

29 ARTS IN PROGRESS gallery

PHOTO LONDON

10 – 14 May 2023 | STAND G27 | Courtyard Pavilion, Somerset House

TONI MENEGUZZO: LARGE-FORMAT POLAROIDS

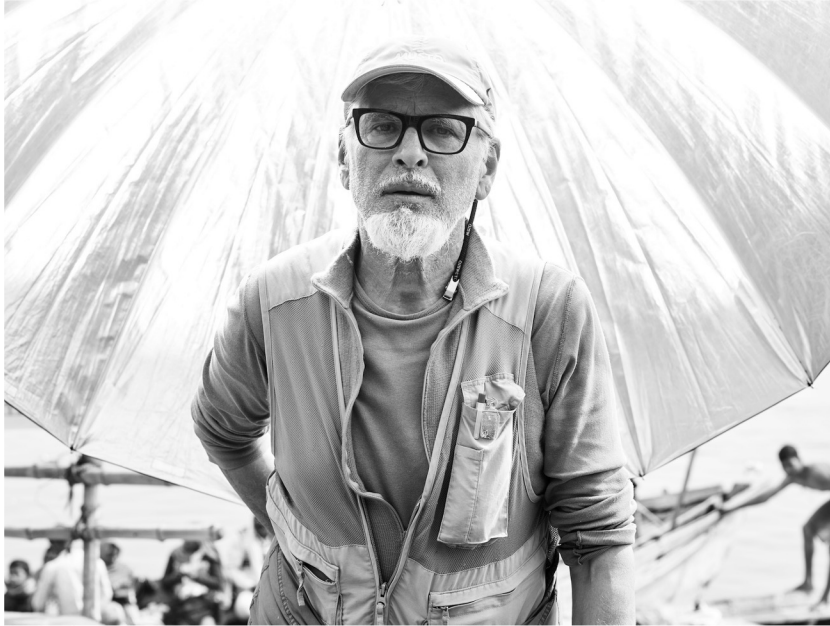


© Toni Meneguzzo – Nude of J., 1985 - Courtesy of 29 ARTS IN PROGRESS gallery

Toni Meneguzzo is the visionary Artist who brought large-format Polaroid to the forefront of editorial and fashion campaigns. Over the years, he has developed specific techniques which apply to his use of Polaroid in the 20×25 format that made him a forerunner in the use of this medium, followed later by many others.

His large format Polaroid photographs are pervaded by an evanescent atmosphere of suspended time where sensuality is all about small gestures and the soft shapes of his elegant women: he creates enigmatic and silent forms, far removed from the images proposed by the fashion world in which he was working. The Polaroids represent the true hallmark of the artist's work and career, showcasing his important contribution to fashion photography. Thanks to a surprisingly unique viewpoint – he is in fact unanimously regarded as being an elegant and original interpreter of great icons of beauty and culture – from the models of advertising campaigns for some of the most famous brands of the eighties and nineties to the ethereal faces of the Japanese women he met during his extensive travels across Asia, through to the ultra-elegant ikebana.

29 ARTS IN PROGRESS gallery at PHOTO LONDON 2023



About Toni Meneguzzo

Toni Meneguzzo (b.1949 in Portogruaro, Venezia) is an internationally renowned photographer who has worked in fashion for over forty years as well as the field of anthropological research and visual analysis whilst always staying true to his own aesthetics.

Over the years, he has developed specific techniques which apply to his use of Polaroid in the 20x25 format: two factors that made him a forerunner in the use of this medium, followed later by many others. For many years he has collaborated with internationally renowned magazines. Abroad these include Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, Queen, Arena, Marie Claire, the New York Times, Elle Décor, Residence, Rolling Stone, and Avenue. In Italy: Marie Claire, Abitare, Domus, D di Repubblica, Io Donna del Corriere della Sera.

He has published a series of three volumes with the prestigious Japanese publishing house Treville Books who presented a selection of his works on fashion and the female nude (Seduction – 1991, Auras – 1993, Fragments – 1993) and has also been included in many special editions by Conde Nast.

He has had many exhibitions and international publications that have presented his research in the socio-anthropological field in both India and Argentina.

