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Book Descriptions:

contax s2b manual

It is a fully mechanical, manual focus, manually operated 35mm SLR camera, using batteries only to power the light meter, and features titanium top and bottom plates. The camera was intended as a purist model for use by customers who were experienced photographers. It is unusual among modern 35mm cameras in that the light meter was designed as a spot meter, without centerweighted or matrix metering options. The use of only a spot meter required some knowledge and expertise by the owner for accurate exposures. The S2b is virtually identical to the S2 with the exception of a different external finish, and a light meter that is centerweighted to provide accurate exposure under an average range of lighting conditions. Both the S2 and S2b were discontinued by Contax in 2000. Self-timer Mechanical; 10 sec delay. Otherwise, the two designs are identical. Unless differentiation is required, I will refer to both cameras as the S2 below. The S2 is the only late model Contax body that allows fully mechanical operation, with a small battery required only to power the exposure meter. The S2 is very similar to Nikons FM2T with its titanium top and bottom covers and the Leica R6.2. The S2 more than held its own with its mechanical competition from other manufacturers, although each design has its own advantages and disadvantages, of course. The S2 has an extremely compact design, and it is finely constructed using the best quality materials and machining. If you are looking for a small mechanical film SLR of the highest quality, that uses amazing Carl Zeiss manual focus lenses, this may be the camera for you. I prefer the S2b over the S2 because I think its weighted average meter is more convenient than the S2's spot meter in most situations. I prefer to have a spot meter when it is really needed, but not most of the time. At least, it is easy to compensate for weighted average metering error, when necessary. <http://www.rippa.pt/files/a-jailhouse-lawyer-manual-chapter-13.xml>

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Unfortunately, Contax never produced a body quite like the fully mechanical Leica R6.2, which provides both spot metering and centerweighted metering. With the S2, the limited EV range of the spot meter is a bit of a problem. The S2 covers only EV 420, while the S2b has a wider range of EV 220. If you are shooting at dusk with an S2, you might need to pull out your handheld meter if it gets too dark. The Nikon FM2, by contrast, has a light metering range of EV 118, so the FM2 is better at dusk, but more limited in bright light. But remember that bright or hazy sun with distinct shadows is EV 15, so I would prefer to have more sensitivity on the low end than the high end. The shutter speed dial is closely surrounded by other controls, so it can be a bit difficult to get your fingers around it, especially with your eye at the viewfinder. However, the nonslip material of the shutter speed dial makes it easy to turn. Film ISO setting is completely manual, with a setting ring around the rewind crank on the top left of the camera. A shutter release lock surrounds the shutter release button, and can be easily set with a flick of the finger. The system works well, but the winding lever is not of the ratcheting type, perhaps to save space and weight inside the body. A multiple exposure switch is located around the Film Winding Lever. The viewfinder of the S2 is nice and bright and incorporates the standard Contax vertical shutter speed indicator. This design provides a series of shutter speed LEDs on the right side of the viewfinder. When the meter is activated, the proper shutter speed for the chosen ISO, aperture and light conditions lights. The actual set shutter speed flashes. The user needs to adjust the aperture and shutter speed until the flashing indicator corresponds to the correct shutter speed. One disadvantage of the viewfinder display is that lens

aperture is not indicated. The viewfinder does, however, incorporate a flash mark which works with dedicated flashes. <http://www.businesslaw.jmnpdevelopment.co.uk/userfiles/a-indicates-a-manual-page-break.xml>

