

Introduction



Carl Zeiss 70-210mm f/4.5-5.6 Jenazoom is a very nice push and pull lens. The lens is in the famous family of “beer can” lenses – 70-210mm lenses with a size and sharp like a beer can.

Zooming is done with pulling and pushing the lens. Focussing is done by turning the front section of the lens. The lens is between 11 cm and 13.7 cm long. Near limit is 1.1 meter and the lens will give you a magnification of 1:4 – wich is a long way from the normal macro definition of 1:1. But Zeiss has, nevertheless, printet “macro” on the side of the lens.

The lens is not a lightweight. But it does fit nicely into your hand and it really does seem to be build to last. A strong construction.

My lens has an OM bayonet; the old Olympus bayonet. But I have seen it with other bayonets too. Nevertheless you will need an adaptor ring before you can attach the lens to a modern DSLR. It is possible to get apator rings with focus assistance. That’s a contrast sensor letting the camera give the characteristic beep sound when focus is found. That is a great help, if you haven’t got superman skills in the art of focus. And it is a very useful help since your cameras viewer darkens when you step down the aperture.

The front element turns when you focus. If you use a POL-filter you will loose the settings everytime you turn the focus. The movement of the focusing is about 180 degrees. The first 90 degrees works within the area of 1.1 meter and 2 meters, the last 90 degrees covers distances from 2.2 meters to infinity. It is in general no problem finding focus on the short distances; but the long distances might tease a bit – especially because you are pushing and pulling the front section at the same time in order to zoom in or out.

The focus ring has a nice rubber surface giving lots of grip.

The lens is not a fast lens. Aperture at 70mm is 4.5 and at 210mm it is 5.6. But considering the lens is a walk-around lens the speed seems okay. The aperture ring is rather thin and the movement is a little stiff. The lens has a switch between auto and manual; but that function will not work with your modern DSLR. Remember to set the switch to manual and adjust your aperture using the ring.

The lens has 8 blades.

Price

It is an old lens; but the lenses you find on eBay are normally in good condition. Maybe the name Zeiss has made many take good care of their lens, I don't know. But we all benefit from it now.

The prices at present (may 2011) on eBay between 100 and 120 Euro. I think that is a little high compared to the prices just one month ago. I think should expect that the lens will set you back around 80-90 Euro; but you might also be lucky and find it even cheaper.

The images

All images are shot using Olympus E-520.

70mm, f/5.6 and 1/60 sek.



210mm, f/5.6 and 1/400 sek.



210mm, f/5.6 and 1/2000 sek. Distance is about 50-60 meters.



At 200 meters, using 210mm and f/5.6. The shutteritme is 1/400 sec. The camera is handheld:

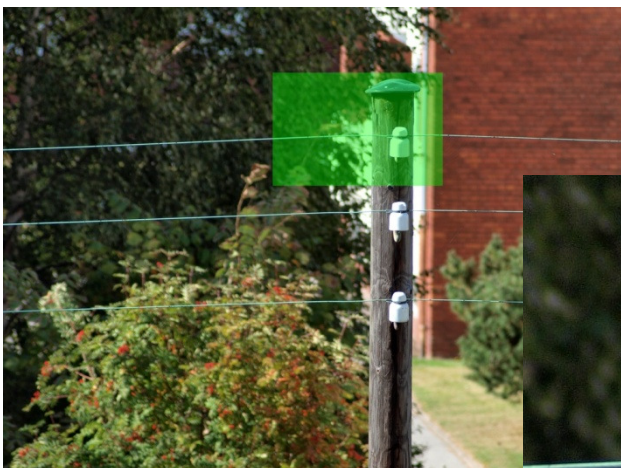


Left: Resized only



Right: Cropped

At 35-40 meters, using 210mm and f/5.6. The shuttertime is 1/160 sec. The camera is handheld.



Left: resized only



Right: Cropped

210mm, f/5.6 and 1/320 sek. Distance to focuspoint is 8 meters.



210mm, f/5.6 and 1/250 sec. The distance is about 2 meters.



70mm, f/5.6



Conclusion

I enjoy using and testing old lenses. Not only because they might be cheap to buy, but because they will give me a very special feeling. They have a certain feel of quality and craftsmanship attached to them, that I seldom find with modern lenses.

And in this case, I think I have to admit that the name Zeiss does add to this feeling.

In many ways I find that the 70-210mm meet my expectations. And in some cases the lens is better than I hoped for.

But I can't help being a little irritated that the sharpness at long distances isn't "razor". The lens is sharp, I think. But on the long track I would have liked some better sharpness. The pictures are a little (too) blurry both in the corners and in the center.

On the other hand: The lens has a very pleasant colouring and adaptation of contrast. The bokeh is smooth and very nice to look at.

On a scale from 0 to 5; (5 being the best), I give the lens: 2.5

The downfall is the sharpness on long distances. 210mm on a Olympus is equal to 420mm on a Full Frame camera. That it a long distance shooter for sure – and as such it really has to be sharp.