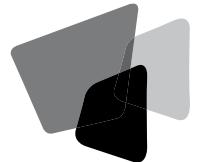


Press Kit :

# SYGMA INITIATIVE



corbis.

 sygma  
initiative



# Initiative to Preserve and Access SYGMA



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# The Sygma project involves...

50 MILLION OBJECTS

7,000 METERS OF SHELVING

MORE THAN 10,000 CONTRIBUTORS

800,000 IMAGES ONLINE

10 ARCHIVISTS

9 COLLECTIONS OF UNIQUE PHOTOS

6 EDITORS

1 EDITOR-IN-CHIEF FOR THE COLLECTIONS

# 50 YEARS OF IMAGES FROM THE 50S TO THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY



© Christian Simonpietri/Sygma/Corbis



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# Corbis' commitment

IN 2004, CORBIS ANNOUNCED ITS «SYGMA PRESERVATION AND ACCESS INITIATIVE».

CORBIS' INITIATIVE AND COMMITMENT INVOLVES FINDING A SUITABLE SITE TO KEEP SYGMA ARCHIVES, ONE OF THE LARGEST COLLECTIONS OF PHOTOS IN THE WORLD. THIS IS AN AMBITIOUS PROJECT REPRESENTING A GREAT INVESTMENT OVER SEVERAL YEARS BECAUSE IT INVOLVES RECLASSIFYING, MOVING, ARCHIVING AND BRINGING TO LIFE AROUND 50 MILLIONS OF "OBJECTS" (SLIDES, NEGATIVES, PRINTS AND CONTACT SHEETS) IN A NEW ARCHIVING SITE, IN ORDER TO OPTIMIZE PRESERVATION CONDITIONS AND ENSURE THE CONTINUITY OF THE COLLECTION.



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# How to archive one of the largest collections of photos in the world ?



## Phase I : 2005 to 2007/2008

### • Changing the archive classification system

Corbis decided to set up a unique and constructive archiving system whereby pictures would be classified by photographer rather than by theme. Such a reorganization of archives required a great deal of sorting, which was carried out on almost 50 million objects. A different archiving system was chosen because there was a desire to regularize royalties, promote the collection and make it accessible to the public via the digitalization of prints. In doing so, Corbis has set itself a challenge that will ultimately highlight an inestimable heritage, one of the greatest collections of photojournalism in the world: the Sygma, Kipa and TempSport collection.

### • Corbis invites photographers to sign a contract

This long-term reclassification and conservation work is carried out in conjunction with archiving agreements offered to photographers. Each carefully classified and archived picture is the photographer's property and he alone can decide whether or not to entrust it to Corbis, or to take it back. So since 2004, Corbis has contacted all the photographers, more than 10,000 contributors altogether, to offer them an «archive operating agreement» enabling them to entrust the archiving and commercial development of their works.

### • Publishing the heart of Sygma, Kipa and TempSport

### collections : close collaboration between Corbis and the photographers, involving team work :

Digitalizing the pictures in the collections is carried out in close collaboration with the photographers. The idea is to «bring the collections to life,» and to allow more people to discover pictures that until recently were still unknown. Since 2002, more than 55,000 pictures have been published : «This collection, containing treasures that up until now were difficult to use, is in the process of being digitalized so it can be revealed to the public.», says Philippe Bagot

## Phase II : 2008 and after

### • Storing the archives in the best possible place for their preservation : Locarchives

Choosing the archiving site for such a collection is not easy, the aim being to send the collection to a place that meets several criteria: maximum security for the collection, good conditions of preservation offered by the site, and finally easy access for specialists and photographers wishing to consult the archives.

Corbis decided to entrust its archives to Locarchives, one of France's specialists in archiving and document management. Located 45 minutes from the Porte de Saint-Cloud, in Garnay near Dreux, the Locarchives archiving site has the great advantage of being near the Paris region, making access and consultation easy.

Locarchives is planning to build a construction entirely dedicated to Corbis, where the collections will be stored : a surface area of 800 m<sup>2</sup> with controlled humidity and temperature, an airtight environment

and optimal fire safety and intrusion protection.

Locarchives offers an appropriate solution to Corbis' requirements :

- 7000 meters of shelving capacity on a site entirely dedicated to the Sygma, Kipa and TempSport collections
- Proven and guaranteed archiving techniques implemented on all types of media
- Accessible living archives, close to the Paris region
- Responsiveness: turnarounds between place of preservation and agency (2 shuttles per day depending on requirements), a maximum delay of 24 hours for obtaining photos once the search has been made
- Experience: Locarchives houses the library for the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (National Foundation of Political Sciences).

### • Guaranteeing access to professionals

Access to the archives is going to be given to professionals for consultation, purchase and research : photographers, researchers, historians, professionals working in the photo industry, and iconographers, and finally the Corbis teams, who will be able to consult the archives freely.



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© Andanson James/Syagma/Corbis



© Patrick Chauvel/Syagma/Corbis

IN 1973, HUBERT HENROTTE AND OTHER PHOTOGRAPHERS FROM THE GAMMA AGENCY DECIDED TO SET UP THE SYGMA AGENCY.

