

# HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

## IMAGES À LA SAUVETTE

JANUARY 11 - APRIL 23, 2017



Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), cover

> **Press opening**

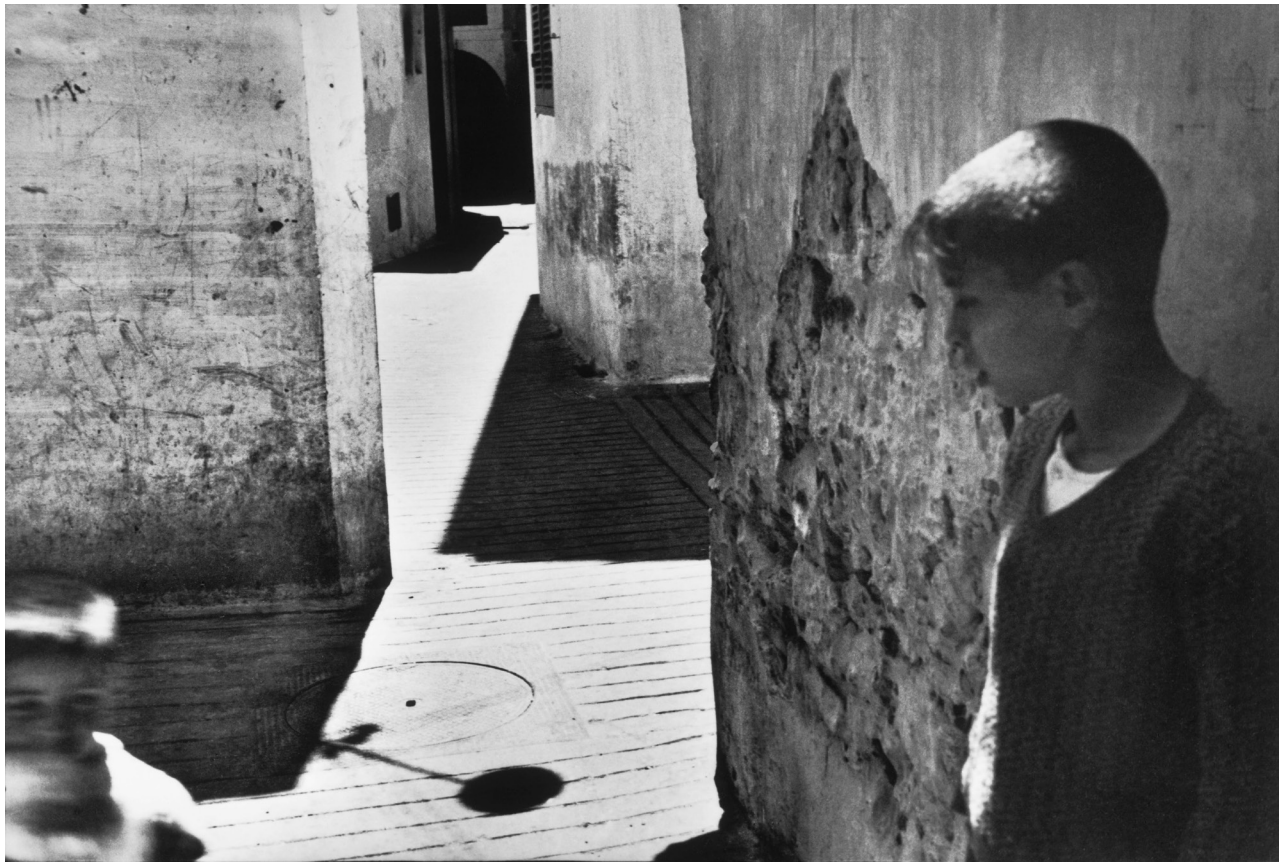
January, 10: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

> **Public opening**

January, 10: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

FONDATION HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON  
2, impasse Lebourg - 75014 Paris





*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), p. 27-28, *Seville, Spain*, 1933

« Magazines end up wrapping french fries,  
while books remain.»  
Henri Cartier-Bresson

