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Art, Beauty and the Realisation of dreams

*a discussion of Serge Lutens' advertising photography
for Shiseido Cosmetics*

by

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of this thesis is the commercial photography of Serge Lutens who is creative director with *Shiseido* cosmetics. This subject was initially chosen due to my interest in photography and advertising and because Lutens' work is an unusual and innovative combination of both disciplines. Another reason is the relative unawareness of Serge Lutens' work here in Ireland despite his great renown within the design industry in his home country of France and also in Japan, the home of *Shiseido* cosmetics.

The aim of this thesis is to draw together a concise overview of Lutens' ideas and style based on information from a wide range of fragmented and often limited sources. It also aims to give the reader some new understanding of his concepts, methods and opinions by developing a framework that allows for analysis of the imagery in terms of specific themes.

Research material consisted mainly of magazine articles, both general articles on cosmetics advertising and specific articles on Serge Lutens. Many of the latter, however, were translated synopses from French and other European magazines which contained a limited amount of text. In fact, most of the articles dedicated solely to Serge Lutens turned out to be quite superficial and without any in-depth analysis or thorough discussion of his work. They simply documented his work visually through a series of images. The rest of the imagery discussed in this thesis was obtained from the *Shiseido* company itself and Lutens' own publication '*L'Esprit de Serge Lutens*'.

Thanks to the financial assistance of the Thomas Damann Memorial Trust Fund, a meeting in Paris with three people highly involved with Serge Lutens was made possible. Interviews with Kayoko Takatsu (public relations), Liliane Ménard (director of Les Salons du Palais Royal) and Yasutaka Yamada (designer and art director) proved quite useful in providing greater insight into Lutens' work. There it was also discovered that the

imagery collected for this thesis is, in fact, a very small part of the entire collection.

For the purpose of detailed discussion and analysis the imagery has been categorised into different themes. The first chapter simply introduces Serge Lutens and outlines his career to date and his responsibilities within *Shiseido*. Chapter Two discusses his portrayal of the female and looks at his prototype of the ideal woman, comparing her to the supermodel. It also attempts to analyse the rationale behind this dehumanised woman. Chapter Three involves analysis and discussion of the apparent theme of escapism within Lutens' work and tries to draw parallels between his imagery and wonderlands such as the fairytale, the circus and outer space. The final chapter attempts to discuss and demonstrate the strong influence of fine art on his work, looking at both the compositional and symbolic qualities of the imagery.

1

SERGE LUTENS *a brief biography*

This chapter discusses the role played by Serge Lutens in Shiseido International and briefly outlines his career and achievements to date, including his previous employment with both Vogue and Dior, and how he has shaped a successful corporate identity for Shiseido through his own unconventional ideas and concepts.

Serge Lutens (*fig. 1.1*) is presently creative director with *Shiseido*, Japan's leading makeup and skincare company. *Shiseido* was founded as a pharmacy in Tokyo in 1872, but cosmetics soon replaced pharmaceuticals as its main products and *Shiseido* quickly expanded internationally. It is now the world's second largest cosmetics company. Lutens' contract with *Shiseido* began in 1980 and the bond formed between this Frenchman and this Japanese company continues to flourish. The current president and chief executive officer of *Shiseido* is Yoshiharu Fukuhara, grandson of the original founder of the company. He describes his relationship with Lutens as "more than a contract between a Japanese company and a French artist" (Petkanas, 1992, p. 14). He goes on to say that by unifying these two cultural heritages, they wanted to create a completely new concept of beauty:

cultural exchange does not consist of importing a Monet to Japan or bringing Sumo wrestlers to France. Our goal is to give birth to a universal and cultural notion of beauty. (Petkanas, 1992, p. 14)

This collaboration of the Orient and the Occident has been an international success story. Even before his achievements with *Shiseido*, however, Lutens had an impressive career. He was born in Lille, northern France, in 1942 and lived there for the first twenty years of his life. He became interested in the feminine mystique when he was

quite young. From the age of fourteen, he started dressing and making up his female friends and soon began photographing them with a Kodak Instamatic (Highlights, 1993, p. 61). From these photographs, Lutens compiled a portfolio of his work and in 1962 he left Lille and moved to Paris. After arriving, he called *Vogue*, the only magazine he knew, and began to work there as a stylist a few days later. The editor, Edmonde Charles-Roux, put him straight to work on the prestigious Christmas issue. Soon he was styling hair, makeup and accessories, not only for *Vogue* but also for *Elle* and, the American magazine, *Harpers Bazaar*. (Petkanas, 1992, p. 14)

For the next six years, Lutens worked in an atmosphere of freedom and extravagance; no idea was too crazy. The magazines wanted something spectacular, something beyond the ordinary everyday look- "Extraordinary styles ahead of their time" (Hellin, 1994, p. 10). Not yet a top level photographer, however, he collaborated closely with professionals like Guy Bourdin, Richard Avedon, Irving Penn and Bob Richardson. Lutens created an electric presence for himself on the Paris design scene and as a result, in 1968, the House of *Christian Dior* offered him a position in their company. He became responsible for the image and creations for the entire beauty sector of *Dior*, including its makeup products. Lutens was employed there for twelve years during which he revolutionised makeup art. He developed a unique photographic style unlike anything else in this field:

Every thing in the beauty industry was swept away with what I did at Dior. Before, coverage in the magazines was never more than two pages. Eye shadow came in grandmotherly chestnut, blue and green and that was it. Beauty was a dead dusty subject that I completely turned upside down. For one of the Dior fashion shows I sent the models out in my usual white face, seriously red lips and a sweep of pink from eyes to cheeks. The critics said I made women look like sickly rabbits. Others called it a revolution in makeup. (Petkanas, 1992, p. 17)

Following his move to *Shiseido* in 1980, Lutens proceeded to develop his unique personal style. The sheer size of this multi-million dollar Japanese company meant that Lutens had lots of room for expression. He had worked for *Dior* for twelve years and

had been very happy there, but in world terms it was quite a small house, perhaps lacking in scope to allow Lutens to express all the dimensions of his creativity (Gibbs, 1985, p. 22). *Shiseido* awarded Lutens a lot more responsibility. Based in the corporation's headquarters in his native France, Lutens works behind the scenes, responsible for everything from advertisements, both two-dimensional and for television, to designing the makeup and packaging and all the costumes, jewellery and props used in the photographic shoots.

Serge Lutens is by no means a creator of conventional advertising. Despite great renown in many parts of the world, his work is probably only understood by a handful of people. One reason for this is because his work does not fall easily into categories such as design or photography. He is primarily an artist, an image creator. When asked by *Cosmetique News* how he defines his own role, Lutens replied:

People sometimes call me a creator but I don't like that word very much. I am an artist and that is how I prefer to define myself; through my images. (Prim, 1995, p. 23)

He is part photographer, part makeup artist, part designer and, above all, a concept planner. For every advertisement he personally sets the theme, works out the concept, draws the rough sketches and makes everything required for the photo shoot, from the background set to the model's jewellery. He also takes personal charge of selecting the model, designing her costume, hair and makeup, shooting the session and deciding the layout of the advertisement. All this effort goes into promoting products of his own creation. He determines everything: the season's colours, the texture of a night cream and even the design of the tiny wand used to apply eye shadow. All of Lutens' achievements are the result of motivation, hard work and an unstoppable desire to succeed. He does not have an area of specialisation. He has never followed schools or learned a profession in the traditional sense of the term but is a truly self-taught person (Quaglia, 1994).

Lutens has also directed some film advertising and has received two *Lion d'Or* at the Cannes Film Festival for his first film entitled *Baroque et Poésie*. In 1987, his films *Suspense Colour* and *Night Blue* both won prizes in Cannes, the latter also winning

the International Broadcasting and Clio Awards in the United States. In 1988, he made three films, *Collection*, *Magic Balance* and *Royal Game* and won The Dentsu Prize in Japan. In 1989, he produced the film *Perspective* and the same year was awarded the Tokyo A.D.C. (Art Directors' Club) prize. Lutens' entire collection of cinema productions earned him the Grand Prix de la Qualité de l'Image in 1990 at the UNESCO International Art Film Festival. (Lutens, 1992)

Lutens' approach to his work is completely different to that of his competitors in the business. He follows no existing rules of style but creates his own. Everything about him is unique and unaffected by fashion. Over the years, he has developed a personal path and image by experimenting in all types and forms of artistic expression. His trademark precision and meticulous preparation are apparent in his work for *Shiseido*. His distinctively beautiful photographs display a wonderful sense of balance and proportion and a perfect mixture of different styles, colours and themes. Each photograph requires a lot of preparation and planning, sometimes several months (American Photo, 1995, p. 42). Fukuhara describes *Shiseido* as a company whose image is driven by art (Petkanas, 1992, p. 13). In this competitive industry, *Shiseido* dares to be different and succeeds. Lutens illustrates that the use of sex, supermodels and shock tactics is not the only way to successfully promote and advertise within the world of cosmetics.

Lutens makes it clear that his job is to "portray a philosophy of beauty through the language of art" (Petkanas, 1992, p. 13). The corporate identity of *Shiseido* is driven by such things as cubism, baroque ornamentation, suprematism and an overall feeling of surrealism. Lutens has photographed models wearing furniture, the Eiffel Tower, medieval costumes, the sun, stars, flowers; there is no limit. His work is a successful fusion of artistic creativity and commercial demands. Contemporary image makers have the scope to experiment and investigate the full potential of photography in advertising, but are seldom given the chance due to commercial viability and financial repercussions. Serge Lutens, however, has earned a privileged position in the design world which allows him a lot of freedom. In advertising photography such creative freedom often increases in direct proportion to the photographer's reputation (Ameer, 1992), a

reputation such as that acquired by Lutens during his extensive career with both *Dior* and *Shiseido*. His work is immediately recognisable, not for any strong fashion statement, but for the confidence he exudes in the mystical images he creates. His ever-inventive, aesthetic sense and stunning design captivates the imagination of all who indulge in his thought provoking imagery. Magician of the imaginary and architect of dreams, Lutens obsessively seeks new ways to reinvent the feminine mystique. He imposes his vision on the world, seeking reaction and despising indifference and thereby ensures a distinctive successful series of images.

2

ILLUSIVE REALITY

Lutens' portrayal of the female

This chapter traces the origins and development of 'the Lutens woman' and the frequent transformations of her mask. Aspects of her physicality, sexuality and dehumanisation are also discussed. She is also analysed in comparison to the supermodels and the conventional, stereotypical advertising associated with cosmetics.

The Lutens Woman, as she has come to be known in the business, was born in Lutens' mind during his teen years. In his opinion, all women have a witchy side to them and as a loving observer, he fell under their charm at an early age. Since then, all his art has been dedicated to women and to them only. They are essential to his life. He has always sought to exalt them, first in magazines, then at Dior and Shiseido. Lutens says that the more he grows, the deeper the mystery becomes and the stronger his fascination and desire to know more (Madame Figaro, 1994). Before leaving Lille for Paris, he had worked in a hairdressers doing boyish makeovers on many of his female friends. He chopped their hair short and gave them smouldering, threatening black eyes and thickly powdered white faces (Petkanas, 1992, p. 14). This then became the prototype for the *Shiseido* face. The original corporate identity portrays it in its simplest form (*fig. 2.1*), a white oval face and black eyes. This image of this surreal woman has become recognised and adopted by the female public all over the world. This creation of a surreal woman was never meant as a role model, however. Her creator says:

She only exists for me. Hers is not a 'look'. She has nothing to do with fashion. I do not see her as an advertisement in a perfume shop window and she does not illustrate a technique for employing cosmetics. She is mysterious and inward looking, without age. I have spent a long time defining her, finding her. She has a very slight frame and a long oval face. She is me and I am her: osmosis. She is

my unconscious universe. I don't know how to portray anything
except through her. (Bauret, 1987, p. 16)

Lutens is not portraying an ideal of beauty for everyone to follow. His pictures show a woman who essentially only exists in his imagination and who has nothing to do with reality. The model is simply a vehicle for both an abstract ideal and a commercial message. When he photographs a model, Lutens is not trying to make her appear natural. He wants the viewer to "go behind the mirror, backward in time" (Madame Figaro, 1994). In other words, he wants the viewer to look at his model as part of an image, an artistic image, and not to see themselves in the model. Lutens explains how his pictures are simply artistic proposals and not a recipe for beauty and that women don't need ready made solutions (Airisto, 1994). His imagery has not been invented to create the desire to resemble the woman in the picture. In fact, the woman in the picture doesn't exist anymore - she only exists in the photograph. Lutens explains that it is the fact that she never existed that forces him to create her (Frey, 1994, p. 125). She is only real in the photograph, a real fabrication of Lutens' imagination. She has nothing to do with a real woman. She is the perfect woman for him. His images are depictions of the ideal of a woman whom he loves and envisions as his very own.

