

## **Irving Penn**

### *Paintings*

32 East 57th Street, New York  
September 13 – October 13, 2018

Opening Reception:  
Wednesday, September 12, 6 – 8 PM

New York – Pace Gallery and Pace/MacGill Gallery are honored to present the first-ever exhibition of paintings by Irving Penn (1917–2009). While internationally renowned for his work as a photographer, Penn initially set out to be a painter and worked in the medium at the beginning and end of his career. Focused on Penn's paintings from the artist's final two decades, the exhibition will be on view at 32 East 57th Street from September 13–October 13, 2018, with an opening reception on Wednesday, September 12 from 6–8 pm. To coincide with the exhibition, The Irving Penn Foundation, in collaboration with Pace and Pace/MacGill, will publish a catalogue with the first scholarship on Penn's painting practice, including essays by writer and curator, David Company, and Legacy Program Manager at The Irving Penn Foundation, Alexandra Dennett; as well as Afterwords by Arne Glimcher, Pace Gallery Founder, and Peter MacGill, Pace/MacGill Gallery Founder.

Encompassing approximately 30 works drawn from the collection of The Irving Penn Foundation, the exhibition will showcase Penn's mixed-media paintings from the late 1980s through the early 2000s, highlighting the artist's experimentation with materials, form, and color. Drawing inspiration from leading 20th century figures such as Henri Matisse, Giorgio Morandi, and Fernand Léger, Penn's textured, often verging on abstract, paintings deviate from the striking and smooth style of his photographs yet share in similar techniques and bold character. Penn's paintings comprise successive layers, appearing nearly collage-like. In an evolution of his platinum-palladium printing technique for photography, many of Penn's paintings commenced with the artist creating a drawing in graphite or ink of subjects ranging from mushrooms to mythical creatures, which he would then photograph, enlarge, and print to emphasize his lines' graphic style. The printed form served as the painting's foundational structure, over which Penn would apply combinations of watercolor, ink, dry color pigments and gum arabic, sometimes adding sand to achieve greater texture. As this practice evolved in the early 2000s, Penn began to forego the printing step, painting more directly and freely. By surveying the full span of Penn's decades of painting, the exhibition reveals how his style grew increasingly gestural and fluid over time, embracing all that the medium offers.

In addition to the mixed-media paintings that dominated Penn's work in that medium, he also produced a small group of Surrealist drawings in the very beginning of his career. The first and only occasion these works were



shown publicly was Penn's 1984 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, where a small selection were on view. After this exhibition, the artist again began to paint and draw, over forty years after his earliest experimentations. Then in his seventies and after a prolific and celebrated career in photography, Penn embraced the quiet, solitary and physical experience of painting; writing in his memoir *Passage*: "Pleased with the new freedom, I found inside myself accumulated forms, enjoyed arbitrary color, the touch of the brush, the flow of pigment, the slowness and privacy."

**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.

In addition to his editorial, advertising and personal work, Penn was also a master printmaker. Beginning in 1964, he pioneered a complex technique for making platinum-palladium prints, a 19th century print process to which he applied 20th century materials.

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.

## **Pace/MacGill**

One of the leading photography galleries in the world, Pace/MacGill Gallery has been dedicated to advancing fine art photography for over 35 years. Known for discovering artists, representing masters, and placing important collections and archives into major public institutions, Pace/MacGill has presented more than 200 exhibitions and published numerous catalogues on modern and contemporary photography. Under the leadership of Peter MacGill, Pace/MacGill has helped bring the medium of photography to the forefront of private and institutional collecting worldwide. Pace/MacGill was founded in 1983 by Peter MacGill, in collaboration with Arne Glimcher of Pace Gallery and Richard Solomon of Pace Editions.

**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 in New York, anticipated for completion in fall 2019. In 2016, Pace joined with Futurecity to launch Future\ Pace—an international cultural partnership innovating multidisciplinary projects for art in the public realm.

Image: Irving Penn, *Tower of Babel*, 2006. India ink with gum arabic over graphite on paper mounted to aluminum. Overall, 28 5/8 x 22 1/4 inches. Unique. © The Irving Penn Foundation.

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