

PHOTONEWS

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For a death song, I can be seen absolutely no occasion.

Interview with Hartmuth Schroeder, managing director of MACO PHOTO PRODUCTS, about analogue B&W photography

Hartmuth Schroeder became after activities among other things, for the companies TETENAL and ARGENTA, and own lab trading, in 1991 the managing director of the MACO PHOTO DEPARTMENT, firm HANS O. MAHN. Main focus was at first, the general agency of the ORIENTAL Photo Products, and the distribution of the LABOR PARTNER chemicals. In 1996, the brand MACO PHOTO PRODUCTS was introduced for own films and photo papers, on the occasion, cooperation with different manufacturers, under it FOTOKEMIKA (till 2002). For some years, there are cooperations among others with FILMOTEC Wolfen and ROLLEI.



Hartmuth Schroeder

Anna Gripp / PHOTONEWS: Mr. Schroeder, under photographers is grows the concern, that consumption materials are heavier available for the analogue photographers, and the prices will rise. What can you reply here, as an expert in the matter of B&W photography?

Hartmuth Schroeder: I divide this worry. With the appropriate photo industry, as well as with the specified photo traders, dwindles the readiness, to store these consumption materials. Within the industry, more and more, the minimum amounts are not being reached any-

more, for a profitable production. That leads to production settings, rather not for higher prices. With the stationary specialized photo trade, the competition of the specified professional mail order firms becomes apparent. Hence, it becomes more and more difficult for the interested film chemistry- and photo paper users, to procure on site, the necessary products. What concerns the prices, I find out, that one could help himself at the moment from a "land of cockaigne". To the well informed user, from the situation itself, the "sell-out" positions are typically. Already, just two years ago, with ILFORD, and today with AGFA products, which are offered partly to very attractive prices. I think, at the moment, no dramatic price increases are to be expected, also, because the market leader ILFORD, has given a price level already in the end of last year, that will not change probably worth mentioning, during the next years.

AGFA B&W materials also offered by MACO. How long is still to be calculated on the "remaining stocks"?

This is nice, that you have ask, because often, I experience, that the faithful AGFA users assume, from the fact, that practically overnight, it will not available anymore. Besides, it is probably not known, that the AGFA has up to the bankruptcy, on October 13, 2005, produced daily fresh in large quantities consecutively. The production, in detail, emulsion coating, was finished really immediately. But the preparation, the reaping and packaging, has taken up on account to the huge stocks still months, till April 2006. MACO has taken over loyalty from AGFA production plants, photo papers, films, and photo chemistries, in original packaging pre-packs all ready, as well as in industrial semi-manufactured products. This signifies, these products are also freshly even packaged today in the MACO packaging sites regularly. It is worthwhile, to visit our website and to download the suitable prize sheets.

But not only with AGFA, MACO co-operates for many years, with ROLLEI. To the Photokina in 2004, for many consumers unexpectedly introduced, for the first time B&W films, which are developed in narrow co-operation with MACO, and are Made in Germany. Now, it is to be heard, that this co-operation is further intensified. If you could explain there the connections briefly.

MACO co-operates with ROLLEI since 2003, and compiled together the assortment which is presented in 2006 at the Photokina, in complete form to the market. In 2004 and 2005, occurred the introduction of the single products, with substitute nowadays all, partly since 15 years of existing MACO, and for 24 years, existing LABOR PARTNER products. From beginning, it was intensely co-operated, no, other intensification do not queue.

But a replacement of products or a brand change, sounds already after an intensification. What is the reason for this change? How important is here the rich in tradition name ROLLEI, for the German photo industry?

HANS O. MAHN & Co. is with a photo division active for 35 years in the area of export, import, trade. Own brands under MACO, were introduced first, so to speak, as an auxiliary construct. In 1996, the firm ORIENTAL Japan, stopped his export. The presentation of products for the photo area, has looked at by MACO, as an interim solution, to operate then, either once more with ORIENTAL, or a new partner again, as a commercial firm. Because ORIENTAL retired on account of his assortment policy and policy of prices, MACO has decided, to get into a connection with a very strong partner from Germany. ROLLEI was ready for it. We pursue together the marketing plan, with products from German production plants, a very extensive assortment in films and chemicals, if possible, also to papers, for a very, very long period of time, to make it available to the demanding users.

Because of today, so much is spoken about digital photography, it is sometimes hardly evident, in which areas it is still worked a lot, with analogue material. Which user's in the B&W area, are important buyers for you?

In addition, a may be astonishing answer, because only the German public authorities, have released more than 24 million single exposures on the so called analogue "Radar-film". If you think, that practically in the developed countries, worldwide, these systems are applied (in addition to digital technology), then you can fancy, which respectable production it is, and a long-standing certainly base, for the manufacture of high-quality B&W films. Specifically: The ROLLEI R3 film, becomes with the packaging for photographers, as 35mm, roll film and sheet film offered, based on a mass production, for the traffic area. A differently example, are the orthochromatic high-capacity films, which are offered as the ROLLEI ORTHO 25. The mass goes to the application, as a security copy film, for digital data. These becomes among other things, by the German microfilm institute at Münster, digitally presented on X-ray films, secured onto the special Ortho film. Nevertheless, only this need of the worldwide active security specialists, saves a mass production of this type of film for decades, of protecting digital data for about 30 year guarantee. I could state other areas from the electronic microscopy, with which has become reactivated their analogue arrangements, closed already, partly even again.

That means, institutions protect with their decrease, in the long term also the need for professional photographers and amateurs? How does the inquiry of sides of the photographers look then typically?

Yes, accurately. The sure sales with the commercial and institutional buyers, protect the film production and chemical production still, for many years. We with MACO/ROL-

LEI, go out in our marketing plans nowadays, from a sure 15-year production duration, as long become the typically built admission systems still guarantees her money must earn. The inquiry of the photographer's side rises very much to our surprise now again. After the low-pressure area during the past years, which has led into bankruptcy of two big European factories in 2004 (ILFORD and FORTE), we ascertain typically, a massive inquiry stimulation. The best proof of it should be that both factories, have solved the problems, and produce today extensive assortments freshly again. Today, for the photographers work, big factories in Europe, like FOMA in Czechia, FORTE in Hungary, FOTOKEMIKA in Croatia, FERRANIA in Italy, AGFA-GEVAERT und FUJI-HUNT in Belgium, ROLLEI and TETENAL in Germany, KENTMERE and ILFORD in Great Britain. In addition, FUJI, KODAK and LUCKY, selling considerable numbers of pieces in Europa too. To an death song, I see generally, absolutely no occasion.

In the last PHOTONEWS issue, Guido Puttkammer described, how much this death song of analogue photography, was also forced by sides of the industry. Do you believe, that here in the public mediation work, mistakes were done?

I think, it was not "the industry", but a few marketing strategists and advertising strategists, who wanted to/had to press cameras into the market, with a rather German kind Either/Or, with primitive action. This behaviour is in Europe, above all, typically, for Germany and the Netherlands. In many other countries, the film scanner, and the subsequent treatment were forced by computer. This will maybe be one of the reasons, why we maintain exactly here, a so crass view of the things.

Information under www.mahn.net. MACO/ROLLEI is represented on the Photokina at hall 10, level 2.