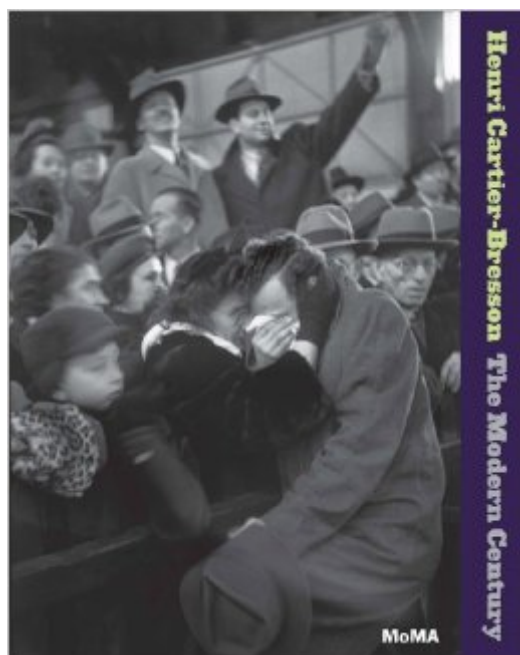


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Henri Cartier-Bresson: The Modern Century



Synopsis

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908–2004) is one of the most influential and beloved figures in the history of photography. His inventive work of the early 1930s helped define the creative potential of modern photography. Following World War II, he helped found the Magnum photo agency, which enabled photojournalists to reach a broad audience through magazines such as *Life* while retaining control over their work. Cartier-Bresson would go on to produce major bodies of photographic reportage, capturing such events as China during the revolution, the Soviet Union after Stalin's death, the United States in the postwar boom and Europe as its older cultures confronted modern realities. Published to accompany an exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, this is the first major publication to make full use of the extensive holdings of the Fondation Cartier-Bresson—including thousands of prints and a vast resource of documents relating to the photographer's life and work. The heart of the book surveys Cartier-Bresson's career through 300 photographs divided into 12 chapters. While many of his most famous pictures are included, a great number of images will be unfamiliar even to specialists. A wide-ranging essay by Peter Galassi, Chief Curator of Photography at the Museum, offers an entirely new understanding of Cartier-Bresson's extraordinary career and its overlapping contexts of journalism and art. The extensive supporting material—featuring detailed chronologies of the photographer's professional travels and of spreads of his picture stories as they appeared in magazines—will revolutionize the study of Cartier-Bresson's work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004) was to photography what the Impressionists were to painting. Those breakthrough artists grasped that the latest innovation in technology--pre-mixed paints, packaged in tubes--allowed them to go outside their studios and chronicle the life they found there. In much the same way, Cartier-Bresson rejected the heavy studio-based camera, covered the shiny lens of a lightweight Nikon with black tape so his subjects would be less inclined to notice him, and took to the streets. What he invented there was, essentially, photojournalism. He shot and shot and shot some more, looking for "the decisive moment" that revealed its subject and maybe much more. When he found it, he turned his film over to the lab--he had no interest in printing, less in cropping. The show includes his revealing portraits of Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus, Picasso, Colette, Matisse, Pound and Giacometti. But the decisive moment did not necessarily mean photographing Personages and Celebrities. In 1937, he was assigned to shoot the coronation of King George VI. He took not a single shot of the king. His subjects? The king's subjects, who filled the streets to cheer their new monarch. Cartier-Bresson's photographs of civilians are body blows. Look at the picture on the cover of Henri Cartier-Bresson: The Modern Century--a mother-and-son reunion at the end of World War II. No one shot post-war conflict like Cartier-Bresson. Kids playing games amidst rubble. The denunciation of a woman accused of collaborating with the Germans. Mourners during the Algerian conflict. For 30 years, Cartier-Bresson was everywhere. In Shanghai, during a run on the banks. In India, to take some of the last pictures of Gandhi--and, from close-up, his funeral pyre.

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