

TONY RIZZI

WORK HARD, DON'T LIE, AND TRY NOT TO HURT ANYBODY

Exhibition Duration: **19 September – 17 January 2027**

Opening: **Friday, 18 September 2026, 7 pm**

Press Preview: **Friday, 18 September 2026, 11 am**

Venue: **Fotografie Forum Frankfurt**

Frankfurt am Main, 23 June 2026

“Now I begin my life in Frankfurt. I really like it here and feel like I should be here. I feel like there’s a protective presence by my side at all times...strange. WORK HARD, DON’T LIE, AND TRY NOT TO HURT ANYONE.” Excerpt from Tony Rizzi’s diary (September 7th, 1985)

This quote frames the most comprehensive exhibition to date of the renowned American dancer, choreographer, and photographic artist Tony Rizzi, who has lived and worked in Frankfurt for 40 years. In 2025, he was nominated as Europe’s best dancer in the annual critics’ poll conducted by TANZ magazine.

Curated by Prof. Celina Lunsford, artistic director of the FFF, the exhibition brings together early black-and-white photographs, Polaroids, large and small format collages, videos, and installations spanning several decades of his career.

Tony Rizzi’s works are characterised by a bold yet sensitive approach to the medium of photography. His Polaroid collages create unique tableaux exploring the passage of time, the human body, movement, and form—shaped by the same working principles as his dance: adaptations of repetition, the impulse of intuition, technique, and lived experience. In self-portraits as well as in evocative and often ironic photographs of family members, lovers and companions from Frankfurt’s dance and cultural scene, he explores questions of identity, belonging, and self-determination.

The exhibition thus spans Rizzi’s entire photographic oeuvre to date: from early black-and-white photographs from the 1980s, through his characteristic Polaroid collages, to the large-format montages using various printing techniques and videos, that he has added to his repertoire since 2025.

Tony Rizzi’s photographic encounters open up spaces for intimacy, diversity, and empathy—and invite visitors to perceive and reexamine the realities of life beyond normative attributions. When Rizzi first arrived in Frankfurt it was photography and dance that provided a means of social integration as well as emotional self-expression reaching across language barriers.

For the project, Celina Lunsford conducted extensive research into the artist’s archive of over 10,000 images and conceived the exhibition in close collaboration with Tony Rizzi. The artist’s first monograph is planned to accompany the exhibition.

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ABOUT TONY RIZZI

Tony Rizzi, born in 1965 in Dedham, near Boston, trained at the Boston Ballet School under, among others, the legendary dancers Violette Verdy and Bruce Wells, both from the New York City Ballet. In 1985, he moved to Frankfurt, where he was a dancer and close collaborator with William Forsythe at Ballet Frankfurt for over 20 years, performing many of leading roles.

At the same time, he developed his own choreographic work: in 1995, he created "Firsttext" for the Royal Ballet in London together with Forsythe and Dana Caspersen; further choreographies were created for the Bavarian State Ballet and the Gärtnerplatz Tanztheater in Munich, among others. From 1999 to 2023, he performed as a principal dancer in numerous productions by Troubleyn / Jan Fabre, including the 24-hour performance "Mount Olympus." In 2012, he played the young Marina Abramović in Robert Wilson's "The Life and Death of Marina Abramović" on an international tour.

With his own company, 'Tony Rizzi and the Bad Habits,' he has been developing his own dance productions since 2000, which regularly premiere at the Mousonturm in Frankfurt and the Gallus Theater. International tours have taken him to Montreal, Vienna, Tokyo, New York, and Oslo, among other places.

Since the late 1980s, Rizzi has been active as a photographic artist. His works have been exhibited at venues including the Frankfurter Kunstverein, Oper Frankfurt, Künstlerhaus Mousonturm, the Kunstverein Hamburg, Platform Sarai in Frankfurt am Main, MUMOK in Vienna and the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, and are held in international collections.

SUPPORTING PROGRAMME: TONY RIZZI

SAT, 19 September, 3 pm **GALLERY TALK** with TONY RIZZI and CELINA LUNSFORD

SAT/SUN, 31 October/1 November, 10 am – 2 pm **WORKSHOP** » STAGING MOVEMENT, STAGING EXPRESSION: BODY LANGUAGE & MOVING IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA« with TONY RIZZI

TUE, 29 September, 3 pm **CURATOR'S TOUR** with **CELINA LUNSFORD**

FFF ACADEMY WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

FRI–MON, 24–27 July, 10 am–5 pm **MASTERCLASS WORKSHOP** "VISUAL STORYTELLING AND THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN ARCHIVE AND CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY" with **NINA BERMAN**

SAT, 22 August, 28 November and 06 March, 05 June, 2027, 10 am–5 pm **MASTERCLASS** "EVERYTHING BUT THE TRUTH" with **VIKTORIA BINSCHTOK**

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FRI–MON, 25–28 September, 10 am–5 pm **MASTERCLASS WORKSHOP** “SPECULATIVE DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY” with **MAX PINCKERS**

PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS Wednesdays, 5 pm

OPENING HOURS Tue–Sun 11 am–6 pm, MON closed

Entry 8 Euros, reduced 5 Euros

Press information and press photos for the exhibition **TONY RIZZI:**

WORK HARD, DON'T LIE, AND TRY NOT TO HURT ANYBODY at the Fotografie Forum Frankfurt are available for download at: www.fffrankfurt.com/presse

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FOTOGRAFIE FORUM FRANKFURT

The Fotografie Forum Frankfurt (FFF) is one of the leading centres of photography in Europe. As an exhibition space, institution and event forum, the FFF deals with all aspects of photography. Since its founding in 1984 it has presented over 300 exhibitions with historic and contemporary photographers and artists. Additionally, the programme of the FFF ACADEMY comprises regular workshops, talks and discussions with internationally renowned photographers, artists and experts. Fotografie Forum Frankfurt is the organizing partner of the international RAY Triennial of Photography, which takes place in various exhibition venues in Frankfurt/Rhine-Main. Further information available at www.fffrankfurt.org.

The Fotografie Forum Frankfurt is supported by the Förderkreis Fotografie Forum Frankfurt e.V., the City of Frankfurt am Main, Crespo Foundation, Henryk Sznep and ABN AMRO Bethmann HAL.

