



Henri-Cartier Bresson

For me the camera is a sketchbook, 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 at 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 Ivory Coast.

1931: Discovers a photograph by Martin Munkacsy 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 Pierre 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 Second World 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 three 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 Photographer

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

1952: His first book, *Images à la Sauvette*, 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 from 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: Realizes 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" staged at the Grand Palais in 1970.

1970-71 : In the USA directs two documentaries for CBS News; *Southern Exposures* and *Impressions de Californie*.

1972-73 : Returns to the USSR.

Back 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, Mélanieto. 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 recognised as being of public interest by 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, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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

1954 : *Les Danses à Bali*. Texts by Antonin Artaud on Balinese theater and commentary by Béryl de Zoete Delpire, Paris. German edition

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

People of Moscow. Thames and Hudson, London. French, German and Italian editions

1956 : *China in Transition*. Thames and Hudson, London. French, German and Italian editions

1958: *Henri Cartier-Bresson : Fotografie*. Text by Anna Farova. Statni nakladatelstvi krasné, Prague and Bratislava.

1963: *Photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Grossman Publisher, New York. French, English, Japanese and Swiss editions

1964: *China*. Photographs and notes on fifteen months spent in China. Text by Barbara Miller . Bantam Books, New York. French edition

1968: *The World of HCB*. Viking Press, New York. French, German and Swiss editions

1969: *Man and Machine*. commissioned by IBM. French, German, Italian and Spanish editions

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

1972: *The Face of Asia*. Introduction by Robert Shaplen. Published by John Weatherhill (New York and Tokyo) and Orientations Ltd. (Hong Kong). French edition

1973: *About Russia*. Thames and Hudson, London. French, German and Swiss editions

1976: *Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Texts by Henri Cartier-Bresson. History of Photography Series. History of Photography Series. French, German, Italian, Japanese and Italian editions

1979: *Henri Cartier-Bresson Photographer*. Text by Yves Bonnefoy. Bulfinch, New York. French, English, German, Japanese and Italian editions

1983: *Henri Cartier-Bresson. Ritratti*. Texts by André Pieyre de Mandiargues and Ferdinando Scianna. Coll. "I Grandi Fotografi". Gruppo Editoriale Fabbri, Milan. English and Spanish editions

1985: *Henri Cartier-Bresson en Inde*. Introduction de Satyajit Ray, photographies et notes d'Henri Cartier-Bresson. Texte d'Yves Véquaud. Centre National de la Photographie, Paris. Editions anglaise *Photoportraits*. Texts by André Pieyre de Mandiargues. Thames and Hudson, London . French and German editions

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

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

1989: *L'Autre Chine*. Introduction by Robert Guillain. 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. French and German editions

1991: *America in Passing*. Introduction by Gilles Mora. Bulfinch, New York. French, English, German, Italian, Portuguese and Danish editions *Alberto Giacometti photographié par Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Texts by Henri Cartier-Bresson and Louis Clayeux. Franco Sciardelli, Milan

1993: *Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Text by Jean Clair. Centre National de la Photographie, Collection Photo Poche, Paris

1994: *A propos de Paris*. Texts by Véra Feyder and André Pieyre de Mandiargues. Thames and Hudson, London . French, German and Japanese editions

Double regard. Drawings and photographs. Texts by Jean Leymarie. Amiens : Le Nyctalope. French and English editions

Mexican Notebooks 1934-1964. Text by Carlos Fuentes. Thames and Hudson, London. French, Italian, and German editions

L'Art sans art. Text by Jean-Pierre Montier. Editions Flammarion, Paris. German, English and Italian editions

1996: *L'Imaginaire d'après nature*. Textes de Henri Cartier-Bresson. Fata Morgana, Paris. Editions allemande et américaine

1997: *Europeans*. Texts by Jean Clair. Thames and Hudson, London. French, German, Italian and Portuguese editions

1998: *Tête à tête*. texts by Ernst H.Gombrich. Thames & Hudson, London. French, German, Italian and Portuguese editions

1999: *The Mind's eye*. Texts by Henri Cartier-Bresson. Aperture, New York. French and German editions

Cartier-Bresson, L'oeil du siècle. Pierre Assouline, Plon, Paris

2001: *Landscape Townscape*. Texts by Erik Orsenna and Gérard Macé. Thames and Hudson, London. French, German and Italian editions

2003: *The man the image and the world* Texts by Philippe Arbaizar, Jean Clair, Claude Cookman, Robert Delpire, Jean Leymarie, Jean-Noel Jeanneney, Serge Toubiana. Thames and Hudson, London 2003. German, French, Korean, Italian and Spanish editions.

Posthumous bibliography:

2004: *Cartier-Bresson, au crayon*. Buchet-Chastel

2007: *L'art sans art*. Text by Jean-Pierre Montier. Editions Flammarion, Paris.

2008: *Henri Cartier-Bresson et Le Monde*. Text by Michel Guerrin. Editions Gallimard, Paris.
Henri Cartier-Bresson. Text by Clément Chéroux. Thames and Hudson, London.
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, Londres, 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, 30 novembre 1966 – 30 janvier, 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, Octobre 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, Londres, February 16th – June 7th, 1998.

Line by line, Drawings by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Royal College of Art, Londres, 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.

