

**Selected Vintage Photographs
from the Estate of Brian Brake**

ART+OBJECT

Auction: 6.30pm, 9 December 2010

Opening preview and book launch

Wednesday 1st December, 6 – 8pm

Viewing

Thursday 2 December	9am – 5pm
Friday 3 December	9am – 5pm
Saturday 4 December	11am – 4pm
Sunday 5 December	11am – 4pm
Monday 6 December	9am – 5pm
Tuesday 7 December	9am – 5pm
Wednesday 8 December	9am – 5pm
Thursday 9 December	9am – 2pm



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Selected Vintage Photographs

from the

Estate of Brian Brake

9 December 2010

Please note that each of the following photographs are from the estate of Brian Brake and that they were all printed during the course of the artist's life. Each and every one of these prints has been carefully stored in a climate controlled storeroom and they have never been exposed to prolonged light. The prints which feature Dowse Art Gallery labels are the original prints produced by the artist specifically for exhibiting in the 1976 touring show. Certificates of authenticity will be made available for any lot which does not bear the artist's signature or stamp, attesting to both its authenticity and its provenance. These photographs have been reproduced in a very large number of magazines and books from around the world and are too numerous to be cited in the catalogue descriptions, however a library of publications will be available for perusal at the exhibition.



Brian Brake with some of the party involved in filming 'Snows of Aorangi' (1955), Tasman Glacier.
Collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Ref. CT.056015).

Brian Brake (1927–1988)

Ben Plumbly

Brian Brake was born in Wellington in 1927 and raised in Arthur's Pass. He was drawn to the camera early on and from the age of 18 Brake trained with Spencer Digby Studios in Wellington where he learnt the art of portraiture, a vein of photography he quickly fell out of love with: "I was frustrated with fashions of time, such as retouching – we'd take out lines, make people look slimmer. It was too artificial for me." In 1947 Brake joined the National Film Unit, soon after directing *Snows of Aorangi* which was nominated for an Oscar. Within a couple of years he moved overseas not returning to New Zealand to live until 1976, frustrated and stultified by the perceived conservatism of 1940s New Zealand.

In 1955 Brake was invited by Henri Cartier-Bresson to join Magnum which had been founded some eight years previous by Cartier-Bresson and Robert Capa among others. Essentially a photographic co-operative, its role was explained best by Cartier-Bresson: "Magnum is a community of thought, a shared human quality, a curiosity about what is going on in the world, a respect for what is going on and a desire to transcribe it visually."

The 1950s and 1960s were the golden era of photojournalism and it is unsurprising that this period too was when Brake was at the absolute peak of his powers, producing the vast majority of his classic images and photo essays. Brake was the 'photographer as hunter', his trusty Leica clutched close to his chest always ready and always steady. He returned to New Zealand in 1963 to shoot the images for the Maurice Shadbolt collaborative book, *New Zealand: Gift of the Sea* which remains today the most popular illustrated book about New Zealand ever printed. Here his Leica presciently freezes a country in transition, brimming with energy, movement and excitement, a country where time waits for no one, livestock included.

There are several defining indexes of Brian Brake's photography: his manipulation and utilization of light and colour, the sharpness and formal acuity of his images and the profound respect with which he treats his subjects are all recurring currents, yet perhaps the most defining trait of Brian Brake's photography is, for me, its unwavering humanism. Whether a consequence of his early training as a portrait photographer or the result of his days with Magnum in the heyday of photojournalism and the world magazine, to spend time with a Brian Brake image is to be confronted

with humanity in all its glory. Be it in an inherently paranoid and xenophobic China where as a westerner he was granted unprecedented access, on the banks of the mighty Ganges in the height of the Monsoon season, or in the rarified company of our most precious taonga, Brian Brake's photographs gain their visual potency and longevity from being fundamentally about us and how we live our lives.

This book constitutes ART+OBJECT's first foray into the publishing world and is the first time an auction house in this country has attempted to create a substantial publication aimed at having shelf life beyond the impending auction which justifies its existence and which brought it into being. We do so acutely aware that simultaneous to the publication of this book and the upcoming viewing and auction, a major retrospective exhibition of Brian Brake's work curated by Athol McCredie at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa is taking place accompanied by a monograph on Brian Brake. At the time of writing we have not had the chance to see either the monograph nor the exhibition yet I feel it important to note that it is not our aim to attempt to compete with either. Rather, we hope that through this publication we can add to the somewhat overdue but now richly renewed dialogue around one of this country's most important and internationally recognized artists.

Ben Plumbly is Director of Art at ART+OBJECT.



Brian Brake, *Mahatma Gandhi* Movie – India 1962.

Brian Brake: Foreign Agent

Gavin Hipkins

Twenty years ago I met an aspiring *National Geographic* photographer on one of Java's west coast beaches. He cradled his camera gear with such protection that, not for a moment, would he leave his kit alone. This meant, of course, that he was unable to venture into the tranquil sea that we stared at through oppressive tropical heat. His upper body, red where his t-shirt did not cover him, betrayed the six weeks he had just spent in a volcanic crater, waiting to get a 'clean' shot of a Sumatran Tiger. He had heard the tiger on numerous occasions as it circled him and his Indonesian guide, but ultimately the photographer had failed. The budding cameraman had tried too hard, and his distrust of others (we had offered to look after his gear as he looked longingly at the cool waters), had affected his chances and swayed havoc with his luck.

By contrast, a successful *National Geographic* agent, Brian Brake trusted people and in return he garnered trust. Brake's comfort as tourist on assignment was coupled with a technological lightness of movement with his handheld Leica camera. The advent of flexible gelatin film earlier in the twentieth-century, paired with the 35mm format camera, and interchangeable lenses, is evident in *National Geographic* photography from the mid-twentieth century on. A persuasive pictorial aesthetic captured in Kodachrome and other colour reversal film stock, which was significantly more appetizing for a popular market than the staid black and white ethnological portraits that defined the magazine's earlier, more scientific, origins.

In this light, Brake's work belongs to that now distant period called analogue photography. Pictures formed by exposure onto light-sensitive and infinitely irregular silver halides: a material surface area radically more organic than a discreet number of pixels comprising picture files today. His travel methods conjure up a time when the bag of film itself would outweigh camera gear; when exposed rolls of film would make the journey — comprising a leap of faith — into foreign postal services, through brute x-ray machines, and were handled by zealous customs officers, before finally getting to 'the lab'. The film developing processing itself, without extreme care, could accidentally destroy or damage the little images from so many thousands of miles before. Viewed from today's place of digital immediacy, Brake's travel photographs reflect arduous yet exquisite mechanical processes, as well as

representing the process of travel itself, to be in *that* place at *that* time.

It is appropriate that New Zealand's most celebrated photojournalist was a member of the world's most prestigious photo-agency for more than a decade, at a time when the magazine era was at its heyday from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s. Brake's time at Magnum Photos Inc. corresponded with the publication of high profile weekly and bi-weekly magazines including *LIFE*, *Look* and *Picture Post*, a period before the established dominance of television. Magnum was formed after the epic destruction that was the Second World War, and was founded by four European photographers including photo-evangelist Henri Cartier-Bresson.

It is also appropriate that Cartier-Bresson himself invited Brake to join the agency in 1954. Given his surrealist sensibilities and lifelong investigation of the photographic medium as poetic vehicle, Cartier-Bresson identified in Brake a kindred spirit of willing mobility and picture making fluidity. Magnum was interested in photographers who would look to expand on their curious hybrid of artistic concerns and social realist currency: artful news. The result being a photojournalism which has been underwritten by a code of consideration for the ability to make formally sophisticated images, and at the same time, attempt to tell stories in expanded series called the photo essay. Magazines working with the photo-agency needed to buy into Magnum's idiosyncratic photographic ethic, which dictated certain publishing conditions: no cropping of the picture; the insistence of a guiding caption which tried to get closer to an elusive photographic meaning; images were to be used within the context of the time of taking; that all photographs be authored; and lastly, that the *photographer* would retain the copyright of their images.

Compassion was also a key goal aspired to by these photographers, and here, Brake's magazine, book, and exhibition contributions abound with his prolific close-up portraits and mid-distant groupings of people: an approach that recalls his earlier years as an apprentice to the Wellington-based portrait photographer Spencer Digby. Defined by trust, a portrait sitting is the meeting of two parties and an agreement into a presentation for the lens: a session akin to empathetic pact. Brake's lifelong extended portrait series need to be read against this backdrop: an

unfolding representation of other in conditions of dignified presentation. I'm not suggesting that Brake would have consent from the thousands upon thousands of individuals contained within his neatly composed frames. Rather, I mean to outline that New Zealand's most celebrated photographer approached his subjects as though they were in knowing agreement of his presence with a camera.

Today, Brake's vintage prints bespeak to both their original time and accompanying place of publication. Whether the images were first reproduced in *LIFE* or *Paris Match* magazines, or book publications describing a key moment in a nation's development such as *New Zealand: Gift of the Sea* (1963) or *The Sculpture of Thailand* (1972). A secondary current moment is activated when the prints are re-established and re-contextualised for display in auction form: the purpose being to find a home in museum or private collection. Such that, the artistic aspirations of the photojournalist as global flaneur whose works were initially published in popular magazine and widely-distributed coffee-table pictorial publications, do eventually (half a century later) take on an after life as (officially certified) art.

Gavin Hipkins is one of New Zealand's leading contemporary photo-media artists and has represented New Zealand in the 25th Sao Paulo Bienal (2002) and the 11th Biennale of Sydney (1998). He has also written extensively on photography and contemporary art in publications including *Art and Text*, *Art New Zealand* and *Handboek: Ans Westra Photographs*.

Australasia: 'Pricked'

Ben Plumbly

It is *somewhere* in the nature of the photographic image that there is capacity to represent a moment in time in a way that no other mode of artistic expression can. This unique ability of photography to capture and hold our attention is a quality which Roland Barthes in his must-read photographic treatise *Camera Lucida*, describes as its 'punctum'. *Camera Lucida* is a concise and wonderfully readable account of the effects of the photographic image on the spectator which stemmed from the death of the author's mother and Barthes attempting to understand and articulate the significance for him of a photograph of her as a young girl. Barthes' punctum is like an arrow thrown from the photograph which pricks us, capturing our attention and lingering in our memory bank. It could be a detail, an object, a shadow, an atmosphere or an expression.

Brian Brake's photographs are loaded with that indefinable but unforgettable 'pricking quality', or punctum, which Barthes speaks of. There it is etched, like the land upon which they tend their livestock, deep into those iconic faces of the farmers in *Dairy Farmers – New Zealand*, in the carefully tended grounds of *Ming Temple, Western Hill – Beijing, China 1957*, a place where we've never travelled to but somehow all been; and most famously, there it dances alongside the hopes of an entire nation on the beautiful face of Aparna Sen, in *Indian Girl in Early Monsoon Rain*.

There is another defining inflection to Brian Brake photograph's though and it features throughout this wonderful and lesser-known group of images taken throughout Australasia, a deep knowledge and engagement with the developments and trends of twentieth century photographic history and practice. Having returned from a considerable period working alongside many of the giants of twentieth century photography, Brake returned to his own backyard with a sharply honed formal acuity and abiding knowledge of Modernist photographic practice.

Initially a reaction to the Impressionist movement in painting, characteristics of Pictorialism include the use of soft-focus and blurring, heavy manipulation in the darkroom, special filters (George Chance was a master of this in New Zealand); in short, an emphasis on aesthetics and those qualities which are unique to the camera. The conventions of Pictorialism are in abundance in the two images of Milford Sound and in the picturesque *North Island Coastal Scene*, yet perhaps the experienced hand and mind of Brake play

out most artfully in the resplendent *Lake Mapourika – New Zealand, 1951*, where the emphasis is overwhelmingly on the aesthetic quality of the print transcending its subject, however beautiful this scene might have been.

Brake also utilizes the Modernist technique of a severely elevated vantage point in *Bondi Beach* and *Surfboat, Australia* serving to create distinct geometric patterns within the picture as well as setting up a more disjunctive spatial relationship between camera and subject. The elevation and formal geometry of *Bondi Beach* appears prototypical and as a portent to so much contemporary photography, especially the New Objectivity exemplified by the monumentalized photographic prints of German art-historical and market phenomenon, Andreas Gursky.