His stop-motion video works are also widely celebrated: From the usual confines on Fornasetti, screened on the occasion of the 100 years of practical madness exhibition at the Triennale di Milano (2013), at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris (2015) and the DDP in Seoul (2016); Five Senses shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art New York (2015) and Magic Accessories for Marie Claire, shown during Fashion Week in 2014.



«In March 1993 my fourth book, *Aure*, dedicated to Japanese female nudes, was published by the Japanese publisher Treville. For this project, I organised the casting of girls in Tokyo: among those selected was Rena Murakami, who was active in adult entertainment and one of the protagonists of the soft porn film *Sex and Zen*. On the set, Rena participates in the shoot with a hieratic, rarefied ceremonial, never exalting female attributes. The presentation of the book *Aure* takes place during my solo exhibition of the same name in Tokyo, at the Parco gallery. Once the event has started, I am forcibly taken aside with the senior editor from Treville by a company car and driven by Yakuza kidnapers to an ambiguous location. Here we discover that Rena is a protégé of the underworld organisation and we are asked to make a formal apology written in kanji along with payment of a large sum of money for the offence created in photographing her as the Yakuza had control of the model business.

Thanks to the negotiation conducted by the senior editor, who thankfully had great respect from the Yakuza as a former secretary of Yukio Mishima, our kidnapping ended without paying the requested sum, but only upon agreeing to delivery a the letter of apology in kanji. And I still have my little fingers intact...!» - Toni Meneguzzo

—

© Toni Meneguzzo

Rena, #2, 1993

Polaroid 809

20 x 25 cm (framed size: 22.3 x 28.3 cm)

Unique piece

Signed, titled, and dated on verso

Courtesy of 29 ARTS IN PROGRESS gallery



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Rena, 1993

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"The Polaroid 10-by-8 inch is a big camera. You have a big black piece of cloth over your head. Inside the camera is a reflex mirror, so the up is down and the left is right. It's quite a difficult thing to control.

But everything I shot on Polaroid was done in the studio, so I had maximum control. The Polaroid allows several shots, but you can't do more than five or six.

Fashion photographers shoot a lot and it's active and keeps moving. In my work, the models couldn't move much. Their heads became statues, like sculpture work, and then they would have to give life to that marble. It was hard for them, but there were beautiful results". - Toni Meneguzzo.

—

© Toni Meneguzzo

Charline, 1986

Polaroid 809

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“In the use of antique cameras, Toni Meneguzzo is a master. Not only because he understands their secrets but because, in combining a technical skill with a true creative spirit, he has, with his use of this advanced camera obscura, over the years developed his own unique, poetic and expressive visual language. A counterpart to this noble instrument so rooted in history – already Leonardo da Vinci used it to investigate natural phenomena – is its fully contemporary partner: the Polaroid. An alchemical partnership that, thanks to the immediacy of the snapshot, rendered the technology wholly independent. A freedom that, through transparent acetate, colour negatives, black and white positives, gave life to sepia tones, sun exposures and transfers on cotton paper”. – Giovanni Pelloso

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© Toni Meneguzzo

Still, 1993

Polaroid 809

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With a career spanning four decades, the innovative and research-driven approach of eclectic photographer Toni Meneguzzo has revolutionised Polaroids throughout his four decades long career.

Throughout the 80s and 90s, Meneguzzo was a fixture in fashion magazines like Vogue and Harper's Bazaar with his large size Polaroids (20 x 25cm) making it his signature. Known for his irreverent techniques including the use of thread, mirrors, and pigments along with light manipulation, he produced airy, dreamlike imagery defined by its distinct feminine elegance.

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© Toni Meneguzzo

Katy K., 1993

Polaroid 809

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I chose Dovanna as the model for a series of portraits for Vogue because of her unique characteristics. Her face was able to express a theatricality reminiscent of Brecht and she was extremely tall, this meant that her posture showed a constant elongation.

Once the portraits were finished, as part of a personal research project, I explored my own concept of the nude with her.

I painted a corner of the studio using broomcorn and, in the centre, I positioned a small dormeuse where Dovanna laid on her side. I took two shots in the 10x8 Polaroid format that were very dramatic as the set appeared disproportionate to the model's height.

