

**PHOTOGRAPHIC'S
USER REPORT**

Creative photography doesn't necessarily stop when you depress the shutter button, or even when the film is processed. Innovative companies are out there designing products to enhance your photographic creativity. Wess Plastics, Inc. offers photographers a variety of devices with which to design new images—by spinning, zooming, masking, duplicating, manipulating, reversing, or just about anything else your imagination desires.

A year or so ago, we reviewed a device called the Wess Grouper, which allowed photographers to group up to 16 images on one film frame to be used as a multi-media image. Now, here are more Wess products: the Mini-Director, the Duper, and the VR Pin-Printer. Each has a special task that allows the photographer to venture beyond the original image.

WESS MINI-DIRECTOR

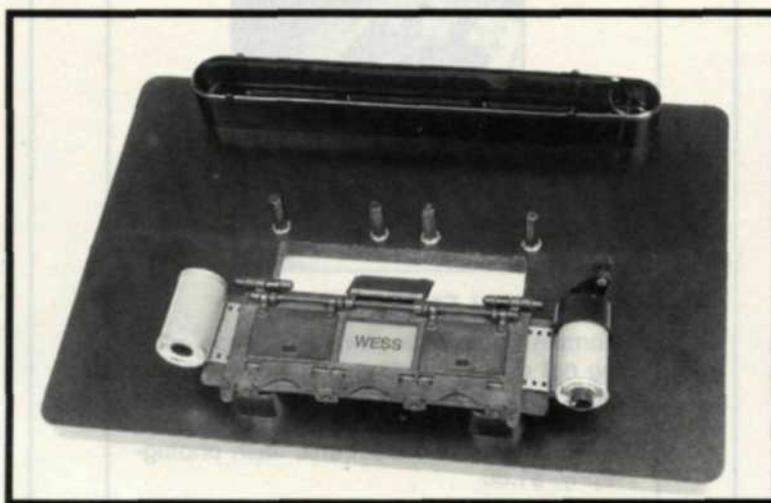
The Mini-Director is a compact, optical-special-effects device that allows the photographer to move an image in a variety of directions. The unit is designed for mounting on a slide duplicator or medium-size light box, and is made up of several layers of black anodized metal. The lowest plate allows you to attach the unit to your slide duplicator or copy device. The next two layers actually move along x and y axes. The round top layer moves in a circular direction, allowing spins or partial circular movements.

The text slide, or original image to be manipulated, is attached to the top of the circular stage using another Wess device called the Holder. If you do not have the Holder, you can place your image under a circular piece of glass that fits on top of the circular stage. The circular stage is held in place with one pin set at the "0" position. When you remove the pin, you can rotate the image in a circular motion.

Movements along x and y axes are achieved by turning two screw controls. Turning the handle at the end of either screw causes that specific layer to move. A distance scale at the end of each screw tells you just how much the image has moved. A quick-release above each

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For Creative Slide-Making



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The Wess Duper is not as complicated as it sounds. The large slot at the top lets you measure out just the right length of film to make contact prints of three slides. The film supply and take-up cassettes are then moved to the slide stage, where the contact exposure is made.

screw allows you to reset the screw once the movement has been made.

To completely understand how the Mini-Director works, we will take you through the sequence of creating several special-effects slides. We will use a white text slide against a black background, as it is the easiest to work with on the Mini-Director. First, you place the original slide on the top of the circular stage using the round piece of glass or the Wess Holder. You then reset the circular stage to "0" and center the x and y stages to "0" using the quick-release device on each stage.

The entire Mini-Director is then placed on a slide duplicator or copy

stand with a lightbox. A camera with multiple-exposure capability must be mounted on the copy device. Once you've loaded the camera and programmed it to make multiple exposures, make your first exposure. Turn the x-axis screw until it has made one full turn back to "0." This will move the image 1mm. Make the second exposure, and continue moving the stage at 1mm intervals until the desired number of exposures has been made. The resulting image will show each exposure shifted 1mm to the right. Variations on this movement could include adding 20CC red to each additional exposure, so that the resulting image would start out white and gradually get more and more red as the image shifts.

