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Join our newsletter for technical tips, reviews, free e-books and exclusive deals! Please confirm your email address in an email we just sent to you. Photo: Bill Cunningham Copyright © 2019 by the Bill Cunningham FOUNDATION LLC. This collection of street photography by Bill Cunningham, edited by Tiina Loite, is the first volume taken from his extensive personal archive. It contains images that originally appeared in the New York Times, where his popular column On the Street ran starting in 1965, as well as many, many others that he published previously, in magazines like Vogue and City Country, and then filed away for future references. Where a person has captivated him for a long period of time - such as Anna Wintour, whom he first noticed in the early 1970s when she was an unknown junior editor in London - it can be assumed that some images have never been seen until now. Even those that appeared in the Times are being seen anew here, beyond the spatial boundaries of the paper. As we move from decade to decade, starting in the 1970s - around the time when Bill's photos began to appear in the Ages - through his death in 2016, you will see an evolution of style, trends, and daily, both in New York and in Paris, the two favorite sites in the world. The book also highlights several hobbies Bill has carried with him always, including his muses, urban dogs, and of course the people in hats - a nod to his early career as a miller, Anna Wintour, 1973. Photo: Bill Cunningham Copyright © 2019 by the Bill Cunningham FOUNDATION LLC. Bill was prolific indeed. In addition to his streetwork, most weeks he managed to pull off 15 to 20 parties, which he showed in his Evening Hours column on the page in front of On the Street. The result was the most recent, kaleidoscopic report on changes in fashion, observed by a man who missed almost nothing. He chronicles the first wave of women ditch heels and commute to work in sneakers, the return of a zoo suit, the phenomenon of low-rise jeans, fashion for camouflage, and a hundred different ways New Yorkers stylishly brave the storm. He believed that a real portrait of fashion - and, in the opinion of time - depended on how real people dressed, whether it was children in deconstructed hoodies or big spenders at a charity event. The runway wasn't enough, so he took to the streets every day with his camera. Such dedication, along with the spartan way Bill lived - in one of the last bohemian apartments above Carnegie Hall, surrounded by battered cupboards, sleeping on a crib supported only by milk boxes - earned him immense admiration and respect. At the same time, this man who noticed everything himself was dressed intentionally so as not to be seen, in hacks and a series of ill-fitting blue smocks he took for a few euros during his trips to Paris for He was utterly charming, but full of demurrals. He appeared secretive about about Background. (For years, the assumption around the Times was that he came from a wealthy Boston family, in part because he seemed to know every blue blood from The Mayflower. Fashion is easy this summer. The more air there is between clothes and the body, the greater the appearance, Bill wrote in the 1970s. Harem and gaucho pants are visible everywhere. Photo: Bill Cunningham Copyright © 2019 by the Bill Cunningham FOUNDATION LLC. On the rare occasions when he talked about his photography - or, at any rate, was asked - he made it sound amateurish, calling it the bottom of the trunk and insisting that he wasn't a real photographer at all, but rather a recorder. Regardless of whether Bill obeyed the highest law and protected his creative methods to keep his mind free, all these qualities - insecurity, modest clothing - have merged into his mythology. To some extent, this is what we got in the interviews he gave at the end of his life, in the Times and The New Yorker. In Bill Cunningham's well-received 2010 documentary New York, and the 2018 documentary The Times of Bill Cunningham, taken from an extended interview he gave to a reporter in the mid-1990s. But with the discovery of his archive, we got a different look at this wonderful man. It is not that previous portraits were inaccurate; they just weren't complete. Among his works were memoirs about his childhood in the Boston suburbs and his first career as a miller in New York; he designed hats between 1948, when he moved to the city, and 1962. Published in 2018 as Fashion Climbing, the book shows that Bill was anything but insecure. He was nervous and ambitious. He was a party animal! He posed as a waiter - complete with a napkin on his arm - to sneak into the fashion show. He tracked down and befriended two women who owned Chez Ninon, a Park Avenue store famed for its quiet taste and registry of society customers, including Jacqueline Kennedy. He coldly named Hubert de Givenchy, one of the biggest names at the time, and was actually granted a meeting. And if none of this blows your head off, he shared his first apartment at Carnegie Hall, the duplex, with Norman Mailer and his third wife, Lady Jean Campbell. Elizabeth Taylor and Halston at the designer exhibition in 1978. Halston was one of the best fashion designers of the 1970s and had a great celebrity clientele. Like Bill, he also began his career as a miller, designing the pill hat he wore to her husband's presidential inauguration in 1961. Photo: Bill Cunningham Copyright © 2019 by the Bill Cunningham FOUNDATION LLC. So much for the oblate of Seventh Avenue. As a young man, Bill was so confident in the life he wanted - living in the innermost part of the fashion world - that he didn't even let his conservative parents shame by beating him when he tried on his dresses to get to it. (And despite how Left things in the book, Bill, a devout Catholic, maintained close ties with his parents for the rest of his life. In the late 1970s, according to his niece, Trish Simonson, he spent two weeks with them each summer at their cottage in Duxbury, Massachusetts.) The writer Louis Menand once said of the challenges of writing history: You are almost completely cut off, by a wall of printing, from the life you intended to represent. These words can be said about Bill and his work. It was blocked behind a foggy wall of untraceable information. Paradoxically, his archive helps to let the light in. I visited the archive with Tiina. I