Among the most impressive of all the photographs in the collection is Brake's wonderful image of the Sydney Opera House, opened in 1973. Through an emphasis on the unique lines, angles and forms of the wonderful structure's sail-like roof, Brake creates an image which through its severe cropping – done, as always, in the camera and not the studio – calls greater attention to one of the most impressive architectural structures of the second half of the Twentieth Century.

Brian Brake's vocation as a photo-journalist has seemed to obscure his work as a masterful fine art image-maker. Close inspection of his carefully composed photographs, outside of the context of the magazine and book, bespeak a photographer closely attuned to the themes and developments of twentieth century photography, whose carefully composed prints whether in black and white or in colour are among the most 'pricking' and artful produced in this country.



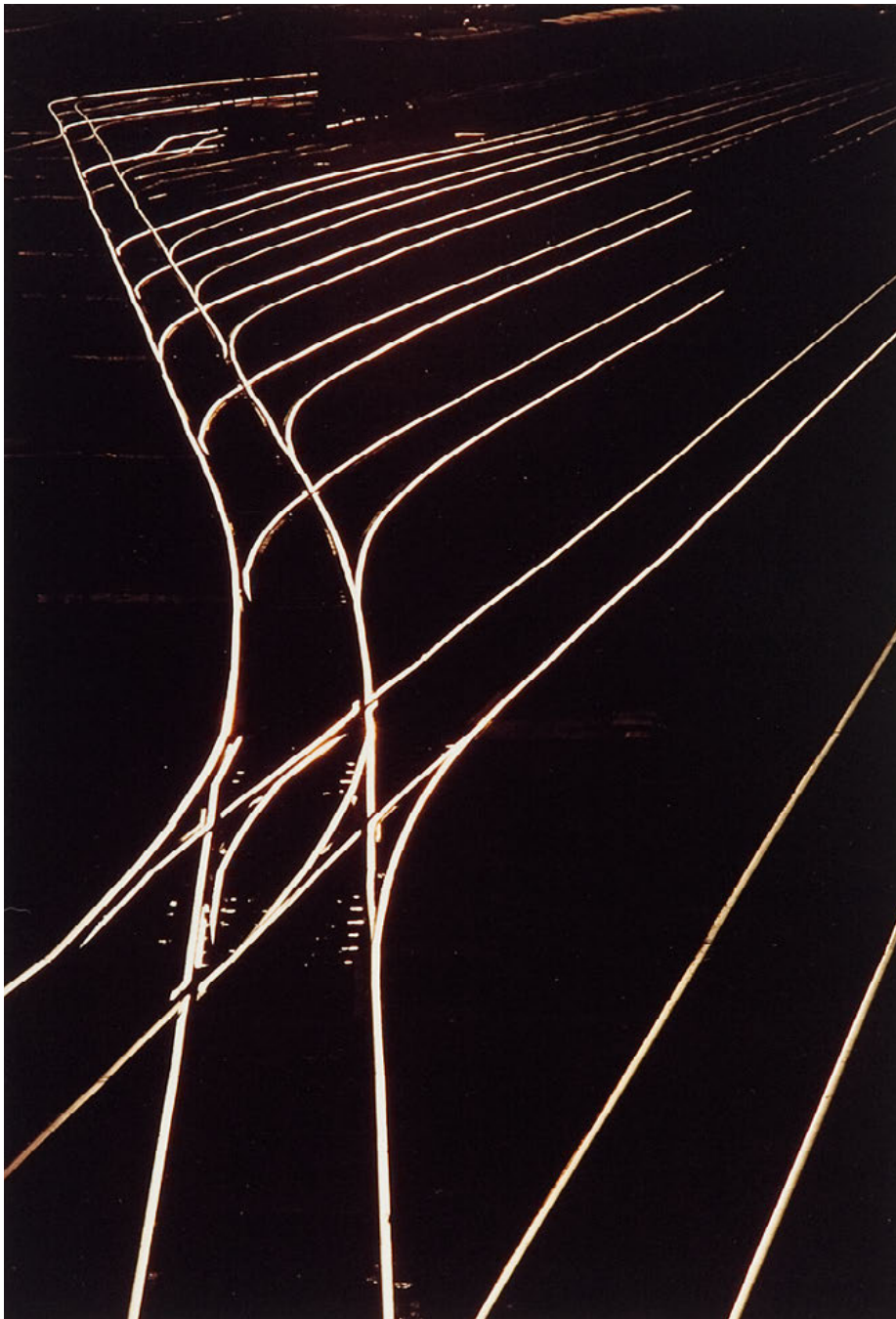
1.
Dairy Farmers – New Zealand, 1960.
black and white photograph printed from Kodak transparency on Ektacolour paper
original *Brian Brake*: Dowse Art Gallery exhibition label affixed verso
350 x 455mm
\$7000 – \$12 000



2.
Milford Sound, Fiordland
chromogenic colour print
signed
406 x 508mm
\$3000 – \$5000



3.
Milford Sound, New Zealand, 1960.
chromogenic colour print
signed
406 x 508mm
\$3000 – \$5000



4.
Railway Tracks
chromogenic colour print
signed
508 x 406mm
\$2500 – \$4000

5.
The Sydney Opera House
chromogenic colour print
impressed signature stamp
345 x 231mm
\$4000 – \$6000





6.
Uluru – Ayers Rock
cibachrome print
impressed signature stamp
512 x 610mm
\$4000 – \$6000



7.
Bondi Beach
chromogenic colour print
signed
231 x 345mm
\$3000 – \$5000



8.
The Farmer's Son
chromogenic colour print
signed
255 x 307mm
\$3000 – \$5000



9.
Sheep Country, Otago
chromogenic colour print
242 x 353mm
\$2500 – \$4000



10.
Burning Trees, Rotorua
chromogenic colour print
signed
405 x 502mm
\$3000 – \$5000



11.
Barley Fields, Southland
chromogenic colour print
signed
405 x 502mm
\$2500 – \$3500



12.
North Island Coastal Scene
chromogenic colour print
signed
406 x 507mm
\$2500 – \$4000



13.

Lake Mapourika – New Zealand, 1951.

black and white photograph printed from Kodak transparency on Ektacolour paper

original *Brian Brake: Dowse Art Gallery* exhibition label affixed verso

350 x 455mm

\$4000 – \$6000



14.
Surfboat, Australia
chromogenic colour print
signed
345 x 231mm
\$3000 – \$5000

‘Made’ Men: Brian Brake and Pablo Picasso

Hamish Coney

This evocative suite of images of Pablo Picasso ‘made’ Brian Brake as a photographer on the world stage. Having landed in London in 1953 to make his way in the world, Brake like so many New Zealanders before and after was revelling in the myriad opportunities afforded in the larger European scene, in his case as a freshly minted member of Magnum Photos.

In today’s hothouse mediaspace the singular position of the paparazzi in the popculture foodchain is well documented. Attracting fear, loathing and fascination in equal measure, ‘celeb hunting paps’ like so many modern phenomena are the subject of reality TV shows and twitterverse chatter.

But in the postwar 1950s the allure of the Vespa powered paparazzi chasing starlets on the Via Veneto in Rome was altogether more novel, even glamorous. Italian director Federico Fellini captured this nascent celebrity culture in the 1960 film *La Dolce Vita*, a chronicle of the exploits of a character modelled on the legendary Italian paparazzo Tazio Secchionoli and his pursuit of the Cinecittà superstars of the day.

Picasso was undoubtedly the greatest art star of the 20th century – a megawatt celebrity of the *Paris Match* years. His pulling power was enormous. As Brake describes it the crowd we see in these images had not gathered for the bullfight but to ogle Picasso.

Brake just happened to be holidaying in the South of France when he got wind of news that Picasso and the famous French poet Jean Cocteau were to attend a bullfight in the sleepy Cote D’Azur town of Vallauris.

Brake was not alone, and he recounted in the catalogue to the 1989 Auckland City Art Gallery exhibition of these works, that a veritable hive of photographers had descended on Vallauris, all looking to bag a shot of Picasso and his entourage, ‘I saw a crowd of photographers in a restaurant whilst Picasso and Cocteau were having lunch. I joined the photographers, got a few photographs, and decided on the spur of the moment to follow them to the bullfight.’

He then recalls a moment that will be familiar to all photographers of the analogue era, he ran out of film. In the digital age those vital attributes of patience and judgment have been rendered sadly obsolete. Photographers today can shoot hundreds of images continuously and later edit these down to the handful required.

In 1955 35mm film was a precious resource to be used sparingly. The spectre of running out of film seconds before the big moment was an ever present fear as Brake recalls: ‘I remember climbing a tree to get the best vantage point. But I ran out of film. So I went to the *Paris Match* photographer and asked him if I could borrow a roll. I told him I was from Magnum. He looked at me and stared me in the eye and said, “Never”. This was certainly an education for me. I’d come from New Zealand with no experience of photojournalism whatsoever; certainly no knowledge of the intense rivalry for a story. I went out into the village, bought another roll of film and returned to carry on with the photographs from the same tree. Then came the moment I’d been waiting for: the climax of the fight. Picasso’s son Claude got so excited he stuck his finger in his father’s mouth. It was the last shot on my last roll of film.’ This was the photograph that made the pages of the magazines around the world including *LIFE*, *Stern*, *The Times* and even *Paris Match*.

The signature image captures the *coup de grace*, the moment of highest drama, but the twenty images that comprise the balance of the suite chronicle a piquant moment in the life of the great Spanish artist.

It is worth lingering for a while on some of the more intimate images of Picasso and his entourage at lunch and enjoying moments of familial conviviality. One uses the term intimacy advisedly as almost every image includes a crowd, sometimes staring, at others seeking autographs or just hanging around in that excited self-conscious way that crowds do in the presence of a superstar and a gaggle of photographers.

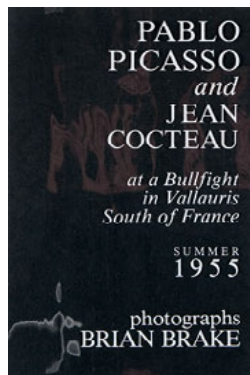
Whilst Picasso is undoubtedly the star of this summer afternoon in 1955, the supporting cast is also revealing of Picasso’s life and loves. Jean Cocteau occupies an exalted position in French literature and was a bona fide star in his own right. *The Bullfight – Jacqueline, Picasso with Cigarette, Cocteau* shows Picasso, Cocteau and Jacqueline Roque transfixed by the drama of the bullfight. Roque was Picasso’s second wife and the subject of over four hundred portraits and nudes over the last twenty years of the artist’s life. Also present are Picasso’s daughter Maia then aged twenty and his eight year old son Claude. *At the Café – Picasso and Claude* delightfully captures the ennui of a restless young boy compelled to sit through a family lunch when he could be doing a million other things.



At the Café – Picasso and Maïa

This suite of works provides both an insight into the 'court' of Picasso and a prototype for the idea of the artist as celebrity whose every move is deemed newsworthy. The act of puffing on a cigarette, taking lunch, hamming it up with his son or just staring into space is posited as evidence of his unique status as the anointed artist of the age, a living cultural monument. It is a role perfected by Andy Warhol in the 1970s and turned into a global branding exercise in the 2000s by artists such as Jeff Koons, Tracey Emin and Takashi Murakami.

The photographer occupies the unique position of observer of this rarified celebrity status and myth perpetuator – these images themselves have become iconic in the Picasso pantheon.



15.