If you make a y-axis movement at the same time as you make an x-axis movement, you will create a diagonal movement. If you want

to spin the image, you can remove the circular stage pin and move the stage 1° for each exposure. Combining x-axis, y-axis, and circular movements simultaneously will result in a spiral effect.

If you prefer a smoother effect, instead of the step-and-repeat movements, you can open the quick-release device on each movement you are going to employ. Set the camera to compensate for the long exposure, and darken the room. Open the

shutter, and move the desired control from the starting point to the end, and back again, as many times as possible during the exposure. The more passes you can make, the smoother the streak. By varying exposure, color balance, focus, and image movement, you will have a multitude of special-effect slides to enhance your slide presentations. The Mini-Director sells for \$845.

WESS DUPER

If you need to make 1:1 duplicate slides, high-contrast reversal masks, or Kodaliths of your originals, the Duper may be just your ticket. The Duper is a specialized 35mm contact printer that can be set up in a variety of ways. The 9x13-inch unit can be used on an enlarging stand or lightbox, and allows you to make three pin-registered 1:1 dupes in one exposure.

First, load a roll of duplicating film and attach the leader to the spool of a second, empty film cassette, so that one cassette is in the opposite direction of



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the other (see photo). The empty cassette with the leader attached is placed top down in the right side of the slot on the back of the duper. A rewind crank is then attached to the bottom of this cassette. The cassette with the full load of film should be sitting next to the empty cassette, with its top up.

Select three original slides and remove them from their slide mounts. Open the door on the front of the Duper and place the original slides side by side on the



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pins, so that their images read backwards. In the dark, pull the full cassette along the slot in the back of the Duper until it comes to the left edge of the slot. This will measure out your first strip of film necessary to make the contact exposure. Carefully remove both cassettes together and place the strip of film on the same pins as the originals. Closing the door will place the original images in contact with the

1.-3. Photos 1 and 2 were combined in the Wess VR Pin-Printer to create photo 3, the final result.

4. Here, two register-punched 35mm slides are held in position on the VR Pin-Printer.

dupe film.

If you are using an enlarger as a light source, merely open the three cover plates, located over each image, and make an exposure. If the Duper is sitting on a lightbox, flip the front stage over and make the exposure through the opening in the middle of the Duper (the cover plates automatically open when the stage is turned over). After you have exposed the three images, open the front door and place the two cassettes in the back of the Duper. Turn the rewind crank on the

right cassette, and the left cassette will slide over next to it as the exposed film retracts into its cassette. Turn on the lights, and repeat the process for your next three images. On a 36-exposure roll of film you should be able to make eight sets of three dupes on the Duper.

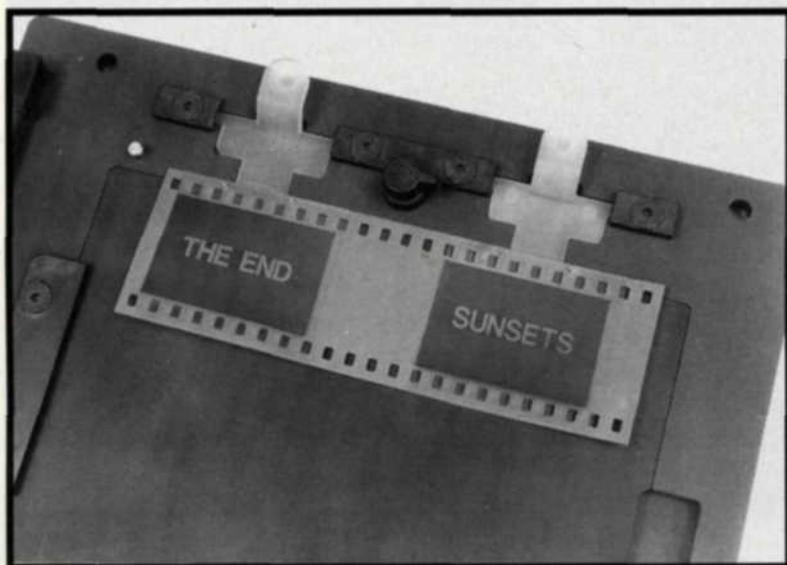
The uses for the Duper go beyond just making 1:1 duplicates. You could make pin-registered Kodaliths for doing posterization, pin-registered positives or negatives for special

