

## THE WORLD OF HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

September 10 - December 3, 2016

Peter Fetterman Gallery is pleased to present *The World of Henri Cartier-Bresson*, an exhibition featuring over one hundred prints from the Gallery's preeminent collection by master photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson (French, 1908-2004). The curated installation showcases the artist's lust for life through the prolific photography that was the result of a lifetime of international travel and a keen eye for visual harmony. The exhibition displays both iconic and rarely seen images from the Gallery's Collection and includes scenes from the photographer's native land of France, as well as across the U.S.A., Mexico, the U.K., Western Europe, Russia, China and Southeast Asia. Photographic themes mastered by Cartier-Bresson guide the installation through motifs such as decisive moments, early Surrealism, geometric compositions, Humanism and photo-journalism. An ancillary installation of Cartier-Bresson's candid portraits of notable personalities including artists, politicians, philosophers, actors, writers and more will accompany the main exhibition, displaying his humble approach to the form of photography the artist himself considered most difficult. The exhibition will stand as the most extensive survey of Cartier-Bresson's oeuvre by the Gallery to date and provide visitors and collectors a chance to view the breadth of this once-in-a-generation photographer's greatest works.

What makes Henri Cartier-Bresson's vast body of work so universally impressive is that he was seemingly present at every significant event and in the intimate company of every important figure of the 20th Century. Trained as a painter at a young age, Cartier-Bresson was heavily influenced by the Cubist and Surrealist concepts when he first began photographing towards the end of the 1920s. While their aesthetics show through in his early images on view from France and Mexico in the 1930s, it was a photograph of boys running in to the surf by Hungarian photographer Martin Munkacsi (*Three Boys at Lake Tanganyika*, 1930) that firmly established in the young artist the expressive and graphic potential of the instant photographic medium. Following the advice of Robert Capa, Cartier-Bresson shed the modernist labels of the era and began to document humanity's rhythm within the context of photojournalism.

It was photography's ability to be an immediate sketch that could capture everyday situations with exceptional grace and Zen-like spontaneity that inspired the young intellectual to travel with the Leica as his companion for decades to follow. With his freedom following World War II and several years in a POW camp, Cartier-Bresson immersed himself fully into documentary and humanist "street" photography, ignited with the cofounding of the renowned Magnum Photos Agency in 1947. Three decades of photojournalism and personal photographic endeavors followed starting with several years on self-assigned work for Magnum in the Far East of Asia and India in the late 1940s. These years produced some of Cartier-Bresson's most celebrated images such as the women praying at Srinagar, Kashmir, as well as many of the singular gems of the Gallery's collection and current exhibition.

Beyond "The Decisive Moment", the title of his 1952 landmark monograph and philosophical theory on photographing as the artless art, Cartier-Bresson was a zealous geometrician and strictly adhered to only composing within the camera and never in the darkroom. His masterful skill for framing a strong, balanced composition was perfected by the 1950s, his most productive decade of work across Europe, China, and Russia. A significant portion of works on view derive from these years including iconic images of the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow as one of the first Western photographers allowed in the USSR. His passion for visual harmony, humanity and the impermanence of reality focused by a classically trained eye allowed for the creation of an unrivaled body of historic imagery; What biographer Pierre Assouline noted as Cartier-Bresson's passion "to capture the world's harmony and record its invisible order within a tiny rectangle."

After meeting in Paris in 1990, Peter Fetterman developed a close dealer-artist friendship with Cartier-Bresson, and along with a firm belief in the importance of his work, Peter Fetterman Gallery amassed the largest private collection of the photographer's signed prints in the world. The collection includes prints from negatives ranging seven decades from 1929 - 1999 including rare prints made at the sole request of Peter Fetterman. Additional ephemera on display include vintage portraits of the artist and original copies of seminal monographs "The Decisive Moment" and "The Europeans", as well as rare video footage of the photographer at work.