Also, the S2 viewfinder provides pretty good frame coverage compared with, for example, the Nikon FM2. The S2 shows 95% of the frame, while the FM2 only shows 93%. For those needing viewfinder diopter adjustment lenses, they can be found on auction websites, although you may need to be patient until you find your required diopter strength eventually appear on the market. Inside the back of the camera one finds a traditional film spool that requires the film leader to be inserted in the usual way. While not as fast as the electronic Contax designs, it is very reliable. On the front of the camera, one finds a manual self-timer lever that doubles as a mirror lockup lever i.e. the mirror goes up when the self-timer is started, allowing time for the camera to settle down before an exposure is made. This camera has a traditional mechanical depth-of-field preview lever on the front, as well as an X-synchro terminal. The bottom of the camera has a centered tripod mount, the film rewind button, and a compartment for one or two button-style batteries. The rubber protective tripod washer that came with the Nikon FM2, for example, works perfectly to solve this problem. Contax offers three interchangeable focusing screens in addition to the normal horizontal split image with microprism ring. The three alternate screens provide either 1 a diagonal split image, otherwise the same as the standard screen, 2 a plain matte screen with a 5 mm circle in the center, and 3 a matte grid screen with a 5 mm circle in the center. With two new consumer grade lenses the system gets more interesting even for the mid-class market. An exciting feature is offered by the Contax AX it allows the miracle to provide AF using any mountable manual focus lenses. Rather than using the focus mechanism of a lens the AX just moves the film plane for focusing thus working as a linear extension focusing system. On some tele lenses it is required to prefocus using the std.

Unfortunately the AX has been discontinued recently. Compared to the RX it adds some toughness, a brighter viewfinder but they removed the electronic focus aid which made the RX quite unique in the manual focus world. It is a fully mechanical, manual focus, manually operated 35mm SLR camera, using batteries only to power the light meter, and features titanium top and bottom plates. The camera was intended as a purist model for use by customers who were experienced photographers. It is unusual among modern 35mm cameras in that the light meter was designed as a spot meter, without center-weighted or matrix metering options. The use of only a spot meter required some knowledge and expertise by the owner for accurate exposures. The S2b is virtually identical to the S2 with the exception of a different external finish, and a light meter that is center-weighted to provide accurate exposure under an average range of lighting conditions. Both the S2 and S2b were discontinued by Contax in 2000. Please upgrade your browser to improve your experience. This is not to imply that it is an unworthy or undesirable camera for some including me, it has wonderful appeal. Its features are limited and the quality is generally high, with a couple of minor, curious exceptions. The price is also high. For those seeking automation of any kind, you can stop reading now and look elsewhere. This camera has no automation. That fact that it has a light meter is almost surprising. No DX film reading, no shutter priority exposure, no motor advance. It's all up to the photographer. It is about the same size and has a similar feel. The S2 has a spot meter. The S2b differs from the S2 because it has a center-weighted meter instead of a spot meter and because it has a glossy charcoal grey finish Contax calls this black, but it is not close to black. That is to say, the features that it does have are engineered with good modern technology.

The shutter for example is a mechanical metal vertical focal plane shutter that is probably about as accurate and fast as one can presently make a mechanical shutter. It is not as accurate, nor as fast, as an electronic shutter, but it does its job without battery power. There is a mechanical 10-second self-timer. There is also a depth-of-field preview button, but no mirror lockup. The viewfinder is good

but since the pentaprism is not as large as its big brothers, the image area is only about 95% of the actual picture area. All shutter speeds are displayed vertically along the right side of the finder area. When the meter is activated, the recommended shutter speed lights. The shutter speed that you've set blinks. The system works well. This is in general keeping with Contax's philosophy that it is better to error on the side of underexposure than to risk overexposure. It is unfortunate and curious that Contax chose to put the separate metering systems in two different cameras. Why not put both a spot meter and center weighted meter in one camera. Did the marketers determine this or was there some engineering limitation. Whatever the reason, unless you want to purchase both, you will have to choose one or the other. However, this is a small camera so there is simply not the room that big fingers might wish to have. For example, the area around the shutter speed selector knob is a little tight. For me this is not a problem, but for some it could be an issue. The film wind knob is not ratcheted it is one single stroke. The smallest control is the little lever for multiple exposures, for which you really need to use your fingernail. The controls are smooth and the knobs require just the right amount of force to move. The shutter release is pleasant, but the force of the mirror return seems excessive. Curiously, the depth of field plunger button is made of plastic instead of metal. But the body itself is well finished for both models.