The Bullfight

Pablo Picasso and Jean Cocteau at a Bullfight in Vallauris, South of France, Summer 1955

At the Café – Picasso and Maia

At the Café – Maia with Guitar

At the Café – Picasso and Claude

At the Café – Picasso with Man in Decorated Shirt

At the Café – Picasso with Claude Wearing Matador Hat

At the Café – Cocteau with Hat and Cape

At the Café – Picasso Autographing Woman's Dress

The Bullfight – Jacqueline Roque, Maia, Picasso, Claude and Cocteau

The Bullfight – Jacqueline, Picasso with Cigarette, Cocteau

The Bullfight – Picasso Explaining to Cocteau

The Bullfight – Jacqueline Pointing

The Bullfight – Jacqueline, Picasso, Cocteau

The Bullfight – Picasso Makes a Point to Cocteau

The Bullfight – a Tense Moment for Cocteau

The Bullfight – Close-up of Jacqueline, Picasso and Cocteau Writing

The Bullfight – the Matador Makes a Pass

The Bullfight – Claude puts his Finger in Picasso's Mouth

The Bullfight – Picasso

After the Bullfight – Picasso Wearing a Cap

After the Bullfight – Cocteau, Picasso in a Matador's Hat, and Guitar Playing

a complete portfolio of twenty gelatin silver prints with artist's original cover sheet and accompanied by the Auckland City Art Gallery exhibition catalogue illustrating all 20 images from 1989

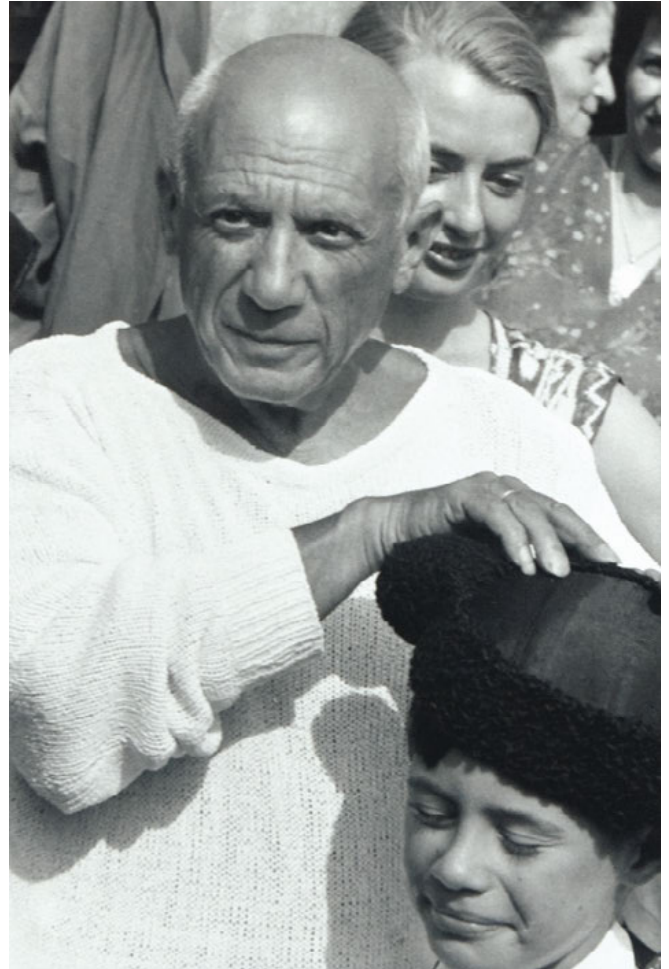
each with impressed signature stamp

505 x 409mm: each

\$45 000 – \$65 000



At the Café – Picasso with Man in Decorated Shirt



At the Café – Picasso with Claude Wearing Matador Hat



Clockwise from top left:

At the Café – Maia with Guitar

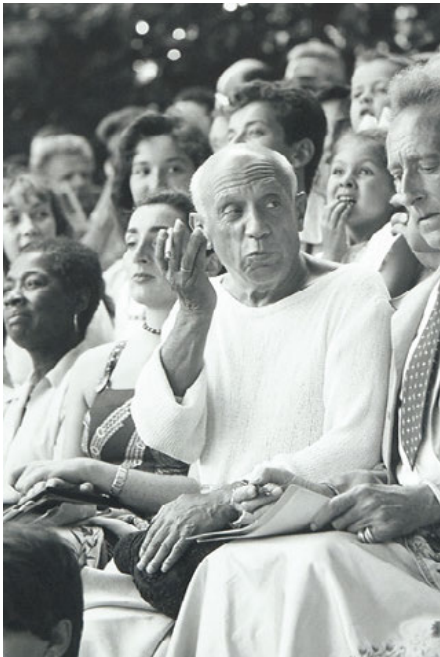
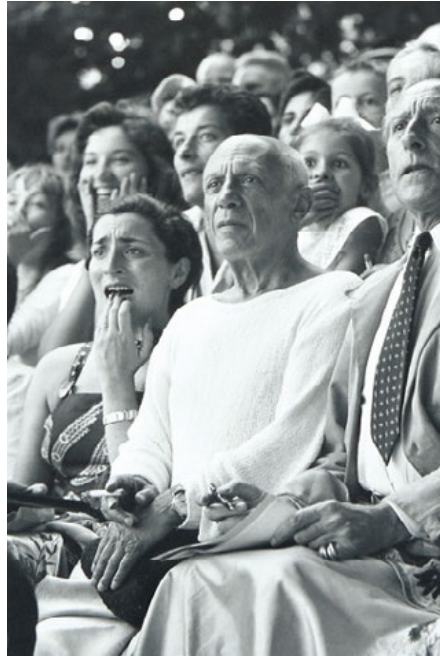
At the Café – Picasso and Claude

At the Café – Picasso Autographing Woman's Dress

At the Café – Cocteau with Hat and Cape



*The Bullfight – Claude puts his Finger
in Picasso's Mouth*



Clockwise from top left:

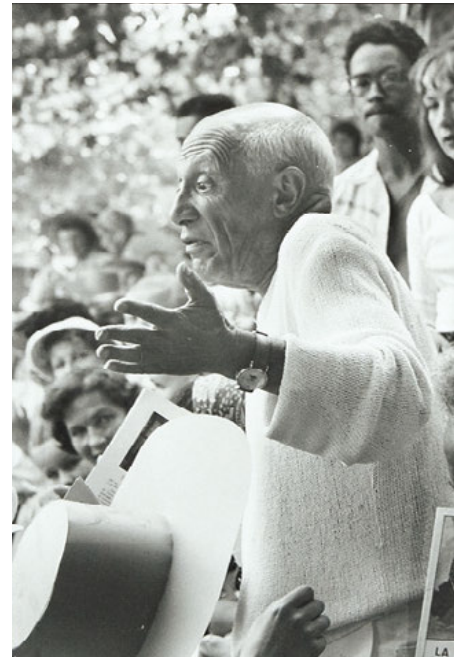
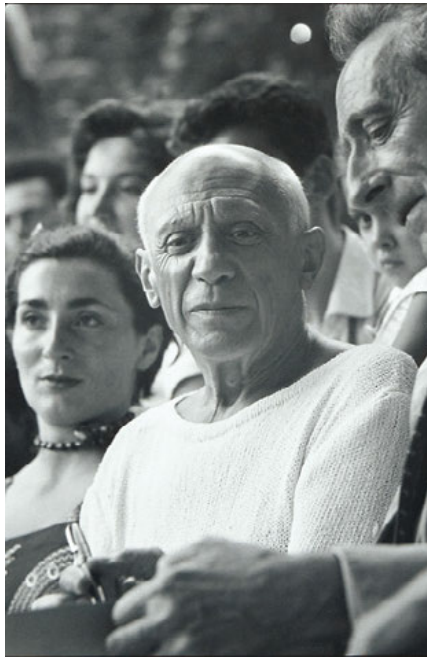
The Bullfight – Jacqueline Roque, Maia, Picasso, Claude and Cocteau

The Bullfight – Jacqueline,

Picasso with Cigarette, Cocteau

The Bullfight – Jacqueline, Picasso, Cocteau

The Bullfight – Picasso Explaining to Cocteau



Clockwise from top left:
The Bullfight – Picasso Makes a Point to Cocteau
The Bullfight – a Tense Moment for Cocteau
The Bullfight – Picasso
The Bullfight – Close-up of Jacqueline, Picasso and Cocteau Writing



Clockwise from top left:

The Bullfight – Jacqueline Pointing

The Bullfight – the Matador Makes a Pass

After the Bullfight – Picasso Wearing a Cap

After the Bullfight – Cocteau, Picasso in a Matador's Hat, and Guitar Playing

Asia and Beyond: A Love Affair with the 'Other'

Hamish Coney

Brian Brake was an intrepid and inquisitive traveller with an abiding fascination for the East. From India, to Japan and China, Brake and his Leica were on hand to record the most emblematic images and those moments that a photographer can locate only with patience and stealth.

Asia today, in the form of the 'Tiger' economies, is presented daily in the media as a seething mass of change at velocity. Contemporary visitors to China and India recount tales of immensity, modernization and capitalist expansion. A new empire is emerging in a hurry. Fifty years ago the Asia encountered by Brake looked more like the past than the future. India in the 1960s was still wrestling with a post-partition, post-colonial reality. In Japan Nissan was still Datsun.

In 1957 when Brake first visited the Middle Kingdom it had been the Communist People's Republic of China for just eight years. The Cultural Revolution was still almost a decade away. That Brake could access China and be able to so candidly capture everyday life was a feat in itself. American photographer and fellow Magnum member Eve Arnold in her introduction to the 1995 Te Papa exhibition catalogue *Brian Brake, China in the 1950s*, recalls that Communist China was isolationist and highly suspicious of outsiders, 'Brian was accompanied by guides wherever he went but in spite of their surveillance he managed to come away with his sharp-eyed images – certainly some of the best of that period.'

Poster Reading – Chengdu, China, 1957 is one such acutely observed image. It is a scene charged by our knowledge of the vice-like grip China exerted over all publicly displayed information in this period and by our (and I mean English speakers here) incomprehension at this moment of comprehension. Brake has elegantly captured both the quotidian connections that can bring cultures closer and the gulf of language and meaning that communicates otherness.

Brake's role as a photographer of Taonga is best known in New Zealand for his suite of images of the travelling *Te Maori* exhibition of 1984. Throughout his career, however he was a sensitive recorder of the cultural treasures of the East. The striking images in this catalogue serve to elucidate Brake's masterly control of lighting, colour and mood to monumental effect. The magnificent 1967 large format print, *Temple of Karnak, Thebes – Egypt*, should be observed next to the delicate intimacy evinced in *Buddha Hand – National Museum, Gampeng Pet Thailand 1970*. These two images

demonstrate Brake's range and his choice of lighting and for want of another phrase, old-fashioned compositional organization. In Brake's hands these traditional skills become formidable tools of image creation.

Brake's cinematographer's eye for a scene also lent itself to, in a counterpoint to the more contemplative images just discussed, live-action. *Naked Festival – Okayama Japan 1964* captures the frenzy of the Hadaka Matsuri festival, an ancient ritual where young men cleanse themselves in the freezing waters of the Yoshii River and then compete for a pair of sacred shingi wands for the treasured prize of a year's good luck. One can imagine Brake, teetering precariously above the maelstrom, balancing the demands of limited light and a diminishing roll of film, waiting for the magic moment. The excitement of reportage and witnessing strange rituals in foreign lands bursts forth from this image.

Whilst some of the images have the air of the most lyrical and inviting travelogue, *Offerings to the Unknown Dead – Kyoto 1964* is a classic case in point, these images of Asia are testimony to the challenge all photographers must resolve, the need to insert oneself within a culture where barriers of language and culture abound and the imperative to dissolve as a presence. That we as viewers can so fulsomely engage with these 'insider' images is testimony to Brake as a man and photographer who obviously moved lightly in front of scenes rarely made available to any foreigner.

