

Conversation

Alejandro Cartagena

Projects: 2005-2026

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From "An Invisible Line (2010-2017)" © Alejandro Cartagena

Date
May 20, 2026

Time
7 pm

Activity in Spanish

In person and online

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On the occasion of the workshop ***Building New Meaning through the Photobook***, we present this conversation between the photographer **Alejandro Cartagena** and **Arianna Rinaldo**, dedicated to revisiting Cartagena's career and the evolution of his distinctive visual language.

This talk offers an in-depth look at two decades of photographic practice, tracing his work from 2005 to today. It will focus on the most relevant photographic series that have defined Cartagena's career, examining how his lens has consistently engaged with themes of urbanization, labor, migration, and the social landscapes of contemporary Mexico.

Through a reflective dialogue, Cartagena will discuss the conceptual foundations behind his most influential projects, the methodological shifts within his practice, and the visual strategies he employs to interrogate everyday realities. The conversation will also highlight how his work, grounded in long-term research and a multidisciplinary approach, moves between documentary and conceptual photography, challenging traditional boundaries while maintaining a strong socio-political focus.

This talk offers a unique opportunity to understand the continuity and transformation within Cartagena's oeuvre, which challenges conventional narratives, and consistently proposes a layered reading of reality in which aesthetics and social critique are deeply intertwined.

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* (Skinnerboox, 2020), *A Small Guide to Homeownership* (The Velvet Cell, 2020), *We Love Our Employees* (Gato Negro, 2019), *Santa Barbara Shame on US* (Skinnerboox, 2017), *A Guide to Infrastructure and Corruption* (The Velvet Cell, 2017), *Rivers of Power* (Newwer, 2016), *Santa Barbara Return Jobs to US* (Skinnerboox, 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 10×10 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.

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).

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