

PAULA SEEGY

GALLERY

Via San Maurilio, 14 – Milan

The Body of Sound. Jazz Portraits in the Photography of Fabrizio Garghetti

Curated by Alberto Barranco di Valdivieso

24 September – 22 October 2026

Opening: Thursday, 24 September, 6:00 PM

*Jazz music, including famous pieces by Miles Davis,
played from the vinyl collection of Guido Desigis*

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Miles Davis and the Greats of Jazz in the Striking Photographs of Fabrizio Garghetti at Paula Seegy Gallery

Paula Seegy Gallery opens its 2026–2027 exhibition season with The Body of Sound. Jazz Portraits in the Photography of Fabrizio Garghetti, curated by Alberto Barranco di Valdivieso, on view from 24 September to 22 October 2026. The exhibition celebrates the centenary of Miles Davis's birth through a collection of around thirty historic photographs, almost all in black and white, bringing together some of the **leading figures of international jazz**.

The lively opening evening will be accompanied by an outstanding selection of jazz music, including celebrated tracks by the Miles Davis Quintet from the album "The Legendary Prestige Quintet Sessions", played live by Guido Desigis (Desigis Records) from his vinyl collection.

The vibrant photographic exhibition represents a departure from the gallery's established *fil rouge*, which has traditionally focused on artists, primarily painters and sculptors, who were key figures of the twentieth century.

An active presence on the cultural scene from the 1960s to the present day, Fabrizio Garghetti has captured, with his immediate and "striking" style, the essence of some of the most significant events, personalities and places in the art world over the past sixty years. A true chronicler of culture, he is regarded as one of the most original photographers of art, dance and contemporary music, in Italy and beyond.

The compelling exhibition journey focuses on the glorious **1960s–1980s**, a period in which the artist's gaze moves beyond the traditions of humanist photography to capture the emotions of the individual at the very moment of artistic creation. Through Garghetti's precision and sensitivity, the bodies of his subjects become a language in themselves.

Jazz becomes the ideal subject of his gaze, as it is through improvisation that the creative process reveals itself in its most immediate, instinctive and unrepeatable form.

The portraits on display capture memorable moments featuring some of the great protagonists in the history of jazz, including **Laurie Anderson, Gato Barbieri, Count Basie, Ray Charles, Ornette Coleman, Miles Davis, Bill Evans, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Charles Mingus and Buddy Rich.**

One photograph captures **Miles Davis** (1983) hunched in on himself, seemingly shutting out the world around him. His intense concentration makes the performance feel almost like an inner dialogue. Garghetti then shifts to an entirely different mood with his portrait of **Buddy Rich** (1970), one of the greatest jazz drummers, caught in a moment far removed from his usual virtuosity. Whistling with an ironic expression on his face, Rich appears playful and irreverent, and the photograph captures the unconventional, unpredictable character of the musician. Garghetti reveals two very different ways of experiencing and expressing music: one introspective and inward-looking, the other light-hearted and carefree.

In other images, it is the gesture of performance itself that captures his attention, as in the photograph of **Ornette Coleman** (1981), captured in the midst of his artistic exploration. The musician seems to break the rules of the jazz language to create a new rhythmic form; the photograph emphasizes his tense features, deeply absorbed expression and the energetic movement of his hand. The same focus on gesture can be found in Garghetti's portrait of **Bill Evans** (1965), expressed here in a more elusive and immaterial form. The pianist appears almost absorbed by the keyboard; the rapid movement of his hands blurs their contours, while his body seems to lose its physical solidity, becoming an extension of the piano itself. In this moment, music becomes form through the body, revealing the extraordinary lightness of Evans's playing.

The photographs on display come together as a cohesive and coherent journey, while allowing each performer to retain their own distinct identity. Garghetti captures the moment when music moves beyond performance and takes on an almost abstract quality, entering the musician's inner sense of time — the instant when the body becomes the place where art comes to life.

