# Manolo

**the “Magician” climber**

“In the mountains, sometimes to take one step forward you have to take two steps back. It happens that you have to wait a year to move forward by just a few centimeters”, says Maurizio Zanolla, better known as ‘Manolo’ or ‘Il Mago’ (The Magician), considered to be one of the pioneers of free climbing in Italy. When at age 16 he discovered rock climbing and started climbing with his bare hands, he realized he had found his way. He is married to Cristina Zorzi, also a climbing enthusiast and who has given him two children. His daily life is far from extreme: he loves family life, spending the winters with his children while his wife works, living next to a forest in a house that he has built with his own hands, at the foot of the Pale di San Martino di Castrozza range. And yet, he was the first Italian to climb a 8b difficulty grade ascent, ‘Ultimo Movimento’, in 1986 on Mount Totoga in Primiero, and he still lives and trains there. A mountaineer and a mountain guide, he has practiced solo climbing, favoring slabs and verticals rather than overhangs, and using increasingly smaller holds and precarious balances. In this discipline he has achieved up to 8a grade with Masala Dosa on the San Silvestro cliff in 1992, choosing the Pale di San Martino not only as a training gym but also as a source of inspiration. He has written many books dedicated to climbing in Primiero, has received prizes and awards, and in 2012 he even wrote a film about himself, Vertically démodé. Despite this, he has always decided to avoid sports competitions.

Mauro Corona has said of him: “Here is a life lived on fingertips. A masterpiece.”