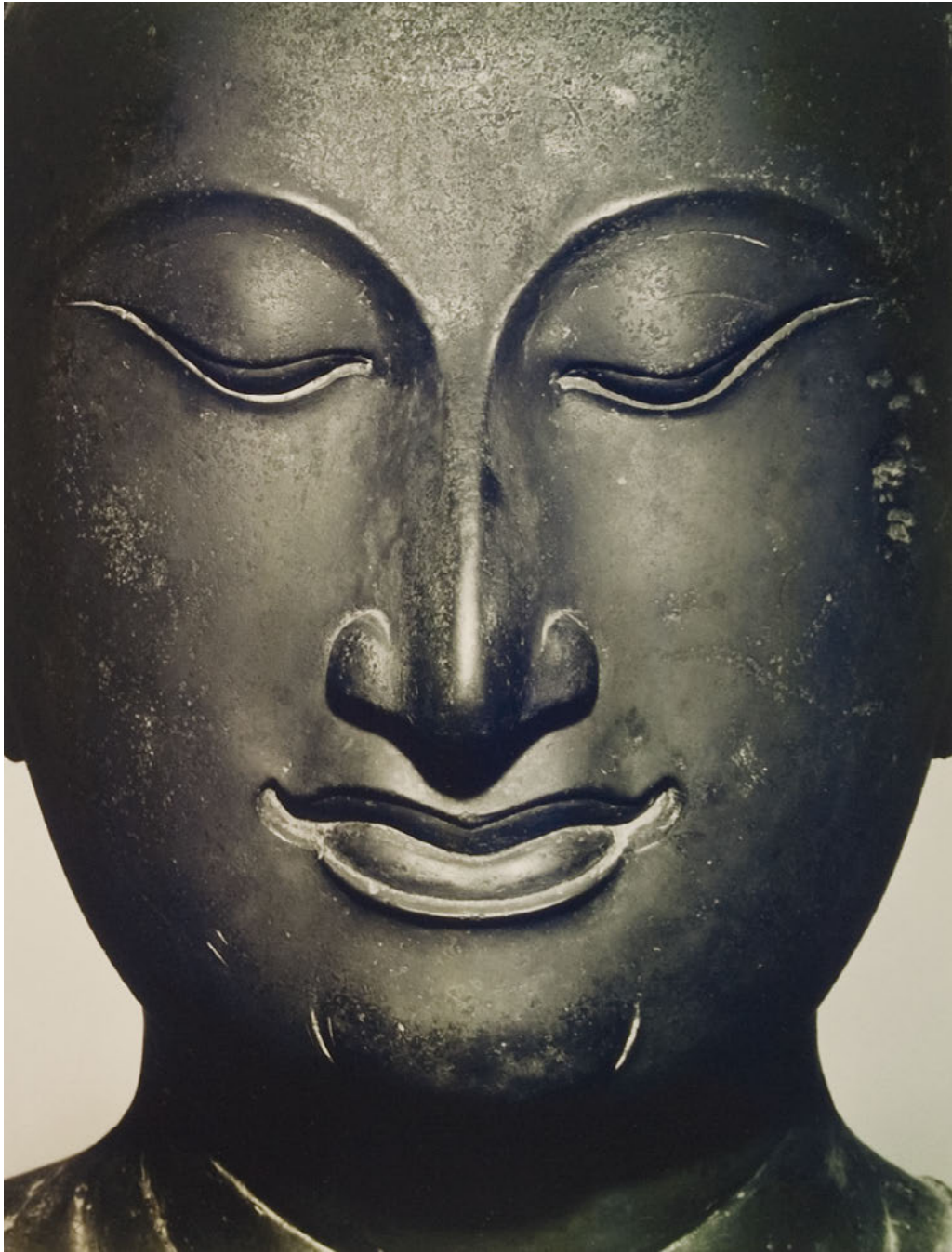
In an era where personality, personal politics and issues of legitimacy can at times seem to be the actual subject of photography, Brake was of an age that some fifty years later seems all the more fragile, haunting, beautiful and though it scarcely seems fathomable, more colourful than the Dayglo present.



16.

*Buddha Hand – National
Museum, Gampeng Pet,
Thailand 1970.*

chromogenic colour print
impressed signature stamp
620 x 496mm
\$6000 – \$9000



17.

*Buddha Image – National
Museum, Bangkok, Thailand
1970.*

colour photograph printed
from Kodak transparency on
Ektacolour paper

original *Brian Brake: Dowse Art
Gallery* exhibition label affixed
verso

455 x 350mm

\$4500 – \$6500



18.
Heian Girl in Festival of the Ages
– Kyoto 1963.
colour photograph printed
from Kodak transparency on
Ektacolour paper
original *Brian Brake: Dowse Art*
Gallery exhibition label affixed
verso
455 x 350mm
\$4500 – \$6500



19.
Poster Reading – Chengdu, China 1957.
chromogenic colour print
signed
502 x 405mm
\$3000 – \$5000



20.
Peking Opera – Beijing, China 1957.
chromogenic colour print
signed
502 x 405mm
\$3000 – \$5000



21.
*Ming Temple, Western Hill – Beijing,
China 1957.*
chromogenic colour print
signed
502 x 405mm
\$2500 – \$4000



22.

Naked Festival – Okayama, Japan, 1964.

colour photograph printed from Kodak transparency on Ektacolour paper

original *Brian Brake*: Dowse Art Gallery exhibition label affixed verso

460 x 665mm

\$4500 – \$6500



23.
Offerings to the Unknown Dead – Kyoto, 1964.
colour photograph printed from Kodak transparency on Ektacolor paper
original *Brian Brake: Dowse Art Gallery* exhibition label affixed verso
460 x 665mm
\$7000 – \$12 000



24.
Movie Director Kurosawa – Japan 1963
cibachrome print
impressed signature stamp
708 x 761mm
\$4000 – \$6000



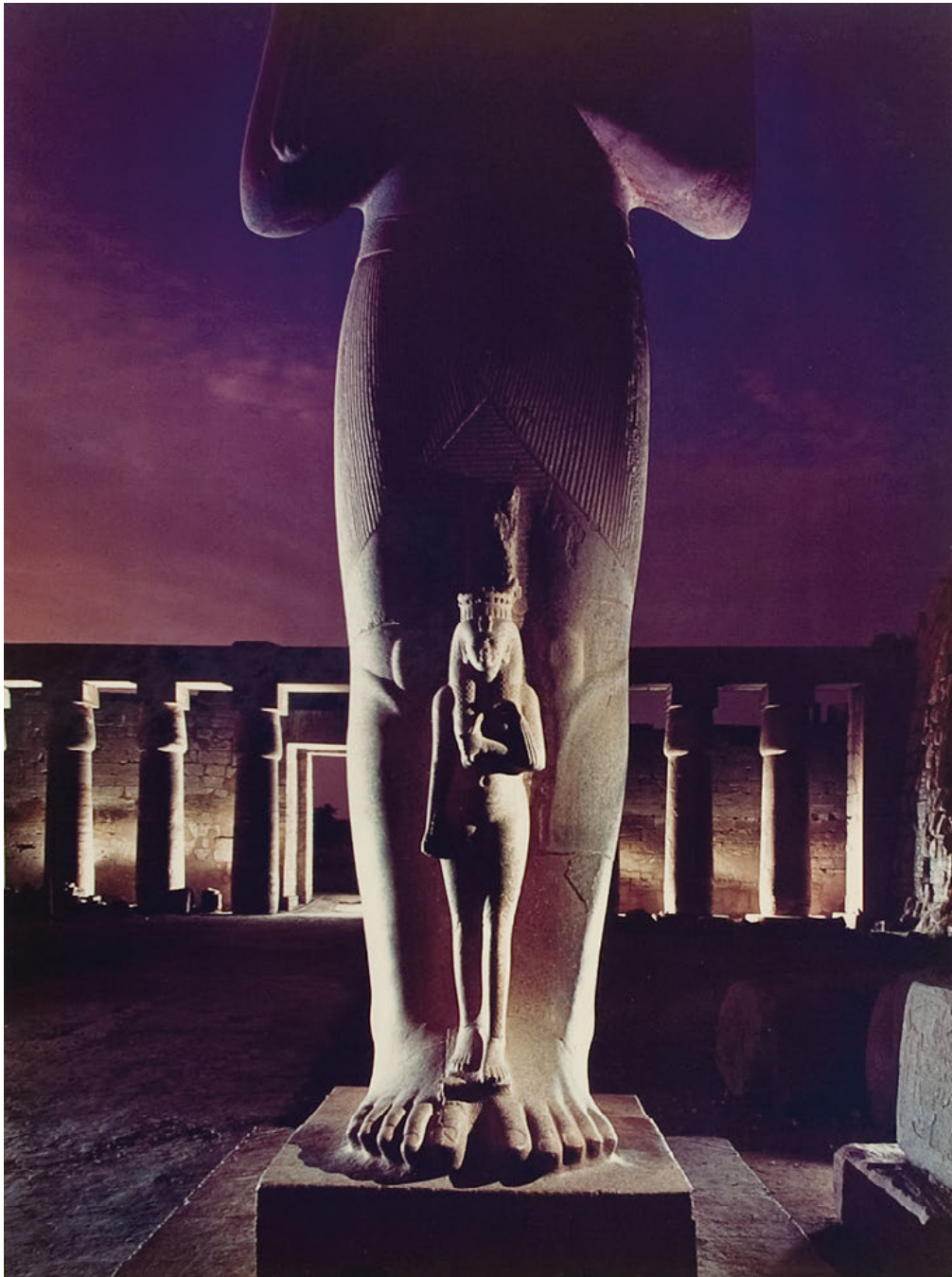
25.
Mahatma Gandhi Movie – India 1962.
colour photograph printed from Kodak
transparency on Ektacolour paper
original *Brian Brake: Dowse Art*
Gallery exhibition label affixed verso
455 x 350mm
\$4000 – \$6000

26.

*Arab Woman – Shibham, Wadi
Hadramawt, 1956.*

colour photograph printed from Kodak
transparency on Ektacolour paper
original *Brian Brake: Dowse Art
Gallery* exhibition label affixed verso
665 x 460mm
\$4500 – \$6500





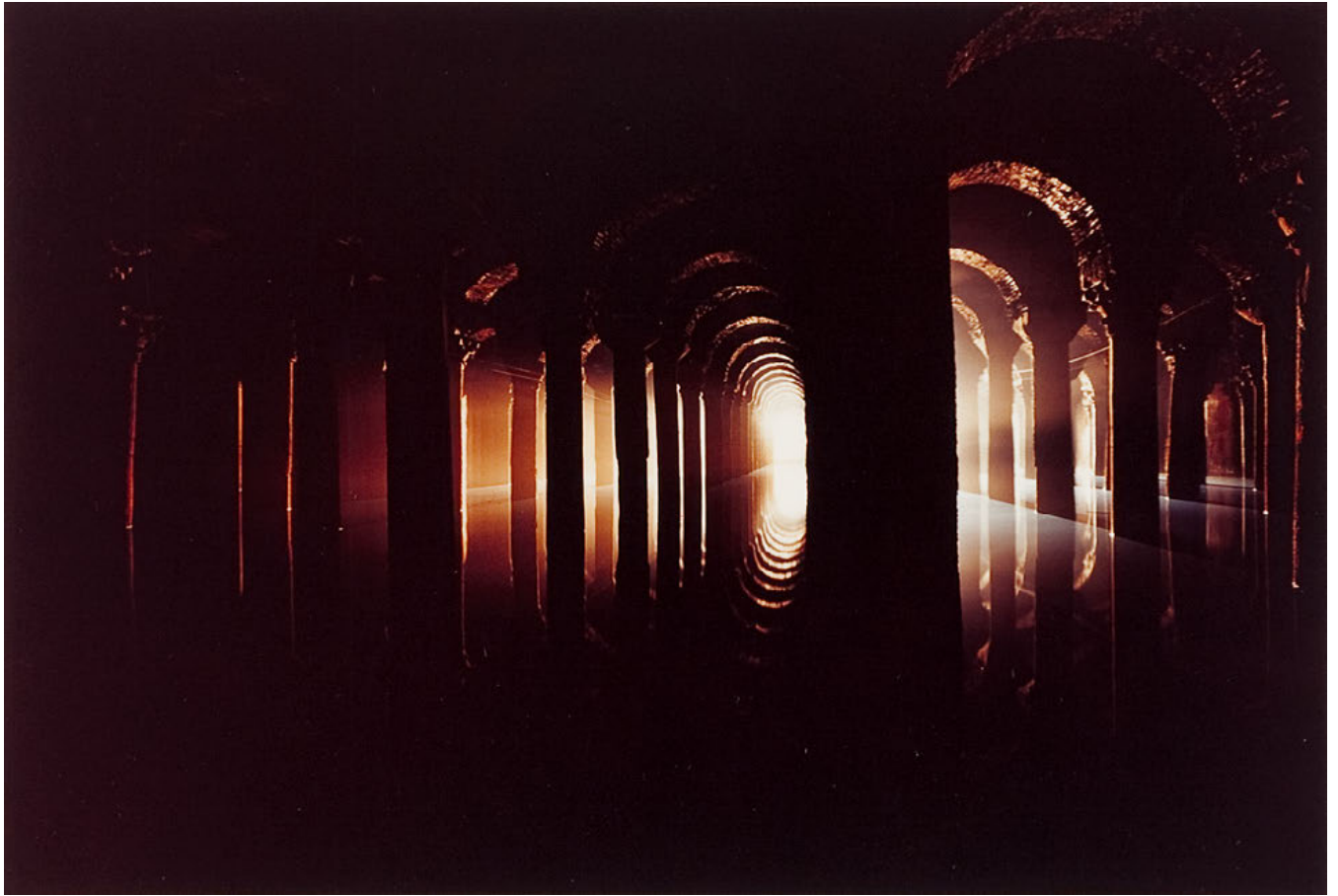
27.

