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**EMBROIDERED TEXTILES
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RAISING THE HEEL

by

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I intend to discuss the various issues that surround the high heel. The high heel is synonymous with femininity and has established itself as part of female iconography.

Before I delve into these issues, I would like to explain how my interest in shoes and high heels came about and led to this choice of thesis subject. The subject has interested me for the last eight years and I have collected vintage shoes paying up to twenty five pounds a pair.

However these shoes are becoming harder to find and have almost disappeared from charity shops. Instead vintage footwear is sold from second-hand clothes shops at a far higher price.

The demand for vintage clothing and accessories has escalated in this country over the last decade. Previous to this Jenny Vanders, selling period clothing and accessories (at 20/22 Market Arcade, South Great George's Street, Dublin 2), stood alone, except for a handful of enterprising market stalls located at weekends in outer-Dublin i.e. Dun Laoghaire and Blackrock.

Harlequin, 13 Castle Market Street, Dublin 2 (beside Jenny Vander) opened in March 1995. Starting out over twenty years ago as a market stall in Dun Laoghaire, booming and closing down intermittently, it resurfaced in Dun Laoghaire, Blackrock and Bray throughout the 1980's and early 1990's, eventually locating prime premises in Dublin's extended Temple Bar area. Harlequins' recent success illustrates the change in consumer attitudes.



Not all vintage shoes are of superior quality. Some from the 1960's and 1970's have crumbly, sponge type heels and soles which collapse. Some are made of cardboard leather substitutes, many are narrower than today's standard fittings.

Not everyone will wear second-hand shoes. Second-hand shoes sometimes retain the original foot shape of a previous owner and are one of the most personal and intimate pieces of clothing, however, most shoes have either been discovered as new and never worn, or have been well treated or rarely worn, yet they have an appeal for today's consumer. Perhaps it is the eclectic styles of the 1990's. Shoppers mix and match old and new, lovers of vintage fashion know that they are unlikely to ever meet their mirror image on the street or in a club. Although vintage shops sell their shoes for an average of five times the charity shop price, they still compare excellently with the outrageous prices charged on the high street for suspect reproduction footwear.

My first charity shop purchase, innocently started an obsession with a geometric buckle, silver mirror block heels, lined in leather with an 'elastamere' sole, size 75B (4½ UK), made in France by J.B. Martin, 50p from War on Want, Bray, Co. Wicklow (Fig. 1) Since 1989, I've found reproduction 1780's slip-on straights of brown leather with a blue leather lining, and arched wedge and curved heel, trimmed with fine pleated ribbon and tiny diamante buckle. £3.99 from Oxfam, Bray, Co. Wicklow. (Fig. 2)

Best of all is a pair of 1940's dusky rose coloured strappy leather sandals with over stitching detail, with twisting ankle straps, leather soles, 3" high heels and a peep toe with knotted



strapping on vamp of the foot. Size 6, handmade in England, £25 - Harlequin (as before).

(Fig. 3)

I rarely buy shoes from the high street, 'though I intend to, this summer as the selection of vintage inspired shoes and sandals is excellent. I prefer to shop in vintage shops and markets. I also shop for shoes in England whenever possible. Most of my day-wear shoes are modern but dated looking, in black leather with wedge soles, not very visually exciting perhaps, but practical. Conveniently some of these shoes work as evening shoes because of the height of their soles. Apart from anything else, I find I have little occasion to wear genuine high heels.

Although the high heel is undeniably glamorous and seductive, it is also perceived as politically incorrect, impossible to walk in, dance in or drink in. The high heel produces a tightly constrained, compressed foot and a shackled ankle. Why then do women continue to buy high heels when they are aware of the damage and distress they can cause to the foot? According to Beatrice Faust, author of "Women, Sex and Pornography" (date unknown) high heels do make you feel sexy as they make the buttocks undulated twice as much, and transmit sexual sensations through the body. High heels alter the shape of the calf, flatter the ankles and lengthen the leg. High heels push the body forward, the breasts outwards and upwards, the stomach in and the buttocks out. (Fig. 4). The wearer produces a wiggle and a mincing gait.

I will explore the cult of the high heel. The high heel cannot be discussed out of context. My aim in this thesis is to record the historical, social and psychological dimensions of the high. The initial reason I chose this subject was in order to rationalise my obsession with the high



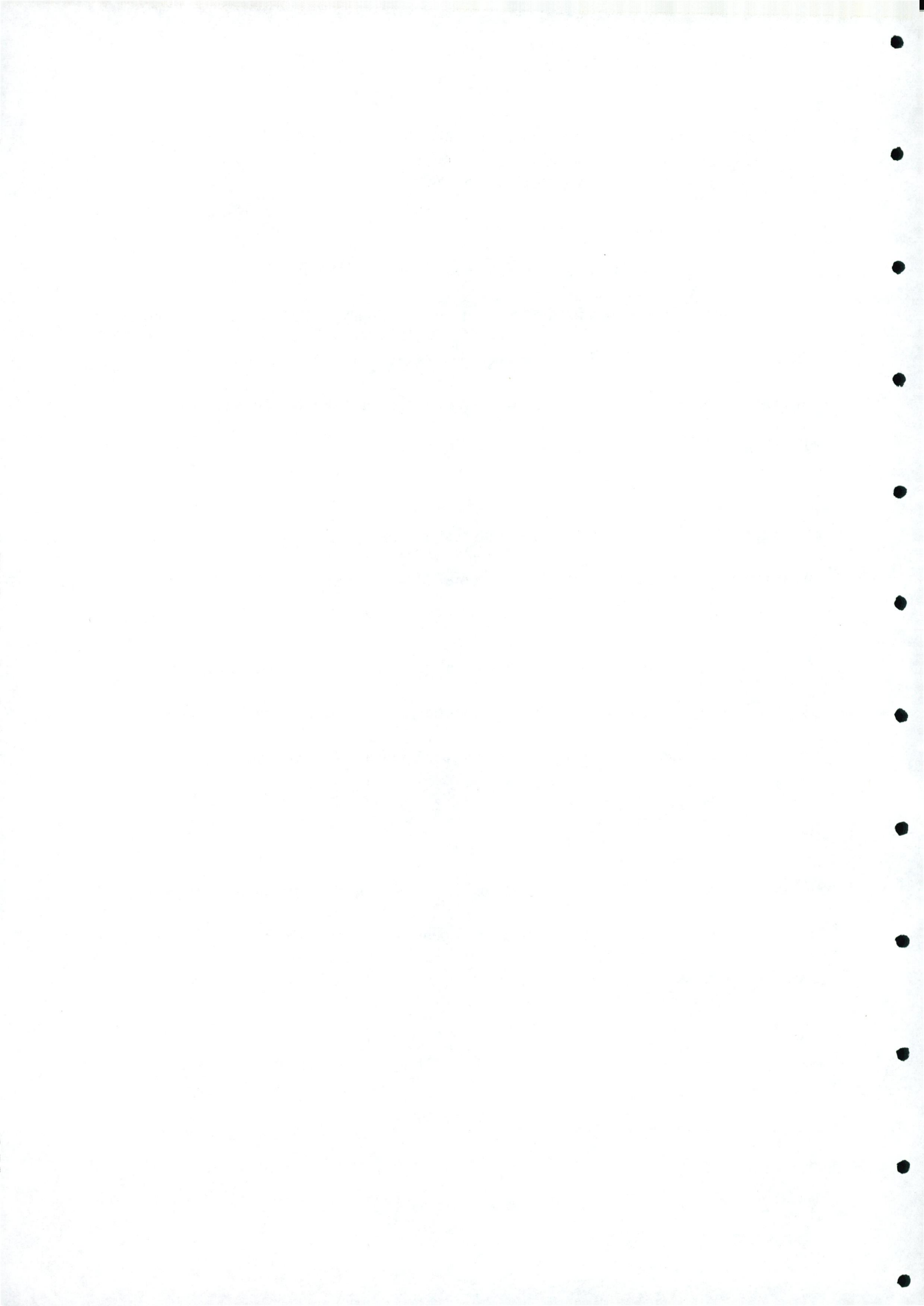
heel shoe. I approach it from different angles - historical, social and psychological and sexual, to try to examine the history of the heel on as many levels as possible.

In order to obtain essential information I have written to Clarks and Scholl in the UK, the School of Surgical Chiropody in Cork and quizzed older family members on their shoe history, therefore in Chapter One, I will consider the history of the shoe and heel for women. Secondly production developments and market place for twentieth century shoe design. Thirdly in Chapter One, I will look at the current state of shoe fashions.

In Chapter Two, I will discuss the twentieth century progress of the high heel parallel to the historical and social changes in the lives of women.

Chapter Three, will consist of an investigation into the role of the high heel as a female object. A lot of baggage accompanies this shoe style, it is stereotyped and pigeonholed and I believe it is beleaguered by an image linking it with female subordination. I will compare the image of the high heel with the image of the flat comfortable shoe.

To conclude this Thesis, I will make an assessment of the topics investigated in Chapters I, II and III i.e. historical design information, market demands, current shoe fashions, the high heel as a cult object, sexism and the heel and historical and social parallels and influences.



Chapter One (part 1)

The wedge has returned gradually over the last four to five years. At present the rage for the wedge is filtering down from couture fashions, however, its revival started at street level. Couture designers took their time in recognising the wedge's increased popularity on the street, in particular with regard to sportswear.

In this chapter I wish to give a brief illustrated history of the heel and shoe to set context for the current fashions. I do not intend to address social issues and their implications in this first chapter and as I stated in my introduction these issues will be dealt with in Chapter II and III.

Beginning in Egypt a shoe with a 12" platform was excavated from a tomb in Thebes and dates back to 1000 B.C. In ancient Greece, 600 B.C. the size of the platform on a sole denoted status. Thick soled, thong sandals with decorative laces were worn by the wealthy. Thin soled, ankle fastened flats were worn by the lower ranks.

We know that the wedge is originally from Asia, and was worn for practical purposes by landowners travelling in slushy terrain. Most renowned of all are the 'Mu-gee' sandals worn by Chinese women. The Japanese version is called the 'Geta'. Particularly vivid are the images of Chinese concubines and mincing Japanese geisha girls. The 'Mu-gee', though worn for practical purposes in a less severe form to keep the feet dry in wet and dirty conditions, was also worn as a decorative shoe. The shoe was part of the costume of the concubine, often elaborately decorated, they were symbolic of their wearer's subordinate position. These wore elaborate costumes daily, their purpose in life was to please, their appearance was all



important. These shoes ensured that they could never travel far from their quarters, they served as a constant reminder of their position and purpose. (Fig. 5).

In Europe in the early seventeenth century, prostitutes and courtesans of Venice adopted a similar style, so, once more the platform heel, connotations of subservience, worn by Venetian prostitutes visibly and also worn by privileged women. (Fig 6 and 7). These shoes were known as 'Chopines'. These women could not go out unaccompanied, they needed to be flanked on both sides in order to get about in these stilt-like, giant slippers. City streets at this time were filthy, with open drains, again, the Chopines theatrical style was a status symbol, in fact commoners were forbidden to wear high heels. Commoners of course could not have worked for a living in such compromising footwear.

The shoe industry remained a craft based trade. The Chopine was only one of many high-rise styles. The pattern however was a more practical approach to the problems of mucky roads and open sewers (Fig. 8). They were used throughout Europe to prevent people sinking into the mud as the 'Mu-gee' was used in the orient. Country roads were not sealed until the nineteenth century in Britain. Women and children in particular, needed patterns to protect their lightweight shoes. Chopines and patterns were still a long way from solving practical and style problems.

Wooden clogs were worn at this time in Britain by craftsmen and unskilled labourers for their durability and low cost. Their popularity lasted well into the last century when they were worn by mill workers in Lancashire, England and in American cotton mills.



A slap shoe (Fig. 9), was introduced in the seventeenth century. Unlike the Chopine this shoe had a raised arch and heel, protection came in the form of a flat extended sole which the heel rested on, not unlike a snow shoe, however, it too had its disadvantages, it was expensive to make and reserved for the well to do. All these shoe styles produced an unnatural gait. In the orient, progress had been made by hollowing out the solid 'Mu-gee' to create a shoe on stilts.

Height was still an issue. Progress in the Far East had produced a stilt like shoe. In the West the front of the shoe had been lowered, creating the high heel, this increased the wearers mobility (Fig. 10). The rise of the high heel shoe style created problems for the shoe makers. They discovered the high cost of producing two separate lasts, so the straight was used continually up until the nineteenth century (i.e., shoes made identical for both feet, neither right or left).

Court shoes dictated shoe fashions. Continental and British monarchs changed the fashions as they took office, each Royal introduced his/her own style. For example the 'Louis Heel' was introduced from France in 1760 named after Louis XV, it is a covered heel with a curved back line. (Fig 11). In the reign of Louis XV another heel was introduced. His mistress Mme. de Pompadour had tiny feet, she wore flimsy salon shoes with 3" heels and a small base, these heels were thinner and higher than the Louis heel , they were named the Pompadour heel after their wearer. (Fig. 12).

In the 1700's a clog of a different type was made to match ladies shoes (Fig. 13). This clog consisted of a flat soled overshoe with a decorative strap across the bar of the foot and a socket at the back to hold the heel.



French heels were popular but were impossibly thin in many cases and impractical for wear outside. The popularity of the French heel waned in the 1800's, instead shoes adopted the wedge heel: arched wedges, true wedges, stacked and single lifts. (Fig. 14). However, shoes became flat again by the 1820's.

The mid-1800's brought an American invasion. Advancement in technology in the United States progressed steadily and together with the skills of immigrant Italian craftsmen, a full scale assault on the British market was launched in the 1800's. The British market was flooded with mass produced shoes. Ready-made shoes replaced handmade, crafted shoes and the bootmaker was forced to diversify. By the 1890's most British bootmakers had become menders. Handmade shoe production became specialised and selective. Mechanical inventions changed the shoe industry as a whole. Rubber soles were tried and tested with the advent of the Plimsoll, registered in 1885.

The years 1830 - 1850 was the heyday of the pattern (see Fig. 8), still surviving in the nineteenth century. At the time of Queen Victoria's marriage in 1840 shoes were flat-like slippers (Fig. 15). By the 1850's heels had risen to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch and by the 1850's to $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Boots became increasingly popular, so by 1867 the heel was set to re-emerge. Straights were still made and not discarded entirely until 1900. The fine, lightweight shoes of the 1840's gave way to sturdier shoes and boots for women. American and French fashions were influencing the market. The Louis heel reappeared and as the century progressed heels continued to rise. Gradually women's mobility increased, the influence of the suffragette movement and sports interests for women meant shoes and heels became practical and colours plainer.



Of course we must remember that shoe styles varied widely. Women of lower classes wore practical shoes, whilst better, advantaged women (in Paris in particular), continued to wear fanciful shoes which restricted their mobility. The women's movement brought a degree of freedom. The suffragettes wore sturdier leather flats - sensible heels and rejected the notion of tiny narrow feet, in fact reports from the first years of the new century described men and women wearing identical footwear.

It is not my aim to cover all styles and fashions for each era, the problem is that different classes adopted different styles. Lower classes were forever playing catch-up, the upper classes followed fashion and had a different pair for every occasion and several pairs for each season. The multiplicity of styles confuses all of this further, for example shoes were flat in the first years of the twentieth century, but Cuban heels were introduced simultaneously. We are told that plain colours were in vogue but that yellow was all the rage, all and all shoe history before 1910 is confusing. (I find it easier to write about twentieth century footwear because it is familiar territory.) Boots continued to be popular with eyelet lacing or button fastening, copies of this style are still sold today.

The First World War had not the same effect on the fashion industry as the Second World War. There were fewer shortages, leather was available for the shoe industry for fashion shoes and boots for the war effort. Women made up a substantial part of the workforce, comfort in footwear therefor became a greater consideration.

Shoes for evening however were influenced by decorative Parisian trends. Day shoes before the war were decorative with buckles and paste encrusted heels, these styles re-emerged after



the war for the general female population. Colours were brighter after the war, buttons and eyelets were replaced by one button T-strap and bar shoes. Also for women brogue style - Gibson, Derby and Oxford were introduced for walking and sports. (Fig. 16).

The Charleston is fixed in most minds, being danced by fidgety girls with bobbed hair, fringed, knee-length gowns and bar shoes. T-straps with open sides were popular as were two-tone shoes advocated by Coco Chanel. Heel styles were influenced by the craze for Latin American dances, which reintroduced the Cuban and Spanish heels. Heels were averaging 1½ inches in 1925 but began rising, reaching 2 inches by 1980.

The post-war atmosphere demanded all types of novelty and saw the reappearance of the beaded heel, pastework, enamelwork and embossed metalwork of pre-war fashions. A broader colour palet and exotic animal skins symbolised the new feeling. The 1920's was a period of high living and extravagance. These styles did however filter down to the street when copies at Parisian luxury shoes were made by American and British manufacturers.