Maybe she is perfect because I envision her to be. She is a dream, a
fantasy. I would say that I have no choice. She exists in my
imagination. (Hellin, 1994, p. 10)

Beauty is something that cannot be defined. There are no set rules for beauty as every culture throughout the world perceives it differently. Lutens takes this into consideration when he plans his advertisements for Shiseido. He explains how beauty is happily and maddeningly personal and how rules cannot make sense in a field where innumerable face shapes, skin types, bone structures and eye and lip contours exist. What is right for one woman is hardly ever right for another (Gibbs, 1985, p. 22). Lutens possesses an immense reverence for the cult of beauty but he understands that there are two million types of women in existence and so he has tried to create a universal solution; a woman who nobody directly identifies with, yet a woman who everybody admires. She doesn't belong to a particular race, country or culture. Is she Oriental or Caucasian? A real

woman or a painted mask?

My work operates on a universal level. I have discussed my work with women from extremely different cultures and the women of my imagination touches their consciousness. (Airisto, 1994)

This approach is completely different to the supermodel approach because the supermodels are mainly representations of how beauty is perceived in the Western world. They belong to a certain class, culture and ideal of beauty. The essential difference between the *Shiseido* model and the conventional, stereotypical model employed by most cosmetic companies, lies in how the viewer reacts to and identifies with each of them. In general, the supermodel is presented as the beauty statement of the moment; as a role model for the viewer to emulate. Companies pay supermodels and beautiful celebrities millions to promote their brand of product because they have the power that comes from recognition, reinforced images that carry the echo of all the images that have been published before. In employing these models companies invite consumers to trade places with them. It projects the idea that by using certain products one will have the chance to be as beautiful as a certain supermodel or celebrity. Most cosmetics advertising revolves around this identification idea which does have successful short term effects but which, in reality, only leads to frustration and disappointment because the consumer can never resemble the model.

Lutens was asked by *Cosmetique News* whether or not he believed in encouraging the customer to identify with the image, considering that his own enigmatic character is not really a role model consumers would want to resemble. He replied,

Indeed I do not. I think 'identifying' is a delusion. It can only be enormously frustrating for the woman who falls for it because they can never live up to the image. They end up lying to themselves.
(Prim, 1995, p. 21)

It is obvious that Lutens' approach operates on a completely different level to most other cosmetic promotional advertising. Elegance is of the essence for the artist who is not seeking to make big waves. The latest *Shiseido* perfumes are not going to be promoted by

leading models. Lutens believes that you can be distinguished without being ostentatious (Madelénat, 1994, p. 64).

Compare any *Shiseido* image to any of these, (fig. 2.2, a-g):

- a Supermodel Cindy Crawford for *Revlon*
- b Supermodel Helena Christiansen for *Covergirl*
- c Supermodel Linda Evangelista for *Yves Saint Laurent*
- d Supermodel Kate Moss for *Calvin Klein*
- e Model and actress Isabella Rossalini for *Lancome*
- f Actress Elizabeth Hurley for *Estée Lauder*
- g Actress Andie Mac Dowell for *l'Oréal*

In all these examples, the celebrity or supermodel is personifying a brand and promoting themselves as the result of wearing the product; ie. *Revlon* is Cindy Crawford, so wear *Revlon* products and be Cindy Crawford. All these models are familiar to the general public. They are real people so the viewer knows that it is humanly possible to look as well as they do. This approach is misleading and ultimately disappointing. The woman in the advertisement will always seem to be superior to the viewer so basically the product offers you a chance to compete with the supermodels - a competition you will never win.

The *Shiseido* woman, however, is not so real even though her presence is documented in the photographs. She has no name or known personality. She is not a celebrity whom one could idolise or desire to be like. Serge Lutens plays on distance. He describes his model as “more a generator of dreams than of purchases” (Petkanas, 1992, p. 14). She was not created as a prototype for women to follow. Lutens humourously states that he should have a disclaimer like in the movies - “any resemblance to persons living or dead is strictly coincidental” (Frey, 1994, p. 125). There is too much distance between the *Shiseido* model and the viewer to evoke identification. The viewer will say either ‘it’s beautiful’ or ‘it’s ugly’ but she won’t say ‘it’s me’ or ‘it’s not me’. There is too much of a difference physically; her skin is too fair and her eyes too sleek to really be human. Lutens says that she is seen like an icon in a chapel or a painting on a wall.

If you can see a Piero della Francesca without walking out as a Madonna and if you can admire a Picasso without wanting to grow three noses, then certainly you can be motivated by a woman in a

Shiseido advertisement without wanting to become her.
(Petkanas, 1992, p. 14)

Lutens is more interested in creating an image than something directly consumer orientated. Even though all women strive to be fabulous beings, there is no fundamental need to resemble an image that one likes or to project a certain image of womanhood put forward by some magazines. In an interview with Lenita Airisto of *Trendi* Lutens was asked his opinion on the following magazine headlines:

The American magazine *Vogue* proclaimed in May 1994: "The new fashionable woman is strong and sexy. She is a gifted and level-headed sex bomb." The French magazine *Elle* said in September 1994: "A superwoman is pure fire and femininity. She operates like this around the clock." The woman portrayed through these headlines isn't flying around on a magic carpet as in Lutens' imagery, but is flying a helicopter. She has taken over men's place at the centre of events and power. Lutens response to these magazines was:

I don't like examples and I don't like guidelines. I don't require or demand anything from women. I dream! These kind of stories constructed from clichés are dreadful. Woman power is not based on these kinds of banalities, rather it is much broader.
(Airisto, 1994)

Lutens has tried to present his own philosophies on women through his art. Some people are intrigued by his imagery, some understand it, others may not like it at all. But that does not mean that they will not go to the *Shiseido* counters because even if they don't like it, their curiosity is aroused. Lutens leaves it to the consumer to bring her own identity to it. He prefers to suggest ideas and leave it to each woman to adapt what suits her best because each person knows their own reality.

It is fair to say, however, that just as *Revlon* has Cindy Crawford and *Estée Lauder*, Liz Hurley, *Shiseido* also has a face to front its advertising campaign. In fact, it is several faces evolving from one concept. So, in this way, it approaches its advertising in the same manner. The *Shiseido* woman, however, does not belong to a fashion or a time. Lutens believes in magical women; those who leave behind a permanent imprint (Madame Figaro, 1994).

She is absolute. She is never out of fashion. She is fragile and protected. She is not always part of life. (Rochon, 1994, p. 27)

For centuries, courtly artists attempted to render elegant figures as if they were eternal icons, displayed in as timeless a harmony as possible. Lutens has also tried to do this. The *Shiseido* woman is not a part of the everchanging ideal of beauty. She does not have a hairstyle or haircolour that could have come from a particular period of fashion. She is never photographed wearing clothes from a certain time or fashion era that would become out-dated in the future. As a face she will live eternally. In ten years, *Revlon* will have to rely on a new face to sell their product because in ten years Cindy Crawford will no longer be the stereotypical ideal of beauty that she is today. If the waif look comes back into fashion twenty years from now, *Calvin Klein* will have to find a new Kate Moss. The *Shiseido* woman is timeless. Her only identity is simply that of her own, nameless, mystical and mysterious. She seems unreal yet we know she exists. She is often photographed to look as though she has no body; as though she is merely a spirit. She portrays a certain mood, although she is never extremely happy nor extremely sad. She conveys mixed emotions and not a definite state of mind. She is not portrayed as a sex symbol; *Shiseido*, unlike many cosmetic companies, does not equate supermodels, sex and blatant sexuality with the selling of makeup.

In fact, the *Shiseido* woman is in many ways desexualized. Lutens plays down the sensuousness of the body; the model becomes thin, frail and even anorexic looking. The body becomes a flat abstract shape and appears to lack human flesh (fig. 4.1, a-c). A strong contrast is established between the two-dimensional silhouette of the body and the three-dimensional face (fig. 4.2, d). In some images the body even disappears and the model becomes completely desexualized (fig. 3.30). The physical aspects of the *Shiseido* woman are in stark contrast to the physicality and sexuality displayed by models such as Cindy Crawford for *Revlon*. In one *Shiseido* advertisement, that of the perfume 'Féminité du Bois' (fig. 2.3), Lutens has actually photographed a nude model but she even lacks sexuality. Her skin tone has been altered to cold unnatural hues and her body seems very thin and frail. This photograph depicts more of an artistic nude than a blatantly sexual image. This lack of sexuality ensures that distance is created between the model

and the viewer.

Lutens, throughout his career in the beauty industry, has managed to develop his own unique promotional concept. This essentially non-identifiable woman, who has fronted *Shiseido* since 1980, may now be a representation of the future of fashion and cosmetic advertising. The theory which Lutens developed may be becoming more widespread. In the late seventies, Lutens covered the faces of his models (*fig. 2.4, a*), perhaps to emphasise their lack of fame and supermodel identity. At his fashion show in 1995, Martin Margiela, a Belgian designer, did exactly the same thing, (*fig. 2.4, b*). One reviewer of this show commented:

There were no sashaying Cindys, Christys or Naomis, and the nonfamous faces he used were veiled so they wouldn't distract from the clothes. Will other designers follow suit? (Self, 1995, p. 22)

Indeed, Lutens' work may have inspired others to abandon the supermodel as a means of promotion. In a recent issue of *The Sunday Times Magazine*, Stuart Wavell wrote about the extinction of the supermodel species and how some New York designers initiated its demise. Could the era of the supermodel be coming to an end?

The species faces fragmentation and, worst of all, competition. Competition has always ranked high in the pathology of mass extinction, but this comes from the most unlikely quarter. Their rivals on the New York catwalks are a monstrous regiment of ordinary looking women. (Wavell, 1995, p.5)

Amy Bongay, president of the Models Guild, also expresses her concerns on this matter: "It's a terrible sign. It will be the death of this profession if designers start using *real* people" (Wavell, 1995, p. 4).

Lutens' focus on a non-identity face is further emphasised by his frequent use of masks (*fig. 2.5, a-d*). "The whole history of the human face may be summed up in two words, the mask and the face. The latter is that which nature has endowed us with, the former is that to which we wish to approximate" Roy Strong (Harrison, 1987). Through his use of masks Lutens could possibly be expressing the idea that the makeup is also a

mask so, therefore, the person behind the mask could be anyone; it could be the person who is looking at the image. This proposal takes away any notions of identifying with the model because, in effect, all one sees is a mask. Lutens is not asking 'which model you would like to be' but 'which mask you would like to wear?'

Makeup is an instrument- it is not an end in itself. I would say that makeup is a social mask. Today's woman uses makeup to play different roles in society. *Lutens* (Hellin, 1994, p. 10)

Makeup presents a woman with the opportunity to play a certain role or project a certain image at a given time. Lutens isn't trying to provide the public with the images usually associated with cosmetic advertising. He is simply portraying his own thoughts through his model. All he asks is that people respond to it and interpret it in their own way.

Whether they love it or hate it, I don't care; as long as they react to it. They have to feel some kind of emotion, a sensitivity. Being indifferent is the ultimate kiss of death. (Elle, 1993, p. 69)

3

A WORLD OF DREAMS

aspects of escapism and the fairytale.

This chapter aims to draw together a series of Lutens' images and discuss how they all relate to the one theme, that of escapism, and how Lutens portrays various wonderlands in order to distance both the model and the imagery from reality. The imagery is categorised into specific themes and discussed speculatively in relation to possible inspirational material.

"An image is theatre as is the imagination. Both are stages that we endlessly fill with characters." *Serge Lutens* (Frey, 1994, p. 125)

Lutens' studio is his theatre and his model a character in his production. She becomes an actress in his organised game. The photographs could be stills from a film or performance art or even images from a dream. It has been said that a shooting session with Lutens is not unlike a secret ceremony (Madame Figaro, 1994). His preparations take hours during which he claims to condition the model to ease gently into whatever character she is about to play. He also uses music to create the atmosphere:

When my model is attired and made up and has turned into her character, she and I enter that final stage. Music takes us there, with a different tempo for every photographic theme. I may use opera, jazz or a polka. (Madame Figaro, 1994)

For example: *Fig. 3.13* to the music *Monts et Merveilles* from the original soundtrack of *Les Visiteurs du Soir* by Marcel Carné, *Fig. 3.14* to Charles Trenet humming *Swing Troubadour*, *Fig. 3.20* to jazz from the twenties and *Fig. 4.2, c* to ethnic music and drums from Burundi (Lutens, 1992).

Lutens' entire approach is theatrical. Theatre can be compared to photography in that both can present an illusion of reality for the viewer. Acting is a form of escapism; it places the model into another world, another situation, into a completely new character whose life is being narrated from behind the scenes. The viewer is offered a glimpse into another world. This results in the creation of a mystical fantasy land. In fact, it all becomes like a fairytale.

Advertisements often function on the level of a daydream; they are founded on a subconscious desire for a better world. As a result, elements of the fairytale are frequently used by film makers and advertisers as a representation of the perfect place; a place that as a child we all believed to exist. To an adult, the fairytale represents an impossibility, an imaginary place where absolutely no social, marital or financial problems prevail. Through his model, Lutens exploits the power of the human imagination and the natural desire for such a place to exist. The *Shiseido* woman invites the viewer into the fantasy to which she belongs. She becomes an unearthly creature, an invention of the imagination. So instead of offering us a chance to identify with a supermodel, Lutens provides us with an escape route to a world of dreams, fantasy and fairytale. He expresses his desire to overcome all that is conventional:

Always I am compelled by the dreams dreamed by the utopians;
anything that transcends the everyday to become mystical and
fantastical. (Rochon, 1994, p. 27)

This expression of an eccentric, imaginary place is a key feature of Lutens' entire design concept. He seems to base his fantastical imagery around three areas of enchantment: the fairytale, the circus and outer space.

