

29 ARTS IN PROGRESS gallery
MILANO

is pleased to present the solo exhibition of

Gian Paolo Barbieri

POLAROIDS AND MORE

Curated by Giovanni Pelloso

10 May - 27 July 2019



© Gian Paolo Barbieri, Lynn Coester, Milano 1991 - Polaroid Type 55 Positive. Courtesy of 29 ARTS IN PROGRESS gallery

From May 10th to July 27th 2019, 29 ARTS IN PROGRESS gallery in Milan (Via San Vittore 13) will host the exhibition “Polaroids and more” by renowned fashion photographer **Gian Paolo Barbieri**, 2018 Lucie Awards Honoree for Outstanding Achievement in Fashion.

Curated by **Giovanni Pelloso**, this special exhibition traces Gian Paolo Barbieri's use of instant photography and comprises **more than 120 Polaroid photographs** never exhibited before and taken in the last 30 years.

A first series of portraits and figure studies depict the world of fashion and its protagonists, an exciting and insightful behind-the-scenes work.

According to Barbieri, fashion photography has to reflect a scene, a performance, theatre, as close to reality as it might be.

It has to channel beauty, metaphor, reality. Standing right at the centre of that scene is a woman, often animated by a playful, irreverent irony. A woman who is able to convey an upsetting deal of ambiguity and mystery, which on the other hand spare her a miserable reduction to object.

Pictured as she is, this woman is no myth. It's a "real" picture and reflects Barbieri's own great belief: women's real essence is a secret, strongly aiming to remain secret.

This view explains Barbieri's admiration for Women's everlasting yet ever-changing beauty, but also his awareness of how rich and full of infinite metamorphosis the female personality is.

Barbieri's shots are stunning and magic, dreamlike and playful, ironic and theatrical. Seducing shots. The plain surface of the picture turns into a "seducing object", an exciting invitation to imagine and fantasise. A whole territory full of mysteries, ready for the eye to explore, and discover.

Viewers can peek behind the lens to see the making of fashion photography in Gian Paolo Barbieri work able to describe the most human side of his subjects, be they iconic top models or Polynesian natives. A second body of works is indeed dedicated to indigenous people in their natural environment, to captivating nudes often conceived as preparatory works, and to flowers, the great passion of the artist.

Sixty years before smartphones and Instagram, Gian Paolo Barbieri was using his Polaroid camera to capture on-the-spot impressions from life that he could later incorporate into his art.

Many of these small, intimate photographs convey tenderness and vulnerability, others depict a toughness and immediacy.

Unlike the highly crafted images Barbieri staged in the studio and became famous for, these disarming pictures are marked by spontaneity and invention. Together, they offer insight into the artist's great career.

Another great preview will be a selection of **new works** inspired by the work of **William Shakespeare**, which Barbieri has been working on for about three years, in the fourth centenary of his death: «As I've always liked to do - Barbieri says - drawing on the past and looking to the future».

Gian Paolo Barbieri (Milano, 1938) - Biography.

Gian Paolo Barbieri was born in Via Mazzini, from a family of textile wholesalers. It is in his father's textile warehouse that he acquires the competence that will become helpful in his fashion photography. He quickly moves his first steps in the theatrical field becoming an actor, operator and costume designer and he was entrusted a small non-spoken part in *Medea* by Luchino Visconti. American noir cinema constitutes an important foundation for him, trying to figure out how the actresses could turn out to be so beautiful with the use of unique lightings making them look even more enchanting.

Movies gave him the sense of movement and the chance of carrying the Italian fashion from a footboard with a white backdrop, to the outdoors, giving it a different soul.

With the opportunity to move to Rome, and thanks to the first photos shot in pure Dolce Vita climate, Barbieri accepts the offer to work in Paris since was defined talented in fashion photography. In this way, he begins his career as assistant to the photographer of Harper's Bazaar, Tom Kublin, for a brief but intense period, since Kublin will later miss for an ictus only 20 days later.

In 1964 he returns in Milan opening his first photographic studio, where he starts to work in fashion shooting simple samples and publishing photographic services on *Novità*, the magazine that subsequently, in 1966, it will become *Vogue Italia*.

From that moment he begins his collaboration with *Condé Nast*, also publishing on international magazines such as *Vogue America*, *Vogue Paris* and *Vogue Germany*.

In 1968 *Stern* magazine classifies him as one of the fourteen best fashion photographers in the world panorama.

Celebrities of the scene such as Diana Vreeland, Yves Saint Laurent and Richard Avedon, belong as part of his important history but also collaborating with iconic actresses of all time from Audrey Hepburn to Veruschka and Jerry Hall.

Fundamental stop of his course is the experience with *Vogue Italy* together with the carrying out of the biggest advertising campaigns for international brands like Valentino, Gianni Versace, Gianfranco Ferré, Armani, Bulgari, Chanel, Yves Saint Laurent,

Dolce & Gabbana, Vivienne Westwood and many more with which it has interpreted the famous creations of the 80s, in concomitance with the conquest of the Made in Italy and of the Italian prêt-à-porter.

To this day Barbieri continues to work as a photographer and artist for fashion advertising campaigns, editorials and his work is exhibited in several international museums and collections, including: the Victoria & Albert Museum and at the National Portrait Gallery of London, the Kunstforum of Wien, the MAMM in Moscow and the Erarta Museum in St.Petersburg, Palazzo Reale in Milan and the Musée du quai Branly of Paris, the Nicola Erni Collection.

Gian Paolo Barbieri is the 2018 recipient of the distinguished Lucie Award for Outstanding Achievement in Fashion.

About 29 ARTS IN PROGRESS gallery

29 ARTS IN PROGRESS is a leading photography gallery located in the historic area of Sant'Ambrogio, Milan. The gallery represents the work of internationally renowned photographers and organises between five and six exhibitions a year. Alongside contemporary and modern masters, the gallery represents a select group of emerging photographers. Its annual exhibition Unpublished Photo searches for talented as yet undiscovered artists. Since its inception, the gallery has curated exhibitions in partnership with public and private museums including: Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow; Erarta Museum of Contemporary Art, Saint Petersburg; and Palazzo Reale and La Triennale in Milan.

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29 ARTS IN PROGRESS gallery - Via San Vittore 13, Milan

May 10th - July 27th 2019

Opening: Thursday 9th May 2019, from 7 pm

Opening hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 11am - 7pm

Other days and hours by appointment

Free entry

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