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IN THE AIR

La Cienega Story

Cary Grant, Cary Grant, Cary Grant—that's how collectors and artists describe the young **Irving Blum** in *The Cool School*, a documentary about the Los Angeles art scene in the 1950s and '60s airing this month on PBS. Architect **Frank Gehry** and assemblage artist **Llyn Foulkes** are among those who testify that Blum, above (in 1962), resembled the movie star in looks, voice and manner. Perpetually attired

in a blazer and natty tie, Blum was, in fact, an aspiring actor in New York before moving in 1957 to L.A., where he bought into the **Ferus Gallery**, which not only launched the careers of **Ed Ruscha** and **Robert Irwin** but was also the first dealer to gamble on **Andy Warhol**. "Irving gave [the gallery] a bit of class," **Don Factor**, one of L.A.'s first major collectors, tells the filmmakers. "Wealthy people felt comfort-

able walking into that situation." As for the impetus behind Blum's polished persona, the man himself says: "You don't want people to know you're hungry."

