

STALEY WISE

GALLERY

Press Release

DENIS PIEL EXPOSED

February 27 - April 26, 2025

Opening Reception:
February 27, 2025 (6-8 pm)



Suzanne Accosta, Red Dress, Key West, Florida, 1979



Heat, New Mexico, 1984

This exhibition of photographs by Denis Piel is an overview of his varied career. It includes his sensual and cinematic photographs for *VOGUE* and designers such as Donna Karan in the 1980s, and his abstract Padièscaapes works inspired by his organic sustainable farm in southwest France.

Denis Piel was born in France in 1944 and his family moved to Australia at the end of the war. After beginning his career in Brisbane and Melbourne, he was encouraged to move to Europe and then New York where he began to concentrate on fashion. His photographs were brought to the attention of Condé Nast and his rise began.

Immediately recognizable for their cinematic quality, his images were a sensational departure from the posed models of his predecessors. His always-sensual photographs tell a story which must be guessed at as several interpretations are possible. Often featuring reclining models lost in thought or engaged in mysterious narratives, Piel's photographs were more influenced by filmmakers such as François Truffaut and Stanley Kubrick than photographers. His star rose swiftly and he was soon *the* fashion photographer of the 1980s, shooting many celebrity portraits along the way.

After a decade, Piel moved on to advertising and filmmaking and in 2002 he moved his family to the Château de Padiès in southwest France where he became seriously interested in sustainable agriculture. This newfound passion resulted in his colorful and abstracted Padièscaapes photographs; work which celebrates nature in flowers and gardens. These images are a departure from the fashion pictures of Piel's early career, but reflect his continued interest in the environment and humanity.

Press images available upon request.

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Un Homme et Une Femme, Cap Ferrat, France, US VOGUE, 1984



Jasper Johns, US VOGUE, NYC, 1987



Rosemary, Biarritz, France, US VOGUE, 1981



Dahlia Redfield, Château de Padiès, France, 2023

In addition to his photography, Denis Piel has created film advertisements for Donna Karan and Anne Klein. In 1993, he directed his first feature-length documentary, *Love is Blind*. Piel's monographs include *Moments* (Rizzoli, 2012), *Down to Earth* (2016), *Filmscapes* (2020), and the upcoming *Rosemary* (2025). He was awarded the Leica Medal of Excellence for Commercial Photography in 1987 and his photographs are included in the permanent collections of The Victoria & Albert Museum and The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.