

Workshop  
*Get Real! (Open your eyes!)*

# Alejandro Cartagena

*Building New Meanings  
Through the Photobook*

**KBr**

Fundación **mapfre**

Program

The photobook is one of the most complex and rich ways of thinking about contemporary photography. Unlike a single image, which stands on its own strength, in a photobook the images are part of a structured language and generate meaning through the relationships created by the sequence, rhythm, design, and physicality of the book as an object.

This workshop proposes exploring photobooks as spaces for constructing meaning, where editing is essentially writing with images and where every decision, from the order of the photos to the typeface and paper chosen, contributes to the visual and conceptual experience.

The workshop will focus on editing, understood not as a technical process of selecting “the best photographs” but as the process of constructing the journey that the reader experiences, page by page. In a photobook, a seemingly incidental image can sustain an entire sequence, while a powerful photograph can upset the balance of the whole. Editing involves making narrative decisions, generating tension, and introducing silence.

Finally, by analyzing historical references and experimenting with mock-ups, the workshop invites its participants to understand photobooks not only as a publication format, but also as a form of visual thinking: a way of organizing images, time, and material to construct new narratives through photography.

Dates  
**Thursday 21 to Sunday 24,  
May 2026**

Schedule  
**10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.  
to 6 p.m.**

**The workshop will be held  
in Spanish**

Opening talk: *Alejandro Cartagena. 2005-2026 Projects*, Alejandro Cartagena in conversation with Arianna Rinaldo.

**Wednesday, May 20, 7 p.m.  
In person and online  
In Spanish**

[kbr.fundacionmapfre.org](http://kbr.fundacionmapfre.org)

Alejandro Cartagena (b. 1977, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic) is a visual artist who lives and works in Monterrey, Mexico. His praxis explores landscape, portraiture, and archives to analyze the social, political, and economic structures that shape contemporary cities in Latin America. Cartagena's work has been exhibited internationally in over 50 collective and individual exhibitions.

Alejandro is a self-publisher and co-editor, and has created several award-winning titles, including *Insurrection Nation* (Studio Cartagena, 2021), *Santa Barbara Save US* (Skinnerbook, 2020), *A Small Guide to Homeownership* (The Velvet Cell, 2020), *We Love Our Employees* (Gato Negro, 2019), *Santa Barbara Shame on US* (Skinnerbook, 2017), *A Guide to Infrastructure and Corruption* (The Velvet Cell, 2017), *Rivers of Power* (Newwer, 2016), *Santa Barbara Return Jobs to US* (Skinnerbook, 2016), *Headshots* (self-published, 2015), *Before the War* (self-published, 2015), *Carpoolers* (self-published with support from the FONCA grant, 2014), and *Suburbia Mexicana* (Daylight / Photolucida, 2010). Some of his books are part of collections including those of Yale University Library, Tate Britain, and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston's 10x10 Photobooks collection, among others.

Cartagena has received several awards and his work has been published internationally in magazines and newspapers. He has been named International Discovery by FotoFest, TALENT by FOAM Magazine, and Emerging Photographer by Photo District News. He was also shortlisted for the Aperture Portfolio Prize and has been nominated for the Santa Fe Prize for Photography, the Prix Pictet, the PhotoEspaña Descubrimientos Award, and the FOAM Paul Huf Award.

The workshop is designed to be an intensive four-day experience with theoretical and practical aspects, debates and conversations. The goal is to offer tools for the creation of a photobook dummy from the participants' works. The daily editing sessions are meant to bring the work from a series of images to a significant sequence that has coherence and sense. Collective exchange of ideas and continuous feedback are the core of the workshop.

**Opening talk**  
**Alejandro Cartagena. 2005-2026**  
**Wednesday, May 20, 7 p.m.**

In person and online

The day before the start of the workshop, Alejandro Cartagena will deliver a talk at KBr Fundación Mapfre.

**Day 1**  
**Thursday, May 21**

- 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Presentation of workshop concepts
- 1 - 2 p.m. Break
- 2 - 6 p.m. Presentations of the participants and their work

**Day 2**  
**Friday, May 22**

- 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Study and analysis of photobooks
- 1 - 2 p.m. Break
- 2 - 6 p.m. First editing exercises

**Day 3**  
**Saturday, May 23**

- 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Editing Strategies
- 1 - 2 p.m. Break
- 2 - 6 p.m. Image Editing

**Day 4**  
**Sunday, May 24**

- 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Final editing and creation of mock-ups
- 1 - 2 p.m. Break
- 3 - 5 p.m. Presentation of the mock-ups

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