

11.10.2024
– 26.01.2025

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Henri Cartier- Bresson

Watch! Watch! Watch!





Winter Palace, Leningrad, Russia, 1973

French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson (Chanteloup-en-Brie, 1908 – Montjustin, 2004), also a painter, sketcher, filmmaker, anthropologist, and humanist, was known as "the eye of the century". A key witness to 20th-century history, Cartier-Bresson created timeless compositions that influenced subsequent generations of photographers. Known for his talent for finding "the decisive moment," he portrayed spontaneous encounters and situations, becoming one of the most important exponents of street photography. His works, many of which have become icons today, depict some of the most important events of the 20th century with an anthropologist's eye.



The Berlin Wall, West Berlin, Germany, 1962

The exhibition that Fundación MAPFRE is presenting on the twentieth anniversary of his death covers the artist's entire career. From his early work influenced by Surrealism and The New Vision, to the more intimate style of his later years, the exhibition also includes some of his lesser-known photo reportages from the 1960s. It aims to offer an authentic journey through time, enabling visitors to appreciate some of the social, political and artistic transformations of the last century, as well as the evolution of photography itself. A prolific and tireless creator, Cartier-Bresson co-founded the Magnum photo agency in 1947 alongside Robert Capa and David "Chim" Seymour, among others, focusing on photojournalism from that point onwards. Although he promoted an apolitical image, his work as a photographer often intersected with political issues, a connection that this exhibition seeks to highlight and that has been overlooked until now.

Divided into ten thematic and chronological sections, the itinerary of the exhibition attempts to reconstruct the original context of some of his photographs. It includes two hundred and forty original silver gelatin prints from the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson in Paris – the author forbade the making of copies of his images to be made after his death – which are accompanied by a careful selection of his publications in magazines and books, as well as a film and two documentaries.



Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare, Pont de l'Europe, Paris, France, 1932

KEY THEMES

“The Decisive Moment”: In 1952, Cartier-Bresson published his monograph *Images à la sauvette* (literally, “Images on the Sly”), which was simultaneously published in English under the title *The Decisive Moment*. The artist's primary concern was to capture the essence of movement in a still image, such as a photograph, through what he called “the decisive moment.” This refers to the precise instant when a fleeting moment, such as a man's legs poised to jump or a woman's head momentarily obscured by a curtain in the wind, is captured. Seconds later, the man's legs return to the ground and another gust of wind reveals the woman's head, altering the movement.



Valencia, Spain, 1933

Magnum Photos: In 1947, after his major exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Cartier-Bresson co-founded *Magnum Photos* with fellow photographers Robert Capa, George Rodger and David “Chim” Seymour, among others. At the agency, each photographer could retain the rights to their own images and choose almost freely the stories on which to work. *Magnum Photos* quickly became one of the world's leading photojournalism agencies. Fully committed to the agency's mission, Cartier-Bresson devoted himself to photojournalism with great intensity from then until 1970.

Cartier-Bresson and Spain: A tireless traveler, Cartier-Bresson crossed the Spanish border twice in 1933. The first time was in the spring, and the second time, in the fall as an envoy of the Parisian magazine *Vu* to photograph the country's elections. In November and December of that year, the Ateneo de Madrid held his first solo exhibition in Spain. During this period, influenced by Surrealism and The New Vision, the artist took some of his most famous photographs in cities such as Seville and Valencia, to cite just a few examples. In 1936, Cartier-Bresson also became involved in the Spanish Civil War. In 1937, he shot the film *Victoria de la vida* [Victory of Life] in and around Madrid, documenting the medical care provided to Republican soldiers in hospitals. The film was used to support the Second Spanish Republic in the war against Franco's troops in 1937 and was praised by the French left-wing media.

Dates

October 11th 2024
to January 26th 2025

Curatorship

Ulrich Pohlmann

Opening hours

Monday (except public holidays):
closed
Tuesdays – Sundays
(and public holidays): 11am-7pm
Last entry: 6.30pm

The exhibition hall will be cleared
10 minutes before closing.

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Tickets

Standard ticket: 5 €
Ticket with reduction: 3 €
Free standard ticket: Tuesdays
(except public holidays)
Groups: 3 € / per person

Guided visit

(mediation service)

Wednesdays & Thursdays: 5-7pm
Fridays & Saturdays: 12-2pm, 5-7pm
Sundays & public holidays: 12-2pm
(Information at reception)

Audioguide

English, spanish and catalan: 4 €

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exhibition: #KBrCartierBresson

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Cover: *Murcia, Spain, 1933*

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