Sandals were developed in the 1930's, sports and active footwear were produced in response to an increasingly healthier lifestyle. Broader, wider toes were introduced, platform soles, wedges and clog soles were worn for evening also. These fashions demanded a less cluttered aesthetic than the look at the previous decade. Sandals were highly popular, cruise and beachwear lines were introduced (Fig. 17). This in turn influenced other shoe styles, resulting in the cut away toe and heel - the Slingback.

Sports shoes in particular were not usually made of leather. Sandal fabric was lighter, technology advances meant cheaper, quicker production and new materials. Soles were not



always made of leather. Rubber soles, wooden and cork soled shoes emerged, wedged soles were covered with a corresponding layer of leather or cloth. (Fig. 18).

Alternative raw materials for heels came into their own in the 1940's. Shortages in leather (needed for the war effort), meant comfort shoes remained in fashion. Supplies of labour and materials were scarce. Europe was hit worse by shortages and rationing, pre-war France depended on imported leather for the domestic and export markets. Britain introduced the utility scheme limiting amount of materials and encouraging recycling and longwear. Utility shoes were mostly masculine in style and colour, often black or brown. As leather was in short supply shoes were rarely resoled, wooden heels were common. Designers were forced to improvise, new processes and finishes were invented. Salvatore Ferragamo had been producing wedge designs before the war. In the 1940's he continued to use hemp, plaited and crocheted raffia and coloured cellophane in place of leather, the 1940's called for all available materials to be used to their greatest advantage. In contrast to Britain, America had far greater national resources of raw material and continued to produce feminine fashion styles. Court shoes had been in vogue before the war, in America they remained in fashion. They were produced in bright, gay colours in new light flexible combinations of fabric. (Fig. 19). In Europe the 'Court' returned triumphantly after the war with the 'New Look' Europe played catch up with the US until things returned to normal at the start of the 1950's. The new style was extravagant and the opposite to utility styles. The wedge remained in fashion becoming lighter and finer. Shoes were ultra-feminine, strappy and frothy, they were revived in the 1970's. Colours were new and bright fabrics were luxurious, carried over from the 1930's i.e. levels, coloured leathers and exotic skins.



Late 1940's heels were fine and elegant, high heels with ankle straps were de rigeur. The feminine look of the late 1940's carried over into the 1950's. The 'New Look' had emphasised on hour glass figure, a refined form, complemented by the court shoe. (Fig. 20). In the early 1950's the rounded form of the court shoe got gradually slimmer, the heel in particular became thinner, this heel became known as the stiletto - meaning fine blade or knife in Italian. The heel was the focus of interest. It was given various names - 'spindle' 'spike' 'needle' - until 'stiletto' took hold. Eventually 'stiletto' came to describe the entire shoe. (Fig. 21). The heel reached 6 inches in height. Italy led the way in ready to wear shoe design in the 1950's. All things in Italian were in vogue. The stiletto became a symbol of rebellion in the late 1950's. Its image changed from ultra-feminine to ultra vamp. (Fig. 22). Other styles were flatties, kitten heeled court shoes and spoon heel day and evening shoes.

Social conditions were changing rapidly. Fashionable voices were becoming louder and younger. Flats had catered for this less sophisticated market in the 1950's, Flats were straight and cleaner than courts, they heralded a new aesthetic for the next decade. The 1960's demanded a cleaner, leaner look. The ultra-feminine curves of the 1950's were replaced by girlie style shoes with stacked low leather heels or no heels at all. These was a throw back to the bar strap 'Mary Jane' shoes and two-tone leather contrasts of the 1920's. The early 1960's look was geometric, but became softer as the decade progressed, influenced by ethnic, peasant inspired fashions.

In the 1950's 'harem' flats had been popular and oriental influence also prevailed in the 1960's with oriental sandals to complement the ethnic look. Boots were very popular, also influenced



by the space race and manufactured in shiny patent leather and plastic. The 1970's brought us the 'snow' boot and cowboy boot for both sexes, amongst other adventurous styles.

The 1970's was a time for invention and expression. Many early twentieth century styles were reworked; cork soled wedges from the 1930's and 1940's, Edwardian high legged lace up granny boots, stiletto heels and ankle straps from the 1950's. Suede was the most popular material used for shoe and boot manufacturer. Patchwork suede, denim and leather were very popular, but the platform style sums up most people's shoe memories of the 1970's. Cone heels dominated evening and day styles, however, steel shaft heels epitomised the outrageous in-your-face spirit of the decade. (Fig. 23). Shoe styles of the 1980's are harder to pinpoint, perhaps the huge success of the Doc Marten boot sums up the mismatched contrasting fashions of the 1980's. I will illustrate the diversity of shoe styles with figures 24 - 28.

I shall deal with shoes of the nineties briefly in Part two of Chapter One. The twentieth century has been called the 'People Century' for obvious reasons, i.e. the legislative and social changes, that have reshaped society. I will address the social changes which have dictated the frantic pace of fashion since 1900 in Chapter Two.

To conclude part one of Chapter I, I draw your attention to the fact that as fashion in the 1900's heads towards the year 2,000 it has reworked styles from virtually every decade of the twentieth century. The key styles of each decade, and previous centuries have already been re-styled and modernised, so what can be next?



Chapter One (part II)

Section two of Chapter One considers the condition of twentieth century shoe design. This chapter will be an investigation into shoe designers of twentieth century bespoke and mass market shops. These designers catered predominantly for the wealthy, mass production of footwear began in the late nineteenth century, since then a larger gap has developed between standards in shoe design. The famous shoe designers of the present century collaborate with couturiers and produce fairy tale shoes. Designers who work for companies such as Clarkes, Russell & Bromley and Bally remain anonymous.

Rather than give a general overview, this section will focus on three of the most prominent designers of the first half of this century. This account of their roles as shoe designers will illustrate the changes that took place within this sphere of design. Secondly I will investigate the developments in shoe design over the last fifty years.

Shoes continue to function as status symbols, making fashion and class distinctions. Yanturni - 'the world's most expensive custom shoemaker' (Trasko, 1989, p.24) was born in Calabria, Italy in 1890, of East Indian parentage. Perhaps because of his ethnic origin he became a figure of curiosity, his exotic appearance added to his appeal (McDowell, 1989, p.179).

Yanturni was the curator of the Cluny Museum in Paris for some time. He began making shoes in his spare time, his clients were mainly rich American and English women. Fittings were by appointment only, and clients would have been expected to wait anything up to 2½ years after fittings for delivery of their shoes. He hand-crafted shoes for evening, town, sport



first couture shoe designers to undertake both private and mass market designs commissions. He created fantasy shoes to create publicity and interest but his practical shoes were described at the time as second to none. (Fig. 30 - 34).

and hunting wear. He sold exclusive, expensive shoes to a wealthy clientele. He was celebrated for a flattering style of shoe which was long and narrow. He is also famous for his use of antique textiles including gold, velvet and silk (Fig. 29)

Yanturmi measured the client's foot meticulously and made a plaster cast of each one. He also watched each client walking bare footed before he made her shoes. The heels of his shoes were refined, usually covered Louis heels.

Andre Perugia worked in Paris at roughly the same time as Yanturmi. Born in Nice circa 1890, his mother was Italian and his French father was a shoemaker. He was apprenticed to his father from the age of eleven to sixteen. He despaired of his father's indifference to design as his father continued to only produce traditional footwear. A handsome and charismatic character, Perugia got his big break in Nice in 1912, when a client persuaded her husband, a local hotelier, to display Perugia's designs in his hotel foyer show case. Perugia began to charge higher prices as he realised that fashionable, wealthy women would pay large amounts for his exclusive creations. Through a second dedicated customer, his shoes were shown to Paul Poiret, the Couturier. Poiret travelled to Nice in 1914 to meet Perugia and invited him to display his shoes in his Paris salon, however, the war intervened and Perugia eventually arrived in Paris in 1920, setting up a salon of his own on the rue Faubourg Saint Honore. He designed for Poiret and Elsa Schiaparelli amongst other grand couturiers. His clients were varied; socialites, starlets and French theatrical actresses.

Yanturmi had designed for private customers only, but Perugia designed ranges for Sak's Fifth Avenue and I. Miller (both large New York City retail establishments). He was one of the

No history of twentieth century shoe design would be complete without the master Salvatore Ferragamo. Born in poverty in Biadene, Southern Italy in 1898, he was apprenticed as a young boy to shoemakers in Biadene and then in Nice. By the age of fourteen he was in charge of a studio of six other craftsmen. He then emigrated to the USA to join his brother who had set up shop in Santa Barbara. Salvatore Ferragamo was unimpressed by the mechanically produced shoes on the American market. He described them as 'heavy, clumsy, graceless... (with) heels of lead' (Ricket, 1987, p. 27). He believed that reduced costs did not justify inferior quality footwear, but his brother disagreed with him. The business produced shoes for the American Film Co. In 1923 Ferragamo moved to Hollywood, where he made famously comfortable shoes for Cecil B. De Mille's 'The Ten Commandments' and 'The King of Kings' (Franko, 1982, pg. 36). He designed shoes for off-duty film stars such as Rudolph Valentino, Clara Bow, Claudette Colbert, Greta Garbo, Sophia Loren, Audrey Hepburn and Lauren Bacall. He returned to Italy in 1929 in search of better skilled craftsmen. Unfortunately he went bankrupt in 1933, but he fought his way back and settled his business in

Florence

His talent is legendary, he had an insatiable imagination and he is most famous for his use of innovative fabric, however, this experimentation would not have succeeded if he had not studied anatomy and the skeletal structure of the foot. Like Yantumi, Ferragamo had a particular fitting system, he made thirteen separate measurements of the foot, he also inserted

a steel plate into the arch of the shoe for support. Although Ferragamo was an innovator, he preferred to be remembered as a disciplined craftsman who worked within the boundaries of fashion (McDavett, 1989, pg. 182). His beautiful shoes were exported to the rest of Europe and the USA, in fact 350 pairs were exported daily in 1950. The 'Made in Italy' label he used became a symbol of quality which has been widely copied on all labels of the shoe market. Ferragamo's finest hour was in the 1930's with his superb platforms and wedges. (Fig. 35 - 38).

Salvadore Ferragamo survived the war years, in part, because of his strong associations with the US market. New York reigned briefly as the world's fashion capital for almost the duration of the war and mass production of fashion items were virtually unaffected by the war effort. The consumer world, as we know it, came into existence just after the war. The 1950's were the baby-boom years and family life was all important. With this came family orientated activities and leisure and sporting developments went hand in hand with the suburban world.

Sandals had been very popular during the war when stockings were scarce, as raw materials were requisitioned for the war effort. Sporty shoes and sandals were championed by post-war designers such as Claire McCardell and Tina Leser to accessorise their collection of separates. The sportswear boom continued throughout the 1950's.

Clothes designers were producing diffusion lines for country wide distribution and consumer demand in the 1950's as in the 1930's demanded novelty and variety. Four particular styles were most prevalent - saddle shoes, flat opera pumps, high heels stilettos and kitten heel lasts.



In the 1950's American high heels were the highest in history, reaching 6½ inches, and women were encouraged to look 'their best' even when doing the housework. Matching aprons were sold with daywear dresses, for newlyweds and married women, dress styles were conservative, neat and ladylike.

Wealthy women still flocked to couture shoe designers for special occasion wear, but as always these designers received little recognition and took a back seat to their fashion contemporaries. In the 1940's and 1950's dress designers diversified and began to design their own accessory ranges to match their own collections, and outside commissions for large retail outlets such as Saks, Fifth Avenue. Increasingly these outside commissions were sold under their own label as the general public became label conscious. Shoe designers themselves remained for the most part anonymous, and mass market shoes carried brand labels. High Street shoes, shoes such as Dolcis and Ravel and middle to higher market shoe stores such as Bally and Russell & Bromley used their own labels.

Shoe styles of the next decade carried over from the 1950's. Young women wore flat 'preppy' styles influenced by the American high school favourite, the saddle shoe. Predominantly flat and simple these styles were pared down and youthful in direct contrast to the 1950's. (Fig. 39) Shoes matched the 'baby doll' look of the early 1960's. Shoe styles introduced by fashion designers such as Mary Quant and Paco Rabanne were widely copied for the high street. Fashion styles changed at a rapid pace, which had never been seen before and inspiration filtered up from street fashions. David Evans an American shoe designers remained in vogue throughout the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's. He survived the fashion circus by keeping up with the ever-changing face of fashion. (Fig. 40-42)



The 1960's brought us boutique fashions, and changed the traditional retail look of the high street. The youth culture explosion attracted mass media attention as teenagers rebelled against the establishment and rejected the co-ordinating, prim styles of the 1950's. Young women refused to wear the matching outfits their mothers bought for them and began to exert their own consumer power. Popular styles in the first part of the decade were for the most part without nostalgia and were influenced by the hard, sharp lines of the Space Age and the black and white designs of Op Art. Shoes were low heeled in brightly coloured patents with geometric ornaments on square toes. Wet look patent and contrasts of matte and shiny were widely used. (Fig, 43)

Towards the second half of the decade, the clean, precise styles of the Space Age gave way to nostalgia, and with this came a vintage boom. (Fig. 44). Second-hand and ethnic shops sprang up and style conscious young people hunted around for original shoes from previous decades. The leg was the focus of attention in the 1960's and no emphasis was placed on breasts, waist or hips, the childlike look was all the rage personified by Twiggy. Shoes for the most part remained flat.

As the 1970's approached a more tactile style evolved and fabrics softened as dress lengths fell. The mini was slowly replaced by the midi and eventually by the maxi skirt. Boots had been high fashion in the 1960's with the influence of the Space Race and the Mod movement. In the 1970's their popularity escalated further and legs continued to be a focus point for fashion. The ankle strap and Greek sandal style strapping were popular for high heels. The wedge virtually replaced the flat sole and patchwork and hand decorated platform boots were



produced for high fashion by the Chelsea Cobbler and Mr. Freedman and for the high street by Ravel, M. Raine and Dolcis. (Fig. 45)

Shoe fashions of the 1980's were a haphazard mixture, mingling exotic and historical influences. The influence of radical Japanese designers such as Rei Kawakubo for Comme des Garçons filtered down to the high street with square toed flat heels, worn with black which was worn continuously by the fashion conscious. In contrast to the deconstructionist style of the Japanese were 'Dynasty' inspired fashions and 'Power Dressing' from the USA. Padded shoulders and big jackets, with tight skirts and 'big hair' needed to be set off by high heels. Consumers became label hungry in the 1980's and top fashion designers capitalised on this by producing diffusion lines for the middle market pocket i.e. Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein. The new designer consciousness was further exploited by the boutique chains such as Warehouse, Next and Hobbs (for shoes), who offered designer quality fashion at a cheaper price.

Red or Dead emerged as a designer label with street credibility, selling a small range of fashions and accessories through their own shops, and a small selection of suitable outlets. Patrick Cox, a Canadian shoe designer, living in London, is perhaps one of the most prominent shoe designers. At the moment his diffusion designs are even within reach of the student pocket. He made headlines last summer when he was forced to employ security guards at his retail premises to control the queues. He is mentioned by Trasko as one of the designers to watch in the 1980's. (Trasko, 1989, pg.115) At that time Trasko mentions his witty heels surrounded by a curtain of chains or silk fringing (Fig. 46). At present I feel he owes much of



his success to the styles of the 1960's and 1970's that he has revived i.e. the Jelly shoes, the transparent heel and the 'Mary Jane' T-bar shoe (Fig. 47)

Manolo Blahnik has been a mainstay of British shoe design for the last twenty five years. He is considered to be one of the great masters of twentieth century shoe design alongside Perugia Ferragamo and Vivier. His designs light up the pages of fashion magazines such as French and Italian Vogue and are featured regularly in the Sunday supplements. He is a couture shoe designer who exerts a huge influence over high street trends (Fig. 48)

In fact today the budgeting shopper can find decent reproduction of styles at reduced prices on the high street, particularly in Britain which boasts a huge selection of retail outlets, Office Shoes, Ravel, Shelly Shoes, Dolcis and Schuhe. It is interesting to note that none of these retail chains have outlets in the Republic of Ireland and that increasing numbers of style conscious young people are travelling to Belfast, Manchester and London in search of a better range. Fashion retailers such as Miss Selfridge and Oasis are increasing by branching out into the shoe and accessory market and both of these chains offer a limited stock of their accessory ranges in Dublin. Mail Order catalogues have added a new dimension to shopping in the 1990's and Irish young people take advantage of this service. London at present is a shoe obsessive's paradise.

In short, good quality, highly designed shoes are now available at the bottom end of the shoe market. Couture shoe styles influence cheaper designs and in turn streetstyle inspires couture designers. Accessory designers are more well known today than ever before and designers such as, Cox and Philip Treacy enjoy celebrity status. Interestingly, both of these designers



produce diffusion lines. Philip Treacy for Debehams and Patrick Cox has a cheaper 'wannabe' range of shoes. Quality shoe design was not available a century ago across the board. Things have changed due to technical and design improvements and today in the 1990's shoe designers receive the respect they deserve.



