

# Mauricio Valenzuela (b. 1951)

## Chile

Most of my photographs are about our journey through life. I take pictures of what I call "the street", because that's where life is to be found. You can establish certain thought structures but if they're not linked to the street, life, and reality, then they're worthless.

### Biography

Mauricio Valenzuela began his studies at the School of Fine Arts in Santiago, only to be interrupted by the military coup in 1973. In this intense period of Chile's history he joined the seminal Association of Independent Photographers, AFI (1981-1990), that documented the violent Pinochet dictatorship that ruled the country from 1973 to 1990. Valenzuela's photography is rooted in the social documentary genre and stands amongst the most original of the 1980s 'golden period' of Chilean photography.

Valenzuela brings a unique and original perspective to his work, capturing society's tensions and its people through a powerful and melancholic poetry. His visual narrative, shot mostly in an atmospheric condition of heavy fog and low light, encapsulates a climate of overwhelming despair and oppression that weighed on Santiago and its people under the military regime.

Valenzuela works mostly in series, unconventional yet careful compositions of anonymous people, often with their faces cropped or obscured, as they hurry to disappear out of shot.

### Exhibitions

Valenzuela questions censorship and freedom of expression and what he chooses to show us in his images carries as much weight as what he chooses to conceal.

In the 1980s and 1990s Valenzuela participated in important solo and group exhibitions

- 1987- *Chile Vive*. Círculo de Bellas Artes, Madrid one of the most significant group shows of Chilean art held during the Pinochet dictatorship.

Recent group exhibitions include

- 2018- *View Chile*. Landskrona Foto, Sweden
- 2018- *El Tiempo es una Ilusion*. FIFV, Festival International de Fotografia Valparaiso, Chile.
- 2018- *Fragmented Dialogues. Art and Identity in 1980s Chile*. Austin Desmond Fine Art. London.UK
- 2017- *Urban Impulses, Latin American Photography 1960-2016*. Les Rencontres de la Photographie, Arles, France.
- 2014- *Urbes Mutantes: Latin American Photography 1944-2013*. The International Center of Photography (ICP), New York.

### Collections

Mauricio Valenzuela is the author of two famed photobooks, *Ediciones Economicas de Fotografia Chilena* (1983) and *La Niebla* (ed. La Visita, 2011).

His work is included in important collections with a focus on Latin American Art:

- Cincinnati Art Museum, USA;
- Reina Sofia Museum, Spain;
- Leticia and Stanislas Poniatowski Collection, Switzerland.
- Prodger/Howe Collection. Los Angeles.USA

Niebla, 1980/83



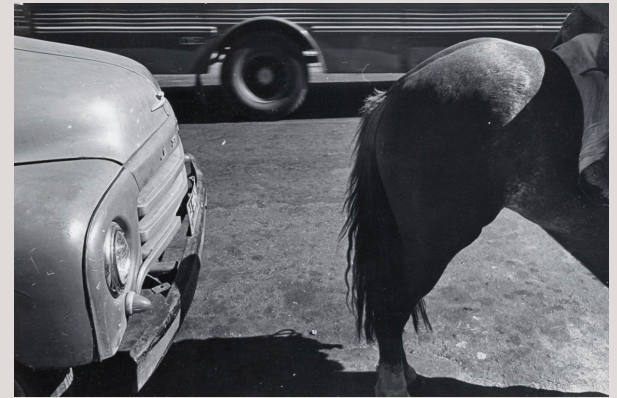


Abrigo de Teresa. 1980/83

Working as a  
photographer under  
the dictatorship was  
difficult: -If I had my  
camera, I ran the risk  
of being detained  
in the street. It was  
almost impossible to  
take photos, that's  
why in my images, the  
people are small as I  
photographed from a  
distance.

Mauricio Valenzuela, Santiago, 2018

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Santiago, 1980/83 (top)

Valparaiso, 1980/83 (bottom)