In Camera
Double Exposure Tips

Double exposure is all about putting bright things on top of dark areas in the initial exposure in the camera as opposed to in the editing process. It is bright on top of dark because that is the way that it works with exposure: you can't add a dark thing on a light background because once the silver halides are exposed you can't add darkness (lack of exposure to them).

If you are double exposing something against a dark background and placing it in part of the frame where there is a dark area in the other image, then you might not need to compensate in the exposure. (This is the case with a matte shot.)

But if you are exposing two scenes with a variety of dark and bright areas, it is a good idea to close the lens and extra 2/3rds of a stop.

Why close 2/3rds of a stop?

The answer is rather subjective and it's a difficult not to have it sound a little confusing. But, here goes:

You do need to close down if two bright things are being double exposed to prevent overexposure. However, the areas of overlap should still be a little brighter than the normal exposure (otherwise the dark areas of the frame will be dark and only the bright overlapping areas will seem normally exposed). Closing 1 stop will mean that only where there is an overlap of bright areas will the image seem normally exposed, and anything overlapping a dark area of the frame will just seem dark.

2/3rds of a stop is a compromise that darkens both images (to avoid overexposure), but not so much that the bright areas of overlap won't seem a little brighter

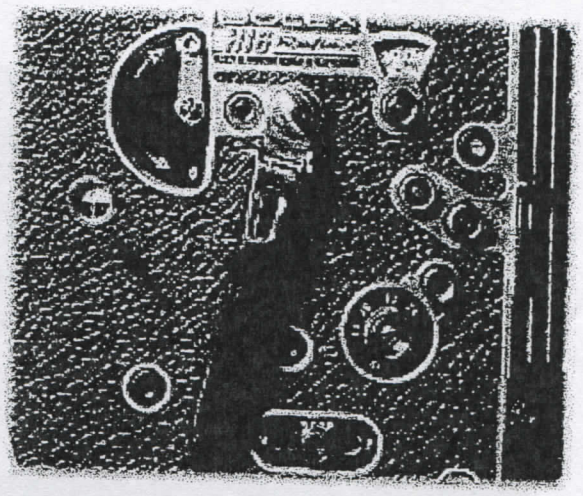
Keep in mind that there is a certain subjectivity in this: You might want to emphasize one of the images through exposure. You might want to additionally compensate for differences in lightness and darkness between things you're double exposing (to keep the brighter subject from crowding out the darker one.

There is a great deal of experiment and play involved with this effect...often it is the "mistake" which delivers the most satisfying result. Keep careful notes when you are working if there is the desire to repeat any of the effects you create. Remember that you must carefully consider the composition and range of brightness in each framing of the filming you are double exposing unless you are simply leaving it all up to chance (chance rewards some times...but often there is disappointment and arbitrary looking material).

Steps for creating a double exposure with the Bolex:

STEP 1:

Check the footage counter before the first exposure, to see how far you will need to wind back the film.

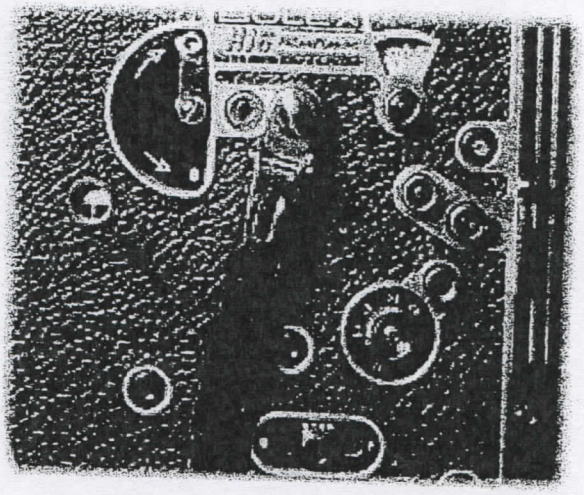


STEP 2:

Film the first subject, compensating in your exposure by closing the lens an extra 2/3rd of a stop.
(See Double Exposure Tips for more on this.)

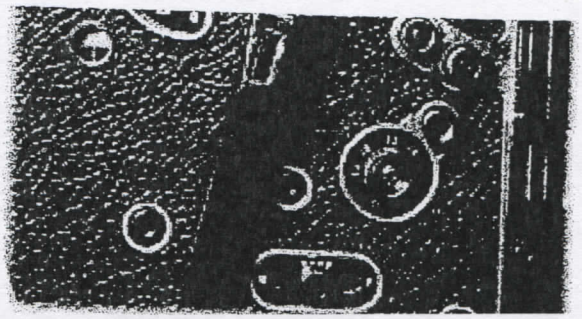
STEP 3:

Check the footage counter at the end of the first exposure, to see how long to run the camera for the second exposure. (You may also determine this while filming by counting seconds on a watch or using the Bolex's internal metronome.)



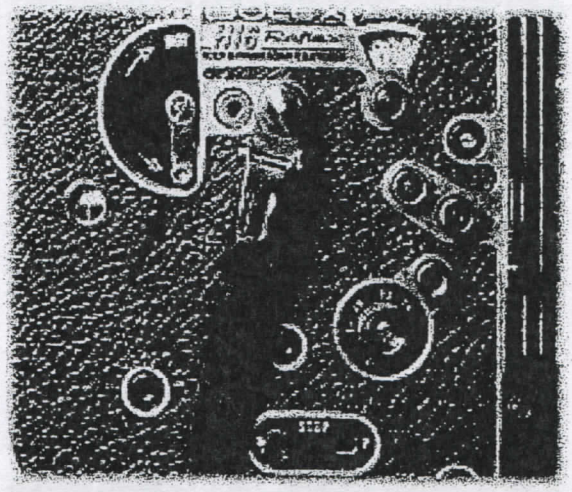
STEP 4:

Close the variable shutter.



