

## **The Amazing Holga**

By Jackie Golding

The Holga is a simple, inexpensive camera that uses medium-format film. It has a plastic lens and very few adjustments. The Holga was introduced in 1982 in Hong Kong and was soon discovered by photography educators in the United States, who used it to teach composition and encourage creativity without the distraction of complex technical issues. It became popular with photographic artists because of the unique qualities of the photos that can be made with it: a dreamlike appearance characterized by greater sharpness and light toward the center of the image, with vignetting and edge blur, and light leaks. Each Holga is unique, and these characteristics differ from one camera to the next. Consequently, the photographer has little control over the appearance of the final image, an attribute that many photographers experience as liberating. Photography with the Holga and other plastic cameras is one form of low-fidelity photography, which also includes “basic and old cameras” such as pinhole cameras and old-fashioned folding cameras. Holga how-to’s include taping the camera to keep the back on and prevent any unwanted light leaks, choosing film (a speed of ISO 400 or more often works best), remembering to take the lens cap off and set the focus and shutter speed, considering parallax, and advancing the film. Non-techniques that can be fun with the Holga include intentional multiple exposure, pointing the camera at the sun to create lens flare, intentional camera movement, cross-processing the film, and using infrared film. Break the rules and have fun with your Holga!

### **Print resources:**

- *Plastic Cameras: Toying With Creativity* by Michelle Bates
- *The Toycam Handbook*, compiled by the members of [toycamera.com](http://www.toycamhandbook.com/)
- *Light Leaks Magazine (low fidelity photography)*,  
<http://www.lightleaks.org/>

### **Online resources:**

- Flickr groups
- Holga
- Holgagraphy
- Holga – B&W – (Black & White 120film shots only)
- Many others (including toy camera groups, lo-fi groups, film users’ groups, etc.)

- Holga Inspire <http://www.holgainspire.com/> (comes from the company that makes Holgas; includes a good resource list, too)
- <http://www.toycamera.com/> All about toy cameras
- Holga Blog, <http://www.holgablog.com/>
- Four Corners Dark <http://fourcornersdark.com/>
- Lomography Society's Holga info <http://microsites.lomography.com/holga/>
- The Plastic Landscape <http://www.theplasticlandscape.com/> (especially good on using infrared film with Holga)
- All kinds of Holgas: <http://www.holgablog.com/2009/04/09/the-massive-guide-to-all-holga-cameras/>
- Edmund and Sophie's Photo Page <http://www.tlucetius.net/Photo/eHolga.html>
- The Massive Dev Chart: <http://www.digitaltruth.com/devchart.php> - film/developer combinations with development times

### **Links to the photos I showed:**

for photos by people other than me:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/falling-thru-the-lens/galleries/> - this will link to:

The Amazing Holga Camera: 1

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/falling-thru-the-lens/galleries/72157622986375356/>

The Amazing Holga Camera: 2

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/falling-thru-the-lens/galleries/72157622986416954/>

The Amazing Holga Camera: 3

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/falling-thru-the-lens/galleries/72157622861872631/>

The Amazing Holga Camera: 4

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/falling-thru-the-lens/galleries/72157622861955479/>

The Amazing Holga Camera: 5

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/falling-thru-the-lens/galleries/72157622986639408/>

for my photos, look at the set "The Amazing Holga Camera: Examples" at

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/falling-thru-the-lens/sets/72157623111177455/>