

was when I became aware of the importance of photography. Those scenes were going to be reproduced all over the world and it was our responsibility to document them. A photograph may or may not be classified as a work of art, in my opinion. Our task is to record events. Whether it's art or not depends on each individual's interpretation.

The funeral of Gilles Tautin on June 15, 1968 in Les Batignolles cemetery.

The seventeen-year-old secondary school student had gone to support strikers at the Renault factory in Flins. He was drowned in the Seine while attempting to flee from charging police.

Meanwhile... life goes on!

"Alécio de Andrade: With or without art: the photo-document",
O Globo, August 31, 1973, Rio de Janeiro.

"And this is precisely what I'm aiming at: to produce the greatest possible number of documents, photographs in other words, to record the moment I'm living through."

"The ephemeral gesture of things and people", Sonia Biondo,
O Globo, April 27, 1979, Rio de Janeiro.

— How to take photos is the only thing I know; (...) My sole concern, when I have my camera in my hand, is to record the things I see, like in a diary. It's the act of taking the photo that matters, of being present and bearing witness.

— To me what's essential is the spontaneity, the randomness of the instant you photograph.

PEF 2018
PARATY EM FOCO
14º FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL
DE FOTOGRAFIA
DE 19 A 23 DE SETEMBRO

Alécio de Andrade May '68

Diaporama by Patricia Newcomer
Montage - Roman Hatala
Original music - Ludovic Morillon and Jérôme Lorichon
Off-screen commentator - Rafael Hime

© Alécio de Andrade - ADAGP, Paris 2018

Black-and-white prints - TOROSLAB
Digitalization of black-and-white prints - Béatrice Hatala
Image processing - Anne-Marie Msili-Jézéquel
Digitalization and processing of press clippings - Christophe Pete, JANVIER

Translation Jacqueline Hall
Design by Patricia Newcomer and Antje Welde



© Alécio de Andrade - May '68

ALÉCIO DE ANDRADE MAY '68

"Letra A", José Carlos Oliveira, *Jornal do Brasil*, June 9, 1971, Rio de Janeiro.

Alécio (de Andrade) — I was talking about him the other day. He's working in Paris as a photographer for the weekly *Manchete* and he's just joined the Magnum agency. Raul Brandão, the painter of churches and high society, initiated Alécio into the art of photography. He gives us a few details:

"I got him a good, inexpensive camera, and an enlarger, and taught him the tricks of the trade. For at least a year, I developed his rolls of film, reviewed with a critical eye his contact sheets and enlargements, and bawled him out a couple of times. That could have been the end of our relationship except that he had the humility to come back the next day, not just to apologize, but to admit that the bawling out was both justified and necessary. At this point I began to realize that he wouldn't be just another of the many young madcaps who came in search of help and advice. That is why I edited his prints and helped to ensure that his exhibition at the Petite Galerie in Rio de Janeiro would be the first step towards a scholarship to go to Paris."

Just before....

"Alécio de Andrade: an enduring link to the ephemeral", Maria Lucia Rangel, *Jornal do Brasil*, April 15, 1979, Rio de Janeiro.

"Go and look, Alécio. Go and reflect what you see, and through your gaze we'll all grasp the feeling of shapes, which is the first – and the last – feeling of life..." (*What Alécio sees* - Carlos Drummond de Andrade)

He began taking photographs in Rio without quite knowing why: — Perhaps it's that link we have to the ephemeral and the nostalgia aroused by its loss. When something flits past, there's a profound need, to retain it. Deep down, it's the need for eternity.

— At the outset, learning to be a photographer is just a vague idea you have. Only later does it become a reality. When you forget about technique — and Alécio stresses the importance of forgetting it —, the link to reality inevitably becomes immediate. For that to happen, you must forget everything you've learnt. So that your hands and feet — which are so very important! — can finally break free. The act of taking photographs also brings physical pleasure. In it two urges are amalgamated, one from the body, the other from the head.

Henri Cartier-Bresson

It was during the turmoil of May '68 in Paris that Alécio met Cartier-Bresson:

— He'd been hit on the head and he emerged, confused and haggard, amidst the smoke and collapsed into my arms. A few seconds later he revived and called out for his helmet: "*Mon casque, mon casque!*" I gave it to him and he left. A few hours later we met again. By that time I'd lost my girl-friend and we went to look for her together. As we walked down the rue St. Jacques, I remember Henri stopped in front of a graffiti to photograph it. It said: *Chantage ou Bonheur* ("blackmail or happiness"). I said nothing and we set off again. But then he started wondering if he'd got the light right. He wasn't sure, so he turned round and did the job again.

It was just two years later that Alécio became a member of the team at the Magnum agency founded by Cartier-Bresson, Robert Capa and David Seymour. But he learnt his most important lessons, not from friendship and experience, but from courage:

— Henri and I often met and talked, so naturally we exchanged ideas about photography. Sometimes I went out to work with him, but while we often dealt with the same topics, sometimes we approached them from different angles, like when de Gaulle died. He went to Colombey-

les-Deux-Églises and I went to Notre Dame. School is useful only for people who want to be virtuosos, in the technical sense.

And technique was what Alécio was least concerned with.

— It's the act that matters. But I don't really agree with what Cartier-Bresson described as "flagrant délit". I think something has to happen between the subject and the photographer. Without this reciprocity, nothing is possible, though obviously there are times when you have to act quickly to bear witness to an event.

"Alécio de Andrade: With or without art, the photo-document", *O Globo*, August 31, 1973, Rio de Janeiro.

Not until the time of the barricades in the Latin Quarter did Alécio discover "the true value and importance of photography".

"Our task is to record events. Whether it's art or not depends on each individual's interpretation."

In other words, several factors come into play. At the start, he said, "I tried to give an artistic conception to my work, perhaps because I was just an amateur".

— I did things, but only for my personal satisfaction. I wasn't concerned with contexts, moments in time, or more elaborate ideas. I hadn't yet discovered the true value and importance of photography. That could well be because I was unaware of the true value of things generally. Today my work is quite different. I photograph everything, but there's one important detail: I only use the ordinary lens.

— And how did this change come about?

— The transformation took four years. After leaving Brazil, I travelled widely in different European countries and spent a long time in New York. I was the correspondent of a Brazilian magazine and worked free-lance as well. I took photos for *Elle* and did other jobs too. The real change took place in 1968. By then I'd settled permanently in Paris and I saw the barricades in the Latin Quarter. I took a lot of pictures and that