Chapter II

In this chapter I will discuss the events and movements that have affected the lives and changed the role of women in twentieth century society. As the twentieth century has progressed, the spending power of the working classes has increased dramatically and living standards have improved so much that travel and education are within the reach and budget of most working class households.

These opportunities are taken for granted by my generation as most, though not all, of our mothers worked outside the home and received second level education at least. In my family my generation is the first to go onto third level education, although two of my aunts on my mother's side trained as nurses. This tells us that opportunities had developed for women in the 1960's but not to the extent that they have today. My grandmother sent her daughters to second level schools, the two youngest went to a private school on a ploughman's wages such was her determination to lift her daughters above her station. Although their parents never travelled my mother and her siblings have gone as far afield as Russia and the USA.

It is worth nothing that my mother's family is small in comparison to most working class Catholic families at the time, with only three children. My father's family in comparison was large with nine children, and out of nine, eight finished secondary school and not one went to third level. In Ireland today, grants are available for higher education and community schools offer a high standard of education and facilities for the children of the working classes. Working class women a century ago might have had one good skirt to appear outside in and



spent any available money for clothes on their children and husbands, household budget increased when children reached a working age and were obliged to contribute.

In the previous chapter on twentieth century shoe design, I have, mostly, discussed bespoke shoe makers and it is only in the last forty years that quality fashion shoes have been available at relatively low prices to the working class. Mass produced shoes have been available since the Industrial Revolution in the middle of the last century when production shifted from small home-based industries to larger factories. Victorian Britain was the first urban society and led the industrialised world. London for example had a population of 1 million in 1801 which was one twelfth the total population of Britain, but by 1851 its population had grown to 2¼ million (Wilson & Taylor, 1989, pg. 13). This illustrates the huge growth of urban areas as thousands abandoned rural life. In fact by 1901, 75% of the population of Britain was urban (Wilson & Taylor, 1989, pg. 13). With the Industrial Revolution came a consumer society and a new class of entrepreneurs whose wealth grew to rival that of the aristocracy.

Working class women had always worked, whether as unpaid workers within the home or as outworkers. In the late nineteenth century, middle class women began to demand their right to work outside the home and earn an independent income. At this time those working class women who worked outside the home were considered amoral, in contrast to the virtuous ladies of leisured society. The genteel ladies of the middle class were prevented from having an independent role as they were expected to run their households, entertain and behave appropriately. Single women past marrying age, experienced great financial hardships, as on the death of their fathers they were not entitled to any inheritance. They fell into a category of 'surplus women' (Wilson & Taylor, 1989, Chapter two). The Society for Promoting the



Employment of Women was founded in response to this problem in 1859, also a campaign began in the late 1840's to protest against the 'Infantilised Status of Women' (Wilson & Taylor, 1989, pg. 27). The campaign for women's emancipation and the improvement of her position contributed to a greater general awareness amongst women of their secondary position in the patriarchal society of the time. Men enjoyed far greater power and privilege.

Women's dress at the beginning of the century illustrated their submissive position. In response to this important difference between the sexes, dress reform became a focus for women's emancipation, whereas women's clothing was elaborate and fragile and impractical in terms of style and fabric, men's clothing was becoming more comfortable and sober.

The Rational Dress Society was founded in 1881 and protected against the introduction of any fashions in dress that either deformed the figure, impeded the movement of the body or in any way tended to injure healthy..... The objective of the Rational Dress Society was to promote the adoption, according to individual taste and convenience of a style of dress based upon considerations of health, comfort and beauty (Wilson & Taylor, 1989, pg. 53).

An attempt had been made to introduce trousers for women but it was ridiculed and abandoned, though this attempt managed to arouse anxieties amongst men about the masculinisation of women. Not all men were against dress reform, and amongst the medical profession many were deeply concerned about the damage caused by wearing tight corsets, high heeled, narrow-toed boots and shoes and heavy skirts that made beneficial exercise impossible. In short, women's clothing was restrictive and unhygienic. The dress reform movement continued to argue for a looser, less constricted style of dress.



In the first decade of the twentieth century fashion designers at couture level such as Paul Poiret and Mariano Fortuny championed a looser style, in part influenced by oriental and Turkish styles of dress which had inspired the dress reformer, Amelia Bloomer also. And also inspired by the looser, more carefree styles worn by artists such as the dancer, Isadora Duncan, Poiret was particularly influenced by the Ballets Russes and Fortuny was inspired by the robes of Greek statues.

In 1906 eleven suffragettes were jailed for demonstrating in London for Women's Emancipation and on the 8th of March 1907, the Women's Emancipation Bill was defeated in parliament. In the United States, suffragettes had won the vote for women in eleven states before World War One. In Britain suffragette activities increased with demonstrations and arrests outside the Houses of Parliament and hunger strikes by 1910. After the death of one such suffragette at the Epsom Derby in 1913, demonstrations escalated with bombings, attacks and an attempt to storm Buckingham Palace in 1914. Shoe styles for women had become wider and flatter. The emancipation movement encouraged sports for women and the popularity at leisure pursuits meant comfortable sports and walking shoes were manufactured for women.

After World War One women's dress changed due in part to the dress reform movement but perhaps this change is more accurately attributed to the new frivolity that followed the grim war years. Many women cut their long hair into short bobs and swapped the long skirts of the Edwardian period for knee length dresses with loose undergarments. Shoe styles changed also from tight narrow boot styles to cut away sandals and T-bar shoes, most importantly, the leg was visible. In the Edwardian years a glimpse of an ankle was regarded as provocative but in



the 1920's Latin dance crazes highlighted the legs. However, working class women did not enjoy the new fashionable freedom to the same extent as their carefree 'superiors'. Most working women lost their wartime jobs, and again, their economic prospects were hinged on marriage. In 1921 Dr. Marie Stopes opened the first birth control clinic in London, in support of women's rights and was attacked by most clergy and many doctors who feared it would promote promiscuity. Simultaneously legislative changes gave women greater equality with regard to divorce and child custody (Wilson & Taylor, 1989, pg. 78). By 1923 wives were allowed to divorce husbands for adultery (Wenborn, 1989, pg. 114).

Women's fashions had changed gradually since the turn of the century, paralleled to the long struggle for emancipation. In contrast men's fashions had not moved with the times. Women's fashions had become looser and more hygienic but men's clothes remained heavy and layered, the same style was worn all year round with no concessions made for summer temperatures. In short men's clothes remained formal even after the great war.

The voting age for women was lowered from thirty to twenty one in 1928 and the British Parliament had a total of eight women MP's, but on an economic front, things did not look so good. By 1930 there were two million unemployed people in Britain, the great optimism of the post-war years had faded. In general the working class had not benefited from the consumerism that had been encouraged between the wars. Conditions deteriorated when Britain and France were forced to declare war on Germany, their great economic rival, on September 3rd, 1939. Britain experienced shortages and 38% less was spent on clothes by 1941. On December 8th 1941 all unmarried women and childless widows between 20 - 23

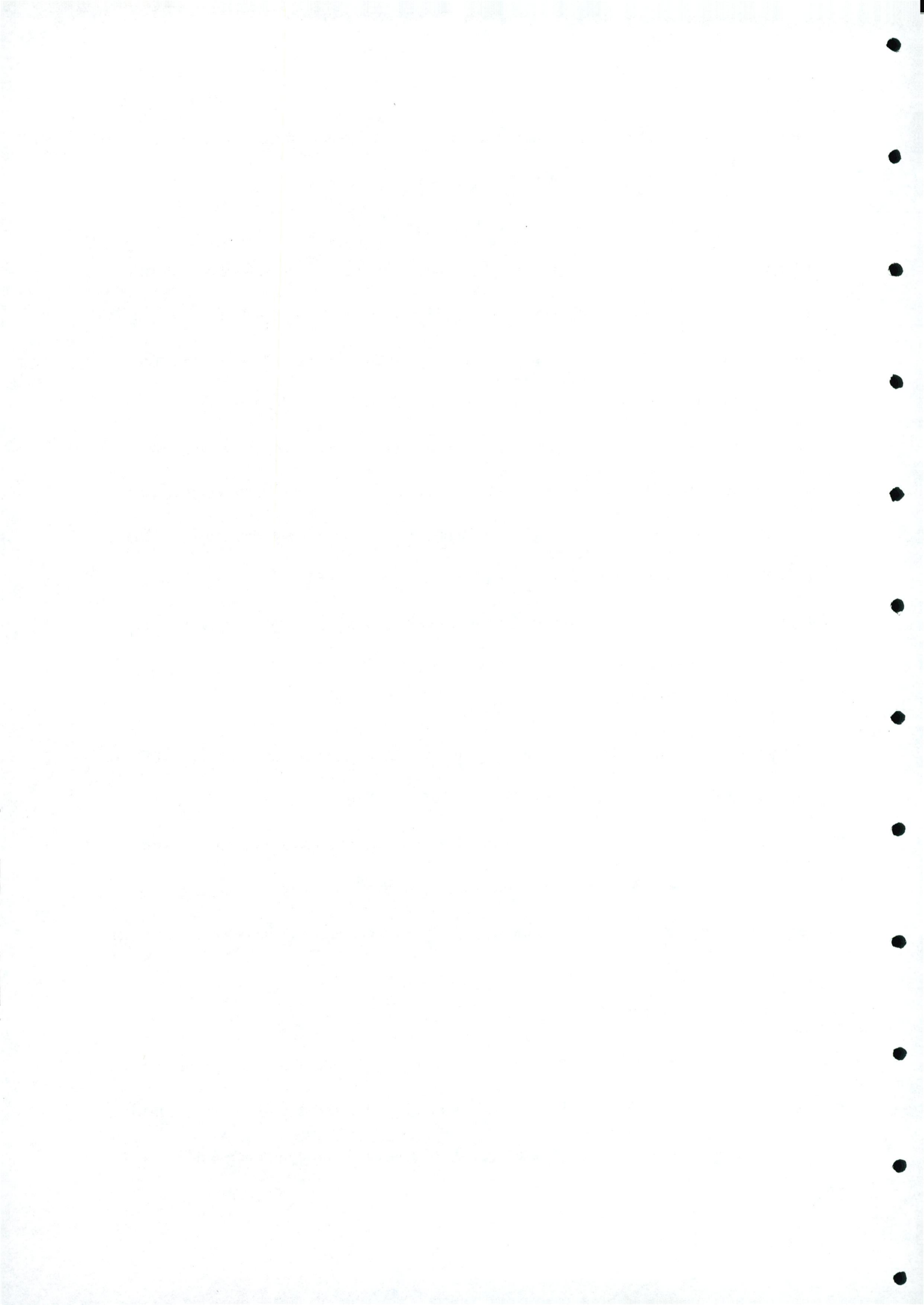


years of age were called up to replace absent men in munitions factories and manufacturing and proved themselves to be equally efficient, diligent and resourceful.

Clothing rations were introduced in June 1941, and interestingly mirrored a scheme already in place in Germany (Wilson & Taylor, 1989, pg. 110). Vogue campaigned for rationing in clothing and by the Spring of 1942 the government introduced the Utility Scheme in order to save labour and materials by simplifying clothing styles. With the introduction of the Concentration Scheme only a certain number of existing clothing factories were allowed to continue producing. In due course this led to greater efficiency as manufacturers merged and substandard operators were forced to close. Increasingly, women were encouraged to 'make do' (Wilson & Taylor, 1989, pg. 127). Shoe styles were plain with little or no decoration, leather soles were patched or replaced with wood and canvas and rubber replaced leather when it was eventually requisitioned for the war effort.

The war ended on May 7th , 1945 and two years later Dior launched the 'New Look' in Paris. Austerity fashions continued up until the early 1950's in Britain where the 'New Look' was resented for its decadence. It was condemned by women's groups for symbolising women's return to the home. The latter felt that the adoption of this exaggerated feminine style would reverse the progress that had been made during the war when attitudes had changed amongst women and employers.

Britain held an exhibition called 'Britain Can Make It' in 1946 and followed this up with the 'Festival of Britain' in 1951. This was an exhibition of products mostly for the export market that included furniture, textiles and ceramic design. The 1950's brought a consumer boom to



Britain for example in 1951 there were 2,250,000 cars but by 1964 numbers had increased to 8,000,000. Household appliances were very popular as families began to compete with each other, this thirst for modernity is illustrated by the increase in households with TV sets, from 1,000,000 in 1951 to a staggering 13,000,000 in 1964. Living standards improved rapidly and teenagers, who made up 8% of the population in 1964, were targeted by the clothing and music industries.

Forty two years on from the opening of the first Marie Stopes birth control clinic in 1923, the contraceptive pill was marketed. The 'pill' was applauded by young couples who welcomed the choice to limit the number of children in the hope, in part, of stabilising their standard of living. However, the Family Planning Association officially did not give advice to unmarried women until 1966 (Wilson & Taylor, 1989, pg. 168).

Couture was losing its hold in the 1960's, and the explosion of new youth fashions was concentrated in London, therefore couture designers were forced to rethink in terms of 'ready to wear'. Mass produced clothes came in easy-care materials and fashion and accessory ranges adopted young sounding labels like 'Miss Y' and 'Saxones' 'Young Colony'. In contrast to the geometric Space-Age look was the pre-Raphaelite romantic fashions of late 1960's nostalgia. Both of these styles offered equal measures of escapism.

In 1967 an Abortion Bill was passed in Britain and in 1969 twenty two year old Bernadette Devlin was elected as an M.P. Also in Britain the break up of the Empire brought with it huge numbers of immigrants from the Commonwealth. In 1961, a Commonwealth Immigration Bill was introduced in parliament and in 1965 a move was made to limit numbers. Britain in



particular was experiencing great social change which has been compared to the confusion which followed the war years. This instability was followed by 'the back to nature' fashions of the 1970's.

Women began to infiltrate male orientated working environments and in general standards of living were higher, but Britain was still suffering political and economic problems. In 1971 there were one million people unemployed, but by 1979 the numbers had risen to three million. Increasing polarisation meant a larger divide between highly skilled, and high paid employment, and unskilled, low paid, non-unionised, part-time employment for both men and women. Women were still in the minority in managerial and professional positions. Larger numbers of women and ethnic minority groups joined an already overflowing labour market. In 1974 the TUC and the British Government agreed a 'Social Contract'

The Woman's Movement demonstrated over issues of discrimination and attacked the cult of beauty promoted by the media. The movement also supported the 'back to nature' revival which promoted a healthier spiritual life. Increased interest in the ECO movements such as Green Peace, CNO and Earthwatch promoted the monitoring of pollution and nuclear energy. These demonstration caused such a furore that political parties were forced to acknowledge the Green Movement.

The long haired unisex fashions of the 1970's hinted at a certain equality when couples wore identical hair styles, pant suits and platform boots. The bottom and buttocks were the main erogenous zone when the body was revealed through tight fitting clothes. At one point men were given a defined waist by tight fitting tailored shirts which mirrored women's styles.



By 1982 unemployment topped three million. A greater social divide existed between the 'haves and the have nots'. The 1980's will be best remembered for mobile phone bearing 'yuppies', high salaried, conservative right wing professionals. Men's fashions were inspired by the past, and influenced in Britain especially by *Brideshead Revisited* in 1981. In 1988 *Arena*, a men's lifestyle magazine was founded. In contrast to this, antiestablishment styles of Punk and 'Japanese' 'Recession Style' dressing were popular and 'owed nothing to outworn conceptions of femininity' (Suzy Menkes, 1983).

A retail revolution rocked the high street in the 1980's 'Next' opened its flagship in 1987 and homeshopping by mail order became extremely popular. The retail boom was due in part to the spending power of young professionals but by 1990 there was a marked increase in the population of over thirties who were less likely to over indulge. The clothes industry began to send garment pieces to the third World to be made up, and sent back to Europe and America to be hand finished, exploiting, a predominantly female, workforce. In Britain ethnic minorities were recognised when Naomi Campbell became the first black model to appear on the cover of *Vogue* in 1987.

To conclude, in the 1900's trousers on women no longer shocked but in real terms, women were in many ways as free from equality as they were in the 1890's. Although women make up a vital component of the labour-force they are also expected to juggle two roles. In addition to holding down a job they are still responsible for the majority of housework and childcare. Unfortunately a large majority of the work available to women is unskilled, badly paid, part-time and non-unionist - the results of a model of 'progress' that places increasing



economic responsibilities on women without redefining their role as the mainstay of family life in the home' (Scott, 1984, pg. 8).

The economic improvements over the last forty years have not effected women uniformly and the wives of manual workers are far more likely to work than the wives of professional men. In short according to Martin and Roberts 'the new economy has been better at providing good jobs for well educated women, than for women at the bottom end of society (Martin and Roberts, 1984).

