



Henri Cartier-Bresson: A Biography

By Pierre Assouline

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Henri Cartier-Bresson: A Biography By Pierre Assouline

“Will inspire fans and followers to rediscover its elusive subject’s remarkable oeuvre.” —*Publishers Weekly*

The twentieth century was that of the image, and the legendary photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, born in 1908, was the eye of the century. Cartier-Bresson was always on the spot, recording historic events as they happened. His work focused on Mexico in the 1930s, the tragic fate of the Spanish Republicans, the liberation of Paris, the weariness of Gandhi a few hours before his assassination, and the victory of the Chinese Communists. It was he who fixed forever in our minds the features of famous contemporaries: Giacometti, Sartre, Faulkner, Camus, and others, their portraits captured for eternity at the decisive moment. An intensely private individual, Cartier-Bresson nonetheless took Pierre Assouline into his confidence over a number of years, discussing his youthful devotion to surrealism, his lifelong passion for drawing, his experience of war and the prison camps, his friends, and the women in his life. He even opened up his invaluable archives. 25 illustrations

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Often called the father of photojournalism, Cartier-Bresson tried to give up photography as a profession four times in his life, returning to his first love, painting, repeatedly—but he always kept his Leica in his pocket. The Frenchman captured the emotion and magnitude of some of the 20th century's most significant news stories by simply turning his camera away from the main event and into the crowd. This, too, is Assouline's approach to biography. Drawing on five years of conversations with his subject, Assouline presents not a chronological or critical accounting of events but a portrait, illustrated through descriptions of Cartier-Bresson's photographs (almost none of which are reproduced in the book) and summarized with generalizations of the artist's approach toward art and life: "His taste was classical: he needed that kind of order to counter the vulgarity of the world outside" or "In affairs of the heart, he was a seductive romantic." Energetic and informative passages describe Cartier-Bresson's years as a soldier and his travels to the Ivory Coast, China and India (where he photographed Gandhi just hours before his death). Despite its gaps—such as mere passing references to Cartier-Bresson's two marriages—this smooth hagiography will inspire fans and followers to rediscover its elusive subject's remarkable oeuvre. (Nov. 28)

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About the Author

Pierre Assouline, a writer and journalist, has written biographies of Georges Simenon, Hergé, and others. He lives in Paris.

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