

WHAT IS KITE AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY?

Using a large kite, or team of smaller kites, to lift a camera into the sky for a birds-eye view.

HOW IS IT DONE?

The kite is launched and flown up into the smooth and strong winds several hundred feet above the ground.

The camera and control rig is then attached to the kite line.

The kite is then allowed to rise higher, taking the camera to the desired height.

The camera is then aimed by radio control and/or by maneuvering the kite to the desired perspective.

Radio controlled switch or simple timing device trips the shutter on the camera.

THE HISTORY:

Using a kite to make aerial photos was first done in the 1880's before the invention of the airplane. Powerful kites were needed as camera equipment and stabilizing platforms could weigh as much as 60 pounds. The aiming of the camera was usually pre set on the ground before the camera was taken aloft. The shutter was tripped in a variety of creative ways but often by a lever restrained by a burning fuse or a melting ice cube.

In the 1920's the availability of airplanes made it far easier to lift heavy cameras into the sky and the use of kites became quite rare.

Today, high quality, lightweight, motorized cameras have given rise to a resurgent interest in kite aerial photography. Sophisticated radio control equipment, like that used with model aircraft, can be modified to control the aiming and firing of the camera.