

la fundación

Fundación MAPFRE magazine#56
September 2021
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Art

MORANDI. RESONANCIA INFINITA

Judith Joy Ross. El retrato del alma

PAOLO GASPARINI

KBr Flama 21

Health Watch

**THE BATTLE
OVER MEAT**

Committed

**A MORE HUMANE
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Giorgio Morandi
Natura Morta [Naturaleza muerta], 1941
Istituzione Bologna Musei | Museo Morandi
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MORANDI. RESONANCIA INFINITA

Lugar
Sala Fundación MAPFRE Recoletos
Paseo de Recoletos 23, 28004 Madrid

Fechas
Del 24/09/2021 al 09/01/2022

Horario de visitas
Lunes de 14:00 a 20:00 h.
Martes a sábado de 11:00 a 20:00 h.
Domingos y festivos de 11:00 a 19:00 h.
Acceso gratuito los lunes



MORANDI. RESONANCIA INFINITA

Location
Fundación MAPFRE Recoletos Exhibition Hall
Paseo de Recoletos 23, 28004 Madrid

Dates
From 24/09/2021 to 09/01/2022

Visiting hours
Monday from 2 pm to 8 pm.
Tuesday to Saturday from 11 am to 8 pm.
Sunday/holidays from 11 am to 7 pm.
Free entry on Mondays

Judith Joy Ross
Sin título, Eurana Park, Weatherly, Pensilvania, 1982
© Judith Joy Ross, courtesy Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne

JUDITH JOY ROSS

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Gunnlöð Jóna Rúnarsdóttir
Serie *Obscure Presence*, 2018-2020
© Gunnlöð Jóna Rúnarsdóttir

KBR FLAMA 21

Lugar
KBr Fundación MAPFRE
Ronda del Litoral 30, 08005 Barcelona

Fechas
Del 30/09/2021 al 16/01/2022

Horario de visitas
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Paolo Gasparini
Campaña electoral, avenida Urdaneta, Caracas, 1968
Colecciones Fundación MAPFRE
© Paolo Gasparini

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KBr Fundación MAPFRE
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the picture



Our solidarity with the island of La Palma

26,000 FFP2 and FFP3 masks, 2,000 protective goggles and 30,000 single-dose packs of artificial tears are part of the first package of emergency measures, funded with **65,000 euros**, that Fundación MAPFRE Guanarteme has activated for distribution among the population as well as the security and emergency forces. The objective is to protect people against inhaling ash and toxic gases, in addition to preventing

dermal and ocular exposure to the emissions caused by the eruption of the Cumbre Vieja volcano on the island of La Palma (Canary Islands, Spain).

This is the first step in an aid plan aimed at contributing to the personal, social and economic recovery of the people most affected by this natural catastrophe. ✕

la fundación Fundación MAPFRE magazine Chairman of the Editorial Board Ignacio Baeza Director Javier Fernández González Published by MAPFRE Corporate Communication Editorial & Advertising Dept. Ctra. de Pozuelo 52. 28222 Majadahonda. Madrid. T 915 815 359. comunicacion@mapfre.com www.fundacionmapfre.org Distributed by Fundación MAPFRE Marketing Area. Pº de Recoletos, 23. 28004 Madrid Editorial Production Moonbook S.L. contenidos@moonbook.es Printed by Gráficas Monterreina. Legal Deposit M-26870-2008 ISSN 1888-7813 The publication of this magazine does not necessarily imply agreement by Fundación MAPFRE with the contents of the articles and works therein. The reproduction of articles and news is duly authorized, provided express authorization is sought from the publishers and the source is acknowledged. Cover Giorgio Morandi, *Natura morta* [Still life], 1956, Collezione Augusto e Francesca Giovanardi, Milán, Photo © Alvise Aspesi, © Giorgio Morandi, VEGAP, Madrid, 2021

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IGNACIO HERNANDO DE LARRAMENDI



GIORGIO MORANDI.
THE "PROFESSION OF PAINTING"



Natura morta [Still life], 1928
Oil on canvas, 34.5 × 46.5 cm
Collezione Augusto e Francesca Giovanardi, Milán
Photo © Alvise Aspesi

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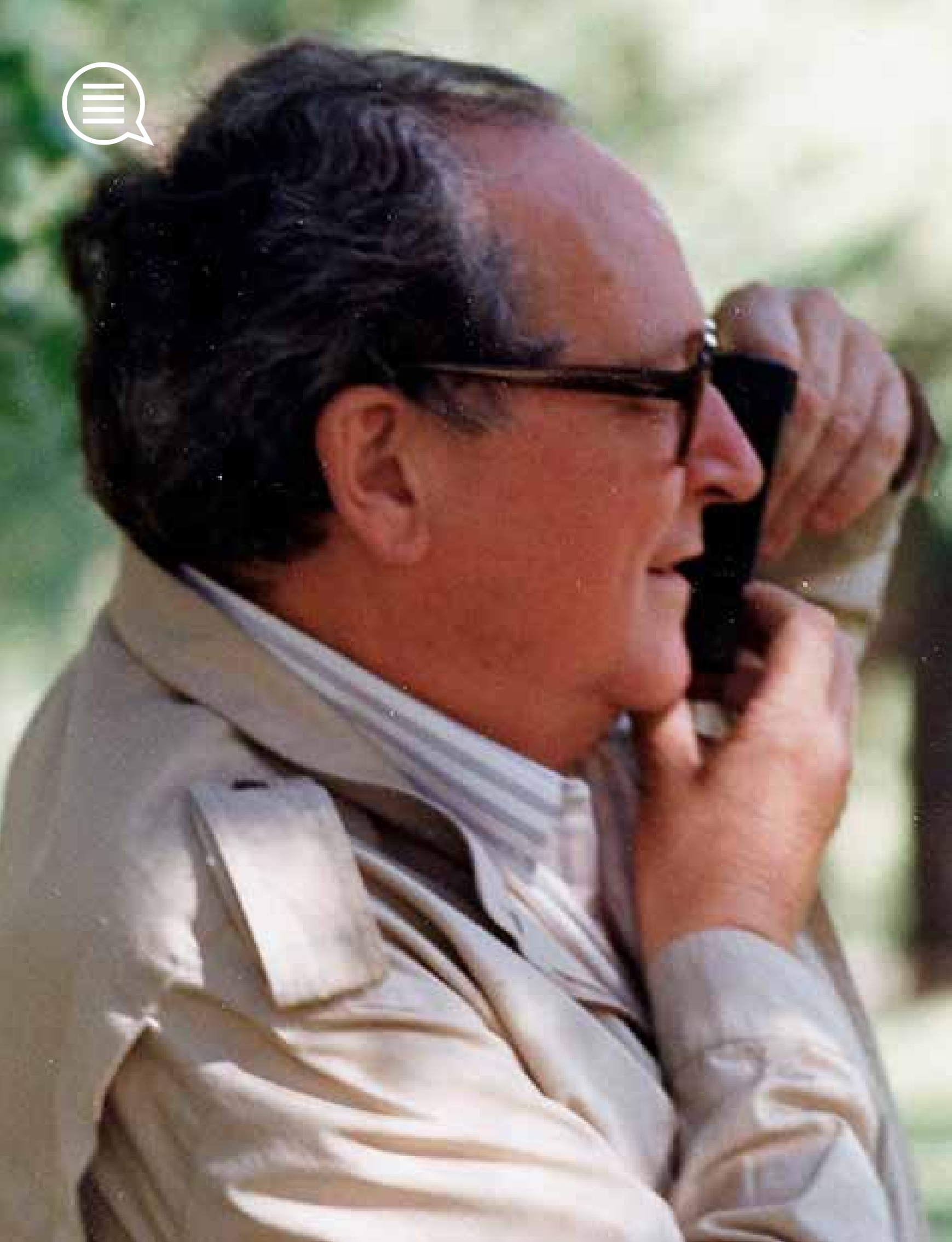


25 YEARS SAVING LIVES



HOW TO START A BUSINESS AFTER 50





The architect of modern insurance

TEXT: RAMÓN OLIVER IMAGES: FUNDACIÓN LARRAMENDI, MAPFRE

It is the centenary of the birth of Ignacio Hernando de Larramendi, the man whose innovative vision and unwavering humanism revolutionized the world of insurance and laid the foundations of today's MAPFRE. A great humanist, Larramendi was ahead of his time and introduced groundbreaking elements into the sector, such as the computerization of work, performance metrics and the figure of the ombudsman for policyholders. To mark his centenary, we highlight the cultural, business and historical dimension of the legacy of this great humanist and cultural advocate.

In 1955, a young insurance inspector left the public administration to embark on a business venture that many considered foolish, indeed, it is said that his own colleagues at the Directorate General of Insurance expressed their condolences when they heard the news. His idea was to refloat a small company on the verge of insolvency that seemed mortally wounded. But Ignacio Hernando de Larramendi (Madrid, 1921-Madrid, 2001), who was 34 years old at the time, was not a man to shy away from the impossible. Today this small company is the leading Spanish multinational in the sector, operates in more than 40 countries, has 12,500 offices, 34,000 employees, a collaboration network of 86,000 agents and its shares are listed on the IBEX-35 and the Dow Jones.

Yet above and beyond all these figures, MAPFRE is an insurer that understands that its mission in the world is not only to offer protection and insurance solutions, but, in addition to this objective, its *raison d'être* is to contribute to making the world a better place. And this legacy, this way of thinking and acting accordingly, which the company has embedded in its corporate DNA, is largely due to Ignacio Larramendi.

A modern and operational MAPFRE

Larramendi occupied the top position at MAPFRE for 35 years, until his retirement in 1990. During this time he completely transformed the company from the ground up, leading it to a much more modern and evolved model, inspired by his stays in the United Kingdom and some ideas he imported and adapted from the emblematic company Lloyd's. Included in the list of the 100 greatest Spanish businessmen of the 20th century, his entrepreneurial instinct, his audacity and his gifts for managing teams and dealing with people have led him to be considered the great architect of modern insurance in Spain.

Under his leadership, MAPFRE underwent a profound internal reorganization that began by pulling the company out of imminent bankruptcy. In the year before he joined the company (he was hired by the company's former president, Dionisio Martín Sanz, who was also appointed to the post that same year), the *Mutualidad de la Agrupación de Propietarios de Fincas Rústicas de España*, as MAPFRE was known at the time, had posted losses of between 2 and 3.5 million pesetas. Antiquated and inefficient systems together with a mistaken



confidence in public health insurance, which made huge losses due to the low wages and high mortality rate of agricultural workers, had landed the company in a very difficult situation.

The early years

Reducing the debt became his first priority. To this end, he embarked on a period of harsh adjustments, with layoffs and cost cuts, including his own salary, which he slashed by 40%. Thus began a model of leadership by example that would become one of the company's main distinguishing features.

After many hardships and extreme “dodging” of payment suspension, the company's financial situation stabilized and a new stage of restructuring and reactivation of the business began. Larramendi then began to optimize operations in order to reduce inefficiencies and achieve growth through quality. Among the most noteworthy measures taken during those early years was the redesign of a diversified product portfolio prioritizing the most profitable insurance products. A path that would later lead MAPFRE to gain a foothold in business sectors in which it had no previous experience, such as the automobile industry, and to modernize others until they became profitable, such as life insurance. Later, Larramendi would also introduce very important client-based innovations, such as the concept of insurance-service that transcended mere financial

Under his leadership, MAPFRE embarked on a journey of decentralization, technological development and international expansion that allowed it to grow to become the leader of the insurance sector in Spain

compensation in the event of a claim or the figure of the policyholder's ombudsman.

National and international expansion

Also during this period, Larramendi initiated the progressive decentralization of the company (“the decision of a mediocre person close to a fact can be better than that of an intelligent man 500 kilometers away”, he used to say), supported by regional offices and an extensive territorial network of branches with their own teams and managers with a great deal of autonomy. To this end, he went back to the company's rural roots, opening offices in small towns that did not attract the attention of his competitors

and, from there, began his assault on the big cities. This strategy was emulated by the U.S. supermarket chain Wal-Mart.

A hitherto unheard-of real estate acquisition policy was another of this visionary's contributions. As soon as the company's financial situation made it possible, MAPFRE began to purchase a series of street-level properties in which to set up its offices. This greatly boosted direct sales and improved customer service, elements that had an immediate effect on the company's growth.

Internationalization, which began to take off in earnest in the mid-1980s, coinciding with the Group's conquest of the sector, was another of the businessman's major commitments. Larramendi was convinced that MAPFRE had to go beyond the borders of Spain if it wanted to continue growing, since its development was based on optimizing processes and taking advantage of economies of scale. Going abroad was, however, a risky move, and unnecessary in the opinion of many of his close collaborators, but he believed that a certain amount of risk was consubstantial to any business venture.

Innovation as a flag

The other way to reduce costs and grow was to increase efficiency by strictly standardizing processes and measuring results, for which he used all kinds of indicators. The use of technology to increase service quality and profitability

A great humanist, Larramendi pioneered the precursor of Corporate Social Responsibility through a multitude of activities to promote culture, history and medicine



was another constant feature of his management. An incorrigibly curious person, Larramendi was a lover of technology and did not hesitate to incorporate any technical innovations that came onto the market if he thought they could improve the company's operations.

The city of boys

One of the great traits of this iconic manager was his ability to lead teams and deal with people. Charismatic and a great motivator, he believed strongly in talent and self-responsibility. He revolutionized the company's recruitment and selection systems by incorporating a large number of young, inexperienced but promising university students,

to whom he almost immediately entrusted responsibility. A very novel strategy at the time and one that made him a laughing stock among his competitors, who renamed the rejuvenated MAPFRE as the "city of the boys".

But Larramendi's policy cannot have been so terribly misguided ("every bellboy has a marshal's baton in his backpack", was another of his favorite phrases), since many of those young whippersnappers are today top managers in MAPFRE as well as in other leading companies. Larramendi threw his young collaborators into the ring, yes. But before he did, he equipped them with a solid policy of continuous training that enabled them to take on any challenge and gave them unlimited confidence,

providing them with the necessary motivation to come out on top and to dare to make mistakes. A great communicator, he exerted an enormous influence on his collaborators and modernized MAPFRE's people management with measures that prioritized meritocracy and internal promotion and put an end to ancestral vices in the sector, such as nepotism.

Forerunner of CSR

Imbued with a deep sense of public service, Larramendi rejected capitalism based solely on pure profit, convinced that any institution that manages large assets has the obligation to return part of this to society and, in particular, to its clients. In this way, and only in this way, can a company

accomplish its social responsibility by contributing to the common good and the general interests of the country.