*Temple of Karnak, Thebes –
Egypt, 1967.*

colour photograph printed
from Kodak transparency on
Ektacolour paper
original *Brian Brake: Dowse Art
Gallery* exhibition label affixed
verso

665 x 460mm

\$4500 – \$6500



28.
Roman Cistern of Justinian – Istanbul, 1965.
chromogenic colour print
signed
406 x 505mm
\$2500 – \$4000



29.
Hong Kong at Night
chromogenic colour print
266 x 351mm
\$2500 – \$4000

Monsoon: A Life Molded by the Seasons

Kriselle Baker

By the 1960s photojournalism had reached its pinnacle with publications such as *LIFE* and *National Geographic*. It would be hard to overestimate the impact of these magazines in the post war years. Both presented a peculiarly American view of the world with images that not only reinforced American self-perceptions but also American preconceptions about the rest of the world.

In the course of his career Brian Brake contributed numerous photographs to *LIFE* and *National Geographic*. He first developed the idea of a photo essay on the Indian monsoon with his associates at Magnum, the international photographers cooperative, and although on sabbatical from *LIFE* at the time he convinced the editors to publish the *Monsoon* series as part of the September 1961 issue. This series also appeared later in *Paris Match*, *Epoca* and *Queen*.

Brake spent nine months in India photographing the effect of the monsoon. In the preface to a 2007 publication of the works he writes about these images as 'a unique document on the life of India as it is moulded by the annual coming of the rains'. In India the monsoon extends from June to September. The hot, dry winds that blow in from the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal bring with them heavy sullen clouds and the blanketing rain that eventually floods land no longer able to absorb the volume of water.

The first works in the series begin with the months of heat: the browns of parched earth, dust and work hardened hands. It is a time of lethargy and waiting. When the monsoon comes the colours change. The bleached browns are replaced by grey sheets of rain and the slick of wet streets and black umbrellas.

At the height of the monsoon are the festivals. Their vibrancy and colour relieves the dark monotones of grey. In July and August women decorate swings with flowers and sing songs in celebration of the rain. All over Rajasthan, even in remote villages, swings are hung from trees. The billowing fabric of saris in hues of green, orange and turquoise create a blur of colour and movement as young girls laugh and play on the swings. Finally the end of the rain is marked by the crowds which come to the beaches to celebrate and make offerings to the god Varun for the coming year.

The most recognizable and widely published photograph of this series is *Indian Girl in Early Monsoon Rain*. Although presented as a documentary image it was in reality staged. The model was Aparna Sen, a fourteen year old Bengali actress, the daughter of a filmmaker, she went on to create

a successful career as a director in the huge film industry in India. In an interview with Bruce Connew she spoke about her experience of being photographed by Brake on a Kolkata rooftop: "He took me up to the terrace, had me wear a red sari in the way a village girl does, and asked me to wear a green stud in my nose. To be helpful, I said let me wear a red one to match, and he said no – he was so decisive, rather brusque – I think a green one... Someone had a large watering can, and they poured water over me. It was really a very simple affair. It took maybe half an hour. I felt I was just a model, a prop. I did what I was asked to do. Nothing more, or less. This photograph, it's amazing the way it conveys a great deal more than went into it. In a way, it's so like Ray (film director Satyajit Ray); Ray is the master of the close-up. In one close shot, there would be so much information, emotional and physical."

What is so compelling about this story is not the fact that the image was staged, as undoubtedly other works in the series also were, but the realization that by constructing the photograph Brake managed to convey more through artifice than it is likely he would have captured with an unmediated image. It tells us that the very best of photojournalism, which is what we see with these images, is at times as much artifice as actuality and that perhaps it has the capacity to take us closer to the moment than conventional objectivity is able to.

It also tells us that for Brake with the *Monsoon* images the aim was to please the eye not to disconcert or question. The gathering of evidence was subjugated to the demands of pictorial appeal: the delicate beauty of monochrome with slight shifts in tone and in contrast to the exquisite vibrancy of heightened colour.

Kriselle Baker is an art historian specialising in contemporary New Zealand art and photography. She recently completed her PhD thesis on the work of Ralph Hotere and is the author of *The Desire of the Line: Ralph Hotere Figurative Works*.



30.
Wrestlers, Coconut Day – Shawan
(July-August)
cibachrome print
impressed signature stamp
508 x 381mm
\$5000 – \$8000



31.
Festival of Swings – Jaipur,
August 1960
cibachrome print on Ilfochrome
Classic paper
impressed signature stamp
610 x 424mm
\$6000 – \$9000



32.
Festival of Swings – Jaipur,
August 1960
cibachrome print
impressed signature stamp
508 x 381mm
\$5000 – \$8000



33.
*Festival of Swings – Jaipur, August
1960*
chromogenic colour print
signed
508 x 406mm
\$4500 – \$6500



34.
Monsoon Rains
cibachrome print on Ilfochrome
Classic paper
impressed signature stamp
610 x 508mm
\$6000 – \$9000



35.
Monsoon Rains
chromogenic colour print
impressed signature stamp
508 x 406mm
\$4500 – \$6500



36.

Farmer waiting for the Rains – India 1960

cibachrome print on Ilfochrome Classic paper

impressed signature stamp

508 x 610mm

\$6000 – \$8000



37.
Praying for the Monsoon Rains
chromogenic colour print
signed
508 x 406mm
\$4500 – \$6500

38.

Praying in the Holy Ganges, Benares

cibachrome print on Ilfochrome

Classic paper

impressed signature stamp

610 x 508mm

\$6000 – \$8000





39.
Praying in the Holy Ganges, Benares
chromogenic colour print
signed
508 x 406mm
\$4500 – \$6500



40.
Crawford Market, Bombay
cibachrome print on Ilfochrome
Classic paper
impressed signature stamp
610 x 508mm
\$6000 – \$9000



41.
Crawford Market, Bombay
chromogenic colour print
signed
406 x 508mm
\$4500 – \$6500

Indian Girl in Early Monsoon Rain

Bruce Connew

I travelled twice in India during 1998 – the first time with Sally, my eldest daughter, when she turned twenty-one, and the second with Catherine, my wife, to meet Aparna Sen in Calcutta. Aparna Sen, when fourteen, was the ‘monsoon girl’ in Brian Brake’s famous 1961 photo-essay that appeared in *LIFE*, *Paris Match*, *Queen* and *Epoca*. After my visit, I wrote a story, *Water of Life*, for the *NZ Listener* about this remarkable woman.

On the way to Aparna Sen’s apartment (she’s a big shot, says the hotel clerk), past the very British Victoria Memorial, past Calcutta’s zoological gardens, the horticultural gardens, and down Alipore Road, an unrelentingly congested road – as is any road or footpath in Calcutta – there stands a concrete, plastered wall about half a kilometre long, with a parapet of broken glass, rusty nails and old barbed wire. It’s an unpretentious wall, just two metres off the road, clearly visible, and protecting I’m not sure what. In the time it took to drive by, I counted eight men urinating against it. Seven hours later, on the way back, I counted five. Two days after this, off to Sen’s again, I counted three there, and four back. The waters of life. In the period between these two journeys, the Calcutta Municipal Corporation launched Operation Piddle. By the end of the first day, 155 men (no women) had been nobbled for peeing in public, and that was the count in only two of the main inner city streets.

The week before, Sen had faxed warning me not to come, Calcutta was drowning, sloshing to a halt, marooned in the worst monsoon rains since the early 70s. Just up the way, in Bangladesh, twenty-five million people were homeless. Her dentist had telephoned, cancelling her appointment saying his assistants had been unable to make it in. It was a calamity. But all the reasons she’s saying don’t come are the very reasons why I must go. She is, after all, the “monsoon girl”.

The sensuously virginal, and rain-spattered face of Aparna Sen, this girl on the cusp of womanhood, inclined heavenwards, became, certainly for a Western audience, the very badge of the monsoon, its evocation: the gift of fertility, romance and rapture, the waters of life – and death. Brian Brake, New Zealander, Magnum photographer, friend of Cartier-Bresson, and deceased, unexpectedly and tragically, since 1988, photographed her thirty-eight years ago, when she was fourteen, for his ubiquitous photo-

essay on the monsoon, published through 1961 in *LIFE* magazine, *Paris Match*, *Queen* and *Epoca*; spreads that, in 1965, the Museum of Modern Art in New York included in an exhibition. *LIFE* made the photograph the cover of their international edition, and reversed it to accommodate the *LIFE* logo in the top left corner. Jawaharlal Nehru raved, wondering how Brake “got to know India so well.”

Alas, for all the cheering and foot stamping that has greeted Brake’s essay, the jeering, the inevitable jeering, hasn’t quietened down. For as long as I can remember, the sword of Damocles has hung over the portrait of Sen’s rain-spattered face, the essay’s keynote image. What were its circumstances? How did Brake do it? Did he cheat? And should we care? Apparently, people do, as if knowledge of its circumstance will provide some greater truth. Come on! Photographs have been photographers’ fictions forever: selectively framed, edited, sequenced, juxtaposed, re-structured to fit an idea; not some chronological, literal run of events, this nonsense of objectivity. That this notion continues to baffle some audiences, perplexed by the fact that even their own baggage alters the truth of an image, only suggests the insidiousness of the truth industry.

Anyway, for what it’s worth, in Sen’s words, this is how Brake did it. And you’ve got to laugh. “He took me up to the terrace, had me wear a red sari in the way a village girl does, and asked me to wear a green stud in my nose. To be helpful, I said let me wear a red one to match, and he said no – he was so decisive, rather brusque – I think a green one. It was stuck to my nose with glue, because my nose wasn’t pierced. Someone had a large watering can, and they poured water over me. It was really a very simple affair. It took maybe half an hour.”

Brake had borrowed the tomboyish Sen from the set of *Samapti*, her first movie, directed by Indian film demigod, Satyajit Ray, one from his trilogy, *Teen Kanya (Three Daughters)*, based on the stories of Bengali cultural hero, Rabindranath Tagore (in 1913, he won the Nobel prize), and for release in May 1961, to celebrate the centenary of Tagore’s birth. In one year, the monsoon girl was splashed all over the US, and everywhere else *LIFE* magazine found a newsagent’s shelf (and in the 60’s that was everywhere), as well as Europe and the United Kingdom. Then, as a dazzling discovery in Ray’s movie, she had film offers gushing in from about the world. All were deflected with a flick of her



42.

Indian Girl in Early Monsoon Rain

chromogenic colour print

508 x 406mm

\$6000 – \$9000

mother's Japanese fan, including one from the great man Ray himself; school, school, school.

By her mid-twenties Aparna Sen was Bengal's most famous film star; money, money, money. Low-brow, commercial cinema that drove her daft (the hotel clerk wanted to know why she had had her broken tooth repaired, he had fallen in love with it), and, inevitably, to writing and directing for "the kind of cinema I believe in."

You must understand this was a well-connected family. Her father, Chidananda Das Gupta, an exceptionally bright and agreeable man ("one of my closest friends"), became Ray's biographer, and with Ray founded the Calcutta Film Society in 1947, which, after the film censorship of the British Raj, helped open the floodgates to movies from here, there, and everywhere. As a child Aparna Sen had her sensibilities shaped by *Battleship Potemkin*, the Russian classic, flickering at night on the verandah wall, the films of Ingmar Bergman, Akira Kurosawa, and a house-guest in Jean Renoir. From Renoir's knee, at age three, she asked, why is your face so red? Answer: "I've had too many chillies."

