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Howard Millard

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NIMSLO- more to it than meets the eye!

Andrew Davidhazy
Imaging and Photographic Technology
School of Photographic Arts and Sciences
Rochester Institute of Technology

While the Nimslo camera may have once been heralded as the new wave of realistic photography and the answer to the dreams of millions of snapshoters who would pay above average prices to experience the feeling of the third dimension in their photography, I believe it is fair to say it has not generated the success it's designers hoped it would.

The Nimslo Corporation is no longer with us but there seems to be a mystique based following for the camera and its accessories by a devoted group of 3D photographers and gadgeteers. Unfortunately for the Nimslo company their catastrophic or agonizing demise might not have taken place if they had investigated some of the applications described below. Maybe.

I think that there were and are many good reasons to invest in a Nimslo camera, in addition to its justified fame as a unique 3-D camera.

With the price of the camera having plummeted to truly unexpected levels (although as an experimenter's gadget it is regaining some of its previous value) the Nimslo is full of promises for unusual photographic adventures. Among the applications for this camera, I have found the following to yield interesting possibilities.

1. This seems to be the perfect travel and family snapshot camera from the point of view that it simultaneously delivers four negatives from which prints can be made in a variety of ways. Among the most intriguing ways is to have them printed by regular photofinishers as if they were regular 35 mm format negatives. This way you will end up with two 3R prints of each scene you took but with each print made up of two images. These can be cut up and you'll have four prints of which you can give away three, and you won't have to spend extra time reprinting. Or, you can ask that all the negatives be printed in 3R size.
2. If you send and keep alternate pairs of the images made with the Nimslo you will still have a passable stereo pair, whether you chose to have them all printed to the 3R size or you have pairs printed into 3R prints. These images can be viewed with a stereo viewer or by free-viewing (especially the smaller format ones) if you take the trouble to learn the technique of fusing stereo pairs without the aid of glasses. Or, you could keep the outside pair for your stereo collection and give the inner pair away.
3. You could experiment with one-shot color separation photography by installing color separation filters over three of the camera's lenses. You should also install appropriate neutral density filters along with the color filters to balance out the exposure for the three

filters. With standard color separation filters, Wratten 29 Red, 47B Blue and 58 Green, use a ND .6 along with the Red filter and a ND .3 along with the Green filter. Use no filter with the Blue filter. Place a .6 ND filter over the camera's photocell window and load Plus-X film into the camera while setting the ISO sensitivity setting on the camera to a speed of 100.

Use the camera normally and process the film as if you were making black-and-white negatives. Then print the three negatives in register on top of each other onto Ektacolor paper through the same filters which you used for the taking process. Printing in absolute registration like this is a bit tricky and you will have to devise some sort of registration system in the enlarger. Perfect registration will not be possible because the three negatives are slightly different. One way to ensure fairly accurate registration is to make a black-and-white print of the middle negative first and then, after fastening it down onto the easel in such a manner that you can repeatedly superimpose the color paper in the same location, print through the three color filters in succession while using the black-and-white print as a placement guide as you swith from one negative to the next.

Don't be too discouraged if you can't achieve perfect registration between the three color images. This will show up as a slight edge mismatch in the final print but this may in fact add to the feel of the final image. Or, devote your time to perfecting a registration system that allows you to achieve as perfect a registration as this inherently imprecise system is capable of delivering.

4. While we are on the subject of color separations and filters, consider that you could call your camera a "multispectral" camera by the simple expedient of loading it with black-and-white infrared film (or just plain panchromatic film) and cover the four lenses with filters of different bandpass limits plus neutral density filters to even out the photographic effect behind each of them. The set of negatives you produce this way will be made up of images produced by the various wavelengths which the filters allowed to pass. Combining these negative images or those of positives made by contact from them on a projection screen, projecting each image through differently colored filters will generate a pseudo-color image reminiscent of the method by which true multispectral images are generated. (This is obviously a field ripe for further exploration.)

5. Or think about this variation if you are a frugal sort. Get twice the pictures per roll of film. Basically you can make a half frame camera out of the Nimslo by alternately uncovering each of the four lenses as you multiple expose the film by cocking the shutter without advancing the film for each of four successive shots. To do this make four lens caps and to cock the shutter without advancing the film, hold the rewind button up while operating the wind lever. In order to prevent the film from advancing within the camera as you perform this operation make sure that you take up the slack in the film and hold the rewind lever firmly as you cock the shutter while making absolutely positive that you are holding the rewind button in the "pushed-in" position. In any case, ^do not force the camera^. After every fourth shot advance the film and cock the shutter normally.

A more positive way to keep the film stationary between exposures involves cutting a small notch about 1/4"x3/4" in the lower left hand corner of the plastic lens cover board. This area can be located more easily by peeling back the camera's protective cover from the left side. Once the notch is cut, the shutter cocking lever should be easily visible extending downwards from the top. Pushing this lever to the right will cause it to latch, recocking the shutter.



