

Brassaï: Paris Nocturne

Sylvie Aubenas, Quenten Bajac

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Firmly rooted in its time and place, timeless in its appeal: Brassai's night photography of Paris assures his place among the great photographers of the twentieth century

Brassai (1899–1984) was the first and is still the most famous photographer to chronicle Paris after dark. Born in Hungary, he came to the French capital in 1924, working first as a journalist and then embracing photography, but it was the Paris of the 1930s that forms the bedrock of his body of work.

Walking the city's streets at night, Brassai captured a previously unseen world on camera. He shows us every face and every facet, from tough guys and showgirls to prostitutes and pleasure-seekers, from the bustling cafés and dance halls to the stillness of deserted streets and mist-shrouded monuments. Through his eyes, Paris becomes a world of shadows, in which light, the prerequisite for any photograph, is reduced to dimly lit windows, streetlamps in the fog, or reflections on a rain-soaked pavement.

This book brings together some of the best-known images from Brassai's classic Paris After Dark and The Secret Paris of the 30's, showcasing them alongside previously unpublished photos and archive material. It places his work in its historical and artistic context, analyzing the unique nature of his photographic vision: part reportage, part social document, part poetic exploration. 296 illustrations, 214 in duotone



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