

MUSEUMS & ATTRACTIONS



Eye of the Century

Discover the moving and iconic images of Henri Cartier-Bresson at a new exhibit at the Ara Pacis. **Tiffany Parks** has the details.

Considered the father of photojournalism, **Henri Cartier-Bresson** was one of the most innovative and influential photographers of all time. He was dubbed the “eye of the century,” and his works continue to be instantly recognizable. Equally inspired by Surrealist art and the reality he saw during his own travels, Cartier-Bresson began taking photos in earnest in the 1930s, embarking on a career that would span the decades until his death in 2004. To commemorate the 10th anniversary of his passing, the Ara Pacis Museum is presenting an exhibition of 500 images that span the arc of his entire career.

The exhibit is divided into two sections, made up of groups of distinct yet complementary images. The first contains a selection of some of the most significant shots of Cartier-Bresson’s long career, many captured in Rome, and many never before displayed in public. The second area displays a collection

of Cartier-Bresson’s natural and unposed portraits, which illustrate his talent for instinctively releasing the shutter of his camera at the precise moment to capture the very essence of his subject. For 55 years, he snapped portraits of the biggest names of his time: Christian Dior, Alberto Giacometti,

Roberto Rossellini, Arthur Miller, Martin Luther King, Pablo Neruda, Truman Capote, and Simone de Beauvoir, as well ordinary people, chosen for an unusual look or an interesting face: a woman and her children in Mexico, a young couple, an old man, or an anonymous pedestrian.

The exhibit proves there was not one but many versions of Cartier-Bresson: the photographer, inspired by the Surrealist movement of the 1930s, the documenter of World War II, the journalist of the ‘50s and ‘60s, and finally, beginning in the ‘70s, the artist he became (p54).

