

Henri Cartier-Bresson

For me the camera is a sketch book, an instrument of intuition and spontaneity, the master of the instant which, in visual terms, questions and decides simultaneously. In order to give a "meaning" to the world, one has to feel involved in what one frames through the viewfinder. This attitude requires concentration, discipline of mind, sensitivity, and a sense of geometry. It is by economy of means that one arrives at simplicity of expression.

To take a photograph is to hold one's breath when all faculties converge in a face of fleeing reality. It is at that moment that mastering an image becomes a great physical and intellectual joy.

To take a photograph means to recognize, simultaneously and within a fraction of a second, both the fact itself and the rigorous organization of visually perceived forms that give it meaning.

It is putting one, head, one, eye, and one, heart on the same axis.

BIOGRAPHY (1908-2004)

Early Life

1908: Born on August 22nd in Chanteloup, Seine-et-Marne. Educated at the Lycée Condorcet, Paris.

1926: Studies painting under André Lhote. Takes his first photographs.

1930: Spends almost one year in the Ivory Coast.

1931: Discovers a photograph by Martin Munkácsi in the arts magazine *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* and decides to focus on photography.

First Photographic Experiments

1932: Buys his first Leica and travels across Europe with his friends Leonor Fini and Pieyre de Mandiargues. First publications in *Voilà* and *Photographies*.

1933: First exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery, New York. His photographs are subsequently shown at the Ateneo Club in Madrid.

1934: Goes to Mexico with an ethnographic expedition team. The mission fails, but he decides to stay.

Cinema

1935: Exhibits with Manuel Alvarez Bravo at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico and one month later at the Julien Levy Gallery with Walker Evans and Manuel Alvarez-Bravo. Spends some time in the USA, where he discovers filmmaking with Paul Strand and Nykino Group.

1936: Works as second assistant to Jean Renoir on *Une partie de campagne* (A Day in the Country) and *La vie est à nous*.

1937: Directs two documentaries: *Victoire de la vie* (Return to Life) on the medical care of Republican Spain and *With the Abraham Lincoln Brigade*, on the American soldiers' life during the war. Photographic report on the coronation of George VI published in the newspaper *Ce Soir*.

1938: Directs, upon request by the Spanish Secours Populaire, a documentary about the Spanish Civil War, *L'Espagne vivra*.

1939: Joins Jacques Becker and André Zvoboda as an assistant on Jean Renoir's *La Règle du jeu* (The Rules of the Game).

During the War

1940: Joins the "Film and Photography" unit of the Third Army. Taken prisoner by the Germans on June 23rd.

1943: After two failed attempts, successfully escapes on his third attempt in February 1943. Works for MNPGD, a secret organization created to help prisoners and escapees.

1944: Takes a series of photographic portraits of writers and artists for Editions Braun (Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Pierre Bonnard, Paul Claudel, Georges Rouault).

1945: Directs *Le Retour* (The Return), a documentary on the repatriation of prisoners of war and detainees.

Professional Photography

1946-47: Spends over a year in the USA. Upon *Harper's Bazaar* request, he travels for a few months with John Malcolm Brinnin to photograph artists and writers.

1947: Exhibition *Photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Creates the cooperative agency Magnum Photos with Robert Capa, David Seymour (Chim), William Vandivert, and George Rodger.

1948-50: Spends three years in the Far East: in India for the death of Gandhi, in China for the last six months of the Kuomintang and the first six months of the People's Republic, and in Indonesia for its independence. His photographs are published all over the world.

1952: His first book, *Images à la Sauvette*, with its cover by Matisse, is published by Tériade. First exhibition in England, *Photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts.

1953: Travels throughout Europe for *Holiday*.

1954: Publication by Robert Delpire of his books *Les Danses à Bali* and *D'une Chine à l'autre*, marking the beginning of a long collaboration with Delpire. He is the first photographer allowed in the USSR since the beginning of the Cold War.

1955: First exhibition in France at the Pavillon de Marsan in the Louvre. Tériade publishes *Les Européens* (cover illustrated by Miró).

1958: Returns to China for three months for the tenth anniversary of the People's Republic of China.

1961: Creates a set of portraits for the magazine *Queen*.

1963: Returns to Mexico for the second time. *Life* magazine sends him to Cuba.

1965: Spends several months travelling in Japan.

1966: Returns to India.

1967: Commissioned by IBM to create *Man and Machine*. This project becomes an exhibition and a book.

1968-69: Spends a year travelling around France for *Reader's Digest* and publishes a book, *Vive la France*, to accompany the exhibition "En France" at the Grand Palais in 1970.

