

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Fashion mourns the loss of NYT's Bill Cunningham

June 27, 2016



Bill Cunningham

By STAFF REPORTS

Over the weekend, the fashion industry lost beloved New York Times photographer Bill Cunningham.

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Mr. Cunningham passed away June 25 at the age of 87 after suffering from a stroke. A self-taught photographer, Mr. Cunningham prefer capturing the fashion styles of everyday people, rather than focusing on celebrity.

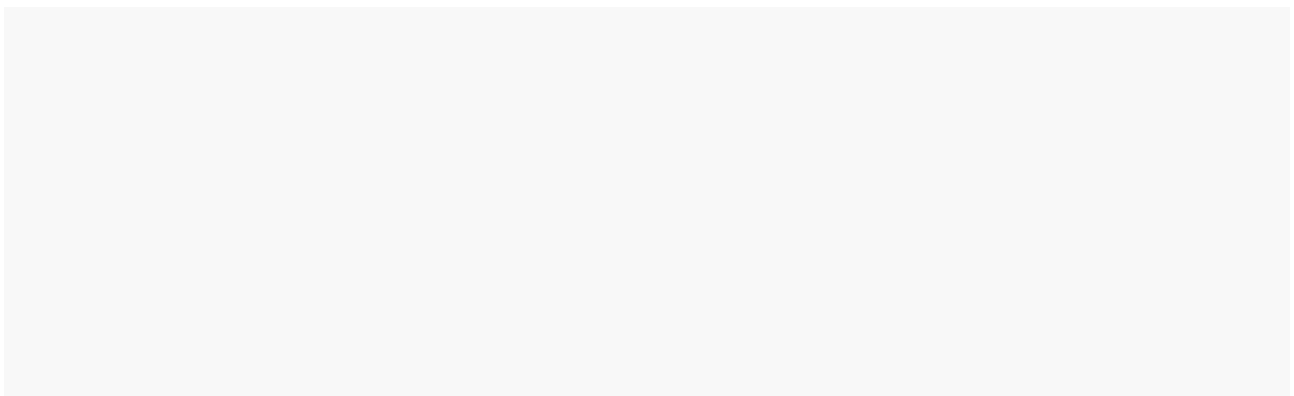
On the street with Bill Cunningham

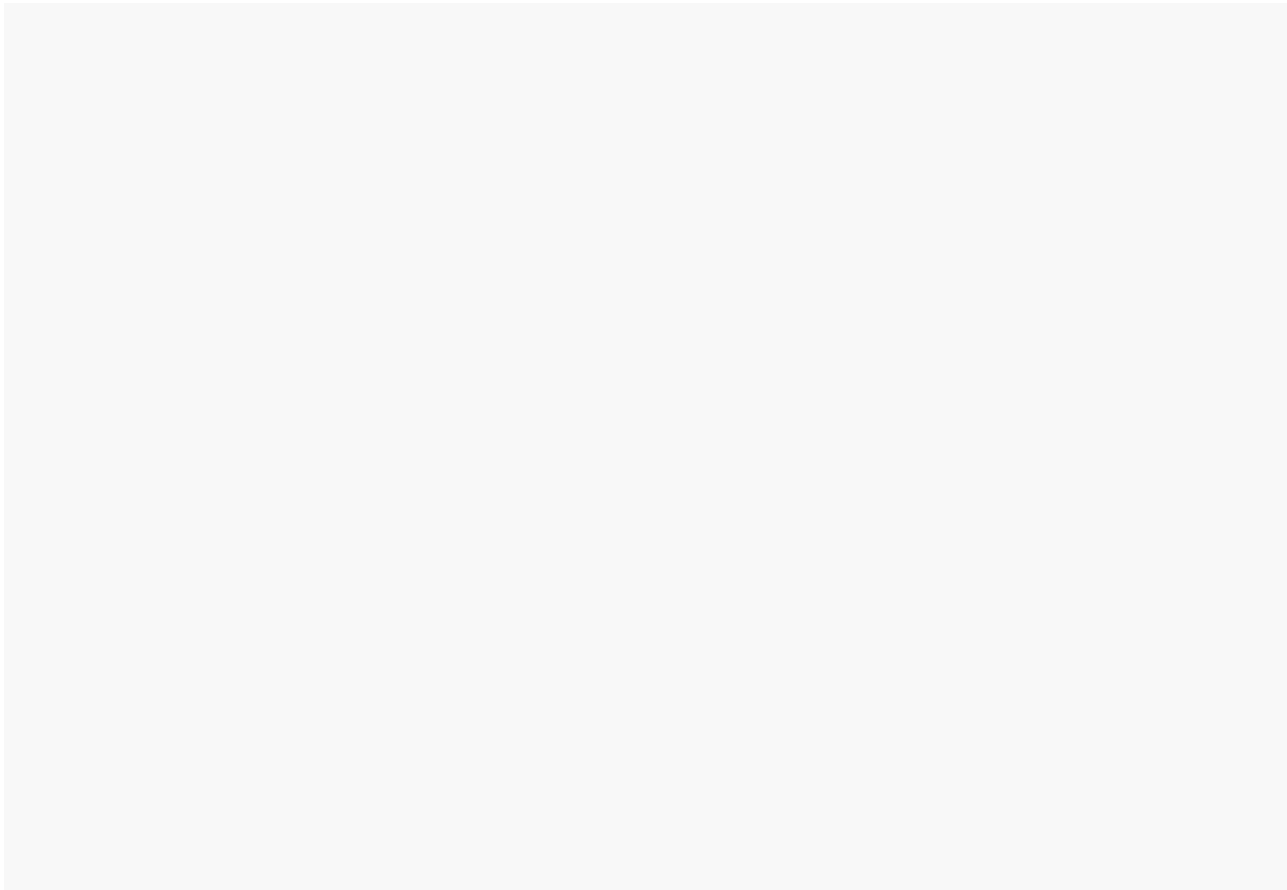
Born in Boston in 1929, Mr. Cunningham was a Harvard University dropout, and was first a women's hat maker before picking up a camera.

