

**IF TREES COULD SPEAK:
NATURE TELLS ITS STORY THROUGH THE LENS
OF MAGNUM PHOTOS' GREAT PHOTOGRAPHERS**

"If Trees Could Speak": in Sirmione, a photographic exhibition intertwining the human gaze and the voice of nature, exploring memory, resilience, and connection

Sirmione, March 20, 2026

An exhibition that explores the fragile and essential dialogue between humans and trees, through an original journey that invites us to observe, understand, and care for the delicate balance that connects us to nature. At its core lies the power of photography and its ability to reveal this fundamental bond.

The Exhibition

What would trees say if they could speak? If they could tell us what they have witnessed over the centuries—watching civilizations rise and fall beneath their canopies, the wounds of war, and the slow healing of the earth?

This is the question explored by "***If trees could speak***", the exhibition bringing to **Sirmione** the perspective of **forty** photographers from **Magnum Photos**, the agency that for over seventy years has documented the world through authorial photography.

Following the renowned 2025 exhibition **DOGDOGS** by Elliott Erwitt, the Municipality of Sirmione renews its collaboration with the prestigious international agency, presenting an exhibition curated by **Andréa Holzherr** (Global Cultural Director of Magnum Photos) and architect **Mariangela Gavioli**.

The exhibition was inaugurated on Friday, March 20 at **Palazzo Callas Exhibitions** in Sirmione, in the presence of Mayor **Luisa Lavelli**, Tourism Councillor **Riccardo Genovesi**, and **Andréa Holzherr**. It will be open to the public from March 21 to July 12, 2026, with free admission.

This relationship with **Magnum Photos** has deep roots and has evolved over the years into a fruitful collaboration, bringing the best of international photography to the Brescia shore of Lake Garda.

The Great Photographers on Display

The silent voices of trees become a visual narrative spanning continents and generations. From the centuries-old trees of Madagascar, captured by **Steve McCurry**, to the burned forests of Australia photographed by **Paolo Pellegrin**, from **Abbas's** sacred forests of Japan to the urban trees of **Martin Parr** and **Richard Kalvar**—each image represents a chapter in a larger story. In mentioning only a few, we are guilty of an “unforgivable omission,” as dozens of other outstanding artists contribute to this collective visual narrative: **40 photographers, 100 photographs**, a plural perspective blending reportage, visual poetry, and environmental advocacy.

As **Andréa Holzherr** suggests, trees remind us that *“we are still connected, that every breath we take is shared with them, that our lives are intertwined through invisible exchanges of air, water, and time.”*

The exhibition invites visitors to pause, observe, and listen. Trees are not mere scenery but living presences—silent witnesses and companions in humanity's journey. They inhabit a different sense of time, marked by seasons and centuries, and their resilience, as Holzherr emphasizes, *“is not only a matter of strength, but also of flexibility—like branches bending under the weight of snow, roots seeking water in the most unlikely places, or a forest regrowing after a fire.”*

An Innovative Exhibition Design

For the first time ever, the exhibition's photographs have been printed on special paper containing seeds. At the end of the exhibition, the prints will be planted in the ground in Sirmione to give life to new trees. In this way, photography—after communicating through its visual dimension—symbolically returns to the earth from which it originated, transforming into new plant life. **A gesture that tells the story of a cycle that both ends and begins again.**

Within the exhibition, there is also a “workbench” featuring soil, plantable paper, water, and light, where visitors can observe the process through which the photographs can be “planted,” transforming the exhibition into a symbolic garden of the future. Display shelves with bibliographic materials on the plant world are also available.

“As photography conveys a message through images, it also carries a deeper, physical dimension: that of a seed that can return to the earth and generate new life,” emphasizes Mayor **Luisa Lavelli**. *“It is a powerful gesture that transforms the exhibition into a garden of the future. For years, Sirmione has consistently worked on environmental issues through numerous initiatives, including green maintenance and protection, educational activities in schools, and artistic projects. Today, “If trees could speak” adds a new piece to this path with an exhibition that is at once art, nature, and concrete commitment.”*

Environmental Commitment in Sirmione

If trees could speak is part of a broader focus that the Municipality of Sirmione has long dedicated to environmental issues. This commitment is also reflected in the ethical approach of recent projects from the **Sirmione Photo Residency**—*Custodi* by Davide Greco, *A RIVA* by Simona Ghizzoni, and *Venature* by Mattia Marzorati—as well as in concrete initiatives such as green maintenance and protection, tree-planting programs, and environmental education in schools.

Tourism Councillor **Riccardo Genovesi** states:

“With If Trees Could Speak, the images captivate and engage us, but also encourage us to reflect on the delicate balance that connects us to nature. This is our vision of high-quality tourism: a model that combines hospitality, the beauty of experience, and the protection of balance—offering meaningful moments of reflection and emotion in harmony with the environment and the community that lives in it.”

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Photographers featured:

Abbas, Olivia Arthur, Jonas Bendiksen, Ian Berry, Werner Bischof, Matt Black, Myriam Boulos, René Burri, Sabiha Çimen, Bruce Davidson, Cristina de Middel, Bieke Depoorter, Thomas Dworzak, Stuart Franklin, Bruce Gilden, Gregory Halpern, David Hurn, Richard Kalvar, Guy Le Querrec, Alex Majoli, Peter Marlow, Steve McCurry, Lorenzo Meloni, Rafał Milach, Wayne Miller, Nanna Heitmann, Emin Özmen, Trent Parke, Martin Parr, Paolo Pellegrin, Mark Power, Lua Ribeira, Jérôme Sessini, Lindokuhle Sobekwa, Jacob Aue Sobol, Alec Soth, Chris Steele-Perkins, Larry Towell, Alex Webb, Patrick Zachmann

Number of photographs: 100

Opening Hours

Every day: 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM and 4:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Friday and Saturday: 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM and 4:30 PM – 10:00 PM

Closed on Mondays (except public holidays)

Free admission

If Trees Could Speak will be open to the public from Saturday, March 21 to Sunday, July 12, 2026

Information: visitsirmione.com

With the patronage of:

Regione Lombardia, Provincia di Brescia, Consorzio Lago di Garda Lombardia, Comunità del Garda, GAL Garda e Colli Mantovani, Garda Musei