The Fairytale

Traditional fairytales are familiar and reminiscent of a worry-free childhood. The characters are simply fabrications of the imagination who only ever exist in a positive, content environment. Lutens recreates such an environment as a wonderland in which to situate his models. A lot of the imagery suggests that he may have been influenced by traditional symbols and characters associated with specific fairytales.

The title of Fig. 3.1, *A Queen For Alice*, immediately suggests the influence behind this image. *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll is a well known fairytale and the famous illustrations by Tenniel are synonymous with it. Although not extremely obvious at first glance, Lutens' image does, in fact, bear a lot of resemblance to Tenniel's illustrations for the story. The model's costume contains many elements similar to those of the characters in *Alice in Wonderland*, such as her collar, sleeves and cuffs, (fig. 3.2, a-c). The playing card characters (fig. 3.3), however, were obviously the primary source of inspiration behind this image. This would explain the two dimensional quality which is a prominent feature of this photograph.

For his Fall / Winter 1994 range, Serge Lutens created colours of enchanted nights of nuance and mirage, woven of starlight and spun out of gold (Beauty Fashion, 1994, p. 22). *A Glimpse of Gold*, (fig. 3.4), carries strong reminders of *Arabian Nights* and even of Walt Disney's animated film *Aladdin*, which was released in the cinema in 1992. There are many visual similarities between Lutens' imagery and that of *Aladdin*, (fig. 3.5), the main one being the magic lamp. However, in Lutens' case it releases the magic of Shiseido makeup and not a genie (fig. 3.6). The model is placed on a magic carpet, implying a wonderland of some kind and the inclusion of so many stars in this image and on the model's costume, (fig. 3.7), accentuates this idea of an unearthly place. The main influence on this fairytale-like image may have been the Islamic lands and Eastern mythology, possibly even the illustrations for *Arabian Nights* by Kay Nielson and Edmund Dulac, who, like Lutens, were more interested in portraying a world of fantasy than one of reality. The heroic female of the story *Scherezade*, as illustrated by Nielson in fig. 3.8,

may have been the inspiration for this particular portrayal of the *Shiseido* woman. Another image by Lutens' entitled *Subtle Contrast* (fig 3.9) also evokes strong connections with Eastern imagery. Lutens explains:

In my fantasies, perfume originated in the Orient. Not in Asia or India but in those countries through which silk and perfume traders journeyed. I am speaking of the Islamic Lands which look like a gigantic flying carpet carrying all the extraordinary fragrances of the *Thousand and One Nights*. A world of precious stones, of harems, of redolent gardens, of gazelles. (Paquet, 1994)

In an interview with Lenita Airisto of the Finnish magazine *Trendi*, Lutens reiterates that these wonderlands are products of his own imagination and dreams:

L.A.- Mr. Serge Lutens, in your fairytale world, a woman soars through the starry heavens on a flying carpet. What is this woman thinking and dreaming about?

S.L.- She is not the one who is dreaming, I am. I express my own thoughts, feelings and dreams in everything. I show a woman from my own imagination who has nothing to do with anything.

(Airisto, 1994)

Just as some scenes in *Alice in Wonderland* revolve around a medieval court-like situation, so too do many of Lutens' fairytale images. A variety of kings, queens, pages and court jesters frequent the photographs in an array of colours and costumes. Many seem to originate from this medieval concept. The image of the model with the two knights, (fig. 3.10), is consistent with the underlying idea of the fairytale. This particular image evokes the notion of knights in shining armour, the fairytale ideal of the perfect man. In this image and a few of the others, the knights seem to be protecting the model, which suggests that she may represent a queen. She is also positioned at the top of the image, hierarchically correct for her position of power. This could be a portrayal of the *Shiseido* woman as the one in power. She has also, in imagery from a previous series, been portrayed as a bee (fig. 3.11), possibly another reference to a queen, the queen bee. (This image is actually one of a series based on insects. Interestingly, each image contains a species of insect where the female dominates such as the preying mantis and

the spider; possibly another reference to the *Shiseido* woman as the one in power.) The use of courtly characters indicates that the imagery may be inspired by the game of chess, the royal game of life, in which the queen represents the moon and the spirit, the feminine principle. The frequent inclusion of a heart symbol may be suggesting the Queen of Hearts character from traditional playing cards, symbolising love, friendship and the powers of life (Cooper, 1982). Maybe this is supposed to evoke feelings in the viewer that, behind her cool exterior, the *Shiseido* woman does, in fact, possess human qualities. All these game situations are familiar aspects of Lutens' work.

All this can be considered, for the greater part, as a game. I go from cards to dice, then onto checkers and jokers. One picture generates the next. (Highlights, 1993, p. 62)

There are also several references to chivalry and the medieval theme in some of Lutens' successive images such as the sword, the crests and the shields, (fig. 3.12, a-c). The model is also featured dressed as a page, (fig. 3.13), and as a jester, (fig. 3.14). The latter image, however, is also reminiscent of *Punch and Judy*; the puppet-like prop reminds one of the fantastical land of puppets. It also seems to act like a mirror image or mask of the model, evoking a fairytale character, especially considering the inclusion of such elflike ears.

The *Inoui Colours* campaign, 1988, is Lutens' ultimate fairytale imagery. The model herself is portrayed as a fairylike creature, far removed from a human existence, (fig. 3.15, a&b). Fairies symbolise the supra-normal powers of the soul. They fulfil humble tasks yet possess extraordinary powers to bestow gifts and to cause wonderful things to appear out of thin air. Could this be a reference to the powers of *Shiseido* makeup? Fairies have also been referred to as white, green and black ladies, terms which are linked to the epithets applied to medieval knights (Becker, 1994). It is, however, not known whether Lutens intended this connection between his imagery.

The *Inoui Colours* series of images suggests such things as nature and the seasons. The leaves and colours evoke a very Autumnal feel in fig. 3.16, a-c. Even the type on the advertisements seems inspired by trees and nature. All the creatures and fairies in these images belong in a faraway wonderland. They are unearthly and most definitely

fabrications of Lutens' imagination and not models with whom the consumer should identify. The positive tones of *fig. 3.17* are replaced with an eerie shade of night time in *fig. 3.18*. In this image, the fairies are situated within a cluster of giant mushrooms, emphasising their inhuman size. One of them is even portrayed as a ladybird, a completely unrealistic feat. The introduction here of the creature clad totally in black is possibly a suggestion of death. The face is deathly white and the stance of this fairy implies that it is preying upon unsuspecting victims. When asked about his indirect references to death by *Cosmetique News*, Lutens replied,

In poetry death is represented as a woman with elegance, intelligence, a personality and even sexuality and eroticism. Death is not all morbidity and sadness; death is also romantic. (Prim, 1995, p. 21)

The model as a fairy in *fig. 3.19* may have been inspired by Tinkerbell, the nymph in the fairytale of Peter Pan, who wore the same style of costume and who also expressed thoughts on the death of fairies. In Spielberg's 1991 version of this classic story, Tinkerbell says: "Every time someone says they don't believe in fairies, somewhere there's a fairy that falls down dead"

All these references to magical places and mystical characters appear to be attempts by Lutens to distance the model from reality. The fairytale wonderland, however, is not the only home for the *Shiseido* woman.

The Circus

The circus is an enchanting place where fictional people become real; the clowns come to life and the acrobats perform what would seem like impossible feats. Like the fairytale, the circus is a theatrical production involving a variety of characters and costumes. It, too, is a kind of wonderland, making it a perfect escapist theme for Lutens.

The first image, from a campaign in 1991, is that of *The Ringmaster* (fig. 3.20). The model is photographed wearing a creation styled to be like the ringmaster's costume, only hers is essentially two-dimensional. All the obvious elements are included: the shirt collar, bowtie, suit jacket and pinstripe trousers. Lutens has also included a moon and stars, perhaps references to magic. The second circus-influenced image, also from Fall / Winter 1991, is that of *The Juggler* (fig. 3.21). The office of 'king's juggler' was in existence until the time of Henry XIII (Hugill, 1984), so this image is also linked to the medieval theme. The juggling balls in Lutens' image take the form of small clowns, not unlike a unique collection of eggs painted with clowns faces (fig. 3.22). These eggs were part of a London exhibition held in 1968 to mark the two-hundredth anniversary of the first circus (Hugill, 1984).

Another image reminiscent of the medieval circus is that of *Young and Devilish*, (fig. 3.23), where the model is dressed as a devil. In medieval times, the devil character became a principle comic character. Religious thinkers at the time decided that drama was a valuable way of driving home moral teaching and, as a result, the church provided an environment in which the clown could flourish. Due to their preoccupation with the devil and eternal damnation, the devil was included to inspire fear of hell but proceeded to become the main entertainer (Hugill, 1984). Lutens' devil, however, wears a costume similar to those worn by his Pierrot clowns, unlike her medieval predecessors who were a lot more fierce.

The last of Lutens' circus imagery involves clowns; not traditional circus

clowns but Pierrot clowns which, interestingly, also relate to the medieval courtly life, namely the jester. This portrayal of the Shiseido woman is becoming somewhat of a trademark. Many of the more recent campaigns feature the model in a Pierrot-like costume, including the Fall / Winter 1995 theme of Red Madness, (fig. 3.24), and the 1994 *Art Play* campaign (fig. 3.25). Fig. 3.26, also from the *Art Play* campaign, depicts the model in a pose traditionally adopted by the now over commercialised and somewhat kitsch image of the Pierrot clown. Comparisons between Lutens' image and a typical commercially produced picture, (fig. 3.27), show many similarities including the style of the hair, the collar, the blushed cheeks, the heavily outlined eyes and fine eyebrows and the position of her right hand. Lutens' 'pierrot' imagery, however, manages to avoid looking kitsch and over-used. This may be due to the fact that the image is transferred from its traditional illustrative form to the medium of photography. The Pierrots in fig. 3.28 are similar but this image also includes Lutens' moon and stars symbolism. On the left of the image, the balls may represent juggling balls, obviously associated with clowns, yet it becomes like a crystal ball in the hands of the model on the right. The moon and stars once again indicate magic and mysticism and the theme of escape and fantasy reemerges.

Outer Space and Technology

Lutens' third escape route to fantasy is to the land of outer space. This highlights once again that the Shiseido woman is essentially an unearthly, mystical being, for she is now placed right out of this world into the open universe of stars and distant planets. As a result, there is no fear of any viewer being able to identify with or desiring to become this extraterrestrial.

The *Eclat Future* series of images, Autumn / Winter 1991, evokes such things as *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*. The first of the three, (fig. 3.29), features the model with what could be a rocket or spacecraft of some kind. Behind her is her destination; a place far from this world. It is interesting to note that Lutens continues to incorporate his initial circle motif in the background of this image: perhaps as a reminder of the original Shiseido corporate identity, (fig. 2.1). The second image in this series, (fig. 3.30), shows the model to be further into outer space. This is indicated by the relative size of the planets here compared to the previous image. The Shiseido woman becomes simply an isolated head with no eyes to display emotion of any kind; a head isolated from humanity and this world. Her magenta headpiece is reminiscent of the one worn by *Darth Vader*, (fig. 3.31), from the internationally acclaimed series of *Star Wars* films. This disembodied head also resembles some kind of spacecraft. Lastly, the third image, (fig. 3.32), also features an isolated head but this time the whole face is visible and an isolated hand becomes part of the composition; visually far removed from everyday life on earth. The planet here is larger in relation to the model, suggesting that she is now even further away than she was in the previous image. All of these images play on distance; Lutens wants to create distance between the consumer and the model in question.

The Autumn / Winter 1993 collection, entitled *OE + M^{7X} = !!!*, *Esprit and Humour*, by Serge Lutens, revolves around a theme based on technology and physics and contains imagery linked to his outer space theme. These images are all about bringing advanced technology into high glamour. Fig. 3.33, *High Voltage Beauty*, as the name implies, visually suggests a lot of wires, circuits and electricity. The model's headgear

seems very technology orientated, even somewhat robot-like. This image may be one of Lutens' indirect references to death, this particular image evoking electrocution. The second photograph in this series, *A Radar for Eyecatching*, (fig. 3.34), also suggests technology and outer space. Both of these images, even considering the possible reference to death in *High Voltage Beauty*, seem to show a humourous side to Lutens' approach. They are unlike anything ever done by a cosmetics company. Lutens' ideas here are bordering on the bizarre and the quirky copylines accompanying the imagery suggest that maybe he has produced this entire series as a skit.

Fig. 3.35 contains elements which relate to physics and science. The surround of the face is reminiscent of molecular structures, the movement of electrons in space, or even the movement of the planets as they revolve around the earth. The final image, fig. 3.36, also suggests a scientific origin. The title, *Elegance, A Simple Equation*, is illustrated literally through the model's headpiece which has been constructed with segments of letters and numbers evoking chemical equations. Lutens expressed his idea of elegance as "a woman wearing a simple black dress and one huge piece of jewellery" (Hellin, 1994, p. 10) so maybe this is what inspired this image. This science and technology approach may also represent Shiseido's expanding empire:

Shiseido was founded in 1872 as the first western style pharmacy in Japan. Today our interests span beyond cosmetics to the fields of pharmaceuticals and the life sciences. (Marie Claire, 1994, p. 150)

Lutens' application of ideas to the fairytale, the circus, outer space and technology as escapist themes, proves to be quite a successful and innovative approach. His portrayal of an escape to a certain fantasy land is very unlike the conventional supermodel approach to advertising, employed by most cosmetic companies. It alleviates the problem of the consumer's tendency to identify with the model and the ultimate disappointment which ensues as a result. It is, however, not only Lutens' use of these wonderlands that creates this distance between the model and the consumer, but also the fact that he approaches imagemaking as art, which in itself could be considered to be removed from everyday life.