He was able to transfer these values to his organization through a wide range of sponsorship and social action activities. Thanks to Larramendi, culture, history, medical research and an endless number of activities beyond the pure insurance business became part of MAPFRE's essence. To carry out this intense activity, he created a series of foundations over the years, two of the most significant of which were Fundación MAPFRE (1975) and Fundación Ignacio Larramendi (1986), to which he devoted himself body and soul once he retired in 1990.

Cultural and historical dimension

This element of humanism and patronage is possibly the thing he enjoyed the most. A convinced Americanist, Larramendi professed a reverential love for the American continent, to whose fraternal relations with Spain he dedicated an extensive part of his work from the foundations. Of particular note is the "MAPFRE Collections 1492" (housed in the Virtual Libraries of Polygraphs), a series of 245 volumes written by leading specialists dedicated to an in-depth analysis of all aspects related to the discovery of the new world. Through the foundations, Larramendi also offered strong support to medical research through initiatives such as the creation of the Ignacio de Larramendi Scholarships and

Larramendi's ten commandments for success

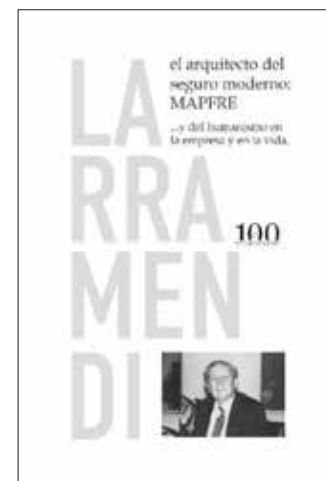
1. It is essential to be ethical in order to be profitable.
2. It is necessary to be frugal in spending.
3. You must always tell the truth.
4. You must not cheat the economy or the tax authorities.
5. You must be serious at work.
6. You must make fair decisions.
7. You must be very transparent with employees and customers.
8. You have to be very objective when judging and assessing a situation.
9. You must always face up to difficulties, you must be courageous in business.
10. You must have great respect, especially for strength of work.

Research Grants awarded each year by Fundación MAPFRE, which have now become an international benchmark in their field.

100 years since his birth

A Carlist, Catholic, lawyer, writer, editor and culture lover, those who had the good fortune to work with him describe Larramendi as a brilliant humanist, humble, enterprising, tolerant, social, honest, with a great sense of ethics and an infinite capacity for work. A key figure in Spanish business history whose influence transcended the scope of MAPFRE, setting the pace of the entire sector to the present day.

To commemorate 100 years since the birth of this exceptional businessman and individual, throughout 2021 various events have been held and are scheduled around his life and his projects related to the recovery and dissemination of our history. ✖



Part of the documentation for this article has been extracted from the book *Larramendi. El arquitecto del seguro moderno: MAPFRE (y del humanismo en la empresa y en la vida)*, a work by Javier Morillas.

A key figure in Spanish business history whose influence transcended the scope of MAPFRE, setting the pace for the entire sector to the present day



Luis Hernando de Larramendi, the current president of Fundación Ignacio Larramendi, is primarily responsible for maintaining the spirit that drives the values of this institution

“My father’s main legacy is the desire to work for the common good”

What do you draw from your father’s legacy?

His unwavering aspiration to do things, not out of mere selfishness, but for the common good. He wanted to go through life leaving behind things that would give back to society and remain standing after he was gone.

It is said that he was the great architect of modern insurance in Spain. What were his main contributions to the sector?

In the 1950s, insurance in Spain was a very structured world organized around the *status quo* of the insurance companies, not the policyholders, to the point that it often seemed to work against the interests of the client. My father shattered all that. He understood insurance as a public service whose true meaning is to serve those who purchase it, at the lowest possible cost, thus providing a service to society.

Would you say that he was ahead of his time?

Without a doubt. He had an uncanny ability to see where the future was going to lead and anticipated many of the elements that are fully established in the insurance world today. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s, there was little taxation, companies used cash. He foresaw what would become auditing, self-regulation, transparency, the need for strong financial backing from banks. He also introduced the figure of the ombudsman, 30 years before this was established.

What was his leadership style like?

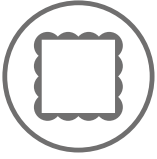
He was not afraid to say that something that had always worked was not working anymore. He made very controversial and risky decisions, such as the company’s decentralization, and had the ability to delegate, which was unusual at the time. He was a great believer in giving each



person a small share of the responsibility, so that each employee was accountable for their own bottom line and was not just a mere number executing orders.

What does Spanish insurance owe to Ignacio Larramendi?

The Spanish insurance world could not have completed the transformation process it has undergone without MAPFRE’s leadership, and MAPFRE would not be what it is today without my father’s effort, tenacity, intelligence and sense of anticipation. It is impossible to know what my father would do today, but what is certain is that it would be groundbreaking.



Laura Gálvez-Rhein
Series *Ex-Libris*, 2018-2019
© Laura Gálvez-Rhein

KBr Flama. New emerging artists

TEXT: FUNDACIÓ MAPFRE CULTURE AREA

IMAGES: LAURA GÁLVEZ-RHEIN, BLANCA MUNT, GAEL DEL RÍO AND GUNNLÖÐ JÓNA RÚNARSDÓTTIR

From September 30, 2021, to January 16, 2022, the exhibition *KBr Flama 21*, a project conceived to support emerging creation and the next generation of photographers who are embarking on their professional careers after training at photography schools in Barcelona, will be on display at the KBr Fundació MAPFRE Photography Center (Barcelona).

In this first edition, Fundació MAPFRE has collaborated with four Barcelona institutions committed to teaching and studying photography: Grisart, Idep Barcelona, IEFC and Elisava, Faculty of Design and Engineering of Barcelona. As a result of their mutual interest in providing a visibility and opportunities for emerging artists, they came up with the idea of organizing an annual exhibition featuring students from the different schools.

Laura Gálvez-Rhein (Frankfurt, 1998), **Blanca Munt** (Barcelona, 1997), **Gael del Río** (Barcelona, 1990) and **Gunnlöð Jóna Rúnarsdóttir** (Reykjavik, 1992) are the four artists selected for this inaugural exhibition. Their projects were chosen through a process in which the works of students from the above-mentioned schools were viewed by the following photography professionals: Marta Gili, Sergio Mah, Ramón Reverté and Arianna Rinaldo.

The exhibition brings together four projects that, in a very personal way, take us to different realities based on the memory of the past or on aspects related to collective identity.

In the first case, Gael del Río and Laura Gálvez-Rhein find in family figures (their father and grandfather, respectively) a motif through which they can unfold their personal stories. Gael del Río presents her mourning for the absence of her father through a subtle and subjective combination of her

father's engravings and her own photographs. Laura Gálvez-Rhein, in her encounter with the trauma of her grandfather Wolfgang, links together in her work, in an exercise of historical memory, the memory of the German war children (*Kriegskinder*) and the life of her ancestor.

In the second case, Gunnlöð Jóna Rúnarsdóttir and Blanca Munt look at collective histories that shape reality and local identities. The former immerses herself in the Icelanders' popular belief in ghosts, elves and the *huldufólk* (hidden people), to compose a dreamlike, multifaceted and contemporary portrait of her country. Meanwhile, Munt directs her gaze towards the daily reality of her neighborhood, focusing more on anthropology than photography, and reveals some of the mechanisms that identify contemporary society, marked by control and fear.

Laura Gálvez-Rhein graduated in photography at the Institut d'Estudis Fotogràfics de Catalunya in 2019 and specialized in Photographic Creation and Reflection at that center. She also completed a course in Documentary and Photojournalism at the Hannover University of Applied Sciences and Arts (Hochschule Hannover).

Her current work explores themes centered on self-knowledge and the introduction of new techniques, for which she relies on the mutation of perception and material, interests that gave rise to the



Laura Gálvez-Rhein
 Series *Ex-Libris*, 2018-2019
 © Laura Gálvez-Rhein

projects *Parasomnia* (2017-2019) and *Metasomnia, those which were good failed too* (2019).

In the documentary field, she covers social issues with an anthropological approach, having a special interest in identity and individual, collective and historical memories. Her emotional approach to everything she tackles sometimes distances her from the academic precepts of reporting and documentary photography. She perceives the image as a tool with which to express herself freely, in infinite ways and in endless combinations.

The work she presents today, *Ex-Libris*, is a documentary series on the biography of Wolfgang F. O. Rhein (born in Berlin in 1937), her grandfather. Wolfgang lives in Steinbach (Taunus), near Frankfurt. He had a practically non-existent childhood and adolescence, with his adult life centered on work. After dropping

out of Jesuit training, he began his career as a German teacher in various locations. Now retired, he continues to teach refugee women as a volunteer.

Ex-Libris uses *photographic collage* to explore the complexity of remembering, forgetting and encounters with trauma. During the creative process, the artist worked with the family archives and material from the Bundesarchiv (German National Archive), compiling a reportage of Wolfgang's daily life, as he represents the *Kriegskinder* generation, the children of the war, silenced by the German cultural memory. These are part of his memories, in his words:

«I was poor. I lived in a completely destroyed city, in a street near the big Stalin Avenue (Stalinallee). Everything was completely destroyed. It was very sad. We didn't stay at home

much, we played in the ruins. There was a place where I studied a little bit, but at home there was no room. I don't have many memories of that time. During the vacations I went to work in the fields. In the war, we were sent to Poland to live with other families with children. Always my mother with the four children. My father had a butcher's shop, but when I was born, he lost everything. Later on it didn't matter, because the war would have destroyed it anyway. Then he worked on the railroad. He had to go by train to Poland to transport people. It was very hard, he was always alone. We always dreamed of buying him a car, but he died very young».

Blanca Munt (Barcelona, 1997) graduated in Photography at the Escola Superior d'Imatge i Disseny (IDEP) in Barcelona in 2020. She believes that the best way to convey her ability

Stemming from a mutual interest in providing visibility and opportunity for emerging artists, the idea emerged to organize an annual exhibition featuring the students from the various schools

to create and tell stories is by merging design, photography and video. She is interested in subjects that include housing, architecture, the periphery, landscape, portraiture and society. She conducts research into the culture of fear and paranoia, which led her to produce the project *Alerta Mira-Sol* (2020), published as a photobook by the Dalpine publishing house, after winning the Fiebre Photobook Dummy Award (2020). Her project *Sòl i Sostre* (2021) was exhibited at the 7th *Mirades de fotografia* Festival in Baix Empordà. She has worked as assistant to the photographer Tanit Plana, participating in her project *Púber*, exhibited at the Centro de la Imagen La Virreina, Barcelona (2020). Together with Borja Ballbé, she currently works as a curator for the digital platform *Panorama*, where she publishes artistic projects that address issues related to landscape and territory.

Fosi Vegue writes about the work *Alerta Mira-Sol*: «In 2019, photographer Blanca Munt participated in a neighborhood chat created to monitor her neighborhood and warn of possible home burglaries or other suspicious occurrences. What was initially presented as an effective neighborhood tool soon became a source of conjecture, suspicion and paranoia. The apparently peaceful coexistence of the inhabitants of a neighborhood of bright streets and standardized housing began to take on water, not only

because of the genuine existence of burglaries, but also because of the utter breakdown of the idea of community when individual security was at stake: now, not only would suspicion fall on strangers spotted in the vicinity because of their appearance or attitude, but it would also affect any neighbor who did not faithfully comply with the group's mission. The photographs in *Alerta Mira-Sol* are interwoven with other sources of information and the mental images that we generate as we get to know the interested parties' points of view through the eyes of each of the protagonists in this scenario

-neighbors, suspicious characters, police, local authorities- all of which speaks deeply to our own fears and contradictions. In her own words, Blanca Munt proposes in *Alerta Mira-Sol* a «reflection on the tension between the privilege of living in a peaceful place and the constant feeling of latent threat as part of the current culture of fear».

Gael del Río (Barcelona, 1990) graduated with a degree in Architecture from the Escuela Superior de Arquitectura de Barcelona in 2015. She stumbled upon photography in the final stretch of her degree, during



Blanca Munt
Series *Alerta Mira-Sol*, 2019
© Blanca Munt

The exhibition brings together four projects that in a very personal way take us to different realities grounded in the memory of the past or in aspects related to collective identity



Carlos del Río
Untitled
 © Gael del Río

Gael del Río
 Series *Evocare*, 2017
 © Gael del Río

her exchange year at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. There she took the subject «Architecture After Dark», taught by the architectural and landscape photographer Erieta Attali. From that moment on, her personal and professional life veered ever closer to the medium. She studied the discipline at the Institut d'Estudis Fotogràfics de Catalunya (IEFC) and at the Grisart school. Nowadays, her professional work is dedicated to architectural photography while she develops personal projects that have been

exhibited in Mutuo (Barcelona), the Voies Off festival (Arles), and Fotofever (Paris) among others. Her photobook *Evocare* was a finalist at the DOCfield Dummy Award 2017.

As Luca Bani points out, *Evocare* is Gael del Río's *first work*, an «autobiographical project that was conceived with the death of Carlos del Río, the artist's father, and investigates the relationship between her own artistic pieces and her father's graphic work. The latter, a surgeon by profession but also an art lover, dedicated an important part of his life to painting, sculpture and engraving. When he died at the end of 2015, the author turned to photography

to confront her pain and convert what she felt into something tangible.

Through this work, Gael del Río offers us an intimate and sensitive look at grief. The revelation of the family bond brings us comfort and, in a certain way, proffers a sense of loss, understood as a crucial moment of generational transition.

Her desire to translate the intangible into images leads her to transcribe emotions through the camera, giving rise to suggestive and poetic photographs, full of evocative elements. They are images that speak of absence and loss, in which the centrality of the photographed subject underlines

Gunnlöð Jóna Rúnarsdóttir
 Series *Obscure Presence*, 2018-2020
 © Gunnlöð Jóna Rúnarsdóttir

the individuality and subjectivity of the project.

The author transports us to her inner world, made up of scattered, isolated, solitary objects that dialogue with the plastic art of her father, a compendium of ideograms full of hidden meanings. A conversation between two juxtaposed personal visions that suggests a formal and conceptual connection between the two generations of artists.

However, what is the true essence of this connection? How far does the link between the two bodies of work go?

In these questions lies the strength of the project, a work that leaves the viewer the stimulating task of discovering, or rather, imagining the multiple interpretations that each piece permits, either in itself or in relation to the others, and that lays bare links that are often impalpable and difficult to describe in a medium such as photography.”

