

HENRI CARTIER- BRESSON



15 OCTOBER



2019

2 FEBRUARY

2020

CHINE



1948-1949

1958



PRESS RELEASE

HENRI CARTIER- BRESSON CHINE 1948-1949 1958

FROM OCTOBER 15 2019 TO FEBRUARY 2 2020

79 rue des Archives – 75003 Paris
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henricartierbresson.org

OPENING HOURS

Tuesday to Sunday: 11am to 7pm

ADMISSION

Full rate 9 € / Concessions 5 €

SOCIAL NETWORKS



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HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON: CHINE 1948-1949 | 1958

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EXHIBITION

On 25 November 1948, Henri Cartier-Bresson was commissioned by *Life* magazine to shoot a story on the “last days of Beijing” before the arrival of the Maoist troops. Having gone for two weeks, he would stay for ten months, mainly in the Shanghai area, witnessing the fall of the city of Nanjing held by Kuomintang, then forced to stay in Shanghai under Communist control for four months, leaving China a few days before the proclamation of the People’s Republic of China (1 October 1949).

As the months went by, his accounts of “traditional” lifestyles and the establishment of a new order (Beijing, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Shanghai), produced with complete freedom of action, met with great success in *Life* and top international news magazines (including *Paris Match*, which had just been founded).

This long stay in China proved to be a seminal moment in the history of photojournalism: this reportage series came at the beginning of the Magnum Photos agency, which Henri Cartier-Bresson had co-founded eighteen months earlier in New York, and brought a new, less event-based, more poetic and detached style, attentive as much to the people as to the balance of the composition. A great many of these photos remain among the most famous in photography (such as “Gold Rush in Shanghai”).

One of the repercussions of “China 1948-1949” was that, from the fifties onwards, Henri Cartier-Bresson became a major benchmark in “new” photojournalism and the renaissance of photography in general. The books *The Decisive Moment* (Verve, 1952) and *D'une Chine à l'autre* (Delpire, 1954), prefaced by Jean-Paul Sartre, confirmed this supremacy.

- For the first time, the Fondation HCB is entirely devoting its new space to Henri Cartier-Bresson
- An exceptional body of photographic and documentary work: vintage prints, documents and original publications from the Collection
- An unprecedented account of two key moments in China’s history: the fall of Kuomintang and the establishment of the Communist regime (1948-1949) and Mao Zedong’s “Great Leap Forward” (1958)
- A major moment in the history of photojournalism and Henri Cartier-Bresson’s personal approach
- A work published by Delpire

In 1958, as the tenth anniversary drew near, Henri Cartier-Bresson set off again on a journey of discovery, yet under completely different conditions: constrained by an accompanying guide for four months, he travelled thousands of kilometres on the launch of the “Great Leap Forward” to report on the results of the Revolution and the forced industrialisation of rural areas. He nonetheless succeeded in also showing the least positive aspects, such as the exploitation of human labour and the hold of the militias. Once again, the report met with international success.

The exhibition at the Fondation HCB brings together 114 original prints from 1948-1949, 40 prints from 1958, and many archive documents.

Michel Frizot

Curation: Michel Frizot, Ying-lung Su
Artistic Director: Agnès Sire
Collection Curator: Aude Raimbault

PUBLICATION

The exhibition is accompanied by the work *Henri Cartier-Bresson: Chine 1948-1949 | 1958* by Michel Frizot and Ying Lung Su, published by Delpire.



Gold Rush. At the end of the day, scrambles in front of a bank to buy gold. The last days of Kuomintang, Shanghai, 23 December 1948.
© Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos

PARTNER

This exhibition is presented with the support of the Gutenberg Agency.



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“Cartier-Bresson’s long stay had produced more than a mere ‘reportage’, an exceptionally rich body of photographic and documentary work that also provided an insight into the practices and perceptions of a major figure in photography, over and above photojournalism in the strict sense of the word.”

“Henri Cartier-Bresson’s instinct and mastery of ‘isolated images’ summarise in a click the state of a society, the poetic intuition at which he always excelled.”

“During these two episodes in 1948-1949 and 1958, each profoundly characterised by a contrasting political and social situation, Henri Cartier-Bresson successfully reconfigured the standard model of reportage or stories, while providing magazines with material to demonstrate through their pages this way of ‘looking at life’, which moved him like ‘a kind of constant questioning and immediate answer’.”

MICHEL FRIZOT AND YING LUNG SU, *HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON, CHINE 1948-1949 | 1958*, DELPIRE EDITIONS, 2019

PRESS IMAGES HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON: CHINE 1948-1949 | 1958

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001
Scene from the black market for silver coins, Beijing, December 1948.
© Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



002
A visitor to the Forbidden City, Beijing, December 1948.
© Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



003
At the entrance to a tavern, Beijing, December 1948.
© Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



004
Near the Forbidden City, a simpleton whose job is to escort brides in a sedan chair, Beijing, December 1948.
© Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



005
Early in the morning, in the Forbidden City, ten thousand new recruits have gathered to form a Nationalist regiment, Beijing, December 1948.
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PRESS IMAGES
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006
Gold Rush. At the end of the day, scrambles in front of a bank to buy gold. The last days of Kuomintang, Shanghai, 23 December 1948.
© Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



009
Celebrations for the 9th anniversary of the People's Republic, Beijing, 1 October 1958.
© Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



007
Cultural meeting at the Canidrome, Shanghai, 4 July 1949.
© Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



010
Construction of the Beijing University swimming pool by students, June 1958.
© Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos



008
The window display of a brush merchant in the antique dealers' street, Beijing, December 1948.
© Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson / Magnum Photos

PRESS IMAGES 79 RUE DES ARCHIVES



014
Fondation HCB, 79 rue des Archives, November 2018
Reception
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017
Fondation HCB, 79 rue des Archives, November 2018
Pearls of the archives and bookshop
© Cyrille Weiner



015
Fondation HCB, 79 rue des Archives, November 2018
Room H, exhibition space
Martine Franck exhibition
© Cyrille Weiner



018
Fondation HCB, 79 rue des Archives, November 2018
Room H, main exhibition space
Martine Franck exhibition
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016
Fondation HCB, 79 rue des Archives, November 2018
Pearls from the Archives
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