

Project #2: The Decisive Moment

“Photographers deal in things which are continually vanishing and when they have vanished there is no contrivance on earth which can make them come back again.”

- Henri Cartier-Bresson

Conceptual Requirements:

For this assignment, shoot a series of pictures using Henri Cartier-Bresson’s philosophy of the Decisive Moment. A great way to approach this project is to have your camera with you and ready to shoot at all times. Your subjects can and should vary widely, so open yourself up to your intuition, your reflexes, and the possibility that a great picture can happen anywhere and at any time!

Technical Requirements:

Since this project largely depends on your ability to react quickly, you should try to use your camera hand-held and with relatively fast shutter speeds. Since there may be little time to focus and adjust your exposure settings & focus, you can use the “range-focusing” technique shown in class.

As a reminder, It works by taking an reading of the lighting condition and selecting an aperture to go with your preselected shutter speed (which should usually be faster than 1/60th, but preferably 1/125th or faster). Then continue using that aperture, only changing it if the lighting condition changes.

If you use this method, you should then be able to spot focus, the way you usually do by looking through the lens and focusing on a point, OR range focusing by using the focus scale numbers engraved on your prime (fixed focal length) lens.

For your first time out, I suggest shooting in bright daylight perhaps on a busy street with lots of pedestrians or action. The more light you have the more options you’ll have. Study the following examples to see how range focusing can affect depth of field when using a prime lens.



f4, shallow D.O.F

focus range: 30'-infinity

f22, long D.O.F

focus range: 6'-infinity

f8, medium D.O.F

focus range: 8'-15'

f8, medium D.O.F

focus range: 15'-infinity

Deliverables:

- See the syllabus for pacing and due dates:
- Robert Adams Reading and discussion
- Shoot 8 rolls (minimum) for this project
- Contact sheets for each roll of film shot
- 5 Great Darkroom Prints.