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7artisans 50mm f 1.1 manual focus prime lens

7artisans 50mm f/1.1 review. 7artisans 60mm f/2.8 mark ii. 7artisans 7.5mm f/2.8 ii. 7artisans 18mm f/6.3 ufo.

I had been playing with the idea of selling the Noctilux for some time and eventually made this a reality when I realised it had sat unused for about eight months, and I simply had no urge to use it. This 4-shot sequence of defocused fairy lights taken at apertures between $f/1.05$ and $f/4$ shows how 'bokeh discs' remain fairly circular when shooting wide-open, even away from the centre of the frame, and how the 13-blade diaphragm helps to retain a well-rounded circumference when stopping down. The aperture diaphragm itself has no less than 13 blades and is particularly well-rounded. Build and handling (image credit: Matthew Richards) Build quality feels solid and robust. This sequence of shots demonstrates the excellent quality of bokeh when shooting wide-open at $f/1.05$, and how well bokeh holds up when stopping down to $f/1.4$ and $f/2$. Designed for mirrorless cameras and available in Canon RF, Leica L, Nikon Z and Sony FE mount options, this 7artisans lens is less than a third of the weight of the Noct, and costs just 6 per cent of the price to buy. You therefore need to adjust the iris via the lens's aperture control ring rather than from the camera body, limiting the range of semi-automatic PASM shooting options. (Image credit: Matthew Richards) Depth of field is really tight at $f/1.05$, enabling you to isolate subjects against blurred surroundings. Any new rangefinder lenses are fantastic to bring people into the Leica system, and into shooting film: at one of the lowest price points it offers an incredible aesthetic to anyone who had been considering the M-mount system. However I was very impressed with the sharpness offered by the 7artisans, as it is definitely not soft by my personal standards - although marginally softer than the Zeiss and Noctilux. I've used this lens extensively on both digital and film cameras, and I definitely see less character overall in a film photograph compared to the digital, which demands that much more for precise rendering on any lens. The difference between the two in my eyes however comes down to basically two(ish) stops of light. So instead of owning three lenses which occupy essentially the same role in my work now I just use this, and honestly haven't missed them at all since then. For such a fast lens, axial/longitudinal chromatic aberration is particularly well controlled, even at the widest aperture. Distortion: -0.65 There's just a hint of barrel distortion but it's so slight that it's almost impossible to spot in the vast majority of subject matter. Verdict: Exif: Nikon Z 6II + 7artisans 50mm f/1.05 (1/800 sec, $f/1.05$, ISO 200) (Image credit: Matthew Richards) Nikon Z 6II + 7artisans 50mm f/1.05 (1/640 sec, $f/1.4$, ISO 200) (Image credit: Matthew Richards) Nikon Z 6II + 7artisans 50mm f/1.05 (1/400 sec, $f/2$, ISO 200) (Image credit: Matthew Richards) Nikon Z 6II + 7artisans 50mm f/1.05 (1/200 sec, $f/4$, ISO 200). However I find issue with the idea of this lens as being defined by its softness. Luckily my experience has mostly been during the winter in London, or at night, and flare isn't too much of an issue in these situations. Handling is very refined and image quality is excellent, making the lens stand out value at the price. Read more • Best 50mm lenses • Best lenses for bokeh • Best Canon RF lenses • Best L-mount lenses • Best Nikon Z lenses • Best Sony lenses 7artisans 50mm f/1.05: Price Comparison 7artisans have been producing some absolutely fantastic options in the low-budget lens department, and one of their best entries for rangefinder coupled full frame cameras is the 50mm $f/1.1$, an incredibly ambitious lens which at first glance many would overlook. Rather than deciding on what to use based on essentially whims my options for 50mm are now either the 7artisans or, when sharpness becomes a factor, my Zeiss 50mm Planar. I see portraiture as being quite a clinical description, especially when in a studio session. It definitely has