Fabrizio Garghetti's photographs form a **gallery of extraordinary human and artistic experiences**, in which the bodies of the musicians he portrays become the very space where art unfolds. Garghetti has always been drawn to theatre, artists, the energy of the stage and music — interests that have led him to document movements and practices such as *Fluxus*, *Visual Poetry*, *happenings*, contemporary dance and jazz, focusing on many of their most significant figures.

His photographs capture the moment when music, while remaining true to itself, seems to enter a new dimension — one that draws the viewer in and invites a deeply personal experience.

Garghetti's photography is rooted in a direct and sustained relationship with artists and the places where art takes place. Over the years, he has followed and photographed numerous figures from the contemporary cultural scene, forging friendships and collaborations with many of them.

Biography. Fabrizio Garghetti was born in Salsomaggiore in 1939. Following in his father's footsteps as an optician and optometrist, he attended photography courses at the Umanitaria in Milan. Between 1960s and 1980s, he ran the Giovenzana optical store, which became a meeting place for artists, photographers and gallery owners. He began his career as a reporter in 1961, photographing a concert by Thelonious Monk at Milan's Teatro Lirico. From the outset, he developed a particular passion for jazz and theatre. He collaborated with the Piccolo Teatro and photographed musicians including Miles Davis, John Coltrane and Ella Fitzgerald, with his work published in *Musica Jazz* and *Jazz Magazine*. In the late 1960s, Garghetti documented the Italian student movement and took several photographs just minutes after the Piazza Fontana bombing on 12 December 1969. His interest in new forms of artistic expression led him to document avant-garde theatre. He was the only photographer to document the opening of Il Parametro, Franco Quadri's (UBU) first alternative theatre space in Italy, and the first to photograph the Living Theatre at Milan's Circo Medini. In 1976, he photographed the opening of Milan's Teatro Out Off with Hermann Nitsch, beginning a collaboration with the theatre that would continue for more than twenty years. Garghetti was closely associated with the Fluxus group, following its development from its earliest days and becoming a close collaborator of artists including Allan Kaprow and John Cage. He photographed many of its leading figures, producing some of his most celebrated images. In the 1980s, he became friends with the visual poet Sarenco and emerged as one of the leading photographers documenting *Visual Poetry*. Particularly significant is his 1987 reportage on Andy Warhol in Milan, documenting the opening of the exhibition "*Andy Warhol. The Last Supper*" at the Refettorio delle Stelline. The photographs record Warhol's final visit to Italy and his last exhibition. From 1989, Garghetti collaborated with the Fondazione Mudima, and in 1990 he documented "*Ubi Fluxus Ibi Motus. 1990–1962*", a project by Gino Di Maggio curated by Achille Bonito Oliva and one of the principal collateral events of the Venice Biennale. Dedicated to documenting contemporary art, performance and major cultural events, Garghetti is considered one of the leading figures of "art reportage". Throughout his career, he has collaborated with publications covering fashion, design, architecture, news and culture, including *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Elle Decor*, *Panorama*, *Epoca*, *La Repubblica* and *Alfabeta*. In 2025, Alberto Barranco di Valdivieso established the Fabrizio Garghetti Archive to preserve and promote his work. In 2026, Garghetti's photographs of Andy Warhol returned to Milan in the exhibition "*Andy Warhol. Passaggio in Italia 1975–1987*", held at the Crédit Agricole Gallery in Palazzo delle Stelline. His photographs of artists including John Cage, Daniel Spoerri, Wolf Vostell, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Arman and Enrico Baj, alongside his documentation of landmark performances by contemporary dance figures such as Pina Bausch and Merce Cunningham, and rock stars including the Rolling Stones and Brian Eno, together form an extraordinary visual record of more than six decades of contemporary art, music and culture.

Exhibition Details

Title The Body of Sound. Jazz Portraits in the Photography of Fabrizio Garghetti

Curated by Alberto Barranco di Valdivieso

Venue Paula Seegy Gallery, via San Maurilio 14 – Milan

Dates 24 September – 22 October 2026

Opening Thursday, 24 September, 6:00 PM

Opening hours Tuesday to Saturday, 12:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Admission Free

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