

January 22, 2021

**The Snite Museum of Art acquires a work by
Magnum Photographer Alex Majoli from *The Eye of the Storm* series**

Notre Dame, IN: The Snite Museum of Art at the University of Notre Dame has added an important photograph by Magnum photographer Alex Majoli from his *The Eye of the Storm* series. Created in Novara, Italy, in April during the COVID-19 pandemic, *Scene #2756, Novara, Italy, 2020*, captures the moment when a priest blesses coffins that have just arrived at the cemetery by Italian Army trucks from nearby Bergamo. This image brings into sharp focus the painful and tragic extent that northern Italy suffered during the first outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Italy's death toll was the highest in Europe during the first months of the outbreak, and the country could barely keep up with the transportation of coffins for burial.

The photograph was an acquisition proposed by the Museum's PhotoFutures: Collecting Art for Notre Dame, a student seminar led by the Curator of Education, Academic Programs and Curator of Photographs. Designed for students of any major, this co-curricular program addresses issues related to museum-collecting, contemporary photography, and socially engaged artistic practice. Students critique individual photographs and evaluate artists' portfolios while engaging in critical discussions with the artists, Museum curators, and select faculty. This fall, students had the unique challenge of acquiring a photograph that addresses the ongoing crises of the Covid-19 pandemic. They state:

This photograph includes many of the hallmark elements of daily life under the conditions of the pandemic. The priest stands alone in a mask, even distanced from the coffins which contain the COVID-19 victims. The haunting loneliness of the piece and the solitary figure relate to the context of lockdowns and quarantine periods, which altered normal everyday activities and transformed bustling public places and city streets into ghost towns overnight. The artist's choice of black and white adds to the melancholy tone while also eliminating any sense of the time of day, which recalls the disorientation of life under lockdown. . . .

[Majoli's photograph] brings to mind our shared humanity in contrast with the mechanized and dehumanized process of handling the high volume of COVID-19 victims. The presence of religion also evokes a theme of grief and the ways in which human beings find comfort when confronted with loss. Although the conditions of the pandemic precluded funerals and religious services from taking place, the priest preserves some measure of human dignity, even in death, through his act of blessing these coffins. . . .



Alex Majoli, *Scene #2756, Novara, Italy, 2020*, archival pigment print. Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame. Milly and Fritz Kaeser Endowment for Photography, 2020.024

Alex Majoli (b.1971, Ravenna, Italy) is a photographer whose dramatic black-and-white photographs focus on the human condition and the narratives of our daily lives. Known for documenting conflicts worldwide, he has covered the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq. He has contributed to *Newsweek*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Granta*, and *National Geographic*, among other publications. Majoli is the recipient of many awards, including the Guggenheim Fellowship (2015), the Eugene Smith Grant (2017), the Getty Images Grant for Editorial Photography (2009), and the Infinity Award for Photojournalism (2003). A member of Magnum Photos since 2001, he splits his time between New York and Sicily.

MEDIA CONTACT: If you would like high-resolution images or in-depth information, please contact Gina Costa, Marketing and Public Relations Program Manager, (574) 631-4720, gcosta@nd.edu

About the Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame

Considered one of the leading university art museums in America, the Snite Museum's permanent collection contains 30,000 works that represent many cultures and periods of world art history. Exceptional holdings include the Jack and Alfrieda Feddersen Collection of Rembrandt Etchings, the Noah L. and Muriel S. Butkin Collection of 19th-Century French Art, the John D. Reilly Collection of Old Master and 19th-Century Drawings, the Janos Scholz Collection of 19th-Century European Photographs, the Mr. and Mrs. Russell G. Ashbaugh Jr. Collection of Meštrović Sculpture and Drawings, the George Rickey Sculpture Archive, and the Virginia A. Marten Collection of 18th-Century Decorative Arts. Other collection strengths include Olmec and Mesoamerican art, 20th-century art, and Native American art.

Sculpture is displayed in the Mary Loretto and Terrence J. Dillon Courtyard and in The Charles B. Hayes Family Sculpture Park.

Snite Museum of Art
The University of Notre Dame
100 Moose Krause Circle
Notre Dame, IN 46556
Phone: (574)631-5466
Fax: (574)631-8501
sniteart@nd.edu
sniteartmuseum.nd.edu

Hours:
Due to restrictions by the University of Notre Dame during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Snite Museum of Art is currently open only to University of Notre Dame, Saint Mary's College, and Holy Cross College students, staff, and faculty.

[Directions: nd.edu/visitors/directions](http://nd.edu/visitors/directions)

Admission is free.