Gunnlöð Jóna Rúnarsdóttir (Reykjavík, Iceland, 1992) graduated from the Reykjavík School of Photography (Ljósmyndaskólinn) in 2018. There she attended an introductory course in photography and became fascinated by this discipline. With fierce passion and keen to learn more, she moved to Barcelona to continue studying. In summer 2019, she obtained a Master’s in Photography and Design from Elisava, Barcelona School of



Design and Engineering. She currently lives in Reykjavík and works full time as a photographer. She has always had a great passion for art, both visual and scenic. Most of her projects deal with what it is to be human, to dream, to live, to feel and to die. In addition to her personal series and long-term projects, her work focuses on portraiture.

The author herself refers to her work, *Obscure Presence*, in this way: «Coming from a small, isolated island with extreme weather and landscapes that seem otherworldly, we Icelanders have a unique bond with the unknown.

We tend to believe in ghosts, elves and *huldufólk* (hidden people), and many of us feel a connection to these supernatural creatures.

According to a 2007 study by folklore professor Terry Gunnell,

most Icelanders do not rule out the existence of ghosts and elves; in fact, many are utterly convinced that they exist.

The extreme isolation of the people, who have lived in huts since time immemorial, could be at the root of their experiences with the supernatural.

But how can we explain these beliefs today?

I interviewed Icelanders who had personal stories of supernatural experiences and used those narratives as the basis for my images. Early on in the process it became clear to me that most of those stories had a common theme and a similar atmosphere. My work *Obscure Presence* is aimed at showcasing these tales and creating a series of images that underline that atmosphere.”



Paolo Gasparini, *Campo de imágenes*

TEXT: FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE CULTURE AREA IMAGES: PAOLO GASPARINI

From September 30, 2021, to January 16, 2022, visitors will be able to enjoy the exhibition *Paolo Gasparini, Campo de imágenes* [Field of Images] at the KBR Fundación MAPFRE Photography Center (Barcelona). This photographer is the Italian artist who has best portrayed the tensions and cultural contradictions in South America. His images convey the harsh social reality that has confronted a region whose cultural authenticity is unquestionable and where past and local tradition dialogue with a clumsily imposed modernity. Gasparini's work has a visual language of its own that always seems to criticize consumer society, while revealing a certain obsession with the way that *marketing* and advertising seduce us.

His works allow us to understand not only the differences between Europe and Latin America, but also the diversities of the latter, from Mexico to south of the Andes. As the curator of the exhibition, Maria Wills, points out: "Gasparini's photographs reflect on the effects of decades of political migrations in the 20th and 21st centuries: Europeans to America, as a result of World War II, Cubans to Spain and the United States, Ecuadorians to Spain and, more recently, the mass exodus of Venezuelans to Colombia. Generations and generations marked by voluntary and forced exile force us to contemplate the ambivalence of identity."

Italian by birth, but Venezuelan in essence, the artist uses his work to eliminate the ethnocentric visions and stereotypes that have historically defined Latin America, almost always in terms of the other, to which the various populisms and nationalisms that the continent has suffered have contributed.

The photographer was born in Gorizia, Italy, in 1934. To avoid military service, he moved to Caracas in 1954, with cultural baggage that included extensive knowledge of Italian neo-realism. Part of his family, who had emigrated voluntarily, was already in Venezuela, and his brother Graziano, then already a renowned architect, gave him his first camera at the age of seventeen. He then began working actively, photographing architectural constructions, while at the same time capturing images of the suburbs of the capital. He soon began to work for UNESCO projects, in parallel to his more personal work, which he pursued in Venezuela and Cuba. As a result of this work, the book *Para verte mejor, América Latina* [To see you more clearly, Latin America] (1972), considered one of the most emblematic photobooks ever, was published in Mexico. In 1979, he was the first artist from Latin America to be present at Les Rencontres Internationales de la Photographie in Arles, and in 1984, with a new exhibition in Arles, he received the silver medal at Les Rencontres. In 1993 he was awarded the National Photography Prize of Venezuela and two

Miliciano [Militia Man], Trinidad, Cuba, 1961
Fundación MAPFRE Collections

© Paolo Gasparini



Carnaval [Carnival], Havana, 1962
Fundación MAPFRE Collections
© Paolo Gasparini

latitudes, revealing how consumer society has a global impact.

The publication deals with Gorizia and Caracas, which is like saying Italy and Venezuela, or the first and third worlds. It comprises seventy photographs printed with no margins that connect the realities of two seemingly opposite worlds while at the same time nuancing their differences.

Rostros de Venezuela and Bobare (1956-1960)

Between 1955-1960 Gasparini traveled through Venezuela, first with his brother Graziano, then with his wife, the laboratory technician Franca Donda, with whom he crossed the Colombian border, traversed the highlands of the Andes, and traveled through the lands of Lara state.

years later he represented his country at the Venice Biennale.

Over the last two decades he has traveled extensively throughout Europe and Latin America, completing series on previously unexplored themes, and has held numerous exhibitions of his photographs and books, some twenty of which have been published to date.

The exhibition is divided into sixteen sections that bring together some of the artist's most prominent projects from over six decades of work, and it emphasizes his photobooks, which the artist recognizes as a means of expression on a par, in importance, with his photographs.

Andata e ritorno (1953-2016)

Andata e ritorno [There and Back] is, in addition to the first section

of the exhibition, the title of Paolo Gasparini's photobook published in Caracas by La Cueva Casa Editorial in 2019. It alludes, metaphorically, to the author's way of working, which breaks temporality, as he revisits his series in time and creates stories in which Latin America dialogues with other



Compañero Lenin [Comrade Lenin], Havana, 1963
Fundación MAPFRE Collections
© Paolo Gasparini

Italian by birth, but Venezuelan in essence, the artist uses his work to eliminate the ethnocentric visions and stereotypes that have historically defined Latin America.

En la acera [On the Sidewalk], Santiago de Cuba, 1964
Fundación MAPFRE Collections
© Paolo Gasparini

He documented the way of life of the peasants in rural areas and the Wayú indigenous community. He published *Bobare* in 1959, illustrating, in his words “the poorest, most abandoned and most miserable people in Lara state”, under the influence of one of his greatest teachers, Paul Strand, whom he met in France in 1956.

This, Gasparini’s first photobook, is arranged with reference to the structure of *Un paese* (1955), by Strand himself. A denunciatory reportage based on individual and family portraits, interior spaces and house facades, as well as texts describing the history of the town as told by its inhabitants. The publication summarizes the villagers’ plea to the President of the Republic, Romulo Betancourt, to help a town

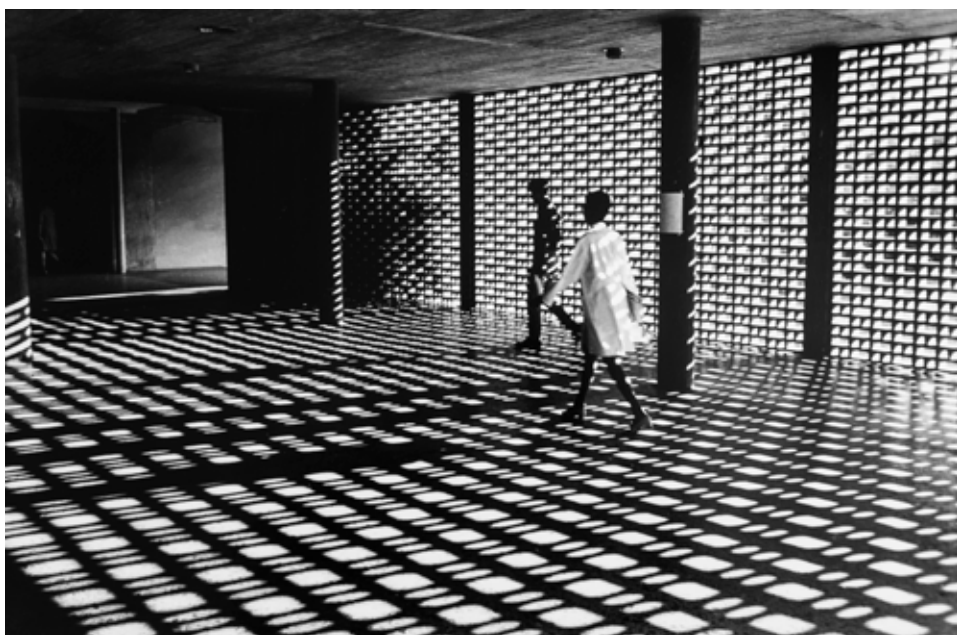


struggling to survive in a desert-like setting. In Venezuela, *Bobare* pioneered the photographic essay, raising the visibility of poverty. In 1961, he exhibited *Rostros de Venezuela: 50 fotografías de Paolo Gasparini* [Faces of Venezuela: 50 photographs by Paolo Gasparini]

at the Museo de Bellas Artes in Caracas.

Between 1961 and 1965 the author traveled to Havana with Franca, invited by architect Ricardo Porro and writer Alejo Carpentier. They toured the city and took photographs of Havana’s colonial architecture and baroque style, which gave rise to the series “La Habana, la ciudad de las columnas” [Havana, City of Columns] (1961-1963). There he also began to represent street scenes, popular rallies, the carnival, and became interested in the project for a school of plastic arts in the city.

He shared the revolutionary enthusiasm and collaborated with the literary supplement *Lunes de Revolución*. He worked at the National Council of Culture and



Transparencia [Transparency], Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas, architecture by Carlos Raúl Villanueva, 1967-1970
Fundación MAPFRE Collections
© Paolo Gasparini

The exhibition is divided into sixteen sections that include some of the artist's most significant projects from more than six decades of work, and emphasizes his photobooks, which the artist recognizes as a means of expression on a par, in importance, with his photographs.



Campana electoral de lujo [Luxury Election Campaign], Caracas, 1968
Fundación MAPFRE Collections
© Paolo Gasparini

particularly the audiovisuals, from 1980 onwards.

Throughout his career Gasparini returned to Cuba on several occasions, his experience is evidenced in this reflection: “[...] the Cuban Revolution, at a certain moment meant utopia, the alternative, the possibility of creating a new man and photographed it in that sense. Today, the course it has taken is not the one we had imagined. And that generates great sense of disappointment, bitterness and lack of credibility.”

Estudio Caracas (1967-1970) and Karakarakas, democracia y poder (1967-1970).

In his work, Gasparini articulated contradictory situations; he recorded images within images. Sometimes he assembled them in the laboratory and superimposed them. He used montage and editing as a system for producing ideas, and his narratives seek to motivate action and shock consciences.

Between 1968 and 1970, he joined the editorial team of the magazine *Rocinante*, published by intellectuals of the Venezuelan left committed to the revolutionary causes of the world. The magazine emerged at a time when the armed struggle in the country was over and some of those who used to

was commissioned by UNESCO to document the ambitious Cuban literacy campaign (1964-1965). It was at this time, with the aim of publicizing the Revolution, that cinema and photography experienced a golden age. Gasparini collaborated with

filmmakers such as Armand Gatti and Agnès Varda, from whom he borrowed certain expressive and technical resources, such as the use of fades, image sweeps and the inclusion of frames with text in the story, with which he ordered a good part of his photographic praxis,



Campana electoral [Election Campaign], Avenida Urdaneta, Caracas, 1968
Fundación MAPFRE Collections
© Paolo Gasparini

Cuarto menguante contaminado
 [Polluted Last Quarter], early
 morning on December 13 in front
 of the Basilica of the Virgin of
 Guadalupe, Mexico City, 1994
 Fundación MAPPRE Collections
 © Paolo Gasparini



take to the streets to protest began to work in state institutions and universities. Most of these issues were illustrated by Gasparini, satirizing politicians, writers and oil companies. Involved with the Venezuelan left, his photographs also illustrated books with revolutionary subjects, on the class struggle, condemnation of torture in the country, as well as the themes of guerrilla warfare, capitalism and underdevelopment in Latin America.

Retromundo (1974-1985)

“[...] I left Europe with a trunk full of images of the Americas. In a second stage, I returned to the first world loaded with images of the Latin American reality. And so arose *Retromundo*, a photobook that does not confront realities, but rather evidences what is happening in the

two continents”, Gasparini explains about this project.

Retromundo (1986) is a photobook in which, aided by poetry, the author establishes a dialogue between the first and third world. The first is represented by images of advertisements, slogans, passers-by in European and American cities that are reflected and multiplied in the translucent surfaces of the shop windows. In his representation of the third world, there are no reflections in mirrors or windows, instead he depicts street scenes, misery and poverty, aspects that are common in Latin American countries. Thus, using opposing images as if it were a diptych, Gasparini reaffirms his way of doing things, which is seen frequently in his creations. The development of a discourse that makes sense in relation to its counterpart.

Series “Acá, este cielo que vemos”, 1971-1992; “Brasilia, dos en uno”, 1972-1973 and 2013; “São Paulo, la muerte del aura”, 1997. 2013 and 2015; “Maracaibo, La Guajira y petróleo”, 1970-2017; “La calle”, 1969-1999; and “El faquir de la Torre Capriles, Plaza Venezuela, Caracas”, 1970.

In 1978, Gasparini participated in the Colloquiums of Photography held in Mexico, and again in Cuba in 1984. These meetings were the most important forum for discussion during that period. The talks dealt with topics such as the role that the photographer should assume in relation to the context in which they worked, as well as the need to create a visual project depicting the contradictions that can be produced by the coexistence of poverty and wealth, but without falling into dramatism or exoticism.



La mirada sobre el mundo [Gazing at the world], Los Angeles, 1997
Fundación MAPFRE Collections
© Paolo Gasparini

In this sense, Gasparini’s work is deeply respectful and shows the harshest aspects of society, the life of miners and Andean peasants in series such as “Acá, este cielo que vemos” [Here, this sky we see], but through images imbued with great dignity, such as those of mothers with taped hats wrapping their children in handmade blankets after long days of work in Peru.

After his experience as an architectural photographer in Caracas, in 1970, together with art critic Damián Bayón, he was hired by UNESCO to photograph the pre-Columbian, colonial and contemporary buildings of the continent, with the aim of publishing these together with Bayón’s research (*Panorámica de la arquitectura latinoamericana*). As a result of this assignment, the

author was able to photograph built urban projects from Mexico to the Argentine pampas and from Brasilia to Machu Picchu. Moreover, as Gasparini himself pointed out: “I strived to photograph the lives of the marginalized, of those who have nothing, and the great differences that coexist next to and around these great buildings.” These contradictions and the unjust effects of post-colonization can be contemplated in series such as “Brasilia, dos en uno” [Brasilia, two in one] (1972-1973 and 2013); “São Paulo, la muerte del aura” [São Paulo, the death of the aura] (1997-2015); “Maracaibo, La Guajira y petróleo” [Maracaibo, La Guajira and oil] (1970-2017); and “La calle” [The street] (1970-1999). Photographs that reflect a robust visual project which, as Sagrario

Berti points out, “is far from victimizing and, on the contrary, reflects a hostile environment, but one that is beautiful in its powerful capacity to resist”, and which underpins the idea that photography should be a vehicle for exposing social injustices, one of the ethical objectives of the Colloquiums mentioned above.