SYGMA PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE INVOLVED IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF PHOTOJOURNALISM: THE KIPPUR WAR WAS THE FIRST MAJOR EVENT THAT THE AGENCY FOLLOWED. THE MAIN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS THAT TOOK PLACE AT THE END OF THE CENTURY WERE REPRODUCED BY SYGMA PHOTOGRAPHERS : THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION, THE NICARAGUAN CIVIL WAR, THE WAR IN LEBANON, THE GDANSK SHIPYARD STRIKES, THE WAR IN AFGHANISTAN, THE WAR IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA, THE TIENANMEN SQUARE EVENTS, THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL AND EVEN THE GULF WAR...

MOREOVER, IN THE 1980S, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF MONIQUE KOUZNETZOFF, SYGMA INAUGURATED A NEW WAY OF «SHOOTING FAMOUS PEOPLE» BY ORGANIZING «RENDEZ-VOUS», AND TRYING TO «FIND PHOTOGRAPHERS WHO WOULD EXCLUSIVELY DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO COVERING FAMOUS PEOPLE» (MONIQUE KOUZNETZOFF QUOTED BY HUBERT HENROTTE IN *LE MONDE DANS LES YEUX*, PARIS 2005).

THERE WAS A TURNING POINT IN THE 1990S, WITH THE DIGITAL TRANSMISSION OF PHOTOGRAPHS DURING THE FIRST GULF WAR. SYGMA CONTINUED ITS TECHNOLOGICAL INVOLVEMENT IN 1993 WHEN IT DECIDED TO DIGITALIZE ITS IMAGES. HUBERT HENROTTE AND MONIQUE KOUZNETZOFF LEFT SYGMA IN JUNE 1998. IN 1999, CORBIS BOUGHT THE SYGMA AGENCY.

The Sygma collection now represents a photographic heritage of inestimable value, grouping together the collections of three agencies :

- Sygma: photojournalism, news, magazines, celebrities and portraits
- Kipa: television and movie sets (agency set up in 1971 by Annemiek Veldman and bought by Sygma in 1991)
- Tempsport: sporting events (agency set up in 1985 by Gilbert lundt and Jean-Yves Ruszniewski and bought by Corbis in 2000) ;

It also has some older collections from the 1950s and 1960s: Apis, Universal Photo, Interpress, Spitzer, Reporter Associés, etc. Altogether, it has 50 million objects (negatives, contact sheets, slides, prints) — there are iconic photos, but also some unforgettable photos recounting the history of the last fifty years.



# The technical scope of the project



WITH SUCH VOLUMINOUS ARCHIVES, NOT ONLY IS THE SCALE OF THE MOVE ENORMOUS, BUT NUMEROUS TECHNICAL CONSTRAINTS AND CONSERVATION STANDARDS HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED TO ENSURE OPTIMAL PRESERVATION OF THE COLLECTIONS. CONTROLLING TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY IS ESSENTIAL:

THE TEMPERATURE MUST BE LOW AND CONSTANT AND THE RATE OF HUMIDITY MUST BE LOW.

TO ACHIEVE THIS, CORBIS HAS IMPLEMENTED THE CONSERVATION AND SAFETY STANDARDS RECOMMENDED BY HENRY WILHELM, AN EXPERT IN THE PHOTO ARCHIVING INDUSTRY :

- CONTROLLED TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY
- INERT GAS EXTINGUISHING SYSTEM
- SURROUNDING AIR TREATMENT
- MATERIAL SUITED TO THE PRESERVATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTS
- LOW-UV LIGHTING

THERE ARE ALSO THE CONSTRAINTS RELATED TO «ACTIVE ARCHIVES.» TO BRING THE COLLECTION TO LIFE, PEOPLE MUST BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE ARCHIVES AND THIS REPRESENTS ANOTHER TECHNICAL CHALLENGE — FINDING THE BEST SOLUTION TO RECONCILE THE NEED FOR A CONSTANT ENVIRONMENT (STABLE TEMPERATURE) AND ACCESS TO ARCHIVES (WHICH DISTURBS THE TEMPERATURE).

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT: A SOURCE OF INCOME FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS. FOR THE COLLECTION TO COME ALIVE, IT HAS TO BECOME KNOWN TO PROFESSIONALS BUT IT ALSO HAS TO BE PROFITABLE, ESPECIALLY FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS. DIGITIZING ARCHIVES THAT UP UNTIL NOW WERE UNEXPLOITED WILL GIVE A PHOTOGRAPHER'S COLLECTION BETTER PUBLIC EXPOSURE



Next stages



THE ARCHIVES ARE EXPECTED TO BE MOVED TO THE LOCARCHIVES SITE BY THE BEGINNING OF 2008.

**THROUGH THIS PROJECT, CORBIS AIMS TO «BRING THE COLLECTION TO LIFE,» AND SHOW IT OFF TO ITS BEST. A LIVING ARCHIVE, AVAILABLE IN THE SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG TERM.**

# About Corbis



**CORBIS IS A WORLD LEADER IN DIGITAL MEDIA. SET UP IN 1989 BY BILL GATES, THE COMPANY OFFERS AN ARRAY OF SERVICES: IMAGE LICENSING, RIGHTS MANAGEMENT, ARTIST REPRESENTATION AND MULTIMEDIA CONTENT MANAGEMENT.**

**CORBIS PROMOTES CREATION AND INNOVATION FOR CLIENTS IN ADVERTISING, THE CORPORATE SECTOR, THE MEDIA AND IN PUBLISHING.**

**CORBIS IS HEADQUARTERED IN SEATTLE IN THE UNITED STATES. CORBIS HAS MORE THAN TWENTY OFFICES THROUGHOUT ASIA, EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA.**

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