

Pierre BRISSAUD (Paris 1855 - Paris? 1964)

Sidesaddle: Design for the Cover of Vogue

Pen and brown ink and watercolour, with a border drawn in green wash.

Signed and dated Pierre Brissaud 1924 at the bottom centre.

Stamped ART DEPARTMENT/ AUG 29 1924 on the verso.

303 x 247 mm. (11 7/8 x 9 3/4 in.)

This splendid drawing was used at the cover illustration for the 1 September 1927 edition of Vogue, published in New York. As this September issue, the 'Autumn Forecast', informed its readers: 'Every year, with the same startling abruptness, autumn is upon us! One day, we consider ourselves quite charmingly dressed in our late-summer clothes, and the next, suddenly, without any apparent warning, that is the last costume we want anything to do with. For autumn is upon us, and anything by autumn clothes automatically acquire a last-season look. And when that day comes – who among us will be prepared? If we have read and assimilated this issue of Vogue, we will have an excellent understanding of the foundation of the autumn mode…For this issue, which is described as the Millinery, Autumn Fashions, and Furs number, is a résumé of the outstanding autumn modes, as well as an important forecast for winter.'

In 1932, an American writer praised Brissaud's drawings: 'If you wish to feel gay, to be amused, to be charmed, to see the quintessence of pure French taste in art, to see good drawing, grave yet lovely color, the humor…' (M. W. B. McCormick, The American, New York, February 1932).

Literature:

Vogue, 1 September 1927, reproduced on the cover.

Artist description:

A leading illustrator of the Art Deco period in France, Pierre Brissaud was born into an artistic milieu. His elder brother Jacques was active as a portrait and genre painter, while his uncle Maurice Boutet de Monvel was a well-known illustrator, as was his first cousin Bernard Boutet de Monvel, who was also noted for his fashionable portraits. Brissaud studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, as well as at the art school in Montmartre established in the 1880s by Fernand Cormon, where such artists as Louis Anquetin, Emile Bernard, Henri Matisse, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, François Picabia and Vincent Van Gogh had also studied. It was as a student at the Atelier Cormon that Brissaud met fellow artists and illustrators Georges Lepape, Charles Martin and André-Edouard Marty.

In 1914, the American edition of Vogue magazine published an article, under the title 'Beau Brummels of the Brush', lauding a group of French fashion illustrators - including Brissaud, George Barbier, Paul Iribe, Lepape, Martin and Bernard Boutet de Monvel - whom they named 'The Knights of the Bracelet'. As the article further noted, 'The artist has discovered the couturier, and vice versa, and they find that they were not so very far apart after all; one uses paints as a medium and the other silks and satins.'

Brissaud became known in particular for his pochoirs and fashion illustrations for the magazine Gazette du Bon Ton. First published in 1912, the Gazette du Bon Ton was an illustrated monthly magazine devoted to fashion, elegance and art, and among other artists who produced illustrations for the magazine were Barbier, Boutet de Monvel, Lepape, Marty and Martin. Brissaud's illustrations appeared in Vogue after it acquired the Gazette du Bon Ton in 1925, as well as in the American magazines Vogue, House & Garden and Fortune. Brissaud also provided illustrations for editions of several books, notably the Abbé Prevost's Manon Lescaut, Honoré de Balzac's Le père Goriot, Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary and Edmond Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac.