

W

Hey Richard!
Shine on!
Catherine
D'Hee

THE **ART** ISSUE

COVER ART BY RICHARD PRINCE

M/M (Paris)'s Michael Amzalag (left) and Mathias Augustyniak flank Dakis Joannou and the Scivolando chair by Alessandro Mendini, in front of Richard Prince's *I'm in a Limousine (following a hearse)*.



Dakis Joannou M/M (Paris)

AS THE DEBATE OVER WHETHER FASHION IS A TRUE ART FORM RAGES ON, CONTEMPORARY COLLECTOR DAKIS JOANNOU FINDS A PLACE FOR RUNWAY TREASURES ALONGSIDE HIS KOONS SCULPTURES AND MURAKAMI PAINTINGS. BY CHRISTOPHER BAGLEY

PORTRAIT BY

JUERGEN TELLER



Inspired by Givenchy

IN 1982, WHEN ARTFORUM MAGAZINE DARED TO PUT A MODEL IN AN ISSEY MIYAKE FROCK ON ITS FEBRUARY COVER, THE MOVE PROVOKED OUTRAGE AMONG A CERTAIN SET OF ART-WORLD STALWARTS. WHAT WAS A PIECE OF CLOTHING—A LUXURY PRODUCT CREATED FOR CONSUMERS—DOING IN A HALLOWED SPACE NORMALLY RESERVED FOR WORKS OF ART? BUT ONE READER WHO WAS MORE INTRIGUED THAN OFFENDED WAS DAKIS JOANNOU, THE GREEK INDUSTRIALIST WHO HAS SINCE BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S FOREMOST CONTEMPORARY ART COLLECTORS. "I BECAME VERY CURIOUS ABOUT HOW ART CONNECTS WITH FASHION, WITH ARCHITECTURE, WITH EVERYTHING," HE RECALLS.

Today, at a time when art magazines are jammed with fashion ads and Richard Prince is designing handbags for Louis Vuitton, we're all much more accustomed to blurry boundaries. Still, the debate about fashion's legitimacy in the art world remains more charged than ever, and no major art collector has ever built an exhibit-worthy stash of clothes. Joannou, however, is determined to find an interesting way to fold fashion into his collection. Last year he challenged Mathias Augustyniak and Michael Amzalag—the graphic design duo known as M/M (Paris), who've made videos for Björk, art-directed museum catalogs and fashion spreads, and exhibited their advertising campaign work alongside Joannou's art collection in a 2005 exhibit at the Palais de Tokyo—to come up with an approach.

"It's a really complex thing to figure out," says Augustyniak. "Sometimes you don't know anymore what is fashion and what is art." Ultimately all three men agreed that a piece of clothing, in order to have any meaning as part of a larger collection, must be linked with something that explains the piece's context and explores its various influences—from the luxury conglomerates' lavish ad campaigns to the designers' personal quirks—that give fashion much of its iconic power. So Joannou asked the two designers to "curate" his first round of purchases, and they selected five runway pieces and created a drawing to go with each one.

The results are these images—M/M's abstract riffs on the items they chose from the fall 2007 collections. A cloud of smoke resembling a woman's face emerges from a compact of Givenchy face powder shaped like the oversized brass buttons on Riccardo Tisci's naval coats; the surreal take on childhood innocence at Comme des Garçons inspires a jumble of deconstructed gloves and bunny ears; Balenciaga's fetishistic stiletto is put into action, squashing a tube of neoprene. Augustyniak says the choices were heavily influenced by M/M's ongoing dialogue with Joannou about his renowned art collection, a provocative assemblage of important works by Jeff Koons, Maurizio Cattelan and others.

Joannou sees these drawings as an "experiment," part of his lifelong attempt to "try to find relationships that are not obvious, not apparent." He adds, "I think these are quite extraordinary images. They bring out what's inside each piece of clothing and help you look at it in a new way." Joannou will continue to buy fashion, asking a new curator each year to choose five pieces that deserve to be remembered. But when asked how the clothes and the accompanying images will eventually fit in with his art, Joannou laughs, noting that he still has more big questions than big answers. "I have no idea," he says. "We'll see." ●



FALL 2007 LOOKS
SELECTED BY
M/M (PARIS)
TO BE PART OF
JOANNOU'S
COLLECTION,
FROM FAR LEFT:
COMME DES
GARÇONS; YVES
SAINT LAURENT;
MARC JACOBS;
GIVENCHY;
BALENCIAGA.





Inspired by Balenciaga

Inspired by Marc Jacobs



ION, WITH CHATEAU

Friday, 11/11/07
11:00 AM - 11:30 PM
11/11/07
11:00 AM - 11:30 PM



Inspired by Yves Saint Laurent



Inspired by Comme des Garçons