

Stefano Mirti's Blueberries

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Polaroid SX-70 Land Camera

I'm definitely a Polaroid camera girl. For me, what I'm really excited about is bringing back the artistry and the nature of Polaroid.

~ Lady Gaga

277/388

Polaroid SX-70 Land Camera, Polaroid Corporation

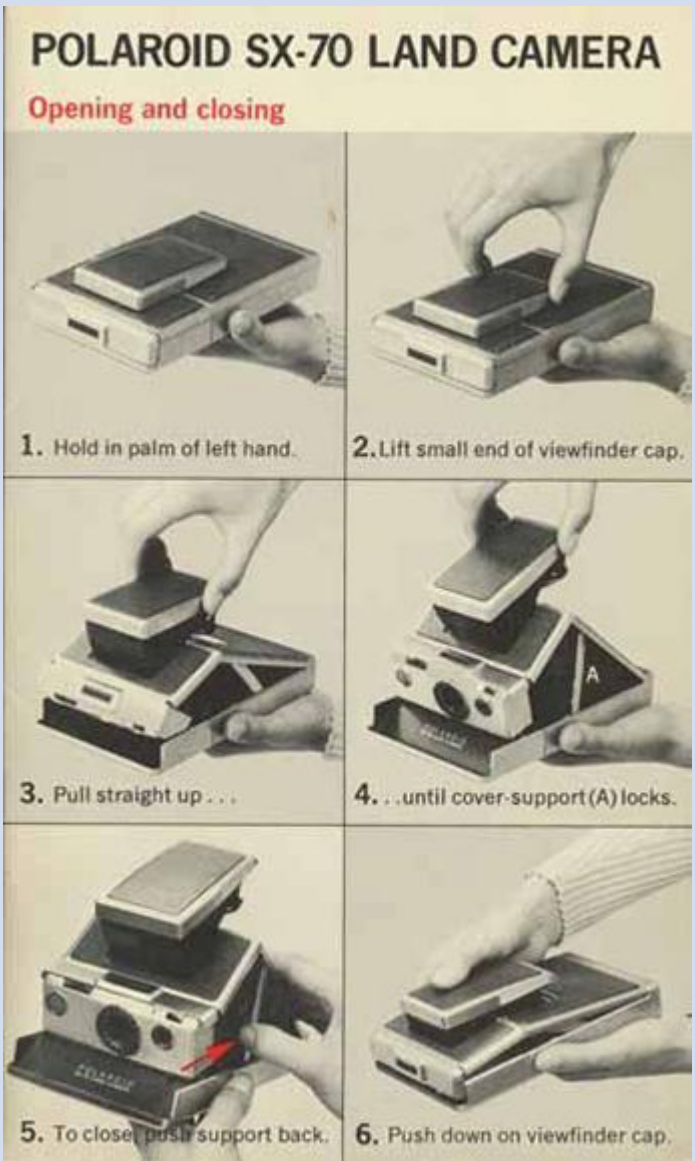
1972/1981



In 1947 Polaroid introduced its first consumer camera. The Land Camera Model 95 was the first camera to use instant film to quickly produce photographs without developing them in a laboratory. The popular Model 95 and subsequent Land Cameras required complex procedures to take and produce good photographs. Photographic paper had to be manually removed from cameras, peeled open after 60 seconds, needed several minutes to dry, and often left developing chemicals on hands. The instructions for the Model 20 Swinger, introduced in 1965, warned that, if not followed, "you're headed for plenty of picture taking trouble".

Polaroid SX-70 Land Camera, Polaroid Corporation

1972/1981



-instruction sheet-

Pictures from the SX-70, by contrast, ejected automatically and developed quickly without chemical residue. Polaroid founder Edwin Land announced the SX-70 at a company annual meeting in April 1972. On stage, he took out a folded SX-70 from his suit coat pocket and in ten

seconds took five pictures, both actions impossible with previous Land Cameras. The company first sold the SX-70 in Miami, Florida in late 1972, and began selling it nationally in fall 1973. Although the high cost of \$180 for the camera and \$6.90 for each film pack of ten pictures limited demand, Polaroid sold 700,000 by mid-1974.



There were a variety of models beginning in 1972 with the original SX-70, though all shared the same basic design. The first model had a plain focusing screen (the user was expected to be able to see the difference between in- and out-of focus) because Dr. Land wanted to encourage photographers to think they were looking at the subject, rather than through a viewfinder. When many users complained that focusing was difficult, especially in dim light, a split-image rangefinder prism was added. This feature is standard on all later manual focus models.

Polaroid SX-70 Land Camera, Polaroid Corporation

1972/1981



The later Sonar OneStep and SLR 680 models were equipped with a sonar autofocus system, which permitted returning to the plain focusing screen. The Sonar Onestep models were the first autofocus SLRs available to consumers. Polaroid Corporation marketed this relatively inexpensive, novel sonar technology as a set of components to hobbyists in order for them to incorporate distance sensing into other systems. The later SLR 680/690 models updated the basic design of the Sonar Onestep to more modern standards by incorporating support for newer 600 cartridges instead of SX-70 cartridges, and a built-in flash instead of the disposable Flashbar. Today they are the most evolved forms of the SX-70, and are highly sought after by Polaroid enthusiasts.

Polaroid SX-70 Land Camera, Polaroid Corporation

1972/1981



Though expensive, the SX-70 was popular in the 1970s and retains a cult following today. Eminent photographers such as Ansel Adams, Andy Warhol, Helmut Newton, and Walker Evans praised and used the SX-70. Not until the \$40 Model 1000 OneStep using SX-70 film became the best-selling camera of the 1977 Christmas shopping season, however, did its technology become truly popular.

Polaroid SX-70 Land Camera, Polaroid Corporation

1972/1981



The SX-70 included many sophisticated design elements. A collapsible SLR required a complex light path for the viewfinder, with three mirrors (including one Fresnel reflector) of unusual, aspheric shapes set at odd angles to create an erect image on the film and an erect aerial image for the viewfinder. Many mechanical parts were precision plastic moldings. The body was glass-filled polysulfone, a very rigid plastic which could be plated with genuine copper-nickel-chromium. Models 2 & 3 used the less expensive and more-easily cracked ABS in either Ebony or Ivory color. The film pack

contained a flat, 6-volt "PolaPulse" battery to power the camera electronics, drive motor and flash. The original flash system, a disposable "Flash Bar" of 10 bulbs from General Electric, used logic circuits to detect and fire the next unused flash.