Matchbox Camera

The original design was by a British gentleman who goes by the name Alspix. The directions for putting it together can be found at his web site: http://alspix.blog.co.uk/index.php/alspix/2005/12/31/matchbox_pinhole%7E428481 (It might be easier to google: alspix stuff matchbox)

When you first put the camera together, advance 16 clicks to get to the first frame. To advance to the next frame after each picture, count 7 clicks. You should get about 30 exposures on a 24 exposure roll of 35mm film.

Be very careful not to wind the film back into the original cassette, the clicker will tear the sprocket holes.

Remember how wide angle this camera is—get close!

When you reach the end, remove the tape on the source cassette side, remove the source cassette, the tear the film off the cassette and wind it into the take up cassette. You’ll probably lose the last picture unless you do this in very dim light.

You can take the film anywhere to have it processed. Make sure to ask them to give you your reloadable cassette back!

The image size of this camera (24mm x 24mm) is different than conventional 35mm film (24mm x 36mm). Make sure you warn the processor that the pictures are this different shape and they will probably be irregularly spaced. They will probably have to align them manually. Because all commercial prints are the shape of a conventional 35mm frame (2 units high by 3 units wide), the prints will include part of the adjacent frames. That’s OK, you can just cut those off when you get home if you want. I’ve had this done at Walgreens and they were very cooperative, but some places might not be as agreeable, so ask first.

In class we’re using special photographic tape which is hard to find. 3M black plastic tape works well, but you need to cut it with scissors rather than just tearing it. Electrical tape doesn’t usually stick very well, and regular black masking tape isn’t completely opaque.