Filmography

Henri Cartier-Bresson developed a passion for filmmaking in the 1930's. He learnt 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*. Documentary on the hospitals of Republican Spain. Director: Henri Cartier, with Herbert Kline. Produced by the Centrale Sanitaire Internationale. Photography: Jacques Lemare.

Music: Charles Kœhlin. Commentary: Pierre Unik. Editing: Laura Sejour. Graphics: Griffoul. Running time: 49 minutes. Black and white.

1938: *L'Espagne Vivra*. Documentary on the Spanish Civil War and the post-war period. 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. This film has been restored by the French Ministry of Culture and the film archives of the Centre National du Cinema. Running time: 43 minutes and 32 seconds. Black and white.

1944-45: *Le Retour*. Documentary on prisoners of war and detainees. 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. Commentary: Claude Roy (Stalag Etain). Music: Robert Lannoy ; (Stalag XIII B), orchestrated by Roger Desormières. Scenes filmed at the Gare d'Orsay: Henri Cartier-Bresson, assisted by Claude Renoir. Running time: 32 minutes and 37 seconds. Black and white.

1969-70: *Impressions of California*. Director: Henri Cartier-Bresson. Producer: William 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: 23 minutes and 20 seconds. Colour.

1969-70: *Southern Exposures*. Director: Henri Cartier-Bresson. Producer: William 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: Harry Gianneschi. Running time: 22 minutes and 25 seconds. Colour.

Films compiled from photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson

1956: *A Travers le Monde avec Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Directed by Jean-Marie Drot and Henri Cartier-Bresson. Running time : 21 minutes. Black and white.

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

1963-65: Five fifteen-minute films on Germany for the Süddeutscher Rundfunk, Munich.

1967: *Flagrants délits*. Directed by Robert Delpire. Original music score by Diego Masson. Delpire production, Paris. Running time: 22 minutes. Black and white.

1969: *Québec vu par Cartier-Bresson / Le Québec as seen by Cartier-Bresson*. Directed by Wolff Kœnig. Produced by the Canadian Film Board. Running time: 10 minutes. Black and white.

1970: *Images de France*. Film by Liliane de Kermadec for the ORTF Unité Trois Production

1991: *Contre l'oubli: Lettre Mamadou Bâ, Mauritanie*. Short film directed by Martine Franck for Amnesty International. Editing: Roger Ikhlef. Running time: 3 minutes. Black and white.

1992: *Henri Cartier-Bresson dessins et photos*. Director: Annick Alexandre. Short film produced by FR3 Dijon, commentary by the artist. Running time: 2 minutes and 33 seconds. Colour.

1997: *Série "100 photos du siècle": L'Araignée d'amour*: broadcast by Arte. Produced by Capa Télévision. Running time: 6 minutes and 15 seconds. Color.

Films about Henri Cartier-Bresson

N.D.: *Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Directed by Gjon Mili. Running time: 2 minutes and 44 seconds. Black and white.

N.D.: *Primo Piano*. Directed by Carlo Tuzii in collaboration with Romeo Martinez. Running time: 52 minutes. Black and white.

1962: *L'Aventure Moderne: Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Directed by Roger Kahane. Broadcast by Jean Bardin and Bernard Hubrenne. Production: ORTF Running time: 29 minutes. Black and white.

1994: *H.C.B. Point d'interrogation?* A film directed by Sarah Moon. Take Five Production. French and English version. Running time: 38 minutes. Black and white.

1994: *Contacts : Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Film compiled from photographs, Robert Delpire, Centre National de la Photographie, Paris. Production: KS Vision. Running time: 15 minutes. Colour.

1997: *La Conversation*. Interview with Laure Adler, France. Production: France 3. Running time: 64 minutes. Colour.

1998: *Pen, Brush and Camera*. Directed by Patricia Wheatley. Production: BBC. Running time: 50 minutes. Colour.

1999: Entretiens avec Charlie Rose pour 60 minutes. Production: CBS. Running time: 55 minutes. Color.

1999: *Le XXe siècle a vécu avec la photographie: conversation avec Henri Cartier-Bresson*. Produced by NHK (cycle ETV Culture TV). Running time: 60 minutes. In Japanese. Colour.

2001: *Profils, Henri Cartier-Bresson: L'amour tout court*. Directed by Raphaël Byrne. Produced by Film à Lou. Broadcast by Arte. Running time: 70 minutes. Colour.

2003: *Henri Cartier-Bresson " Biographie d'un regard "*. A film by Heinz Butler avec Robert Delpire, Elliott Erwitt, Isabelle Huppert, Joseph Koudelka, Arthur Miller and Ferdinando Scianna. Co-production: Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson and NZZ Neue Zurcher Zeitung. Colour.

Audio production

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

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, USA.
- University of Fine Arts , Osaka, Japon.
- Victoria and Albert Museum, Londres, Royaume Uni.

Museums offering a large collection of HCB's work

- Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France
- Musée Carnavalet, Paris, France
- Museum of Modern Art, New York, Etats Unis
- The Art Institute of Chicago, Etats Unis
- The Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Etats Unis

- International Centre of Photography, New York, Etats Unis
- The Philadelphia Art Institute, Philadelphia, Etats Unis
- The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Etats Unis
- Kahitsukan Kyoto Museum of Contemporary Art, Kyoto, Japon
- Museum of Modern Art, Tel Aviv, Israel
- Stockholm Modern Museet, Suède