One of his most recognized series is based on Plaza Venezuela in Caracas, crowned by the 60,000-square-meter Capriles Tower with a modern façade, designed by artist Jesús Rafael Soto. This element, which transforms public space into art, is a metaphor for the fall of the utopia of progress. A homeless person who has placed their bed in the middle of the path of those who walk by is the true protagonist, and not the tower or its façade.

Gasparini's work is deeply respectful and shows the harshest aspects of society, the lives of miners and Andean peasants, but through images imbued with great dignity

Juego de niños con graffitis [Child's Play with Graffiti],
São Paulo, 1997
Fundación MAPFRE Collections
© Paolo Gasparini

México-El Suplicante (1971-2015)

Since 1971, so frequent have been Gasparini's trips to Mexico that its capital has almost become his third home. After receiving the National Photography Award in Venezuela in 1993, the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Unidad Iztapalapa invited him to be a researcher in the Urban Culture program in Mexico City. Since then he has traveled to the great metropolis on several occasions, photographing its streets and inhabitants. Over time, these sojourns have borne fruit in *Letanías del polvo* [Litanies of dust] (2009), an audiovisual CD that accompanies the photobook *El suplicante* [The supplicant] (2010). With texts by Juan Villoro and Gasparini himself, this publication tells a story that begins with the Zapatista uprising and extends to the leader of the indigenous armed group, Subcomandante Marcos. Villoro's texts are detached from the photos, they do not illustrate them; those of the photographer do, and appear in the introduction and at the end, as an explanatory note on his work.

In the sequence it is common to find images of Christ on the cross, graffiti, posters portraying a victim pasted on walls, masked "lucha libre" wrestlers and "Zapatistas", as well as street vendors' stalls, pariahs or crosses and Christian ceremonies.

Regreso a casa [Returning Home], São Paulo, 1997
Fundación MAPFRE Collections
© Paolo Gasparini



El ángel de la historia (1963-2018)
El ángel de la historia [the Angel of History] is a twelve-meter mural composed of 63 photographs taken in different countries that form an overview of Gasparini's work. The title is a specific reference to

the philosopher Walter Benjamin and his idea of history, which, like an angel, looks at the past in ruins to reflect on and understand the environment and proclaim the non-existence of future and progress. ⊗





Judith Joy Ross

El retrato del alma

TEXT: FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE CULTURE AREA

IMAGES: © JUDITH JOY ROSS, COURTESY GALERIE THOMAS ZANDER, COLOGNE

Fundación MAPFRE presents a wide-ranging retrospective of the American Judith Joy Ross (Pennsylvania, 1946), based on the photographic archive that the artist has been developing over the last forty years. Along with her best-known pieces, the exhibition also features previously unpublished material, providing an updated look at her work. From September 24, 2021, to January 9, 2022, this exhibition can be viewed at the Sala Recoletos in Madrid.

Since the 1980s, Judith Joy Ross has primarily focused on portraiture. With a documentary approach inspired by the work of artists such as August Sander, Walker Evans, and Diane Arbus, she is able to portray complete strangers with a very particular sensitivity. The author organizes her work by groups. To date, there are approximately twenty known works taken over several years, others developed in just a few days.

She began taking photographs in 1966, but it was in 1982, in Eurana Park, a grove of trees where she used to go with her family when she was a child, that her passion for the medium really took off. After the death of her father, the artist found photography to be a way to deal with her grief. She also realized that it helped her to better understand the world around her. Her images, far from any degree of pretentiousness, have the ability to bring together the past, present and future of the individuals who pose in front of her camera. She is not a typical studio portraitist, nor does she go out into the street to capture a specific

subject. Rather, she works by subjects, which she refers to as “occasions”, and in each image she takes she establishes a sense of recognition between herself and the subject, although this identification lasts only an instant, the time she needs to take the photograph.

In Ross’s work, we can appreciate two clearly differentiated lines: on the one hand, those projects with a more social character; on the other, those of a personal nature. Her first research in the latter vein was in the aforementioned Eurana Park, where, for two summers in a row, she photographed the children and teenagers who flocked to the site. Along this path of memory retrieval, she also returned to Nanticoke, a small town in northern Pennsylvania where her father had run a convenience store and where she photographed what was left of the store’s facade and the café where she used to have breakfast with her mother and father. All these images are imbued with a patina of nostalgia with which the artist recalls her past, perhaps with the intention of overcoming her loss.

From her earliest days Ross used a large format 8 x 10 inch camera and worked with direct print

Mona Park, Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1996

© Judith Joy Ross, courtesy Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne

In Ross's work, we can appreciate two clearly differentiated lines: on the one hand, those projects with a more social character, on the other, those of a personal nature



Untitled, Eurana Park, Weatherly, Pennsylvania, 1982
© Judith Joy Ross, courtesy Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne

copies that she then dipped in a gold solution to add luminosity, working in a range of cool gray and plum brown tones. In 1983, upon learning that the design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington was completed, she decided to go to the site to try to give meaning to the war that, between 1959 and 1970, had cost the lives of thousands of people on both sides. Throughout that summer and the next, Ross photographed mourners of the dead and visitors. Later, some of these images were chosen by John Szarkowski for the exhibition *New Photography* (1985), at MoMa, which introduced her as one of the new talents of the medium.

After this experience of grief, the author felt drawn to all those politicians who had decided to embark on that senseless war. This interest coincided with what is known as the Iran-Contra scandal, in which the press revealed, during President Reagan's term of office, the secret sale of arms by the government in exchange for the release of hostages in Iran and Nicaragua.

Between May 1986 and May 1987, the artist took hundreds of photographs of congressional representatives and their aides,



Untitled, Easton, Pennsylvania, 1988
© Judith Joy Ross, courtesy Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne



Untitled, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C., 1984
 © Judith Joy Ross, courtesy Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne



Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, 1985
 © Judith Joy Ross, courtesy Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne

both in and around the Capitol. The result was more than a hundred images of great beauty, imbued with intimacy and humanity.

In 1990, influenced by August Sander’s “People of the 20th Century” series, in which the artist presented a wide range of social archetypes, she focused on working-class people in a project she titled “Jobs”. Although this was not a new motif, she explored it more intensely during this period. She visited auto parts dealerships, doctors’ offices and

town halls and captured the essence of these people with such intensity that it is hard to imagine them doing anything else. For this project, she was able to gain access to the Bethlehem Armory where she captured the reservists who, on red alert, were suddenly called to the Persian Gulf as part of Operation Desert Shield, following Iraq’s occupation of Kuwait. In addition to these portraits, the photographer also took images of local demonstrations in support of the troops.

After winning the Charles Pratt Memorial Award in 1992, Ross tackled a series on public education. For three years the artist photographed the interiors of schools and returned to her own, in Hazleton, where her siblings and mother had also attended before her. These photographs form a collective portrait of public education in North America through its teachers, kindergarten, elementary, middle and high school students. On this occasion she focused once again on memory



Robert C. Byrd, opposition spokesman, Democratic senator, West Virginia, 1987.
© Judith Joy Ross, courtesy Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne



Private First Class Maria I. Leon, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 1990
© Judith Joy Ross, courtesy Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne

and remembrance, as she herself points out: “I don’t want these images to explain what school means in a documentary sense. I want it to be an emotional journey. I want the viewer to reconnect with what it means to be a child again.”

In the mid-1990s, African Americans were in the minority in the Lehigh Valley, where the author was living. In the summer of 1998, she decided to drive into one of the most impoverished areas in northwest Philadelphia and set up her camera in a park. With

the help of a city employee, she began to take portraits of the children playing there, as well as some of the participants in various youth and church social programs. These portraits radiate an intense presence in a context of violence and misery.

The 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington D.C. and the Afghanistan War motivated the artist to undertake a series of projects in which she decided to abandon her neutral approach to her work, because, as she noted, “I

wanted to be honest about my feelings of hatred for war.” In 2008, an exhibition was held in Bethlehem entitled *Eyes Wide Open*, sponsored by the Quaker American Friends Service Committee. Encouraged by this event highlighting the human cost of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Ross explored this theme. She photographed, on the one hand, individuals attending the aforementioned exhibition during its tour of western Pennsylvania, and on the other, people demonstrating with their protest messages

The 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. and the war in Afghanistan motivated Ross to undertake a series of projects in which she decided to abandon her neutral approach to her work



Annie Hasz, *Easton Circle*, Easton, Pennsylvania, 2007
© Judith Joy Ross, courtesy Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne



Persephone, 2015.
© Judith Joy Ross, courtesy Galerie Thomas Zander, Cologne

written on placards, in Pennsylvania, Arizona, and Washington, D.C. Together, these portraits resulted in a small book whose cover read: PROTEST THE WAR. When it was finished, she distributed the publication to members of Congress, naively hoping that she could bring about some kind of change.

In 2007, the production of the direct printing paper that the artist had used throughout her career ceased, leading her to start working mainly in color, a realm that up to that moment

she had not tackled. She then began to use soft muted colors, with strong flashes, giving her images an aura similar to that she used to generate in black and white. In recent years the artist has returned to shooting in black and white, and her images have become more essential, less anecdotal. The portrait of a young woman adorned with a wreath of flowers and a cell phone in her hand, embellished with a skull sticker, and entitled *Persephone* (2015), reveals, in the words of the show's curator, Joshua

Chuang, "the goddess of the underworld it seems, but it is Judith Joy Ross who fearlessly peers into the mystery of her being, taking it all in." ✕



Giorgio Morandi. The “profession of painting”

TEXT: FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE CULTURE AREA IMAGES: © GIORGIO MORANDI, VEGAP, MADRID, 2021

The exhibition *Morandi. Infinite Resonance*, which will be open from September 24, 2021, to January 9, 2022, at Fundación MAPFRE’s Sala Recoletos in Madrid, takes a retrospective look at the work of Giorgio Morandi (Bologna, 1890-1964), one of the most significant and unclassifiable artists in the history of 20th-century art.

The Italian painter hardly traveled outside Italy and remained almost his entire life in his house-studio on Via Fondazza in Bologna. There he created a body of work in which everyday objects, flowers and landscapes became the protagonists.

His canvases attempt to capture reality as faithfully as possible through his personal aesthetic, silent and suspended, which he constructs using light, color and volumetric values. In this way he crafts works depicting seemingly nothing more than what the painting shows: basic and pure forms, conferring on his compositions a strong sense of the unreal.

On this occasion, his productions are accompanied by a careful selection of works by contemporary artists whose artistic practice has established a fruitful dialogue with the Bolognese master. An artist among artists, Morandi is internationally recognized as one of the key figures in the development of contemporary art.

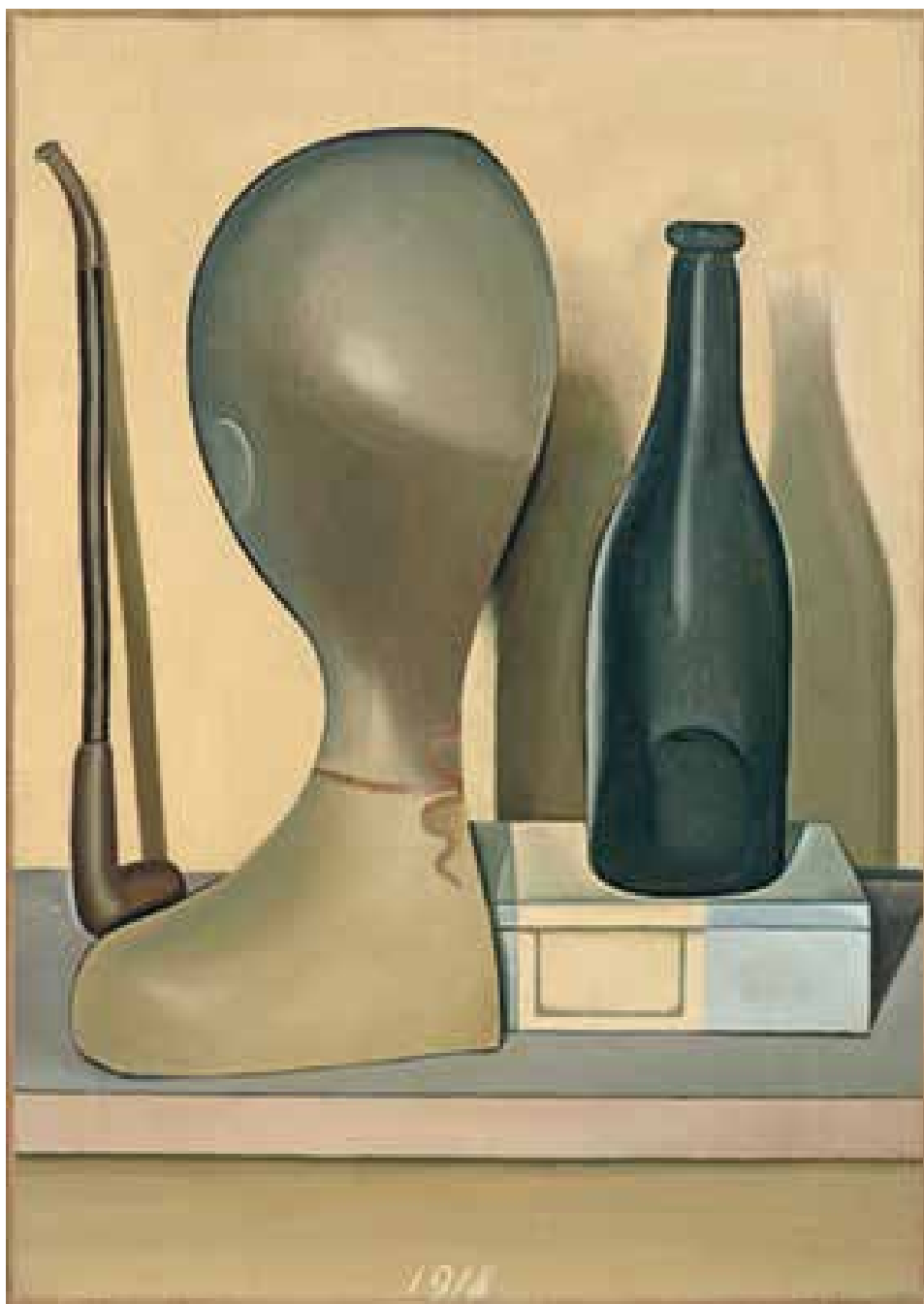
The exhibition takes a broad overview of Morandi’s art through different sections that deal with all of the subjects dear to the artist, mainly still lifes, landscapes and flower-filled vases. In addition, throughout the exhibition the visitor will find, in dialogue with the works of the Bolognese master, the aforementioned selection of works by contemporary artists who he has influenced. This is the case of Joel Meyerowitz, Rachel Whiteread, the artistic couple Bertozzi & Casoni, and Alfredo Alcáin, to name but a few.

