

THE REVIVAL



HENRI MATCHAVARJAN
Poster Design for Paris Fashion
Show, Paris.

Robert Rauschenberg

by Fred R. Conrod

The subject of a chock-a-block time capsule of a show at Gagosian Gallery in Chelsea, was an optimist and a doer. He not only did what artists normally do: make paintings, sculptures, prints and photographs. He also did the work of performers, musicians, philanthropists and career politicians.

He danced, composed, gave away money and initiated diplomatic missions, always on behalf of art. He believed that if he, or we, or anyone could just produce enough art, then art and life would be the same thing, and the world would change for the better. So, committed universal citizen that he was, he kept trying to make enough. He made a lot. He was blessed with sunny energy, immense talent and an unstoppable creative flow, the equivalent of stream of consciousness in literature. For years on end, that stream railed forward, turning whatever it swept up — childhood memories, art history, street junk, nature, the daily news — into gold. Then for stretches, and quite lengthy ones, it meandered and poked. Even then, the flow never stopped. In a six-decade career, Rauschenberg turned out more than 6,000 works of art, some of preposterous size and ambition. Gagosian Gallery thinks that's too, and bigger than usual in its series of museum-style exhibitions in Chelsea over the last few years. In early 2009 there was a Piero Manzoni survey. No one knew it was coming, and there it was, a knockout, invaluable. A reminder of all the artists we should be looking at and aren't.

Continued on p18

BANKSY AS HERE

by Laura Collins

The invisible man of graffiti art.

The British graffiti artist Banksy likes pizza, though his preference in toppings cannot be definitively ascertained. He has a good tooth. He has a silver tooth. He has a silver caring. He is an anarchist environmentalist who travels by chauffeur'd SUV. He was born in 1974, or 1974, in Bristol, England — or, Yate. The son of a butcher and a housewife, or a delivery driver and a hospital worker, he's fat, he's skinny, he's an introverted workhorse, he's a bruxer-shooting exhibitionist prone to drinking pint after pint of stout. For a while now, Banksy has lived in London, if not in Shoreditch, then in Hoxton. Joel Urzangot is asked what adorns the T-shirts, he will allow, before fretting constantly that he has revealed way too much already, that they are mostly covered with smudges of white paint.

Continued on p17

by Nicholas Drake
Since the 1980's there has been an international revival of interest in fashion illustration not just for its practical function of reportage but also as an art form.

SHARPEYE & PENCIL

If there is a single constant in the creative world, it is that fame has a nasty habit of disappearing overnight. One prime example is the cartoonist Denys Wortman, who from 1924 to 1954 contributed six drawings a week to The New York World and its successors.

His feature, "Metropolitan Movies," was admired for its strikingly naturalistic portrayal of daily life in Gotham. Using a single panel and a conversational caption, Mr. Wortman adroitly summoned up an entirely believable world of housewives talking across free escapes, girls in the subway hashing over last night's date, and men and women trying to make a buck in diners, offices, music halls and factories — or struggling to keep afloat during the Great Depression. Mr. Wortman's drawings were also beautifully composed and finely worked, a legacy of his art school years, when he studied alongside future Ashcan school painters like Edward Hopper and George Bellows, and with their guru Robert Henri. Even then "there was nothing quite like it," said the cartoonist Jules Feiffer, who enjoyed the drawings as a boy. "His work didn't seem studied. It was as if you were looking out the window — or any window in the Bronx."

Continued on p19

established international publications such as *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. Glamour and *Marie Claire*, although still largely committed to photographs, now regularly allocate more pages to illustrations that at any point since the early 1960's. The world's most prestigious designers, beauty companies and clothing stores are using art as well as photographers to illustrate their advertising campaigns and catalogues, which have become showcases for a host of bright, original and daring new talents. Not since the heyday of fashion illustration in the early decades of this century have artists been given so much freedom to portray fashion as they wish, to experiment and extend the boundaries of the art-in their styles, the media in which they work, and their choice of backgrounds and subjects. Unlike photography, illustration does not produce a mechanical, unselective documentation of the subject. Its point is not of total recall but of an individual and refined interpretation. Yet a drawing can be truer than a photograph, for by selectivity and discrimination the artist can lay bare the essential.

Until the early 1960 important fashion publications gave equal emphasis to both photographs and drawings but around 1960 several leading artists died, including Eric and René Bonché of *Vogue*. They had been regular contributors for over twenty years but no one was asked to replace them. Collectively, the leading fashion magazines undertook a clear change of editorial policy: artists were no longer given consistent support, only sporadic and spontaneous commissions. Photography alone was to record the heroes and heroines of the classless new age of youth culture, newspaper however, confirmed to value artists for their skill as reporters and their ability to work quickly under pressure. Ted Draz worked for *The New York Times*, Joe Edla for the *Herald Tribune* and the *London Sunday Times* and Kenneth Block and Steven Sipelman for *Bloome's Year Daily*. The most exciting confirmation of this revival was the establishment of several European publications, which chose to commission artists rather than photographers to supply their principal visual matter. Anna Piaggi, the eccentrically chic muse of couturier Karl Lagerfeld, gave free rein to Antonio's stylistic diversity in *Wavy*, the Italian *Conde Nast* magazine of which she was a founding spirit in 1981. She was also responsible for promoting the witty social caricatures of the young French artist Hippolyte Romanin, for whose meticulously satirical pencil she herself would provide an ideal subject. Romanin, who says curiosity is his strongest asset, always wanted to be a journalist: "I was in awe of Paris Match correspondents. I would have loved to write but I wasn't good enough." His vision of fashion editors, for instance is very funny — but a bit frightening and sobering way. So are his sketches of fashion gossips and designers whose affections he compares to those of the eighteenth century hairdressers.

'I sometimes like to mock the futility of certain fashion editors, the vanity of certain designers and the whole inflated self importance of their little universe', says Romanin.

Continued on p12

CONTENTS:

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| ART NEWS | 2-7 |
| EXHIBITIONS | 8-11 |
| FEATURES | 12-16 |
| INTERVIEWS | 16-19 |
| COMICS & CARTOONS | 19-23 |

Oh,

East & West &
West & East
never the two
shall meet

Rudyard Kipling

But My Dearest,

They always meet in me.

Love,
بيروت

stories, intimate notes, letters, poems
Edited, translated and designed
by Sybil Layous