

Conversation

# Alex Majoli

*Life is a stage, photojournalism  
its screenplay*

KBr

Fundación **MAPFRE**

Barcelona Photo Center

Eng

# Alex Majoli

## *Life is a stage, photojournalism its screenplay*



© Alex Majoli/Magnum Photos

Date  
**January 21, 2026**

Time  
**7 pm**

Activity in English with  
simultaneous translation  
into Spanish

In person and online  
[kbr.fundacionmapfre.org](http://kbr.fundacionmapfre.org)

On the occasion of the workshop *Unveiling the Myth: How Photography Acts* which Alex Majoli will lead from January 22 to 25, we present this conversation between the photographer and Arianna Rinaldo, devoted to looking back at Majoli's career and his distinctive approach to visual storytelling.

Majoli's work focuses on the human condition and the theater of everyday life, moving beyond reportage to exploring the emotional and psychological dimensions of his subjects. Inspired by the theories of Franco Basaglia—a pioneer of modern mental healthcare and the driving force behind the abolition of psychiatric hospitals in Italy—his first long-term project documented the closure of the asylum on the Greek island of Leros and resulted in his first monograph, *Leros*. This early interest in psychiatric care led Majoli to Brazil, where he began *Tudo Bom*, an ongoing project now more than two decades in the making, which explores the contrasts and extremes found in the underbelly of society.

Drawing on his experience photographing people in a wide range of contexts, Majoli develops the idea that we are all actors in our own lives. From this reflection emerges *Scene*, another ongoing project in which he uses artificial light to dramatize ordinary routines, intensifying the sense of performance within real environments.

Majoli's images become cinematic scenes in which people, through spontaneous performances, reveal their identities. This boundary between the documentary and the theatrical generates the tension that drives him to continue exploring spaces where the human condition is put to the test. Even in the deepest tragedy, Majoli uncovers theater, pride, and the magnificence of the human spirit.

**Alex Majoli** (Ravenna, Italy, 1971), photographer for the Magnum Agency, explores the human condition and the theater inherent in everyday life. A graduate of the Ravenna Art Institute, his career began with *Leros*, a project documenting the closure of the famous psychiatric hospital on the island of the same name, in Greece.

Since then, and over the years, his photojournalistic work has been marked by a constant questioning of conventional documentary form and, more broadly, of the nature and role of photography itself. He joined Magnum Photos in 1996 and became a full member in 2001.

His work is held in major public collections, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art; the International Center of Photography (ICP); and Mucem. Among his numerous accolades are the W. Eugene Smith Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the ICP Infinity Award. He has published several books, including *Leros*, *Congo*, *Scene* and *Opera Aperta*.

**Arianna Rinaldo** (Milan, Italy, 1971) is an independent curator, photo editor, and educator. Between 2012 and 2021 she was artistic director of the *Cortona On The Move* international festival in Tuscany. Prior to that, she managed the Magnum Photos archive in New York, edited *Colors* magazine, and served as editor-in-chief of the quarterly documentary photography magazine *OjodePez*.

Since 2016, she has been a photography curator at PhEST in Monopoli and continues to develop photographic projects internationally, while also collaborating with leading international events such as Houston FotoFest (Houston, USA), FORMAT Festival (Derby, United Kingdom), and Fotografia Europea (Reggio Emilia, Italy), among others. She is a member of the selection committees for the British Journal of Photography's Ones to Watch, the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize, and the Leica Oskar Barnack Award (LOBA).

# KBr

Fundación **MAPFRE**

Barcelona Photo Center