4

THE COMMERCIAL ARTIST

symbolism and the influence of fine art

This chapter aims to discuss the influence of fine art on Lutens' work and the compositional and symbolic qualities of some of the images. It also discusses how Lutens portrays his models and imagery as works of art as opposed to commercial statements. This approach, like the escapist theme in chapter three, is also an attempt to distance the model from reality.

"The work of Serge Lutens appears first as a style, a style so strong it opens up a new world" J.C. Lemagny (Lutens, 1992)

Serge Lutens is first and foremost an artist. Over the years, he has developed a personal path and image by experimenting in all types and forms of artistic expression. He is responsible for the successful application of art to the demands of an international commercial venture. What interests him is making a picture and not something directly consumer orientated (Bauret, 1987, p. 16). Lutens has replaced sex and shock tactics with art as a means to a successful advertising campaign. He relies on the potency of the visual experience to sell the product. The universal artistic language of Lutens transcends language barriers and the Western ideals of beauty epitomized by the supermodels. Art itself was a risky route to take, especially when so many people don't even try to understand it or react positively to it. Lutens, however, likes this daringly different approach.

Being daring does not mean trying to shock people; it's a matter of expressing what you really feel and making no concessions.
(Prim, 1995, p. 23)

Lutens represents a polar contrast to the unrivaled monotony so typical of some commercial design practiced today. This may reflect a Japanese influence on his work.

Japan is famous for what is often described as 'mood' advertising, with its emphasis on open-ended, surreal and emotional messages rather than direct product identification. It seeks to create a feeling; to elicit an emotional response (Garret, 1991, p. 20)

Yoshiharu Fukuhara, Chairman of Shiseido, believes that Lutens' affiliation with Shiseido has been a fruitful one and that Lutens has created works of important historic value (Fukuhara, 1990, p. 124). He has said that "an image is not only visual, it must evoke real contents, have real significance" (Petkanas, 1992, p. 17). From the very beginning, Lutens has created images with resonance for Shiseido. The original identity, (*fig. 2.1*), contains a lot of relevant symbolism representing the philosophies of the company. The red circle, apart from its obvious connection with the Japanese flag, is also an Oriental synonym for harmony (Petkanas, 1992, p. 17), and symbolises timelessness, unity and perfection. The circle is also often associated with the moon, symbolic of that which is gentle and feminine. The red colour symbolises power, revolution and a new beginning- Lutens was a new beginning for Shiseido and the creator of a revolution in makeup. The black background may also have been chosen for its symbolic qualities. In the Orient, it is the colour of the feminine principle, Yin, which is one half of the Yin and Yang symbol and, like the circle, corresponds to the absolute (Becker, 1994). This original image also portrays the Shiseido woman in her most primitive form; a long, pale face, black lined eyes and defined lips.

Lutens' book, *L'esprit de Serge Lutens*, includes the thoughts of some people who are involved in the arts. One is Ushio Amagatsu, a choreographer, who believes that "Obsession is important in art." The Shiseido woman is the focus of Lutens' obsession. She is his ideal woman and, to him, she is a work of art. The models used in his imagery have been transformed into art and pure structure: they have been elevated out of reality into the distant world of art. Like a figure in a painting, the Shiseido woman is there to be admired and not emulated. She is the reason for Lutens' art and she is the focal point of every image he has created for Shiseido. He believes that "to perceive the beauty of a woman is to learn to recognise a work of art" (Petkanas, 1992, p. 13). Lutens portrays a philosophy of beauty through the language of art, through the Shiseido woman. Her steady gaze eliminates any overly emotive expression- the model's own feelings must not

interfere with Lutens' inspiration. Lutens believes that the image's appeal lies in what it doesn't reveal rather than what it does (American Photo, 1994, p. 42).

Lutens often rests his models on pedestals, placed like sculptures or pieces of art on display (fig. 4.1, a-e). The models themselves then become the pedestals for sculptural works of art (fig. 4.2, a-d). They even become like ancient Greek statuary (fig. 4.3, a-c), timeless symbols of nobility and classicism. Lutens has also created a series of images which have been highly influenced by the fine art movements and which have formed some of Shiseido's major advertising campaigns in the past. Previously, in 1972, both the Guggenheim Museum of New York and the Van Gogh Museum of Amsterdam housed an exhibition of a Lutens' series based on the masters of painting showing that fine art has always had a profound influence on his work. When asked by *Highlights* where he gets the inspiration for his collections, Lutens replied:

From intuition. It's like a mysterious force in me. I never use an image or theme with great precision but rather I intensify my emotions by focusing on my personal desires. The starting point may be expressionism or cubism, it doesn't really matter as it will be so transformed that it will finally become the expression of something distinctly Lutens. (Highlights, 1993, p. 62)

It is true that all his images form a collection based on a clearly identifiable Lutens style, but most of the time other influences are also evident. Lutens, however, suggests that all external inspirational or source material becomes completely transformed:

I generally absorb art, music and art movements globally and then translate them in my own way to the point where the original influence is forgotten. (Highlights, 1993, p. 62)

But how could such influential material be forgotten or not be visible, especially when the collections are titled with reference to certain art movements and when visually there are some obvious links with artists and works of art from particular periods?

Firstly, the collection from 1985, entitled *Baroque et Poesie*, (fig. 4.4, a&b),

with the rich golden and burgundy tones, certainly expresses the highly ornate and classical, extravagant qualities of the Baroque period. A collection of cubist inspired images dominated in 1988, (fig. 2.5, a,c&d). The masks seem very reminiscent of the faces in Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*, (fig. 4.5), with the assemblage of fragmented geometric forms. Even the colours in fig. 2.5, a are similar. The series entitled *The Suprematists*, 1989/90, (fig. 4.6, a-d), evokes the abstract geometric qualities of the Suprematist movement which was an experimental trend in Russian art at the beginning of this century. The work of some of the artists of this period seems to have highly influenced Lutens' imagery, in particular the design for a mural by Nikolai Suetin (fig. 4.7) and a piece entitled *Proun* by El Lissitzky (fig. 4.8). The former bears an obvious resemblance to the structure in fig. 4.6, b and the colours and shapes in the latter are those predominantly used by Lutens in his Suprematist series. Lutens' collection, *The Minimalists* (fig. 4.9, a-d), 1989/90, also draws inspiration from the art movement of the same name. This is evident from the exclusive use of simple forms and structures, the restrained use of colour and the minimalist portrayal of the model, showing only her head.

Lutens' use of fine art movements as inspiration for his work is by no means to be considered a negative aspect. Each of the artists and art movements he has been influenced by are recognised by their own personal style but Lutens' work expresses an individual and distinctive style, very different from all of theirs. His photographs display a beautiful sense of symmetry and proportion and they are an interesting combination of various styles, colours and backgrounds which translate the familiar into new and exciting images.

His models convey a strong sense of grace and elegance, their bodies moulded into flat abstract shapes. Although it sometimes seems as though the body is absent, it is, in fact, according to Lutens, used as a kind of writing or calligraphy, "Calligraphy with a head if you like" (Bauret, 1987, p. 16). Lutens has a preference for long, delicate faces with fine, rather long noses in the Modigliani or Kisling tradition with a pointed aspect (Bauret, 1987, p. 17). It is the frequent strong contrast between this ethereal, flawless, white face and the stark black backgrounds, (fig. 4.10, a&b), that stamp these images with the Lutens trademark. His choice of colour and composition are entirely

personal.

Photography and painting have two real dimensions but many great artists have expressed all their art by the simple conquest of the third dimension. *J.C. Lemagny* (Lutens, 1992)

Lutens' work is an unusual synthesis of the second and the third dimension. His characters pass from two-dimensional life on paper into a new dimension. While his models seem to belong to reality, to the third dimension, they always retain a trace of their origins in two-dimensional art through the flatness of colour and shape. Since two-dimensional space is not the space in which people live, this two-dimensional quality distances the model from reality, just as the fairytale characters do, and therefore also serves the purpose of not creating a stereotype of beauty with which the consumer could identify.

As previously discussed, the faces of Lutens' models often resemble masks, once again focusing on two-dimensional surfaces which replace the reality they conceal but which sometimes result in more striking images. The face veiled with muslin, (*fig. 4.11*), is both erased and exalted. The juxtaposition of an actual mask and the model's face, (*fig. 2.5, a,b,c&d*) causes ambiguity. Where before the model was created as a mask, as art, she now seems more real in contrast to the mask beside her. However, maybe Lutens is making a comparison rather than a contrast, suggesting that she is, in fact, wearing a mask despite her realistic appearance and that the mask she is wearing is one of makeup so it can be altered and changed. If this is the case, the Shiseido woman can never reveal a true identity.

Lutens, however, has on occasion revealed some of his own identity through his images. Just as many artists visually refer to their homeland, Lutens too blatantly expresses some elements of his national identity. Where Monet painted *Rouen Cathedral*, Lutens has photographed a model wearing the Eiffel Tower, (*fig. 4.12*). Even the colours coincide with those on the French flag. In His *Artplay* series, 1994, the models are wearing blue and white striped creations and beret-like hats, a costume often associated

with France, (fig. 3.25). Lutens works between a Japanese world and a Western culture so along with his symbols of France, there are also some elements symbolic of Japan. Apart from the original Shiseido identity, (fig. 2.1), which has already been discussed, the Flower series from the *Moisture Mist* campaign, 1982, contains interesting symbolic qualities, which may not even have been intentional on Lutens' part, (fig. 4.13, a&b). The reoccurrence of the circle, the Oriental synonym for harmony, is evident in both images but the blue flowers contain the strongest symbolic attributes. In Japan, the art of flower arranging, *Ikebana*, has developed into a form of symbolic expression. The blue flower is a legendary symbol of mysticism and romanticism and is associated with dreams and mystery (Cooper, 1982), qualities all linked with Lutens' portrayal of Shiseido.

These attributes of fine art found in Lutens' work reiterate his own view that he is more of an artist than a designer. The obvious parallels found between his work and some of the fine art movements show that he is highly influenced by the work of other artists. Each image he produces, however, conveys his own distinct style and personal trademark. Lutens has proved that it is possible to successfully fuse artistic creativity with the commerciality of the advertising industry.

CONCLUSION

Since he began working with *Shiseido* in 1980, Serge Lutens has developed a distinct and individual style. He has introduced a new genre of advertising photography for the cosmetics industry unlike anything else in that market sector. His extensive body of work is an innovative blend of commerciality and personal expression.

Lutens' constant endeavor to distance his imagery from reality is a key feature of his work. This is evident in his unconventional approach to portraying the female which is in strong contrast to the contemporary ideal of the supermodel. The *Shiseido* woman has been elevated out of reality to become an unidentifiable face and a somewhat desexualized body as opposed to a familiar stereotype of beauty. She is an icon rather than an idol. Through discussion and the analysis of examples, it was discovered that this approach has more successful longterm effects: firstly, it alleviates the problem of the viewer attempting to emulate the model and the inevitable disappointment which ensues as a result and, secondly, it establishes a timeless, definite corporate identity and continuity that integrates successive promotional campaigns.

Lutens' world of dreams and fairytales offers an escape route from the real world, a common aspect of contemporary advertising. Designers frequently create images which offer the viewer an escape from reality by visually equating a reward of some kind with the use of a certain product. They imply promises such as a model figure, a more exciting life or even previously undiscovered sex appeal. Lutens avoids such empty promises by distancing the model and the image far enough from reality to deter any realistic associations. It is not only the themes he chooses to work within, but his style and composition that allow the imagery to be successfully distanced from humankind. The juxtaposition of the two- and three-dimensional surfaces creates a world where fantasy and reality appear to merge. The two-dimensional flat shapes, however, ensure that the image will always retain some elements of its fantastical origin, thus emphasising the fact that Lutens is only presenting the viewer with a world of illusion and not reality itself.

The choice of art over sex as a medium of advertising immediately distinguishes Lutens' work from competitors in the cosmetics industry. By not using the lure of sexuality, Lutens also diverts the possible connection between the beautiful body and the purchase of Shiseido cosmetics. He creates a mask-like look for the model as the focal point of each image. The visual and even artistic qualities of these masks, inspired by both fairytale characters and fine art movements, emphasise the fact that it is makeup that is being promoted and not the face of the model in question.

Each image Lutens produces conveys his unwavering enthusiasm and passion for beauty, as well as his constant desire to create the perfect woman. Through his exploration of the imagination and realisation of dreams, Lutens has not only created an immensely successful corporate campaign for Shiseido but also a series of mystical masterpieces which continue to intrigue and inspire.

