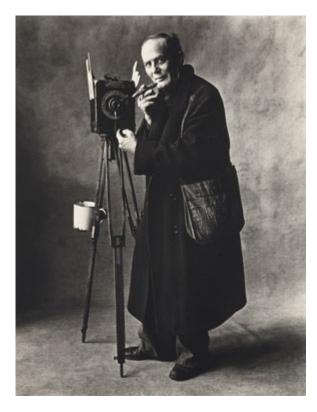# Irving Penn, "Street Photographer (A), New York, 1950"

In 1950 and 1951, the celebrated American photographer Irving Penn (1917–2009) made a remarkable series of portraits of anonymous tradespeople—chimney sweeps, plumbers, bakers, sewer cleaners, and even a messenger for the Cartier jewelry store in New York City. In recognition of Constance McCabe's achievements in photograph conservation and in honor of her retirement as the head of photograph conservation at the National Gallery of Art, The Irving Penn Foundation gave the museum a platinum-palladium print of *Street Photographer (A), New York* (1950, printed October 1976). The printing process has great meaning for McCabe, as she has done extensive research into the history and science of platinum-palladium prints.

The work depicts a photographer posed in front of a simple background. At the time Penn took

this image, photographers such as the one seen here would often set up their cameras on city

streets, hoping to convince passersby to have their portraits made. Penn treated the workers in his series of portraits with the same care and attention to detail that he gave to the celebrated authors, painters, intellectuals, and *Vogue* magazine fashion models whom he also photographed.

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