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LIMITED EDITIONS

PRESS RELEASE

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***Bruce Davidson: Central Park in Platinum* Provides Collectors Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity**

Limited Edition Platinum Prints to be Published in Unique Hand-Bound Collector's Portfolio

Santa Barbara, California, December 3, 2008 – Verso Limited Editions, a publisher of handcrafted books that celebrate the work of significant photographers, announced the March 2009 publication of *Bruce Davidson: Central Park in Platinum*. Produced in a limited edition of 50 books, this hand-bound collection will contain twelve bound platinum prints and two free-standing platinum prints. Each print is numbered and signed by Davidson. The book includes an introduction by Charlotte Cotton, curator and department head of photography at Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

“Platinum is known as a precious metal. It’s a noble metal in that it is beautiful, helpful and catalytic. When used in making a platinum print, it allows for a greater tonal range and subtlety in the final print. The craftsmanship of this project is beyond what I could ever achieve using silver gelatin,” said the photographer, Bruce Davidson, upon viewing the first completed commerce edition. *“It is as if the Central Park imagery has been reborn and a new vision of the imagery holds true. The Platinum portfolio has brought me closer to my original vision and closer to the nature of the Park.”*

“For over 40 years, Bruce Davidson has been one of my heroes,” said Glen Serbin, president of Verso Limited Editions. *“As a boy, his work inspired me to follow a path in professional photography. I am honored, as well as humbled, to have the opportunity to publish this remarkable photographer’s work in platinum. The entire process has been a labor of love.”*

Bruce Davidson

Bruce Davidson began taking photographs at the age of ten in Oak Park, Illinois. While attending Rochester Institute of Technology and Yale University, he continued to further his knowledge and develop his passion. He was later drafted into the army and stationed near Paris. There he met Henri Cartier-Bresson, one of the founders of the renowned cooperative photography agency, Magnum Photos.

When he left military service in 1957, Davidson worked as a freelance photographer for *LIFE* magazine and in 1958, at the age of 25, became a full member of Magnum. From 1958 to 1961, he created such seminal bodies of work as “The Dwarf,” “Brooklyn Gang,” and “Freedom Rides.” He received a Guggenheim fellowship in 1962 and created a profound documentation of the civil rights movement in America. In 1963, the Museum of Modern Art in New York presented his early work in a solo show.

In 1967, he received the first grant for photography from the National Endowment for the Arts, having spent two years witnessing the dire social conditions on one block in East Harlem. This work was published by Harvard University Press in 1970 under the title *East 100th Street* and was later republished and expanded by St. Ann’s Press. The work became an exhibition that same year at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 1980, he captured the vitality of the New York Metro’s underworld that was later published in a book, *Subway*, and exhibited at the International Center for Photography in 1982. From 1991-95 he photographed the landscape and layers of life in Central Park. In 2006, he completed a series of photographs titled “The Nature of Paris,” many of which have been shown and acquired by the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Davidson received an Open Society Institute Individual Fellowship in 1998 to return to East 100th Street. His awards include the Lucie Award for Outstanding Achievement in Documentary Photography in 2004 and a Gold Medal Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Arts Club in 2007. Classic bodies of work from his 50-year career have been extensively published in monographs and are included in many major public and private fine art collections around the world. He continues to photograph and produce new bodies of work.

Central Park Images

The fourteen images included in *Bruce Davidson: Central Park in Platinum* come from Davidson’s four-year exploration of the park, which began in 1991. At the time the park was a neglected dustbowl, synonymous with the social ills and threats of the late 20th century. Davidson was originally commissioned by National Geographic to document the park in a color series. But while the sumptuous vibrancy of Kodachrome film and the dye transfer printing process brilliantly combined with the harsh

realities of life in Davidson's Subway work, neither Davidson nor National Geographic found the fruits of his three-month labor in the park a similar success.

For the magazine, Davidson had not found enough of the sensationalized, underworld violence credited to New York's neglected park. For himself, he had discovered that this still magnificent landscape could not be shown through the saccharine tint of color. Once the commission had been cancelled, Davidson began the real work of finding the essence of the park's diverse terrain in black and white. In these exquisite platinum prints, we comprehend just how essential monochromatic tonality is to Davidson's vision of Central Park.

The Platinum Prints

Platinum prints, which are rare due to the expense and labor intensive process, were chosen for their exceptional warmth, tonal detail and subtlety. The platinum print utilizes a negative that is the size of the final image. The light-sensitive platinum solution is brushed on by hand and exposed to ultra violet light. The image becomes part of the paper itself to create a velvety matte surface. Historically, many great photographers have printed with platinum, including Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, Paul Strand, Edward Weston, Edward S. Curtis, Irving Penn and Manuel Alvarez Bravo. Platinum prints also have superior archival quality. The fourteen prints in *Bruce Davidson: Central Park in Platinum* will be individually hand printed in platinum by Stan Klimek on 100% cotton Arches Platine printmaking paper. The print size is 16 x 12.5 inch. There will be twelve bound prints, plus two free-standing prints that are suitable for framing. Each print is numbered and signed by Bruce Davidson.

Handmade Bookbinding - Process and Materials

Verso Limited Editions has employed the finest traditional materials and processes in the creation of *Bruce Davidson: Central Park in Platinum*. The text of *Central Park in Platinum* has been handset in Bembo by the Press & Letterfoundry of Michael & Winifred Bixler, and letter pressed on 100% cotton Cranes Rag paper by Michael Russem at KatRan Press. Book designers Skolkin + Chickey chose a rich variety of materials and worked closely with master bookbinder Mark Tomlinson to create a collection that evokes the natural tones and textures of the park. Each book is hand-bound in dark brown quarter-leather with distinctive green end sheets from the St. Armand Paper Mill, and natural linen covers title die stamped with gun-metal foil. The two free-standing platinum prints are individually housed in blind-stamped folios. Both the book and the unbound prints are encased in a unique box of Asahi brown cloth with a telescopic lid, mahogany walls and gated flaps. The entire collection is displayed in a custom-crafted mahogany box.

About Verso Limited Editions

Verso Limited Editions draws on the traditional, handcrafted book form to celebrate the work of significant photographers. Verso projects emulate the finely printed, rare editions of the 1900s of artists like Picasso, Chagall, Dali and Matisse. Born out of reverence for great photography, Verso Limited Editions are designed for individual private photography collectors, galleries with permanent collections, and institutions with an interest in the photographic genre.

In June of 2007, Verso released *Magnum Founders, In Celebration of Sixty Years*, a limited-edition collection of platinum prints celebrating the 60th anniversary of Magnum Photos, the photographic cooperative founded by Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, George Rodger and David “Chim” Seymour. *Magnum Founders* includes twelve bound and one free-standing rare platinum, estate-stamped prints of iconic images by these four visionaries who influenced the course of modern photographic history.

Magnum Founders was honored in May of 2008 by the Pictures of the Year International (POYi) Competition’s first *Distinguished Leadership in Photojournalism* Award. Produced in a limited edition of 75, there are currently just eight editions of *Magnum Founders* still available for purchase.

For more information on Verso Limited Editions please visit <http://www.versoeditions.com>.

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