



## A LIFE IN PICTURES

Reality has been good to Albert Maysles. He and his brother David, pioneers of the '60s movement direct cinema, always attempted to paint true pictures of their subjects—whether that was the Rolling Stones or rural Georgians—unadulterated by point of view. With the meticulousness of ethnographers and the empathy of psychologists (Albert Maysles's first profession), they filmed the everyday lives of door-to-door Bible salesmen (*Salesman*), rock bands (*Gimme Shelter*) and faded aristocracy (*Grey Gardens*).

Now comes *A Maysles Scrapbook: photographs/cinematographs/documents*, 376 pages of artifacts from the Maysles brothers' lifetime of filmmaking (David died in 1987). "Both photography and cinema can bring the viewer so close to what is happening that the experience of the subject can become that of the viewer," writes Albert in the book's introduction (the foreword is written by Martin Scorsese).

In this case, the Maysles brothers are part of that subject matter, their eager faces peering from the pages, along with images of Brando, the Beatles, Sophia Loren, Rostropovich, Christo (lots of Christo) and the Burks of Georgia (from a film commissioned by Westinghouse Broadcasting Co., a company

that required the Maysles brothers to subtitle the film for fear the Burks' thick accents would make their speech impossible for non-Georgians to decipher).

Just as captivating, if not more, are red-tape relics: the letter asking a Bible sales company for suggestions of "dedicated, top-notch, full-time" salesmen to profile; negotiations with Mick Jagger over the edit of *Gimme Shelter*; production notes about cameramen too zonked on LSD-laced wine to film.

True, the book doesn't give what the films do (e.g. the painfully long shot of salesman Paul Brennan, "The Badger," meditating on his despair in *Salesman*), but the viewer/reader is drawn to digest the images in both the agnostic and scopophilic way that we do the Maysleses' films. "There's something special about a really good photograph," says Maysles. "Without sound and movement, you're all eyes on that photograph . . . You're left alone with that moment, and that could be very powerful." *An exhibition of prints from the book will be on display through Mar. 15 at Steven Kasher Gallery, 521 W. 23rd St., 2nd Fl., New York. For more information, see [www.stevenkasher.com](http://www.stevenkasher.com)* ★ Lisa Selin Davis • Photograph from *A Maysles Scrapbook: photographs/cinematographs/documents* by Albert Maysles