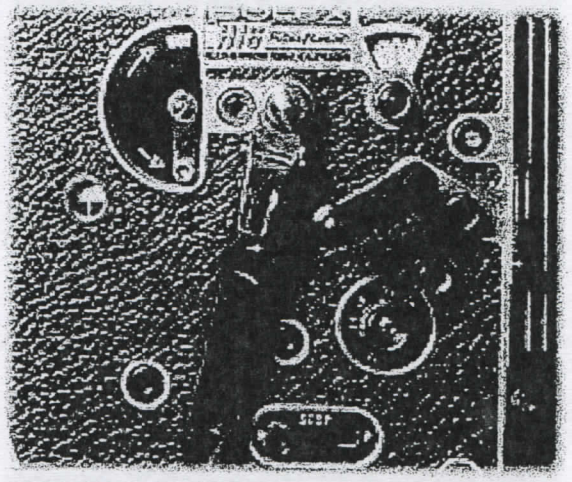
STEP 5:

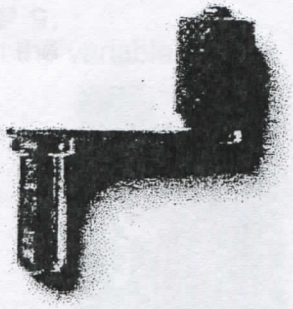
Release the spring by simultaneously turning the spring-disengage lever from "MOT" to "0" and the run switch to "M."

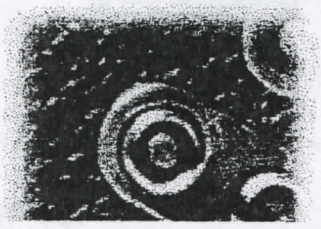


STEP 6:

Insert the backwind crank into the 8 to 1 shaft and turn in the direction of the arrow (counter-clockwise), watching the footage counter to see when you've rewound to the beginning of the shot.

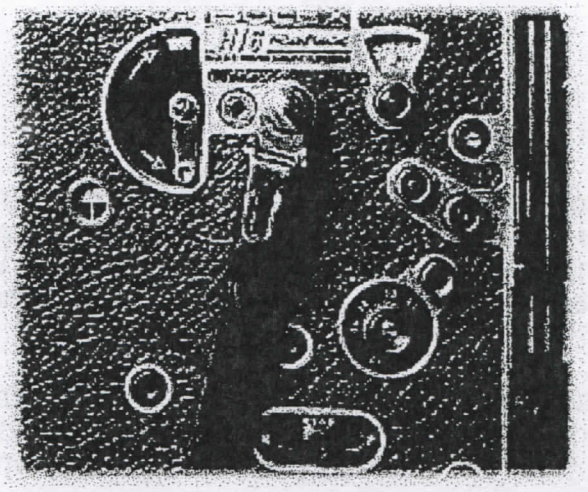






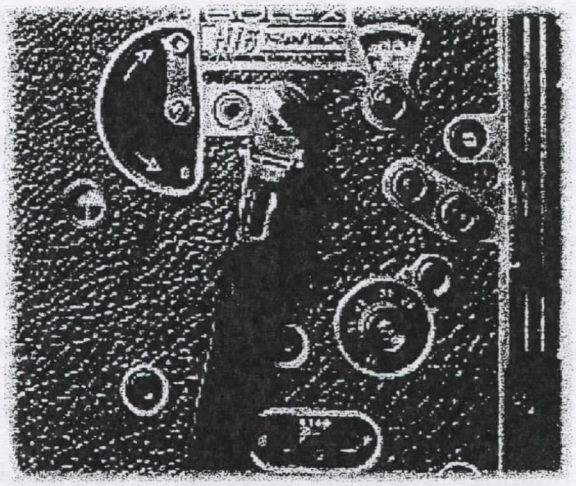
STEP 7:

Before re-engaging the spring, first set the run switch to "STOP." (It is **important** that you do this before STEP 8, or else the camera will start running as soon as the spring is re-engaged.)

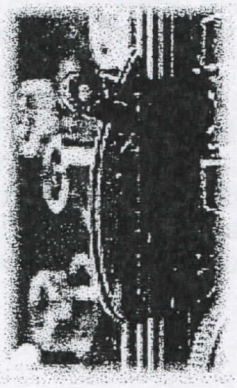


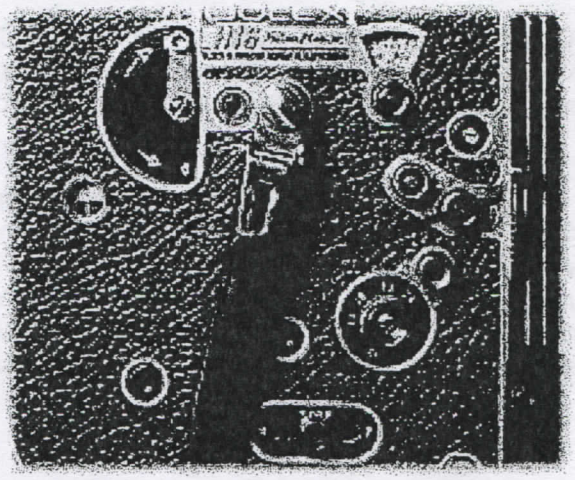
STEP 8:

Re-engage the spring by turning the spring-disengage lever to "MOT."



STEP 9:
Open the variable shutter.





STEP 10:

Film second subject for the same amount of time as the first subject. once again compensating for the double exposure by closing the lens down an extra 2/3rd of a stop.

Don't forget to wind the spring before filming your second exposure!