6. If you can bear the thought of "gutting" the camera you can make a rather unusual large aspect ratio camera out of one. First you need to remove the front end of the camera including the lens and shutter assembly and also removing the partitions which separate one image from the other within the camera. Now you need to build up the gap between the body and a shutter equipped lens, which, of course you will also need to provide. This is so the lens focuses onto the film plane of the camera. If you place the lens of your choice in a press fit sliding arrangement you could even make the lens a zone focusing one by marking the stationary part of the newly installed barrel at appropriate places to indicate the amount of extension necessary to focus the lens to a variety of distances. You can do the calibration experimentally. Modified in this manner the Nimslo II will give you pictures with an aspect ratio of about 1:3 rather than the normal 1:1.5 of standard 35mm cameras.



7. If you are into stereo photography, you already know that you can't take close-up photographs with most stereo cameras because the separation between the lenses is fixed at approximately the interpupillary distance. The clear possibility which the Nimslo makes available to you is that of making close-up stereo pairs by somehow adding a close-up lens to the front of the camera and firing away at a subject distance from the lens which is equal to the strength of the close-up lens in diopters divided into 40". You may have to allow for parallax and make sure you are not covering up the photocell with the close-up lens, but these are minor problems to contend with given the opportunity newly available to you.

8. While we are on the subject of close-up stereo photography, notice that after you disassembled the camera as described in step 5 , you had some parts left over. If you were careful you have a lens/shutter board with four matched lenses on it. While the shutters had to probably be disabled the lenses may have survived the surgery. If so, you can put them to good use by converting a pair of them into a special, close-up, stereo attachment for many older SLR's with mirror lock-up provision or for focal plane shutter rangefinder cameras.

Attach a pair of the set of four lenses into a camera body cap or short extension tube and attach a "septum," or separator, extending into the throat of the camera so that it almost reaches the curtains of the shutter. This will allow each of the lenses to place it's own image on one side of the 35mm frame. Since you have no viewfinder capability with this arrangement you will need to improvise some kind of focal frame in front of the lenses to indicate the approximate area covered by the lenses as well as to indicate the plane of sharp focus. Both of these can be accomplished experimentally by keeping the shutter open and viewing the image formed by the lenses on a piece of groundglass installed in the focal plane of the camera.

9. If you figure out a way to keep the shutters partially or fully open all of the time the Nimslo has the possibility of being modified into a high-speed sequence camera by the simple expedient of dropping a mask with a shallow diagonal slit cut into it in front of the lenses as the event takes place. Since the slit will arrive at the lenses at successive times you will have captured a sequence. The frequency, or time between pictures, depends on how fast the mask and slit are moving. The faster the rate the faster the frequency. With small slit sizes a frequency of 1,000 pictures per second can be easily achieved.

10. Finally, if you are into the "art" of things you might try a technique which yields rather hard to predict results. To investigate an unusual image-making camera remove the septum that separates one image from the other within the camera while otherwise not altering it. This will blend four images of a subject into one continuous superimposed image. And, if you devise a means for sequentially exposing the film really weird overlays could come about as a result of a happy accident or careful and deliberate previsualization and meticulous execution. Good luck.

I am sure that there are a lot more possibilities for the Nimslo but even if you were to try out some of the ones that I mentioned, you would find lots of potential for experimentation and photographic satisfaction coming your way. I am sure you would get you money's worth. Even if you did nothing with the camera you can rest assured that it will probably become a collector's item someday, or at least a photographic curiosity. While the following bit of advice may be counterproductive in terms of the retail price of the Nimslo cameras still available or yet to be produced, maybe you should try to get more than one while you are at it.

ADDENDUM

To enable the camera to make multiple exposures through each individual lens without danger of the film moving slightly between exposures the modification necessary can be accomplished quite easily.

Remove the plastic leatherette covering and remove a portion of the left bottom corner of the plastic lens cover board. This will give you access to the shutter cocking lever visible as a vertical lever extending downwards. Pushing gently on it towards the right as you look at the front of the camera will result in recocking the shutter without moving the film. The opening necessary to do this need only be about 1/8 inch in height and 3/4 inch long. Cutting a slot into the plastic cover just wide enough to allow your shutter cocking tool to reach the lever will make this modification almost invisible after the cover is reinstalled on the body.

To gain access to the interior "guts" of the camera you first need to remove the top cover. It is held in place by a small screw located under a metal tab inserted in the accessory shoe atop the camera. By raising the back of the tab and pushing outwards it will readily slide off. In addition, three plastic snap tabs protruding from the cover into slots in the body hold the cover in place. They are located at either side and in the front center of the camera. Gentle prying along with an upward push should coax the top off the camera as long as you first remove the film advance and rewind levers. Be careful as the cover comes off because the flash contacts are connected to the shutter mechanism by soldered wires and these may break if too violent a pull is exerted on them.

The front cover, which is separate from the lens/shutter board, is held in place by four small screws. Removal of this board will allow you to easily cut a notch into its lower left corner for the multiple exposure slot.

To use other films than those whose speeds the camera can be set for all you need to do is to add Neutral Density in front of the camera's meter cell. Films faster than ISO 400 can not be accommodated. The strength of the ND filter which you need to use is given by dividing the speed of the film you wish to use into one of the two camera speed settings and finding the log of the quotient. For example, if you wish to use ISO 64 film you'd divide 100 by 64 giving you a quotient of 1.56. The log of this is very nearly .2 and that is the ND filter strength you'd use keeping the speed setting on the camera at 100.

If you have questions or want to discuss any aspect of Nimslo modifications fee free to write to me right [HERE](#) or later at andpph@rit.edu.