As a young man working for Women's Wear Daily and the Chicago Tribune, Mr. Cunningham began taking candid photos of fashion on the streets of New York, focusing on the use of clothing to exude expression.

In December 1978, he published a portfolio to the New York Times, a project that would soon become his regular series, "On the Street."

New Yorkers would often spot Mr. Cunningham wearing his own personal signature: a blue work man's jacket paired with a camera. Mr. Cunningham traveled by bicycle.





Bill Cunningham in @centralparknyc in 1967 with his first camera, a half-frame that cost \$35. A #streetstyle photographer whose photo essays memorialized trends ranging from fanny packs to Birkin bags, #BillCunningham died in New York today at 87. In nearly 40 years working for @nytimes, he operated both as a chronicler of fashion and as an unlikely cultural anthropologist. He wanted to find subjects, not be the subject. He wanted to observe, rather than be observed. "When I'm photographing," he once said, "I look for personal style with which something is worn. ... At parties, it's important to be invisible, to catch people when they're oblivious to the camera - to get the intensity of their speech, the gestures of their hands. I'm interested in capturing a moment with animation and spirit." #?

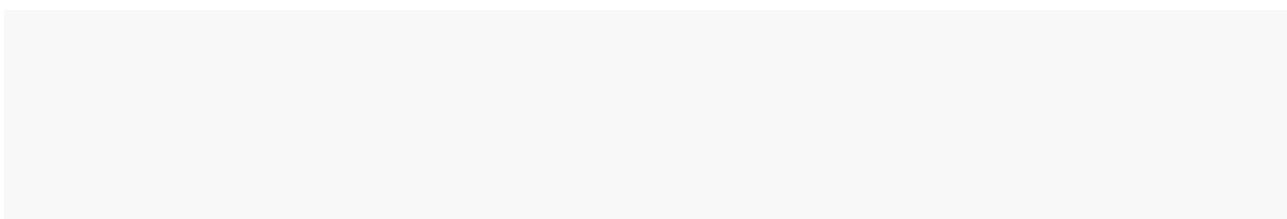
A photo posted by The New York Times (@nytimes) on Jun 25, 2016 at 3:42pm PDT