The white woman. A crystalline fabric which ensnares all dreams.
She leaves her image behind - what happiness has she given him?
Creating her again and again, he remains quiet for a moment, feeding
on her. But then strikes another match, screaming 'Again...' To see
and possess nothing except what is left of dreams. A collection of
frozen treasures. (Privilege, 1994, p. 46)

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PLATES



Fig. 1.1

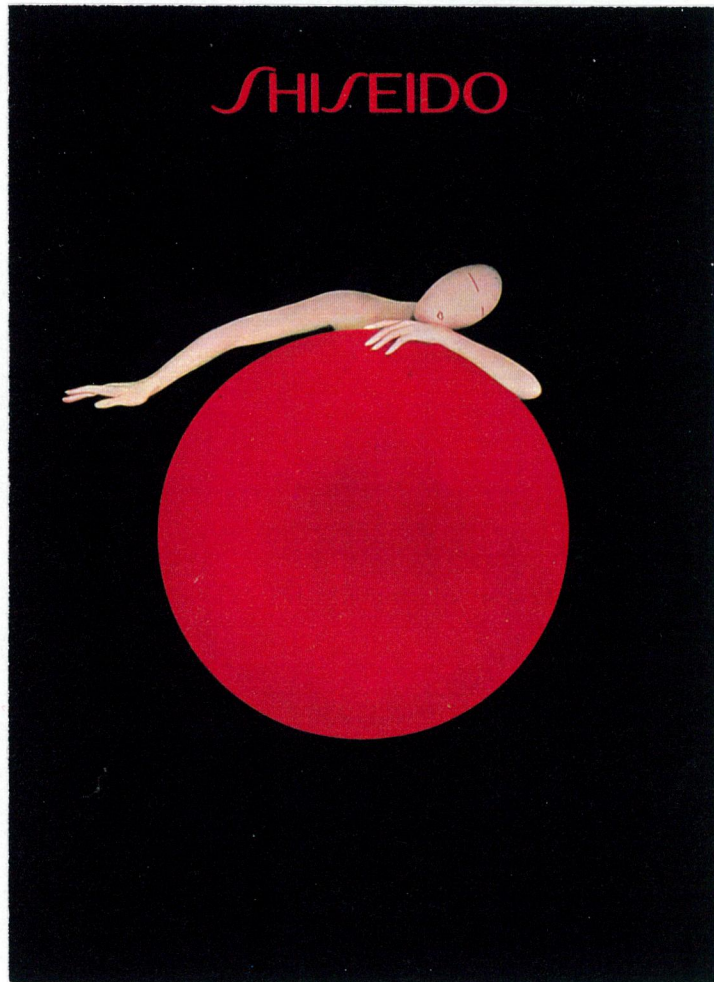


Fig. 2.1

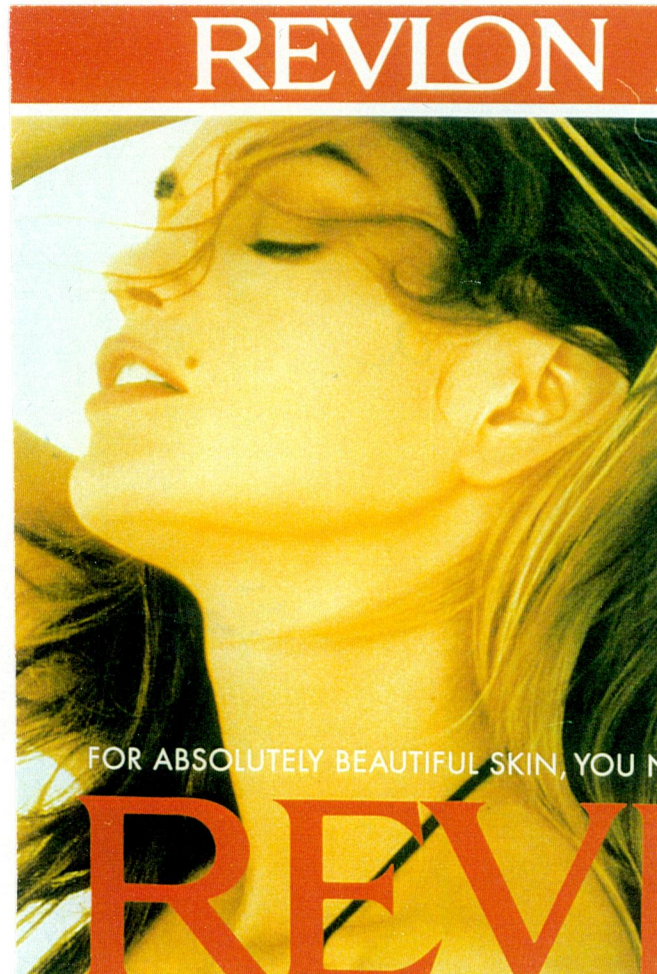


Fig. 2.2, a

-elena's
 new look
 yours for only £13

It's true! Cover Girl has a beautiful new look, with fabulous new packs and great prices. They're still top-quality cosmetics top models use for that clean, fresh, natural look. Skin specific foundations and powders, up-to-the-minute eye and lip colours, and a mascara for every lash look. Discover the new look of Cover Girl. Any way you look at it, it's beautiful.

COVER GIRL
 PROFESSIONAL LASH

Extremely Gentle
 Pressed Powder
 Translucent Pink
 £3.50 net

Professional Mascara
 Black
 £3.25 net

Continuous Colour
 Lipstick
 Really Red, £2.95 net

Non-Stick Colour
 Eye Shadow Duo
 Peach Twist
 £3.50 net

COVER GIRL Helena Christensen

Experience the beautiful new look of Cover Girl.

 A full-page advertisement for Cover Girl cosmetics. The background is a close-up portrait of model Helena Christensen, who has dark hair pulled back and is wearing bright red lipstick. She is looking slightly to the left. Overlaid on the left side of her face are several Cover Girl makeup products: a compact of 'Extremely Gentle Pressed Powder' (Translucent Pink), a tube of 'Professional Mascara' (Black), a tube of 'Continuous Colour Lipstick' (Really Red), and a compact of 'Non-Stick Colour Eye Shadow Duo' (Peach Twist). The Cover Girl logo is visible on the products. The text 'COVER GIRL' and 'PROFESSIONAL LASH' are prominently displayed. At the bottom, the text 'Experience the beautiful new look of Cover Girl.' is written. The name 'COVER GIRL Helena Christensen' is printed near the bottom right of the image.

Fig. 2.2, b



Fig. 2.2, c



Fig. 2.2, d

SKIN LIBERATING.
Only you know
you're wearing it.

MAQUI-LIBRE

SKIN LIBERATING.
NATURAL WEAR FLUID MAKE-UP.
SPF 8.

It's the most amazing revolution
in make-up since foundation
was invented: skin is liberated,
letting it breathe.

**MAQUI-LIBRE is the first ever
foundation to liberate the skin,**
because our silky silicone pearls
leave your skin kissed with a fine,
invisible veil.

Skin looks healthy, radiant.
And yet it can breathe.

MAQUI-LIBRE, new from LANCÔME:
Make-up freedom for your skin.

MAQUI-LIBRE
fond de teint fluide
exploit longue tenue
liberté et finesse
skin liberating
natural wear fluid makeup

LANCÔME
PARIS




Fig. 2.2, e



Estée Lauder
pleasures



Fig. 2.2, f

L' O R É A L
PAR

SUBLIME MAKE-UP

Powdered Compact Foundation

L'OREAL
Perfection

NEW

In just one step:

- 1 - The comfort and coverage of a cream foundation.
- 2 - The velvety finish of a powder.

■ **Blends and smooths like a foundation.**
Just apply with the sponge applicator. Amazingly easy and precise. It's incredible. Imperfections disappear like magic. Result: a smooth complexion perfectly blended.

■ **The velvety finish of a powder.**
In one step Sublime Make-Up gives light, long-lasting coverage with the soft finish of a powder. Result: a perfect matt complexion that looks completely natural.

■ **The care and magic of the lightest micro-aerated texture.**
Enriched with softening and protective agents, the micro-aerated formulation of Sublime Make-Up is exceptionally light. It's make-up magic. Ideal for frequent touch-ups. To leave a superb, comfortable sensation, every time.

PERFECT MAKE-UP.
PERFECT CARE, TOO.

