



1967, Alberta Tiburzi, Milano
courtesy of Fondazione
Gian Paolo Barbieri ETS

THE 43rd EDITION OF MILANO UNICA

In collaboration with the Gian Paolo Barbieri ETS Foundation Exhibition

Radical Elegance: An Expression of the Culture of Italian Excellence

Milano Unica pays tribute to Gian Paolo Barbieri, the photographer who transformed Italian fashion into a universal language

The 43rd edition of **Milano Unica** pays tribute to **Gian Paolo Barbieri**, a pivotal artist in the history of fashion photography and contemporary culture, with the exhibition "**Gian Paolo Barbieri. The Radical Elegance**," organized in collaboration with the **Gian Paolo Barbieri ETS** Foundation and scheduled for **July 7–9, 2026**, at Fiera Milano Rho.

Curated by **Stefano Fadda** and **Antonella Matarrese**, the exhibition spans three decades of creativity, presenting the vision of an artist who helped define the imagery of international fashion from the 1960s onward.

Widely regarded as one of the most influential photographers of the twentieth century, **Gian Paolo Barbieri** developed a distinctive visual language, recognized for its extraordinary formal elegance, compositional refinement, and the ability to transform every image into a narrative suspended between reality and imagination. His photographs accompanied the rise of Made in Italy on the global stage. Through collaborations with some of the leading



names in international fashion, he helped shape the visual identity of fashion houses and designers who have left an indelible mark on the industry.

Barbieri's lens has immortalized some of the most influential figures in the fashion world, from Valentino Garavani to Giorgio Armani, from Krizia to Dolce & Gabbana, alongside renowned personalities from cinema, culture, and the performing arts, such as Claudia Cardinale, Rudolf Nureyev, Christopher Lambert, and Ewan McGregor. His work bears witness to the evolution of taste, aesthetics, and contemporary society.

Milano Unica has chosen to honor **Gian Paolo Barbieri** because his work represents one of the highest expressions of the culture of excellence that characterizes Made in Italy textiles and accessories. In his images, discipline and creative freedom, innovation and memory, compositional rigor and the ability to anticipate the future coexist harmoniously-- the very values that guide the research and development activities of the companies exhibiting at the event.

In this context, Barbieri emerges as an extraordinary interpreter of Italian craftsmanship, capable of transforming materials, savoir-faire, and creativity into a universal visual language. His presence at **Milano Unica**, therefore, acquires a significance that extends beyond the exhibition itself, expressing the ongoing dialogue between culture, industry, and innovation that lies at the heart of the Italian fashion system.

The exhibition is divided into two sections. The first is dedicated to portraits created between the 1960s and the early 1990s, portraying some of the leading figures who helped shape the history of fashion and international culture. The second section brings together a selection of the photographer's most iconic images and the display tables presenting **Milano Unica's Fall-Winter 2027-2028 collections**, creating a direct dialogue between textile research, creative innovation, and artistic vision.

The initiative forms part of the cultural program that **Milano Unica** develops around its Tendenze, highlighting the dialogue between manufacturing excellence, creativity, and cultural heritage. It is no coincidence that the exhibition is perfectly in line with the concept of this edition, **MU IS PUNK!**, where punk is interpreted as an attitude of independent thinking, experimentation, and the challenging of conventions.

Aesthetic rigor, attention to detail, the pursuit of perfection, and expressive freedom represent the points of convergence between Barbieri's work and **Milano Unica's** values of excellence, serving as a compass for the entire textile supply chain.

With "**Gian Paolo Barbieri. The Radical Elegance**," **Milano Unica** offers its international audience a unique opportunity to rediscover the legacy of an artist who helped write some of the most significant chapters in contemporary visual culture and who continues to inspire new generations of creative talent.



**The exhibition will be on display in the MU Tendenze Sostenibilità area
in Hall 3 - Fiera Milano Rho
July 7, 8, and 9, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

For additional information:
Milano Unica Press Office tel. +39 02 6610 1105
Alessandra Ardenzi mob. +39 335 677 46 20
Daniela Scardi mob. +39 3661964979

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