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© Toni Meneguzzo

Dovanna Nudo, 1985

Polaroid 809

20 x 25 cm (framed size: 22.3 x 28.3 cm)

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“In the eighties he creates ethereal female figures, against faded backgrounds, he photographed subjects of faded, worn out elegance against semi dawn skies, creating images that are incorporeal and otherworldly in their extreme refinement, figures that attach themselves to a frame devoid of spatial and temporal references. He creates enigmatic and silent forms, well removed from the images proposed by the fashion world in which Toni Meneguzzo was working”.

From *Toni's diaphanous breath* by Silvana Turzio

This shot was made for Ryujō Tsushin Magazine; the dress is by Giorgio Armani

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© Toni Meneguzzo

G. Klimt, 1989

Polaroid 809

20 x 25 cm (Framed size: 30 x 36 cm)

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Dress by Dolce & Gabbana

—

© Toni Meneguzzo

Feather, 2000

Polaroid 809

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“His female figures, always slightly ethereal, slightly veiled, a little hidden, demand a long, considered gaze, as though the ‘prise de vue’ of the camera apparatus is never quite sufficient to reveal their full femininity, because he puts into play, using his own subtle and poetic means, that uninterrupted dance of veiling and unveiling that is a fundamental part of our lives. On closer inspection even his *modus operandi* is the result of a veiling and subsequent unveiling.

The polaroids of the eighties are covered with a coloured acetate, distancing the composition from the photographed reality whilst the gradually fading colour from the centre to the edges renders the composition devoid of time and place making it so mysterious and fascinating”.

From *Toni's diaphanous breath* by Silvana Turzio

Dress by Thierry Mugler

—

© Toni Meneguzzo

Valerie Jean, 1992

Polaroid 809

20 x 25 cm (Framed size: 30 x 36 cm)

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Toni Meneguzzo's large format Polaroid photographs are pervaded by an evanescent atmosphere of a suspended time where sensuality is all about small gestures and soft forms of his elegant women. Reality is shattered leaving space to an imago which opens a door onto the unexpected and the unforeseen. Each Polaroid, with the triggering of the sign, activates the passion and curiosity for the mysterious world of appearances.

This shot belongs to a campaign made for Vogue Pelle (December 1986). Renowned actress Amira Casar wearing a pair of Gianni Versace gloves.

—

© Toni Meneguzzo

Amira, 1986

Polaroid 809

20 x 25 cm (Framed size: 30 x 36 cm)

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© Toni Meneguzzo

White, 1994

Polaroid 809

20 x 25 cm (Framed size: 30 x 36 cm)

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“The work of Toni Meneguzzo shines with seduction. Reality is shattered leaving space to an imago which opens a door onto the unexpected and the unforeseen. It breaks with history, going beyond a linear concept of time to become a frozen moment, much like the commercialized experience. The sign does not impose a signifier since it recalls, in the vertigo of suspension, a dialectic and a play of meanings. Each Polaroid, with the triggering of the sign, activates the passion and curiosity for the mysterious world of appearances. Here, on this surface, the refusal to seduce and be seduced is a long way off. Small gestures, soft forms. Everything contributes to activating a discursive process that leads back to a sensual matrix.

A slight anxiety emerges for that symbolic that provokes and that refers to a communicative game made of rules and challenges. A mix of ancient non-verbal rituals and subtle diversions. Thus, the imagination has the upper hand in a canvas of transparencies and fluctuating meanings”. – Giovanni Pelloso

This shot belongs to a campaign made for Vogue Pelle (December 1986)
Gloves are by Prada

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© Toni Meneguzzo
Amira and Juliet, 1986
Polaroid 809
20 x 25 cm (Framed size: 30 x 36 cm)
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«The strategy of the photographer is to leave it to the natural light to flood the surfaces with colour. Standing in front of these photographs, the first thing that attracts the viewer is the artist's sensibility for colour and tone. In some of the compositions figures of a ghostly beauty appear like graceful silhouettes pushing against amniotic seeming surfaces.

