

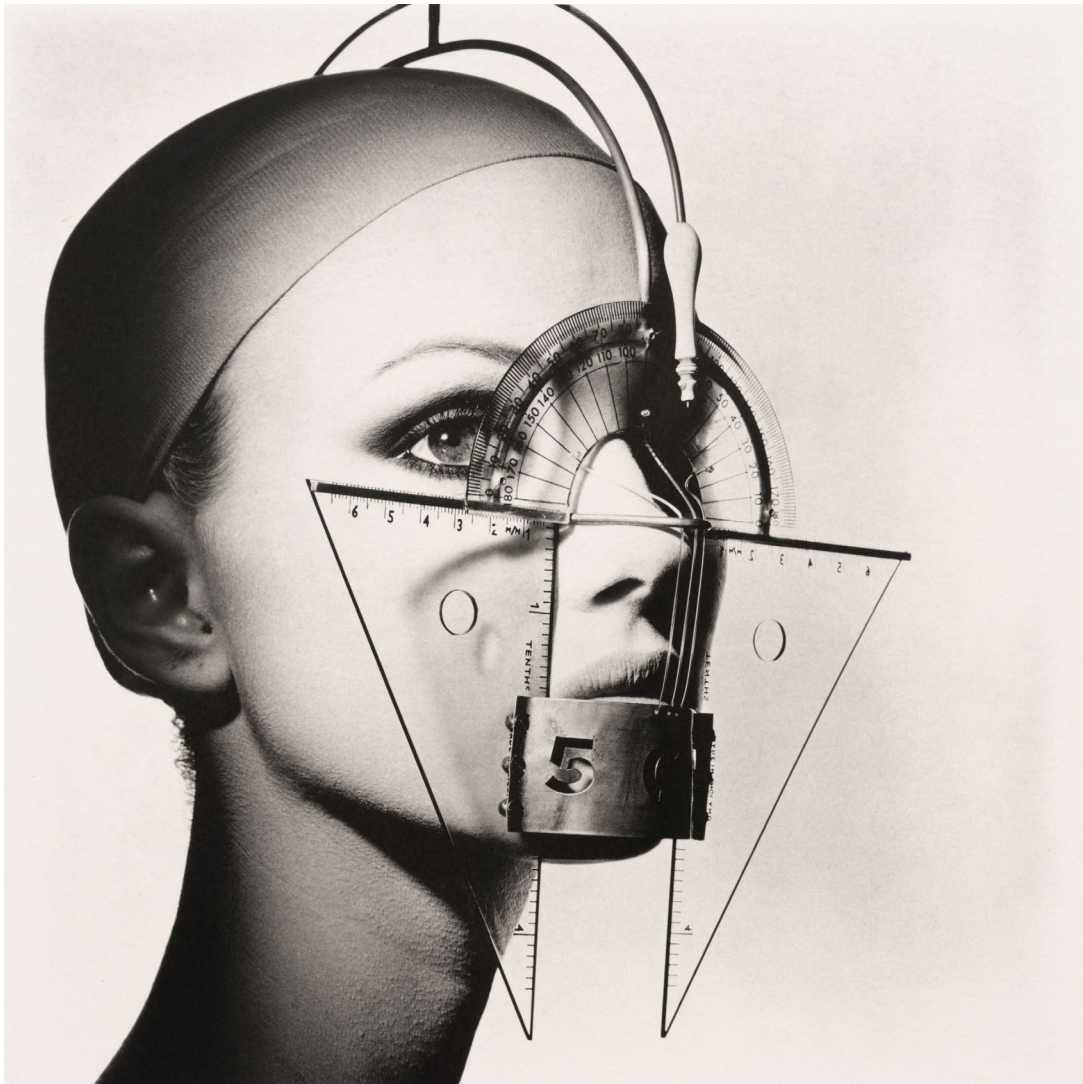
Press release

Irving Penn *Edge of Beauty*

Co-presented by
Thaddaeus Ropac and Pace

22 June—13 July 2024
Opening: Thursday 27 June, 6—8pm

Thaddaeus Ropac
Paris Marais
7, rue Debelleye, 75003 Paris



Irving Penn, *Protractor Face (Jaime Rishar)*, New York, 1994 (print made in 1996)
Platinum palladium print mounted to aluminium
49.7 x 49.5 cm (19.57 x 19.49 in)