elements that would put some people off from using it entirely and this is a shame, but so far I don't think that any of these things have been dealbreakers. I also think that when stopped down it becomes something else entirely; a pretty averagely sharp basic 50mm option, with very little in the way of special effect looks. We tested the Nikon Z edition. Thanks for taking the time to read about my experiences with the 7artisans 50mm $f/1.1$. I hope it's been useful to helping you decide whether or not it's something for you! If you've enjoyed my images here then you might consider following my work on Instagram. For situations which require me to walk backwards while focusing on a subject moving through planes of focus in front of me there's no real advice or tricks I can offer other than to practice and find what works for you. This is similar to the use of prisms with Stealing Frames, but in a natural setting, without needing any props. It has survived my most recent gear cull, during which I got rid of both my Noctilux $f/0.95$, and Zeiss C Sonnar 50mm $f/1.5$. It took me quite a bit of deliberating to be comfortable parting with those lenses, but the 7artisans won out for a few reasons which I'll be discussing in this write up. 35mm demands a little too much proximity for my liking, although in the right hands it can be excellent. I think rangefinder users can often be a little spoiled in terms of the benefit of the absolute light-weightedness of the average daily carry when compared to an SLR shooter. The bokeh from this lens often has a very distinct shape to it, an oblong rather than a sphere, sometimes a semi-circle when at the edge of the frame. It promises a lot in that short description - a staple focal length with an aperture verging on hyperbole - it invokes comparisons to the Noctilux range, and so I did a rough comparison soon after purchasing one. Eventually holding onto the Noctilux became sort of meaningless, as I'd rather focus on taking pictures than hoarding gear I might use, so I sold it and honestly haven't missed it since. The standout feature is naturally its blisteringly fast aperture rating, surprisingly shoehorned into an amazingly compact and lightweight build. I think it could offer even half as much in terms of quality for the price and still be an excellent option. It certainly doesn't have any effect on my use with black and white film. (Image credit: Matthew Richards) The depth of field is very tight at $f/1.05$, especially at the short end of the focus range, but the transition between focused and defocused areas looks very smooth and natural. It's definitely soft, definitely the softest lens I own, and almost certainly the softest M lens aside from the Thambar. This leaves 50mm as something I understand, and can use effectively in situations where I absolutely cannot afford to be thinking about my gear. My go to for general street photography is longer than most, at 90mm, but I feel that 50mm is the best storytelling lens for faster paced use, where speed is essential both from the user and in terms of the aperture. I'm not a mechanical connoisseur, so anything further in terms of precision is wasted on me. Considering the speed of the aperture rating, the lens is amazingly compact and lightweight, yet tough and well-built. I buy all of my film from Analogue Wonderland. The absolute wow factor for this lens is the price, whatever way you look at it. I think that film is more forgiving than digital in most cases, especially when paired with soft lenses, so for my film-based photojournalism the look of the lens is sort of balanced out by the feel of the film. I've been photographing with the 7artisans for quite some time now, both on digital and film, for documentary, street, portrait, fashion, personal, and professional work. Lens type Prime lens Focal length 50 mm Image stab. Glare? So what's the catch? (Image credit: Matthew Richards) Fast lenses often suffer from noticeable axial chromatic aberration (bokeh fringing), where high-contrast edges of objects in front of and behind the point of focus, typically taking on red, green or blue fringes anywhere across the image frame.