effects, or even create your own sharp- or soft-edge masks. The Duper sells for \$80.

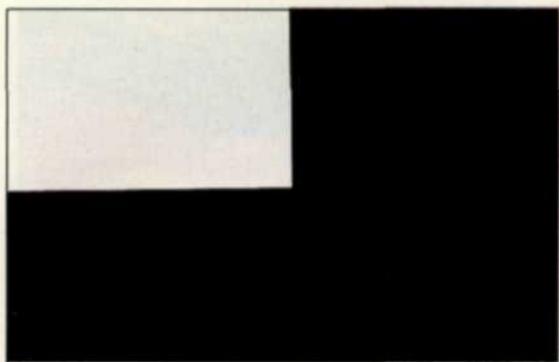
WESS VR PIN-PRINTER

One of the most critical elements in making quality special effects is a pin-register device. With that in mind, Wess has created a pin-register system that covers just about any contingency you can think of. The VR (Variable Register) Pin-Printer comes in two basic parts: The VR Punch is a clear plexiglass plate with two sets of double punches at one end. Etched lines indicate where to place your 35mm, 120- and 4x5-format originals for punching. After placing your original on the plate, press down on the red button, and holes are punched along the edge of the film.

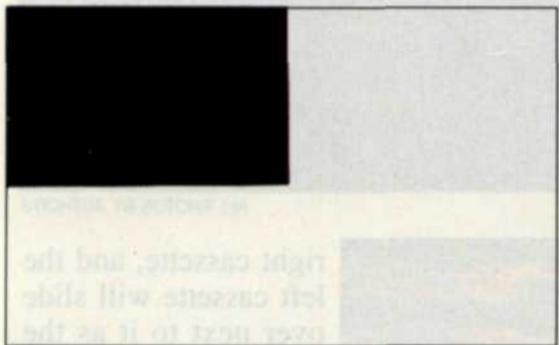
The VR Printer device is a small contact printer with four identical register pins at one edge. Various masks for different formats can be inserted into the middle of the contact printer. These masks limit the light to just the area of the format being used. For example, the 35mm mask has two diffused windows