# THE EXHIBITION

JANUARY 11 - APRIL 23, 2017

From January 11 to April 23, 2017, the Foundation devotes an exhibition to Cartier-Bresson's famous publication *Images à la Sauvette*. Initiated by the French publisher Tériade, the project is finally achieved on October 1952 as a French-American co-edition, with the contribution of Matisse and the American publishers Simon and Schuster. The latter chose "The Decisive Moment" as the title of the American version, and unintentionally imposed the motto, which would define Cartier-Bresson's work. Since its publication in 1952, *Images à la Sauvette* has received an overwhelming success. It is considered as "a Bible for photographers" according to Robert Capa's words. The innovative design of the publication stroke the art world with its refine format, the heliogravure quality and the strength of the image sequences. The publication reveals the inherent duality of Cartier-Bresson's work; between the photographer's intimate interpretation and his documentary approach.

*Images à la Sauvette* is the fruit of joined efforts of a famous art publisher, Tériade, a talented photographer, a painter at the peak of his career, Matisse, and two American publishers, Simon and Schuster. From his beginnings, Cartier-Bresson considers the book as the outcome of his work. In the thirties, he met the publisher of *Verve*, Tériade, who he would later likely acknowledge to be his mentor. They plan, at the time, to carry out a book project on large cities rough areas together with Eli Lotar, Bill Brandt and Brassai, but this ambitious project will never see the light of day.

Twenty years later and after a trip of three years in Asia, the *Images à la Sauvette* project finally began to materialize. The French title has been thoroughly thought with his brother-in-law and cinema historian Georges Sadoul and evokes the snatchers or street peddlers. Cartier-Bresson attested that the meaning of this idiomatic expression, the street vendors ready to run at the first request for a license, is very akin to his way of capturing images. Tériade would then prompt the Cardinal de Retz quote, the epigraph to Henri Cartier-Bresson's introductory text: "There is nothing in this world which does not have its decisive moment". The American publisher hesitated to use a translation of the original French title and opted for something punchier, *The Decisive Moment*.

*Images à la Sauvette* established itself as an extremely pioneering work by its wish to claim the images strength as the unique narrative form and the emphasis on the photographer text. It proposes a daring purity, allowing the 24 x 36 to spread out on its very large format pages. A model of its kind with the heliogravure printing by the best craftsmen of the era, the Draeger brothers, and the splendid Matisse cover has been called "A bible for photographers" by Robert Capa. In Spring 1951, Cartier-Bresson explains, "While our prints are beautiful and perfectly composed (as they should be), they are not photographs for salons [...] In the end, our final image is the printed one". This affirmation definitely proclaims *Images à la Sauvette* as an artist's book.

Yet paradoxically, the book confirms a turning point in the life of the photographer who has co-founded Magnum Photos a few years earlier, in 1947, and which has contributed to guarantee the photographers authorship. The choice to separated the image portfolio before and after 1947 certifies this shift to the documentary. The significant size of the *Reportage* chapter in his introduction, as well as the recurrence of the plural pronoun evoking the cooperative, demonstrate this important change. The book structure in two definite parts reveals the inherent duality in Cartier-Bresson's work. *Images à la Sauvette* brings to light the photographer vision, which we thought to be torn between a very intimate interpretation of the inner world and, since the creation of Magnum, a more observational approach of the external world. Cartier-Bresson was fully aware of this coexistence and advocated a balance: "there is a reciprocal reaction between both these worlds which in the long run form only one. It would be a most dangerous over-simplification to stress the importance of one at the cost of the other in that constant dialogue".

The exhibition presents a selection of vintage prints as well as numerous archival documents to recount the history of this publication, until its facsimile reprint by Steidl Verlag, in 2014. This edition comes with an additional booklet containing an essay by Clément Chéroux.

# THE EXHIBITION

JANUARY 11 - APRIL 23, 2017

I, like many another boy, burst into the world of photography with a Box Brownie, which I used for taking holiday snapshots. Even as a child, I had a passion for painting, which I « did » on Thursdays and Sundays, the days when French school children don't have to go to school. Gradually, I set myself to try to discover the various ways in which I could play with a camera. From the moment that I began to use the camera and to think about it, however, there was an end to holiday snaps and silly pictures of my friends. I became serious. I was on the scent of something, and I was busy smelling it out.

