



RENÉ GRUAU (1909 - 2004)

THE GRUAU MAN

WEDNESDAY MARCH 21ST - SATURDAY APRIL 21ST 2012

PAUL SMITH, No.9 ALBEMARLE STREET, LONDON W1S 4BL

Fashion Illustration Gallery in association with Paul Smith No.9 Albemarle Street is delighted to present *The Gruau Man* an exhibition of works on paper made by René Gruau featuring only men.

The works exhibited span a 16 year period from 1956 to 1972. They were prepared for the front covers of the magazine *Sir: Men's International Fashion Journal*. Published quarterly in Amsterdam by Ludwig Katz, *Sir* was the baby brother publication of *International Textiles* magazine whose Gruau covers FIG exhibited at The Mayor Gallery at the end of 2010.

On the surface, crafted in gouache and felt tip pen, Gruau's man is chiselled, groomed, suave and sophisticated. Suited and booted he is always dapper, sometimes depicted with a strategically dipped Trilby hat and occasionally accessorized with an umbrella or cigarette. He's the picture of simmering machismo. He's the man about town, a real life James Bond in control of every situation he finds himself in.

Beneath the surface and the primary colours Gruau's man, for all his brooding self assuredness makes Lichtenstein's Brad look positively three dimensional. When he appears with a suitcase you can't be sure that he's really going anywhere and the longer he strikes a pose and stares out of his frame the more one realises his eyes are connecting only with his own. He's looking in the mirror and we repeatedly catch him doing so.

Gruau's man is to Gruau's woman what Ken is to Barbie or Leandro Penna is to Katie Price. He's a piece of arm candy an accessory to fashion. He's Gruau's fantasy *Action Man*.

These works have rarely been shown. In 1972, *Sir* works were exhibited in Holland¹ and a small group were recently showcased in London². Works for the covers of two issues of *Sir*, dated 1957 and 1962, are featured in a recent monograph on Gruau³, and another appears in Cally Blackman's *100 Years of Fashion Illustration*⁴.

1. The Hague, Haags Gemeentemuseum, Modetekeningen van René Gruau: tekeningen, gouaches en ontwerpen 1945-1972, exhibition catalogue, 1972, nos.44-49.

2. London, Somerset House, Dior Illustrated: René Gruau and the Line of Beauty, 2010-2011.

3. Sylvie Nissen and Vincent Leret, *Le premier siècle de René Gruau*, Paris, 2009, p.97 and p.262.

4. Cally Blackman, *100 Years of Fashion Illustration*, London, 2007. p.214.

For high resolution images of the work please contact FIG. info@fashionillustrationgallery.com

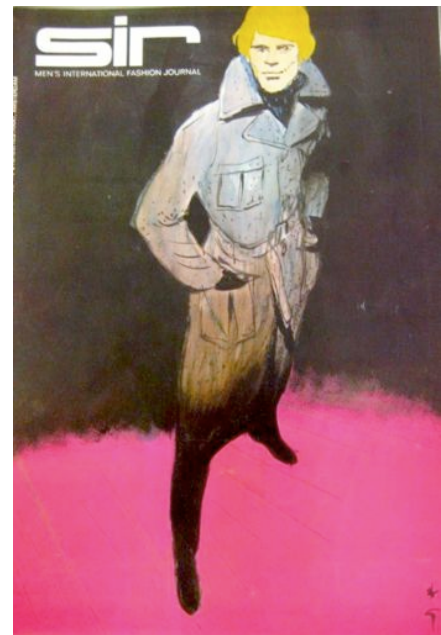
F/G



René Gruau

Cover Art / Sir #2, 1971

1971
Gouache and ink on paper
37 x 27 cm



Sir #2, 1971