Henri Cartier-Bresson, born on August 22, 1908, in Chanteloup, France, was a pioneer in street photography and is often considered the father of modern photojournalism. His early interests, however, were in painting and the arts, influenced by his uncle Louis, a gifted painter. He studied under the Cubist painter André Lhote in Paris during the 1920s, which helped him develop a strong foundation in the geometric aesthetics that would later inform his photographic compositions. Cartier-Bresson's approach to photography was influenced by his exposure to the Surrealist movement and its emphasis on the unconscious, chance, and the capturing of fleeting moments, which became a cornerstone of his photographic philosophy. In 1932, after spending a year hunting in the Ivory Coast, Cartier-Bresson acquired his first 35mm Leica camera, which would become his preferred tool and a hallmark of his work. This camera's portability and discretion revolutionized his approach to photography, allowing him to capture life as it unfolded with an unprecedented spontaneity. It was with this camera that he took his famous photograph 'Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare' in 1932, which perfectly encapsulates his concept of 'the decisive moment'—the precise instant when the meaning of an event was most clearly captured in a photograph. Cartier-Bresson's experiences during World War II had a profound impact on his life and work. He served in the French Army during the war and was captured by German forces in 1940. He spent nearly three years as a prisoner of war before finally escaping on his third attempt in 1943. After his escape, he joined the French Resistance, using his photography skills to aid the war effort. These harrowing experiences deepened his commitment to capturing human dignity and the resilience of the human spirit through his photography. In 1947, Cartier-Bresson, along with fellow photographers Robert Capa, David Seymour, George Rodger, and William Vandivert, founded the Magnum Photos cooperative. This organization was the first of its kind, allowing photographers to have control over their work and its distribution. Magnum Photos played a crucial role in the development of documentary photography, providing a platform for photographers to showcase their work on global issues and conflicts while maintaining their artistic integrity. Henri Cartier-Bresson's work was characterized by his adherence to the philosophy of 'the decisive moment.' He defined this as the instant when all the elements within the frame align in perfect balance and harmony to capture the essence of a situation. His ability to anticipate and frame these moments led to some of the most iconic images of the 20th century. Cartier-Bresson's emphasis on timing, composition, and spontaneity influenced generations of photographers and remains a fundamental principle in the field of photography. Throughout his career, Cartier-Bresson traveled extensively, documenting some of the most significant historical events and figures of the 20th century. His assignments took him to places like China during the last months of the Kuomintang and the establishment of the People's Republic, India during the death of Gandhi, and the Soviet Union after the death of Joseph Stalin, capturing pivotal moments in world history. His work not only recorded events but also conveyed the human emotions and stories behind them. Despite his fame as a photographer, Cartier-Bresson had a complex relationship with his own celebrity. He was known for being fiercely private and often shunned public attention. He disliked being photographed and was reticent about the details of his personal life. This aversion to fame was in part due to his belief that the photographer should be a 'fly on the wall,' unobtrusive and unnoticed, to best capture the reality of a situation without influencing it. In the latter part of his life, Cartier-Bresson returned to his first passion—drawing—and largely retired from photography. He felt that after half a century of capturing the world through his lens, he had said all he wanted to say with photography. His return to drawing was a way to engage with the world in a slower, more introspective manner. This shift underscored his lifelong commitment to art as a means of understanding and expressing the human condition. Cartier-Bresson's influence extends beyond photography into the realms of cinema and literature. He worked on films with Jean Renoir, one of the masters of French cinema, and his photographic work has been likened to the literary technique of the 'stream of consciousness' for its ability to capture the flow of life and the human psyche. His work is often studied and appreciated in the context of other art forms, demonstrating the universality and depth of his vision. Henri Cartier-Bresson passed away on August 3, 2004, at the age of 95, leaving behind a legacy that has shaped the visual language of the 20th century. His work is preserved in major museums and galleries around the world, and his approach to photography as an art form continues to inspire photographers and artists. Cartier-Bresson's dedication to capturing the ephemeral moments of life has made his work timeless, and his contributions to photojournalism and art have cemented his status as one of the most influential figures in the history of photography.