Then there were the movies. From some of the great films, I learned to look, and to see. « Mysteries of New York », with Pearl White; the great films of D. W. Griffith — « Broken Blossoms »; the first films of Stroheim — « Greed » Eisenstein's « Potemkin »; and Dreyer's « Jeanne d' Arc » — there were some of the things that impressed me deeply. Later I met photographers who had some of Atget's prints. These I considered remarkable and, accordingly, I bought myself a tripod, a black cloth and a polished walnut camera three by four inches. The camera was fitted with — instead of a shutter — a lens-cap, which one took off and then put on to make the exposure. This last detail, of course, confined my challenge w the static world. Other photographic subjects seemed to me to be too complicated, or else to be «amateur stuff. And by this time I fancied that by disregarding them, I was dedicating myself to Art with a capital «A.» Next I took to developing this Art of mine in my washbasin. I found the business of being a photographic Jack-of-All-Trades quite entertaining. [...]

I had just discovered the Leica. It became the extension of my eye, and I have never been separated from it since I found it. I prowled the streets all day, feeling very strung-up and ready to pounce, determined to «trap» life — we preserve life in the act of living. Above all, I craved to seize the whole essence, in the confines of one single photograph, of some situation that was in the process of unrolling itself before my eyes. The idea of making a photographic reportage, that is w say, of telling a story in a sequence of pictures, was something which never entered my head at that time. I began to understand more about it later, as a result of looking at the work of my colleagues and at the illustrated magazines. In fact, it was only in the process of working for them that I eventually learned — bit by bit — how w make a reportage with a camera, how we make a picture-story.

I have travelled a good deal, though I don't really know how w travel. I like to take my time about it, leaving between one country and the next an interval in which to digest what I've seen. Once I have arrived in a new country, I have an almost desire to settle down there, so as to live on proper terms with the country. I could never be a globe-trotter. [...]

To me, photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression.

I believe that, through the act of living, the discovery of oneself is made concurrently with the discovery of the world around us which can mold us, but which can also be affected by us. A balance must be established between these two worlds — the one inside us and the one outside us. As the result of a constant reciprocal process, both these worlds come to form a single one. And it is this world that we must communicate.

But this takes care only of the content of the picture. For me, content cannot be separated from form. By form, I mean a rigorous organization of the interplay of surfaces, lines, and values. It is in this organization alone that our conceptions and emotions become concrete and communicable. In photography, visual organization can stem only from a developed instinct.

Extract from the text by Henri Cartier-Bresson, in *The Decisive Moment*, Simon and Schuster, 1952

# THE DECISIVE MOMENT MYTH

## TRAP OR ACME ?

« André Breton taught me to let the photographic lens  
look into the rubble of the unconscious  
and of chance »  
Henri Cartier-Bresson, 1995

« There is nothing in this world which does not have its decisive moment. » This phrase, which comes from the memoirs of Cardinal de Retz first published in 1717, appears as the epigraph to Henri Cartier-Bresson's introductory text for his first major book of photographs, *Images à la Sauvette*. It was his publisher, Tériade, the creator of the legendary Verve collection, who suggested using the quotation in 1952. At the time, Cartier-Bresson had no idea how important it would become. In fact, the book's co-publisher in the United States, Richard Simon, from Simon & Schuster, hesitated to use a translation of the original French title – although this would have been quite possible – and sought something more impactful. In the end, Cartier-Bresson accepted *The Decisive Moment*, which would thus be handwritten by Matisse at the bottom of the paper cut-out the artist had created for the cover.

