



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN KIEV-60 AND KIEV-88

Kiev-88 (any version) behaves not as good when shooting at 1/500 and 1/1000 compared to Kiev-60. Kiev-60's mechanism is designed in such way, that even on the fastest shutter speeds, the curtain moves evenly. In Kiev-88 the curtain is unable to gain the higher speed that is necessary and as a result one may get uneven exposures along the frame (vertical bands of different brightness). Back in the day, that is the reason that made Hasselblad drop 1/1000 shutter speed on the model that was later copied by the guys at the Arsenal factory. This defect cannot be completely cured because of the way the curtain movement mechanism was designed in this camera. It doesn't matter whether the curtains are made of metal or cloth. The problem becomes most apparent when shooting an evenly lit object, such as a bright sky, with a very short exposure time. The problem cannot be completely solved, but since all ARAX cameras are expected to perform two or even three times better than the standard allows, the impact caused by this flaw is minimized.

Besides this problem, Kiev-88 has a very complex mechanism of magazine/shutter interaction, which can be a problem even in theory. Not only do light leaks plague this part of the system, but also many flaws exist due to the absence of reasonable quality control at the factory. For example, all NT magazines produced by Arsenal circa 1997-2001 are defective. They cannot be repaired by any means other than replacing the core gears and mechanisms. That's why all film magazines made during this period malfunction-- and as a result, the shutter mechanism of the camera breaks. But if magazines are properly made, there shouldn't be any problems with them, such as light leaks or sudden breaks. ARAX cameras should, of course, be completely free from any magazine defects.

Another weak spot in Kiev-88 is the mechanism of shutter speed selection. It is so designed that the photographer can only change speeds after the shutter has been cocked. If one accidentally happens to do it before the shutter is cocked, one will end up with a broken camera. This problem cannot be solved. Kiev-60 cameras are free from this restriction.

KIEV-60

As for Kiev-60, its weak spot is in the film transport mechanism. It's not 'smart' and cannot understand the thickness of the film loaded. The photographer will get 3mm frame spacing on Russian-made films such as SVEMA, but much less for any other type of film. That is because the Russian film is thicker compared to other films and the mechanism is tuned to handle such thick film. ARAX cameras are tuned to work best with widespread thin films, however this means one may get one less frame on a film than when using a thick one. In Kiev-88's NT magazines the transport mechanism is 'smart' and can adapt itself to film thickness. This way you can get the best results with any type of film.

The second weak spot of Kiev-60 is a film pressing plate. It's somewhat more primitive than Kiev-88's film pressing plate. Because of film pressing plate, focusing defects on the edges of the frame may be observed when shooting on thin films. The problem can be solved temporarily. ARAX cameras are free from this defect, but it may reappear in them some day. However if ever encountered by the user, this can easily be solved by simple adjusting of the springs of the film pressing plate.

We recommend ARAX-60 cameras for beginners. These cameras are simpler, easier to handle, and harder to break. After the beginner familiarizes himself with medium format photography and feels a need to move to something more advanced, such as a camera with features like interchangeable magazines and a multiple exposure capability, then it's the time to buy the ARAX kit based on Kiev-88. The photographer will get an advanced camera that will serve him just as great as the ARAX-60, but he'll have to train himself to use it. We think it's well worth it if one plans on doing professional photography.

We hope this mini review makes the difference between the two branches of ARAX cameras more clear and allows the reader to make a reasonable choice of what camera to buy. However if you have any further questions, don't hesitate to write to us, we'll gladly help you!

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