But, back to the photograph. "I felt I was just a model, a prop. I did what I was asked to do. Nothing more, or less. This photograph, it's amazing the way it conveys a great deal more than went into it. In a way, it's so like Ray; Ray is the master of the close-up. In one close shot, there would be so much information, emotional and physical. The same with this photograph. The drops of water, the texture of the skin, the expression on the face, all of it. Brake said, 'Feel the rain on your face.' He said no more than that. You see, in India, a young girl with the first rain... the first rain is known to be good for you, there is a tradition of getting wet in the first shower of the monsoon. After all the heat, the first shower is so welcome. And there is a beautiful smell of wet earth; you find it in a lot of literature and poetry, the smell of the earth getting wet. It's a lovely, strange, sensual smell. And I think that sense of smell comes through in the photograph. I had no idea Brake was an important photographer, or that the photograph would come on the cover of *LIFE*. I just thought it was somebody wanting to photograph me, and creating rain, it's a monsoon photograph, oh, very well. So I thought, what do I feel when it rains on my face? Usually, I like it. It wasn't, oh God ... So, I just enjoyed it."

Brake sent the magazine "to the monsoon girl". "I thought that was so sweet. I love being called the monsoon girl. When my parents showed me the magazine, it was a bit of a surprise, and I didn't like the way I looked. I looked more

twenty-eight, than fourteen, and I was all teeth. I didn't like myself at all. And then Bansi, Ray's art director, he said, 'Oh, go on, you're not better looking than this', so I shut up after that, of course. I now like it." There were two watering cans, Sen explains. While someone filled one, an assistant of Ray's, standing on a chair, poured from the other.

Then there's the semi-autobiographical content of *Paroma* (1985), her second movie as writer/director. "Semi-autobiographical?" she snaps. "What gave you that idea? Paroma's was a quest for her identity. I've never had any problems with mine!"

But wait a minute. A *LIFE* magazine photographer comes to India, during the monsoon, to photograph a woman, with whom he has an affair, and whose water-spattered face becomes a full-page spread in the magazine. There is enough detail here to reel in the events of thirty-eight years ago, I would have thought.

"Oh, I see what you mean. Nobody has ever mentioned this before. You're absolutely right. These things may be subconscious, but I was not aware of that connection until today. You see, because I have been married, divorced and remarried (and divorced and remarried again), many people think that is what Paroma is about, in fact, a film about adultery, and nothing else. The loss of identity matters very little to them. Yet, that is what interests me. It's like saying *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is only about an adulterous affair with a game keeper, and not about the class system. So many people have said Paroma is autobiographical. I was reacting to that. I wanted a little more credit for my imagination. Everything is not autobiographical."

An antique gramophone from Ray's Samapti, turned up twenty-one years later in her first, and intensely venerated, writer/director endeavour, *36 Chowringhee Lane* (1981). An unconscious reference? "Yes." It's how she writes her scripts too. "You see the thing is, the creative process is unconscious; it's not an intellectual process." *36 Chowringhee Lane* began (in a hotel room, when she was miserable with acting) as a couple of pages, a short story that looked more like a screenplay. "I talked about it a lot with friends and, as I talked, the details grew. It was not as if I thought about them, and composed them in my head. My last script (August 1998), I wrote in a week ... I dictated it."

But, back to the photograph, and Brake's monsoon. "This is a romantic view, certainly. But, in India, the monsoon is romantic. I know it's fraught with difficulty, but in literature, in painting, culturally, it is romantic, sensuous. A season where lovers meet, and if they can't, there's the pain of separation. I can't begin to tell you

how much has been written about the monsoon. Tagore has scores of songs. Other poets, too, and a great deal of Sanskrit literature. A whole lot of Rajput paintings depict the monsoon."

I mention *The Grand Trunk Road*, a book by the remarkable Indian photographer, Raghubir Singh (who lives in Paris), with its uncompromising facts of Indian life, absurdly poetic juxtapositions, the monsoon as destroyer rather than libidinous metaphor.

"That is there, too. That is a reality, too. But it doesn't invalidate the other. Raghubir is very contemporary. Whereas Brian Brake and, particularly, Cartier-Bresson (in 1936, Cartier-Bresson appeared as a young curate in Jean Renoir's film, *A Day in the Country*), were much, much earlier. Parts of India exist in the 21st century, and parts still in the 15th. So, it is very difficult to come to any conclusion quickly. Since 1980, there's been tremendous change. India was in its own little world until telecommunications – Mrs Ghandi said there will be a television in every home – and now there is cable television, so many satellite channels where you get the BBC, Chinese television, Australian, French, everything under the sun." As if to muddle any presumption, the Indian writer R.P. Gupta wrote (in 1988) that a Calcuttan street dweller of twenty-five years had never heard of Mother Teresa.

Aparna Sen's face, at fifty-two, is a refined and elegant picture with its classical curves mimicking those of the fourteen-year-old in both Samapti and Brake's photograph. Her face is fatter now, Sen says, but, for a moment, she tightens at the lips. "Why always go along with an ism?" In this instance, feminism, which, after her movies (all deal with issues concerning women), comes as something of a surprise, and must have caught off guard those feminists in India who, particularly after *Paroma*, saw her as a new voice.

Sananda, the prosperous, middle-class, Bengali women's magazine that Sen has edited for twelve years, since *Paroma*, would have doubled the surprise. "What's wrong with cookery, what's wrong with beauty?" Bourgeois, she was told. "You know, a lot of feminists are very silly. I'll tell you why. Because they are always preaching to the initiated." What they write is being read only by feminists, she reasons. "So what is that achieving? It has some archival value and some news value, but what else is it achieving?"

In the inaugural issue of *Sananda*, she says, gathering her sari, her lips full again, there was a debate on the label "housewife". "We quoted a letter from a sixty-year-old

woman, and one day I want to make a film about this." The woman wrote, saying she had married at seventeen, and had worked in the family home every day since, and now at sixty-years-old, she wants to go on a pilgrimage. "It's not important where I go, but I want to go away by myself, and I am not being allowed to do that. Everyone says, no, you can't go on your own. My husband says you can't go on your own. My children say you can't go on your own, my daughters, my sons-in-law, my grandchildren, they all say, you can't go on your own. And I say I want to go, but I don't have any money that's mine."

Sen finishes the story: "There's no money that belongs to her, specifically. She may have a joint account with her husband, or there may be an account in her name, but she is not free to take the money." It's an Aparna Sen movie, no question, a plum story, and where Sen expects you to find her feminism.

She accompanies me across the building's eighth floor landing to the lift, and apologises for having less than I had hoped for on Brian Brake. I try to reassure her. Then I shake her gentle but resolute hand, and grin all the way to the ground. What must she think (and I didn't ask), someone coming all this way to follow up on a photograph taken so long ago? She didn't know that Brake had died.

Back in New Zealand, on the way home from Wellington airport, I count Aparna Sen's rain-spattered face more than twenty times on Museum of New Zealand posters pasted in the streets, high, low, and all over the place. The Museum has resurrected the photo-essay as an exhibition.

Bruce Connew was born in 1949 and, like Brian Brake, began photographing at an early age. Over the past three decades he has travelled extensively, undertaking documentary photography projects all over the world. He currently lives and works in Wellington. This essay originally appeared in the *NZ Listener*.

Brian Brake's Portraits: An Empathetic Pact

Peter Simpson

The two groups of portraits by Brake in this collection are strongly contrasted in both period and style, though equally accomplished in their different ways. One group dates from early in Brake's career – the late 1940s and early 1950s, prior to his departure for London in 1953 – the other from after his eventual permanent return to New Zealand in 1976. The first group involves classical studio portraiture by a rising young star of photography; the second group are commissioned work-place portraits by a seasoned and expert professional.

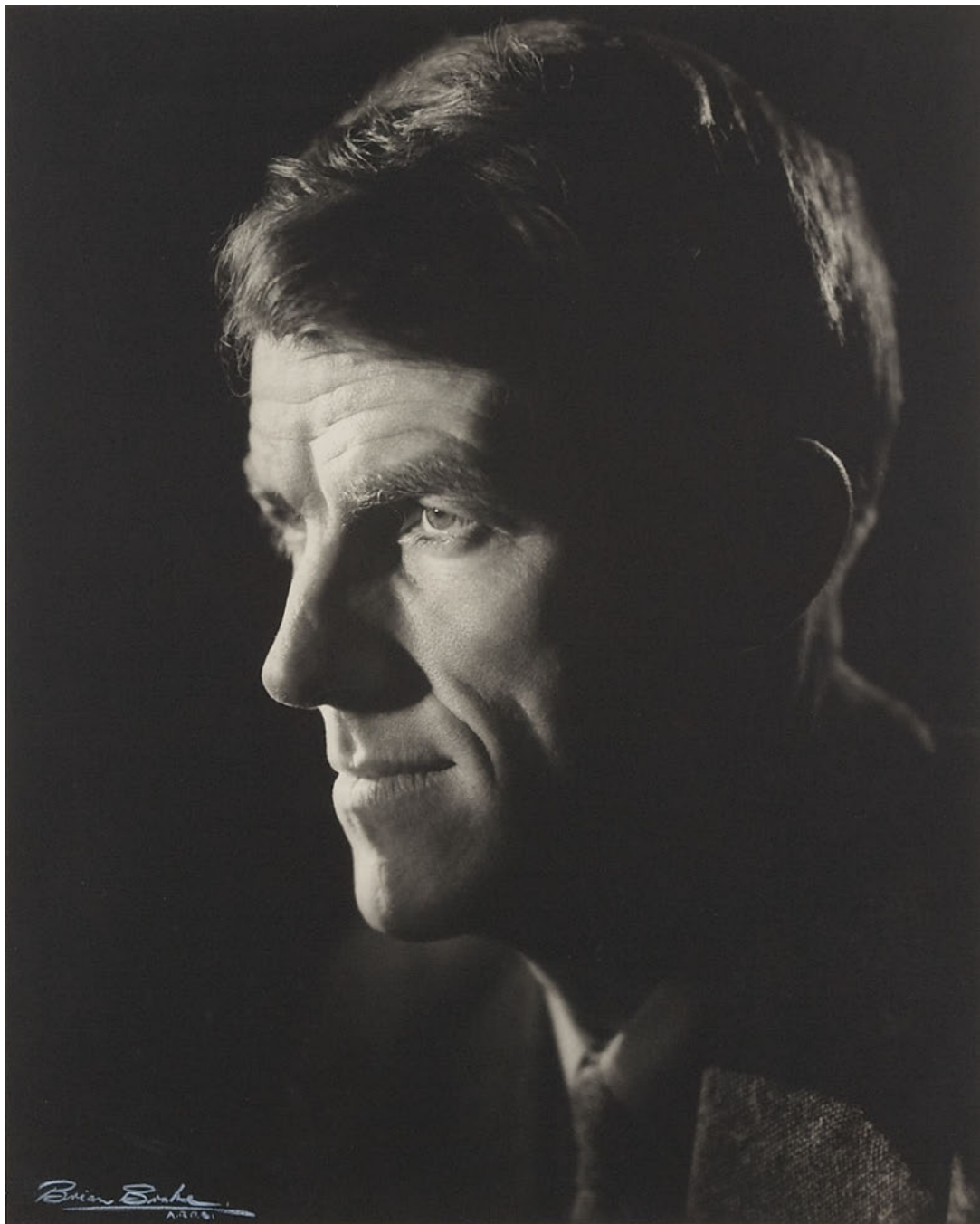
Brake's career began when he joined the well-established studio of Spencer Digby in Wellington in 1945. He developed the rudiments of his craft with Digby for two years until 1947 when he joined the National Film Unit as a cameraman, with which he worked until he left New Zealand for London, and began his rise to international fame. Although influenced by his mentor, Brake's early studio photographs were presumably made later than his period of working in Digby's studio, as two of his subjects, the mountaineer Edmund Hillary and the pianist Richard Farrell only became famous in the early 1950s. Richard Farrell spent most of his life outside New Zealand, at first in Australia but later in the United States and England. He toured New Zealand in 1948 and it is possibly then that this image was made. If so, he would have been 22 at the time. The photograph was almost certainly taken before Farrell settled in London in 1951 when he was 25. As for Edmund Hillary, he was already well-known in New Zealand before climbing Everest with Tensing in May 1953. However, the portrait was possibly made after the high adventure on Everest and before Brake left for London the same year. The only other person identified in these early portraits is the mother of the potter Doreen Blumhardt. Doreen herself was born in 1914 so her mother, of German background, was probably in her late 50s or even 60s when Brake photographed her. The other two early images show an unknown male dancer – a study of youthful male beauty – and an unidentified dance troupe performing some tragic story (or so it appears from the dead bodies strewn about).

