

GAGOSIAN

Gagosian to Present Irving Penn Photographs in Gstaad

The Gallery's First Exhibition Dedicated to Penn's Work Opens February 14



Irving Penn, *Gerbera Daisy / Gerbera asteraceae*, New York, 2006, pigmented inkjet print, 17 7/8 × 16 1/4 inches (45.4 × 41.1 cm), edition of 17 © Condé Nast

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GSTAAD, February 3, 2026—Gagosian is pleased to present an exhibition of photographs by Irving Penn in Gstaad, on view from February 14 to April 6, 2026. This marks the gallery's debut presentation of his work and its first collaboration with the Irving Penn Foundation.

Irving Penn (1917–2009) stands among the most influential image-makers of the twentieth century, producing photographs that shaped modern fashion, portraiture, and the still life while blurring the boundaries between commercial practice and fine art. Surveying Penn's work across seven decades, the exhibition showcases a wide range of photographic processes and includes many images originally published in *Vogue* that have rarely been seen outside the magazine's pages.

Photographs taken in New York and Paris in 1949 and 1950 exemplify Penn's singular contribution to the look of postwar fashion, aligning his restrained, architectural compositions with the new silhouettes introduced by designers such as Balenciaga, Chanel, and Molyneux. Working against spare studio backdrops and employing dramatic directional light, Penn distilled fashion into form, emphasizing silhouette, contrast, and texture with remarkable precision. His portraits—represented here by images of Marlene Dietrich (1948) and Grace Kelly (1954)—reveal his ability to convey presence and individuality through subtle adjustments of pose and framing.

Penn's commitment to photography extended beyond image making to an exacting engagement with the printed object itself. The exhibition includes three versions of *Seine Rowboat, France* (1951), a photograph of an isolated figure rowing on the Seine that Penn selected for the cover of his first monograph, *Moments Preserved* (1960). Executed in dye transfer, gum bichromate, and platinum-palladium, each handcrafted print has a distinct tonal and material character, underscoring Penn's belief in the photograph as a finely made, enduring object.

Taken more than three decades apart, *Man Lighting Girl's Cigarette (Jean Patchett), New York* (1949) and *Vogue Bathing Suit with Light Meter, New York* (1982) reflect Penn's visual wit. In the former, a centrally placed bottle refracts light like a lens, subtly distorting Patchett's features; in the latter, Penn knowingly exposes the mechanics of image making by including an assistant's hand holding a light meter. Editorial photographs such as *Woman Stepping on Man's Toe* (1980), *Bee on Lips* (1995), *Headache (Audrey Marnay), New York* (1999), and *Young Woman Hearing Noise, New York* (2003) further demonstrate his ability to transform concepts into images of lasting visual impact.

Penn was also an innovator of the photographic still life. His flower photographs depart from convention through compressed compositions and unexpected perspectives that heighten color and form, while his close-up images of discarded cigarette butts elevate debris into subjects of quiet monumentality. Printed in sumptuous platinum-palladium metals, these works challenge notions of beauty and impermanence.

For Irving Penn's biographical information and exhibition history, [please visit gagosian.com](http://gagosian.com).

#IrvingPenn

IRVING PENN

Opening reception: Saturday, February 14, 11am–6pm

February 14–April 6, 2026

Promenade 79, Gstaad

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