The denied perfume

It is well known that impressionism changed our way of looking at things, and also boosted genres considered to be “minor”, such as landscape and still life, which for years had remained in the shadows.

In his flower studies, Morandi turns his gaze to Renoir and works on these types of compositions in a traditional manner. *Flores*, from 1952 (V. 796), presents a vase that is notable for its verticality, as opposed to the horizontality marking the place on which it rests, resulting in a somewhat unstable equilibrium. Despite the simplicity of the scenes, these vases, which mostly house roses, zinnias or daisies with tight buds, generate a kind of uneasiness

Natura morta [Still life], 1914
Oil on canvas, 73.8 × 65 cm
Collezione Augusto e Francesca Giovanardi, Milán
Photo © Alvise Aspesi



Natura morta metafisica
[Metaphysical Still Life], 1918
Oil on canvas, 54 × 38 cm
Fondazione Magnani-Rocca,
Mamiano di Traversetolo, Parma

complement to his painted pieces, but a mode of expression in its own right; he was convinced that certain “images” corresponded to certain artistic techniques. His learning process was slow, probably by means of manuals, but after ten years of practice he managed to transcribe the sensations of color into the black and white gradations of his engravings. His prints may seem simple, but they are the result of a complex and meticulous process, which, despite everything, does not make the image lose its spontaneity.

He made his first print at the age of twenty-two, in 1912. From that moment on, his activity with this technique would not cease, although there were some interruptions, until three years before his death. The 1920s and 1930s were his most prolific decades in terms of printmaking.

Over time, Morandi turned etching into a technique where he could achieve tonalities, surpassing its use as a procedure to define only the shapes of objects. Chiaroscuro then occupies almost the entire sheet, and the whites of the paper act as an additional color, thanks to the areas of the plate that, left without traces from the artist, remain white after printing. As in his painting, his interest in volumes and light led him to create an atmosphere that seems to envelop

in the viewer; perhaps because the arrangements, associated with the ephemeral and the inevitable withering of flowers, remain represented in the painting, eternal and immutable, removed from the passage of time.

The autonomous timbre of engraving

Throughout his career, Morandi produced about one hundred and thirty engravings, exclusively in black. For the Bolognese artist, printmaking was not a

Despite the simplicity of the scenes, these vases, most of which house roses, zinnias or daisies with tight buds, generate a kind of uneasiness in the viewer

Natura morta
[Still life], 1928
Oil on canvas, 34.5 × 46.5 cm
Collezione Augusto e Francesca
Giovannardi, Milán
Photo © Alvisè Aspesi

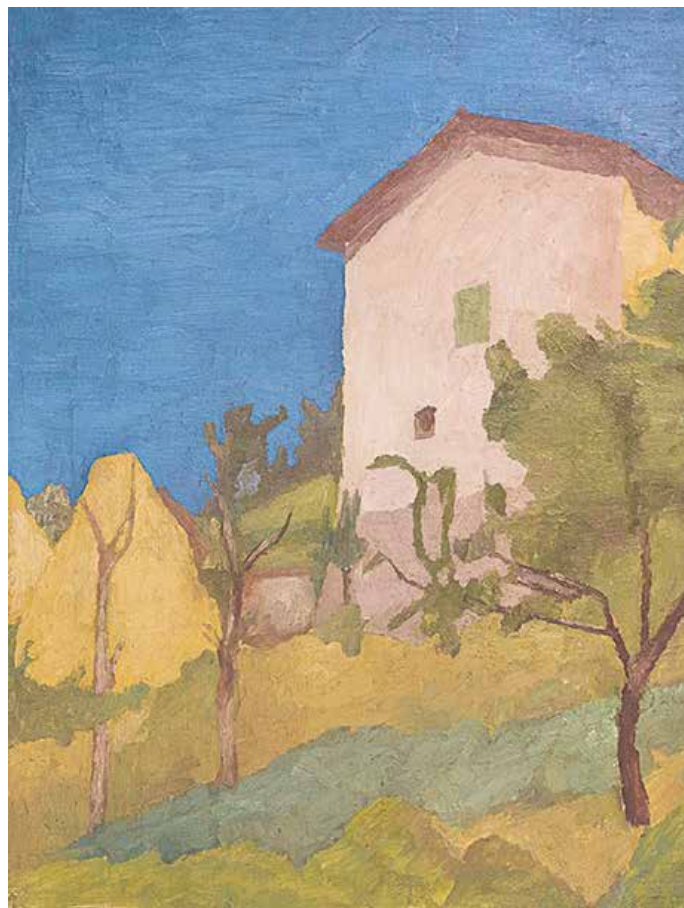


Natura morta
[Still life], 1937-1938
Oil on canvas, 42 × 63 cm
Musei Civici Fiorentini -
Collezioni del Novecento,
Firenze





Joel Meyerowitz
Morandi's Objects: Wood Grained Pitche, 2015
 HP print on 100% cotton paper. 51 x 40.6 cm
 Damiani
 Photo © Joel Meyerowitz



Paesaggio [Landscape], 1928
 Oil on canvas, 61.7 x 46.8 cm
 Collezione Augusto e Francesca Giovanardi, Milán
 Photo © Alvise Aspesi

the motifs. It is this atmosphere that generates the immediately recognizable aura of Morandi's style.

The colors of white

Over the years, Morandi's painting tended towards sublimation, to a progressive reduction of subjects and technical refinement, enhanced by the almost ineffable tonal gradations and a soft brushstroke that began to dematerialize around 1950. The works of this period are extremely simplified and

increasingly softened, to the point that motifs are no longer clearly distinguishable and become almost abstract. In 1955, during an interview for *Voice of America*, Morandi, when asked about this matter, replied: "I think there is nothing more surreal, nothing more abstract than the real."

In this sense, the color white is fundamental in his aesthetic. Paradoxical as it may seem, in his compositions this "non-color" acquires a very varied chromatic value, with its shades of ochre,

ivory, pink or gray. In watercolor, the white of the paper clearly acts as another color, contrasting with the painted areas. A technique that Cézanne applied, and which Morandi also adopted in his engravings.

Silent dialogues

Contemplating Morandi's still lifes evokes the feeling of being in a suspended time, almost eternal, impossible to reach. The artist, once definitively distanced from the fashions and movements that came



Natura morta [Still life], 1941
 Oil on canvas, 37 × 50 cm
 Istituzione Bologna Musei | Museo Morandi

and went in Italian art during the first decades of the 20th century, dedicated himself to the silence of the everyday and domestic objects he found in his studio.

Morandi was capable of painting a canvas in a couple of hours, but he spent a great deal of time beforehand thinking about and studying the composition

of the objects, their relationship in space, the possible incidence of light and tonal gradation. His bottles, boxes, and vases, whether arranged as a compact barrier or in a looser composition, always reflect a controlled positioning in which there is nothing casual. The dusty ambience of some of his works is obtained through tonal gradations, with a palette that tends almost to the monochromatic but that reveals, after a second glance, a much richer tonal variation than

one might discern at first glance. The same is true of the *chiaroscuro* variations.

It is as if Morandi saw infinite possibilities in orchestrating the objects in space; in fact, some critics have used musical metaphors to explain his painting. By way of example, Cesare Brandi writes of the “force of a colored note that rises with the purity of a trill, without altering the harmonic order”, and Francesco Arcangeli speaks of a “symphonic peace.” ✕





A more humane future

TEXT: LAURA SÁNCHEZ IMAGES: FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE

“May we never forget that there is nothing greater than helping others.” This phrase concentrates the essence of Fundación MAPFRE’s latest campaign which, under the slogan, “A more humane future”, aims to remind us of the importance of commitment and individual responsibility when building a world in which no one is left behind. A philosophy that we have been applying for more than 45 years.

The campaign “A more humane future”, launched by Fundación MAPFRE, is based around a video where the action takes place in a train carriage. Three generations are sitting in the same compartment: a little girl, her mother and an elderly man carrying a mysterious, ancient-looking suitcase that immediately arouses the little girl’s interest. When the mother steps out to answer a phone call, the little girl and the old man begin a conversation based on the innocent sincerity and curiosity of the little girl. “What an old suitcase! What do you have in it?”

Only a child could start this kind of conversation. The supportive and unprejudiced gaze of childhood becomes the ideal vehicle for the man - the personification of Fundación MAPFRE - to demonstrate that, in reality, everything needed to help others fits in a suitcase: books to share knowledge with anyone who wants to learn and cannot;

keys to the homes of all those people who feel lonely and need someone by their side; a bowl of warm soup that is able to both nourish and comfort and which has been cooked with love; a huge contact list of people willing to lend a hand and help others find a decent job; a dictionary that does not include the word “strange”, especially when it comes to illnesses; a mirror that has the power to reflect the immense talents of people with intellectual disabilities... and, in the end, the most important thing: a piece of red wool that the man ties on one of the girl’s fingers so that she never forgets that there is nothing greater than helping others.

Fundación MAPFRE has been on an intense journey for forty-five years, carrying that suitcase full of projects with which it works to ensure that no one is left behind. And year after year, whether in times of prosperity or crisis, it reaffirms the immense power that people

wield when they come together to achieve something. We have seen it, once again, over the past year. The pandemic may have been unprecedented, but each and every one of the projects implemented in response to the situations generated by COVID-19 has been based on the same premise and the same values that inspired the creation of our foundation in 1975: tolerance, trust, cohesion, cordiality, solidarity and enthusiasm.

For Fundación MAPFRE, this feeling of solidarity is something basic and inherent to its way of understanding human relations: without cooperation there is no progress and, even if there was the slightest possibility of progress without people collaborating with each other, that would not be - in any case - the kind of progress that inspires and moves the more than 10,000 volunteers who work in the more than 900 projects currently underway. All the initiatives in which these people collaborate



are inspired by an idea of progress in which everyone moves forward together, at different paces, with different capacities and conditioning circumstances, but all together nonetheless!

In coordinating the work of the volunteers, the role of Fundación MAPFRE's managers is not only to guide people, but also to help others to succeed and to optimize their potential. Solidarity does not recognize hierarchies, nor does commitment: Instead, it is about training people so that everyone, at any given moment, can offer the necessary support and guidance. Fundación MAPFRE empowers both its partners and beneficiaries so that they do not hesitate to step up to take the lead on each project.

Feedback and encouragement are a vital part of team performance, especially when we share a common direction and a strong sense of community. Fundación MAPFRE could not be closer to that vision: the foundation constantly interchanges information between projects, managers, volunteers, and beneficiaries. It analyzes, learns and improves so that volunteer teams become increasingly responsible and aware of the value they bring to the table. Feedback is necessary for growth in all areas of our lives, especially when we share a common direction and a keen sense of community.

In 2020, 978 Fundación MAPFRE projects reached in

excess of 3 million beneficiaries in more than 30 countries around the world. Almost a thousand direct tickets to the search for better opportunities along with personal and social development. To ensure that no passenger on this journey is left behind, Fundación MAPFRE promotes the integration of groups at risk of social exclusion, offers backing and support for the most disadvantaged people and their families, supports education as a tool for development, and facilitates incorporation into the labor market.

All social action activities are carried out in collaboration with non-profit institutions and entities. These entities are firmly rooted in their districts, locations, cities, communities or countries,



For Fundación MAPFRE, this feeling of solidarity is something basic and inherent to its way of understanding human relations: without cooperation there is no progress



and there is no one better placed than them to identify situations of need in which to intervene. A good example is the Fundación Grandes Amigos. Since its creation in 1994, this organization has cared for more than 850 elderly people experiencing problems of loneliness. It provides emotional support for these people, something that cannot be supplied by the authorities, but which its 875 volunteers do very well, taking care of the elderly and establishing friendships, and mutually helping one another. Their role during the months of lockdown, during the worst moments of the pandemic, has been fundamental for this group.

Fundación MAPFRE's presence in Latin America

is especially significant. Our collaboration with CESAL (Centro de Estudios y Solidaridad con América Latina) exemplifies much of the work we do with local partners. This entity mainly operates in marginalized areas of cities where many people who arrive from rural areas settle. Many of these families are affected by family disintegration, lack of work and poverty, and as a consequence, the quality of life and education of children suffers. The aim is to promote education, particularly among the children and young people of these disadvantaged communities. Fundación MAPFRE understands education in a holistic way, working on educational projects that, at the

same time, support nutrition, health, education, women's empowerment and training for access to the labor market.

Through the campaign "A more humane future", Fundación MAPFRE's intention is to tie a piece of red wool on the finger of each and every one of us so that we never forget that one of the most gratifying sensations is to help others. Fortunately, in a year as challenging as 2020, when the coronavirus disrupted so many activities, events and programs, our volunteers' desire to collaborate increased, reaching 17% more beneficiaries than in the previous year. Solidarity and commitment become even more pronounced in difficult times. ✕





Hugo Martínez Gutiérrez, Group Leader at the San Blas Fire Station, Madrid; and President of the NGO Bomberos Ayudan

“We believe that hope helps the healing process”

TEXT: CRISTINA BISBAL IMAGES: BOMBEROS AYUDAN

The greatest tragedy imaginable for a father was a real turning point for this 43-year-old firefighter who has been in the service for 14 years. After two years of continuous efforts —countless therapies and a very powerful antiviral— to get his son to overcome a congenital cytomegalovirus, the little boy passed away when he was just two years old, in an accident in a swimming pool. That terrible event turned Hugo’s life around and, “after the great dark night of the Soul,” as he describes it, he and two other colleagues, José Andrés Mora Molina and Antonio Poncela, decided to start an organization to help other people. “Personally, I felt that helping without expecting anything in return was one of my life’s missions.”



Because of their work, the three firefighters realized that many households were facing really dramatic financial situations and that they could use all the potential they had as a group to offer social assistance. That is how Bomberos Ayudan came into being.

What does your work in the NGO involve?

I am the president of a board of directors, which is made up of three other members and which decides and organizes the actions of the NGO. But I am also a volunteer and I help collect and deliver food, visit hospitals and I get involved in other activities and projects. I am particularly invested in the Ayuda Pequeños Guerreros (Little Warriors Aid) project, which really motivates me. In this project we sponsor and maintain an ongoing relationship with sick children. We believe that hope helps the healing process. This is something we have seen in our visits.