In the 1990's shoe styles are incredibly varied and the greatest changes in footwear over the last five years has been the impact of sports shoes on high street style. Modern hi-tec runners are worn with everything from causal snow boarding gear to slinky club wear. These styles of sneakers cross over the style and class barriers, though they are predominantly worn by the 16 - 25 age group.

Together the social developments for women over the last century are reflected in the fact that 1990's shoe style are incredibly varied and at a time in Irish society, at least when the youth population are very non-political, means that no particular styles stand out or make any revolutionary statement 'style' has definitely become an individual decision.



Chapter Three

This chapter is an investigation into the high heel as a female object. Although the high heel has hovered between the sexes throughout the centuries, it is now firmly established as part of female iconography. To illustrate the power of the high heel as a female object, I use the example of the stiletto shoe. The baggage which accompanies this much maligned shoe style, stems from the development of this style in the late 1940's and early 1950's. I take the stiletto as a representation of the female in Post World War II society.

The Court shoe had been a popular shoe style before the war. It re-emerged in a simplified form in the late 1940's. This coincided with the launch of the 'New Look' (by Dior) in Paris in 1947. (Fig. 53). Utility fashions of the 1940's had been austere because of restriction imposed during World War II, but well designed. Utility regulations had limited fabric lengths and fabric types. Shoulders were broad and padded, skirts were slim and to the knee. Fashions had been based on menswear, in this way novelty became second to design. No holds-barred was considered unpatriotic (Rennolds Milbank, 1996). (Fig. 54).

The Post War look was deliberately feminine in contrast to functional war fashions. Christian Dior's 'New Look' emphasised the natural curves of the feminine silhouette, it benefited from the highly designed simple ethos of austerity fashions. The curve of the shoulders, the bust, waist and the fullness of the hips, the stiletto heel was developed alongside this style and was an essential element in the creation of the total look. The tailored court shoe was refined, the round toe gradually became finer and because the court shoe was quite plain, the heel became the main focus of interest.



the redesigned court shoe at the beginning of the 1950's was feminine and conventional. As a female object it reflected the traditional role of the passive subservient female. The images of doll-like suburban housewives and sweet girl-next-door characters from Hollywood films of the period contribute still to prevailing negative attitudes towards the high heel shoe. (Fig. 55).

Many women had returned voluntarily to the home. They had left responsible, resourceful jobs which they had held during the war. Women's social status had improved radically between 1939 and 1950, and it is true to say that after the war, women were encouraged to forget the progress they had made. Their social status was diminished as they returned to the home. This diminished role was reflected in the style of the era.

Of course in every decade there are a number of pioneering women who refuse to toe the line and fill these preconceived roles. However, in the 1950's they were in the minority, women returned to their pre-war roles as troops returned from a liberated Europe. These women felt obliged to beautify themselves and please their menfolk with post-war extravagances, but by the mid-1950's the younger generation began to rebel against the pristine, cartoon world of suburbia.

The stiletto heel was first called the 'needle' or 'spindle', these terms conjured up images of fragility that at first reflected the bad design of the heel. As the decade progressed the heel became higher and the toe more sharply pointed. The term stiletto' meaning (small dagger) was eventually used to describe the whole shoe and not just the heel (1959). Technological advancements meant a six inch heel was produced.



The 1950's was a time of exaggerated normality. Women's roles were as housewives and mothers, always pleasantly attractive and appropriately dressed, most social activities were family orientated.

According to Rennolds Milbank, many of these women had abandoned their responsible wartime positions with relief (Rennolds Milbank, 1996). A lot of these women had college education and would have been the daughters of flappers and suffragettes, yet they rejected this independence and put their aprons on. Women tottered around on flimsy heels and squeezed themselves into Waspwaisted corsets, thus high heels have come to symbolise female bandage, just as the housewife was confined to the house by her child rearing role, she was also not likely to get very far in her impractical high heeled shoes.

Women look helpless mincing around on flimsy heels, high heels make no practical sense, walking becomes precarious and the feet become distressed. According to Rossi men see, and enjoy this distress when the woman looks as though she needs masculine support (Rossi, 1989, pg. 123). The position of the foot in the high heel shoe is almost vertical. Rossi believes this position to be sexualised and the reason for the sex appeal to these shoes. (Rossi, 1989, pg. 123).

The wearing of high heels reshapes the body's silhouette. It defines the shapely contours of the ankle and the leg, the foot looks smaller and the curve of the arch and instep is increased. It accentuates the voluptuous shape of the lower limbs - the pelvis, buttocks, abdomen and breasts. The back bone curves and the gait of the wearer is shortened suggesting a state of helpless bondage (Rossi, 1989, pg. 121). Of course the wearer appears taller and the legs



lounge (Fig. 4). High heels provide a psychological and emotional uplift for a lot of women. Whether women wear high heels to enhance their sexual attractiveness is debatable, but high heels can provide a lift in confidence. The term 'dressing up' can relate to the ritualised way women dress to go out for an occasion.

According to Rossi, some men believe wearing high heels raises the sexual temperature of a woman's genital area - this has never been proven (Rossi, 1989, pg. 122). In fact Rossi mentions, in jest, that the high heel was probably 'invented by a pretty girl who was always being kissed on the forehead' (Rossi, 1989, pg. 125), though Rossi also believes women take pleasure in squashing their feet into pinching shoes and believes the pain to be overcompensated by the attention they receive from men (Rossi, 1989, pg. 123). He could be right! This image of women wearing high heeled shoes is a devalued image, the high heel is seen as a sexual fashion item that denies women their dignity and renders them as sexual objects.

The stiletto heel was invented by a man - M. Jourdan in Paris in 1951. Jourdan was a bootmaker who combined wood and steel to make a slender heel. Well-to-do women wore the stiletto for occasional wear, but a mechanised production system was in place by 1957, making the stiletto cheaper and therefore available to women on lower incomes. The mass produced version was a huge success. Sales increased dramatically between 1958 and 1962. It was worn not only for evenings out but for almost all purposes by young women, it was worn at work and for everyday activities like driving a car or running for a bus (Wright, 1989, pg. 13). This illustrates that young women embraced the high heel style, perhaps because these fashions contrasted with the utility styles their mothers had been forced to endure, young



women of the late 1950's began to reject the conventions of post-war society. Paradoxically the stiletto, once a symbol of subservience, was being worn by women as a symbol of their discontent. In this respect the stiletto as a female object can be seen as progressive rather than retrogressive.

The underground style of the 1950's was a bum hugging skirt, with black mesh stocking, spike heeled shoes and a waist length jacket with a black fox collar (Carter, 1982, pg. 11). This style of outfit was worn purposely by young women who wanted to assert their independence. These women were more assertive than their contemporaries, and they regarded the stiletto as an essential fashion item that accentuated their femininity. The stiletto was no longer a shocking instrument to these women, instead it was an extension of their power, the more exaggerated the stiletto heel became, the more radical its followers became.

Assertion of gender differences challenges the power relationships more effectively than any attempt to emulate what is seen as male' (Wright, 1989, pg. 15). Therefore in contrast to the image of the girl-next-door, we have the image of the vamp - a strong confident woman, unafraid to assert her femininity, a woman with aspirations, a go-getter, who lived in a world outside the home.

Today women are not confined by the same conventions that the young women of the 1950's had to contend with. Women now have a wider choice of fashion styles to choose from. High heel shoes are better made and more comfortable with fashionably wider heels. Today the stiletto is rarely seen and has become, for the most part, a cult shoe worn by clubbers and cabaret drag queens. They appear in fashion spreads in up-to-the-minute British style



magazines such as *The Face* and *I-D* (Fig. 56 - 58). Stiletto shoes are still available on the market, but they by no means dominate sales, in fact they have become something of a novelty.

High heels are still regarded as 'grown-up' shoe and little girls still emulate their mothers by applying makeup and wearing their high heels. The high heels therefore still represents womanhood. In contrast the flat shoe has an unfashionable image, whereas women in high heels aren't always taken seriously, women in flat shoes are often considered to be too serious. This is a typical shoe cliché. In defence of the flat shoe, I remind you that teenagers in late 1950's America wore the 'flatties' as a challenge to the court shoe styles of their mothers. In the 1960's in Britain, flat shoes were worn by teenagers and young adults, and most importantly, adopted by Mods when styles became increasingly anti-establishment.

High heels are now the prerogative of women. According to Wright 'expression of femaleness can signify power and be objectified in ways other than masculine' (Wright, 1989, pg. 16). By using male forms of clothing we are establishing the dominance of masculinity. Vivienne Westwood believes that it is 'not powerful to be like a second rate man' (Vermorel, 1996). I agree with her, and identify with the high heel as a positive female object.

In conclusion, women in high heels are usually perceived in one of two ways, either as vulnerable and submissive or as aggressive man hunters. It is not only men who perceive women in high heels this way, women can be their own worst enemies and judge each other by their appearances. I don't believe that these stereotype images of the stiletto wearer will ever be annihilated, but I do believe that women now have the freedom to exploit these images themselves.



CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have discussed the various issues that surround the high heel. It is significant that this fashion item can raise and explore significant issues. In Chapter one, I have considered the history of the shoe and heel for women since 1,000 B.C., concentrating mainly on twentieth century design developments. The high heel court shoe has been the representative of the female in footwear since the 1930's, it has gradually lost its appeal. Today the stiletto is a novelty shoe and most women wouldn't attempt to wear them. Unfortunately stiletto is still associated with women's subordination and will always be referred as 'the height of tart's taste'. In the late 1950's the stiletto was used by women as an expression of rebellion and discontent, therefore breaking with earlier forms of femininity rather than conforming.

In Chapter two, I discussed the historical and social events and issues that have changed women's role in the twentieth century society, the two great wars were most instrumental in changing the establishment's attitude towards economically independent roles of women. Women were accepted eventually as vital components in the workforce. Though many argue today that though much has changed, women's position and responsibility has doubled and therefore disimproved.

The outcome of twentieth century social change is, that unlike previous decades, when shoe styles pigeonholed women, the 1990's boasts no particular shoe style that represents women 'badly'. The stiletto today, if anything, can be seen as a progressive style, no longer used to only represent femininity within the realms of what that meant in the 1950's. In Chapter three,



I continued to assess women's social and psychological position as I investigated the role of the high heel as a female object. I concluded from this that today if women choose to wear high heels that this expression of femaleness can signify power. The women's movements are still fighting the stereotyped images of women that the media continue to throw at us, but they have abandoned the idea that the adoption of inherently masculine clothing empowers women having believed that open displays of gender differences exploited women. High heels are now the prerogative of women.

The sexual revolution of the 1960's with the introduction of the contraceptive pill and family planning facilities has given women a degree of freedom. Equal opportunities in education and increased numbers of women in the workplace mean women no longer need to emulate each other in terms of style or conform to male ideals. Fashion and style are individual and the prerogative of women. In short, I draw a definite conclusion that footwear cannot be isolated from fashion and fashion cannot be isolate from the political and social world.





Fig. 1 Cream coloured square toed patent slingbacks with silver mirror block heel and geometric buckle. Made in France, 1960.

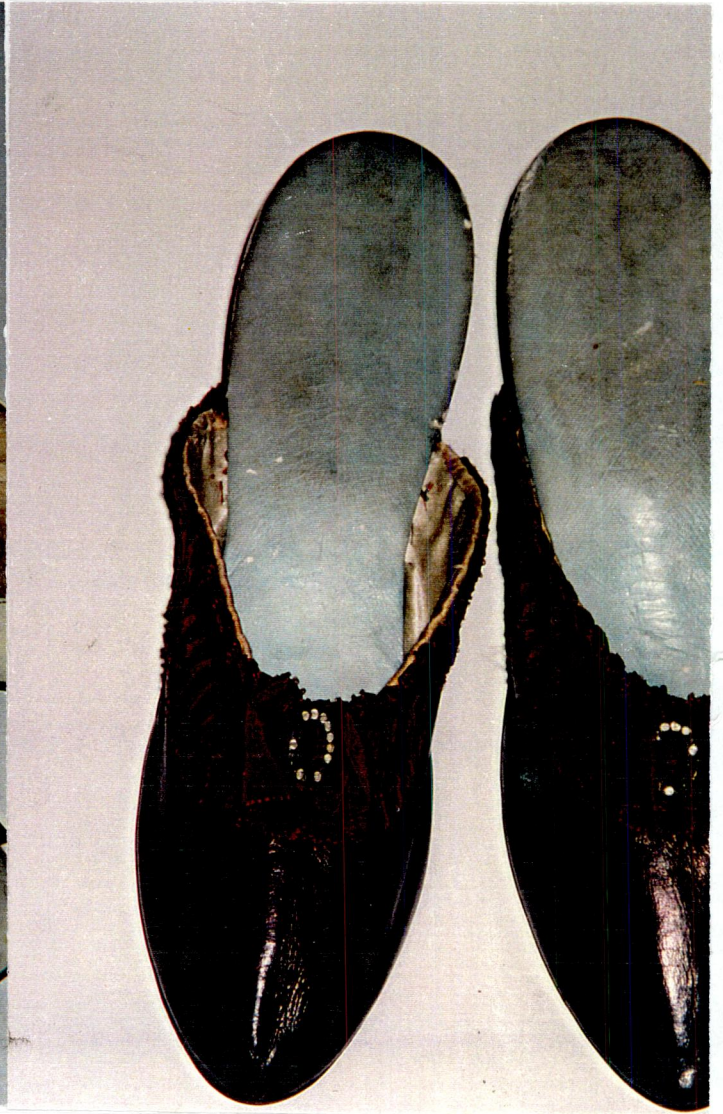


Fig. 2 Brown leather straights with eggshell blue lining and tiny diamante buckle - British ? 1780's.

2

3



Fig. 3 Dusky Rose coloured strappy sandals with overstitching detail and twisting ankle straps. 3" heel, handmade in England, 1940's.

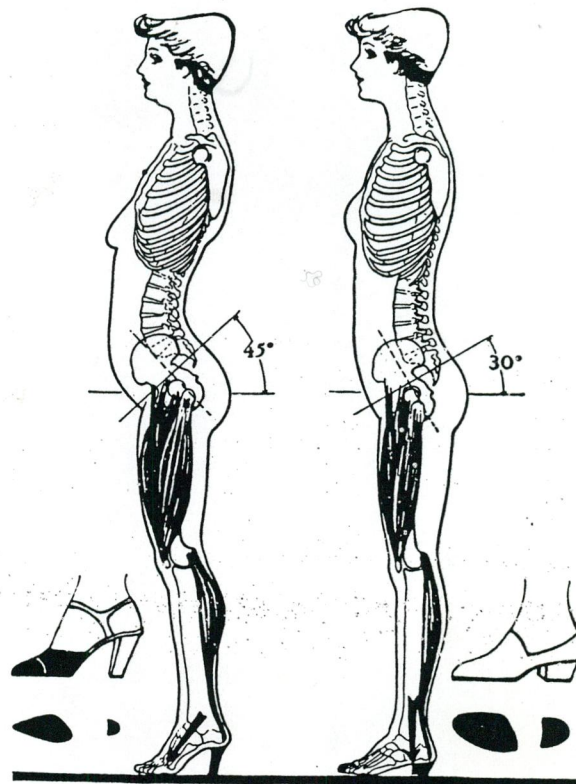
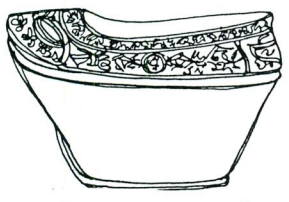
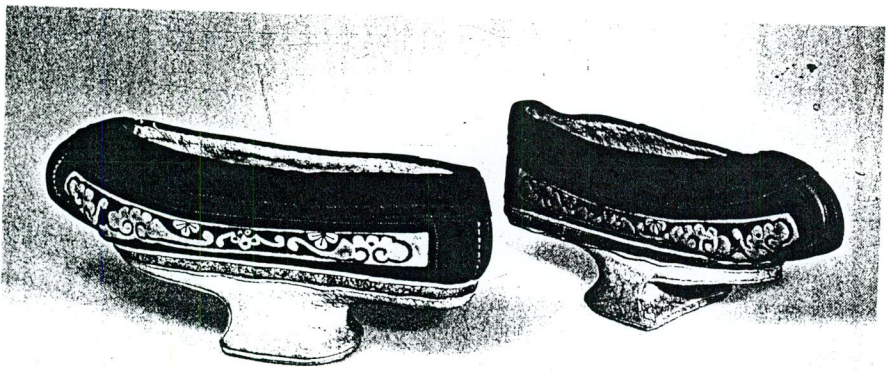


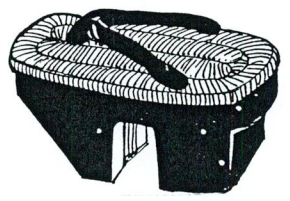
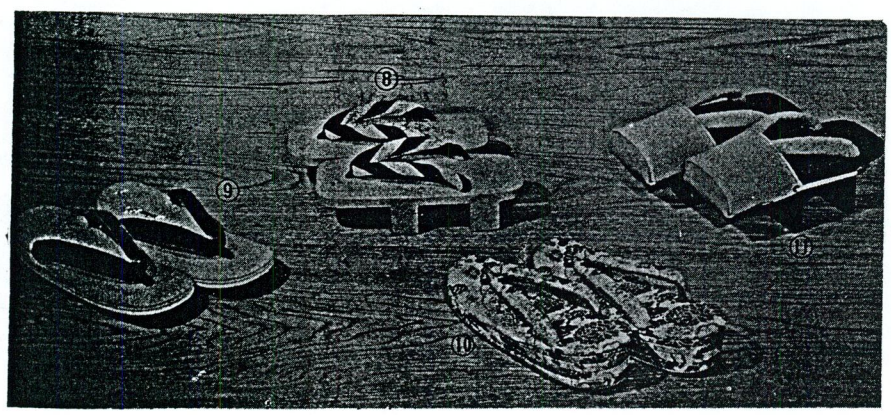
Fig. 4 Postural changes of the female body silhouette (Rossi, 1989, pg. 148)





Boy's clog covered in white silk embroidered in blue and black, Chinese

Lady's clog covered in black silk, embroidered in colours, Chinese



Japanese clog or geta of wood painted red with gold design

Japanese clog or geta of wood painted black with straw sole and black velvet straps

Fig. 5 Top Chinese and below Japanese platforms.

