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INDIENS D'AMAZONIE 1955-1975

VINGT BELLES ANNÉES

RENÉ FUERST

A positive appraisal of an extraordinary experience, but above all a tribute to the last Amazonian Indians still living in freedom. This is the gist of a new book by René Fuerst, an eminent ethnologist from Geneva, which condenses his observations over a large portion of his life dedicated to the indigenous populations of Amazonia. A kind of visual autobiography, passing through the central regions of Brazil, especially the Mato Grosso and the deepest Amazonian forest, and covering encounters with inhabitants, research projects, and trips to gather objects of ethnographic interest that have enriched the collections of European museums, particularly the Musée d'ethnographie in Geneva.

His black-and-white photographs capture and illustrate a wealth of encounters over a twenty-year period, dwelling on faces, bodies, and ceremonies, in some cases sedate and in others involving dances. The pictures also explore daily life and its inherent dignity, displayed through the objects that give it resonance, cajoling the reader into serious reflection on Lévi-Strauss's notoriously *tristes tropiques*.

René Fuerst was born in 1933 and is an ethnologist specializing in Amazonian tribes, with whom he has lived at various times between 1955 and 1975, writing books and making documentaries and recordings. He was an independent researcher from 1983 to 1998 and is now a curator at the Musée d'ethnographie in Geneva. He was a member of the investigatory missions established by the International Committee of the Red Cross (1970) and the Anti-Slavery International (1972) in London. He was refused entry by the Brazilian authorities in 1975 on account of his criticism of their policy towards the indigenous population. 5 Continents has already published his *Yanomami. Premiers et derniers amazoniens* (2011), *Indiens d'Amazonie. Réminiscences d'un passé lointain* (2008), and *Xikrin. Hommes oiseaux d'Amazonie* (2006).