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Irving Penn: A Career in Photography

By Colin Westerbeck, Colin Eisler, Issey Miyake, Edmund Carpenter, Jennifer Jankauskas, Rosamond Bernier, Martin Harrison



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Trained as an artist, Irving Penn began photographing for "Vogue" in the 1940s and went on to become an accomplished and versatile image-maker. This retrospective showcases 90 images covering the whole of his career.



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Editorial Review

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The occasion that inspired this retrospective of one of the century's most captivating and stylish photographers is Penn's donation of his professional archives and a hand-picked collection of his work to the Art Institute of Chicago. This is cause for celebration, and Westerbeck, the museum's curator of photography, and his contributors, including former *Vogue* editor Rosamond Bernier and anthropologist Edmund Carpenter, who represent the two extremes of Penn's photographic universe, explain why in their essays. In his fashion photographs, Penn combines glamour and wit; in his portraits of artists and writers (the series of such notables as Martha Graham, Marcel Duchamp, and Georgia O'Keeffe wedged into a cleverly constructed corner set are especially compelling), Penn reveals both the drama and the danger of the creative life; in his nudes, he discovers the body's eternal mystery; in his portraits of New Guinea tribesmen, he further explores the body as sculpture, attire as art. Even when Penn casts his eyes on something as classic as a tulip, or as commercial as cosmetics, he makes magic. *Donna Seaman*

About the Author

Colin Westerbeck is Associate Curator of Photography at the Art Institute of Chicago. Contributing are the art-world editor, biographer, and lecturer Rosamond Bernier, who was Penn's first editor at *Vogue* in the early 1940s; fashion designer Issey Miyake; anthropologist Edmund Carpenter, who advised Penn on his photographic expedition to New Guinea in 1970; Colin Eisler, Robert Lehman Professor of Fine Arts at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts, who composed a catalogue for Penn's first show at the Marlborough Gallery over 20 years ago; and the English historian of fashion and photography Martin Harrison.

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