5.



Fig 6/7

White leather Chopines with hollow platforms. Venice.1600 - 1620.

1600

6

7

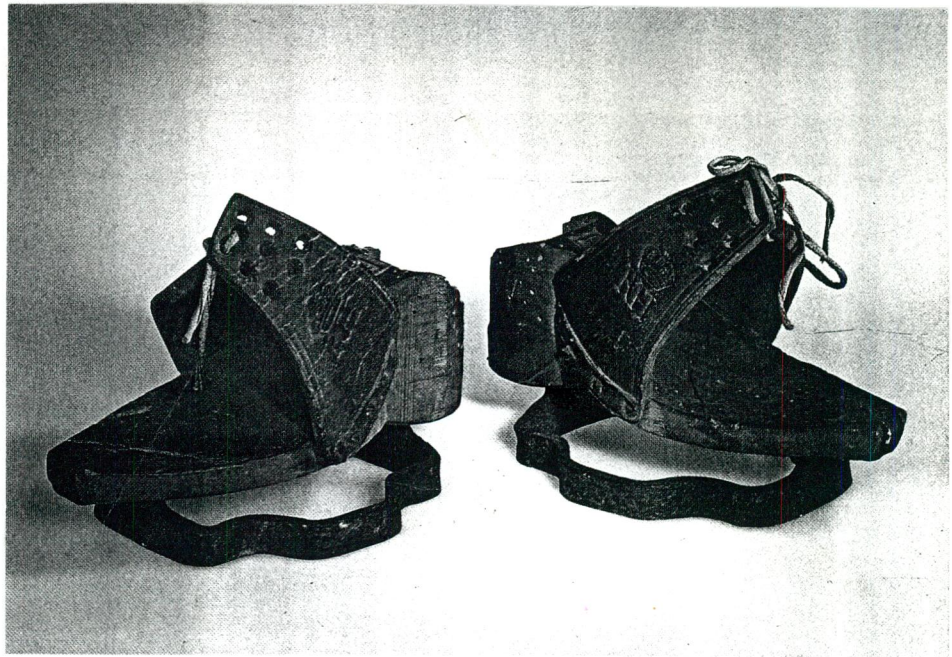


Fig. 8

3 Patterns circa 1700. Wood, leather and iron. Germany.





Fig. 9

Slap shoe - 1690 - 1700
White leather with brown leather covered heel and sole.





Fig. 11 Louis heel - heavily decorated embroidered vamp and heel with ribbon ties. 1730, European.



Fig. 12. Pompadour heel - finely embroidered vamp, slip-ons with curved thin heel. 1720, French style, for salon wear.

1730

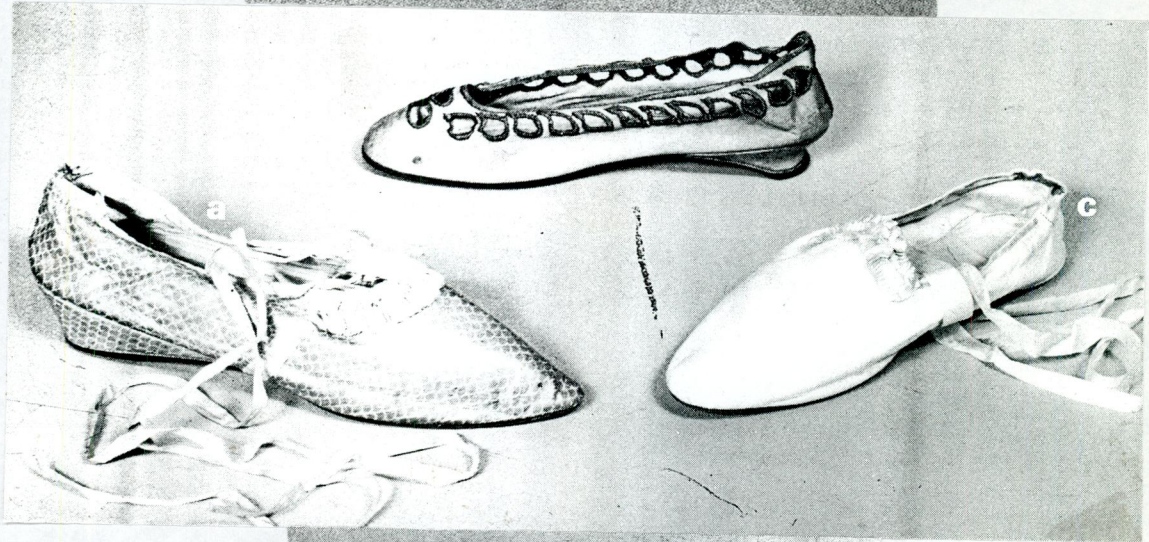
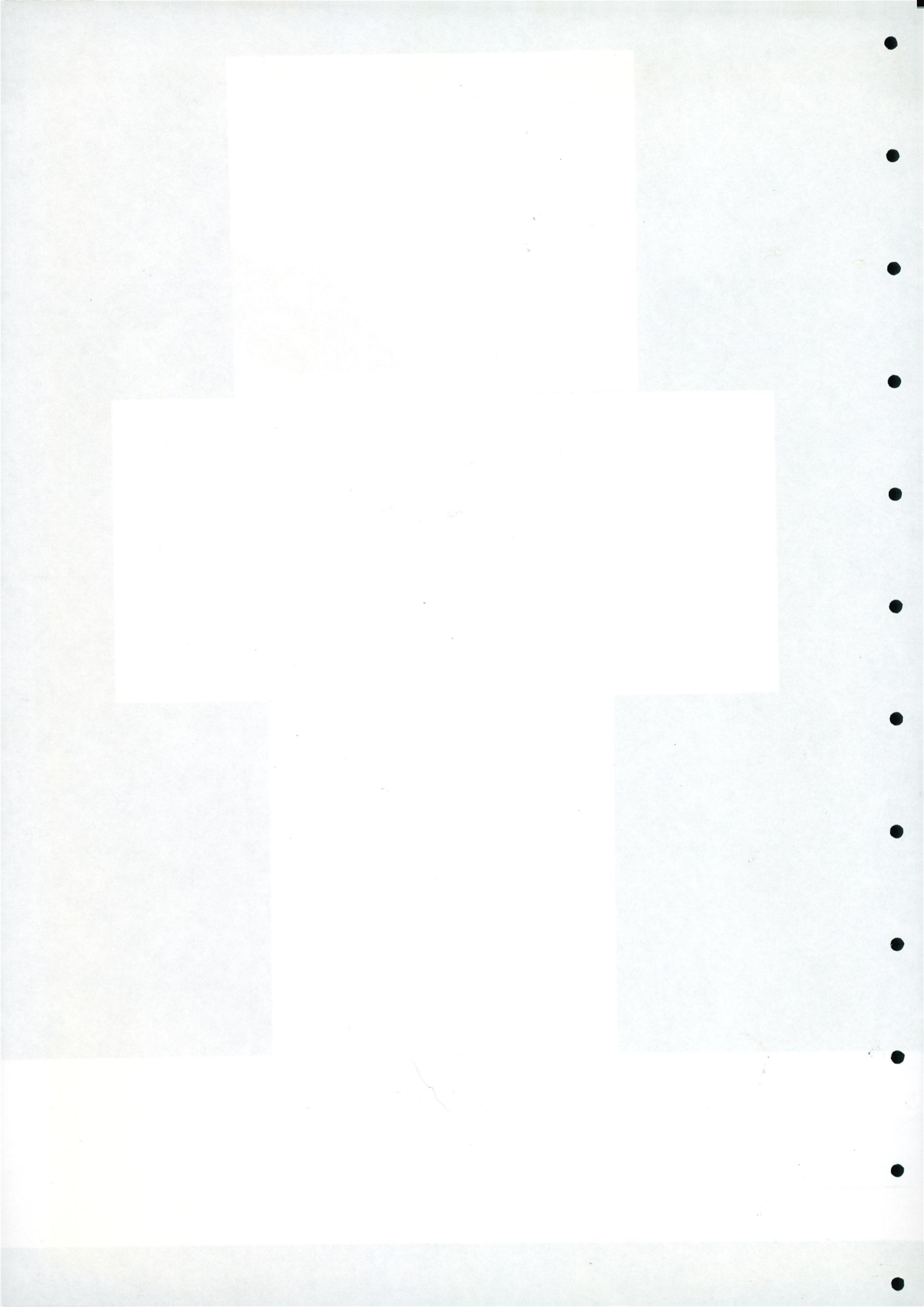


Fig. 13 Ladies shoe and clog, $2\frac{3}{4}$ " red Morocco covered heel. England circa 1700.

Fig. 14 Combined wedges, 1800 - 1865.

Fig. 15 Slippers (a and b) 1840 - 1865.



Walking & Sports Shoes

No. 271513 24.11
 In Patent leather, with grey embroidered flowers and stitching. Light single sole, celluloid covered Louis heel



No. LT429 . 35 -
 Sports Shoe, with buckle, in Brown Grain Calf. Stout sole, low heel



No. 27780 26.11
 Court design in Patent leather, with light single sole and celluloid covered Louis heel



No. LT834 . 32.9
 Buckle Shoe in Brown Willow Calf, with crepe rubber rolling sole and heel



No. 27703 35.-
 In Patent leather, with grey watersnake collar and bar. Light single sole, celluloid covered Louis heel



No. LT448 . 37.6
 Brown Willow Derby-cut Shoe for sports wear, with fawn lizard strapping. Medium-stout sole, low heel



Manfield
ESTABLISHED 1910

Fig. 16 Sports and leisure ladies shoes - T-straps





Fig. 17

Brightly coloured sandals in suede, kid and crepe, worn with colourful, printed crepe skirts. New York, 1932.

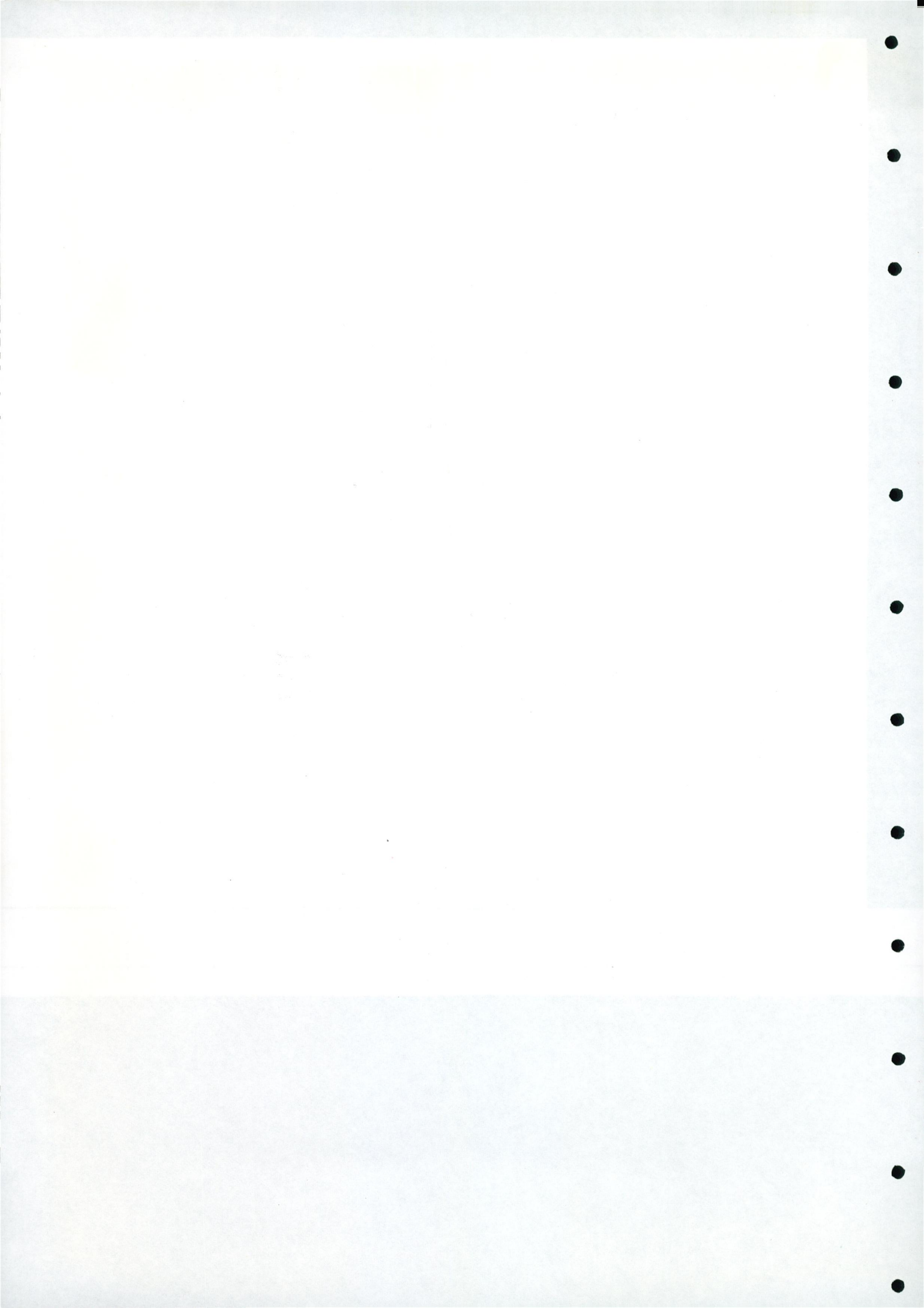




Fig. 18

Wedge soled shoes. Clockwise from top right: sandal with wedged heel in pressed layers of cork and sole of rubber derivative, Italy, Salvatore Ferragamo, 1942 - 1944. Ankle boot sandal of beige piler with wedge heel of painted wood, Italy, Salvatore Ferragamo, 1944. Slip-on, canvas shoe with wedge heel covered in corn coloured woven raffia. Germany, Anonymous, 1935.

Leather slingback shoe with carved wooden wedge heel. Germany, anonymous, 1940.

Fig. 19

War Sandal, canvas, sock peep toe, slingback with wooden suspended sole. France, 1940.