This way of shooting, and this style, was really just something to play with and not something I would take seriously, but I was actually pretty happy with quite a few of the examples - all of which were made with the 7artisans lens. It really was a hard decision to sell the Zeiss Sonnar, as I'd used this for pretty much the majority of my early work - I'd even had a piece featured on the Zeiss blog about it.



The wideness of the aperture offers itself to some wonderfully creative possibilities in portrait work. I've found it to be the perfect fit for my usual requirements for a 50mm lens - that is to be something fast and elegant, to frame subjects within around 10 meters from me, in situations which require fast reactions to capture fleeting moments. I think this image wouldn't be nearly as effective without the background working in this way to accentuate the foreground. You can also enable the in-body stabilization of Nikon full-frame Z cameras by entering the relevant 'non-CPU lens data' in the setup menu. The lens's optical path is based on 10 elements in 7 groups, of which two are ULD (Ultra Low Dispersion) elements. I think many would assume that this means somehow it is a gimmick lens, like a lens-baby, or a pinhole; with one possible lock to offer. It has 7 elements in 6 groups, a 12-blade aperture, 0.7m minimum focus distance and threads for 55mm filters. I don't think there's anything particularly stand out as badly implemented, the focus and aperture ring move when I need them to and don't when I don't. It feels well machined, securely bolted together, with little to no give when played with to try and force a wobble. It has character and fantastic applications wide open, and stopped down produces excellent results. The lens is large and heavy, nowhere near the 0.95 Noctilux, but relative to the majority of 50mm rangefinder lenses it is definitely more cumbersome. Photos of test charts are taken across the range of apertures and zooms (where available), then analyzed for sharpness, distortion and chromatic aberrations. We use Imatest SFR (spatial frequency response) charts and analysis software to plot lens resolution at the centre of the image frame, corners and mid-point distances, across the range of aperture settings and, with zoom lenses, at four different focal lengths. It's actually slightly smaller than Nikon's comparatively pedestrian Z 50mm $f/1.8$ S, and even has a smaller filter thread at 58mm compared with 62mm, despite the need to pull in all that extra light. Not just a manual-focus lens, this one's purely mechanical and has no built-in electronics whatsoever. The severity of the character can depend on the kind of light and conditions, as well as the distance from the subject, and the subject to the background. I think that the look of the 7artisans is actually pretty controllable, and can be used in different ways to achieve different effects. (Image credit: Matthew Richards) For keeping shutter speeds sufficiently fast under dim lighting, to freeze motion without bumping up your camera's ISO setting too far, this lens has a lot going for it. Being able to render the context in certain ways using the "look" to their advantage. For sure my absolute best case application for it would be for film photography - the wide aperture is a must for maximising my shutter speed when my film ISO is lower than I'd prefer. I think the quality between these two lenses at 1.5/1.4 is pretty much identical, so again after a while of not using the Zeiss I made the decision to sell that too. Skin is smoothed, eyes glow, and the overall rendering is usually very lovely especially when wide open; I really prefer to shoot it that way for portraiture, and usually really enjoy the final results.



If my intent is to produce a likeness of a person I would much rather it be in a candid moment, with energy and life in the eyes, rather than guided, or posed, or staged. Although my preferred lens for this is 90mm I use 50mm fairly frequently, especially if the work is going to be a little closer, and fast paced. When viewed at a 100% crop an image made on this lens will have a fine layer of hazing to it, a definite very slight blur to all of the fine detail. We have such high standards for clinical sharpness (especially from brands like Leica or Zeiss, which this lens is being categorised alongside by merit of it's M-mount and rangefinder coupling) that it feels kind of arbitrary to call this lens soft. Usually moving at the same speed as the subject pays off, but this requires good situational awareness to avoid tripping or knocking into things. At the end of my earlier write up where I compared this lens to the Noctilux I left a side by side comparison without labelling either and the rendering is incredibly close. With these parameters I don't need to give any thought to my metering, as the latitude of the film will catch any blown out highlights, and if not then the lens will render them beautifully. For street and documentary reportage work it's a real Swiss army knife, dealing with all and any difficult conditions. Firstly I don't actually see softness as the worst thing that can happen to an image; as long as the idea is clear. Feature. Think super-fast prime lens and you're probably thinking of big, hefty glass with a preposterous price tag. Anytime I came close I picked the 7artisans instead - the weight, lower price, and parity between the low-light potential left me with a very easy choice. The Basics Things like build quality are never the defining sales pitch for gear to me. I've also found excellent potential for set stills, and fashion photography, as well as general portraits - but these are areas I'm less excited about. I think that there are some definite parallels between the look of the 7artisans 50mm $f/1.1$ when shot wide open and some of the lens-baby lenses however this is not the only think the 7artisans is capable of. The worst I've felt is the severe chromatic aberration, but this only gets bad when shooting on digital, in colour, in a backlit situation, and that doesn't happen very often. The character of this lens expresses itself in a few ways, but the three main ones are in the softness, bokeh, and flare. Secondly while the lens is definitely soft when compared to other lenses it isn't that much softer really. The most obvious is that this is a manual focus lens and that it doesn't even have electronic connections for the camera to control the lens aperture. It took me a little longer to be comfortable with the idea of selling the Zeiss - this had one benefit over the 7artisans, in terms of the weight. The supplied slip-on front lens cap is also metal but, by contrast, the mounting plate is made from high-grade plastic, unlike the metal plate of 7artisans' sibling 10mm fisheye lens. The quality of defocused areas is lusciously smooth and dreamy, and the transition between sharp and blurred areas looks entirely natural with a soft progression. The tight depth of field when shooting close-ups demands very precise focusing, aided by the focus peaking display and magnified viewing options available in mirrorless cameras.



