# ADOX - Back to the Future


Adox film materials were at the cutting edge for a generation of photographers who were embracing small format photography in the period after WW2. The legendary Adox KB17 was marketed in 1952, a new type of thin emulsion, which when coupled with new energetic highly dilute developers like Neofin Blue, gave results previously unattainable from 35mm film. The '17' of the name referred to the speed, being 17 DIN (Deutsche Institut fur Normung) which equates to our present ISO 40. This was supplemented by KB 14 (ISO 20) and KB 21 (ISO 100). Through a series of strange events at corporate level Adox films recently emerged from a time warp, and are here today! The range remains as three, now named Adox CHS25 ART, CHS50 ART, and CHS 100 ART, the number referring to the ISO speed.

The evolution of the film range goes back to the dawn of photography. Dr. C. Schleussner performed pioneering work on the wet-collodion process during the early years of photography, and in 1860 formed an early photographic manufacturing company, Adox Fotowerke. The organization capitalised on the potential of the newly invented gelatin dry plate, and working with the X-ray pioneer, the physicist Roentgen, devised the first X-ray plate. Remaining a family owned business, the company never expanded on the scale of other photographic industrial operations such as Kodak or Agfa, but remained on the cutting edge of the technologies they embraced, which includes to this day leadership in medical diagnostics and industrial coating. Their greatest contribution to film technology, though, was the Adox KB series which became available in 1952, starting with the legendary Adox KB17. The new films were a significant advance, being the first films with thin layer emulsions, and coupled with the incorporation of double anti halation features were capable of very high image sharpness. This was a turning point in photographic technology, and it was only during the 1960's that other manufacturers caught up with the ADOX lead, as improved base materials made it more simple to achieve effective anti-halation layers.

The Adox films are particularly suited to pyrogallol development, which produces a yellow dye image as well as metallic silver, the two in combination giving exceptionally well defined tonality. Bruce Rae is a new convert to Adox for his still-life work, and uses CHS100 processed in his own mixed pyro. This print is on the warm-tone Foma 131 glossy fibre-based paper.

At this point, in 1962 the photographic holdings of the Scleussner family were sold to the American DuPont company, and the story becomes more diffuse. There isn't enough space to cover subsequent events here; look it up on the net. Suffice it to say that the technology was acquired by Fotokemika, in what is now Croatia, and the range of films they began to manufacture, marketed through Fotoimpex in Berlin, recently reacquired their original brand-name, having for many years being sold as EFKE (which they still are, in some markets).

The films are available in a full range of formats, 35mm, 120 and several sheet sizes. The 120 film is supplied in a reusable snap-top container, similar to those used for 35mm films.

Also in the Adox range are other useful specialised films, including CMS20, an alternative to discontinued Technical Pan, and which will give exceptionally fine grain continuous tone when processed in a low-contrast developer (Adox Adotech is recommended).

There is a an Adox print film in a range of sheet formats, which is one of the few options now for making black & white internegatives or transparencies. This can be processed to a range of contrasts through choice of developer activity. and control of exposure & developing time.

Infra-red film sensitised to 820nm in all formats completes the range.

## Available from:

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