

Música proibita : men's underwear

Autor(en): **Florestan**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Swiss textiles [English edition]**

Band (Jahr): - **(1952)**

Heft 2

PDF erstellt am: **22.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-799030>

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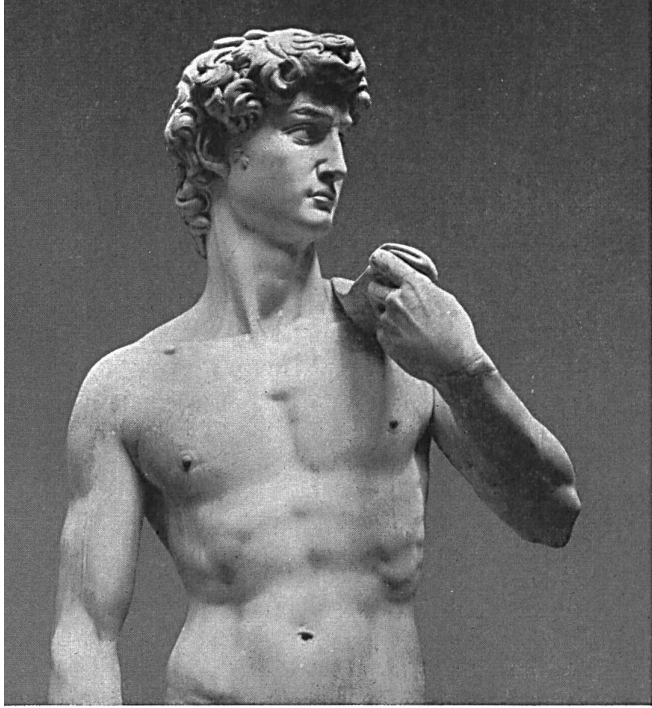
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Musica proibita

MEN'S UNDERWEAR

Man's conception of himself and of his relationship to society is a decisive factor in fashion. Although in the 16th century man was not ashamed to speak of the natural functions of the body, the « honnête homme » or courtier of the following century was much more reserved in this respect, and the dandy of the 19th century was reduced, if we are to believe Baudelaire, almost to a mere spirit. This ethereal creature, who devoted so much of his time and thought to his external appearance could never have

been imagined in underwear. The subject was a forbidden one.

Since then, the world has seen quite a few wars, two of them world wide, witnessed economic and social upheavals, lived through an increasingly rapid evolution of morals, applauded the growth of technical progress and the rise of sport, and suffered a complete overthrow of values... Modern man has other habits, other needs than his father. Yet he is still, in spite of everything, modelled

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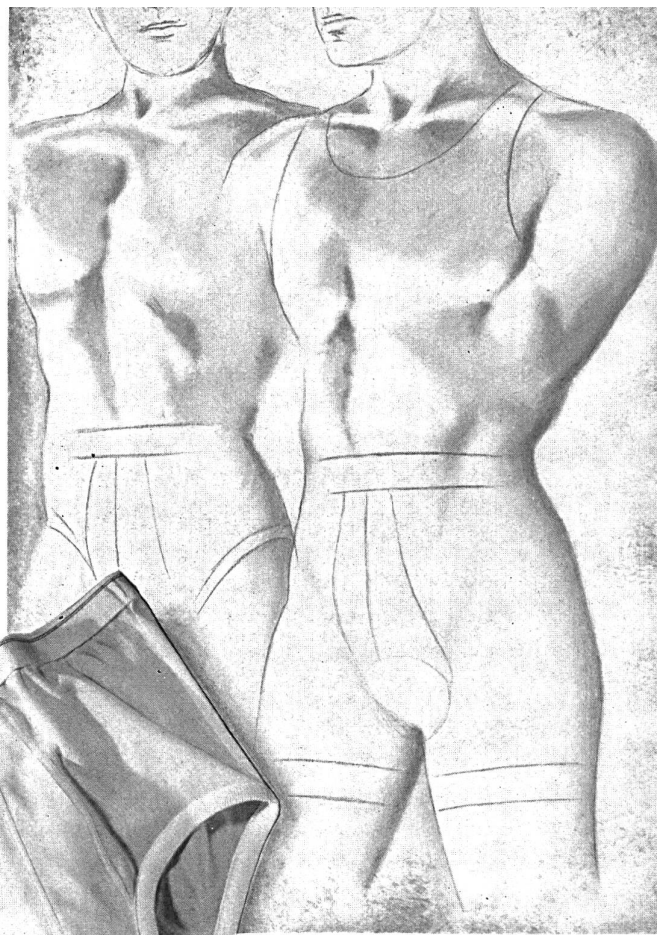
on the idea of the typical British « gentleman » as far as his own person is concerned. That is why men's underwear is still, for many, a slightly dangerous topic of conversation.