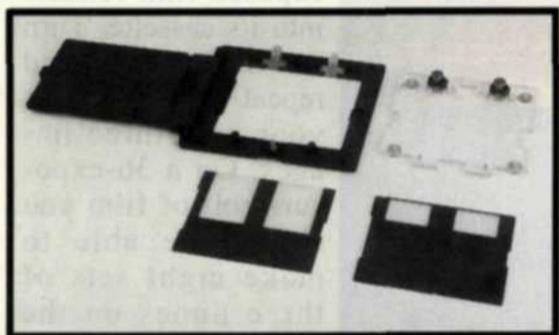
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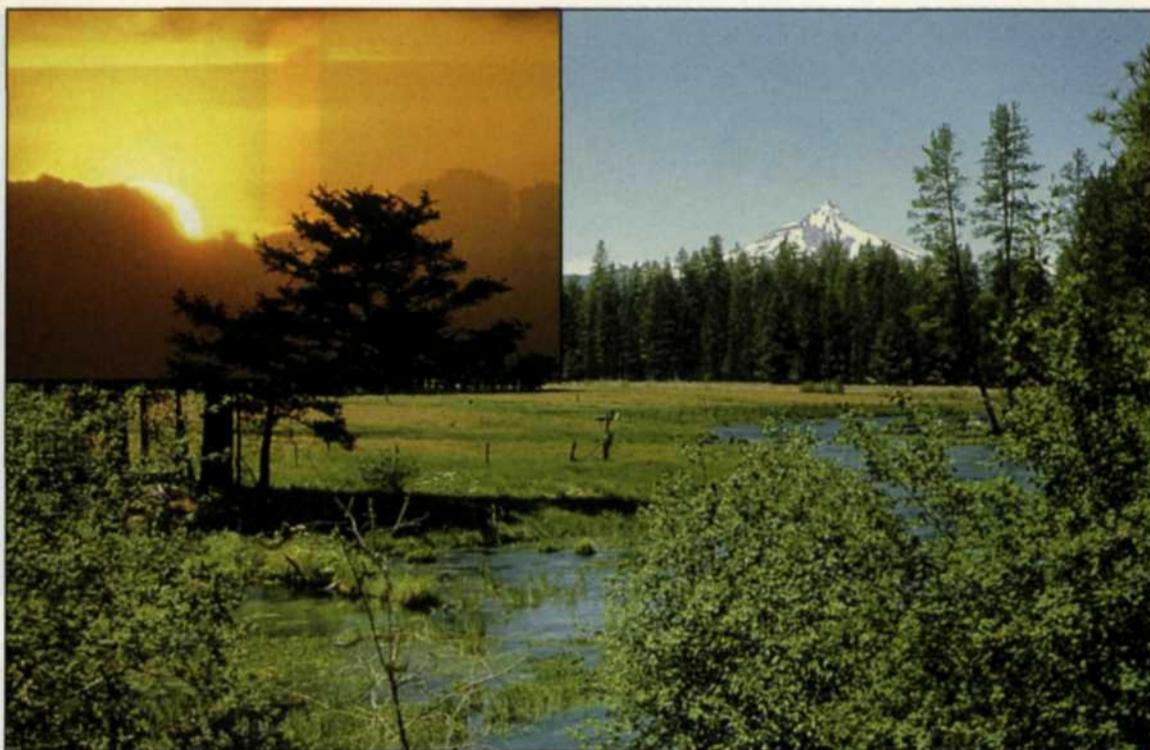
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1.-3. Using the Wess Contact Printing Frame, which is part of the VR Pin-Printer, positive and negative masks were combined to create the final composite image.

4. The Wess VR Pin-Printer consists of two basic parts: the clear plexiglass VR punch (upper right), and the Printer (shown at top left, with two format frames below).

tures. In the time we had these three products for review, several new and improved modifications were added to the VR Pin-Printer. If you enjoy doing special effects, or require exacting manipulations with your originals, you can't go wrong with Wess—the company that provides products for the creative slidemaker.

For further information, contact Wess Plastics, Inc., 70 Commerce Drive, Hauppauge, NY 11788; or give them a call at (516) 231-6300. Tell 'em Jack and Sue sent you. ■

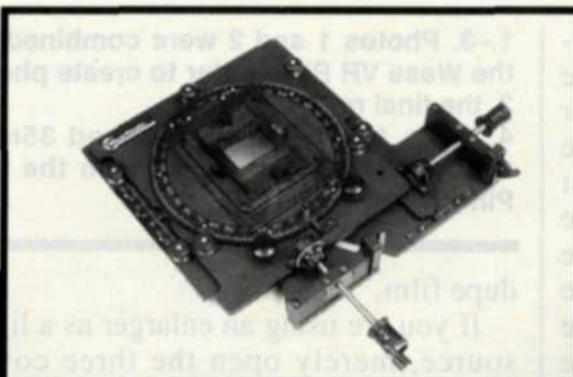
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slightly larger than two 35mm frames.