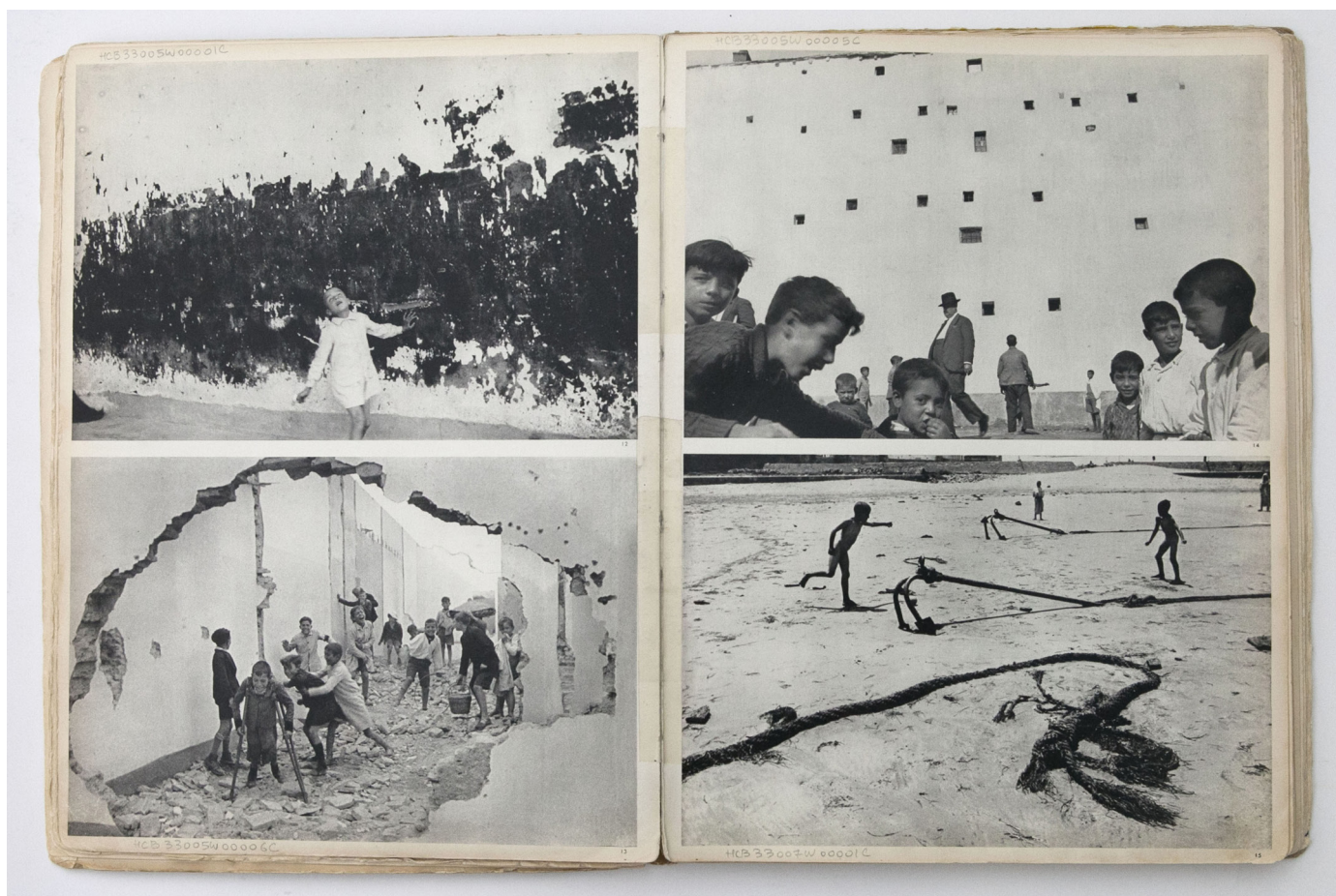
And so it is why, since that time, the concept of the 'decisive moment' has practically always been associated with the name of Henri Cartier-Bresson. The expression gained such a following that it became a kind of definition of the photographic act for certain photographers, and one which would absolutely have to be overthrown afterwards. In the 1980s, the concept of the 'decisive moment' was contrasted with that of the 'slack time' (temps faible), as brilliantly developed by French critic Alain Bergala in his essay accompanying Raymond Depardon's *Correspondance New-Yorkaise*.

The error, the misunderstanding concerning this 'decisive moment' attached to the name of Henri Cartier-Bresson is that it has become a kind of standard, as if there were only one right moment, the one where everything falls into place in a geometric way. Many photographers have gone astray by attempting to imitate that balance; what often gets lost is the impulsiveness of a desire, the personal anxiety in face of a moment to preserve. The 'decisive moment' has imposed itself and somewhat distorted, or in any case simplified, the way Cartier-Bresson's work is seen, like a tree hiding the forest.