<http://www.gasparedicaro.com/images/canon-gp200-manual.pdf>

The top and bottom plates are titanium in both. The center body panels are covered with a beautiful and easy to grip textured material that looks like leather much nicer than the smooth material used on the RTS III, AX and RX. I did, because I wanted to have a lightweight and inexpensive body, which could make a real contrast to my RTS III. The Yashica is almost as sturdy as the S2, similar equipped, and has an equal value in use. Admittedly, the viewfinder information is Spartan, the shutter and mirror dampening is lousy and the speed knob is difficult to operate, but the same holds for the S2. The main point is to have a more reliable camera at all times so you DONT NEED A BACKUP in the first place. Some people have been spooked by the times the automation fails and the battery store is a days travel away, and others don't want a computer program in control of their camera. For them, there is the Contax S2. I say this as a user of Leica M series cameras who has seen generations of electronic gimmicks go obsolete while I still get pictures with my double stroke M3 and folding Summicron that fits in my pocket. It may not be a modern camera but as a back up or even main body is not bad at all. Electronic shutters are of no practical benefit for a camera without auto exposure. One other little quirk mirror is too loud. I have never regretted this, the S2 is a very reliable companion. And yes the light meter could be more sensitive, but as an experienced photographer I know the light situations and use the meter only for contrast control. My experiences so far After a few days of use the viewfinder display went mad and eventually stopped working. I opened the battery chamber, rubbed and warmed the silver oxide cells and it went back to work only to stop again after a few minutes. I changed to a lithium cell to watch the same problem occur. I send the body to Kyocera in Hamburg, they fixed it by loosening the battery chambers contact ring.

<http://ambingenieria.com/images/canon-gp215-user-manual.pdf>

I returned the body to get that ring fixed and now the thing mostly works but sometimes the display quits working again. I decided to forget about Kyocera's so called customer service and cleaned the battery chambers contacts with isopropyl alcohol from time to time and was able to take some very nice pictures. They are good tools to take pictures with though there is no special glory in the name Zeiss, except, perhaps, for the ZEISS customer service when my 28 broke its diaphragm Zeiss fixed it and send it back within four days. When the 300 lost a small metal plate of its tripod mount I got the piece fixed and send back within 5 days. I only can recommend the Zeiss lenses and Zeiss service but you have to forget about Kyocera Hamburg! My main problem is Nikon, I think that Nikon marketing has blown it. big time! In 19 years of production they couldn't upgrade the flash sync on the F3. This AF thing is totally out of hand you see the shot, Formula one car at 180mph. remember

trust your AF. In the heat of the moment you press too hard on the shutter button and take a fuzzy picture of the overweight woman in front of you. I would say that I'm worried that I will buy the F3 and Nikon will come out with the F5m super manual camera 30 days after I buy the F3 and Contax will come out with the new and improved S2 with data back and super light metering same time frame. I'm an Aero Prof. in NYC and I go to airshows a lot and I do a lot of aircraft interior shots structural, for play. I shoot landscape, archit, girls in short skirts etc. I've looked at the MTF curves at photodo.com for both lens systems so this is not a problem. Any comments on the S2 and the F3 would be welcome. Thanks, Jim. A lot of Leica M photographers seem to like the S2 for its high quality, excellent optics, mechanical construction, manual operation, and small size. The Zeiss lenses are NOT small, however. You should seriously consider the tiny 45mm f2.