Fig. 2.2, g

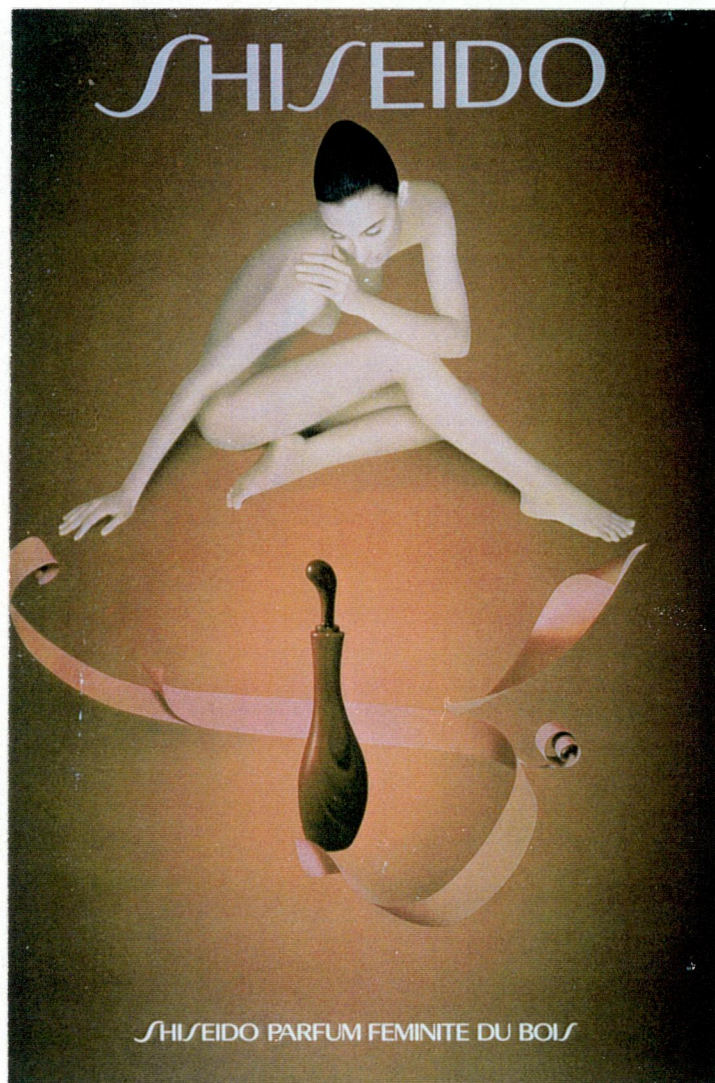


Fig. 2.3



Fig. 2.4, a



Fig. 2.4, b



Fig. 2.5, a



Fig. 2.5, b

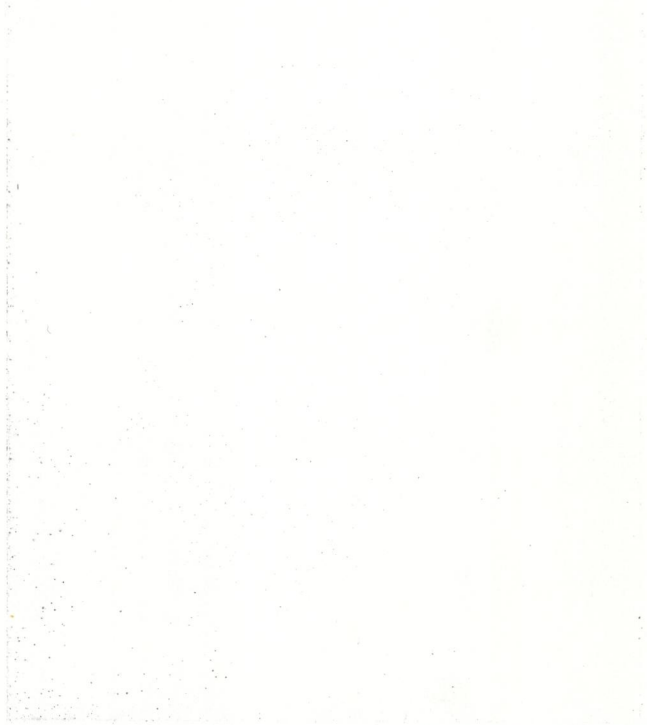




Fig. 2.5, c



Fig. 2.5, d



Fig. 3.1

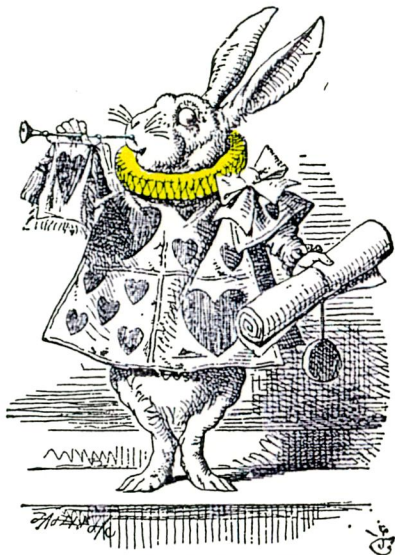


Fig. 3.2, a



Fig. 3.2, b

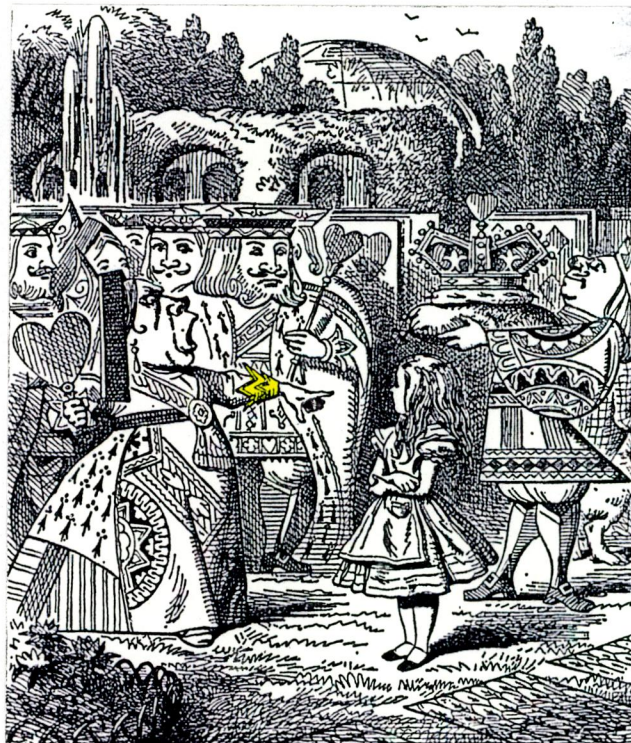


Fig. 3.2, c

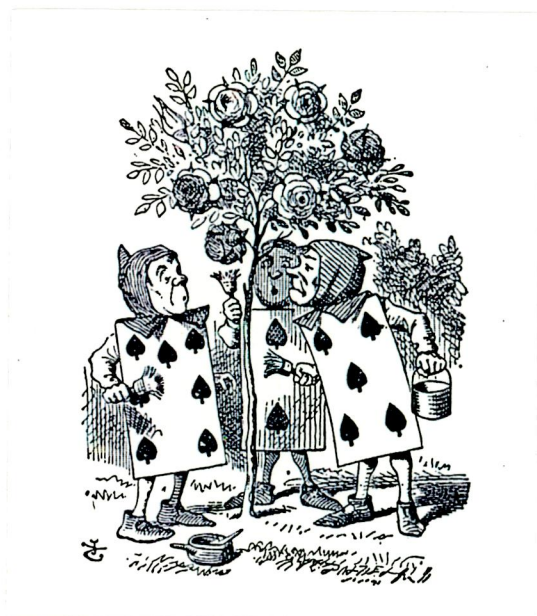


Fig. 3.3

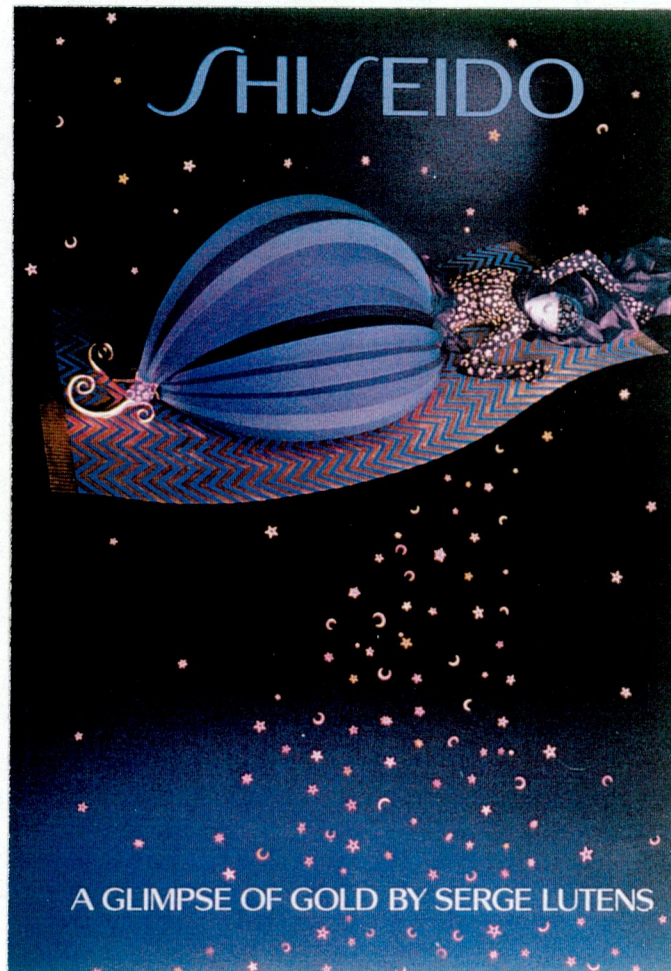


Fig. 3.4

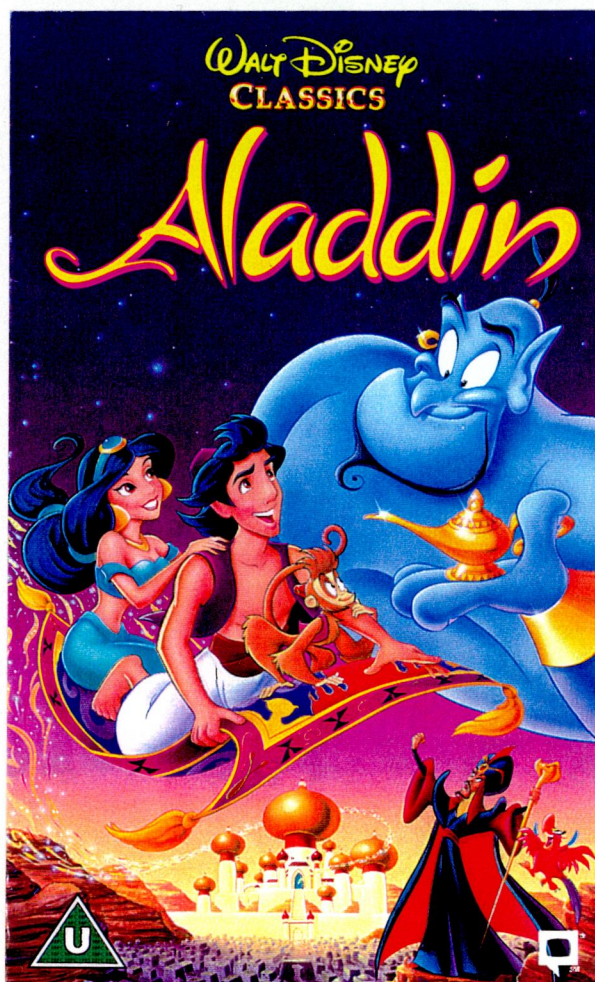


Fig. 3.5


The Makeup

Shimmer & starlight, spun out of gold.

Gradation Colors whisper softly on eyelids
or blush, like the dawn across your cheeks.

Petit Shadows tempt with golden offerings.

Now, colors are treasures,
as luminous
as the moon.



GRADATION COLORS (BLUSHER & EYESHADOW) / PETIT SHADOW
ADVANCED PERFORMANCE LIPSTICK / NAIL LACQUER II

Fig. 3.6



Fig. 3.7



Fig. 3.8



Fig. 3.9

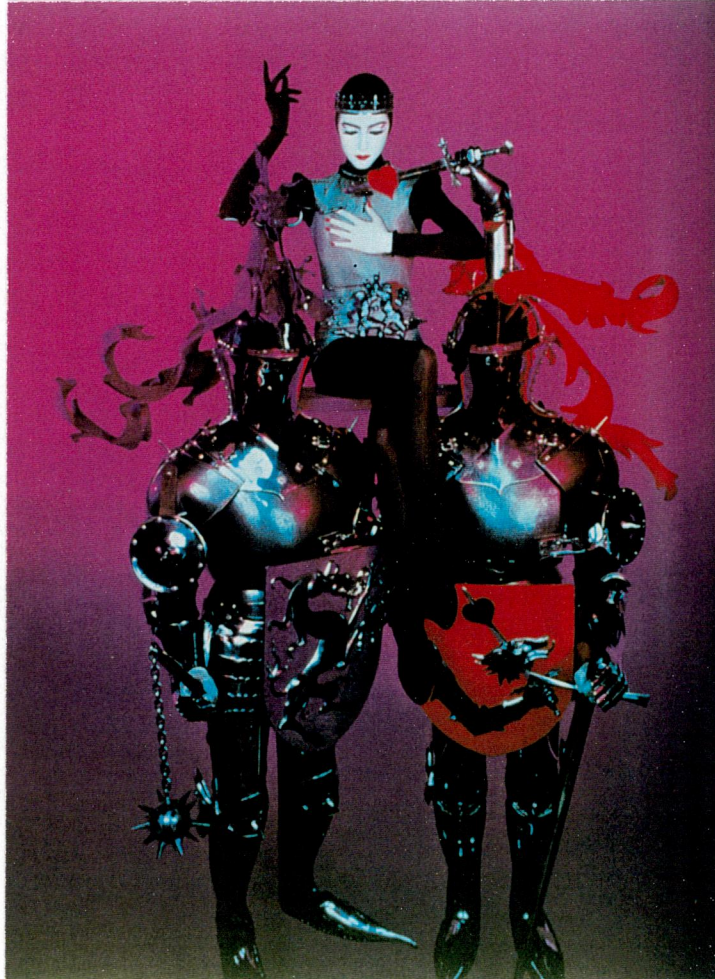


Fig. 3.10

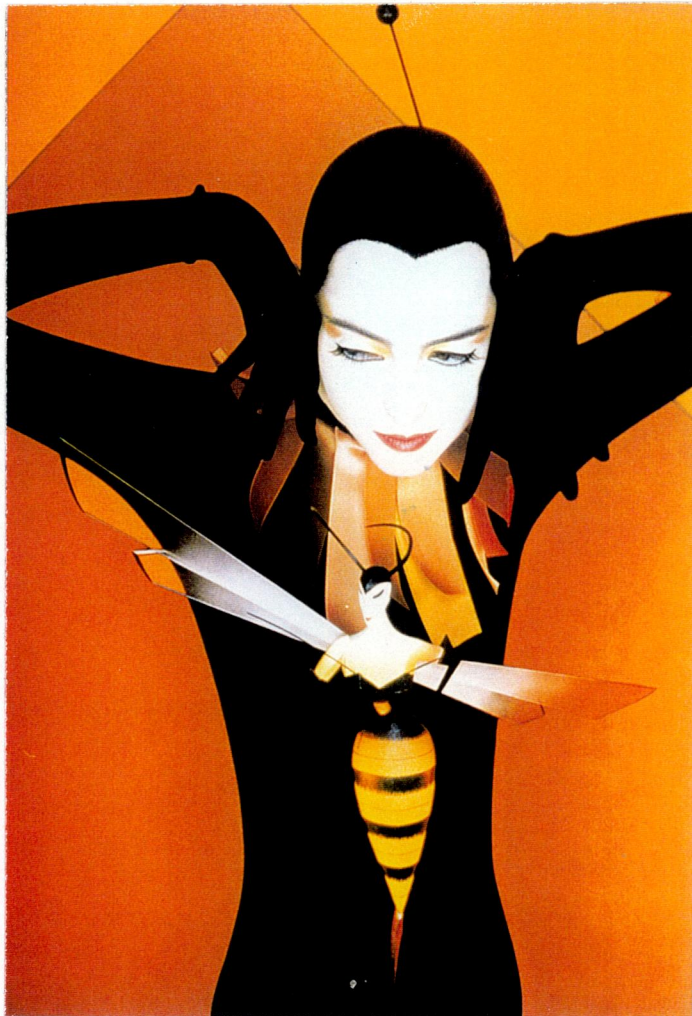


Fig. 3.11



Fig. 3.12, a



Fig. 3.12, b



Fig. 3.12, c



Fig. 3.13



Fig. 3.14



Fig. 3.15, a



Fig. 3.15, b



Fig. 3.17



Fig. 3.18



Fig. 3.19



Fig. 3.20



Fig. 3.21



Fig. 3.22



Fig. 3.23

SHISEIDO



PETIT SHADOW
(DUO)

MATTE VARIATIONS
(LIPSTICK)

Irresistible, like rose petals upon your lips.
Luminous on your eyes. Experience unending color.
A smooth, fresh matte. A new, slim jewel of a lipstick.

