

Phillips Announces A Selection of 11 Photographs from an Important Private Collection

Including Ten Fresh-to-Auction masterworks from Irving Penn's 1950-51 *Small Trades* series



Irving Penn, (clockwise from top left) *Milkman (A)*, New York, 1951; *Engine Driver*, London, 1950; *Station Sweeper*, New York, 1951; *Rockette*, New York, 1951; *House Painter (B)*, London, 1950; *Iceman*, New York, 1951; *Hunter*, New York, 1951; *Tinker*, London, 1950; *Locomotive Fireman*, London, 1950; *Barber*, New York, 1951

LONDON – 4 NOVEMBER 2021 – Phillips is pleased to announce an offering of exclusive, market-fresh photographs which come to auction on 23 November from an Important Private Collection. Including an exceptional, oversized work by Helmut Newton to be featured in ULTIMATE and ULTIMATE IRVING PENN, a carefully curated selection of ten platinum-palladium prints from Irving Penn's *Small Trades* series. Captured between 1950-51 in London and New York, these striking full-length portraits depict working men and women with the clothes and tools of their trades. All 11 works have been in the same private collection for over a decade and are appearing at auction for the first time, including Helmut Newton's *Mercedes, Paris*, 1975 from the rare, oversized edition of three. A preview exhibition of these works will open to the public from 8 to 12 November at 46 Rue du Bac, Paris and from 17 to 23 November at 30 Berkeley Square, London.

Yuka Yamaji, Head of Photographs, Europe said, "We are delighted with the extraordinary calibre of these 11 works on offer this November. ULTIMATE, led by Helmut Newton's *Mercedes, Paris*, presents collectors with the very rare opportunity to acquire this larger-than-life work from the sold-out edition of three. ULTIMATE IRVING PENN showcases ten exquisite *Small Trades* prints in platinum-palladium that are long sold out and fresh to auction. Since the creation of *Small Trades*, most of these professions have all but vanished, ensuring the legacy of Penn's

emblematic series not only as a major artistic achievement but also as a historical record of our society. We look forward to welcoming visitors to our pre-auction exhibitions in Paris and London where these incredible works can be seen in person.”

To create *Small Trades* (1950-51), Penn chose to isolate the subject in the neutral space of his studio over the vernacular setting of the street. He later recalled, ‘I preferred the limited task of dealing only with the person himself, away from the accidentals of his daily life, simply in his own clothes and adornments, isolated in my studio. From himself alone I would distill the image I wanted, and the cold light of day would put it onto the film.’ The studio setting with his signature, mottled grey backdrop provided a sense of timelessness to the portraits. Asking his sitters to occupy the space as they wished, Penn allowed their personalities to slowly emerge under his patient eye.

After originally publishing the *Small Trades* photographs in the pages of French, British and American *Vogue*, Penn embarked on a multiyear research project to learn about platinum printing, which was a popular printing process at the turn of the 20th century. Penn’s extensive experiments led him to the platinum-palladium process, which enabled him to create prints with remarkable subtlety, richness of tone and sensuous textures that were dramatically different from glossy gelatin silver prints. A meticulous craftsman, Penn mixed, coated, exposed and developed all the platinum-palladium prints himself, revelling in his new-found ability to manipulate each image to his liking. Perfecting his technique in 1967, he reprinted his *Small Trades* work in platinum-palladium, imbuing warmth to his subjects and transforming his images into luminous works of art.

In 2008, Penn spoke with the deepest respect and empathy for the daily lives of working men and women, describing his *Small Trades* photographs as ‘residual images of enchantment.’ The transformation of the *Small Trades* from their initial magazine appearance to their rigorous reinterpretation as platinum-palladium prints reflects Penn’s own career from *Vogue* photographer to one of the most acclaimed artists of the 20th century.

Auction: 23 November 2021

Auction viewing: 17-23 November 2021

Location: 30 Berkeley Square, London

Click here for more information: <https://www.phillips.com/auctions/auction/UK040221>

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