



CARL ERICKSON

(Illinois, 1891 - New York, 1958)

A seated man in a pastel orange suit carrying a white cane

signed centre left (recto): *eric*; extensively inscribed (verso)

black chalk and watercolour, heightened with white, on card

400 x 520 mm

Provenance:

Private collection, Amsterdam

As perhaps the most influential fashion illustrator of the early to mid-twentieth century, Carl Erickson's drawings were synonymous with the illustrated style of *Vogue* for some 35 years. The son of Swedish immigrants to the United States, Erickson was a fashion illustrator and artist who studied art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Chicago before moving to New York in 1914. Working as a freelance illustrator he sold his first work to *Vogue* in 1916, an association that he would maintain, with varying degrees of punctuality, until the late 1950s when alcoholism rendered his behaviour too inconsistent and eventually led to his death.

This drawing, likely produced in the mid-1910s, is one of the earliest known examples of Erickson's draughtsmanship, made shortly after his adoption of the penname 'Eric' whilst a student in Chicago. The sitter, wearing a muted pastel orange suit, wire rimmed glasses and holding a white cane, is thought to be a close personal friend of Erickson's, perhaps another student or an acquaintance from the first years in New York. True to his academic training, Erickson never drew from memory but only from life. His methods were idiosyncratic, and at times arduous for those who modelled for him. He was known to insist on the model remaining motionless and was sometimes forgetful of their need for an occasional rest.