The aperture control ring has no click-stops, which is a bonus when shooting video. Vignetting? The real ideal use for this lens so far for me has been a combination of low light conditions, with this lens wide open, rendering onto a 3200 speed film, with a shutter of 1/125ths - 1/4ths depending on the availability of light. If your goal is personal or even serious documentary, portrait, or general purpose photography then this is an exceptional lens. I honestly think that this lens is the perfect one-lens solution to any film rangefinder user. It performs than the majority of "rare" vintage lenses which sell for ten times the price, and outlasted two of the most iconic rangefinder 50mm lenses in my own use.



For Portraits I am not a portrait photographer by any means – it isn’t work I particularly enjoy or gravitate towards, but it does play a role in my work, when hired for portrait or when incorporating it into my photojournalism. The *f*/1.05 aperture also delivers a really tight depth of field, ideal for isolating objects in fussy scenes by blurring the surroundings. This left me with quite a broad use case for this lens, and it ticks a lot of boxes for me. That’s actually ten grams heavier than the Nikon FM2/105mm 2.5 combination which I shoot just as often. The most obvious characteristic of this lens that is sure to be noticeable when shot wide open, regardless of the other characteristics is the bokeh. However, it is absolutely much smaller and lighter than any equivalent SLR lens would be with this specification. My Ideal Use Case I initially wanted this lens to be a cheap low-light solution, for use in situations I would be uncomfortable and maybe held back by the potential for damage to the more expensive Noctilux and Zeiss Sonnar lenses which were my previous go-to for low-light photography. Refinement and perfection of ideas, not technical matters. A feature. As long as it works and I can create an image without fighting my kit for it that’s good enough for me. The ability to nail focus at *f*/1.1 with this lens will come down to two things: how well your camera and lens are calibrated, and the amount of practice you have with a rangefinder camera. I would be very interested if their ever released a 90mm at any aperture, but would be an immediate buy if it were at 2.8/2. Conclusion I think that if anyone feels their use of this lens would be similar to my application then it’s an easy purchase, it’s as simple as that. One of the best things about a rangefinder is that regardless of the aperture of the camera is set to the focusing mechanism will not change; you are not looking through the lens, so a lower or higher aperture has no effect over what you see.

Shortcomings This is a difficult area to really nail down, as with any character lens any drawback can be waved away with “it’s a feature.” The softness? There are no weather-seals, neither on the mounting plate nor elsewhere around the joints.Handling benefits from a smoothly operating focus ring with sufficient rotational travel to enable good precision throughout the entire range, from 0.57m to infinity. The lens is “soft” by any comparison to the vast majority of current production lenses, and definitely many vintage ones too. I’ve enjoyed focusing through foreground detail with my subject placed behind this. I spend the majority of my time with the lens wide open, and have used it both for its character, and at other times as a straightforward lens. Compared with the Leica, Zeiss, and Voigtlander lenses I either still own or have owned in the past it stacks up fairly well. These are things I would never think to incorporate into my usual work so I used the opportunity to really play with what was possible in these kinds of images. There was a lot of hype around this lens when it was first released, and I truly believe it lives up to it (and quite possibly exceeds it). 50mm fills a specific purpose in my work, so my use of the 7Artisans needs to be complimentary to that purpose. (Image credit: Matthew Richards)The 7Artisans 50mm *f*/1.05 caters to all the major mirrorless mount options.

On film that can mean the difference between nailing the shot and missing it, and on digital it isn’t all that much these days. This makes it one of the easiest systems to nail focus wide open.

I found that when using things like prisms alongside this lens it renders them very subtly, which makes the final image nicely nuanced.

