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# Paolo Gasparini

Field of images

30.09.2021  
– 16.01.2022





Paolo Gasparini, *Election Campaign*, Avenida Urdaneta, Caracas, 1968.  
Fundación MAPFRE Collections

With the apparent aim of encompassing the entire universe, the work of Paolo Gasparini (Gorizia, Italy, 1934, resident in Venezuela since 1954) offers a journey that spans two opposing worlds but ones that have been historically interdependent. By means of his photography Gasparini aims to eliminate the very ethnocentric vision from which Latin America has taken shape, through or in opposition to Europe and the United States. This is the case with *The better to see you, Latin America* (1972), considered one of the most emblematic Latin American photobooks of all times, and *Retroworld* (1986), a photobook in which, with the support of a poetic text, the artist establishes a dialogue based on opposing images of the first world and the developing world.

Gasparini's aim is that of creating a type of committed photography which will help to remedy social injustices but without falling into miserablism or exoticism. Over the course of this creative journey the artist has focused his gaze on cities such as São Paulo, Río de Janeiro, Havana, Mexico City and Caracas, as well as London, New York and Los Angeles, major metropolises in which the reality of life produces a powerful impact on the photographer and thus on the viewer. As the exhibition's curator María Wills has observed: "In this sense, we have a visionary in Gasparini, as since the 1980s he has understood the need to create visual stories based on internationalisation in which he carefully establishes parallels that do not erase an individual place's complexities but give rise to hybrid territories which, despite being burdened with contradictions, can subsist in chaos."

Gasparini's images are real. They reflect the chaos of contemporary life: advertising posters, reflections in shop windows, workers finishing their day, homeless people,



Paolo Gasparini, *Advertisements for modernity*, Lima, 1972. Fundación MAPFRE Collections



Paolo Gasparini, *Polluted waning crescent*, early morning of 13 December in front of the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico City, 1994. Fundación MAPFRE Collections



Paolo Gasparini, *Special Effects*, Hollywood, Los Angeles, 1987.  
Fundación MAPFRE Collections

passers-by, tower blocks, poor houses, political slogans and the harsh lives of Andean peasants, all treated with the maximum respect and dignity and with the aim of finding beauty in that quotidian chaos and showing its vitality.

At the age of twenty Gasparini decided to leave his native city of Gorizia and emigrate to Venezuela where his father and two brothers had been living for some time. He took the cultural baggage of post-war Italy with him, having fully assimilated the lessons of Neo-realism. An admirer of Paul Strand, Gasparini decided to devote his life to photography and soon became aware of the importance of the photobook as a vehicle for generating visual narratives.

In the present day Paolo Gasparini is one of the most reputed creative figures in the international art world, specifically in Latin America. His photobooks are a fundamental chronicle for understanding the heterogeneous nature of a world that wishes to be global but which is still marked by differences. The photographer's travels, which provide the starting point for this exhibition now presented by Fundación MAPFRE and based on works from its collections, constitute the greater part of a career that has spanned more than sixty years. The resulting body of work is represented in the collections of institutions of the stature of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York; the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the New York Public Library, New York; the George Eastman House, Rochester, New York; Hermès International, Paris; the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris; the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris; the Fondation A Stichting, Brussels; and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid.

## KBr Fundación MAPFRE

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## Dates

September 30, 2021  
– January 16, 2022

## Curatorship

María Wills Londoño

## Opening hours

Mondays: Closed  
Tuesdays – Sundays  
(and public holidays): 11am-7pm  
Last entry: 6:30pm

Visitors must leave the galleries  
10 minutes before closing time

## Admissions

Standard ticket: 5 €  
Ticket with reduction: 3 €  
Free standard ticket: Tuesdays  
(except public holidays)  
Groups: 3 € / per person

## Audio guide services

Available in English, Catalan  
and Spanish

## Guided tour (cultural mediation service)

Wednesdays & Thursdays: 4-7pm  
Fridays & Saturdays:  
12-2pm, 4-7pm  
Sundays & public holidays: 12-2pm  
(Information at the reception)

## Bookshop

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Cover: Paolo Gasparini, *26 of July*, Havana, 1961.  
Fundación MAPFRE Collections

All images: © Paolo Gasparini

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