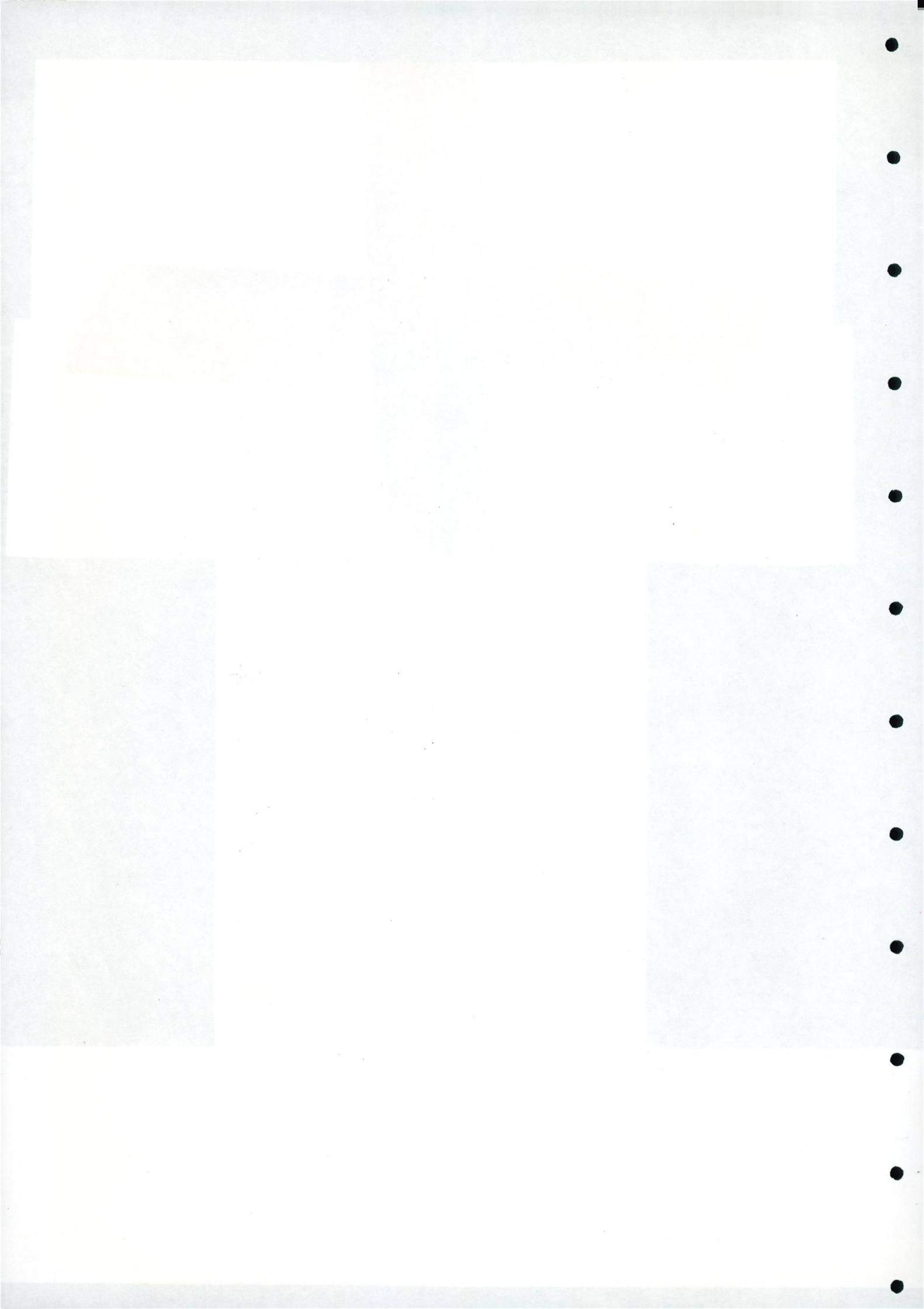
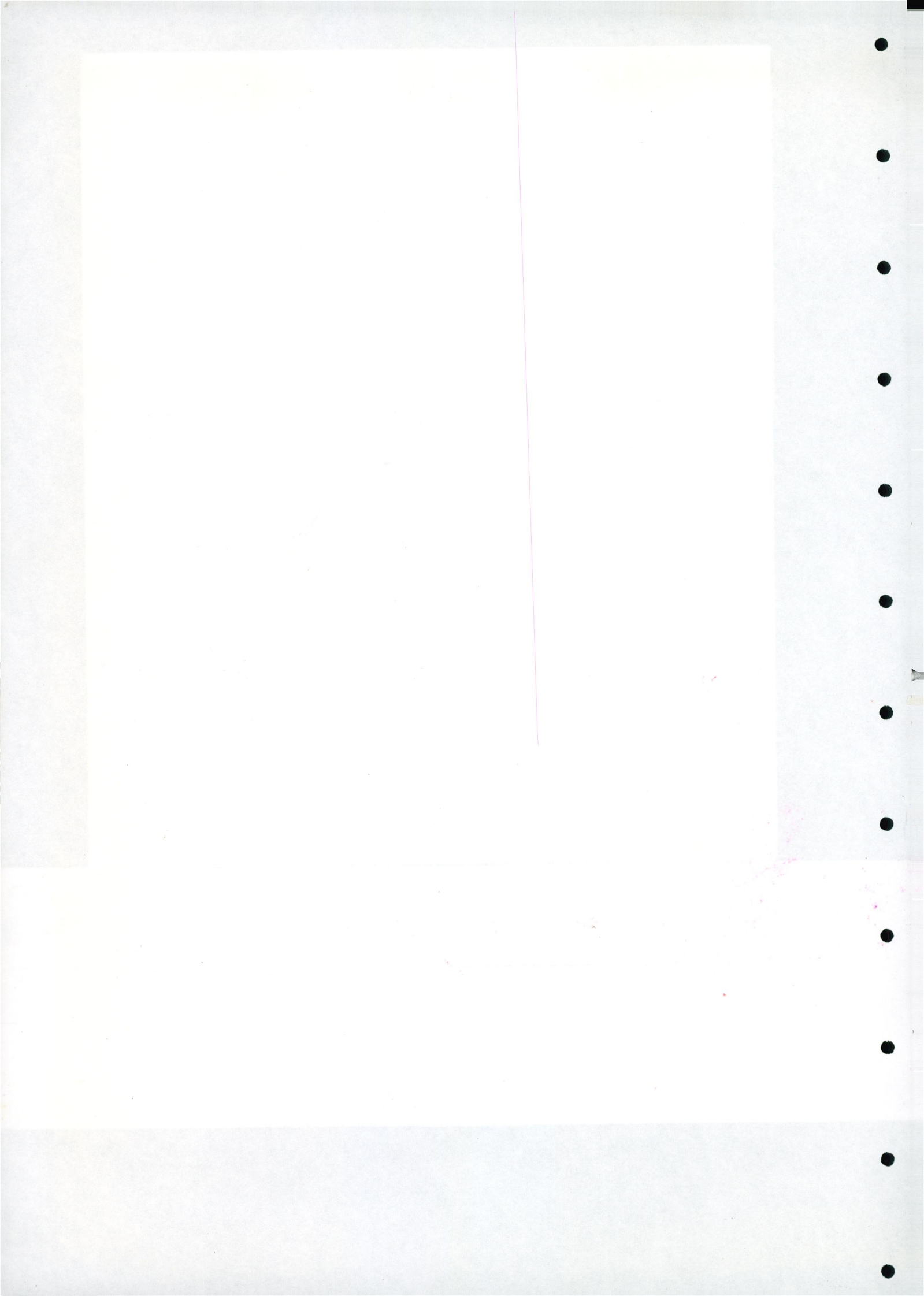




Fig. 21 Stiletto heeled, court shoe, brown crocodile and brown calf. Pointed toe, high stiletto heel in wood and mesh covered with brown crocodile. Leather sole and reinforced arch. Ferragamo, Italy, 1958 - 1959.

Fig. 20 Court shoe, black leather upper with pointed toe and high stiletto heel in wood, covered with black leather and leather sole. Ferragamo, Italy, 1954 - 55.

Fig. 22 (see figures 20 and 21)



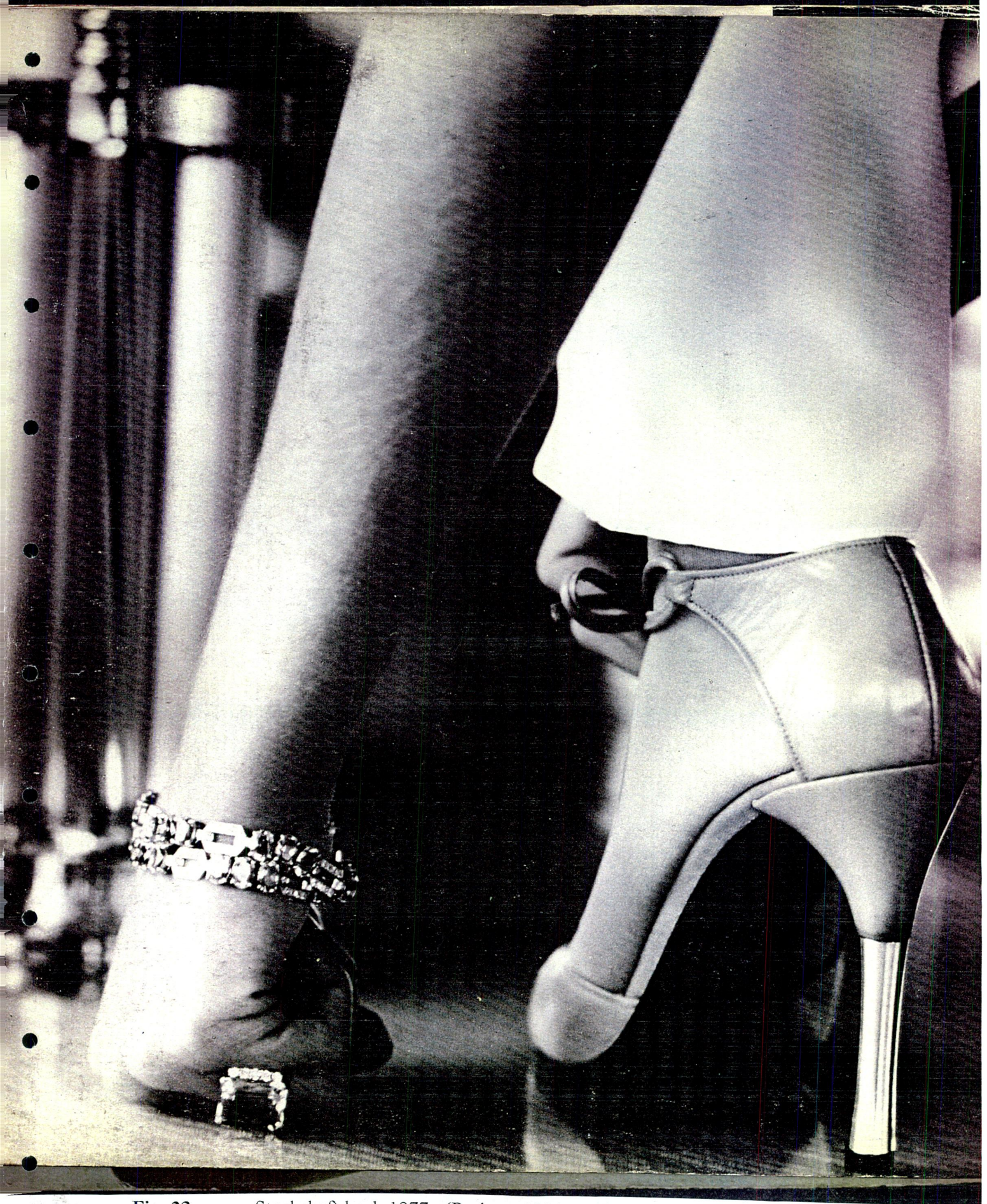


Fig. 23 Steel shaft heel, 1977. (Probert, 1981, pg. 92).

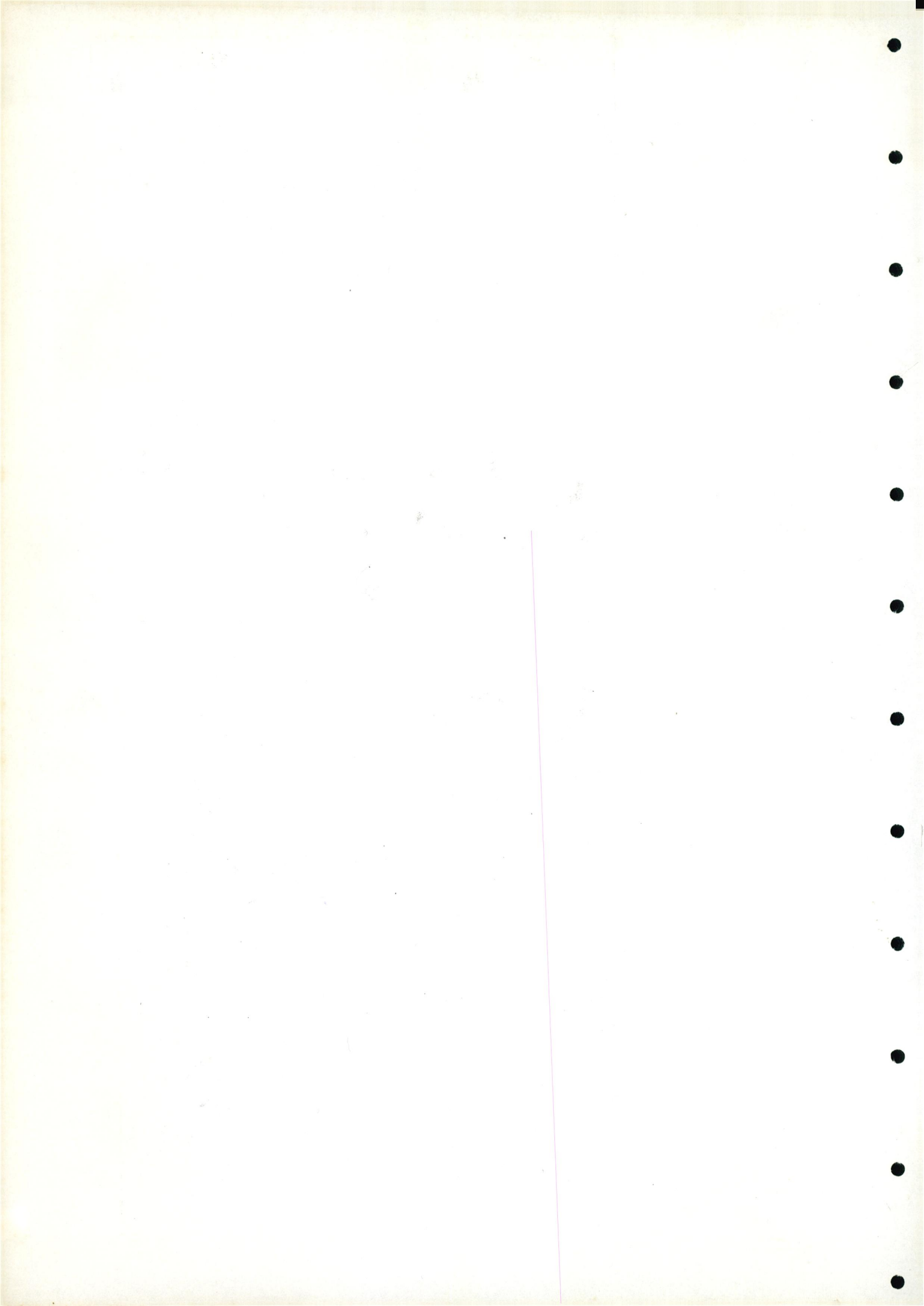




Fig. 24 - 28 Eighties Fashions, from Commes des Garçons, Next and Freeman's catalogues.

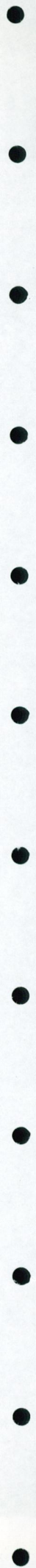
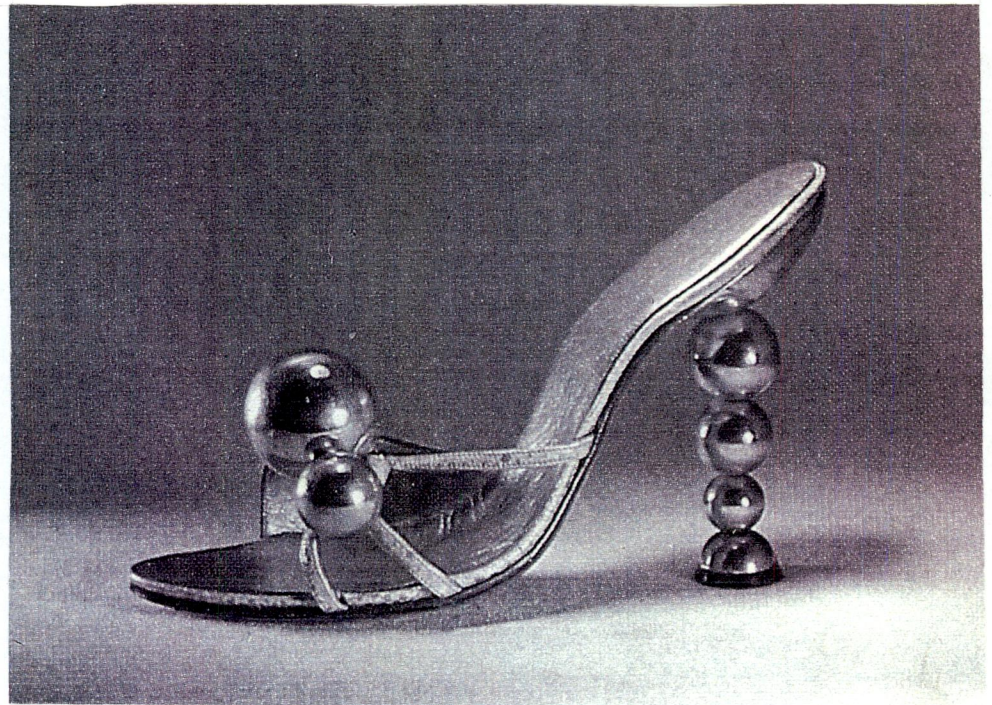