En 1974, Cartier-Bresson would admits : « For me, the Leica is a sketchbook, a psychoanalyst's couch, a machine gun, a big, hot kiss, an electromagnet, a memory, the mirror of memory. » There is no trace here of any supposed record of a reality, but rather, of memory (and thus the past), the psychoanalyst's couch (to make the past re-emerge) and the mirror of memory (the image of the past). Clearly, this poetic accident does not lie within everyone's reach but, through the camera, it presents itself to some, provided they are good at passing it on. And this is something which, according to Walker Evans, left no room for doubt in Cartier-Bresson's case: 'Cartier has always been a kind of spirit medium: poetry sometimes speaks through his camera.'

Wouldn't the 'decisive moment' be rather an 'art of poetic accident', knowing how to capture it in order to avoid the eternally 'lost moment': a mirror of memory, a moment saved by the artifice of the film's light-sensitive surface?

Extract from « De l'errance de l'œil au moment qui s'impose, quelques pistes pour mieux voir », Agnès Sire, *Revoir Henri Cartier-Bresson*, Textuel, 2009



*Images à la Sauvette* (Nerve, 1952), p. 29-30, *Spain and Spanish Morocco*, 1933

« The first [book] that really impressed me was  
Cartier-Bresson's»  
William Eggleston

# HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

## CHRONOLOGY

### Early Life

- 1908** Born 22 August 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 the Ivory Coast.
- 1931** Discovers in the arts magazine *Arts et Métiers Graphiques* a photography by Martin Munkacsi and decides to focus on photography.

### First Photographic experiments

- 1932** Buys its first Leica and travels in 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. The mission failed but he decides to stay there.

### 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 reportage on the coronation of George VI published in the newspaper *Ce Soir*.
- 1938** Directs, upon request by Spanish Secours Populaire, a documentary about 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*).

# HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

## CHRONOLOGY

### During the War

- 1940** Joins the “Film and Photography” unit of the Third Army. Taken prisoner by the Germans on June 23rd.
- 1943** Escapes at his third attempt in February 1943. Works for MNPGD, a secret organization set up to help prisoners and escapees.
- 1944** For Editions Braun, takes a series of photographic portraits of writers and artists (Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Pierre Bonnard, Paul Claudel, Georges Rouaul).
- 1945** Directs *Le Retour (The Return)*, a documentary on the repatriation of prisoners of war and detainees.

### Professional Photographer

- 1946-1947** 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*, cover by Matisse, is published by Tériade. First exhibition in England, *Photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts.
- 1953** Travels in 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).
- First exhibition in France organised by Les Arts Décoratifs de Paris in le Pavillon de Marsan at Le Louvre. Publishes *Moscou vu par Henri Cartier-Bresson* by Editions Delpire and, the same year, *Les Européens*, with Tériade (cover illustrated by Joan 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*.

# HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

## CHRONOLOGY

- 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.
- 1968-1969** 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.
- 1969** Directs two documentaries in the USA for CBS News: *Southern Exposures* and *Impressions de Californie*.
- 1972-1973** 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 recognised as being of public interest by French State.
- 2003** Opening of the Foundation Henri Cartier-Bresson in Paris.  
Retrospective exhibition *De qui s'agit-il?* at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- 2004** Cartier-Bresson dies peacefully in Montjustin, Provence on August 3rd.



*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), p. 69, Henri Matisse and his model Micaela Avogadro, Vence, France, 1944

« Someone showed me a copy of Henri Cartier-Bresson's book *The Decisive Moment*,  
and it changed my life and my own photography »  
Dennis Hopper

# PRESS IMAGES

## REPRODUCTION CONDITIONS

Use of press visuals is authorized and exempted of rights during the exhibition at the Fondation HCB.  
Visuals must not be cropped.

**001**

Henri Cartier-Bresson  
*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), cover  
© Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



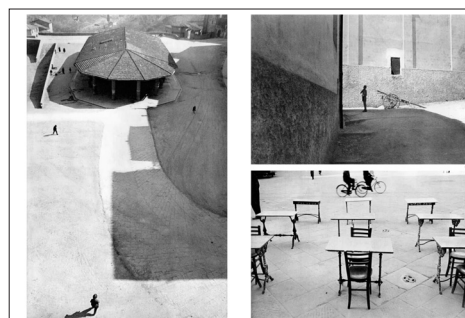
**002**

Henri Cartier-Bresson  
*The Decisive Moment* (Verve, 1952), cover  
© Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



