

GAGOSIAN Wallpaper*

Suited and booted: Ed Ruscha invites us along for his Savile Row fitting

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Ed Ruscha is in London for the opening of his new exhibition at Gagosian – and to unveil the results of a collaboration with Savile Row tailors Huntsman

Among the art world royalty in London this week for Frieze Art Fair is American artist Ed Ruscha, for the opening of his exhibition of new works at Gagosian Gallery. Media-shy Ruscha gave a rare audience to Wallpaper* – while having a suit fitted on Savile Row.

Ruscha certainly has style when it comes to words and colours. His paintings put carefully selected phrases and American-isms (like 'oof' and 'honk') into new contexts, carefully designed to help us reconsider their use and impact. His works are famed for their elegance, exactitude – they're bold, confident messages about bold, confident American culture.

But does such an artist have personal style, in the sense of clothing? 'I wouldn't call myself a clothes hound,' says Ruscha, while he attends his fitting for a very fine bespoke grey suit at Huntsman in London. 'For years I liked second hand clothing,' he confesses.

In fact the artist, always impeccable, looks really quite at home on his first visit to Savile Row. How does it feel? 'It feels like... fitting like a glove,' he says. In an unusual collaboration, the artist has agreed to make a limited-edition range of suits with the historic tailors.

While the tailoring will be left to the professionals, Ruscha has designed the suit lining. 'I like the idea of the concealed secret,' says the artist, indicating the loud message contained in his jacket's silky lining. 'You know that you wear the jacket and clothing like this but then there's this surprise, almost like you're flashing'.

The lining print is taken from one of the artist's seminal works from 1986, *Boy Meets Girl*, which is currently on show at the Gagosian. When asked if, nearly 30 years on, the painting still felt relevant, he said: 'Boys still meet girls and girls still meet boys.' The painting's owner, actress Lauren Hutton, will own one of the Ruscha suits, as will the artist's dealer Larry Gagosian. The last suit in the edition of six will be sold at a charity auction in New York later this month.

The artist is typically unforthcoming on his latest series of artworks, which went on show today. The paintings take big, abstract themes – science, the universe, time – and play with language, and the associations and assumptions of scale and order that we make through words. He says, 'I call this show "Extremes and In-betweens". They are exactly that – extremes and in-betweens.'