These early portraits are masterful studies in light and darkness. The prints are of superb technical quality and depict the heads of the subjects emerging from velvety blackness with the studio lighting artfully highlighting certain physical features. Richard Farrell is shown in profile with the emphasis as much on his hands (as is fitting for the portrait of a pianist) as on his face. He holds a cigarette

in his slender fingers, the smoke slowly rising, Hollywood-style. In the case of the young dancer – very much an Adonis type – the light falls flatteringly on hair and brow and his rapt, idealistic expression. Edmund Hillary, lean and angular, is posed so that light falls on brow and nose, while the rest of the face is in shadow. Is it too obvious to suggest that the photographer's skill has turned his face into a mountain landscape, with sharply lit ridges and shadowy declivities? Mrs Blumhardt is a fine study in character. Her lived-in face seen in half profile, speaks eloquently of the burdens of prejudice and exile (it wasn't easy to be German in New Zealand during World War II).

The later portraits, probably made in the 'seventies or early 'eighties, result from a professional commission from Tasman Pulp and Paper in Kawerau. Built in the 1950s to harvest the vast radiata pines forest of Kaiangaroa, the factory was New Zealand's largest, employing some 2000 workers. The subjects of these highly professional images are a bunch of typical workers, shown in their every day working gear and with some of their tools of their trade on their persons or seen in the sharply focused background (no velvety blackness here). With the exception of Lance Thrupp, a bailer, the identities of the other workers are unknown though they are individuated by their ethnicity, by items of gear and clothing such as radio telephones, hard-hats, rugby league jerseys, and by pieces of equipment such as Fire Trucks, fork lifts and huge bales of paper. These photographs bear a superficial resemblance to Glen Busch's well-known *Working Men*, in placing workers in their costume and setting of physical labour. But the feeling is very different. Busch's photographs are expressionistic, moody. Brake's, no doubt intended to please the company who commissioned them, are redolent of what might be called industrial optimism – cheerful, active, well-equipped employees of a thriving industry at the height of its fortune and power. They are good examples of a professional photographer doing his job at a very high level, and make a fascinating contrast with the publicity stills of Brake's earlier, and equally brilliant, studio work.

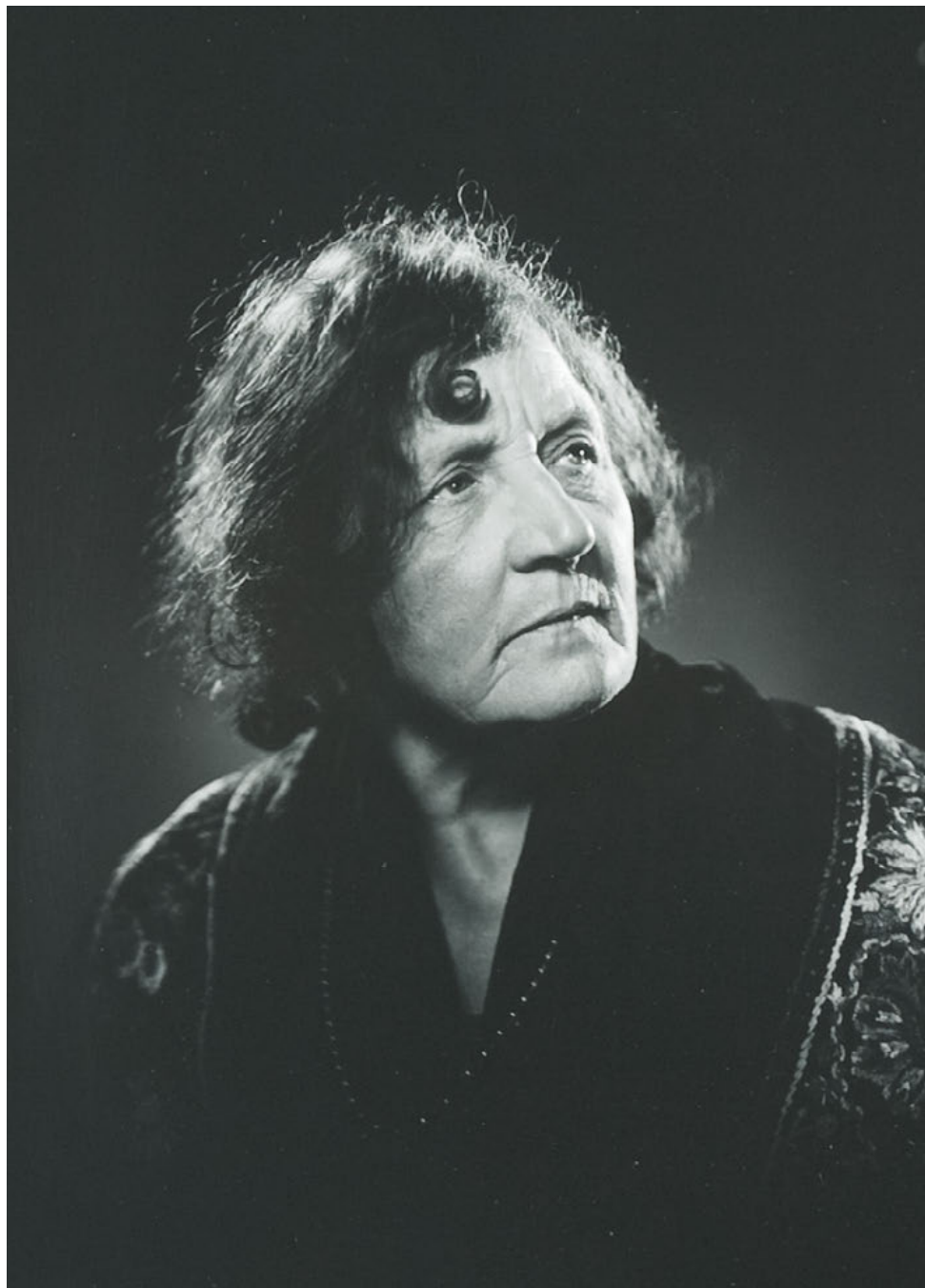
Peter Simpson is an academic, writer, curator and publisher. He has written several books and curated several exhibitions on Colin McCahon and has also written extensively on New Zealand photography, recently co-authoring *Peter Peryer: Photographer*.



43.
*Portrait of Sir Edmund
Hillary*
gelatin silver print
signed
487 x 393mm
\$7000 – \$12 000



44.
*Portrait of Richard Farrell,
New Zealand Classical
Pianist*
gelatin silver print
impressed signature stamp
505 x 406mm
\$6000 – \$9000



45.
*Portrait of Doreen
Blumhardt's Mother*
gelatin silver print
impressed signature stamp
505 x 406mm
\$4500 – \$6500



46.
Portrait of a Dancer
gelatin silver print
impressed signature stamp
505 x 406mm
\$4500 – \$6500



47.
The Dance Troupe
gelatin silver print
impressed signature stamp
505 x 406mm
\$4500 – \$6500



48.
*Fire Security Worker, Tasman Pulp and
Paper Mill, Kawerau*
gelatin silver print
impressed signature stamp
508 x 406mm
\$2500 – \$4000



49.
Worker, Tasman Pulp and Paper Mill,
Kawerau
gelatin silver print
impressed signature stamp
508 x 406mm
\$2500 – \$4000



50.
*Worker, Tasman Pulp and Paper Mill,
Kawerau*
gelatin silver print
impressed signature stamp
508 x 406mm
\$2500 – \$4000



51.
*Lance Thrupp, Balerman, Tasman Pulp
and Paper Mill, Kawerau*
gelatin silver print
impressed signature stamp
508 x 406mm
\$2500 – \$4000

Maori Culture: A New Eye?

John Perry

The achievements of New Zealand photographer Brian Brake on the international stage are too numerous to discuss here, but curiously in the country of his birth and death, his life and work have remained somewhat 'off the radar' for at least the last two generations of New Zealanders. Previous exhibitions include a survey show organised by the Dowse Art Museum in the mid 1976 which travelled to a number of key public art galleries, and in the mid 1990's there was another touring exhibition *Images of China*, comprising of photographs Brake had taken in China while on Magnum assignments during the Communist era. Predating these however was a landmark exhibition from 1979 featuring some twenty large-format photographs of Maori artworks held in New Zealand museums.

This exhibition *Tangata – The Maori Image of Man*, was a seriously important precursor to the international travelling exhibition, *Te Maori* (1984). In fact I believe Brian Brake's photographs of these Maori Taonga helped us all re-view Maori material culture with brand new eyes as they seemed to reveal the spirit, strength and beauty inherent in these diversely crafted objects.

In tandem with this touring exhibition was the significant 1979 publication *Art of The Pacific* in which The QEII Arts Council and Oxford University Press bought together the extraordinary talents of ethnologist Dave Simmons, writer James McNeish and Brian Brake. Shortly after his return to New Zealand from Hong Kong in the mid 1970's, Brake was commissioned by The QEII Arts Council to visit New Zealand museums photographing important pieces from their Maori and Pacific collections. The tangible results were the aforementioned publication and *Tangata – Maori Image of Man*, which was then invited by the NZ Art Gallery Directors' Council to tour various museums throughout the country.

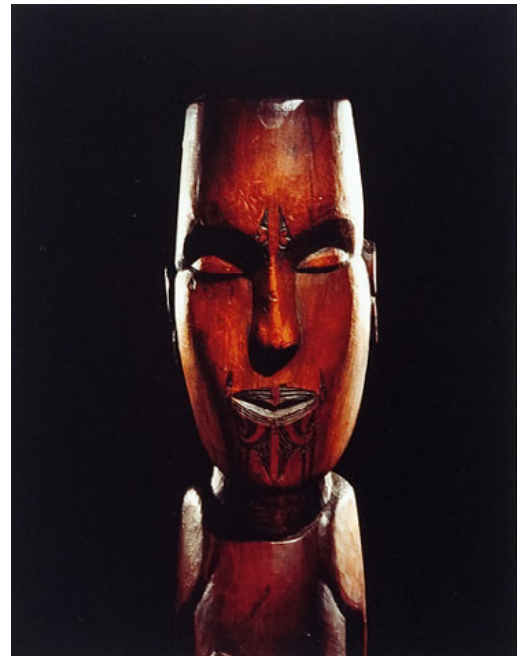
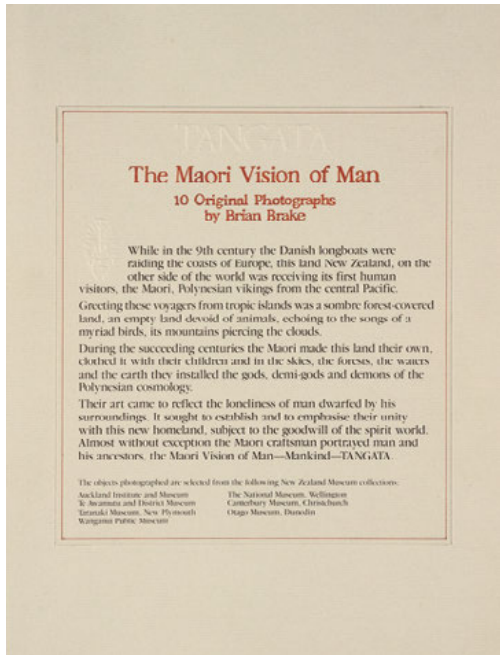
It was on the road for a number of years and then taken up by the then Ministry of Foreign Affairs and toured internationally. The large format Cibachrome photographs were finally deaccessioned by the Ministry of External Relations and Trade (MERT) about 10 years ago, and the original travelling exhibition photographs were all sold at auction in Wellington. Ironically, as these culturally important images did not owe MERT anything, they were placed in an affordable art auction, and all sold for a song.