8 lens for times when you want to keep things small and light, even if you also use the 50mm f1.4 lens. I use a Heliopan linear polarizer to keep image degradation to a minimum. For macro, I use a tripod and mirror lockup via the self timer. The RTS III is the only other Contax SLR with any kind of mirror lockup. In any case, criticizing one of the few remaining mechanical cameras in the world seems like extremely bad karma to me. My S2 produced overexposed pictures except my FX3. But try to tell this to the Yashica Service they will blame you. The FX3 is a fairly good and robust camera, that never leaves you alone except the S2. Anyway, why didn't Kyocera use the more pleasant design of the Contax 159 with the shutter dial of the 137 MA and the more smooth mechanism of the RX e.g. The S2 is just a Ti bodied Yashica FX3. The sound of shutter, quake of mirror, feeling of film advance lever and shutter release, meter sensitivity, and the way all the parts fit together; all the signs show S2 is a pair of Yashica FX3. For the same price I can get 9 Yashicas. Do you think those are enough to back you up? Saying there are many design similarities would be closer to fact, I suspect. Whether this makes a real difference other than esthetics is an endless debate I suppose. FX3 does not. They are both based on similar mechanical designs, however, one is engineered to tighter tolerances and made with better materials which will allow for greater performance and longer life. The fact that these two cameras share the same shutter mechanism makes that comparison even more compelling. I wonder why some people are thinking the Yashica FX3 is the same camera as the S2. It is all different except both are mechanical cameras. This means the two cameras have entirely different shutters. The viewfinder coverage is 92% for the Yashica and 95% for the S2. Probably the shutter of the Yashica is engineered for 2000050000 shutter cycles and the S2s for 100000150000 cycles.

There is much little chance for a simple camera to fail compared to a very sophisticated one. After you get used to these mechanical cameras you can work quite fast with them. I think Contax S2 is the best choice for anyone looking for a good mechanical camera. There are a number of very good points made by other people who have submitted comments, Richard Wazniak in particular. No bells and whistles to worry about. I have loved working with Zeiss lenses for nearly two decades. I love my Leica M3, but when it came down to moving on to an SLR, I parted ways with Leica and went to Contax. The Contax lenses I use, all primes, are superb. I have enlarged photos up to 16x20 taken with the S2 and these lenses with wonderful results. If you are looking for an all mechanical camera and not venture into the rangefinder arena, look for a used S2 or S2b. Good cameras, outstanding optics. Good luck. For night shots esp. It's got mirror lockup, eyepiece blind, DOF preview, MUCH more solid construction than the original RTS this thing is a tank, full manual control and a reliable meter, aperture priority AE with AE lock. I love the feel of the machine and the vibe of working with it. Note; if you can't find the right battery, you can get the meter and full range of shutter speeds running again with four cheap LR44 batteries and 23 mm ball of aluminum foil. I take it with me every time I go out to photograph along with my Aria or RX. It slows me down since I have to think more about what I want to do. I also feel that it will last as long as I do. The S2 exudes quality. Even though it is a completely manual SLR it has a plushness to it it is, as far as I am concerned, the RR Silver Cloud of cameras. I thought Contax's customer service total rubbish and I

was glad to get shot of it. My biggest niggles were the shutter and the spot meter. The S2's shutter was about as loud as a Pentax K1000, which was distracting for me and made the camera conspicuous.

The S2 is a fine camera as anyone can attest to, it just wasn't for me. It was a bit embarrassing and it wasn't helped by my own wife and daughter doubled up with laughter at my expense. Why didn't you put your hands out to break your fall they asked. To them, it was the strange rolling fall of a short round man, a funny slowmotion accident. It could have been because as I fell my instinct was to protect the camera hanging around my neck. The fall wasn't that bad a couple of small cuts and a moment of humiliation but at least the camera was undamaged. Subconsciously I decided to risk injury to my elbows and knees rather than my CONTAX S2. For me, having a strong connection with a camera, understanding it so that it seamlessly becomes a part of your shooting is important. I think that only by knowing your camera intimately can you concentrate fully on its primary purpose, making photographs. And because I don't have the capacity to know a multitude of different cameras nor do I want to, I do not have a big collection preferring to keep and use only what I need. That and I really don't like the idea of cameras sitting on my shelves unused. One camera I do know well is my overprotected CONTAX S2. I sought and bought this camera for many reasons but overwhelmingly what attracted me most was its pure simplicity. Released in 1992 to celebrate Contax's 60th anniversary the S2 was a pared down, totally manual camera with limited features. In Contax's own words Simple is Best. By selecting mechanical over electronic the S2 was an uncomplicated camera that turned its back on automation. In the 90s the best 35mm SLRs were packed with electronics and sophisticated automation reaching a zenith of autoeverything, most did not even have a winding lever. So Contax's daring gamble to do away with all but the most essential of camera operations was indeed novel for its time.

