

VOGUE SEPTEMBER

PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT

PHOTOGRAPHY MASTER CLASS



LIGHT TOUCH
PENN'S TAKE ON BEE-STUNG LIPS, *VOGUE*, 1995.

With their uncanny brilliance, Irving Penn's pictures were always quick to travel from magazine to museum, thanks in part to sharp-eyed curators such as Edward Steichen at the Museum of Modern Art, himself a photographer. But Penn remained devoted to the journalistic enterprise. "He always said, 'I work for the printed page,'" remembers Peter MacGill, who served as Penn's primary gallerist for the last 25 years of the photographer's long career. Opening this month, Pace/MacGill's new exhibition, "**Irving Penn: On Assignment**," will feature roughly 65 of Penn's commissioned photographs, many of them portraits and still lifes shot for *Vogue*. His famous *Cuzco Children*, taken in Peru in 1948, will also be on display, as will various sketches (Penn trained in drawing and painting under Alexey Brodovitch). He was fond of obscuring his subjects' faces, whether with veils, shadows, or, in one instance, a leathery football, and yet somehow these images rank among his most expressive. "It was a kind of uncompromising genius," says MacGill. "So many people have tried to follow in his footsteps, but it just doesn't work. He simply did what he did better than anybody else." —KATE GUADAGNINO