



RENÉ GRUAU (1909 - 2004)

COVER ART / INTERNATIONAL TEXTILES MAGAZINE

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 5TH - SATURDAY DECEMBER 4TH 2010

THE MAYOR GALLERY 22A, CORK STREET, LONDON W1S 3NA

Fashion Illustration Gallery is delighted to present a unique collection of works on paper made by René Gruau.

The drawings and paintings were prepared for the front covers of the world's first ever international rag trade magazine *International Textiles*.

Gruau was contracted by the magazine's founder and publisher, Ludwig Katz, to make the work from 1946 to 1984. The result was an incredible 38 years worth of works on paper that show Gruau as not only the 20th Century's greatest fashion illustrator but also one of its most influential graphic artists and image makers.

Rene Gruau was the fashion illustrator's illustrator. For more than half a century his draughtsmanship, graphisme and effortless élan set the standard and defined an era. His mature style, with its flat planes of colour, daring use of negative space and signature sweeping black line came into bloom after World War II signaling a return to optimism and opulence. Alongside his friend Christian Dior, Gruau created a new ideal of feminine beauty, one that looked to the past and was at the same time inescapably modern - David Downton 2010.

There is today a resurgence of interest in his highly recognisable work. There are few who encounter it without a sense of familiarity and this is a testimony not only to the age of mechanical reproduction but to the power of the artist's vision and the head-turning quality of his world of aspiration and desire. Few it seems would be able to resist the temptation to pick up a copy of *International Textiles* with a Gruau image on it and not have a quick flick through. No wonder he was commissioned time and again and again and again.

So where does this leave the cover art, the remnant of the now defunct publication?

The collection presented by FIG comes from Ludwig Katz's daughter who had a long term personal friendship with Gruau. It contains exceptional pieces from the body of work much of which is now in museum collections.

The works reveal the artist's hand in a way that is concealed on the printed page. The cleverness of his composition, and simple sophistication of his design is matched perfectly by the exuberant confidence of his line, brush stroke and mark. The application and layering of gouache paint and ink spray create a painterly texture to the surface of the paper that comes as a wonderful surprise given these works were created to be reproduced and printed as flat graphic glossy magazine covers.

Outside of the context given to them by the history of fashion, art and graphic design they are beautiful objects in their own right. They are stand alone paintings whose decorative appeal and glamour equals, if not surpasses other figurative work made in the same period. Within the context given to them by the history of fashion, art, and graphic design they embody the genius of an exceptional and important talent whose inspiration derived from and influenced all three worlds of fashion, art and graphic design from the immediate post war period to the present day.

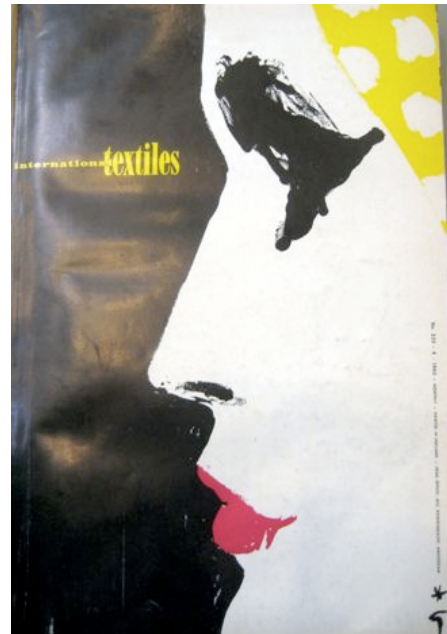
The FIG exhibition coincides with the exhibitions *Dior Illustrated: René Gruau and the Line of Beauty* at Somerset House and *Drawing Fashion* at the Design Museum.

For high resolution images of the work please contact FIG on + 44 (0)20 7112 1979



René Gruau

Cover Art / International Textiles No. 335, 1960 - X
1960
Gouache and ink on paper
41 x 30.5 cm (37 x 29 cm)



International Textiles No. 335, 1960 - X