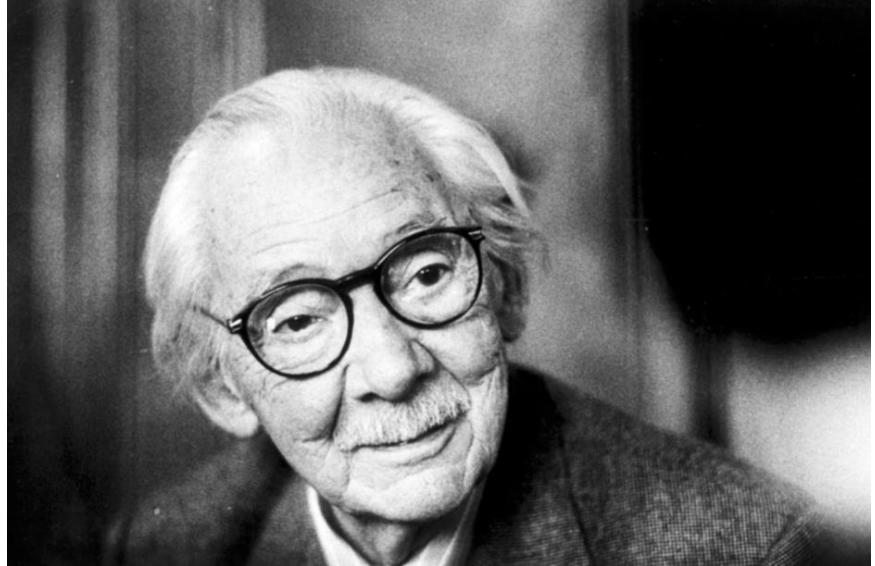


#78 December 2022
Cameraderie
Manuel Álvarez Bravo
(1902-2002)



Manuel Álvarez Bravo's career spanned 70 years, from the 1920s to the 1990s. He participated in many of the arts, and with many collaborators. Please read some of the linked articles below for extensive details, but here are a few highlights that impressed me:

- He was one of the leading—perhaps *the* leading—Mexican photographer in the 20th Century.
- He was known internationally, knew everyone in the art world in Mexico, and collaborated with many of them.
- He received numerous prizes and honors, and had his work exhibited all over the world.
- Two of his images were included in the 1955 MOMA exhibit, *The Family of Man* (#22, Sept. 2017; #69, Feb. 2022).
- Early in his career, in 1930, Tina Modotti (#63, July 2021) was deported from Mexico for political activities, and she left him her camera and her job at Mexican Folkways magazine.
- He trained most of the next generation of photographers, including Graciela Iturbide (#59, March 2021).
- His work includes overtones of humor, surrealism, and symbolism. See some of his images below.

Here are several interesting links for more information. I particularly recommend the Wikipedia article for a good and detailed overview.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manuel_%C3%81lvarez_Bravo

The following Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) site has 51 images—to see them all, press the button, “Works,” on the left side of the home page: <https://www.moma.org/artists/135>
Among the MOMA images are several of Álvarez Bravo's nudes—all of which are deeply symbolic or surrealistic.

<https://allaboutmonochrome.com/2015/07/05/manuel-alvarez-bravo/>

Here are some of Álvarez Bravo's images that I particularly like:

El ensueño (The Daydreamer) 1931



Of course, that one little patch of sunlight on this young person's shoulder makes the composition. But the suffusion of shadows also suggests the dream world.

Los agachados (The Crouched Ones) 1932-34



Here are a group of men lunching at a quick food counter. What does it suggest that they are headless? Is the door in danger of closing and consigning them to Hell?

Recent Grave

1933



I don't quite know what this is—maybe feathers. But it has a stirring impact on me

The Mother of the Shoeshine Boy and the Shoeshine Boy 1950s



Diego Rivera had advised Álvarez Bravo to photograph more ordinary folk.

Salt Workers in Cuyutlán 3

1938



These workers are faceless, and therefore represent all workers. One wonders about the health for their breath and skin working in unprotected contact with all that salt.

Striking Worker, Assassinated

1934



This is a very direct documentary shot of street violence. Again, the dead worker is generalized to be any worker because his features are obscured by blood.

Footnote to #25 January 2018 The Vietnam/American War

In #25, I included the following section:

Misdirected Napalm Attack

After brief and intense internal controversy, the Associated Press decided to distribute this photograph. Immediately after taking the image, the photographer, Nick Ut, took the burned girl, Phan Thi Kim Phuc, to a hospital. She recovered from burns on 30% of her body. She now lives in Toronto, and she and Ut have maintained a life-long friendship. Ut won a Pulitzer Prize, and several other awards, for this image. Read the story of this image and Nick Ut here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Ut. I have shown two versions of Ut's image available on the internet. The first is evidently the full frame he shot, and the second is an editorial cropping, which instructs us all how to focus on the main subject of a scene.

"The Terror of War" by Nick Ut / The Associated Press



In the Washington Post of June 22, 2022, Nick Ut wrote the following poignant feature article about taking this photograph, its effect on the ending of the Vietnam/American war, and his life-long friendship with the child Phan Thi Kim Phuc. For those of you who have access to The Washington Post online, here is the link:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/06/02/nick-ut-vietnam-war-photo-kim-phuc/>