

About a month ago Alimantas Kovys, a young priest who came here from Lithuania, visited me at the museum and invited me to the Lithuanian Youth Center where an exhibition of his photographs was shown. I went to see it and liked his work. He talked so much of you and what your work meant to him that I wanted the liberty to send, under separate cover, a brochure which was published at the time of his show.

With best regards and the hope that you are still favorable to showing your work here,  
Mr. Henri Cartier-Bresson,  
c/o MAGNUM Photos, Inc.,  
15 West 47th Street,  
New York City, 36,  
New York.

High Edwards, Curator of Photography,  
Museum of Modern Art,  
11 West 53rd Street,  
New York City, 19,  
New York.

After you have heard from so many others about the matter with which this letter is concerned, I hope you will forgive my writing it so late.

When I was in New York early in November, you were away in Mexico and it was during a conversation with Inge Morath regarding her exhibition that I mentioned a hope I have long indulged and enjoyed that someday we might show a selection of your portraits in our gallery of photography. She believed you might be interested and offered to mention it to you. Soon after this, Barbara Riboud was in Chicago (a show by Marc Riboud in October is another of my plans) and she told me she would also speak to you of this matter. Now - after a telephone conversation with Inge Bondi - I am told you have expressed an interest.

I hope the circuitous route by which news of this reaches you does not cause you to withdraw your decision. The dates for the exhibition would be January 9 through February 14, 1965 which - as time moves now - is not so far away as it seems. This is an excellent period for attendance and if we are fortunate enough to have your work then, it will be a memorable occasion. We would need about seventy-five prints to work with and we would assume any expenses of printing, announcements to be sent, etc. All these details may be arranged with you later or through Inge Bondi.

It would make me very happy to exhibit the portraits for it would be a pleasure to introduce Léautaud, Elsa Triolet, Genet, Mauriac and many others to this large public here, just as you have recorded their faces and instantaneously captured their characters. It would be dishonest for me to say I prefer one aspect of your work to another, but I believe these portraits of yours to be among the greatest made with the camera and certainly your conception of the single human being as a subject is unique and has no equal.

I expect to be in New York in March and will visit Magnum. Inge Morath's show opened this morning and there are crowds of people enjoying it this afternoon. There is a fine quality of felicity which runs through all the pictures and it is a long time since the gallery has had so much life and light in it.

About a month ago Algimantas Kezys, a young priest who came here from Lithuania, visited me at the museum and invited me to the Lithuanian Youth Center where an exhibition of his photographs was shown. I went to see it and liked his work. He talked so much of you and what your work had meant to him that I was taking the liberty to send, under separate cover, a brochure which was published at the time of his show.

With best regards and the hope that you are still favorable to showing your work here,

Mr. Henri Gertler-Bresson,  
c/o MAGNUM Photos, Inc.,  
15 West 47th Street,  
New York City, 36,  
New York.

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography;  
Assistant Director of Prints  
and Drawings.

After you have heard from so many others about the matter with which this letter is concerned, I hope you will forgive my writing it so late. When I was in New York early in November, you were away in Mexico and it was during a conversation with Inge Morath regarding her exhibition that I mentioned a hope I have long indulged and enjoyed that someday we might show a selection of your portraits in our gallery of photography. She believed you might be interested and offered to mention it to you. Some time later this Barbara Riboud was in Chicago (a show by Marc Riboud in October is another of my plans) and she told me she would also speak to you of this matter. Now - after a telephone conversation with Inge Bondi - I am told you have expressed an interest.

I hope the circuitous route by which news of this reaches you does not cause you to withdraw your decision. The dates for the exhibition would be January 9 through February 14, 1965 which - as time moves now - is not so far away as it seems. This is an excellent period for attendance and if we are fortunate enough to have your work then, it will be a memorable occasion. We would need about seventy-five prints to work with and we would assume any expenses of printing, announcements to be sent, etc. All these details may be arranged with you later or through Inge Bondi.

It would make me very happy to exhibit the portraits for it would be a pleasure to introduce Léonard, Eise Trollet, Genet, Meric and many others to this large public here, just as you have recorded their faces and instantaneously captured their characters. It would be dishonest for me to say I prefer one aspect of your work to another, but I believe these portraits of yours to be among the greatest made with the camera and certainly your conception of the single human being as a subject is unique and has no equal.

I expect to be in New York in March and will visit Magnum. Inge Morath's show opened this morning and there are crowds of people enjoying it this afternoon. There is a fine quality of felicity which runs through all the pictures and it is a long time since the gallery has had so much life and light in it.

February 25, 1964.

Mr. Henri Cartier-Bresson,  
c/o MAGNUM Photos, Inc.,  
15 West 47th Street,  
New York City, 36, New York.

Dear Mr. Cartier-Bresson:

I am happy to have received your letter with its news that you are agreeable to showing your work in our gallery. We will leave the dates (January 9 through February 14, 1965) as they are and when I come to New York again, I shall talk with Mrs. Wright and look at the photographs of which you have written. An exhibition of them would be of much interest and have success with the large public which often inquires about what you have done during the last few years.

Immediately after your letter came I telephoned Mrs. Wright and it will be a pleasure to work on this exhibition with her. I am sure we will be able to arrange everything with a minimum of trouble for you and I am grateful to you for the prospect of this show which will be a notable compliment to the gallery here.

Sincerely yours,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.