1970-71: Directs two documentaries in the USA for CBS News: *Southern Exposures* and *Impressions de Californie*.

1972-73: Returns to the USSR.

Return to Drawing

1974: Terminates his active working relationship with Magnum Photos, although the agency distribution retains his archives. Concentrates on drawing.

1975: First exhibition of drawings at the Carlton Gallery, New York.

1987: Photographic exhibition *The Early Work* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

1988: The Centre National de la Photographie celebrates his 80th anniversary. Creation of the HCB Award.

2000: Makes plans to set up the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation with his wife, Martine Franck, and daughter, Mélanie. The idea is to provide a permanent home for his collected works as well as an exhibition space open to other artists.

2002: The Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation is recognized as being of public interest by the French State.

2003: Opening of the Henri Cartier-Bresson Foundation in Paris. Retrospective exhibition *De qui s'agit-il ?* at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

2004: Henri Cartier-Bresson dies peacefully in Montjustin, Provence on August 3rd.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1947: *The Photographs of Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Text by Lincoln Kirstein, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

1948: *Beautiful Jaipur*. Text by Max J. Olivier. The Times of India Press, Bombay

1952: *The Decisive Moment*. Text and photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Cover by Henri Matisse. Simon & Schuster, New York

1954: *Les Danses à Bali*. Text by Antonin Artaud, "Le Théâtre balinais," and commentary by Béryl de Zoete Delpire, Paris. Collection Huit

D'une Chine à l'autre. Text by Jean-Paul Sartre. Delpire Editeur, Paris

1955: *The Europeans*. Text and photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Cover by Joan Miró. Simon & Schuster, New York

Moscou, vu par Henri Cartier-Bresson. Foreword by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Delpire Editeur, Paris. Collection Neuf

1956: *China in Transition*. Thames and Hudson, London

1963: *Photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Text by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Grossman Publisher, New York

1968: *The World of HCB*. Text by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Viking Press, New York

1969: *Man and Machine*. IBM World Trade Corporation, New York

1970: *France*. Text by François Nourissier. Thames and Hudson, London

1972: *The Face of Asia*. Introduction by Robert Shaplen. Weatherhill/Orientations, New York

1973: *About Russia*. Thames and Hudson, London

1976: *Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Text by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Delpire Editeur, Paris. Collection Aperture/Delpire

1979: *Henri Cartier-Bresson Photographer*. Text by Yves Bonnefoy. Bulfinch, New York

1982: *Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Introduction by Jean Clair. Centre National de la Photographie. Collection Photo Poche

1984: *Paris à vue d'œil*. Text by André Pieyre de Mandiargues and Véra Feyder. Paris Audiovisuel et Association des Amis du Musée Carnavalet, Paris

1985: *Henri Cartier-Bresson en Inde*. Introduction by Satyajit Ray. Text by Yves Véquaud. Centre National de la Photographie, Paris. Collection Photo Copies

Photoportraits. Text by André Pieyre de Mandiargues. Thames and Hudson, London

1987: *Henri Cartier-Bresson: The Early Work*. Text by Peter Galassi. Museum of Modern Art, New York

Henri Cartier-Bresson in India. Introduction by Satyajit Ray, photographs and notes by Henri Cartier-Bresson, texts by Yves Véquaud. Thames and Hudson, London

1989: *L'Autre Chine*. Introduction by Robert Guillaud. Collection Photo Notes. Centre National de la Photographie, Paris

Line by Line. Henri Cartier-Bresson's drawings. Introduction by Jean Clair and John Russell. Thames and Hudson, London

1991: *America in Passing*. Introduction by Gilles Mora. Bulfinch, New York

1994: *A propos de Paris*. Text by Véra Feyder and André Pieyre de Mandiargues. A Bulfinch Press Book

1995: *Mexican Notebooks 1934-1964*. Text by Carlos Fuentes. Thames and Hudson, London

L'Art sans art. Text by Jean-Pierre Montier. Editions Flammarion, Paris

1996: *L'Imaginaire d'après nature*. Text by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Fata Morgana, Paris

1997: *Europeans*. Text by Jean Clair. Thames and Hudson, London

Henri Cartier-Bresson, dessins 1974-1997. Text by Jean Leymarie. Galerie Claude Bernard, Paris

1998: *Tête à tête*. Text by Ernst H. Gombrich. Thames & Hudson, London

2001: *Landscape Townscape*. Text by Erik Orsenna and Gérard Macé. Thames and Hudson, London

2003: *The man the image and the world*. Text by Philippe Arbaizar, Jean Clair, Claude Cookman, Robert Delpire, Jean Leymarie, Jean-Noel Jeanneney, Serge Toubiana. Thames and Hudson, London 2003

