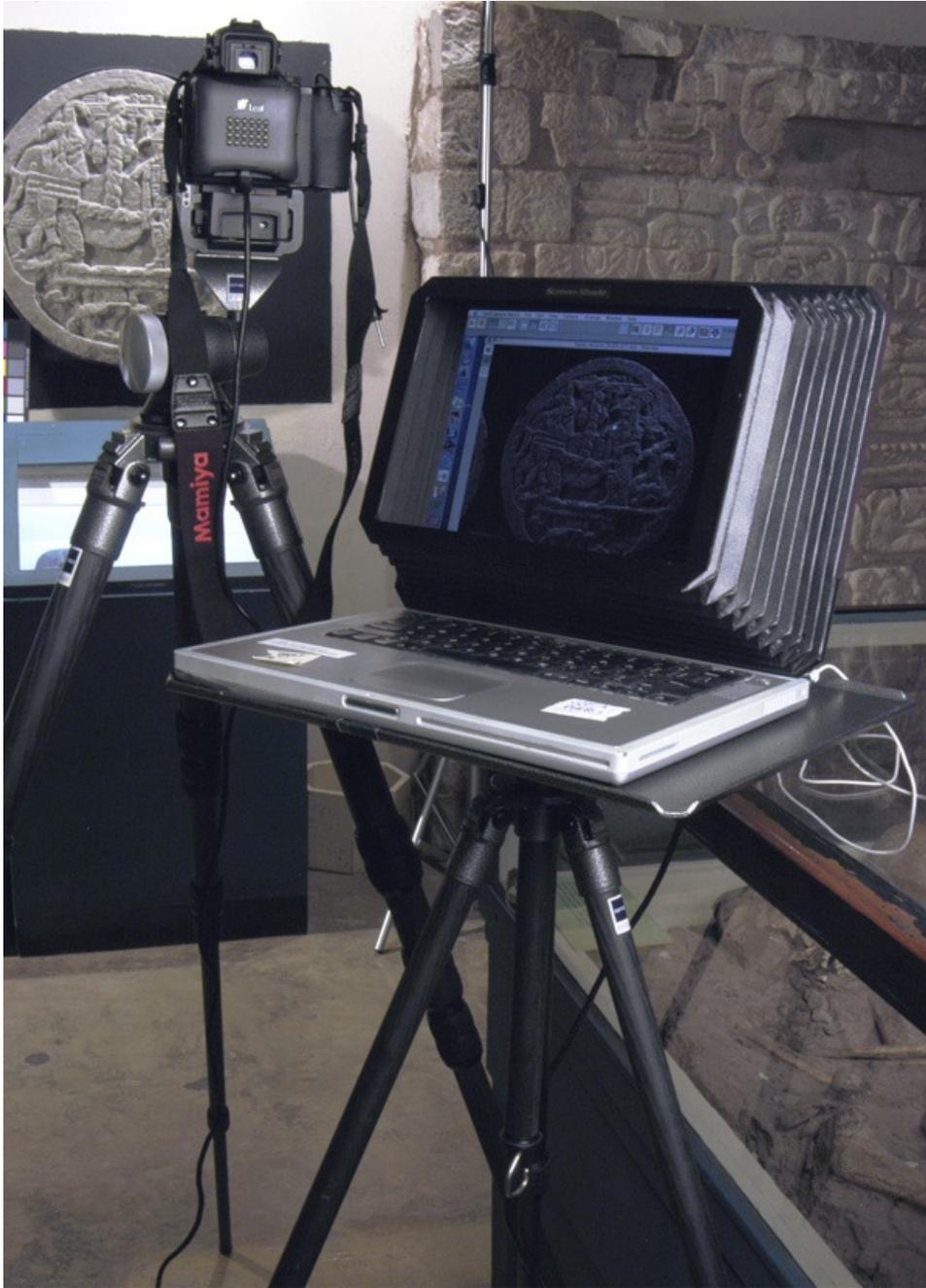


Using a laptop nowadays is made easier by the ready availability of other portability accessories. The first is the portable laptop computer tripod-table. Both Gitzo and Manfrotto offer tables of this kind. We have the Gitzo G065 "monitor platform." But it is more than a monitor platform, it holds the complete 15" Macintosh Titanium. I estimate it would also hold the 17" Mac Titanium equally well. Only thing that is missing is a side arm or pull-out tray to hold a mouse pad for mousing. But I find you can manage either by using the touchpad or by using the mouse on top of the front area of the Titanium, on the large expanse in front of the keyboard.

The other accessory that makes it not just feasible, but desirable to use a laptop out on location (or in the studio), is the screen-shade for laptops. By using a monitor shade you can see with a clarity that is simply not available from any normal camera monitor.