Irving Penn, *Bee on Lips*, New York, 1995 (print made in 1999)
Dye transfer print. 40.3 x 57.2 cm (15.87 x 22.52 in)

Thaddaeus Ropac gallery and Pace Gallery present a collaborative exhibition featuring 14 photographs by Irving Penn, showcasing both his iconic and lesser-known beauty images. Curated by Tom Pecheux, the Global Beauty Director for YSL Beauty, this exhibition coincides with Paris Fashion Week – Menswear, and will celebrate Penn’s enduring influence on the history of photography.

Renowned for the elegance and aesthetic simplicity of his style across fashion imagery, portraiture and experimental personal work, Irving Penn produced beauty photographs that are distinctive for their understated humour and technical concision. These photographs – many made for *Vogue* during his 65-year tenure there – illustrate concepts loosely related to the cosmetics featured in the magazine, often employing the same formal qualities established by Surrealism to hybridise editorial imagery with fine art.



Irving Penn, *Mascara Wars*, New York, 2001 (print made 2001)
Fuji Crystal Archive print. 39.7 x 61 cm (15.63 x 24.02 in)

Bee on Lips (1995), included in the presentation, is an extreme close-up of a bee crawling across a vividly rouged mouth. Emblematic of Penn’s use of visual puns, it refers to the expression ‘bee-stung lips’, used to refer to the fashion for plumped lips. In *Mascara Wars* (2001), a bloodshot eye starkly contrasts with the model’s powdered snow-white face, with two mascara wands poised at the base and tip of her eyelashes, suggesting a pause in the action. While Penn is known for his extraordinary ability to capture beauty, his works simultaneously render a latent darkness. Juxtaposed with the inexorability of decay, his works endure precisely because they compel viewers to them again and again in an attempt to comprehend their hidden meaning, drawing parallels with artists such as Man Ray.

Penn’s photographs are consistently characterised by their formal beauty. His sparse compositions and juxtaposition of sharp line with soft flesh create images that are visually arresting, even – or especially – when they verge on the grotesque or painful. In his beauty photographs, it is the unexpected that engages the viewer, prompting Alexander Liberman, editor of *Vogue* from 1943, to call them ‘stoppers’ – images that make time stand still amid the magazine’s pages.



Irving Penn, *Milk Slash (B)*, New York, 1996 (print made in 1997)
Platinum palladium print mounted to aluminium
43.2 x 38.1 cm (17.01 x 15 in)



Irving Penn

Photo: Irving Penn, *Autoportrait*, Cuzco, 1948
Gelatin silver print, 34 x 26.4 cm. © The Irving Penn Foundation

About the artist

Born in 1917 to immigrant parents in Plainfield, New Jersey, Penn attended the Philadelphia Museum School of Industrial Arts from 1934–38 and studied with Alexey Brodovitch in his Design Laboratory. His first photographic cover for *Vogue* magazine appeared in October 1943 and he would continue to work at the magazine throughout his career. In the 1950s, he founded his own studio in New York and began taking advertising photographs alongside his private, experimental work, including the *Nudes* series. In the early 1970s, Penn closed his Manhattan studio and immersed himself in platinum printing in the laboratory he had constructed on the family farm on Long Island. There he created his groundbreaking *Cigarettes* series, which was shown in his first exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1975, as well as his *Street Material* series, shown at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in 1977.