2004: *Cartier-Bresson, au crayon*. Text by Frédéric Pajak. Buchet/Chastel, Paris. Collection Les Cahiers Dessinés

Posthumous bibliography

2006: *Portraits par Henri Cartier-Bresson. Le silence intérieur d'une victime consentante*. Text by Jean-Luc Nancy and Agnès Sire. Thames & Hudson, Paris

Scrapbook. Text by Michel Frizot and Agnès Sire. Steidl, Göttingen

2008: *Le tir photographique*. Text by Clément Chéroux. Gallimard, Paris, Collection Découvertes Gallimard

2010: *The Modern Century*. Text by Peter Galassi. The Museum of Modern Art, New York

2013: *Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Text by Clément Chéroux. Centre Pompidou, Paris

EXHIBITIONS

Personal Exhibitions

1933: *Anti-Graphic Photography, Photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson*, Julien Levy Gallery, New York, September 25th – October 16th, 1933.

1935: *Fotografias: Cartier-Bresson, Alvarez Bravo*, Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico, March 11th – 20th, 1935.

Documentary & Anti-Graphic Photographs by Cartier-Bresson, Walker Evans & Alvarez Bravo, Julien Levy Gallery, New York, April 23rd – May 7th, 1935.

1947: *Photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, February 5th – April 6th, 1947.

1952: *Photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, February 7th – March 4th, 1952.

1955: *Henri Cartier-Bresson: Photographies 1930-1955*, Musée des Arts décoratifs, Palais du Louvre, Pavillon de Marsan, Paris, October 26th – November 30th, 1955.

1966: *Photographies d'Henri Cartier-Bresson*, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Palais du Louvre, Pavillon de Marsan, Paris, November 30th 1966 – January 30th, 1967.

1968: *Cartier-Bresson: Recent Photographs*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, June 24th–September 2nd, 1968.

1969: *L'Homme et la Machine*, IBM, Paris, April 10th – 15th, 1969.

1970: *En France*, Galeries Nationales d'Expositions du Grand Palais, Paris, October 21st – November 30th, 1970.

1974: *A propos U.S.S.R. (1953/1974): Henri Cartier-Bresson*, International Center of Photography, New York, November 16th, 1974 – February 15th, 1975.

1975: *Henri Cartier-Bresson, drawings*, Carlton Gallery, New York, February – March 1975.

1977: *Images du Pays Franc*, Palais Rihour, Lille, June 24th – July 4th, 1977.

1978: *Cartier-Bresson Archival Collection*, University of Fine Arts, Osaka, April 4th – 21st, 1978.

1979: *Henri Cartier-Bresson: Photographer*, International Center of Photography, New York, November 8th, 1979 – January 6th, 1980.

1980: *Henri Cartier-Bresson: 300 photographies de 1927 à 1980*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, November 12th, 1980 – January 11th, 1981.

1981: *Henri Cartier-Bresson: Dessins 1973 – 1981*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, May 20th – September 13th, 1981.

1984: *Henri Cartier-Bresson: Carnet de Notes sur le Mexique*, Centre Culturel du Mexique, Paris, March 15th – April 28th, 1984.

Henri Cartier-Bresson: Drawings and Paintings, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, June 3rd – July 29th, 1984.

Paris à vue d'œil, Musée Carnavalet, Paris, November 5th, 1984 – January 6th, 1985.

1985: *Henri Cartier-Bresson en Inde*, Centre National de la Photographie, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, October 23rd, 1985 – January 13th, 1986.

1987: *Henri Cartier-Bresson: The Early Works*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, September 9th – November 29th, 1987.

1988: *Hommage à Henri Cartier-Bresson*, Centre National de la Photographie, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, December 1988 – January 1989.

1991: *L'Amérique Furtivement: 1935/1975*, Fnac Etoile, Paris, November 14th, 1991 – January 18th, 1992.

1995: *Matisse par Henri Cartier-Bresson*, Musée Matisse, Le Cateau-Cambrésis, May 20th – October 30th, 1995.

Carnets Mexicains 1934 – 1964, Centre National de la Photographie, Hôtel Salomon de Rothschild, Paris, November 8th, 1995 – January 22nd, 1996.

1996: *Henri Cartier-Bresson: Pen, Brush and Cameras*, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, March 3rd – May 12th, 1996.

1997: *Des Européens*, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, March 20th – June 22nd, 1997.

Henri Cartier-Bresson (dessins 1974-1997), Galerie Claude Bernard, Paris, September 26th – October 30th, 1997.

