

GAUGUIN THE ALCHEMIST

11 October 2017 - 22 January 2018

On the strength of a collection of over 200 of the artist's works, *Gauguin the alchemist* is an exceptional journey into this major artist's fascinating creative process.

It is the first exhibition of its kind to study in depth the remarkable complementarity of the artist's creations in the field of painting, sculpture, graphic and decorative arts. It focuses on the modernity of Gauguin's creative process (1848-1903), and his ability to constantly push the limits of each medium.

IRVING PENN

This exhibition is organized with the support of Imerys, Terra Foundation for American Art, Fondation Louis Roederer and La Vallée Village.



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AROUND THE EXHIBITION

CULTURAL PROGRAMME

INAUGURAL LECTURE

Friday 22 September, 12.30pm

The exhibition is presented by Jeff L. Rosenheim, Curator in Charge of the Department of Photographs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Maria Morris Hamburg, independent curator and the founding curator of the Department of Photographs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and Jérôme Neutres, curator and Director of Strategy and Development for the Réunion des musées nationaux - Grand Palais, all three curators of the exhibition. Introduction by Sylvie Hubac, President of the Rmn - Grand Palais.

EUROPEAN NIGHT OF MUSEUMS

Saturday 7 October

Free admission from 8pm to midnight.

Musical night around the Great American Songbook themes with the duo formed by the saxophonist Melvin Marquez and double bass player Sylvain Fournet-Fayas, both coming from the Jazz and improvised music department of the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris.

MEETINGS, 6.30PM

Monday 23 October

Guest : Jean-Luc Monterosso, Director of the Maison Européenne de la photographie. Interview led by Gabriel Bauret, photography expert.

Wednesday 8 November

Guest : Francis Giacobetti, photographer. Interview led by Jérôme Neutres co-curator of the exhibition.

Wednesday 15 November

Guest : Jean-Baptiste Huynh, photographer. Interview led by Jérôme Neutres co-curator of the exhibition.

FRIDAY SCREENINGS, 12PM

« SHOOTING » CYCLE

Friday 6 October

Blow up by Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966, with David Hemmings, Vanessa Redgrave and Sarah Miles, 1h50, VOSTF.

Friday 13 October

Puzzle of a Downfall Child by Jerry Schatzberg, 1970, with Faye Dunaway, Barry Primus and Viveca Lindfors, 1h40, VOSTF.

This screening comes within the framework of "ADDICTION à l'œuvre".

Friday 17 November

The September Issue by R. J. Cutler, 2009, with Anna Wintour, Thakoon Panichgul and André Léon Talley, 1h30, VOSTF. 1st part : **Les années Vogue** by Hugo Lopez and Clarisse Verrier, 2012, 26'.

DOCUMENTARIES

L'Aventure photographique by Philippe Azoulay, 2000, **La Photo de mode + Les Portraitistes + Le Nu**, 3 x 27', 14pm on Fridays 6 and 13 October, 17 November; 4pm on Monday 23 October; 4pm on Wednesdays 8 and 15 November.

ARTISTIC PERFORMANCES

Wednesday 13 December, from 3pm

in the exhibition rooms, with performing arts and visual arts students from Paris 8 directed by Katia Légeret, lecturer at Université Paris 8 / Labex Arts-H2H.

DISCOVERY SUNDAY

Sunday 28 January, 5pm

Musical journey into Irving Penn's work with Guillaume Huret, founder of « Rejoice » evenings.

CULTURAL MEDIATION

AUDIOGUIDES RENTAL

In situ, in French, English and Spanish €5. Children's tour also available in French.

From the app, €2.29 in French and in English.

Children's tour also available in French.

On Google Play and Appstore :

<http://tinyurl.com/appirvingpenn>

GUIDED TOURS IN FRENCH to book on grandpalais.fr

Adults

DURATION : 1H30 PRICE : €23 CONCESSION : €16

CLAN PRICE : €62 (2 adults and 2 youngsters from 16 to 25 years)

Families & children (from 5 years)

DURATION : 1H PRICE : €21 CONCESSION : €14

FAMILY PRICE : €47 (2 adults and 2 youngsters less than 16 years)

CLAN PRICE : €56 (2 adults and 2 youngsters from 16 to 25 years)

PUBLICATIONS

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Irving Penn : the centennial, published by Réunion des musées nationaux - Grand Palais, 2017.