Where did the idea for Pequeños Guerreros come from?

By a magical coincidence we met Yago and his family. He had a rare cancer that kept him in Hospital 12 de Octubre for five years in strict isolation without leaving his room. According to his mother, hearing the firemen's siren was so exciting for him it became part of his medication. We also received a request from a volunteer for a firefighter to deliver a story to a sick child. That child was Yago and the fireman was me. This project

was born out of the connection between the two of us.

At first, we went to each hospital once and never went back, but after 40 visits, we realized it was a shame not to see the children again. They loved us going to see them! One mother told us it was the first time her son had laughed in three weeks and that gave us food for thought. Now we visit them once a month. It's a way of keeping a presence in their lives.

Do you remember a particularly moving time in the years you have been with the association?

When Yago was finally disconnected from the machine that provided him with chemo for 18 hours a day, it was a really emotional and joyous moment for all of us.

Also, all the Epiphany parades in Madrid have been very special and a wonderful gift for the firefighters and non-firefighter volunteers who give everything they have throughout the year.

But there have also been some difficult moments...

Especially when Pequeños Guerreros pass away, like Smailer and Maria, who touched the bottom of our hearts. I am sure they are helping us from wherever they are.

Pequeños Guerreros is not your only project?

We also help other associations and NGOs that have difficulties in assisting third parties. We check that their project is real and that they are directly and immediately supporting those most in need, and we offer them the logistical

help that they cannot provide, if they lack personnel, vehicles, informational campaigns, training, and so on.

What is the most gratifying thing, in general, about what you do in the NGO?

Without a doubt, meeting so many people who help selflessly. On a personal level, I feel how, by collaborating in this, each volunteer heals their inner child, how they embrace and take care of them to bring out all the human potential they have inside, that we all have inside.

How much time do you dedicate to this each week?

For the first three years it was many hours, both physical and mental. We spent around 15 to 20 hours a week on it. But as everything went well for us and we have always been supported, we kept getting enough energy to keep going at full speed. The next four years, with experience and more volunteers, have been more manageable.

Is it difficult to reconcile work, volunteering and private life?

Thanks to our schedule, where we work 24 hours straight but then rest, we have been able to make the time to organize everything. I dedicate more time to it while my wife is working and the children are at school. But yes, over the past seven years there have been moments of family stress due to the intense activity of the association and my continuous involvement. But when you devote yourself from the heart to your child, everything works out well. ✕

Desde 1968



Secreto
boi
14,95.

Alcatraz
21,95.

Bife
9,35.

The battle over meat: a war of nuance

TEXT: LAURA SÁNCHEZ IMAGES: ISTOCK

As happened with *light* products and saturated fats, meat consumption is now at the forefront of the food debate. The key to this story lies in the nuances: there are no absolute truths, and shades of grey outweigh the black and white. To help you understand this debate with the right information, we will discuss the relevant nuances.

Although the controversy over meat consumption seems to have flared up again in recent months, the truth is that it began back in 2015. In that year, the WHO included red meat among the foods whose consumption increased the risk of developing colon and rectal cancer. Previously, the WHO had already warned about the dangers of fats and sugar, with subsequent awareness-raising campaigns. The 2015 announcement marked the beginning of the meat battle.

But what exactly was the WHO claiming? The organization recommended that we reduce our consumption of meat, especially processed and red meat, because these are considered, respectively, as being confirmed as carcinogenic (group 1) or probably carcinogenic in humans (group 2A) by the International Agency

for Research on Cancer (IARC), an agency affiliated to the WHO.

“In the case of processed meats the evidence is strong. With red meat, there is some controversy because the results of epidemiological studies are not very clear”, explains Oscar Picazo, head of projects in the Fundación MAPFRE Health Promotion Area. It is known that carcinogenic substances such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, heterocyclic amines, nitrosoamines and acrylamides are produced when meat is cooked. However, the results of the studies are not as conclusive as in the case of processed meats. Moreover, the initial studies grouped the two types of meat into the same category. What has happened is that when separate analyses have been carried out, the negative effect has been upheld for processed meat, but the level

of risk has been reduced for red meat.”

Another factor adds to the controversy. Óscar Picazo explains that within the epidemiological studies on which these results are based, there are also other types of not inconsiderable biases that distort the results: “For example, people who tend to consume more processed or red meats are those who tend to take less care of their health, have a poorer diet overall, drink alcohol, smoke, are sedentary, and so on. Although attempts have been made to control for these kinds of habits, it is not always possible to disentangle these effects in the results of the studies.”

So, let us look at the objective figures. How much meat is consumed in Spain? The latest data from the Food Consumption Report, produced by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and



Food, show that in 2020 Spanish households increased their meat consumption by 10.5%, reaching 2,305.25 million kilos. The average person ate 49.86 kilos of meat in 2020, which is 4.62 kilos more than in 2019. Fresh meat is the most commonly consumed, with a per person intake of 36.20 kilos per year, 3.43 kilos more than in the previous period. Per capita consumption of processed meat is one third that of fresh meat, at 12.39 kilos per year, and for frozen meat it was just 1.28 kilos in 2020.

The Spanish Food Safety Agency recommends eating between 200 and 500 grams of meat per week - the WHO advises that we should not exceed 500 grams - so consumption in Spain is above

these recommendations. However, the 2020 figure is influenced by another important nuance: staying at home because of the pandemic led to an increase in meat consumption, breaking the downward trend that had been underway since 2012.

The data clearly show the need to reduce our meat intake to bring the figures within the official recommendations. However, it is quite another thing to say that, as has been claimed in some quarters, meat is bad for human health in general. “This is not true. In fact, the nutritional contribution of meat is important, especially in certain vital stages such as the development of children and adolescents”, explains Óscar

Picazo. “In nutrition, context is important, and as part of a healthy Mediterranean-type diet, rich in vegetables, the nutritional contribution of quality meat is positive. It is paradoxical, but, for example, crisps or cereal-based baked goods (pastries, bread, etc.) have also been classified as a probable carcinogen in humans (2A) due to the presence of acrylamide, and yet no one is claiming that potatoes or bread are bad for our health. Again, there are nuances: the context, how the food is cooked or eaten, how often, and the rest of the diet, are all important factors.”

Beyond diet itself, there are other aspects to consider in the meat debate that also lend themselves to various interpretations and which therefore involve different nuances. For example, there is a widespread claim that 15,000 liters of water are required to produce one kilo of meat. The meat sector argues that 90% of the water attributed to meat production is “green water”, in other words, water from rainfall which, if the animals were to disappear, would continue to fall in the same way. They also claim that only 10% corresponds to “blue water” and “grey water”, that CO₂ emissions are lower than for many vegetable crops, and that livestock meat production represents only 7.8% of total greenhouse gas emissions in Spain.

“The models for calculating the ecological food footprint

are very complex, and as part of the environmental impact we must not only take into account the water or greenhouse gas footprint, but other parameters such as land use, effect on biodiversity, soil, water and air pollution, energy consumption, and a long list of other factors”, explains Picazo. “There is a lot of work to be done to improve production models, but sending the message to the population that eating less meat will save the planet is simplistic to say the least.”

Ethics and economics are not immune from controversy either. In terms of ethics, it is of course essential to improve the way we treat animals and eliminate cruelty throughout the process. Animal rights activists push for a vegan diet.

From an economic point of view, some sectors, especially related to the food industry, are promoting the production of synthetic meat. Artificial meat is created in laboratories from stem cells extracted from animal muscles: from cows, chickens and pigs, along with other elements such as fetal bovine serum, myoglobin, vitamins, amino acids, fat and connective tissue. This new form of production was unveiled in 2012, when the first hamburger made in a laboratory was presented in London. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation supports this type of production, which still raises many questions and sparks heated debate. Other groups



such as the Eat-right commission or the World Economic Forum are openly promoting veganism, while other voices criticize them.

Professor Frédéric Leroy, a researcher in food science and biotechnology at the Vrije Universiteit in Brussels, is at the forefront of one current of thought suggesting that meat is now being used as a scapegoat by environmental and commercial campaigners. Leroy believes these groups base much of their conclusions on bad science. “Red meat is a valuable nutrient-rich food and a key component of our evolutionary diets. Red meat has been consumed since the dawn of humanity, sometimes in enormous quantities. One and a half million years

ago, we adapted to eating meat, both anatomically and physiologically, and could not have survived without it”, writes Leroy. “Studies have shown that meat consumption is associated with a lower mortality rate and less heart disease. Red meat consumption in randomized controlled trials does not lead to a worse risk profile for inflammation, oxidative stress or heart disease.”

In short, as Óscar Picazo explains, in the meat debate we often encounter premises that are sold as absolute truths, “both in terms of health and environmental issues. But nothing is black and white in this matter. In the meat debate there are many nuances to be taken into account.” ❌



From Infinity to Zero. *We did it like this: the* **present and future of road** **accidents in our country**

TEXT: CRISTINA BISBAL IMAGES: ISTOCK, FUNDACION MAPFRE

In 1989, more than 9,000 people lost their lives in traffic accidents in Spain. From then up to the present day, the figure has decreased by more than 80%. That is why we are a benchmark in Europe; and that is why we have a particular responsibility towards the countries in Latin America. Despite all our efforts, there are more than one million fatalities a year worldwide. And each victim is a failure that should drive us to pursue “Objetivo Cero”, our goal of zero deaths on the road.

Over the last three decades, the number of traffic fatalities in our country has fallen by almost 80%. Since 1989, the year that set an unfortunate record, things have changed a lot. They really have. Regulations have changed, roads have improved, the AVE railway network has been created and extended, we have replaced words like accident with incident... But, above all, the awareness of the general public has changed. Jesús Monclús, director of the Road Safety and Prevention Area of Fundación MAPFRE, translates all these changes into a single figure: 150,000 victims saved over the last 30-plus years. Despite this, every year more than 1,300,000 people still die across the globe.

A shocking statistic that shows us how much there is yet to be done.

This was made clear at the presentation of the book *Del Infinito al Cero. Así lo hicimos*



Book cover *Del infinito al cero. Así lo hicimos*, edited by Fundación MAPFRE and the DGT.

[From Inifinity to Zero. This is how we did it], co-edited by Pere Navarro, director general of Spain’s Directorate General of Traffic (DGT), and Monclús himself. This publication reviews the 25 years that have passed since the MAPFRE Road Safety Institute was created, “a key organization in this field in our country”, as asserted by Antonio Huertas, chairman of both MAPFRE and Fundación MAPFRE. The book reflects back upon this time. That is why it involved the collaboration of no less than 50 experts in road safety, who, in the words of Fernando Grande Marlaska, Spain’s Minister of the Interior, “are key players and first-hand witnesses of this process that began decades ago and has not yet

“We have become a benchmark for all of Europe. We have achieved a silent revolution, without being aware of it. In terms of reduced road traffic fatalities across Europe, between 2001 and 2020, Spain is in first place”, Pere Navarro

concluded. It will only end when we have finally achieved the goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries in traffic accidents. It is a reflective look back that provides useful elements to help us face the future.”

Indeed, there is still much to be done. In particular, in Spain, we must move further towards our “goal of zero”. This is what Jesús Monclús describes in the book as “the difficult, but wonderful”;



the thing “we have to work hard and sweat for.” He is referring to various regulations, initiatives in the field of new technologies, and plans and strategies that are already in place but yet to be finalized. But he is also talking about improving our road culture and respect for traffic regulations. In particular, “small daily speeding violations: with a lower individual risk, of course, than major violations, but perhaps even comparable at the aggregate level because of their

extreme frequency.” Because who does not walk across the road when the traffic light is red or does not go over the maximum speed limit in the city, even if just a little?

These small offenses and, above all, the level of social tolerance they enjoy, could come to an end. Several solutions must be applied. One of these is road safety education. In this area, Fundación MAPFRE has a lot to say, because

it is precisely this that has been, and continues to be, one of its key activities. This is demonstrated by the fact that over the last 12 years alone, close to three million children have benefited from the courses run by the organization. “It is essential that from childhood we are taught that we have certain duties, regulations to abide by and a responsibility towards third parties”, says the Minister of the Interior. More can and should be done. Several co-authors of the

book argue, for example, that the Directorate-General for Traffic should become a Secretary of State with greater capacity to generate synergies between the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Transport, Mobility, and Urban Agenda, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education.

Despite all that remains to be done, the role we play at the international level must be recognized. The implementation of the driving license points system, the reform of the Penal Code, and speed limits both on secondary roads and in urban areas have together brought about a very striking reduction in the number of deaths and serious injuries. Fernando Grande Marlaska writes in the book’s prologue: “In the European context, in 2019 Spain presented a fatality rate of 37 fatalities per million inhabitants, below the European average of 51 fatalities per million inhabitants. In 2020, a year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. for the first time we have dropped below 1,000 deaths on the road.”

And this is how we are recognized beyond our borders, as Pere Navarro said at the presentation of *Del Infinito al Cero*: “Spain has become a benchmark for the whole of Europe. We have achieved a silent revolution, without being aware of it. In terms of reduced road traffic fatalities across Europe, between 2001 and 2020, Spain is in first place And we are the envy of the rest of the continent. They envy our activism, commitment and the prevalence

of our victims' associations. Our traffic police. Our administrative organization, the DGT, an essential element in any public policy. In Europe they also envy our civil society and how involved people are in road safety. And also the political support that it gets: it is neither right-wing nor left-wing, it is above ideologies and the continual *squabbling*."

In light of this somewhat privileged status, Spain has a responsibility towards those who are not in the same situation. And specifically towards Latin America, where, as Antonio Huertas said at the presentation of the book, "road safety is still unfinished business". Jeanne Picard, president of the Ibero-American Federation of Associations of Victims against Road Violence, FICVI, and co-founder of STOP Accidents, is of the same opinion: "In most Latin American countries, human rights are violated on a daily basis." Indeed, the number of road accidents continues to rise there. The associations that make up FICVI are very aware of this and therefore orient their voluntary work towards mobilizing all social actors to promote changes in public policy, modify laws, and open up spaces of shared responsibility.