1998: *Henri Cartier-Bresson, Portraits*, National Portrait Gallery, London, February 16th – June 7th, 1998.

Line by line, Drawings by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Royal College of Art, London, March 6th – April 9th, 1998.

1999: *Landscape*, Nihombashi Mitsukoshi Main Store Gallery, Tokyo, October 12th – 17th, 1999.

2000: *Vers un autre futur, un regard libertaire*, Espace Louise Michel, Paris, April 25th – May 25th, 2000.

2003: *De qui s'agit-il ?* Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, April 30th – July 27th, 2003.

Posthumous Exhibitions

2006: *Portraits par Henri Cartier-Bresson: le silence intérieur d'une victime consentante*, Fondation HCB, Paris, January 18th – April 9th, 2006.

Scrapbook, Fondation HCB, Paris, September 21st – December 23rd, 2006.

2010: *Henri Cartier-Bresson: The Modern Century*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, April 11th– June 28th, 2010.

2014: *Henri Cartier-Bresson*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, February 12th – June 9th, 2014.

2019: *Henri Cartier-Bresson, Chine 1948-1949 / 1958*, Fondation HCB, Paris, October 15th – February 2nd, 2020.

FILMOGRAPHY

Henri Cartier-Bresson developed a passion for filmmaking in the 1930's. He studied cinema with Paul Strand in New York in 1935. When he returned to France, he was hired as the second assistant director to Jean Renoir in 1936 for *La vie est à nous* and *Une partie de campagne*, and in 1939 for *La Règle du Jeu*.

Films directed by Henri Cartier-Bresson

1937: *Victoire de la vie*. Director: Henri Cartier-Bresson, with Herbert Kline. Produced by Frontier Films for the Centrale Sanitaire Internationale. Photography: Jacques Lemare. Music: Charles Koechlin. Commentary: Pierre Unik. Editing: Laura Sejour. Graphics: Griffoul. Distributed by Cinéliberté. Running time: 47 minutes. Black and white.

With the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. Director: Henri Cartier-Bresson, with the collaboration of Herbert Kline. Running time: 18 minutes. Black and white.

1938: *L'Espagne Vivra*. Director: Henri Cartier-Bresson. Produced by the Secours Populaire de France et des Colonies. Editing: Ibéria. Graphics: Griffoul. Commentary: Georges Sadoul. Musical arrangement: J.-C. Simon. Spanish songs recorded by "Le Chant du monde." Distributed by Les Films Populaires. Running time: 44 minutes. Black and white.

1945: *Le Retour*. Director: Henri Cartier-Bresson and Richard Banks. Production: U.S. Army Signal Corps, Captain G. Krinsky and Office of War Information (OWI), Noma Ratner. Technical advisor: Henri Cartier-Bresson (Stalag VC), with the assistance of Lieutenant Richard Banks. Camera operator: Claude Renoir. Commentary: Claude Roy (Stalag Etain). Music: Robert Lannoy ; (Stalag XIII B), orchestrated by Roger Desormière. Scenes filmed at the Gare d'Orsay: Henri Cartier-Bresson, assisted by Claude Renoir. Running time: 33 minutes. Black and white.

1970: *Impressions of California*. Director: Henri Cartier-Bresson. Producer: William K. McClure for CBS News. Production: Peter Callam, John Mayer, Judy Osgood. Executive producer: Burton Benjamin. Assistant producer: Christine Ockrent. Photography: Jean Boffety and Henri Cartier-Bresson. Sound: Michael Lax. Editing: Jules Laventhol. Running time: 25 minutes. Colour.

1971: *Southern Exposures*. Director: Henri Cartier-Bresson. Producer: William K. McClure for CBS News. Production: Jimmy Murphy, Ross Williams, Martine Franck and John Hockenberry. Executive producer: Burton Benjamin. Assistant producer: Christine Ockrent. Photography:

Walter Dombrow and Henri Cartier-Bresson. Editing: Peter Callam. Sound: Larry Gianneschi. Running time: 26 minutes. Colour.

Films composed of photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson

1956: *A Travers le Monde avec Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Director: Jean-Marie Drot and Henri Cartier-Bresson. Running time: 22 minutes. Black and white.

1963: *Midlands at Play and at Work*. Produced by ABC Television, London. Running time: 19 minutes. Black and white.

1967: *Flagrants délits*. Director: Robert Delpire. With the collaboration of Liliane de Kermadec. Original music score by Diego Masson. Editing: Anne-Marie Cotret, Kenout Peltier. Photography: Seria. Production: Delpire Paris. Running time: 28 minutes. Black and white.