It makes rangefinder photography that much more accessible to people for whom even Voigtlander lenses were pricy. The 7Artisans 50mm *f*/1.05 breaks the mold. This portrait was taken with my subject at around 90cm away from me, and the background maybe half a meter from her. That’s it. I haven’t tried the other lenses by 7artisans yet, as 50mm is their only offering so far I would actually use. Of course, having seen what they did with this lens I am more inclined to speculate, as I really think they are likely to produce some really interesting and more importantly accessible rangefinder lenses. Flair occurs with this lens in harsh conditions, and I would recommend a hood to anyone looking to use it in harsh sunlight. The tests also measure distortion and color fringing (chromatic aberration).Sharpness:(Image credit: Future)Sharpness is excellent overall, only dropping off a little at the very widest apertures between *f*/1.05 and *f*/1.4. One curiosity is that, at apertures between *f*/2.8 and *f*/1.1, sharpness is even better in the outlying area of the image frame, between the centre and the edge.Fringing:(Image credit: Future)There’s very little in the way of colour fringing. This way my entire attention can be driven towards seeking out those unique moments and reacting to them quickly.

In terms of the characteristics of the lens interfering with the accuracy of the rendering of journalistic events I can’t say I’ve ever been bothered by something feeling too unrealistic as a result of the look of this lens.

Lateral chromatic aberration towards the edges and corners of the frame is quite negligible, even when uncorrected. This is a particular bonus for ‘zone focusing’, enabling you dial in the minimum and maximum distances at which objects will be rendered sharply, for any marked aperture setting.The stepless or ‘de-clicked’ aperture ring operates with a similarly smooth action but, while it’s a bonus for video capture, there’s a bit of guesswork involved in setting precise apertures for stills between *f*/4 and *f*/16.PerformanceExif: Nikon Z 6II + 7Artisans 50mm *f*/1.05 (1/800 sec, *f*/1.05, ISO 200) (Image credit: Matthew Richards)Exif: Nikon Z 6II + 7Artisans 50mm *f*/1.05 (1/640 sec, *f*/1.4, ISO 200) (Image credit: Matthew Richards)Nikon Z 6II + 7Artisans 50mm *f*/1.05 (1/400 sec, *f*/2, ISO 200). In fact the combination of this lens and my Leica M6 Titanium, on which it sees most of its use, is 985g. I balance out the use of the 7artisans with my Zeiss Planar which has none of the issues of the 7artisans, so if a client is ever not comfortable with me using a softer lens then I have the option to go sharper. When applying the 7artisans lens to this kind of work it has been interesting to see the way that the character of the lens influences the way I depict my subjects.

I very briefly shot some work with a fine art collective called Stealing Frames, who use things like long exposure, double exposure, prisms, shooting through water, messing with film/prints during development, to achieve a really unique and often other worldly effect. No Lens mount Leica M Max aperture F1.1 Min aperture F16 Min focus 0.70 m (27.56”) Weight 400 g (0.88 lb) Length 49 mm (1.93”) See full specifications Why you can trust Digital Camera World Our expert reviewers spend hours testing and comparing products and services so you can choose the best for you. A notable example is the manual-focus Nikon Z 58mm *f*/0.95 S Noct, which weighs in at a whopping 2,000g and sells for £8,299/\$7,997. Impressively, there’s also virtually no ‘onion ring’ effect.

The lens has an aluminum body and copper core and weighs 400g. Both the inner and outer barrel are crafted from metal, the inner one extending at shorter focus distances. I couldn’t even find any examples in my archive to show here. But when viewed as the actual image it can be very difficult to tell the difference between images made with this lens and any other (unless you look for the other characteristics). (Image credit: Matthew Richards)Sharpness is highly impressive at apertures of *f*/2 and narrower and, for such a fast-aperture lens, holds up very well even when shooting wide-open at *f*/1.05. For Documentary The main genre of photography I shoot is documentary, in both photojournalism and street. But how does the image quality stack up?SpecificationsMount: Canon RF, Leica L, Nikon Z, Sony FE Lens construction: 10 elements in 7 groups Angle of view: 46 degrees Diaphragm blades: 13 Minimum aperture: *f*/16 Minimum focusing distance: 0.57m Autofocus type: Manual only Filter size: 58mm Dimensions: 61x86mm Weight: 606gKey featuresDespite its much faster aperture rating, the 7Artisans 50mm *f*/1.05 is slightly smaller than Nikon’s relatively pedestrian Z 50mm *f*/1.8 S lens, which is about 1.5 *f*/stops slower. These ‘bokeh discs’ remain very circular and uniformly outlined when stopping down, thanks to the extremely well-rounded 13-blade aperture diaphragm.Lab resultsWe run a range of lab tests under controlled conditions, using the imatest Master testing suite. My experience of this lens has been pretty consistent happy use, without worry about sharpness, distortion, or any of the other factors. What’s arguably more important for this type of lens is the quality of bokeh, and that’s where the 7Artisans really excels.Axial/longitudinal chromatic aberration or ‘bokeh fringing’ is very minimal around high-contrast edges just in front of and behind the point of focus, even when shooting wide-open at *f*/1.05. 50mm is as versatile as the photographer needs it to be, and can be used both close up and from a little further to apply more context. I think the softness of the lens plays a role as well, as it means that layering things through the foreground, and then the subject, are all fairly similarly detailed and equally soft, rather than with a sharper lens where this contrast may be far more apparent. For this kind of fast paced image practice will be very important, especially when focusing wide open. I know people for whom that would be an issue, and others for whom it would not, definitely a personal preference decision. Reasons I’ve been unhappy with the results from this lens have never been a result of something inherent to the character, and more due to my own shortcomings/other factors when making that exposure. I also think a 50mm *f*/2 by them would be incredible, especially if they were to make it a pancake, another easy buy – but these things are easy to think of when being entirely hypothetically.