In association with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. 25x31 cm, bound, 372 pages, about 370 illustrations, €59.

EXHIBITION POSTCARD NOTEBOOK

12,5 x 16,5 cm, bound, 112 pages, 40 postcards, €15,50.

WORKSHOP TOURS IN FRENCH

Adults, Dessins en promenade

Tuesday 16 January, 2pm

Take a tour with our guide and complete the pages of a sketch book featuring creations inspired by Irving Penn's portraits and still lifes.

Drawing equipment not provided.

DURATION : 2H PRICE : €30 CONCESSION : €22

From 8 to 11 years old, Construire une image

Discover Irving Penn's work and then build a picture which will become a photograph freely inspired from Irving Penn's techniques and style.

DURATION : 2H PRICE : €10

MULTIMEDIA

THE EXHIBITION APP

Ticket sales, exhibition texts, chronology, cultural programme around the exhibition and audioguides (€2.29) on Google Play and Appstore :

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GRAND PALAIS

FROM THE 21ST OF SEPTEMBER 2017 TO THE 29TH OF JANUARY 2018

Celebrated for more than sixty years of masterly work at *Vogue* magazine, Irving Penn (American, 1917-2009) was a superb photographer of style, but his attention to fashion was merely one aspect of his lifelong study of face and figure, attitude and demeanor, adornment and artifact. As his penetrating portraits reveal, Penn had few equals as an observer of human expression. He also had an acute graphic intelligence and a sculptor's sensitivity to volumes in light. These talents came to the fore in his studies of the nude and in still life, a genre he favored throughout his career.

#IrvingPenn

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1. STILL LIFE AND EARLY STREET PHOTOGRAPHS

Penn acquired his first *Rolleiflex* in 1938 while working as an assistant at *Harper's Bazaar*. Penn's earliest photographs are studies of nineteenth-century shopfronts, hand-lettered advertisements, and street signs in Philadelphia and New York. With their visual clarity and vernacular content, these pictures reflect the subject matter of Depression-era, documentary-style photography. Frequently, Penn focused in close to his subject when framing the image in the camera and then cropped it more extremely in his finished print.

Still lifes were among his earliest assignments after joining *Vogue* in 1943. When composing these pictures he played the role of storyteller but left out the human protagonists. All that remains are their traces—an alluring smear of lipstick on a brandy glass, a burnt match. Penn constructed these photographs through a bravura act of reduction, challenging the viewer to read them for signs of life.

2. EXISTENTIAL PORTRAITS, 1947-1948

After serving in the war, in 1945 Penn returned to his work at *Vogue*. To infuse the magazine with culture and boost his associate's budding career, art director Alexander Liberman asked Penn to make a series of portraits of personalities. The sitters were selected for him, but the set, lighting, and conduct of the sessions were up to the photographer.

Not yet thirty and hardly known, Penn had to find a way to direct the sessions with his famous subjects. He found that cornering them between two angled stage flats was an effective way to control the interaction and amplify their responses. The unfinished nature of the set highlights the artifice of studio portraiture. Likewise, the sitters' sometimes disproportionate body parts (such as Joe Louis's narrow shoulders and enormous feet) call attention to the foreshortening distortions of the camera's lens.

Another minimal schema Penn used was an old carpet tossed over boxes. Like the no-exit corner, this barren no-man's-land seemed appropriate to the psychic tenor of the postwar moment. By 1948 these stark, astute portraits had made Penn's name.

3. IN VOGUE, 1947-1951

Once Penn's prowess in portraiture was established, Alexander Liberman groomed him for fashion. "Alex thought I was a bit of a street savage," Penn recalled. He was instructed to buy an evening jacket and to attend "the collections," the highly anticipated showings of Parisian couture. However, the crush of competing photographers and excited editors at these events overwhelmed Penn. He preferred to work away from the fray, and, if possible, in a daylight studio. For the 1950 collections, therefore, a Paris studio was found, as well as a theatrical curtain that served as a neutral backdrop.

In an old building with neither electricity nor water, Penn was delighted with the pearly light, with the superbly wrought fashions by designers, and with his models. His encounter with model Lisa Fonssagrives, a former dancer having a gift for posing, is determining. Their knowing collaboration resulted in an unparalleled suite of pictures.

