

Irving Penn

229 Hamilton Ave
Palo Alto, CA
April 11 – May 26, 2019

Opening Reception:
Wednesday, April 10, 4 – 7 PM



“In 1967 there was word coming out of San Francisco of something stirring—new ways of living that were exotic even for California. People spoke of a new kind of young people called hippies, and of an area where they had begun to congregate called Haight-Ashbury. They seemed to have found a satisfying new life for themselves in leaving the society they were born to and in making their own. ... It grew on me that I would like to look into the faces of these new San Francisco people through a camera in a daylight studio, against a simple background, away from their own daily circumstances. I suggested to the editors of *Look* magazine that they might care to have such a report. They said yes—hurry.”

—Irving Penn, *Worlds in a Small Room*, (Grossman, 1974) 50

Palo Alto— In 1967 armed with a Rolleiflex, Irving Penn came to San Francisco. He rented a building in Sausalito that allowed him to photograph under plenty of northern light, with beams strong enough to bear the weight of the Hell's Angels' motorcycles. This studio—like countless studios Penn used over the course of his career—became a neutral space where the photographer and subject could focus on the task at hand to capture individual expression. Photographing them in his signature smooth pared-down style, Irving Penn brought equal consideration and expertise into his work with young hippie couples, motorcyclists, and radical nude dancers as he did with celebrated actors, artists, and luminaries of his time. Decades later, Pace Gallery is honored to bring the work of Irving Penn to the San Francisco Bay Area.

The exhibition at Pace Gallery in Palo Alto will highlight Penn's work in the Bay Area while contextualizing these pieces in his larger oeuvre. Rare streetscape works from a 1947 visit to San Francisco will be on view, including *Lone Star Baptist Church*, *99-Year-Old House*, and *House Front*. The exhibit will feature over a dozen photographs from Penn's return visit to San Francisco for *Look* magazine in 1967. Highlights include *Hell's Angels*, and *Hippie Family* (Kelley). The latter is a sensitive portrait where the mother looks directly into the camera lens with an open

expression, while the father, in a quarter pose, looks at the lens from a side glance. He clutches the child tightly against his chest and away from the camera, as if in protection from the viewer's watchful gaze. The complexity with which Penn has photographed the family reveals his renowned gift in extracting the nuances of personality and social relationships.

Penn was not only one of the most seminal photographers of the 20th century, but he was also a master craftsman and innovator in photographic printing. The exhibition will present works made in gelatin silver, cibachrome, and platinum-palladium. Until Penn began using the process in the mid-1960s, platinum-palladium printing was regarded as a 19th century technique that had mostly gone extinct. Penn's method required incredible stamina and an alchemist's touch as he hand-coated paper with a light sensitive solution of platinum and palladium, then exposed each sheet multiple times through his large-scale film negatives using ultra-violet lamps. This printing process would take days to complete but gave a delicacy to the photographs and infused them with a soft internal glow that can be seen in *Bird Bones (Sweden)*, New York (1980) and *Hippie Family (Ferguson)*, San Francisco (1967).

Irving Penn will be on view from April 11 until May 26, 2019 at Pace Gallery located at 229 Hamilton Ave in Palo Alto. An opening reception for the exhibition will be held on Wednesday, April 10 from 4 – 7 PM.

Irving Penn (1917–2009) was born in Plainfield, New Jersey. From 1934–38, he studied design with Alexey Brodovitch at the Philadelphia Museum School of Industrial Art. Following a year painting in Mexico, he returned to New York City and began working at *Vogue* magazine in 1943, where Alexander Liberman was art director.

Penn photographed for *Vogue* and commercial clients in America and abroad for nearly 70 years. Whether an innovative fashion image, striking portrait or compelling still life, each of Penn's pictures bears his trademark style of elegant aesthetic simplicity.

Penn has had over 40 major museum exhibitions in his lifetime including shows at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, and his Centennial opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 2017 and toured at the Grand Palais, Paris, France; C/O Berlin, Germany; and the Instituto Moreira Salles, São Paulo, Brazil.

Pace is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under the leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace is a vital force within the art world and plays a critical role in shaping the history, creation, and engagement with modern and contemporary art. Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy for vibrant and dedicated relationships with renowned artists. As the gallery approaches the start of its seventh decade, Pace's mission continues to be inspired by our drive to support the world's most influential and innovative artists and to share their visionary work with people around the world.

Pace advances this mission through its dynamic global program, comprising ambitious exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, and curatorial research and writing. Today, Pace has ten locations worldwide: three galleries in New York; one in London; one in Geneva; one in Palo Alto, California; one in Beijing; two in Hong Kong; and one in Seoul. Pace will open a new flagship gallery at 540 West 25th Street in New York in September 2019. In 2016, Pace joined with Futurecity to launch FuturePace—an international cultural partnership innovating multidisciplinary projects for art in the public realm.

Image: Hell's Angels, San Francisco, 1967 © The Irving Penn Foundation.

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