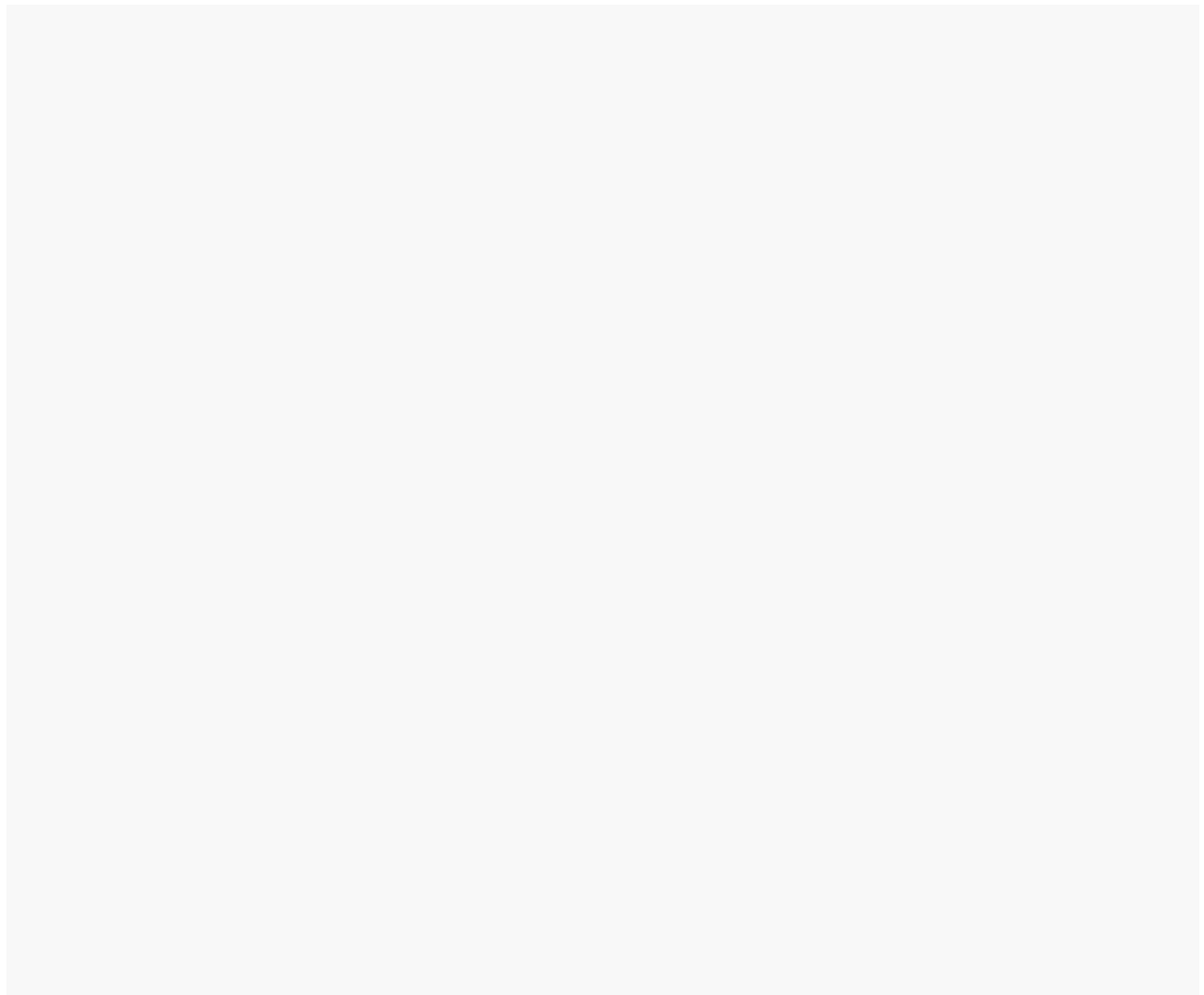
His contribution to fashion journalism was recognized by the CFDA, which named Mr. Cunningham as outstanding photographer of the year in 1983. In 2008, Mr. Cunningham was awarded the Officier de l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture.

The following year, the New York Landmark Conservancy named him a "living landmark."

Since news of his passing on June 25, Mr. Cunningham has been memorialized by fans, friends and fashion lovers. On Instagram alone, the photographer's name has been tagged in nearly 40,000 posts.

Vogue International editor Suzy Menkes took time on her Instagram account to share her memories of Mr. Cunningham and the impact he left on the fashion industry and fashion journalism.





At age 87, Bill Cunningham was still cycling around New York, refusing my offer to share a taxi, even when it snowed. He always wore one of his royal blue cotton Paris street cleaners jackets. I hope those massive piles of photographs for the New York Times will be shown as an exhibition of changing styles.

A photo posted by Suzy Menkes (@suzymenkesvogue) on Jun 25, 2016 at 2:50pm PDT

Brands, media outlets and celebrities alike looked to social media to remember Mr. Cunningham, including the New York Times, Humans of New York, Vogue, Rihanna, Bergdorf Goodman, Marc Jacobs and Anya Hindmarch, among many, many others.

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