Josef Koudelka

Koudelka's early work significantly shaped his later photography, and its emphasis on social and cultural rituals as well as death. He soon moved on to a more personal, in depth photographic study of the Gypsies of Slovakia, and later Romania. This work was exhibited in Prague in 1967. Throughout his career, Koudelka has been praised for his ability to capture the presence of the human spirit amidst dark landscapes. Desolation, waste, departure, despair and alienation are common themes in his work. His characters sometimes seem to come out of fairytales. Still, some see hope within his work — the endurance of human endeavor, in spite of its fragility. His later work focuses on the landscape removed of human subject.