The DGT has also made a significant effort to transfer the models that have been successful in Spain to Latin America. But so far, only two road safety agencies —Argentina and Colombia— have independent budgets. In Mexico, civil society has been campaigning for two years for the federal

government to pass a road safety law, which it still does not have. And Chile is close to approving the CATI (Centro Automatizado de Tratamiento de Infracciones or Automated Center for Processing Traffic Violations) project, which is based on the Spanish model of installing speed cameras with automatic penalties. "This illustrates the fact that changes are very slow and that there is

we have achieved, but also the story of our loved ones who are no longer with us and whose memory reminds us that we are very fragile, that in a second our lives can be lost in an avoidable traffic accident," concludes the president of FICVI. Perhaps even greater social and political awareness is needed for this. Jesús Monclús offered a reflection along these lines: "Globally, crashes are the



still no political will or awareness at country level to prevent road violence," Picard reflects. To help promote prevention, the publication is being sent to the heads of road safety agencies in all Latin American countries, including Brazil.

All this shows that road safety is a chapter that cannot yet be closed. There is much to be done, although Picard herself understands that "this book represents hope, a road traveled. It is the story of all that

main cause of death of children and young people between 5 and 29 years of age, according to the WHO. How can we tolerate this? And he continued: "If we are not convinced that deaths in traffic accidents are avoidable, that we have the knowledge and measures to prevent them, and that our "Objetivo Cero" is achievable in the medium term if we scale up our efforts, actions and resources sufficiently, we will be signing the death warrant of many people." ✕



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Fundación

25 years saving lives

TEXT: ÁNGEL MARTOS IMAGES: FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE

The war on road traffic accidents is being fought on many fronts: road safety education, research into technical improvements to infrastructures and vehicles, and the promotion of new prevention measures. In all of these, Fundación MAPFRE has been playing a leading role through the MAPFRE Institute for Road Safety, now Fundación MAPFRE, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

It was the year in which Barcelona handed over the Olympic baton to the American city of Atlanta. The year in which the cloned sheep Dolly was born and in which Lady Di divorced Prince Charles. In that year, chess legend Garry Kasparov was defeated by IBM's Deep Blue supercomputer. It was 1996, and in Spain 5,635 people (4,276 men and 1,359 women) died in road traffic accidents. The figure, although terrifying, was a hopeful drop from the 1989 peak of 9,344 fatalities, to which must be added casualties (whether hospitalized or not). Together they painted a black picture of more than 170,000 people affected by accidents. At that time, if we spoke of a pandemic, our imaginations did not conjure a coronavirus, but rather a jalopy roaring down the road.

We had already spent our first decade in the European Union (formerly the European Community) and the enormous improvements in transport and road infrastructure (we

started with 483 kilometers of motorways, but today there are more than 15,000) were working miracles with the help of new vehicles and the compulsory use of safety systems (seat belts, child seats, helmets, etc.). Spain was going to stop being the black sheep of Europe in terms of road accidents and was set to become a shining example for the world, as it is today.

This global success as a society was only possible thanks to collective heroes. And if political awareness was fundamental in the public sector, implemented through the Spanish Directorate General of Traffic (DGT), in the private sector it was MAPFRE that led the way with the creation, in

1996, of the MAPFRE Institute for Road Safety (now Fundación MAPFRE), 25 years ago.

This is how Miguel María Muñoz Medina, who was at the head of the DGT during those pivotal years (1988-96) and would also later chair the Institute (until the end of 2009), remembers it. "I always thought that the only sector whose business interests coincided with an improvement in road safety was the insurance industry. The sector as such did not take up the gauntlet that I repeatedly threw down to it and so, in the autumn of 1995, I contacted the then president of MAPFRE, Julio Castelo, to propose that a permanent road safety programme or structure be created within the Foundation", writes Muñoz Medina in his article in the book *Del infinito al cero. Así lo hicimos* [From Infinity to Zero. This is how we did it], edited by Fundación MAPFRE and the DGT. "The idea was received very enthusiastically."

FUNDACIÓN MAPFRE
HAS INVESTED AROUND
125
MILLION EUROS
ON ROAD SAFETY

An innovative recipe

The Institute was not born out of nothing. Throughout the 1980s, MAPFRE had been building a road safety research structure “in response to the significant developments achieved by motor insurance and with the desire to provide, both to its members and to society in general, other corporate services that went beyond the mere payment of claims and compensation”,

gradually achieved international recognition. It also shows how a layer of psychological and social research and road safety education was added to the more technical studies into accidents and infrastructures. For this reason, Larramendi highlighted studies such as one on night-time signposting at roundabouts, and another on the influence of drugs and caffeine on driving. This innovative recipe would

MAPFRE’s commitment to prevention was undoubtedly a trigger for our creation and subsequent development.” In effect: reducing the number of road traffic incidents involving casualties, even as low as zero, has always been the ultimate goal. Antonio Huertas, president of Fundación MAPFRE, underlined this in his foreword to *Del infinito al cero. Así lo hicimos [From Infinity to Zero. This is how we did it]*: “We need to do more and do it even better in the coming years to achieve the goal of zero serious victims and fatalities in cities by 2030, and in rural areas by 2050, as proposed by Fundación MAPFRE in 2015.” The key lies in prevention, through actions that influence the three cornerstones of road safety: people, infrastructure and vehicles.



writes Ignacio Larramendi, the fondly remembered president of the insurance company and creator of Fundación MAPFRE in 1975. In his book *Así se hizo MAPFRE. Mi tiempo* (2000) [This Is How MAPFRE Was Made. My Time], he gives an account of the creation of the first road safety and experimentation centers, which

eventually emerge fully baked in 1996, in the form of the Institute, today Fundación MAPFRE.

“At that time, talking about road safety awareness was a minority issue”, recalls Antonio García Infanzón, a member of the Institute’s founding team. “It gave the impression that the figures from road accidents were taken for granted by society...

The Institute in figures

Over these 25 years, Fundación MAPFRE has invested around 125 million euros in road safety, a figure that reflects the significance of a commitment that, moreover, is not limited to Spain, but is being rolled out in 23 countries, mainly in Latin America, Brazil, Portugal, Turkey and Malta. As Ángela Sordo, head of International Road Safety Projects at Fundación MAPFRE, acknowledges, initially Spain exported knowledge and projects, but this is now a two-way street and “there are wonderful programs in some

The commitment to road safety is not limited to Spain, but is being pursued in 23 countries, mainly in Latin America, Brazil, Portugal, Turkey and Malta

The only sector whose business interests coincide with improved in road safety is the insurance sector



Filomeno Mira, then Area President, receiving the Road Safety Merit Medal from the Spanish Minister of the Interior in 2010.

countries that add a great deal to our work.” The difficulty of this vast international endeavor lies in the different realities that exist in each society. “Alcohol consumption rates, speed limits, and the regulations for the use of child restraint systems are not the same in all countries, although I believe that they are gradually becoming more standardized”, says Sordo. And as an example, she talks about the recent #love30 campaign carried out in collaboration with the United Nations Road Safety Committee, “which aims to raise awareness of the fact that on a one-way street in a city we should never drive at more than 30 km/h.”

Collaborations with the UN, the World Health Organization

(WHO), the European Commission and its Road Safety and Sustainable Mobility area, and the Spanish Congress of Deputies are now commonplace for Fundación MAPFRE’s Road Safety and Prevention Area, reflecting its international standing and the strength of its contact with this network of institutions. A large part of this prestige is based on its capacity to generate knowledge. 25 years ago, “it was very easy to promote analyses for any problem related to road safety, as the problem was enormous and the initiatives were few and far between”, recalls Antonio García Infanzón. Today, the field of study is still vast, but the horizon is clearer thanks to the 125 or so documents and research

studies published by Fundación MAPFRE, including its own studies, manuals and guides, dossiers and translations, many of which have been produced in collaboration with the most respected organizations.

“I would highlight our 2021 study on the safety of electric scooters, developed together with CESVIMAP”, says Jesús Monclús, head of the Road Safety and Prevention Area at Fundación MAPFRE since 2014, “because we are convinced that it has been key in the legislative change that is about to take place.” Other studies such as the one on the use of seat belts in coaches, “something that had never before been addressed in Spain and which came about after the 2016 tragedy

Road traffic injuries are the result of known risk factors or, in some cases, clear recklessness, for which there are very effective preventive measures.



in Tarragona”, have even been cited on several occasions by the European Commission itself in official working documents. Or the 2002 Road Safety Manual for Industrial Estates, which was totally innovative at the time.

Over the last 12 years, Fundación MAPFRE has educated approximately 3 million children around the world in road safety. In 2019 alone, before the coronavirus pandemic struck, thousands of educational activities were carried out for children and young people, as well as for professionals and adults in general. And this activity has not stopped even under the various lockdowns around the world imposed by the coronavirus emergency. Like the Educational

Program in Peru “where, in the midst of the pandemic, road safety workshops have reached almost every home through television campaigns in collaboration with the country’s Ministry of Education”, explains Sordo.

Recognition for the cause

The fact that a collective project of such importance is commemorating its 25th anniversary seems like enough of a gift. But this is also the time to take stock of our achievements and show off those justly deserved medals. Some of the most outstanding awards received by the Institute in recent years are from the European Road Safety Charter Awards, organized by the

European Commission; as well as the award from the international organization Safekids and the prestigious Prince Michael Award. And, of course, the three Medals of Merit for Road Safety awarded by the Spanish Government, the first of which was won by the MAPFRE Road Safety Institute and the following two by two of its directors (Julio Laria and Jesús Monclús).

We asked Monclús how many lives have been saved thanks to this key initiative. “I’m afraid I’m going to answer a bit vaguely, which is the correct way to answer complex questions”, he argues. “What we do know is that since 1989, when the number of fatalities in Spain peaked, traffic deaths in Spain have dropped by 80%, which equates to more than 150,000 lives having been saved thanks to improvements in road safety. And, as one of the key players in this period, and since its creation in 1996, the contribution of the MAPFRE Road Safety Institute to this “road miracle” is unquestionable. Although the pain remains for all the lives that could not be saved.” “Without exaggerating, we can say that we are part of road safety history in Spain, as well as in Latin America”, maintains Antonio Huertas in this regard. “We could almost say that Fundación MAPFRE is in itself ‘an important road safety measure’.”

In this sense, “Spain needs to revitalize its road safety

policy in the coming years”, point out Monclús and Pere Navarro, head of the DGT, in their introduction to the book *Del infinito al cero. Así lo hicimos*, “to fight against what has been called the exhaustion (others see it as a lack of investment) of certain road safety measures. Or at least, to combat the accident figures, and the human pain

growing presence of new/old vehicles (bicycles and electric scooters) to the arrival of the electric car and its culmination with autonomous driving through artificial intelligence. But as Jesús Monclús recommends, “We must not allow ourselves to be dazzled by technology, and we must keep educating, raising awareness

attainable for Spain, but that across the planet, when the total number of road deaths still exceeds one million (1.35 million in 2019, according to the World Health Organization), seems more difficult to achieve. “They are not really “accidents” or “accidental” events, in the sense that they are not foreseeable or avoidable. Road traffic injuries

Over the last 12 years, Fundación MAPFRE has given road safety education to approximately 3 million children around the world



these represent, which have not improved in recent years, unlike, for example, in the 2010s.”

Sustainable mobility, within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals can contribute some of this impetus. The streets of our cities and the uses to which we put them are changing by leaps and bounds. From the increase in pedestrianization and the

and promoting empathy among all types of road users and, increasingly, with Mother Earth.”

In another 25 years, by the year 2046, if not sooner, “we will have already achieved the goal of zero serious and fatal traffic accidents”, Monclús predicts, whether thanks to self-driving cars, new safety measures or the commitment of society as a whole. A vision that sounds

are the result of known risk factors or, in some cases, outright recklessness, for which there are very effective preventive measures. We just need to deploy these throughout the entire network, in all vehicles, and to deliver road safety education, awareness and training to all road users throughout their lives.” Fundación MAPFRE will continue to be involved in this work. ❌



Financial education for a more informed society

TEXT: RAMÓN OLIVER IMAGES: ISTOCK

For more than 30 years, Fundación MAPFRE has been working intensively to disseminate, divulge and educate different groups about financial and insurance knowledge, particularly focusing on young people. The aim of this work is to ensure that citizens are better prepared and trained so that they will be able to make good financial decisions in the future.

“Inflation”, “premium”, “risk diversification” If you do not understand any of these terms, you are no different from approximately 50% of Spaniards who, according to data from the Bank of Spain and the National Securities Market Commission (Comisión Nacional del Mercado de Valores or CNMV) are not financially literate.

Financial Education is, historically, one of the great outstanding issues in our country. A more serious hindrance than one might think, since it affects people’s security and their future. Because only an informed public, with at least a basic understanding of the increasingly complex mechanisms governing financial products and services, can make informed decisions about how to manage their money and take care of their future.

Various bodies are working to overcome this knowledge

gap which, for various reasons, continues to afflict Spanish society. This is also true in the field of insurance, where Fundación MAPFRE works extremely hard to improve the social perception of insurance through knowledge of the insurance culture, its principles and foundations. As Fundación MAPFRE points out, “For the citizens of any country, it is very important to possess a certain amount of information on insurance, as this is the best guarantee of covering oneself against the risks of modern society.”

Despite the fact that it has existed for many years and that it is very difficult to find even one person who does not have insurance coverage of some kind, this financial product is largely unknown to a significant majority of the public. A proper understanding of the

functioning, benefits, capabilities and limitations of insurance, as well as of the basic terms used to articulate this –understanding of the terms “policy”, “premium”, “claim”; knowing who is the “policyholder” and who is the “beneficiary”, what the “coverage and guarantee” of each type of insurance is, and so on– is a key factor in providing security and reducing the levels of uncertainty in people’s lives. For this reason, it is very important to start this financial and insurance education from an early age.

Fundación MAPFRE carries out a great deal of financial and insurance education through different activities, both in Spain and Latin America. “Our program can be divided into two main blocks: one is educational, aimed at students; and the other is informative, targeting society in general. We develop content

and resources adapted to each type of audience and to the medium through which we make them available. For example, we have classroom and online courses, we produce publications that can be consulted free of charge in our Documentation Center, and we present reports at conferences that are mainly virtual at the moment, but which we hope to be able to offer in person soon”, summarizes Adrián Gutiérrez de la Dehesa, head of Foundation Activity at Fundación MAPFRE.

The target audience for these programs is very broad. “We have resources that are aimed at society in general, but the educational program is mainly focused on vocational training students, both in Spain and in other countries such as Mexico and Brazil, as well as university students. Meanwhile,

the digital resources for the general public target an audience between the ages of 25 and 55”, comments Gutiérrez de la Dehesa.

Insurance and pensions for all

Fundación MAPFRE’s key commitment to insurance education is Insurance and Pensions for All, a website that brings together numerous programs, materials and resources that provide information and guidance related to the world of insurance. Since its launch in 2012, the website has received more than three million visits.