I believe that the photographer's innate ability to seduce through unseen colours- almost a Venetian touch - stems as much from his technical skill and his biography and background»

From *Polaroids that fade in the distance* by Ivo Bonacorsi

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© Toni Meneguzzo

Nude of J., 1997

Polaroid 809

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Unique piece

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-

© Toni Meneguzzo

Nude of J. #4, 1993

Polaroid 809

20 x 25 cm (Framed size: 22.3 x 28.3 cm)

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© Toni Meneguzzo

Ikebana, 1993

Polaroid 809 + 891

20 x 25 cm (framed size: 22.3 x 28.3 cm)

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“As a photographer, if you only serve the purpose of Fashion...It won't last. My idea was to have my own image: of course, they look vintage, but they still resist”. – Toni Meneguzzo

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© Toni Meneguzzo

Nude of J., 1985

Polaroid 809

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From *Toni's diaphanous breath* by Silvana Turzio

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© Toni Meneguzzo

Above, 1993

Polaroid 809

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"After a while, you get fed up– you want to alternate, you want to create something, so you would start playing around, putting (lighting) gels directly on the picture holder of the camera, with some kind of micro-grain attached to it, so it alters it once again, and you make your own film.

Otherwise, it gets boring. It's like eating rice or pasta every day – at some point, you want to change. At some point, you start creating lots of different things and that's the great thing ". – Toni Meneguzzo

Over the years, Meneguzzo has developed specific techniques which apply to his use of Polaroid in the 20x25 format that made him a forerunner in the use of this medium, followed later by many others.

-

© Toni Meneguzzo

Ortensia, 1985

Polaroid 809 + 891

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The forty years of Toni Meneguzzo's career has been marked by a constant interest in study and experimentation.

Among many other accomplishments, he was one of the first to use the sepia tone achieved by overlapping positive and negative Polaroid's sheets. These smooth brown shadows and soft, off-white highlights became Meneguzzo's distinguishing mark and made him one of the most sought-after photographers by all major fashion magazines.

This shot was made for *Harpers & Queen Magazine* (November, 1986)
The dress is by Jasper Conran

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© Toni Meneguzzo

Amira Casar, 1986

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This shot was made for *T Magazine*, *The New York Times* (March 23, 1997)
The dress is by Donna Karan

-

© Toni Meneguzzo

Debbie Deitering, 1997

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Dress by Koji Tatsuno

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© Toni Meneguzzo

Beaded, 1992

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But everything I shot on Polaroid was done in the studio, so I had maximum control. The Polaroid allows several shots, but you can't do more than five or six.

Fashion photographers shoot a lot and it's active and keeps moving. In my work, the models couldn't move much. Their heads became statues, like sculpture work, and then they would have to give life to that marble. It was hard for them, but there were beautiful results". - Toni Meneguzzo.

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© Toni Meneguzzo

Viviana, 1997

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© Toni Meneguzzo

Sasha con ambre, 1986

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Piuma, 2000

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29 ARTS IN PROGRESS gallery at PHOTO LONDON 2023

About 29 ARTS IN PROGRESS gallery

29 ARTS IN PROGRESS is a leading art photography gallery located in the historic area of Sant' Ambrogio, Milan.

The gallery represents the work of internationally renowned photographers, with a focus on portraiture and fashion photography. Since its inception, the gallery has curated exhibitions in partnership with public and private museums including V&A Museum; Hong Kong Arts Centre; Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow; Erarta Museum of Contemporary Art, Saint Petersburg; Palazzo Reale, Palazzo Pirelli and Triennale in Milan, Museum of Cultures in Lugano and Nicola Erni Collection in Steinhausen, Switzerland.

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29artsinprogress.com

PHOTO LONDON 2023 | 10 – 14 MAY 2023

Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA
Stand: **G27**, Courtyard Pavilion

Opening Hours

Wednesday 10th May:	VIP: 11.00 – 21.00	
Thursday 11th May:	VIP: 11.00 – 13.00	Public: 13.00 – 20:00
Friday 12th May:	VIP: 11.00 – 13.00	Public: 13:00 – 20:00
Saturday 13th May:	VIP: 11.00 – 12.00	Public: 12:00 – 20:00
Sunday 14th May:	VIP: 11.00 – 12.00	Public: 12:00 – 18:00