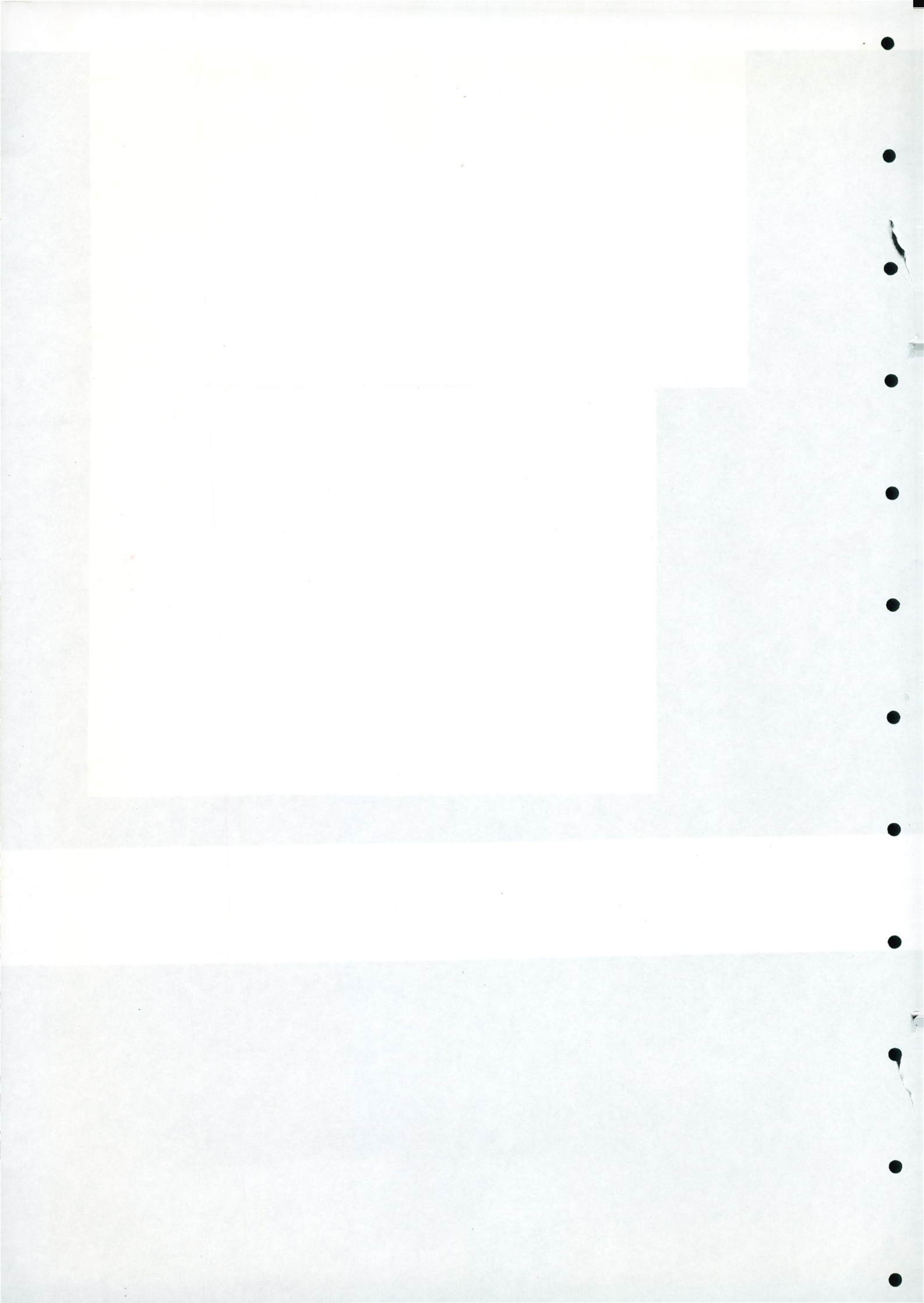
Fig 29

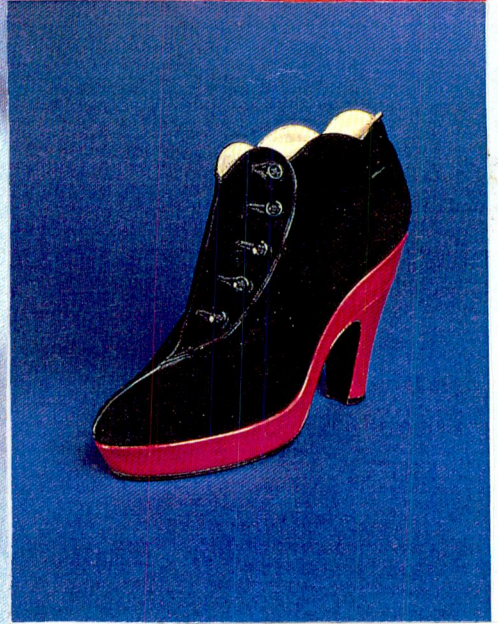
Yanturni evening shoes c. 1915. Embroidered with antique textiles for Rita de Acosta Lydig (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).



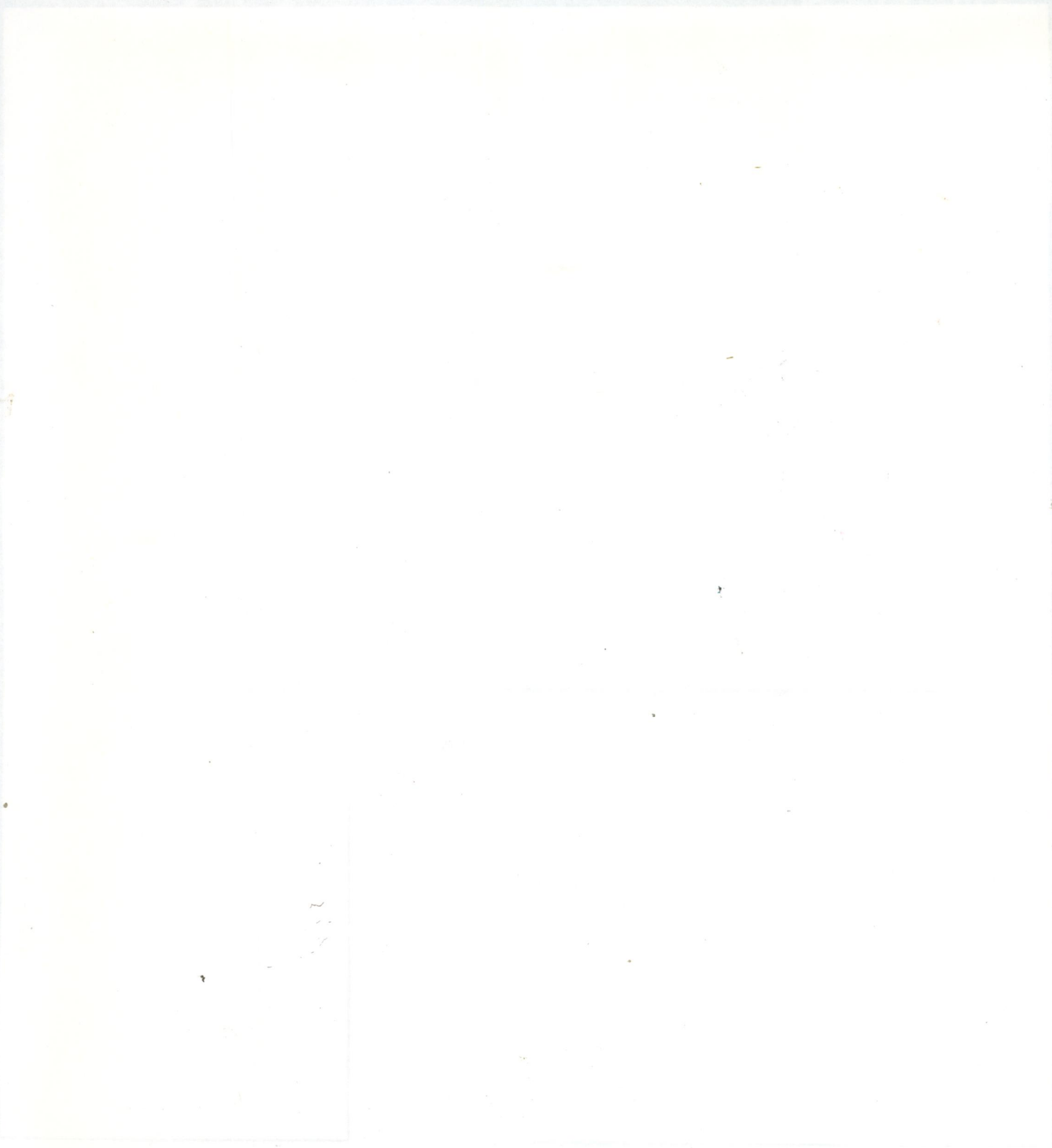


30. Leisure shoes 'for strolling to the Casino in style' Perugia, 1929.
31. Slip-on shoe with heel of stacked golden globes made for Josephine Baker, Perugia, 1934.



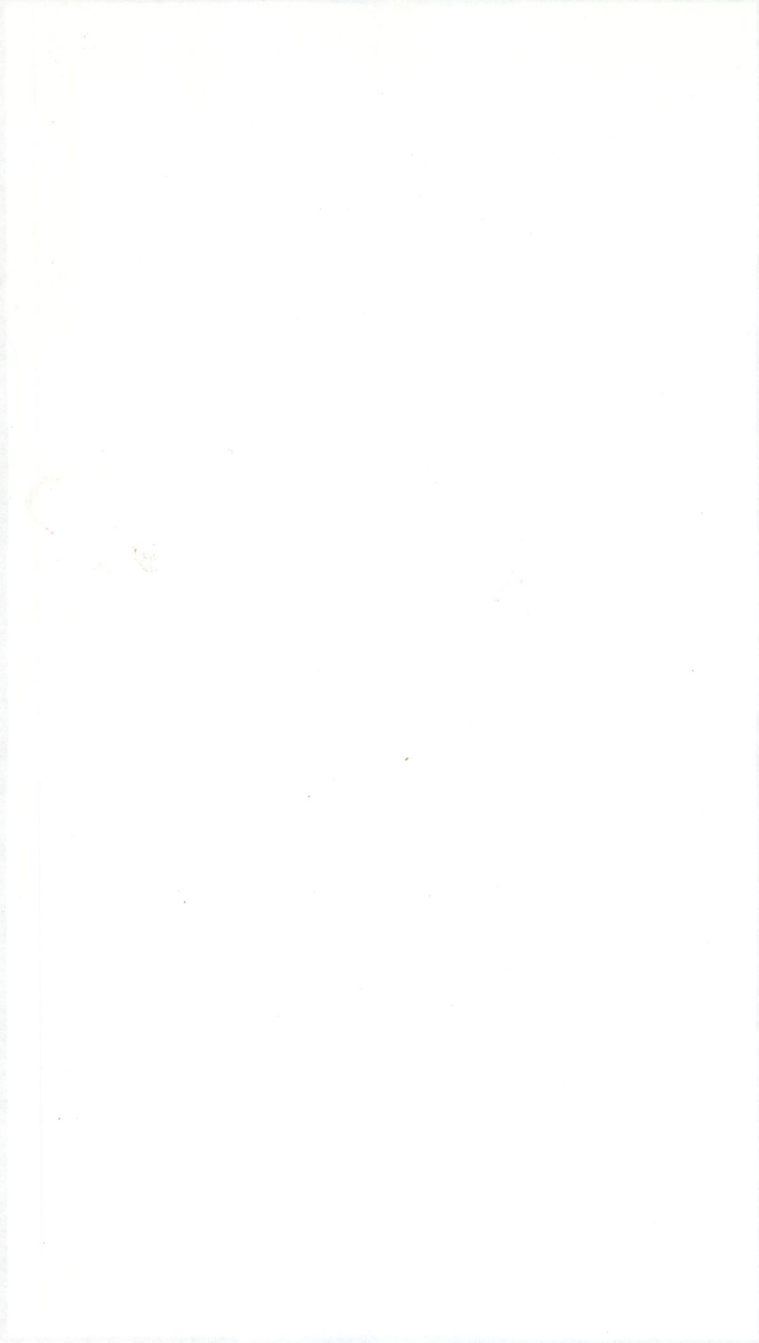


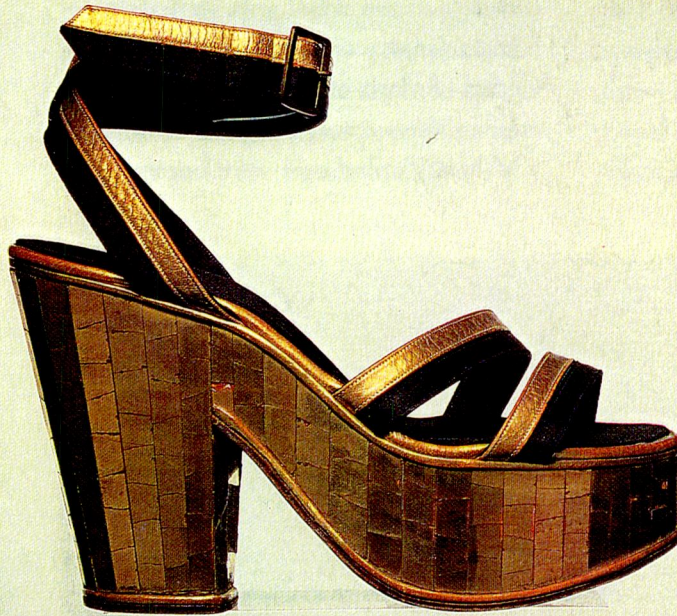
32. Suede and kidskin platform boot by Perugia under the 'Padova' label, 1936 - 39. Suede and leather Chopine made for Elsa Schiaparelli by Perugia, late 1930's.





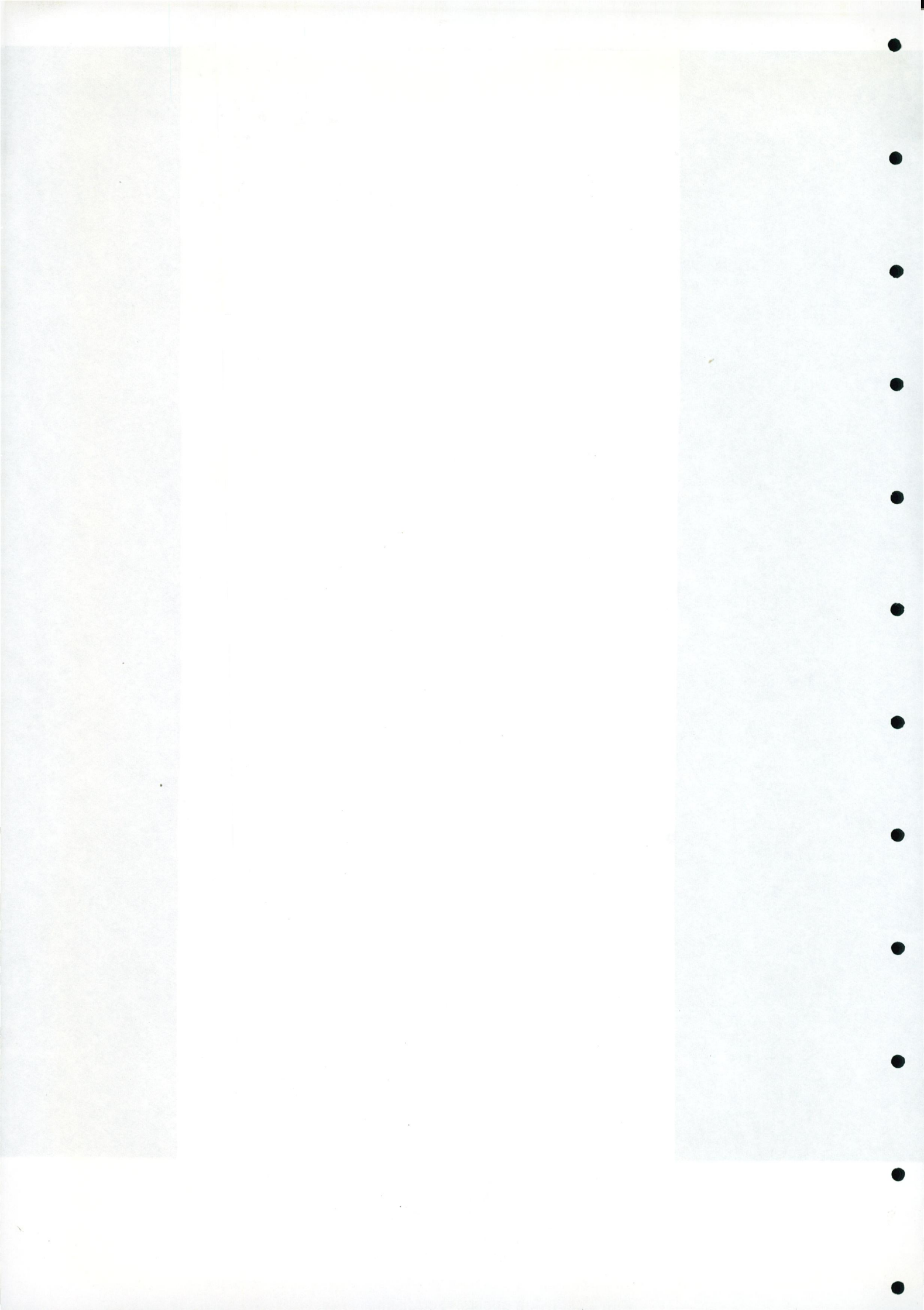
34. Two shoes left. Right, two tone blue suede and kidskin, high heeled shoe designed for a Parisian music hall revue. Perugia, 1948.