was curious to see the files for myself. What immediately stands out is how far in the future Bill could see. In the memoir, he boasted of having extra-long antennae to predict the fashion mood and that this feeling pushed his creativity like a milliner - sometimes over the edge. For his latest collection, he made space helmets: bare trim, just clean shape, molded like rocket cones and racing headgear. It was two years before Andre Kurreges' futuristic simplicity dominated the fashion world. Fashion in the center of the city. Photo: Bill Cunningham Copyright © 2019 by the Bill Cunningham FOUNDATION LLC. The fact is, Bill acted instinctively, and as soon as he moved to journalism, in 1963, and then photography, in 1967, that instinct served him in a similar way. The fact that he chose Anna Wintour is one of the signs. How did he know, besides the fact that she looked charming in clothes and was the daughter of a famous journalist, that she was someone special to watch? He just did it. He also continued to feed her file, so over time, he conducted a comprehensive visual account of one of the most fascinating people in fashion. But there's other evidence in his files and elsewhere. Bill excelled in journalism from the beginning. When he felt that the convention on wearing hats was dying, he closed the store and joined Women's Wear Daily, a commercial publication, and added freelance concerts with several regional newspapers. By 1966, he was a fashion reporter for the Chicago Tribune, based in New York. While preparing this introduction, I decided to read his reporting on the Tribune. It was amazing. Between 1965 and 1969 he covered virtually all important events and personalities in what was a very happening era. He wrote about underground films, Electric Circus, Max's Kansas City, Chelsea Hotel (the most delightful array of creative people in all of New York), Andy Warhol, Halston, Joan Tiger Morse, Diana Rierland, Betsy Johnson and Happenings. (After reading his live if somewhat subjective accounts, I wonder if he didn't pen his secret memoir around the same time.) Young New Yorkers are lining up at a newsagent in Greenwich Village in the Village Voice so they can be the first to read the apartment ads. Photo: Bill Copyright © 2019 by the Bill Cunningham Cunningham Foundation The idea of shooting him was almost luck, like so much else, what happened to Bill. In 1965, while in London, he met photographer David Montgomery through their mutual friends, illustrator Antonio Lopez and his partner Juan Ramos, who also lived above Carnegie Hall. When Montgomery came to visit Lopez the following year, he noticed that Bill, who at the time preferred fisherman to knit sweaters, had furiously scribbled notes on the playground. I said to him, Why do this? Montgomery, now in his 80s, recalled. Here's the camera. Use it. The camera was the Olympus Pen-D half-frame. About the size of a pack of cigarettes, it can shoot 72 frames. He took it very well, Montgomery said, adding: The thing about Bill was when you look at the pictures, they're right in the middle of the matter. Because of Bill's background in fashion, his instincts, and frankly, his ego, his photographs took power equal to his writing. He didn't publish his photos, at least not in the Tribune, until 1967, and the themes were mostly fashion shows and VIPs at events. In the same year he photographed a charity show featuring the Givenchy collection. His thrill of being allowed to shoot backstage - a big deal back then - was right on the surface, as he noted in his story: Givenchy, who usually runs away from the camera, allowed... Photographer free reins. Designer Diane von Furstenberg at a fashion show, 1973. Photo: Bill Cunningham Copyright © 2019 by the Bill Cunningham FOUNDATION LLC. Bill began acting for the Times in the mid-70s, although he continued to freelance for magazines, and in 1982 he helped run Details. Freedom was important to him, and he didn't join the Times until 1994. As he once said: Money is the cheapest thing. Freedom and freedom are the most precious. In the tradition of early 20th century street photographers, notably the Juak Henri Larig and the Siberger brothers in Paris, who photographed fashionable women at raccourses or parks, Bill is positioned in busy shopping corners such as Fifth Avenue and 57th Street, and outside of posh restaurants. Le Cirque was the favorite. It was there that he took pictures of socialites such as Blaine Trump and Pat Buckley, and on another occasion Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. His files of the 70s and 80s are absolutely saturated with the glamour of that era. It helped that he clearly knew where the action was - whether it was the charm of Yves Saint Laurent and his gang or scenes in Studio 54. He also annotated his files - again, with foresight - by incorporating press clippings from events. When couturier Charles James died, in 1978, Bill returned to the image he had taken two weeks earlier in Studio 54, and recorded that it was the last photograph he had taken of the great man. This type of image seemed to serve as a bridge to street fashion he shot more and more in the late 70s when the people he photographed were unknown - and unaware of the spindly man rushing through the crowd with his camera. Perhaps that's why his early black-and-white images - before the Times took on color - have an unusual degree of spontaneity. The 1970s. Photo: Bill Cunningham Copyright © 2019 by the Bill Cunningham FOUNDATION LLC. But the unifying element in all of Bill's works, from his innovative hats to his search news, the photographs in this wonderful book, is that ideas flow forward. As much as Bill relishing the history of fashion and its eccentric cast of legends, he never let nostalgia creep into his paintings. For the rest of his life, he remained energetic, joyful, one step away from time. A child, he told a middle-aged man, is fashion today. This book is a lifetime of putting that belief on the pavement. Excerpts from Clarkson Potter's permission from Bill Cunningham's book: On the Street from The New York Times Company. Image © copyright The New York Times, 2019, copyright © 2019 by the Bill Cunningham LLC Foundation. Published by Clarkson Potter, an imprint of Random House, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights are reserved. Reserved.

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