Will anyone object then to our taking it up, with all due propriety? Every illustrated paper, every magazine we glance through offers us ten times or twenty times over, the picture of some modern nymph — highly idealised, it is true — clad only in those accessories necessary to the

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beauty of her form. Nowadays nobody would dream of suggesting that he is in the least offended by it. It is time for mere man to claim equality of treatment! For, like woman who has become emancipated, man too has evolved and shaken off many old conventions. « A dandy never does anything », wrote Baudelaire a hundred years ago. But our modern 20th century man is always on the move ;

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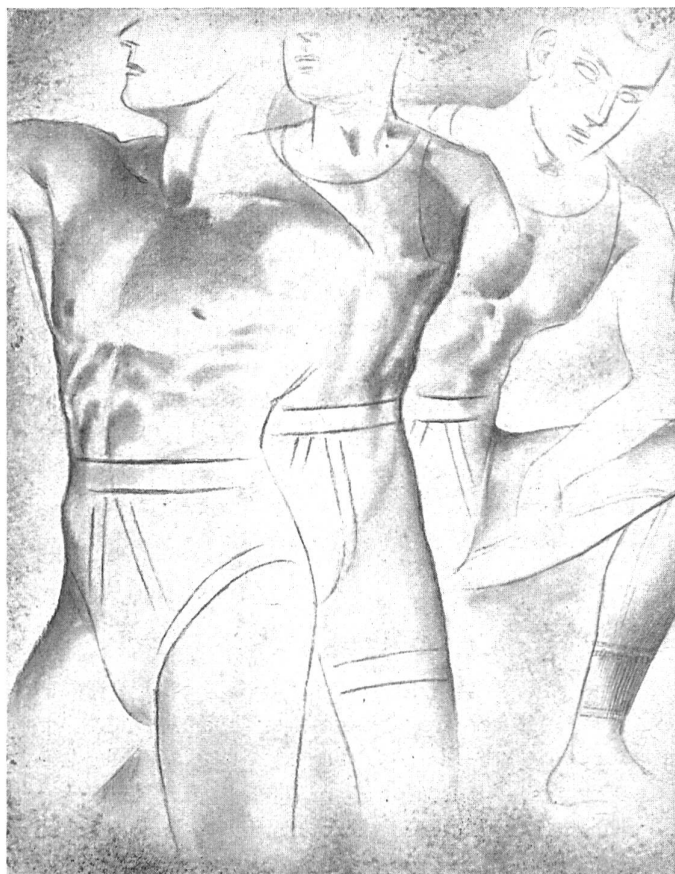


he comes and goes, travels here, there and everywhere by land, sea and air, for his work and his leisure, and this activity, this perpetual movement make comfort in his clothes a law which he dare not ignore for fear of losing the efficiency required of him. Man's body is no longer merely an anonymous peg on which to hang drab, uncomfortable and unhealthy clothes ; he is alive, he wants to be comfortable, to be unrestricted in his movements and to be able to breathe freely, healthily... That is why nowadays we men are permitted to concern ourselves with our personal and bodily comfort.

Ingenious manufacturers have designed men's underwear whose shape and function are inspired by the body itself. Each of them has given to the various problems his own personal solutions, all of which moreover answer the same concerns and needs : to provide modern man with bodily comfort, complete freedom of movement, convenience and hygienic clothing next to his skin. Modern knitted pants are supple, light, porous, absorbent and perfectly suited to the body, not only by their cut but thanks to their elasticity which makes them hold and stay in place without any risk of being too tight or irritating the skin and prevents them from losing their shape, slipping or getting into uncomfortable creases. They are moreover easy to look after because they can generally be boiled, require no ironing and many of them have no buttons. They are made in the form of briefs, short, medium or long drawers and are therefore suitable for all seasons, all outfits and all sports. According to taste, one may choose models without buttons, with elastic waistbands or models buttoned at the waist ; in summer, cotton articles are the most popular, but men who feel the cold can also find long models in cotton or a mixture of wool and cotton. To go with these underpants there are classical singlets or vests in various styles, with or without sleeves, in cotton or half wool and suitable for every season.

Whatever one may think of his own particular form of beauty, the man who is neither an Apollo nor yet a Punch may now, if not compete with the lightly clad Dianas of the more suggestive advertisements, at least feel himself less minimised : he has entered — by the back door, perhaps — but nevertheless he has entered fashion... in his underpants !

Florestan.



Jos. Sallmann & Cie., Amriswil

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