



Courtesy of The Mark

ARTS

## Jean-Philippe Delhomme Understands the Art of a Well-Lived Life

BY JESSICA ADRIAN DEJAE

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Irak Serubar, president of Mexico Group and owner of The Mark hotel, describes *The Mark*—a new Anouline volume chronicling a century of history within the halls of the Upper East Side institution—as “a love story.” Jean-Philippe Delhomme would agree.

The Perrotin-expressed artist’s playful illustrations, featured throughout the book, led The Mark’s brand identity and artwork when Serubar tapped French interior designer Jacques Grange to renovate the property back in 2009, seeking to make it “the best hotel in the world.” The inclusion of chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten rounded out the trio of legendary French talents that Serubar recruited, likening each facet of the project to an artist’s blank canvas.



Photo courtesy of The Mark

As Delhomme, a painter and illustrator whose previous collaborations and projects included *Le Bon Marché* in Paris, Barney’s New York, and *Chanel: The Making of a Collection*, recalls, the commission felt like a rarefied opportunity to follow in the footsteps of the legendary Ludwig Bemelmans.

“To me, it was a great example of something really witty and free, a true fantasy of the old New York,” he says of the 79-year-old cocktail bar that bears the name and illustrations of the late *Madeline* author and is just a stone’s throw from The Mark. “I still love it very much. It represented fantasy and poetry, pre-marketing.”

At the time, the commission placed Delhomme within a cadre of renowned artists and artisans whose work is mounted in the hotel—Karl Lagerfeld, Vladimir Kagan, Piero Lissoni, Rachel Howard, and Gary de Rougemont among them. (More recently, Warren Nedick’s 20-foot-tall illuminated sculpture *NO VIGILANCE* has animated the building’s facade.)

Seventeen years on, their contributions have set the tone for a space that has become synonymous with what Derek Blasberg calls, in *The Mark’s* introduction, “a well-lived life.”



Are you wearing Jacques Grange?

As soon as you go, Delhomme’s considerable part in transforming that corner of 77th and Madison into the most glamorous spot to preen, prep, and pre-game every *Fine Monday in May* is a pretty fine one. The Mark was among the last of his advertising and brand identity projects before he turned his focus to painting full-time.

From the start of his career in the 1980s, commissions for posters, illustrations, and fashion editorials took the Nanters-born artist everywhere from the US to Japan and England. “It was a bit like being a fashion photographer. If you’re a fashion photographer, you don’t stay home. It was very much fueled by this idea of not staying in my studio,” he says.

Things changed, however, in 2020, when the pandemic made travel between Brooklyn, where Delhomme had a studio, and France difficult. It was then, he says, that he began to prioritize his painting practice.

Since 2021, Delhomme has averaged one solo exhibition per year with Perrotin, focusing on portrayals of landscapes, still lifes, and people with an almost journalistic eye and intent, often returning to the metaphor of photography to describe his practice. This is perhaps most apparent in “*Model Resting*,” his 2024 solo show at Perrotin Paris that sought to capture his clients’ individuality in moments of repose.

“With what I’m doing now, I’m asking people I paint to come to the studio wearing their own clothes. They might have something fashionable [on], but I’m not looking for that at all. I’m just looking for them to be real as they are, not posing, just being themselves,” he says. “It’s really about a moment of truth, in a way.”

At present, his work is featured in two group exhibitions—“*A Century of Class*,” at Perrotin’s Paris gallery, and an *assemble show* at Perrotin *Maison*—before he ramps up for a summer that will see him stage a solo show at the Tokyo department store Isetan Mitsukoshi, followed by a solo show in September at Perrotin Shanghai.

When asked whether he’d consider returning to illustrative commissions, Delhomme says, “I’m really focused on what I’m doing now—and happy for the work I did for The Mark, because we had a very long run. It was always very humorous, which is rare, in this sort of high-level business. What was really fun with The Mark is that they were completely open to that.”