The first retrospective of Penn's work was organised by The Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1984 and toured internationally to countries including Japan, France, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Israel, Italy and the UK. He donated his archives to the Art Institute of Chicago in 1995, and established the Irving Penn Foundation in 2005 to promote knowledge and understanding of his artistic legacy, including the diversity of techniques, mediums and subject matter that he explored. Recent exhibitions of the artist's work include *Irving Penn: Beyond Beauty* at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. (2015) and *Centennial* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2017), which travelled to the RMN - Grand Palais, Paris; C/O Berlin; the Instituto Moreira Salles, São Paulo; and the De Young Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, USA.

About Thaddaeus Ropac and Pace

Thaddaeus Ropac gallery supports and showcases the careers of some of the most influential artists today with a wide-ranging programme of over 40 exhibitions curated at the six extensive and historic gallery spaces each year.

Specialising in contemporary art and representing over 60 artists, Thaddaeus Ropac also represents a number of renowned artist estates and continues to build on their legacy, as well as providing curatorial expertise, acting as consultant to major museums and public institutions and advising private and corporate collections. Active in both the primary and secondary markets, the gallery also represents its artists at all major international art fairs. Thaddaeus Ropac runs its own publishing house, producing catalogues and books to accompany exhibitions, contributing to new scholarship and a wider art-historical discourse by inviting prominent art historians, curators and writers to collaborate.

Thaddaeus Ropac's galleries, which span a total of 12,000 square metres, are located in London at Ely House, a five-floor listed mansion in Mayfair that was formerly the Bishop of Ely's London residence; in Paris both in the Marais and an extensive early 20th-century ironworks factory in Pantin, which was redeveloped to accommodate the display of large-scale artworks; in Salzburg at the Villa Kast, a 19th-century townhouse in the Mirabell Gardens in the historic centre and Salzburg Halle, a converted industrial space close to the city centre; and in Seoul, in the heart of the thriving cultural district of Hannam-dong, occupying the ground and first floors of an outstanding architectural landmark: the Fort Hill building.

Pace is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential contemporary artists and estates from the past century, holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Barbara Hepworth, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko. Pace enjoys a unique U.S. heritage spanning East and West

coasts through its early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements.

Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy as an artist-first gallery that mounts seminal historical and contemporary exhibitions. Under the current leadership of CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace continues to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences worldwide by remaining at the forefront of innovation. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery advances its mission through a robust global program – comprising exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances, and interdisciplinary projects. Pace has a legacy in art bookmaking and has published over five hundred titles in close collaboration with artists, with a focus on original scholarship and on introducing new voices to the art historical canon.

Today, Pace has seven locations worldwide, including European footholds in London and Geneva as well as Berlin, where the gallery established an office in 2023. Pace maintains two galleries in New York – its headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, which welcomed almost 120,000 visitors and programmed 20 shows in its first six months, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. Pace's long and pioneering history in California includes a gallery in Palo Alto, which was open from 2016 to 2022. Pace's engagement with Silicon Valley's technology industry has had a lasting impact on the gallery at a global level, accelerating its initiatives connecting art and technology as well as its work with experimental artists. Pace consolidated its West Coast activity through its flagship in Los Angeles, which opened in 2022. Pace was one of the first international galleries to establish outposts in Asia, where it operates permanent gallery spaces in Hong Kong and Seoul, along with an office and viewing room in Beijing. In spring 2024, Pace will open its first gallery space in Japan in Tokyo's new Azabudai Hills development.

Thaddaeus Ropac

London Paris Salzburg Seoul

For press enquiries:

Marcus Rothe
Thaddaeus Ropac Paris
marcus.rothe@ropac.net
Telephone +33 1 42 72 99 00
Mobile +33 6 76 77 54 15



Share your thoughts with:

@thaddaeusropac
#thaddaeusropac
#irvingpenn






Press Inquiries:

Europe

Rebecca Riegelhaupt
Communications Director
rriegelhaupt@pacegallery.com
+44 7917 909779

Kirsteen Cairns
Communications Manager
kcairns@pacegallery.com
+44 7467 830230

Follow Pace Gallery

 @pacegallery
 @pacegallery
 @pacegallery