

Fundación Telefónica | International

Awakening ideas awakens the future

Players. Magnum photographers come to play

alvaro · Tuesday, May 8th, 2018

2017 marked 70 years since Robert Capa uncorked a champagne bottle along with Henri Cartier-Bresson, George Rodger and David Seymour to toast to the success of the now-famous [Magnum photographic agency](#). Since then, 92 photographers have contributed to its history, capturing the crucial events over this period in a language that is both artistic and journalistic, while also forging global icons.

The exhibition *Players. Magnum photographers come to play*, commissioned by **Cristina de Middel** and **Martín Parr**, shows a different facet of these professionals and seeks to present their fun-loving side through the concept of play. This proposal takes a look at the different meanings of the word “player” and collects images where play is present in different forms, whether in the actions captured by the images or in the recreational attitude of the photographer. In this proposal, either the photographers play or they watch as others do. This exhibition and its selection of images takes into account the wide variety of styles and visions of Magnum photographers who, through their cameras and their work, give way to a wide range of combinations on the concept of play. In the words of Cristina de Middel, the exhibition “hopes to relax people’s expectations for the agency, to show how it looks privately, in a relaxed setting, when no one’s looking. It’s about enjoying photography without having to record great universal truths in stone with each shot”.

The photographic exhibition brings together almost 200 black-and-white and colour photographs from different generations of the Magnum Agency in order to show images where play is the underlying theme. This exhibition is part of the proposal *Players*, suggested by the recent winner of the Spanish National Photography Award, Cristina de Middel, for [PHotoESPAÑA 2018](#). In it, the photographer challenges the audience to discover the most playful and experimental side of photography. Most Magnum authors have immortalized the great historical events of the 20th century, and have been recognized for their professional career in the area of journalism and photojournalism. Without downplaying this documentary work, the images and photographs selected for this exhibition offer a fresher, more open view of their current status and contribute to a broader understanding of photographers’ responsibilities as communicators and privileged witnesses.

This selection will also trace a particular retrospective of the agency itself, through

the history and the different photographic styles of its members, to show a lesser-known side of the Magnum archive. *Players* brings together authors from different generations (from historical photographers like **Jim Goldberg, Bruce Davidson, Susan Meiselas or Elliott Erwitt**, to more recent acquisitions such as **Alec Soth, Mark Stuart or Christopher Anderson**) to build an unusual retrospective of Magnum and its different styles, showing, for the first time, the fun, most easy-going facet of its authors.

This exhibition includes examples of all sorts of recreation and fun, using the word “player” to mean those that take part in sports like football, golf or baseball. This includes some examples of British eccentricity, such as **Peter Marlow’s** photographs of Eton students playing the famous “wall game”, a type of ancient rugby, or **Chris Steele-Perkins’** pictures of the cricket game played on the Isle of Wight each year when the tide gets low enough to reveal the sandy bank used as a playing field.

However, “player” can also refer to those that play musical instruments. As a result, this exhibition also includes photographs on the world of jazz by **Guy Le Querrec** or images by **Jonas Bendiksen** showing portraits of Norwegian heavy metal musicians in a state of ecstasy.

Players also refers to the more general idea of people just having fun: children playing in the street in pictures by **Bruce Davidson, Cristina García Roderó or Alex Webb** among others; people playing cards, chess, or betting on horses by **Marc Riboud** and **Bruce Gilden**. Especially noteworthy are the already-famous Pokémon GO pictures taken by **Thomas Dworzak** (which became the most popular photos ever uploaded to the Magnum website).

Biographies of Cristina de Middel and Martin Parr

Martín Parr (Epson, United Kingdom, 1952) has been a part of the Magnum agency since 1994, as well as one of the most well-known documentary photographers of his generation. With over 90 books published and an additional 30 edited by him, his photographic legacy is already well-established.

Parr also works as a commissioner and editor. He has served as commissioner at two Areles photography festivals in 2004 and the Brighton Biennial in 2010. More recently, he served as commissioner for the exhibition *Strange and Familiar* at the Barbican Centre. In 2013, he was named visiting professor of photography at the University of Ulster. Parr’s work has been included in the collections of many important museums, including the Tate, Pompidou or MoMA.

Cristina de Middel (Alacant, Spain, 1975) This Spanish photographer investigates the ambiguous relationship between photography and reality. Her work plays with the reconstruction of archetypes and stereotypes that help to blur the divisions between reality and fiction.

After 10 years working in the press and as a humanitarian photographer, De Middel created *The Afronaut*, a series narrating the adventures of the Zambian space program in 1964.

Since 2012, De Middel has produced new work focused on redefining the idea of documentation and contemplating the limited description of the world of mass media. Having published over 12 books, she has been a finalist and a winner of multiple awards such as 2012 PhotoFolio Arles or the Infinity Award from the International Center of Photography in New York. In 2017, Cristina de Middel won the Spanish National Photography Award and was nominated as a member of the Magnum agency.

Parallel activities

The exhibition *Players. Magnum photographers come to play*, the Space launched a new photography contest within the Instagram community. **#PlayersContest** is looking for images that show the most playful facet of life, images where play is the protagonist.

To participate, upload your image to Instagram with the hashtag **#PlayersContest** from **April 13-29, both included**. The 50 best images received will be exhibited in the [Instagrammers Gallery](#) starting on 22 May 2018.

Programme of workshops and parallel activities

On the occasion of the exhibition, the Space has organized a program of complementary activities for all sorts of audiences. From the workshop “The secrets of a shoebox: The photographic method”, aimed at young people, to activities for adults such as “When reality isn’t enough. The camera and chance” or “The creative process of a reporter”, presented by Cristina García Rodero, a member of the Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando and the Magnum Agency. All these workshops seek to give the public an idea of how professional photographers and reporters see the world that surrounds us.

In addition, there will be free guided visits (no reservation needed), each Wednesday at 10:30 am, 12:00 am, and 5:00 pm, as well as Saturdays at 10:30. In addition, in July and August, “Open for vacations” will be offered for our youngest visitors.

For further information and registration: espacio.fundaciontelefonica.com



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