**003**

Henri Cartier-Bresson  
*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), p. 25-26  
*Italy, 1933*  
© Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



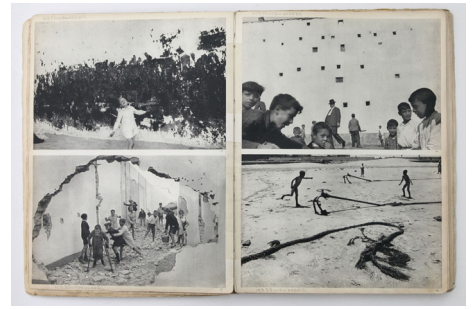
**004**

Henri Cartier-Bresson

*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), p. 29-30

*Spain and Spanish Morocco, 1933*

© Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



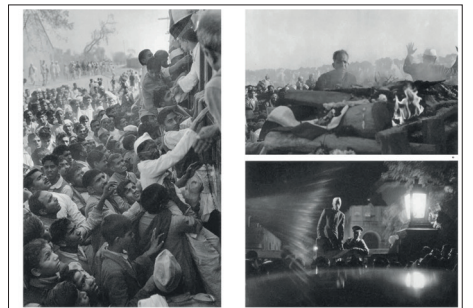
**005**

Henri Cartier-Bresson

*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), p. 99-100

*Gandhi's funeral, Delhi, India, 1948*

© Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



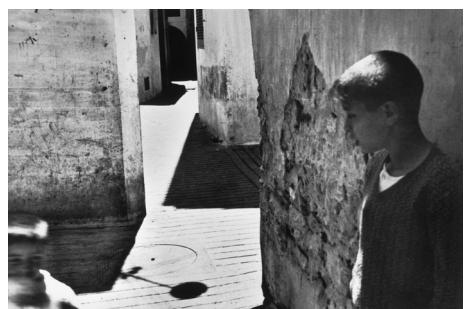
**006**

Henri Cartier-Bresson

*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), p. 27-28

*Seville, Spain, 1933*

© Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



**007**

Henri Cartier-Bresson  
*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), p. 34  
*Tehuantepec, Mexico, 1934*  
© Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



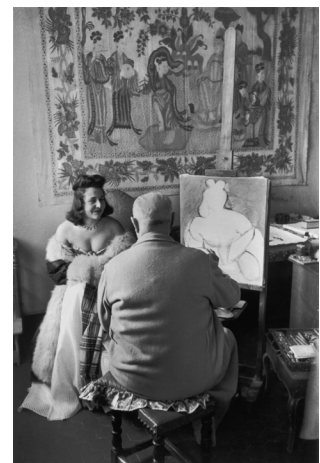
**008**

Henri Cartier-Bresson  
*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), p. 16  
«*Chez Gégène*», *Joinville-le-Pont, France, 1938*  
© Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



**009**

Henri Cartier-Bresson  
*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), p. 69  
*Henri Matisse and his model Micaela Avogadro, Vence France, 1944*  
© Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



**010**

Henri Cartier-Bresson

*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), p. 68

*Truman Capote, New Orleans, United-States, July 1946*

© Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



**011**

Henri Cartier-Bresson

*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), p. 59-60

*Boston, United-States, 1947*

© Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



**012**

Henri Cartier-Bresson

*Images à la Sauvette* (Verve, 1952), p. 127-128

*Last days of The Kuomintang, Shanghai, China,*

December 1948 - January 1949

© Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



# FACSIMILE EDITION

STEIDL



2014

160 + 48 booklet pages

Clothbound in slipcase

27.4 x 37 cm

Two versions : *The Decisive Moment* / *Images à la Sauvette*

ISBN 978-3-86930-788-6

98.00 euros

This new publication is a meticulous facsimile of the original book. It comes with an additional booklet containing an essay on the history of *The Decisive Moment* by Clément Chéroux.

## EXTRACT

" While making the portrait of a living being is an arduous undertaking, what can be said of that of a book? The object should first be considered in its materiality: thickness, outer aspect, handling, layout, printing quality, etc. What should also be considered is its "inner silence," another expression Cartier-Bresson liked to use when referring to the portrait, which means understanding the stakes involved in its process, whether in reference to the author's work, history at large or the history of photography publishing.