4. CUZCO, 1948

In late November 1948, *Vogue* sent Penn to Lima, Peru, for his first fashion assignment on location. After completing the sessions with Jean Patchett, he traveled alone to Cuzco, the splendid city high in the Andes. Penn quickly found a local photographer's daylight studio to rent and produced, in three days, hundreds of portraits of residents and visitors from nearby villages, all wearing their traditional woolen clothing. The photographs reveal a couturier's instinctive grasp of a garment's weight, pattern, and texture and a stage director's knack for posing subjects. The Cuzco series also established the fundamental

visual and psychological principles behind the portraits Penn would make in distant corners of the world over the next twenty-five years.

5. SMALL TRADES, 1950-1951

In July 1950, while photographing the couture collections for *Vogue* in Paris, Penn began a new series—portraits of the "small trades"—a project he would continue in London and New York City. The Small Trades eventually became the largest single series of Penn's career. He photographed skilled tradespeople and street vendors with their tools and wares using the same type of daylight studio, the same neutral backdrop, and the same lighting as he did in sittings with fashion models and the cultural elite. This mix of butchers, bakers, and high-style makers, Penn quipped, was "a balanced meal."

With grace and finesse, Penn used his well-honed skills to pose the figures and to carefully record their physiognomies and idiosyncratic attire, tools, and attributes. Collectively, the photographs expand upon a centuries-old printmaking tradition known interchangeably as small trades, street cries, and *petits métiers*. *Vogue* published Penn's portraits in its respective American and foreign editions.

6. CLASSIC PORTRAITS, 1948-1962

During the 1950s and early 1960s, Penn's eye, imagination, and technical prowess were in great demand. He divided his time between advertising work and photographing fashion and celebrities for *Vogue*.

Penn wanted his portraits to be weighty and irreducible, like paintings. He studied the art of Goya, Daumier, and Toulouse-Lautrec for lessons in focus, lighting, and graphic immediacy.

The gist of his task was to get past the prepared faces and personal armor of the luminaries who came to sit. He met his subjects honestly, without airs, and began by putting them at

ease over coffee. Then, speaking softly, Penn supported and encouraged his sitters through the arc of the session, gradually melting their defenses and aligning their intent to his. Only when they entered some vital territory together, where truths consolidated or essence was revealed, was he satisfied. The resulting portraits are like no others: their hallmarks of graphic concision and psychological acuity are instantly recognizable.

7. NUDES, 1949-1950

The female nude has been an inspiration since the dawn of art. Penn's first take on this genre was in 1947 (see the small *Nude No. 1* nearby). Still longing to photograph "real women in real circumstances" two years later, he returned to the subject and made an extended series.

Without a lens of fashion or prudery, Penn's series evolved in the spirit of open-ended experimentation and discovery. The series unfolded before his camera in slow motion, culminating in more stable, monumental forms. Though Penn gloried in the ample and voluptuous flesh, he wanted to dial down the ultrarealism of photography through printing. Using an unruly silver process, he greatly overexposed the images and then bleached them back to produce a range of results, most of which he discarded. But his obsessive dedication sometimes paid off with granular, powdery deposits that selectively veil or reveal the forms with the shimmering quality of a dream.

The Nudes found no favor in 1950. Later Penn explored the negatives anew using the platinum-palladium printing process, but the series did not receive substantial public attention until an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2002.

8. WORLDS IN A SMALL ROOM

Penn's service in Italy and India during World War II inspired him to expand that experience

and photograph people around the globe. From 1967 to 1971, he lived his dream, traveling for *Vogue* to the Pacific and Africa with a tent to use for a studio.

The studio became, for each of us, a sort of neutral area. It was not their home (...), it was not my home (...), but in this limbo there was for us both the possibility of contact that was a revelation to me and often, I could tell, a moving experience for the subjects themselves, who without words—by only their stance and their concentration—were able to say much that spanned the gulf between our different worlds.

Penn was not an anthropologist; he was an artist seeking to create exquisitely detailed and carefully constructed portraits. Although it was not his intention to echo stereotypes of ethnographic photography, the isolation of the sitters against a blank ground inevitably recalls colonialist traditions.

9. CIGARETTES, 1972

Like Penn's Nudes, his Cigarettes were met with incomprehension. Why make achingly beautiful prints of something beneath regard?