Dust and weatherproofed, using a traditional winding system, it was a reliable camera that was not dependent on batteries or electronics. Contax continued with its simple is the best philosophy on the S2's metering system. Fitted only with a spot meter that precisely targets and measures light in the central area of the viewfinder. Uninfluenced by illumination outside this critical area and with no other assistance from the camera it allows a photographer full creative control. A small, solidly built body that is designed with a nod to the classic SLRs of the 70s. The chassis is dressed with a warm silver coloured titanium shell and wrapped in a classic black Contax leather surround. The pentaprism hump is wide and low with the CONTAX name finely embossed in black across its breadth. Dials either side control the speed and ISO selection, both turn with a precise positive movement. Next to the winding crank is the shutter button with cable release thread and engineered locking ring that completes the elegant top. The viewfinder is bright and has an interchangeable focusing screen. My camera is fitted with the standard FU 4 screen, a horizontal split microprism design. There are at least three other alternative designs available. With only the shutter speeds running vertically on the right side the viewfinder, it is uncluttered and clear. The set speed flashes red while the spot meter reading remains illuminated. Point the camera at something midgrey read the number and set the dial or something like that! Blameless because you choose the only three important things when it comes to taking a photograph. ISO, aperture and speed. You direct the spot meter and you interpret its reading and that's it. If there is a problem with the photo it's your fault nothing else. At first I thought this way of shooting would be a challenge but in fact, it is liberating.

Free from options like metering and priority modes, exposure compensation, a viewfinder packed with flashing numbers and icons, with the S2 I am able to concentrate on taking photos. Allowing a photographer to take photos is what this camera does best. Simply best. Everyday I see work that inspires me and here is my chance to say why. Its simple design and good build quality are two of its strongest characteristics as they give the photographer total control over all aspects when it comes to taking photographs. It was released by Contax to commemorate the company's 60th anniversary

and was marketed towards experienced photographers who are looking for a more hands-on approach to photography. The S2 had few controls and uses a battery only to power the spot meter. Simplicity was what Contax was aiming for when they released the S2. The S2's body is protected by two durable and lightweight titanium top and bottom plates that also add a more premium look and feel to the camera. The mechanical metal vertical focal plane shutters are fast and accurate. They offer smooth operation — a sign that Contax took great care designing and building the S2. Features like DX code reading, shutter priority exposure, and motor advance are nowhere to be found. The photographer had to rely on skill and expertise with the camera so the S2 was considered as a “purist camera”. Contax understood this market very well and knew their clientele. The small form factor when compared to hulking fully mechanical SLRs paired with the textured grip make it ergonomic and a joy to use on photowalks. The less is more mentality behind the S2 again manifests itself in this aspect. This allowed the Contax S2 to use a variety of good quality lenses that are available in the market. Simple camera functions plus great quality lenses offer more creative applications for the discerning shooter. The result was the S2b that was introduced in 1994.

It was virtually identical to the S2 in almost all of the functions except the centerweighted light meter. The S2b also sported a sleek charcoal gray finish that played in contrast to the original S2's metallic look. Learn more about Germany-based photographer Safia Nadim in this intimate interview. But this time, we take a look at the fresh work of two budding Lomographers, Lalitya and Anastasia in this Community Spotlight! You can change your language preferences any time you like — just select your language from the dropdown list! Subscribe to our newsletter and be the first to know about amazing deals, brand new products, and essential creative photography news. We'll send you exciting photography interviews, crazy tips and tricks, competitions giveaways, and unmissable offers. No funny business, just a whole heap of Lomography love right to your inbox.