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# Wittnauer Cine-Twin Camera And Its Main Functions

## The Wittnauer Cine-Twin Combo Projector Camera

The 1959 Wittnauer Cine-Twin Camera stands at about eight inches tall, with metallic and matt black finishes, two scoping lenses, and an obviously weighted bottom. The heavy piece of equipment looks very dated and worn in its place behind glass panelling at the Dead Media Museum in Kerr hall, yet stands out from the other mid 20th century cameras due to its enigmatic dual lens face. Its label in the showing box reads “Wittnauer Cine-Twin Zoom 800 Combination movie camera and Projector, Ca 1959”, hence the two lenses; assuming one functioned as a camera and the other functioned as a projector port. An immediate note that came to mind was how this particular piece of technology could have potentially had a place in the modern world of photography (a film camera that could project its own pictures, post-development); however, through some supplementary research done online, it became very clear why and how this unique camera model failed to survive and/or evolve in the exponentially developing world of camera technology and consumerism. Simply put, although the Wittnauer Cine-Twin Camera was innovative, it was also incredibly inconvenient.

The Wittnauer Cine-Twin Camera comes in two primary pieces. The first piece is the actual body of the camera itself, a silver and matt black chamber, roughly twice the size of an average 1990s video camcorder. Although it does look outdated, aesthetically (and subjectively) speaking, it is definitely not ugly. At first glance it takes on the appearance of a “vintage retro” device; like something you would see in the Jetsons, or a colored drawing from the 1950s, depicting life on earth in year 2000. Its dual lens system definitely adds to this effect. From its appearance, it can be noted that both lenses have zoom or aperture functions. However, since one of the lenses acts as a projector port, it can be safely assumed that one of the lens’s functions is not for zoom or aperture, but instead for size and projecting accuracy.

The second piece of the camera is a matt black cinder block of a stand, and besides a knob that appears to only serve the function of projection angling, it appears to just be an inconveniently heavy addition to the camera. In the Wittnauer Cine-Twin camera’s original advertising campaign as seen in TIME magazine, the camera/projector appears to function fairly easily. One simply took off the camera’s film cartridge, fed developed film back into the film reel, placed the camera on its stand, and flicked a switch to start projecting . The camera/projector’s purpose was to convenience the consumer by negating the necessity of buying an expensive projector to display films or home movies. Its convenience comes from the fact that it is a two-in-one item, a multi-use appliance that was invented and marketed to be sold as a technological fix

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to the clutter and confusion of multiple pieces of technology performing under the same function - in this case, recording and relaying videos and memories. However, although the Wittnauer Cine-Twin camera's primary function was technological adaptivity and convenience, its production failed to last any longer than six years . One must question why this is.

Ironically, the Cine-Twin camera failed to serve its primary function of convenience, simply due the fact that it was incredibly inconvenient. The camera was much heavier than an average 8mm camera due its projector capabilities, it took massive D-cell batteries to run in order to power its projector light, the actual bulb itself was very expensive and delicate, and on top of everything else, the camera was just incredibly expensive . So expensive, in fact, that the camera was sold only at Wittnauer stores and displays, behind glass, with their luxury watches and jewelry . Given the context, it is not unsafe to assume that Wittnauer was attempting to tap into the home-video market with the Cine-Twin camera, a product that they released with 14 other cameras in the late 1950's and early 1960's . Today, Wittnauer is again just a watch and jewelry company, and they do not manufacture cameras at all. The failure of the Cine-Twin camera and the rest of the Wittnauer camera line was most likely due to the Cine-Twin's inability to crack into the "camera-convenience" market, along with consumer taste and simple competition among major camera companies.

By attempting to tap into the market of technological convenience, Wittnauer was attempting to appeal to the taste of the American economic family unit. With the invention of the hand held video camera, the personal TV, and the cultural phenomenon of the home video, there was a huge market for personable camera technology in the late 1950's and the early 1960's. By innovating convenience, Wittnauer's marketing platform for the Cine-Twin camera became about the American family and giving the everyday man or woman access to not only easy home-video, but easy home-video watching - easy-ready family times. Like an archaeological clue, understanding the marketing and application of Wittnauer's Cine-Twin camera allows one to make educated assumptions about video and media culture at the time. Although the Wittnauer Cine-Twin camera (and the Wittnauer Company as a whole) failed to succeed as a video recording and projecting device, it represents an invention based on sheer innovation - capitalizing on user interest and room for convenience.

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