

The Future of Large Format: Currently Available Sheet Films

by
Steve Simmons

The big fear among many large format photographers is that film is not or won't be available. Well, as you can see from the charts in this article, there are still plenty of choices.

What has become more difficult, however, is that if you want film larger than 8x10, you may have to plan ahead and keep your own supply on hand. Ilford will make film in the larger sizes including 6.5x8.5 (full plate), 7x17, 8x20, 10x12, 11x14, 12x20, 14x17, 16x20 and 20x24, but they have two production runs per year and when that run is gone, you will have to wait (Visit http://www.ilford.com/html/us_english/ILFOPRO/forum/forum.asp?FORUM_ID=27 for details). J and C Photo lists many films, but seems to be frequently out of them, at least until their next shipment comes in. Kodak will make runs, but there are minimum orders. Bergger also requires

a minimum order for ULF sizes and recommends that photographers group together to make orders. Bergger will do 14x17, 16x20 and 20x24 as a special order. Working in the ULF sizes is a big commitment and not to be made lightly. I would suggest photographers working with these larger sizes find a dealer and work together to buy film.

As I have heard, and as some of the responders in the first part of this series stated, there seems to be a resurgence of interest in the larger formats. If this is true then those photographers need to support the manufacturers by purchasing film and using it. *View Camera* would love to do an article on people working with larger than 8x10 cameras (anything more than 80 square inches), so please let us know what you are doing. Our submission guidelines are on our web page - www.viewcamera.com.

Commonly Available Black and White Sheet Films

* also available in Readyload 20/box **Quickload Only X means film is available but box sizes not reported to us.

4x5 5x7 8x10 11x14 7x17 8x20 14x17 12x20 16x20 20x24

	4x5	5x7	8x10	11x14	7x17	8x20	14x17	12x20	16x20	20x24
Efke PL25	x	x	x	x						
Efke PL50	x		x							
Ilford FP4+	25/100	25	25							
Acros**	20									
Delta 100	25/100		25							
T-Max 100*	50	50	50							
Efke PL100	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
J&C Pro 100	x		x							
J&C 200	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Bergger 200	25	25	25	25	25	25		25		
Kodak Tri-X	25/50	50	50							
J&C 400	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
T-Max 400	50		50							
Ilford HP5+	25/100	25	25							

Commonly Available Color Sheet Films

Transparency	4x5	5x7	8x10
Astia 100F**	10/50		10/50
Provia 100F**	10/50		10/50
Velvia 100F**	10/50		
Fuji 64T **	10/50		
Ektachrome 64	10/50	10	10
Ektachrome 100G*	10/50		10
Ektachrome 100VS*	10/50		10
Ektachrome 100*	10/50		10
Ektachrome 100 Plus*	10/50		10
Ektachrome 64T*	10/50	10	10
Negative			
NPS 160**	10/50		10
NPL 160**	10/50		10
Portra 100T	10/50		10
Portra 400NC			10
Portra 160NC	10/50	10	10
Portra 160VC	10/50		10

* available in Readyload 20/box **avail in Quickload 20/box

There should be a film here for anyone's taste. There is even 5x7 color film. So, next time you hear or read someone complaining about sheet film going away, just show them this list (we will place a PDF of this file on our web site in the Free Articles section that can be downloaded or sent electronically).

So, I think it is too soon to predict the demise of large format film. Yes, Agfa is gone and so is the Agfa 25 film. Many people lamented the death of this film but there are plenty of alternatives. Ilford has renewed their commitment to the traditional market, and Kodak has several times acknowledged that Tri-X, across all formats, is their best selling black and white film. Many people wish Kodak would package Tri-X in Readyload but that may only be a far away dream

Ordering ULF Film Sizes - by Fred Newman

The View Camera Store has been involved in ordering ultra large format films (ULF) since 1995. Ilford has always been our main source of films. Our Ilford rep told us we were one of the few dealers to order ULF. The sizes supplied by Ilford were 11x14, 7x17, 8x20, 12x20, 14x17, 16x20 and 20x24. The two film types available in these sizes were FP4 Plus and HP5 Plus. The size of our order was based on square footage and the minimum order was 12-25 sheet boxes of 12x20. You can do the math for the other sizes. That cost was about \$3000 for a minimum order. What we would usually do is call up our customers that use a particular size film, and when we had most of the boxes spoken for we would place the order.

Keeping expensive boxes of film in our refrigerator makes me nervous, especially when they are sitting there for over a year.

I have always advised our customers to have a minimum of six months of film in their refrigerator/freezer because it takes at least 3 months for special order film to arrive from the time the order is placed. We try to pre-sell the entire order before placing the order.

We have seen it go from films like 11x14 being in the catalog and no minimum order to all film larger than 8x10 being special order. The problem has been very low sales of ULF and that causes Ilford and other film manufacturers to make these film special order. If you want to photograph using a camera larger than 8x10 you have to make a very serious commitment and have a large stock of film. I realize that this is a very serious financial commitment but if the orders are very low even the nicest company is not going to be interested in manufacturing something that will sit on the shelf. Consequently, the item becomes special order or is no longer available.

The minimum order from Kodak is larger than Ilford about \$9000 and up for special order films. We have shared orders with other dealers to make the minimum order, but, due to the large size, we have not done that very often.

Recently Ilford has been interested in doing special orders again and I have customers waiting for 7x17, 14x17 and 20x24 film. They are interested in FP4+. I'm waiting for the OK from Ilford so I can place their orders. The number of photographers using ULF is very small, and unfortunately the manufacturers need to see steady sales to continue doing this service.

If I can be of any help please feel free to contact me.

If you want to send your name and contact info to View Camera to form a buying collective please do so.

Sending your name means that you agree to have this info shared with other participants.

Please list the film(s) and size(s) you are looking for in your note to us.

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