That is also quite difficult. Even more so for a publication of such historical importance as *The Decisive Moment*, Cartier-Bresson's first real publication, a model of the kind described by Robert Capa as "a Bible for photographers." Successfully carrying out this delicate exegesis means introducing oneself "between shirt and skin," as Cartier-Bresson recommended for portraits. In other words, it is necessary to read between the lines, the pages, the images, which is what I sought to do here."

**Clément Chéroux**

# EXHIBITION EVENTS

## AT THE FONDATION DURING THE EXHIBITION

### LES RENDEZ-VOUS DU LIVRE

Les Rendez-vous du livre, led by Rémi Coignet, founder of *Des livres et des photos* and editor in chief of the magazine *The Eyes*, questions the photobook field. The conferences alternate between interviews with artists for who the book is at core of their approach and debates with professionals from the photography publishing world, whether they be photographer, publisher, designer, expert or bookseller.

**The photobook market in France**, Thursday, January 19, 2017, 6:30pm to 8:00pm

With Guillaume Dumora (Bookshop Le Monte-en-l'air), Patrick Rémy (Steidl France director and independant publisher) and Pierre Samoyault (diffuser/distributor Interart director).

**The photobook: from myth to reappropriation**, Thursday, February 9, 2017, 6:30pm to 8:00pm

With Mishka Henner, photographer.

> Free admission, subject to availability, mandatory registration online or: [contact@henricartierbresson.org](mailto:contact@henricartierbresson.org)

### LES CONVERSATIONS

The Foundation hosts a cycle of conferences on photography led by art critic Natacha Wolinski.

**Photographic commissions: the new initiators**, Thursday, March 16, 2017, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

With Julie Corteville, chief of the Patrimoines and Inventaire dpt, Ile-de-France region, photographic commission « Le Grand Paris » and **Gilles Favier**, association CéTaVOIR, operator for the photographic commission « La jeunesse en France » initiated by the ministry of Culture and Communication and the Centre national des arts plastiques.

> Free admission, subject to availability, mandatory registration online or: [contact@henricartierbresson.org](mailto:contact@henricartierbresson.org)

### FREE ADMISSION ON WEDNESDAY!

Every Wednesday, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, free admission to exhibitions for everybody.

### SATURDAY GUIDED VISIT

Last saturday of every month, the Foundation offers a guided visit of the exhibition in French led by a art historian at 11:30 am.

> Last saturday of every month, 11:30 am

> Free admission with entrance ticket

> Mandatory registration : [anaelle.rod@henricartierbresson.org](mailto:anaelle.rod@henricartierbresson.org)

Exposition presented as part of Magnum Photos 70th birthday.

The Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson would like to thank, Olympus, partner of the rencontres, for their support:

**OLYMPUS**

Your Vision, Our Future



*Images à la Sauvette (Nerve, 1952), p. 25-26, Italy, 1933*

# PRACTICAL INFOS

## PRESS OPENING

We are pleased to invite you to a press coffee & croissants opening on Thursday, September 8, 2016, from 10:00 am to 12:00pm.

RSVP : Emilie Hanmer / T +33 1 56 80 27 03 / [emilie.hanmer@henricartierbresson.org](mailto:emilie.hanmer@henricartierbresson.org)  
or through this link : [RSVP online](#)

## ADDRESS

2, impasse Lebourg, 75014 Paris  
01 56 80 27 00  
[www.henricartierbresson.org](http://www.henricartierbresson.org)

Ligne 13: Gaîté  
Ligne 6: Edgar Quinet

## OPENING TIMES

Tuesday to Sunday 1:00 pm - 6:30 pm  
Wednesday (late-night opening) 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm  
Saturday 11:00 am - 6:45 pm

## ADMISSION

Full-price 8 € / Reduced price 4 €  
Free admission for members of the Fondation HCB  
Free admission during late-night openings on Wednesdays (6:30 pm - 8:30 pm)

## MEMBERS

Members enjoy an unlimited access to exhibitions for a year, invitations for exhibitions openings, a discount of 10% at the bookshop, priority to attend conferences at the Fondation HCB, private visits of exhibitions in attendance of curators.

Member : 100 euros

Student / Reduced price : 60 euros

## FOLLOW US ON



## MEDIA PARTNERS