1969: *Québec vu par Cartier-Bresson / Le Québec as seen by Cartier-Bresson*. Director: Wolff Koenig. Producer: Canadian Film Board. Running time: 10 minutes. Black and white.

1973: *The Decisive Moment*. Production: Scholastic Magazines and the International Center of Photography. Editing: Sheila Turner. Coordinator: Cornell Capa. Running time: 18 minutes. Black and white.

1991: *Ecrire contre l'oubli : Mamadou Bâ Mauritanie*. Director: Martine Franck and Henri Cartier-Bresson for Amnesty International. Rostrum camera: Jean Gloker. Editing: Roger Ikhlef. Running time: 3 minutes. Black and white.

1994: *Contacts : Henri Cartier-Bresson*. From William Klein's idea. Director: Robert Delpire. Rostrum camera: Jean Gloker. Sound engineer: Frédéric Ullmann. Editing: Roger Ikhlef. Delegated Producer: KS Visions, Jean-Pierre Krief, Alex Szalat. Production: KS Visions. Coproduction: ARTE and Centre National de la Photographie. Running time: 12 minutes. Colour.

1999: *L'Araignée d'amour*. "100 photos du siècle" series. Director: Marie-Monique Robin. Production: ARTE and Capa Production. Running time: 6 minutes. Colour.

2012: *Le siècle de Cartier-Bresson*. Director: Pierre Assouline. Production: ARTE France, Cinétévé, Fondation HCB, INA. Editing: Michèle Hollander. Produced by: Fabienne Servan Schreiber, Laurence Miller and Christine Graziani. Running time: 53 minutes. Black and white.

Films about Henri Cartier-Bresson

1959: *Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Director: Gjon Mili. Running time: 2 minutes. Black and white.

1962: *Henri Cartier-Bresson : L'Aventure Moderne*. Director: Roger Kahane. Broadcast by Jean Bardin and Bernard Hubrenne. Director of photography: Jacques Mercanton. Editing: Michel Plat. Sound design: Guy Montassut. Production: ORTF. Running time: 29 minutes. Black and white.

1994: *Henri Cartier-Bresson, Point d'interrogation?* Director: Sarah Moon, in collaboration with Robert Delpire. Production: Take Five. Production manager: Michèle Siritzky. Photography: Etienne Becker, Sarah Moon. Editing: Roger Ikhlef. Running time: 38 minutes. Colour.

1997: *La Conversation*. Broadcast "Le cercle de minuit" presented by Laure Adler and Thérèse Lombard. Photography and direction: François Ede. Editing: Camille Laurenti. Production: France 3. Running time: 66 minutes. Colour.

1998: *Pen, Brush and Camera*. Interview with Patricia Wheatley. Production: BBC. Running time: 49 minutes. Colour.

1999: *60 minutes*. Interview with Charlie Rose. Production: CBS. Running time: 55 minutes. Colour.

Le XXe siècle a vécu avec la photographie: conversation avec Henri Cartier-Bresson. Produced by NHK. Running time: 60 minutes. Colour.

2001: *Henri Cartier-Bresson: L'amour tout court.* Director: Raphaël Byrne. Produced by Film à Lou and ARTE France. Running time: 70 minutes. Colour.

2003: *Henri Cartier-Bresson, Biographie d'un regard.* Director: Heinz Bütler. Co-production: Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, NZZ Neue Zürcher Zeitung and Xanadu Film. Executive producers: Wolfgang Frei, Agnès Sire. Photography: Matthias Kälin. Editing: Anja Bombelli. Running time: 52 minutes. Colour.

2005: *Une journée dans l'atelier d'Henri Cartier-Bresson.* Director: Caroline Thiénot Barbey. Editing: Rodolphe Molla. Running time: 16 minutes. Colour.

Audio production

1991: *Henri Cartier-Bresson : le bon plaisir.* Produced by Véra Feyder. FNAC/France Culture, Paris.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Henri Cartier-Bresson's work is in the collections of museums throughout the world. The following had the privilege to acquire the "Master Collection" – 385 prints chosen in 1979 by Henri Cartier-Bresson:

- Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, France
- De Menil Collection, Houston, Texas, United States
- University of Fine Arts, Osaka, Japan
- Victoria and Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom

Museums possessing a large collection of HCB's work

- Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France
- Musée Carnavalet, Paris, France
- Museum of Modern Art, New York, United States
- The Art Institute of Chicago, United States
- The Getty Museum, Los Angeles, United States
- International Center of Photography, New York, United States
- The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, United States
- The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, United States
- Kahitsukan Kyoto Museum of Contemporary Art, Kyoto, Japan
- Museum of Modern Art, Tel Aviv, Israel
- Stockholm Moderna Museet, Sweden