In the 1950s, Penn had made portraits of people smoking and ads for cigarettes. But privately he hated smoking and sympathized with the American Cancer Society's war against Big Tobacco. The attitude toward smoking was but one of the beliefs in major upheaval during the 1960s and early 1970s.

The butts in the gutter took on greater resonance. Laying them out to be photographed, Penn saw their uncanny relationships to individuals and, gathered together, to a nation undone by corporate and government irresponsibility. Printed large and in platinum, these fragile remnants of momentary pleasures internalize the miseries of the age and, in Zen-like fashion, reconcile the base and the beautiful.

10. LATE STILL LIFE

Between 1975 and 2007 Penn produced four major series: Street Material, Archaeology, Vessels and Underfoot. They are compositions of old bottles and vases, and of detritus—gutter rubbish, metal parts, rags, bones, and decaying fruit. In his off-hours, Penn often sketched or painted the same objects.

Like assembling a jigsaw puzzle, but in three dimensions, Penn's still-life habit was a form of creative meditation. Engrossed with the materials, he considered the imaginative realms residing in the life of shoe leather, a fissured crock, or a flower petal. As sensitive to the charge emitted by objects as he was to the spark from individuals, Penn listened to their messages and photographed them singly or arranged in conversations, as human surrogates. These assemblages were then disassembled and painstakingly rearranged to form other constellations. Pictured are moments of rest in the ongoing flow of Penn's active mind; they make permanent a cycle of constant change and offer further proof of the artist's exceptional, lifelong fecundity.

11. TIME CAPSULES

The portraits and photographs of style in this room range in date from the 1960s to the first decade of the twenty-first century. The expressions of 1960s modernity—such as model Marisa Berenson in a brazen bridal outfit and author Tom Wolfe's Beau Brummel flair—embody the swinging "youthquake" years. The lighter tone of these images yields, in works from more recent decades, to nostalgic fantasies and suggestions of lost innocence and futile vanity. While Penn's sense of beauty had always included the inevitability of decay, the death of his wife (in 1992) and his own advancing years affected his perspective, turning his late fashion photography into a brilliant mirror of life's transience.

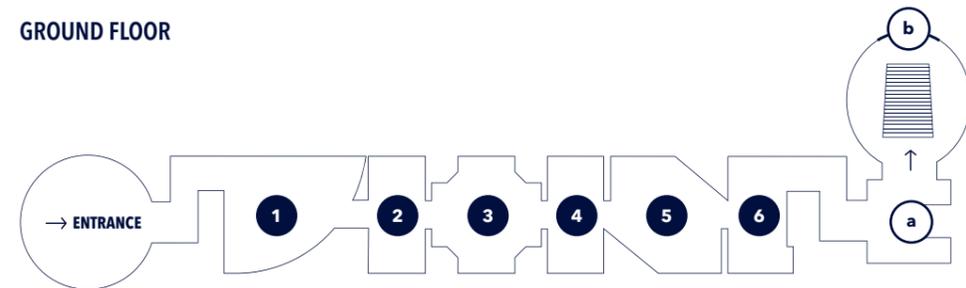
Curators :

Jeff L. Rosenheim, Curator in Charge of the Department of Photographs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
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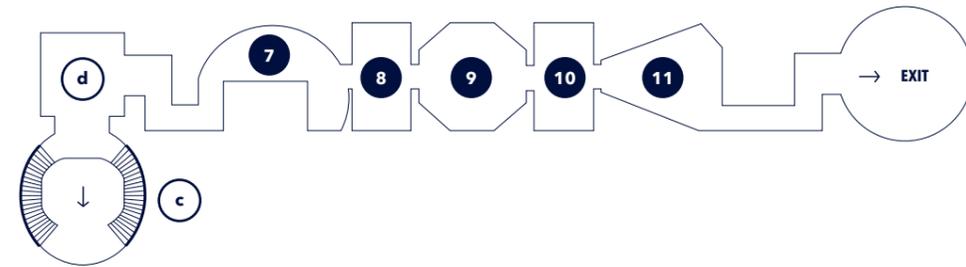
Set design : Gare du Nord Architecture

EXHIBITION PLAN

GROUND FLOOR



1STFLOOR



a - Studio's curtain
b - Screening
c - Chronology
d - Camera

This exhibition is organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Réunion des musées nationaux - Grand Palais, in collaboration with The Irving Penn Foundation.



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