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# The Great LIFE Photographers



The Great **LIFE** Photographers



## Synopsis

The Great LIFE Photographers is the most comprehensive anthology of LIFE photography ever published, featuring the best work of every staff photographer who worked for the famous magazine, and that of a handful of others who shot for LIFE. It was always the photographers who made LIFE great, and this is the most vivid and exciting portrait of those men and women that has ever been produced. The book offers more than 100 portfolios including those of Alfred Eisenstaedt, Margaret Bourke-White, Carl Mydans, Gordon Parks, W. Eugene Smith, Robert Capa, Ralph Morse, Nina Leen, Harry Benson, Philippe Halsman, and Joe McNally, whose work for LIFE in the aftermath of September 11 was in the finest tradition of the magazine. Each portfolio includes a short biography, offering an intimate look at the people behind the lens. Here are the defining moments of the 20th century, including MacArthur wading ashore by Mydans, Capa's D-Day landing at Omaha Beach and, of course, Eisenstaedt's sailor kissing the nurse. Here are the first pictures taken from inside the womb and the first taken from outer space. Here are powerful scenes from Tiananmen Square and from the American South during the Civil Rights movement. LIFE helped make icons of Sophia Loren and Marilyn Monroe, the Beatles and Michael Jackson, and those indelible photographs are here too. This attractive new paperback edition is an affordable way to own some of the most memorable photographs ever made, stunningly reproduced in black and white and full color.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

On page 558 of this stunning photo book there is a studio shot taken in 1960 by Bill Sumits of

thirty-eight Life photographers, surely the only time in history that so many great photographers have been together in one place and it is amazing to think that the ninety-nine featured in the book were all on the staff of this one publication. The book is arranged alphabetically and each photographer gets between five and eight images plus their photo and short hundred or so word biography. Now it's possible to see who took so many images that defined a moment and became classic examples of photojournalism and also to see other examples of their great work. John Loengard's introduction does not say so but I assume all the photos did appear in Life and they cover the years from 1936 (when the title started) to 1997. The book is well designed with mostly one photo per page (well printed in 175 dpi) and a caption and nicely some photos get longer captions where a photographer reveals some background detail about their images. There are a lot of news type photos here, especially from the Second World War years but equally as many taken from the photo-essay style work that Life became famous for. Others show celebrities and ordinary folk going about their lives. These photos are so good that you have to stop and really take notice of what they are telling you. I think this wonderful book is a strong visual reminder of how great Life was. A fascinating book that came out some years ago:

What an amazing book! Ninety-nine photographers and 589 of their masterpieces, both black & white and color. The photographers are listed alphabetically. Each photographer's page starts with a photo of the photographer him/her self and a paragraph of biography. These have great tidbits of information. For example, Jack Birns moved to SE Asia in 1947 and became a specialist in that part of the world. Especially China, "where he captured Shanghai's poverty and social chaos, which derived from the long battle between the ruling Nationalist Party and the insurgent communists. Interestingly, Birns' Chinese images often clashed with the ardent anticommunist views of publisher Henry Luce. As a consequence, many of his pictures didn't receive a wide audience." Each photographer gets a spread of from 2 - 10 pages. The number of photos shown for each photographer ranges from 2 - 13. The photos are in all sizes, and there are many two-page spreads. Though I love reading the written word, it is so true that a picture can replace a thousand words. John Dominis' photo of a leopard faced down by a howling baboon is electrifying. Samuel Goldwyn taking his daily walk, with his chauffeur driving his Rolls Royce alongside, is hilarious. Marilyn Monroe in her "ballerina" dress, that photo will outlive you and me together. And then there's the horrors. You can read a description of a concentration camp survivor, but it's nothing as riveting as a photo. So many famous photos came out of Vietnam, you'd think we'd never go to war again. Many of the photos in this book are famous, and justly so. Everything from world news to

intimate glimpses to celebrities. I'm not always a fan of celebrity photos, but sometimes they tell a story, too.

It's not fashionable these days to speak of Henry Luce as great because his political views weren't left-wing. But the truth is Luce was a brilliant man who built a publishing empire based on delivering information in a concise way. His empire began with Time, then Fortune and next Life, a magazine that told its stories through pictures. (Sports Illustrated and the abominable People followed, the latter after Luce's death.) Life editors perfected the photo essay. To do this, they hired some of the finest photographers in the world. This work showcases the work of 99 of those photographers in 698 color and black-and-white photos. It is a glorious work. Life photographers were perfectionists. The technicians at the Life labs who printed their work were perfectionists. The editors who selected, cropped and laid out the work of the photographers and lab techs were perfectionists. The result was for nearly sixty years a collection of some of the finest photography created in the 20th Century. It is sad that public tastes changed, that television overwhelmed the desire to leaf through the pages of magazines like Life. The news in those days was largely captured in the still photograph. And here many of them are. The young Shah of Iran talking with Wendell Wilkie, the 1940 Republican Presidential candidate on a flight somewhere. An iconic photo of fashion-plate Jacqueline Kennedy and nattily-clad toddler son John, Jr. walking along the ocean in Palm Beach. American soldiers passing by a fallen comrade on a bridge across the Roer River. The dazzlingly beautiful 16 year old Elizabeth Taylor and incredibly intense 24 year old Marlon Brando two years before his first film role. The crowded Saturday night main street in small town Franklin, Indiana in 1940.

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