In the darkroom, you open the VR Printer door and place the original film to be duped onto the Printer pins. After turning out the light, punch the edge of unexposed film and place it on the pin above the original. Close the door and lock it into place. You then turn the VR Printer upside down and make an exposure through the diffused mask in the bottom of the VR Printer. A VR Printer door with a hole in the top can be substituted so you can make a contact dupe without the diffusion material in the bottom of the Printer. This exposure is made through the top of the Printer. If you use this method, reverse the order of your original and the unexposed film. The VR Pin-Printer sells for \$475.

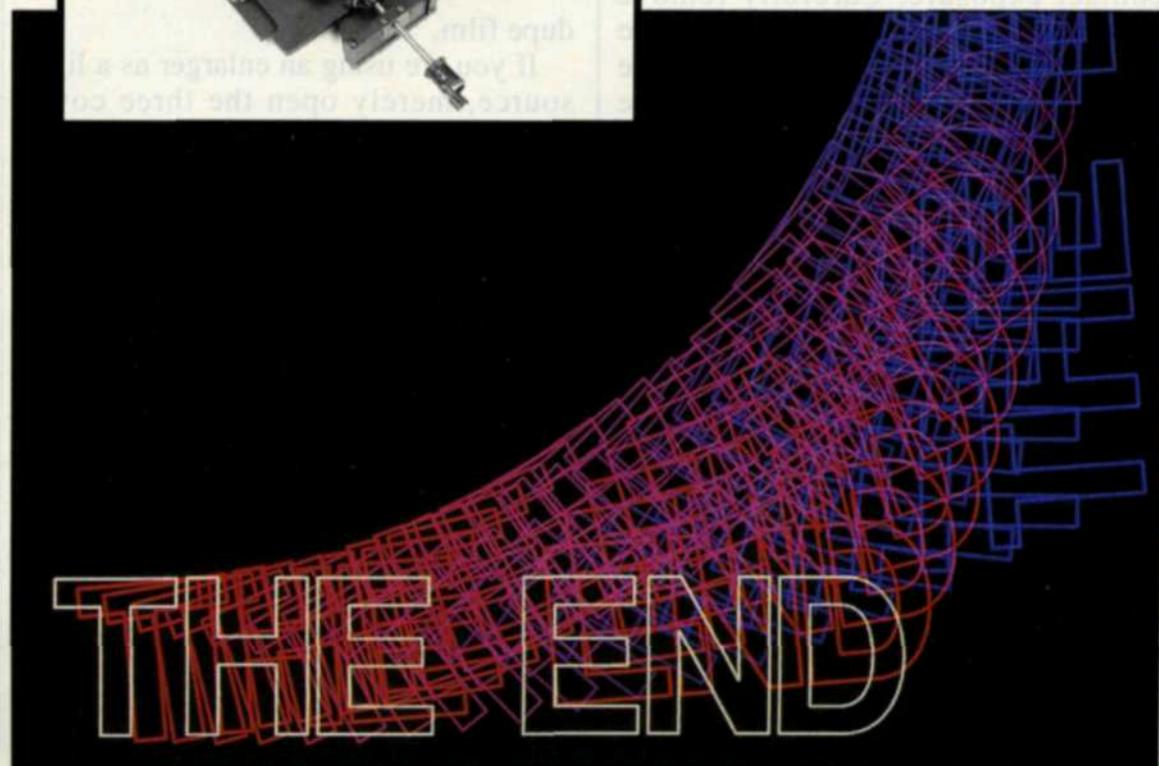
WRAP-UP

Each of these products is extremely well made, and we found their versatility refreshing. Wess is constantly updating these devices with new adapters and accessories. They told us that many of their ideas come from the consumer, and when the demand is high enough, they add the suggestions as new fea-



5. The Wess Mini-Director lets you precisely move a slide horizontally and vertically, or rotate it, or do a combination thereof, all in precise increments.

6. This image illustrates all the movements that the Mini-Director makes possible, and the effects created as a result



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