THE MAKEUP
RED MADNESS
BY SERGE LUTENS

Fig. 3.24



Fig. 3.25



Fig. 3.26



Fig. 3.27



Fig. 3.28

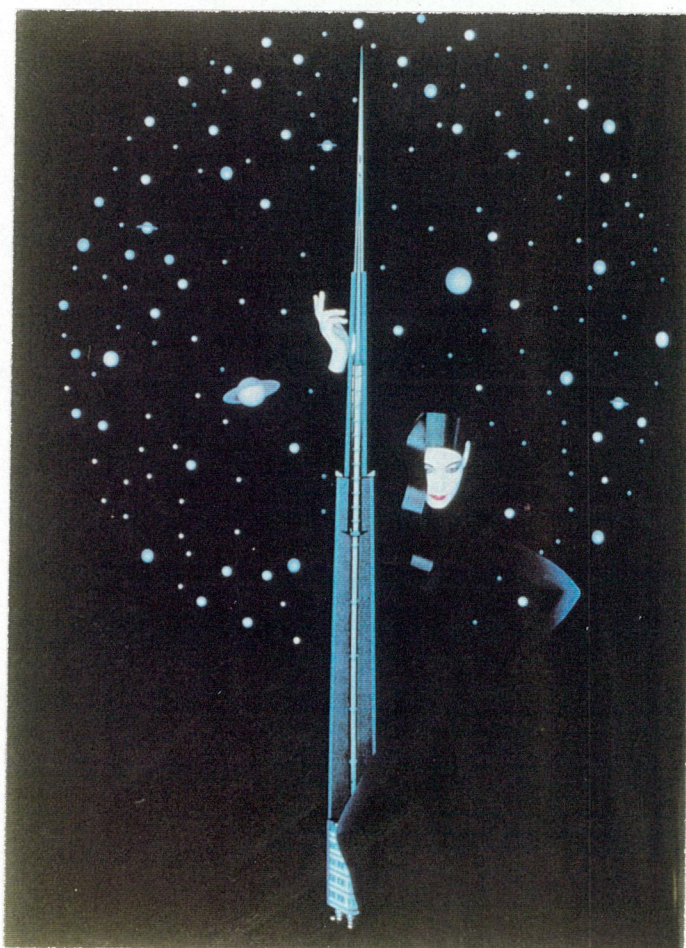


Fig. 3.29



Fig. 3.30



Fig. 3.31



Fig. 3.32

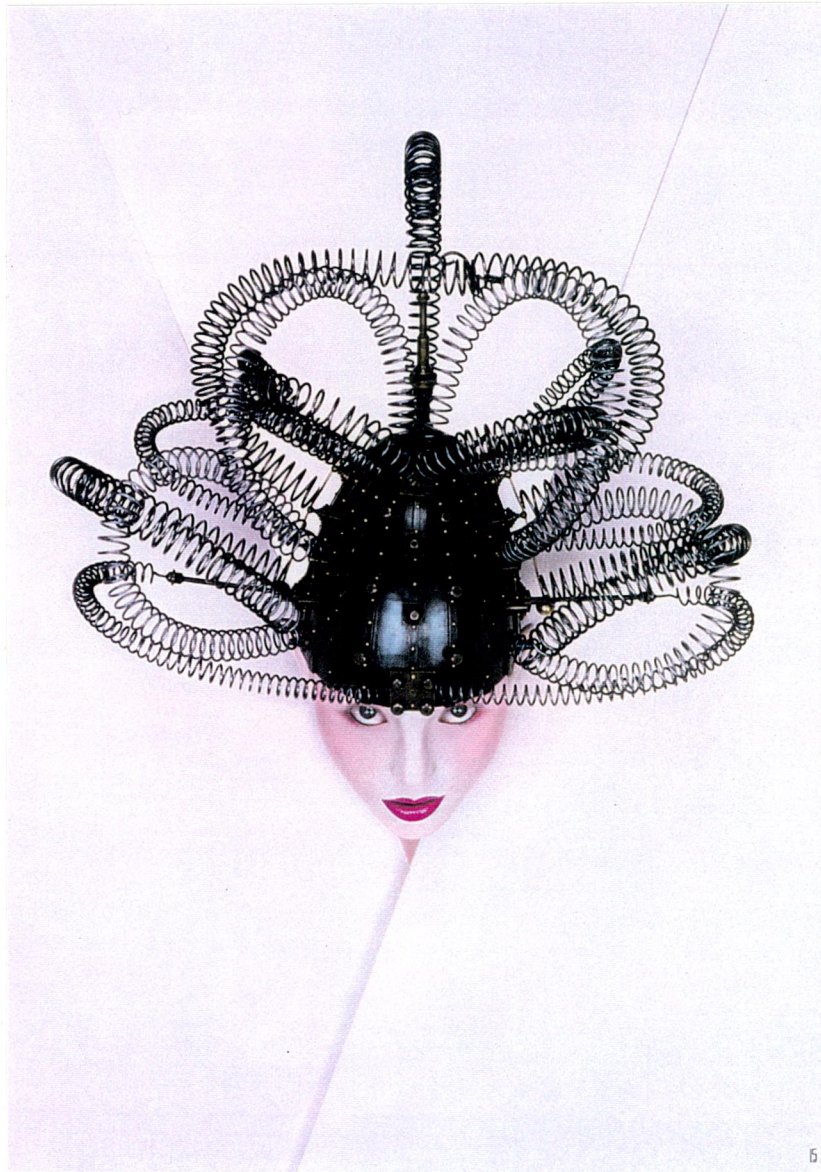


Fig. 3.33

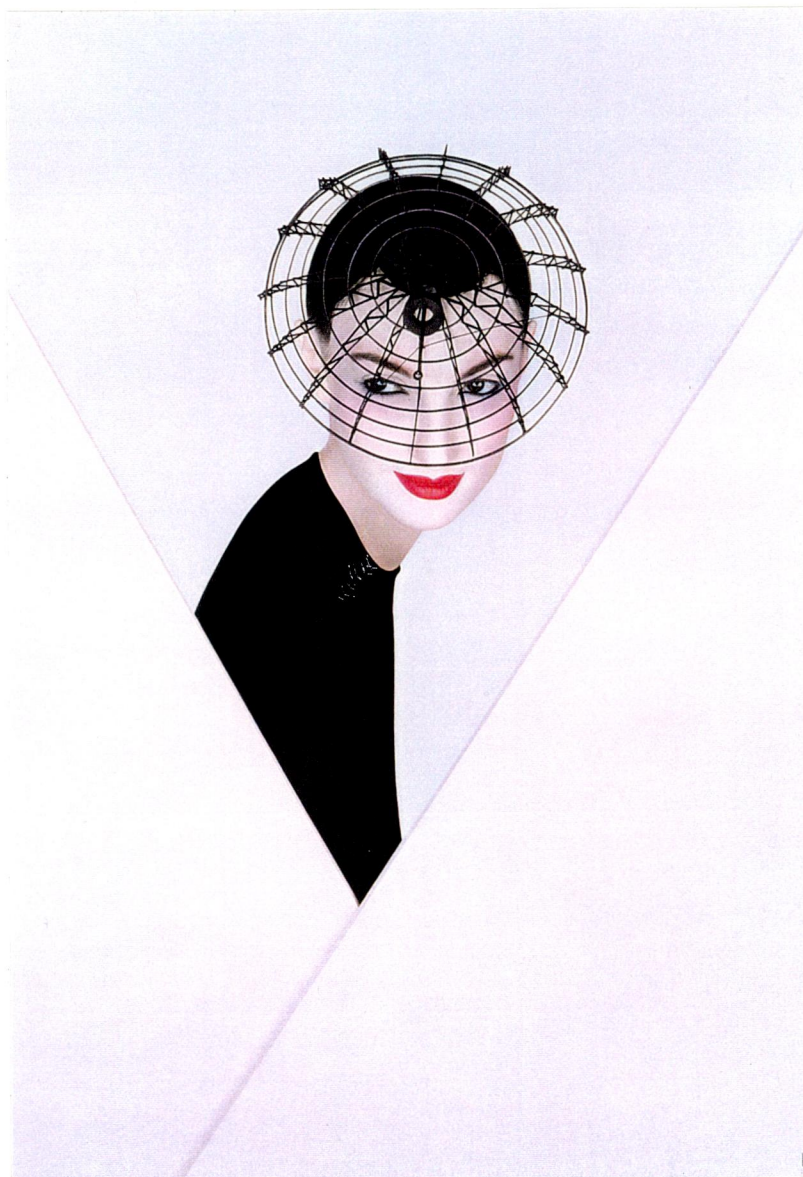


Fig. 3.34



Fig. 3.35



Fig. 3.36



Fig. 4.1, a



Fig. 4.1, b



Fig. 4.1, c



Fig. 4.1, d



Fig. 4.1, e



Fig. 4.2, a



Fig. 4.2, b





Fig. 4.2, c



Fig. 4.2, d



Fig. 4.3, a



Fig. 4.3, b



Fig. 4.3, c

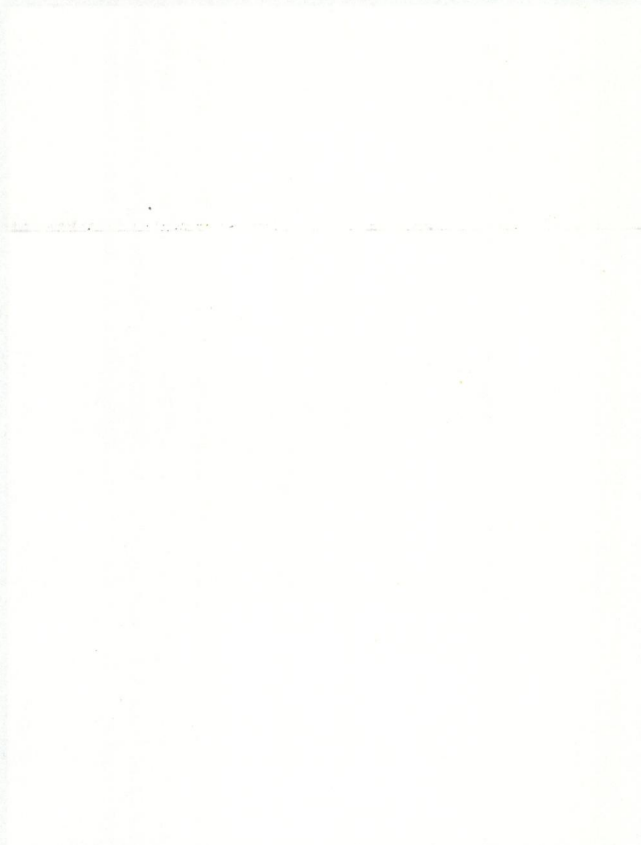




Fig. 4.4, a



Fig. 4.4, b



Fig. 4.5