It is important to note that Brian Brake did not take any images of Maori women's work for inclusion in *Tangata – Maori Image of Man*, and fibre works appear only infrequently in *Art of The Pacific*. However what could be seen as an oversight was to be rectified later in the 1980's when Brake, working with Auckland Museum's Assistant Ethnologist Mike Pendergrast, produced the book *Te Aho Tapu: The Sacred Thread* (1987) which looks at the fibre crafts of New Zealand Maori.

Images of indigenous people going about their lives have been the primary focus of many photographers, and Brake was no exception. It is interesting to note that in his collaboration with Maurice Shadbolt, *New Zealand Gift of the Sea* (1963), we see a selection of images that look at Maori, their cultural customs and artifacts largely in traditional settings – except for one photograph of a student teacher and her class of children engaging in a process of discovery amongst some of Auckland Museum's more spectacular pieces in what was known as the Maori Court. In another image in the book we see a finely carved palisade figure (originally produced by Tene Waitere and the Ngati Tarawhai carvers for the Christchurch Exhibition of 1907) which was then installed at the model pah at Whakarewarewa in 1908. These images are harbingers of what was to follow, a large significant body of work where Brian Brake was to photograph Maori artifacts taken in museum situations, often working late into the night, with his trusty assistant and partner, Wai-Man Lau.

Looking at the photographs in this auction, I feel that as well as being the personal favourites of the photographer, they rate as some of the most significant images Brian Brake took of Maori in their environment as well as their artifacts, many now located in public collections.

John Perry was director of the Rotorua Museum of Art and History for twenty years. He is a leading and well-published authority on New Zealand social history, folk art and photography.



52.

Tangata: The Maori Vision of Man

Detail of a Wahaika, late 18th C. (pictured above right)

Upper part of the Gateway from the Te Ngae Pa, Rotorua, early 19th C.

Poutokomanawa figure from a small house at Taupo, ca. 1860 (pictured right)

War Canoe Stern Post, 1831

Detail of a House Carving, 1842

The figure above the door of Te Potaka

Greenstone Hei Matau, ca. 1860

Hue, a gourd used as a pre-served food receptacle, ca. 1860

Upper section of a carved post, dwelling-place for the spirit Uenuku

Greenstone Hei Tiki

a complete and unique portfolio of ten chromogenic colour prints including
 artist's original cover sheet and inscribed plates

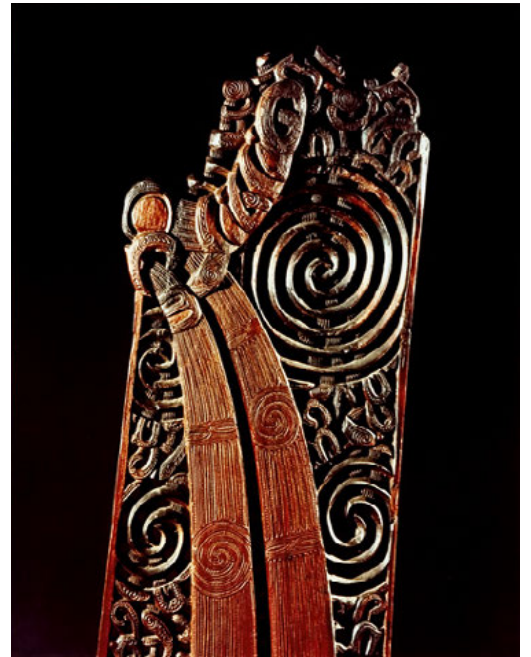
each print signed

355 x 278mm: each

\$8000 – \$12 000



Clockwise from top left:
*Upper part of the Gateway
 from the Te Ngae Pa,
 Rotorua, early 19th C*
*Upper section of a carved
 post, dwelling-place for the
 spirit Uenuku*
*Hue, a gourd used as a
 pre-served food receptacle,
 c. 1860*
*Greenstone Hei Matau,
 circa. 1860*



Clockwise from top left:
*The figure above the door
of Te Potaka*
Detail of a House Carving,
1842
War Canoe Stern Post,
1831
Greenstone Hei Tiki



53.
*Carved Gateway, Pukeroa
Village, Rotorua, c. 1850.*
chromogenic colour print
impressed signature stamp
405 x 285mm
\$2500 – \$4000



54.
*Former Gateway from
Rotorua Region (Auckland
Museum)*
chromogenic colour print
impressed signature stamp
367 x 280mm
\$2500 – \$4000



55.
Tattooing Pigment Pot,
Waipu District c. 1820
(Whanagnui Regional
Museum Collection)
chromogenic colour print
impressed signature stamp
610 x 507mm
\$4500 – \$6400



56.

*Easter Island Dance Paddle –
Auckland Institute & Museum, New
Zealand 1975*

colour photograph printed from Kodak
transparency on Ektacolour paper

original *Brian Brake: Dowse Art
Gallery* exhibition label affixed verso

455 x 350mm

\$4500 – \$6500



57.
*Maori Elder at Tangi,
Ngaruawahia, Waikato*
chromogenic colour print
signed
508 x 438mm
\$2500 – \$4000



58.
*Unveiling Ceremony, Lake Rotoiti,
Rotorua*
chromogenic colour print
signed
355 x 279mm
\$2500 – \$4000

Chromogenic color prints were first introduced by Kodak in 1942 and came to be the predominant form of colour photography in the latter half of the Twentieth Century. The type utilized by Brian Brake and which appear in this catalogue were produced from a color transparency (slide). Chromogenic color prints are composed of three main dye layers – cyan, magenta, and yellow – that together form a full colour image. The light sensitive material in each layer is a silver halide emulsion, as it is in a gelatin silver print. Plastic chromogenic papers such as Kodak Duratrans and Duraclear are the same as used for producing backlit advertising lightboxes.

Gelatin silver prints were the dominant photographic process right from the period of their introduction in the 1880s until the 1960s when they were eclipsed by consumer color photography. They remain the most common form of black and white photography. Soon after their introduction in 1882 the gelatin silver print virtually replaced the albumen print (as seen in the Nineteenth Century photographs of The Burton Brothers, Muir and Moodie, John Kinder and Josiah Martin) due to its stability, ease of use and enlargement ability.

Cibachrome prints are created from colour transparencies and possess a sharpness, colour intensity and critical accuracy to the original slide which is stunning. Cibachrome prints are printed onto a polyester base (i.e, plastic and not paper) and this means that their life expectancy is far greater than other print processes. Ilford purchased the process in the 1960s, dubbing the cibachrome process Ilfochrome.

Conditions of sale

Please note: it is assumed that all bidders at auction have read and agreed to the conditions described on this page.
ART+OBJECT directors are available during the auction viewing to clarify any questions you may have.

1. Registration: Only registered bidders may bid at auction. You are required to complete a bidding card or absentee bidding form prior to the auction giving your correct name, address and telephone contact + supplementary information such as email addresses that you may wish to supply to ART+OBJECT

2. Bidding: The highest bidder will be the purchaser subject to the auctioneer accepting the winning bid and any vendor's reserve having been reached. The auctioneer has the right to refuse any bid. If this takes place or in the event of a dispute the auctioneer may call for bids at the previous lowest bid and proceed from this point. Bids advance at sums decreed by the auctioneer unless signaled otherwise by the auctioneer. No bids may be retracted. The auctioneer retains the right to bid on behalf of the vendor up to the reserve figure.

3. Reserve: Lots are offered and sold subject to the vendor's reserve price being met.

4. Lots offered and sold as described and viewed: ART+OBJECT makes all attempts to accurately describe and catalogue lots offered for sale. Notwithstanding this neither the vendor nor ART+OBJECT accepts any liability for errors of description or faults and imperfections whether described in writing or verbally. This applies to questions of authenticity and quality of the item. Buyers are deemed to have inspected the item thoroughly and proceed on their own judgment. The act of bidding is agreed by the buyer to be an indication that they are satisfied on all counts regarding condition and authenticity.

5. Buyers premium: The purchaser by bidding acknowledges their acceptance of a buyers premium of 15% + Gst on the premium to be added to the hammer price in the event of a successful sale at auction.

6. ART+OBJECT is an agent for a vendor: A+O has the right to conduct the sale of an item on behalf of a vendor. This may include withdrawing an item from sale for any reason.

7. Payment: Successful bidders are required to make full payment immediately post sale – being either the day of the sale or the following day. If for any reason payment is delayed then a 20% deposit is required immediately and the balance to 100% required within 3 working days of the sale date. Payment can be made by Eftpos, bank cheque or cash. Cheques must be cleared before items are available for collection. Credit cards are not accepted.

8. Failure to make payment: If a purchaser fails to make payment as outlined in point 7 above ART+OBJECT may without any advice to the purchaser exercise its right to: a) rescind or stop the sale, b) re offer the lot for sale to an underbidder or at auction. ART+OBJECT reserves the right to pursue the purchaser for any difference in sale proceeds if this course of action is chosen, c) to pursue legal remedy for breach of contract.

9. Collection of goods: Purchased items are to be removed from ART+OBJECT premises immediately after payment or clearance of cheques. Absentee bidders must make provision for the uplifting of purchased items (see instructions on the facing page)

10. Bidders obligations: The act of bidding means all bidders acknowledge that they are personally responsible for payment if they are the successful bidder. This includes all registered absentee or telephone bidders. Bidders acting as an agent for a third party must obtain written authority from ART+OBJECT and provide written instructions from any represented party and their express commitment to pay all funds relating to a successful bid by their nominated agent.

11. Bids under reserve & highest subject bids: When the highest bid is below the vendor's reserve this work may be announced by the auctioneer as sold 'subject to vendor's authority' or some similar phrase. The effect of this announcement is to signify that the highest bidder will be the purchaser at the bid price if the vendor accepts this price. If this highest bid is accepted then the purchaser has entered a contract to purchase the item at the bid price plus any relevant buyers premium.

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The following information does not form part of the conditions of sale, however buyers, particularly first time bidders are recommended to read these notes.

A. Bidding at auction: Please ensure your instructions to the auctioneer are clear and easily understood. It is well to understand that during a busy sale with multiple bidders the auctioneer may not be able to see all bids at all times. It is recommended that you raise your bidding number clearly and without hesitation. If your bid is made in error or you have misunderstood the bidding level please advise the auctioneer immediately of your error – prior to the hammer falling. Please note that if you have made a bid and the hammer has fallen and you are the highest bidder you have entered a binding contract to purchase an item at the bid price.

B. Absentee bidding: ART+OBJECT welcomes absentee bids once the necessary authority has been completed and lodged with ART+OBJECT. A+O will do all it can to ensure bids are lodged on your behalf but accepts no liability for failure to carry out these bids. See the Absentee bidding form in this catalogue for information on lodging absentee bids. These are accepted up to 3 hours prior to the published auction commencement.

C. Telephone bids: The same conditions apply to telephone bids. It is highly preferable to bid over a landline as the vagaries of cellphone connections may result in disappointment. You will be telephoned prior to your indicated lot arising in the catalogue order. If the phone is engaged or connection impossible the sale will proceed without your bidding. The auctioneer will endeavour to cater to the requirements of phone bidders but cannot wait for a phone bid so your prompt participation is requested.

Absentee bid form

Auction No 41 9 December 2010 Selected Vintage Photographs from the Estate of Brian Brake

This completed and signed form authorizes ART+OBJECT to bid on my behalf at the above mentioned auction for the following lots up to prices indicated below. These bids are to be executed at the lowest price levels possible.

I understand that if successful I will purchase the lot or lots at or below the prices listed on this form and the listed buyers premium for this sale (15%) and GST on the buyers premium. I warrant also that I have read and understood and agree to comply with the conditions of sale as printed in the catalogue.

Lot no.	Description	Bid max
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Payment and Delivery ART+OBJECT will advise me as soon as is practical that I am the successful bidder of the lot or lots described above. I agree to pay immediately on receipt of this advice. Payment will be by cash, cheque or bank transfer. I understand that cheques will need to be cleared before goods can be uplifted or dispatched. I will arrange for collection or dispatch of my purchases. If ART+OBJECT is instructed by me to arrange for packing and dispatch of goods I agree to pay any costs incurred by ART+OBJECT. Note: ART+OBJECT requests that these arrangements are made prior to the auction date to ensure prompt delivery processing.

Please indicate as appropriate by ticking the box: ☐ PHONE BID ☐ ABSENTEE BID

MR/MRS/MS: _____ SURNAME: _____

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Signed as agreed: _____

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