Hoodman was one of the first companies that made such a screen-shade. But their design had multiple problems: its viewing area is too small, it does not hold onto the computer easily, and it is hard to fold properly. The much superior design from Lee Filters is the one we recommend. These "screen-shades" are available from Screen-Shade, www.Screen-Shade.com, info@Screen-Shade.com.

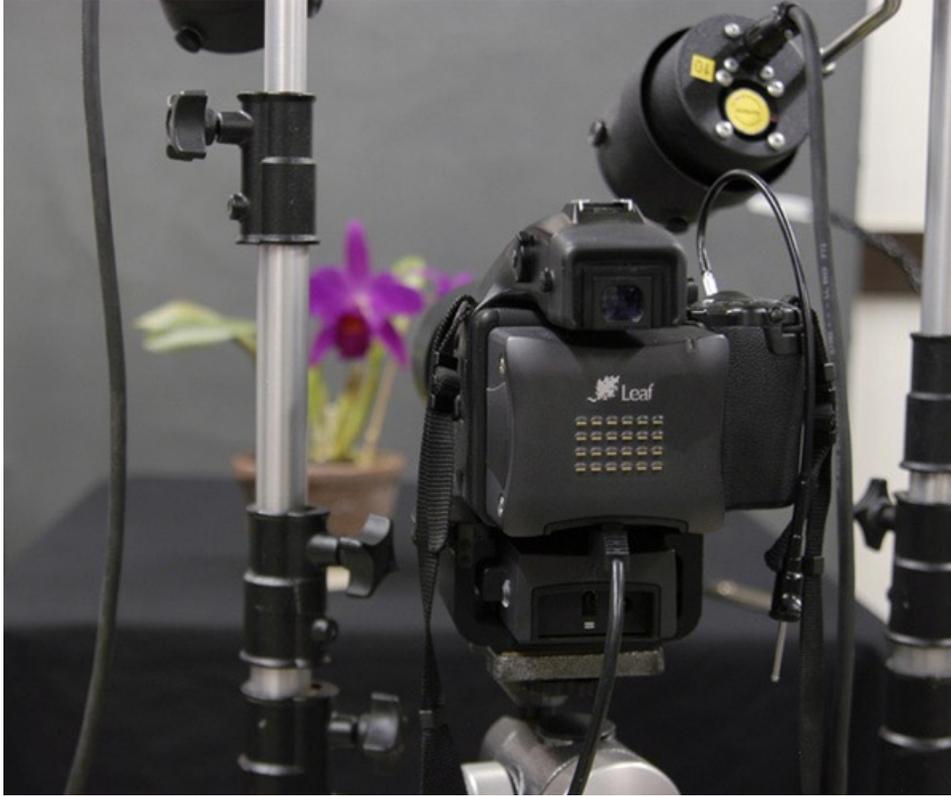
Obviously shooting in your main studio it is natural to use your Leaf on a computer. The purpose of this brief report is to suggest that now you can get better results out on location as well.



Samples



Samples



Samples



Summary

We were attracted originally to the Leaf Valeo 22 because it was completely wireless. Most of the photography that we do is out on location in Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, or Mexico. We can't be snaggled with wires and cables.

But when you are in one place for more than an hour, and if you really want to get better results, we highly recommend getting your hands on a tripod to hold your laptop computer. Then add a sun shade and you will be more relaxed when out on location doing photography. We now use the "sun" shade even inside.

The Leaf Valeo 22 on the Mamiya 645 AFD produces enviable results. Having the test shots on the computer monitor allows you to more easily fine tune everything.

Although the Leaf cameras are made for fashion, portraits, weddings, and commercial product photography, I would recommend the Leaf also for

- Architectural photography
- Historical buildings for architectural history
- Photography of works of art
- Photography of artifacts and other archaeological objects
- Photography of scientific specimens for botany, zoology, and geology, ecology.
- Fine art photography for giclee printing.

Acknowledgements

The Leaf Valeo and newer Leaf Aptus cameras are shown and described on www.Creo.com/Leaf

Leaf digital backs are distributed in the US by Mamiya America. Mamiya America is also the logical source of information on the Mamiya 645 AFD camera (the one we are using with the Leaf back). You can see this camera on their web page www.mamiya.com/cameras2.asp?id=1&id2=1728

We obtained our Leaf back and Mamiya 645 system through Parrot Digigraphic. The advantage of working with Parrot is that they are familiar with fine art giclee, color management, Epson printers, photo papers for inkjet, canvas and watercolor papers for inkjet, and high-end scanners for scanning photo archives. Contact is imaging@parrotcolor.com.

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