Fig. 4.6, a



Fig. 4.6, b



Fig. 4.6, c

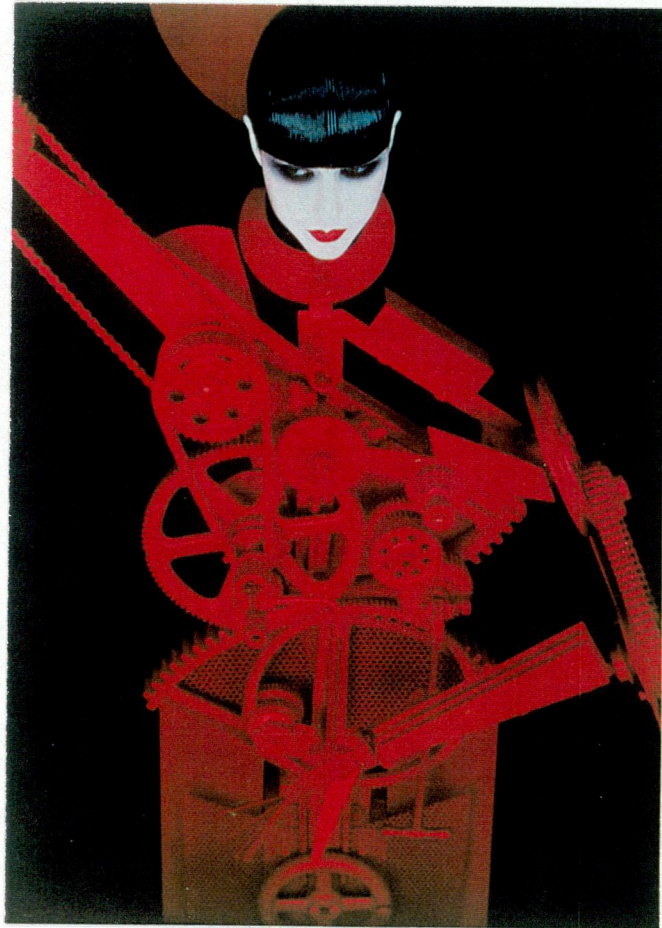


Fig. 4.6, d

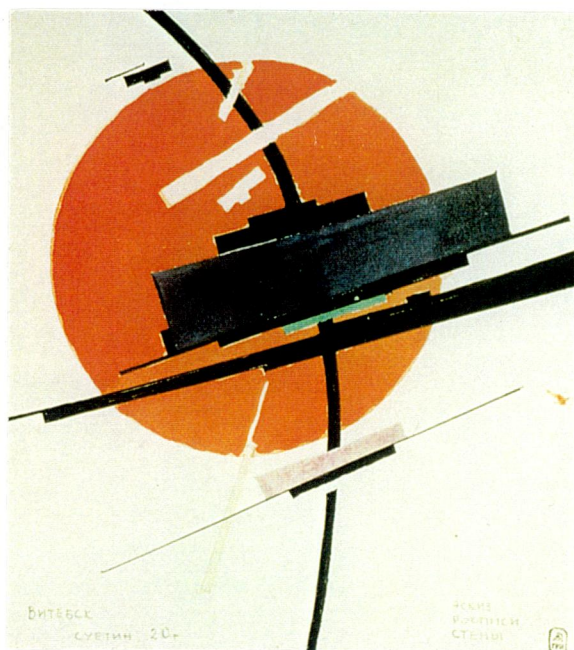


Fig. 4.7

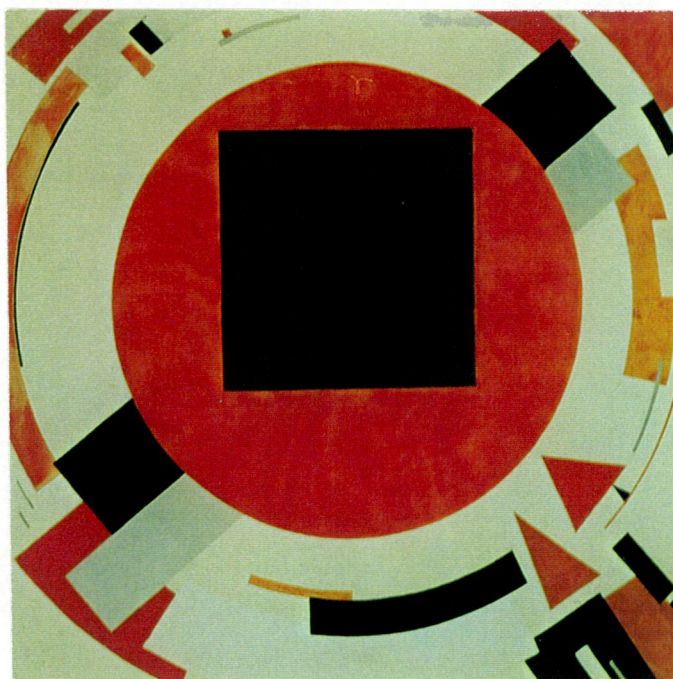


Fig. 4.8

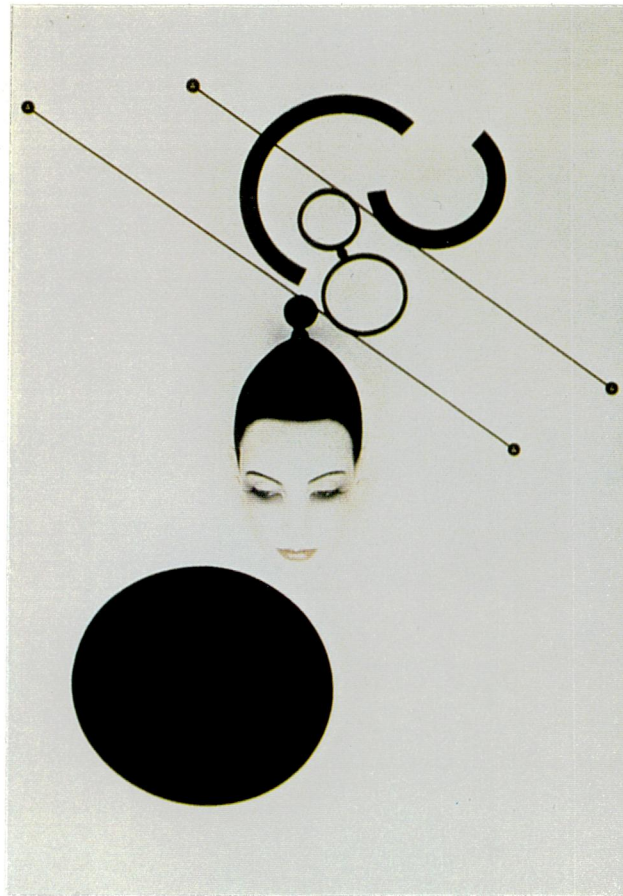


Fig. 4.9, a

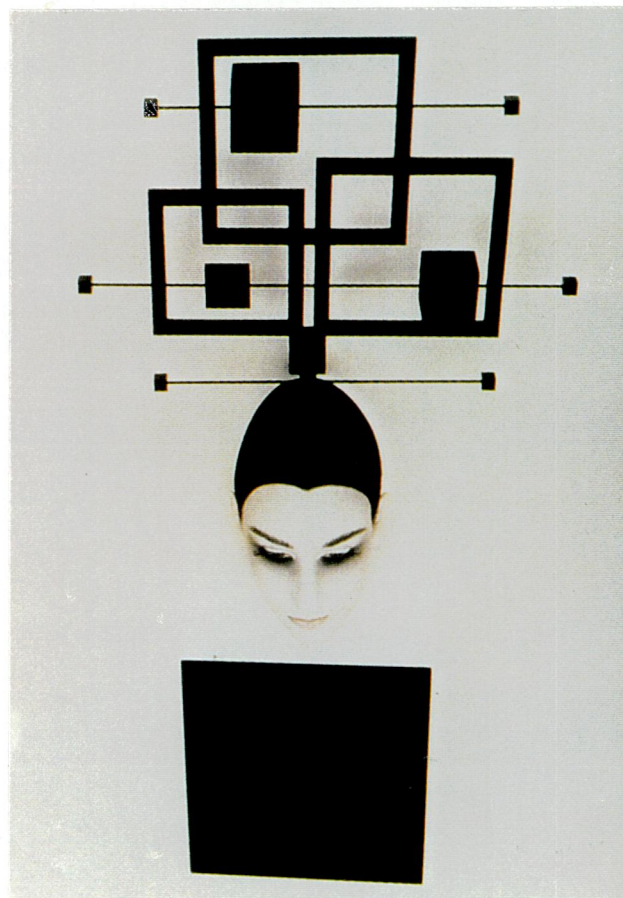


Fig. 4.9, b

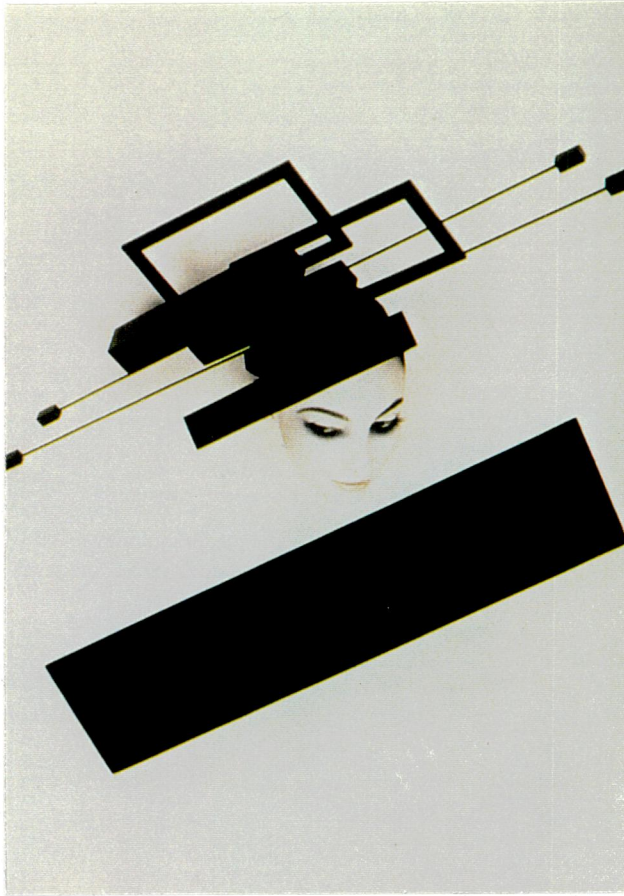


Fig. 4.9, c

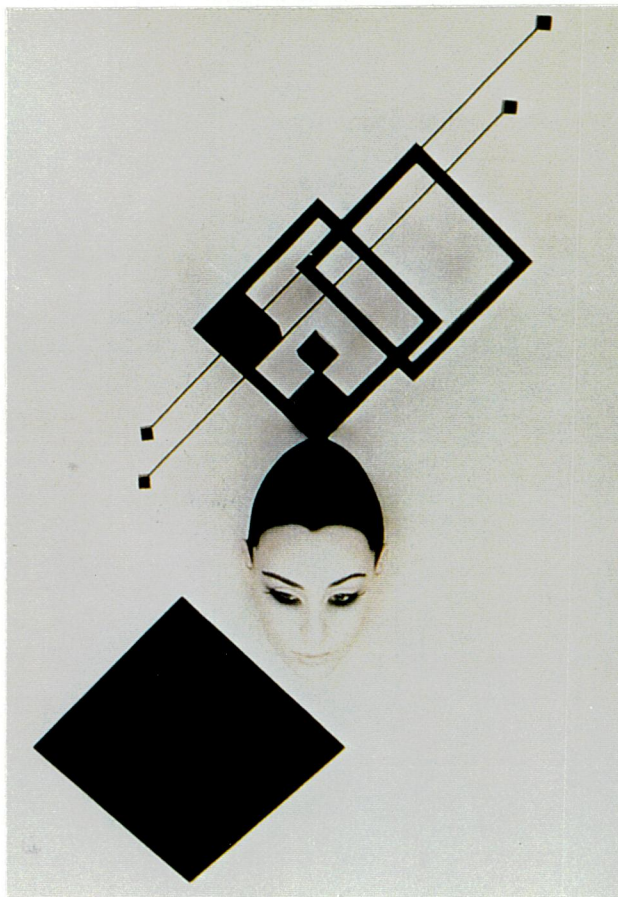


Fig. 4.9, d





Fig. 4.10, a



Fig. 4.10, b

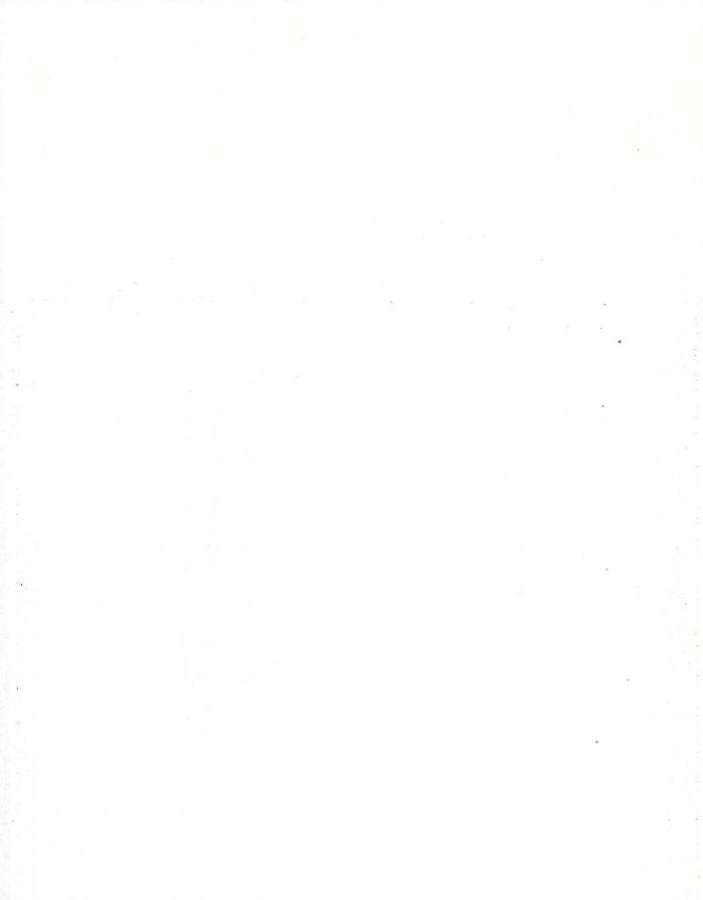




Fig. 4.11

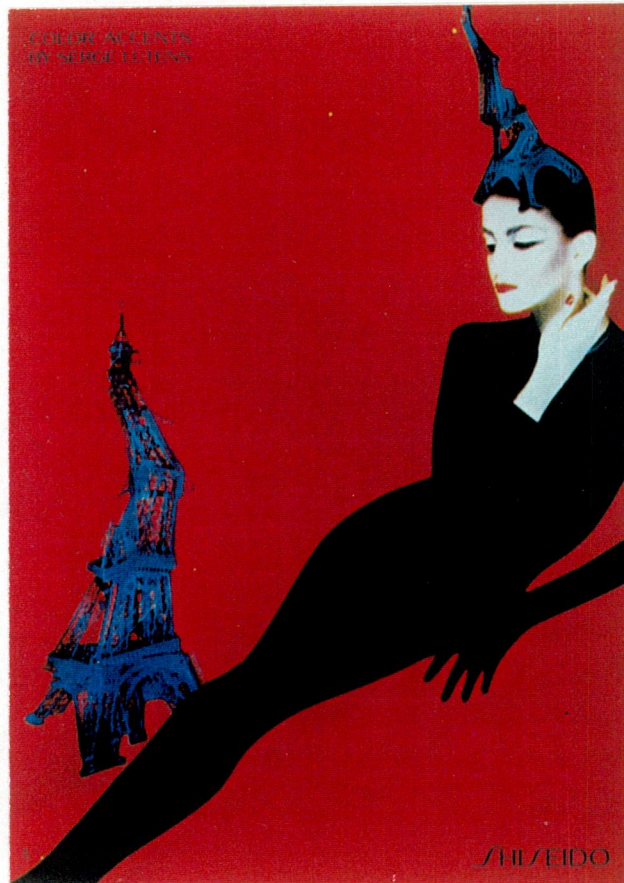


Fig. 4.12



Fig. 4.13, a



Fig. 4.13, b