Through attractive and diverse formats such as articles, infographics, animations, games, and a glossary that includes the 285 terms most frequently used in insurance jargon, we facilitate basic information for the general

public on how insurance, social welfare and the culture of savings work.

The program also includes educational programs on these same subjects, suitable for all kinds of audiences (students, educators, the general public, etc.), as well as a practical section that provides a step-by-step explanation of specific aspects related to the insurance universe, from how to take out an insurance policy to what to do in the event of a claim.

All the materials and programs are free of charge and prepared using clear, simple and accurate language, where practicality is paramount. The website currently has 15 basic courses and 4 introductory courses on insurance and complementary social welfare, the latter available in Spanish, English and Portuguese, and more than 5,000 people have already passed through its virtual classrooms.

In another of its sections, the website contains a series of monographic information guides that provide current and comprehensible information on various aspects related to personal, family, and small and medium-sized business risks. Each of these guides develops a specific aspect and provides practical information on issues such as retirement, car insurance, health insurance, protection for self-employed workers and SMEs, cyber threats, and so on.



Other initiatives

Fundación MAPFRE participates, either as the main organizer or as a guest entity, in many other initiatives aimed at improving people's financial and insurance literacy. These include PlayPension and Finexit, two financial education workshops aimed at students over the age of 16, and the foundation participates in Financial Education Day (the first Monday in October), an initiative promoted by the National Securities Market Commission (CNMV) and the Bank of Spain.

For the Foundation, the financial education content it provides is as important as the way in which this is conveyed to its target audience. For many people, this is an unfamiliar and tricky subject, and it can sometimes be difficult to convey it in creative ways that are attractive to the target audience. That is why its managers particularly want to incorporate the latest teaching techniques into their financial education projects.

Specifically, two of its most recent initiatives use gamification to achieve greater immersion and emotional connection with participants. On the one hand, bugaMAP is a business simulation game applied to the insurance market aimed at university students. Working in groups of between 20 and 35 students, participants must deploy their strategic




and decision-making skills to compete in an environment that simulates that of a real insurance company.

On the other, FINEXIT is an original idea that uses the popular "escape room" format to challenge vocational training students to solve a challenge using their ingenuity and financial knowledge. The initiative is available in both face-to-face and virtual versions and is expected to be rolled out in countries including Mexico and Brazil later this year.

Also in Latin America

This awareness-raising work on financial and insurance matters has also been extended to Latin America. Since 2015, Mexico, for example, has had its own space in the Finance

Room in the Interactive Museum of Economics (MIDE, Museo Interactivo de Economía) in Mexico. This space, known as Patrimonio, Riesgo y Seguros (Wealth, Risk and Insurance), is designed so that children, young people and adults can discover the value of insurance, and to promote insurance education among these groups. This collaboration with MIDE has also enabled the museum to be the setting for a highly successful educational and outreach experience in which more than 2,800 people have already participated. This involves 90-minute workshops in which the participants are invited to discover the importance of insurance as a tool for protecting people's finances in the face of an unexpected event. 





How to become an entrepreneur after 50

TEXT: CRISTINA BISBAL IMAGES: ISTOCK

Although entrepreneurs are often thought of as young people eager to take on the world, there is a large sector of society over the age of 50 who, either out of necessity or for pleasure, want to conjugate the verb enterprise and do it well. Fundación MAPFRE has published a practical guide showing all of them how to do it.

Last March, the United Nations (UN) published a comprehensive report on ageism, i.e. age discrimination, describing it as “a stealthy but devastating disgrace to society.” According to this study, among older people in particular, “ageism is associated with poorer physical and mental health, greater social isolation and loneliness, greater financial insecurity, lower quality of life, and higher rates of premature death.”

Indeed, on an economic level, it is an expensive “pandemic” that affects all first-world countries to a greater or lesser degree. A 2020 study showed that, in the U.S., ageism in the form of negative stereotypes and an unfavorable image entails an annual cost overrun of \$63 billion in healthcare costs. And it does not seem to be getting any better. In April 2020, the U.S. NGO AARP, whose mission is to attend to the needs and interests of the over-50s, reported that

the unemployment rate among people over the age of 54 had soared to 13.6%, according to a report by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

In Spain we are on the same track. According to the EPA (Encuesta de Población Activa), in the fourth quarter of 2020, 936,200 citizens over 50 years old were unemployed in Spain, in other words, 25% of the total number of unemployed people are over that age, which is not at all flattering. It is even worse if we consider that, in Spain, this figure has doubled over the last 10 years and currently constitutes one of the main aspects of structural unemployment. Put simply, it is a trend that does not seem likely to change in the near future.

The same applies to early retirement. Trade union sources say that the number of early retirees in Spain is around 600,000, with a tendency to increase in recent months in

response to the pandemic, so that the figure could exceed 800,000 this year. If we add these figures together, we can see that, in Spain, more than one and a half million people over 50 spend more time at home than they would probably like and, above all, more than they need. This is the reason why these people often decide to start their own business, often out of necessity, and at other times because of personal interest and true desire. Meanwhile, entrepreneurship is a word that the collective imagination usually associates with young people.

Nevertheless, data from the latest Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report, prepared in conjunction with the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, and published in May 2020, contradicts the typical idea of what an entrepreneur is. They are young people eager for success and very technologically

literate. But they are also older people eager to use their experience in their own business. In fact, entrepreneurial activity among the 45-64 age group rose from 4.6% in 2010 to 9.9% in 2019. Fundación MAPFRE is aware of this and for this reason, through its Ageingnomics Research Center, has published a *Guide to Senior Entrepreneurship* in collaboration with the International University of La Rioja, UNIR. This is an eminently practical publication that reflects the Foundation's strategy to offer

a better quality of life to people aged 50 and over.

Of course, this quality of life includes economic activity, which is becoming more and more relevant both within our borders and beyond. So much so that a new term has been coined for it in English: the *Silver Economy*. This *Silver Economy* may play a fundamental role in the future of our society, according to the authors of the guide, Clara Lapiedra and Pablo Cardona. To give us an idea, we can point to a figure provided in the UN report

on ageism: If 5% of Australia's over-54s were employed, this would generate \$48 billion a year.

The reality is that the world of entrepreneurship does not just have to be the territory of young people. Our so-called seniors have a lot to contribute. For Clara Lapiedra, a strategy consultant and innovation expert, is clear that "experience is something that can only be gained over the years. I often come across entrepreneurs who ignore issues such as subtlety when delivering certain messages or do not understand the context of the audience and other situations. And this is not taught in any business school." It's something you learn through time and work. With life. Yet that is not the only factor that works in favor of older people. It is true that they often face shortcomings that do not worry young people, such as mastery of technology. But, as the business consultant says, "This shortcoming is undoubtedly compensated for by other challenges where seniors have an advantage, such as their network of contacts. In other words, it is not a limiting factor when it comes to entrepreneurship."

Experience also helps one to know how to assess whether it is the right time to start an adventure like an entrepreneurial venture, something the authors call the entrepreneur's life cycle. In this sense, it is important to bear in mind that "the right moment is created, it does not



With an eminently practical approach, the Senior Entrepreneurship Guide outlines the roadmap for entrepreneurs over 55 years of age.

Entrepreneurial activity among people aged 45 to 64 rose from 4.6% in 2010 to 9.9% in 2019.



come knocking on your door one day. If you have a project in mind and you have the energy to develop it, then it is the right time”, says Lapiedra. It is true that sometimes that moment arises out of obligation, as in the case of the long-term unemployed. But other times it is “because of what the Americans call *giving back*; that is, they feel the need to give back to society some of the knowledge they have harvested.” Often the two situations coincide.

In all cases, this entrepreneurship expert offers the same key advice: “To all of them I would say that a very common mistake is to wait until everything is perfect. That approach is very damaging to entrepreneurship, since every day counts. We have to pass

through a series of phases that we should start traversing as soon as we can. We have to learn from our mistakes, so the sooner we make mistakes, the sooner we will find the best possible solution.”

12 topics, 12 chapters, 12 real cases

From the outset, the idea behind the guide was that it should be a practical and easy-to-handle publication. That is why Clara Lapiedra, co-author of the guide, decided to structure it according to “the logical order I use as a consultant. This point is important to emphasize because it is one of the most frequent questions that my clients usually ask me: “I think I have a clear idea, but where do I start?” In addition, it has been written

using a very applied theory and teaching-oriented style.” To achieve this, the authors used a very interesting resource: the testimony of a series of senior entrepreneurs aged between 52 and 68. In fact, there are 12, as many as there are chapters in the guide. This idea came from Clara’s experience as a consultant: “It helps me a great deal to visualize what others have done before, and we tried to use *best practices* that were enlightening for other people.” In choosing them, she drew on case studies she knew from her work. “I’m fortunate to have been able to help hundreds of individuals, either as *mentées* or clients, so it wasn’t hard for me to pick out those who could serve as illustrative examples for each of the chapters.” ✕

Another way to help

TEXT: LAURA SÁNCHEZ IMAGES: FROM THE PROJECTS, ISTOCK

Solidarity birds

Students and teachers from the Faculties of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine at UNICEN (National University of Central Buenos Aires) are proposing that the peace, harmony, calm and tranquility snatched away by the coronavirus is recovered through birdwatching. The project is called “Aves Solidarias” (Solidarity Birds): in the toughest months of lockdown, this group realized that through the windows of their homes they could observe birds, their characteristics, behavior, and so on. The participants posted photos of their sightings on the internet and shared their “field notebooks” with other bird lovers.

The group leaders came to the conclusion that, as well as enabling people to get closer to nature, observing these animals contributed to their psychological stability and boosted their patience levels. “We are all learning, interacting with popular wisdom and educating one another”,

explains one of the people in charge of Aves Solidarias. “We are working together to bolster the necessary reconstruction of our social fabric, where the sense of belonging is one of the cornerstones, and the birds



become natural intermediaries, strengthening the ties between us. For the participants, the birds have become the main players and also companions in this pandemic which, unfortunately and in many

areas of the world, requires us to remain in our homes.”

Aves Solidarias already has nearly 1,000 followers on Facebook and Instagram, the two social networks it uses. Activities and interactions are permanent and take place in Argentina, the birthplace of the project, as well as in Peru, Chile, Guatemala, and other countries. The group is made up of students, elderly people, adults, children in kindergartens, teenagers... the photos come from professional cameras, mobile phones, tablets... all contributions are welcome and are a constructive part of the project, which is neither a competition nor a census of birdlife. “The idea is to take another look at ourselves, at nature, at our society, it is a search for wellbeing, harmony and tranquility.”

For more information:
<https://www.facebook.com/aves.solidarias.7>

The Olympic spirit and refugees

Empathy, teamwork, sacrifice, solidarity... sport tries to instill certain values that are particularly important when it comes to helping other people. And there are few vehicles as powerful when it comes to raising the profile of less well-known realities. The plight of refugees is one of these, and the Olympic Games are a magnificent platform from which to appeal to the collective conscience.

It all started at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games: that year, the International Olympic Committee decided to create a team comprising athletes forced to flee their respective countries because of war or political persecution. That year, the team had ten members, including Syrian swimmer Yusra Mardini, who fled the war via the Aegean Sea in a boat with 17 other people. When the boat began to take on water, she and her sister

REFUGEE OLYMPIC TEAM



jumped into the sea to hold the boat and push all their compatriots to safety.

This year, the team, sponsored by the IOC and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has grown to 29 members. They come from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Venezuela. Their flag? The Olympic flag. Their anthem? The Olympic anthem.

IOC President Thomas Bach addressed them during his speech at the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Games to give them the recognition they deserve, stating that their courage and dedication should serve as an inspiration to the many people currently facing similar situations. “You had to flee from your homes because of violence, hunger or just because you were different”, he said. “Today, we welcome you with open arms and offer you a peaceful home. Welcome to our Olympic community.”

For more information: www.olympics.com/ioc/refugee-olympic-team-tokyo-2020

Weaving stories

The solidarity campaign “Tejiendo Historias” (Weaving Stories) proposes that people in the Las Heras department in Argentina, particularly the elderly, knit a woolen garment and deliver it together with a story written by them that is linked to knitting and solidarity. The garments and stories will be given to the children and elderly people of the Uspallata and Alta Montaña region, an area very close to Aconcagua and a natural passage to the Andes Mountains. The weather alone is enough to give you an idea of the extreme conditions faced by the people with few resources in this zone: the climate in the city of Uspallata is harsh and cold, with absolute minimum temperatures that can drop below -17°C in the winter. The average minimum temperature for the month of June is -2.5°C and the average maximum is around 14.8°C.



The hope of the campaign is that around 800 people from Uspallata and Alta Montaña will, on the one hand, receive the warmth of a new winter garment to protect them from the low temperatures and, on the other hand, they will be touched by the human warmth transmitted through the words of the person

who knitted that garment for them and who shares an experience through a written text: advice, a few words of inspiration or a beautiful story. In addition, the people who knit the garments will have the opportunity to add their name and contact information to their messages.

The majority of people who will knit the garments will be participants in the online workshops organized by the senior citizens’ department, as well as various retirement centers in the region that are part of the virtual program “Mañanas Compartidas” (Shared Mornings).

For more information: <https://lasheras.gob.ar/2021/06/29/donar-abrigos-que-cuentan-historias/>

Seen on the web

Learn about all our activities on social media. In this section you will find a selection of the best posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

FACEBOOK

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@fundaciónmapfrecultura
@FMgoalzero

TWITTER

@fmapfre
@mapfreFcultura
@FMgoalzero
@FMculturaCat
@FM_ageingnomics

INSTAGRAM

@mapfrecultura

THE BEST TWEET

We at Fundación MAPFRE would like to offer all our support, solidarity and love to the people of La Palma, and we hope that they manage to overcome the consequences of the volcanic eruption they are suffering as soon as possible. We wish the best to all our neighbours in La Palma.



Fundación MAPFRE

Don't stop! ❌

Regular physical activity will improve your physical and mental health 🏋️‍♀️🧠.

Don't miss this video made in collaboration with Consejo COLEF and get moving 🏃‍♀️.

#FM_Contigo #Salud



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If you do it right, everything goes well. Using a scooter in the city is a fantastic alternative for personal mobility.

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La mejor manera de dar valor a tu tiempo es compartirlo.

We are very proud that our Fundación MAPFRE volunteers gave 1,600 hours of their time last year.

#FM_Contigo #Solidaridad #Voluntariado



Numbers are important, but **the individual stories and families** behind every figure **are our true driving force.**

4,385
reinsertions of
people with
disabilities since
2010

502
candidates
managed to get
a job in 2020

36,048
people have
benefited from
our programs

*Together we are **Able***

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