GRAFLEX SPEED GRAPHIC 1947 – MEDIA ARCHAEOLOGY



I have decided our lab needs to take seriously the materiality of media. Not just the picture – but its texture, style, feel, ambience, aura, substrate – and its instrumentality – how it came to be made, by what means, agency, mechanism. So I have been buying old cameras.

The Graflex Pacemaker Speed Graphic arrived this morning.

Weegee used a Graflex in New York.



They are big 4″x5″ field cameras. In your face cameras.

I got this one on eBay from an estate sale. It was bought in 1947 and belonged to William A. Blind of 137 East 13 Street, Casper, Wyoming. He had converted an old leather suitcase into a carrying case. Everything was untouched from maybe the late 50s. It all smells strange – a combination of the camera materials and the room or attic where the camera was kept … and William A. Blind. There is an unexposed film pack, a lot of paperwork (instructions, guides, notes he kept, the original guarantee), and six negatives. It looks as if he took copies of his 1957 driver's license and medical card, and then finished a length of film on someone he knew …



He was born in 1911, was 5 feet 4 inches tall, drove a grey 1956 four door Oldsmobile, and this photograph has probably never been printed before …