

GAGOSIAN GALLERY



Peter Lindbergh: “I’m the only photographer who calls himself a fashion photographer”

Popaganda joined photographer Peter Lindbergh at the Press preview for his exhibition at Gagosian Gallery.

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Peter Lindbergh

He’s the one who coined the term “supermodel” for the fashion industry; he’s also the photographer who shot the image with the Big Five supermodels together: Naomi Campbell, Linda Evangelista, Tatjana Patitz, Christy Turlington and Cindy Crawford for the January 1990 cover of *Vogue Magazine*. Fashion photographer Peter Lindbergh arrived in Athens for the opening of his exhibition at Gagosian Gallery, Kolonaki. Popaganda was there as well, for the Press preview that took place before the opening, where Lindbergh answered to the journalists’ questions.

During the ’90s Lindbergh introduced new faces for fashion photography and upgraded the already famous models to supermodels. Lindbergh’s now-iconic photographs of women derive inspiration from early narrative cinema and street photography, in their fleeting observations and compositional elegance. His Eastern European heritage can be traced in the stark and guileless realism that frames the feminine beauty of his subjects.

In his editorial work for *Vogue*, *Harper’s Bazaar*, *Interview*, and many other international magazines, Lindbergh replaces staged, calculated glamour with a *vérité* approach, enhanced by

his use of high-contrast black-and-white photography. He uses body movement, in particular modern dance, to celebrate the human form in a way that carries elements of both antiquity and modernity.

Spanning the last thirty years, the exhibition testifies to Lindbergh's impact on the world of fashion photography, and his contribution to portraiture in general. The beauty of his female subjects is purposeful, self-possessed, and uninhibited. With little styling or setting to divert attention, Lindbergh's approach emphasizes the raw physical grace of his subjects. For his Athens exhibition he decided to show several of his famous nudes. Monica Bellucci, Naomi Campbell, Karen Elson and many more of his models will be displayed on Gagosian Gallery's walls until 23 April.

Lindbergh was asked why he prefers black and white photography – his trademark throughout his career. *“I think that black and white images highlight a person's characteristics, they penetrate the models. And the reason is because black and white offers an interpretation of reality. So this immediately becomes more interesting, it has a personal trait, we need a person to offer the interpretation. Why do I prefer black and white? Well, honestly I don't know. I think that color photography is better for promoting products, that's why I choose black and white.”*

Lindbergh also disclosed several of his future plans. A major retrospective of his work will open shortly in Rotterdam, curated by his close collaborator Thierry-Maxime Loriot. But before the exhibition, his book *“A Different History of Fashion”* will be published – a coffee-table book researching the history of the word *“supermodel.”* Both the book and the exhibition will include his most iconic photographs, revealing his passion for dance and cinema as viewed through the prism of fashion. At this point Lindbergh noted: *“I'm the only photographer who calls himself a fashion photographer and I'm still working to make a living out of it.”*

Given that the exhibition was mostly based on his iconic nudes, Popaganda asked the famous photographer what it's like shooting naked women: *“As far as I am concerned it is an adventure. The person being shot naked is actually offering something to you. This has nothing to do with voyeurism. When the other person gets naked something really important is happening, there is a turning point in the relationship, it gets transformed. From the minute you photograph someone naked, everything changes. It's completely different even if you photograph the same person in clothes the next time. Your relationship has changed forever and this becomes obvious afterwards, in every shooting, because what you actually capture with the camera is the atmosphere, the chemistry between the photographer and the model. Well, it took me 30 years to realize this.”*