

RENÉ BURRI

René Burri's photography began with an interest in motion pictures. He studied in the field and was assistant cameraman for Walt Disney's Switzerland. Attracted by still photography, he became one of Hans Finsler's students at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zurich and it was through Hans Finsler he met Werner Bischof. René Burri's ability so impressed Bischof that the latter recommended him to MAGNUM, the famous group of photographers founded by Robert Capa and Henri Cartier-Bresson, of which he became an Associate Photographer in 1956, and was elected to full Magnum membership in 1959.

René Burri's reportage included a sensitive story on deaf and dumb children at the Institute of Musical and Rhythmic Education in Zurich, done in 1955. In 1956 he covered the Suez crisis. Magazine and industrial assignments in Italy, Spain, Greece and Turkey followed in 1957. In 1958 he returned to the Middle East, covering Nasser at the Union of Egypt and Syria, followed by six months in Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Peru and Brazil. Another trip to Latin America in 1960 for the inauguration of Brasilia resulted in a comprehensive story on Brazil itself. The same year also found him in Iran covering the birth of the heir to the Shah.

In 1961 he produced a notable series on the inception of the new regime in South Korea that displaced Syngman Rhee, and then went on to do a major story in Japan. In 1963 he went to Cuba for Look magazine, did a color essay for Paris-Match, and caught the beginning of the escalation of the war in Vietnam at the end of the year.

Most of 1964 was spent in the Far East, his first visit to China, preparing for a color movie that was shot during the summer of 1965.

Essays on the Argentine Gaucho, Japan at Work, An Island in the Gulf of Siam have appeared in the Swiss magazine DU. The July 1967 number of DU, devoted to Salvador da Bahia, is illustrated by René Burri's photographs. René Burri's interest in the French architect Le Corbusier over many years has resulted in an essay on the man and his work which has had wide distribution. Another important work, The Germans, has been published in France and Switzerland. Although René Burri's photographs have been shown in many group exhibitions, The Art Institute's is his first one-man show.

René Burri makes his home in Zurich, Switzerland.