That means that a combination of their 35mm and this 50mm may be the perfect all round street and reportage setup, as those are the two most popular lengths for that genre. (Image credit: Matthew Richards)Contrast and colour rendition remain very pleasing when shooting wide-open. 90mm also sometimes means a little too much distance from the subject, meaning that the view can become obstructed and shots can be missed as a result. When I do shoot with it wide open in sunlight I am careful to angle the front element away from any strong reflections and the sun itself to minimise the risk of flare. It’s definitely not a one-trick lens by any means, and it’s yet to offer me results that either I or my clients are unhappy with. The 7Artisans keeps this fringing to a bare minimum and performs much better than many much pricier fast lenses that we’ve tested. This will be when shooting film – on digital I am able to check my exposure and make sure flare hasn’t caused an issue – I can also use live view to use flare to my advantage, something I really enjoy for portraits. Another bokeh bonus is that defocused pinpricks of light and other bright objects keep a fairly well-rounded appearance when shooting wide-open, even away from the central region of the frame. I also cannot see 35mm framelines with my glasses, so 50mm is the first set of lines I can really access. The focus direction and confirmation indicators in the viewfinder and on the rear screen of Nikon Z cameras are also disabled, but the focus peaking option works a treat. The directional bokeh is really great, especially when focusing on a subject that’s quite close to you. For a slightly more alternative kind of portrait I found that this lens was a really excellent choice. I’ve been using rangefinders for my entire career, and find it very easy to nail focus using the rangefinder system. It’s the same again with the flare the lens offers in the right situations – I use this to accentuate parts of the frame, incorporating it into my composition whenever possible. The lens is sharp enough to stand apart from the Thambar, but soft enough to be very flattering to details. I hear their 35mm *f*/2 is incredibly close to the Summicron, and honestly I believe that. The Character This lens has unquestionable potential for use as a character lens. Announced Dec 9, 2017 Discuss in the Third Party Lens Talk forum The 7Artisans 50mm F1.1 is a manual focus prime lens for Leica M-mount cameras. Find out how we test. A crop featuring Bokeh from the middle right of a frame made with this lens – just as it begins the transition to being semi-circular. A focus distance scale is clearly marked on the ring, calibrated in feet and metres, and the rearward adjacent section of the barrel has depth of field markings for *f*/1.05 (negligible), *f*/2.8, *f*/4, *f*/8, *f*/11 and the narrowest available aperture of *f*/16. I tend to shoot this lens wide open, so just need to slightly fidget to check that it’s at 1.1 before metering and taking the shot. However at this point in my photography I just want to focus on shooting, and again owning too many lenses will hold me back in my decision making. I think the only thing that is noticeably distinct from my other lenses is the lack of a click-y aperture ring. Halation? For some I understand these will be dealbreakers, but I will always advocate a mindset that emphasises generating quality images rather than images which possess characteristics of quality. I think that on film this softness becomes even less noticeable, as between the grain and rendering of the lens what’s left is simply “the image”. Environmental/environmental candid portraiture, or better yet action and activity is a more documentary analysis of people, in organic situations for me.