35 Lace-up shoe in black antelope with padded collar, silk cord laces and antelope tassels and horn toe. Ferragamo, 1930 - 35.

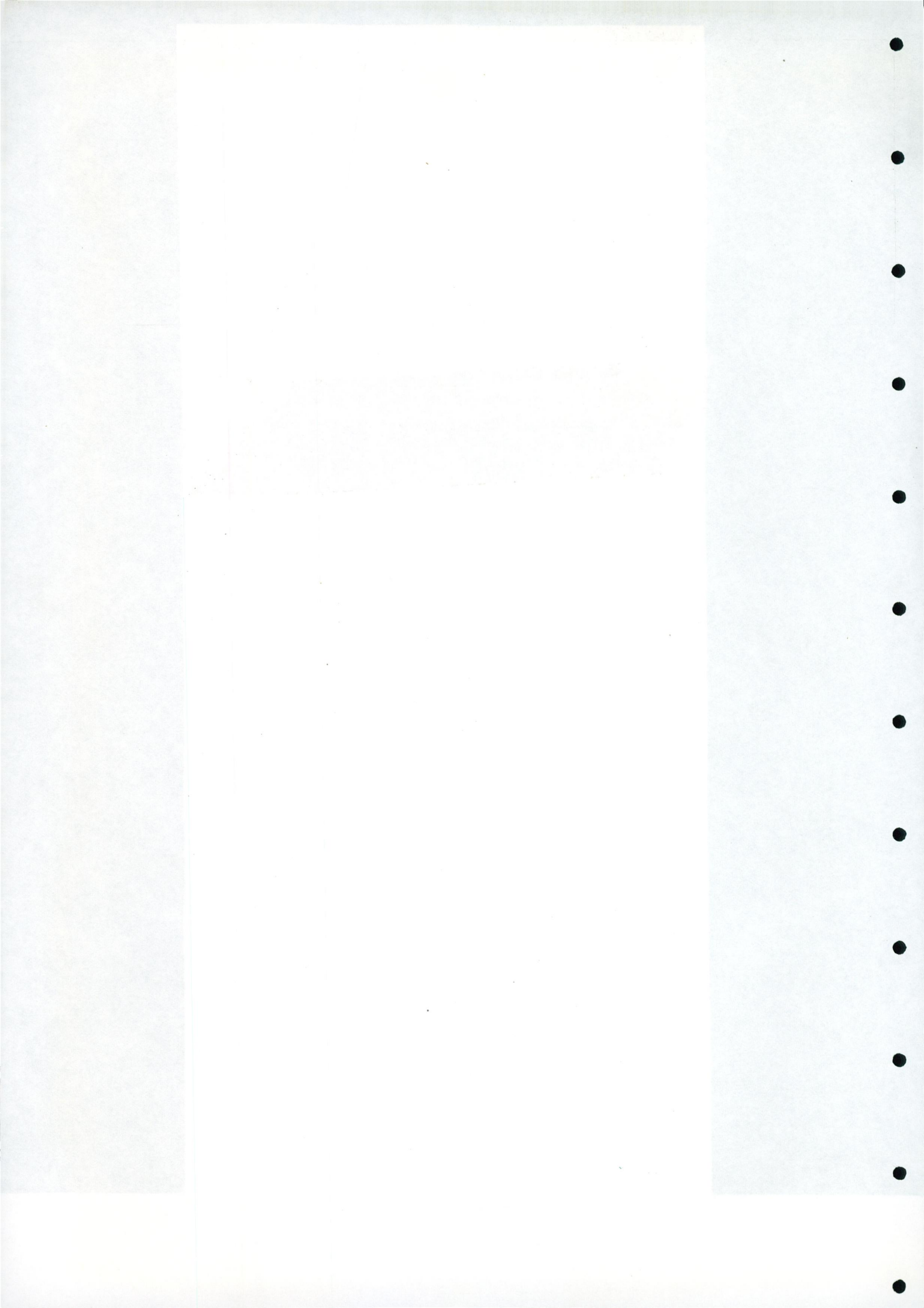
36. Two sandals wit platform soles and wedge heels. Left: Cork sole covered in gilded glass, trimmed in gold kid and black satin. Right: Painted wooden sold, divided to facilitate movement with strips of red suede. Ferragamo 1935 - 36





37 Crocheted cellophane sandal with three-layer cork heel covered in kidskin. Ferragamo, 1941 - 42.

38 'Invisible shoe' on F-shaped, wooden wedge heel, covered in red calf with clear nylon uppers. Ferragamo, 1947



This... is how a new life can open up for you—



H.M.V.
SAFETY
ELECTRIC BLANKETS

Full-length comfort on the coolest floor... you have experienced the luxury of using a mattress of air! Electric Blankets are a wonder of science... designed to give you the best of both worlds... the H.M.V. Electric Blanket and Series is the latest in modern electric blankets... known throughout the world...
 Features: strong, durable...
 *Lithuania No. 2714



— a life of ease and efficiency !

Toes: elongated, levelled to a flat, wafer-thin line







Fig. 40 David Evans, New York
White T-bar stilettos with diamante trim on T-bar. Evans, late 1950's

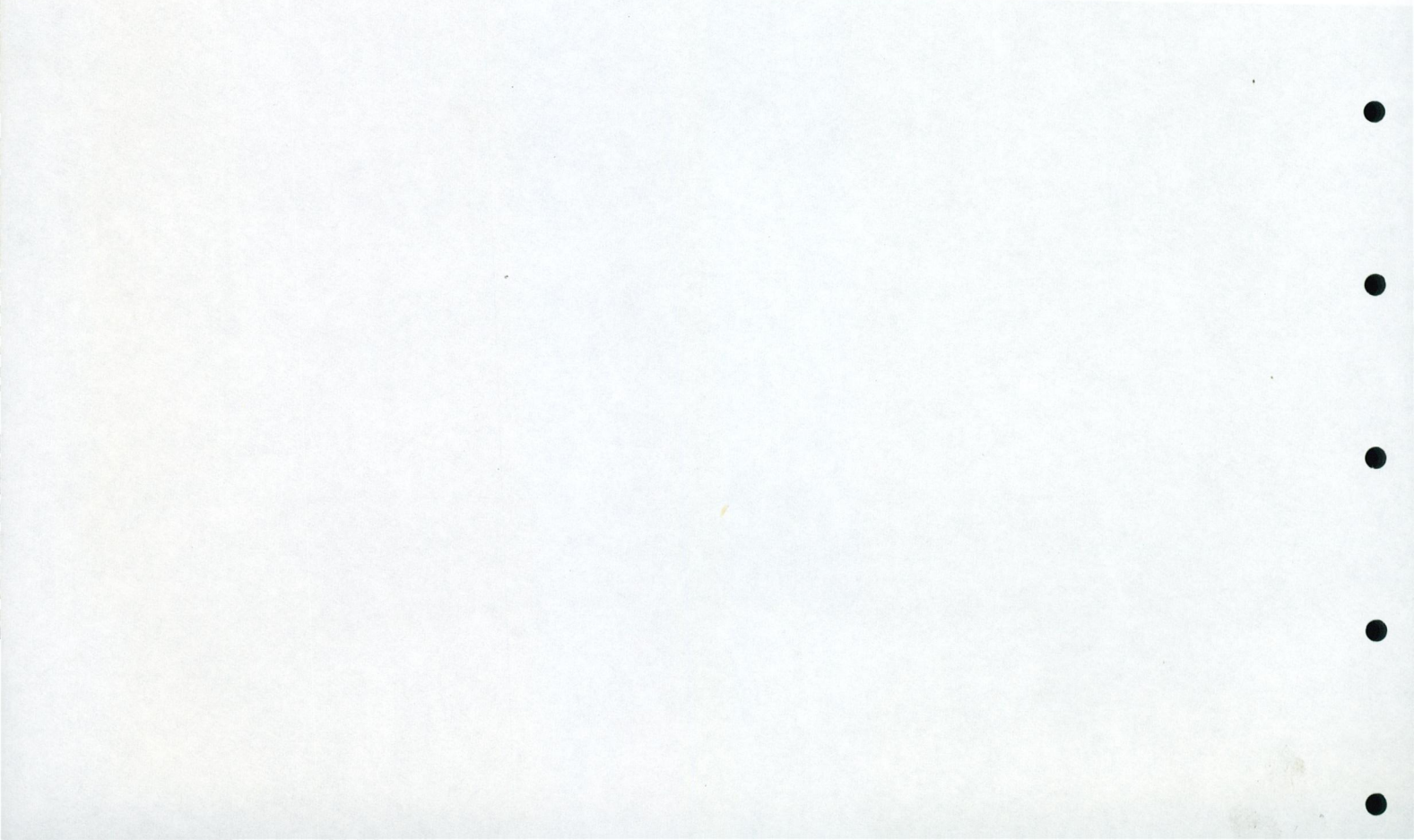
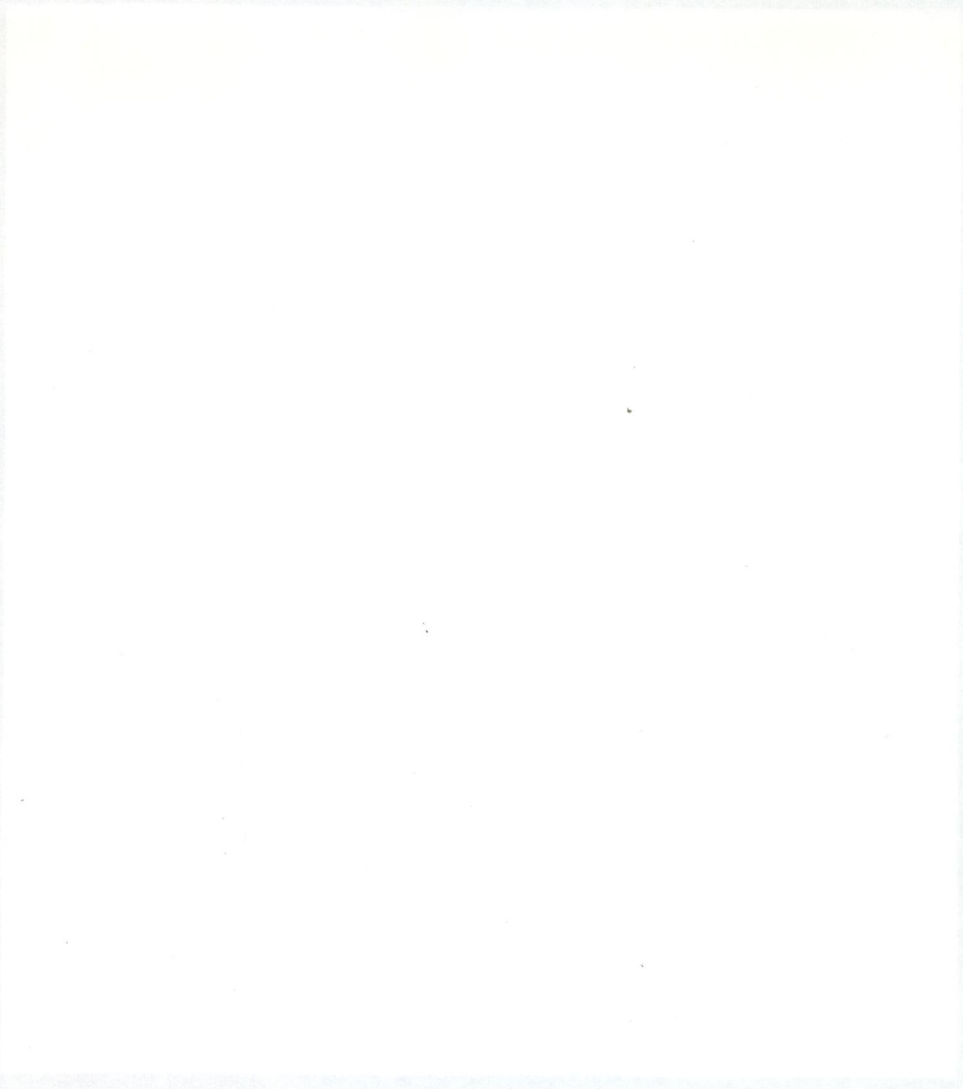


Fig. 41 White, highheeled ankle-strap shoes. Evans, 1969 - 70.



Fig. 42

Red platformed Mu-gee Chinese clogs with richly embroidered velvet vamp.
Evans, 1972.



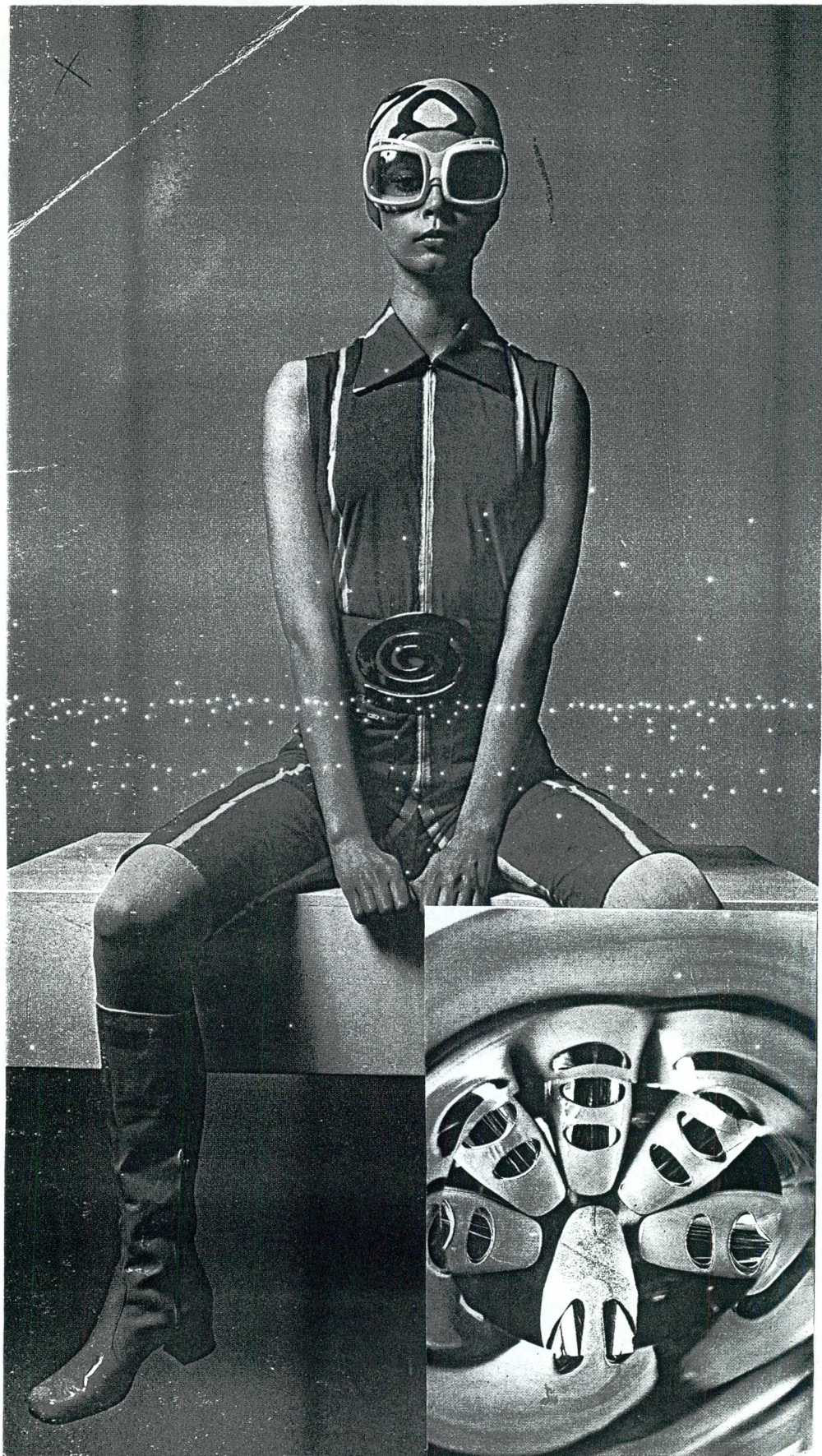


Fig. 43

Space Age - orange leather boots with square block heel and square toe.
Ravel, 1969.



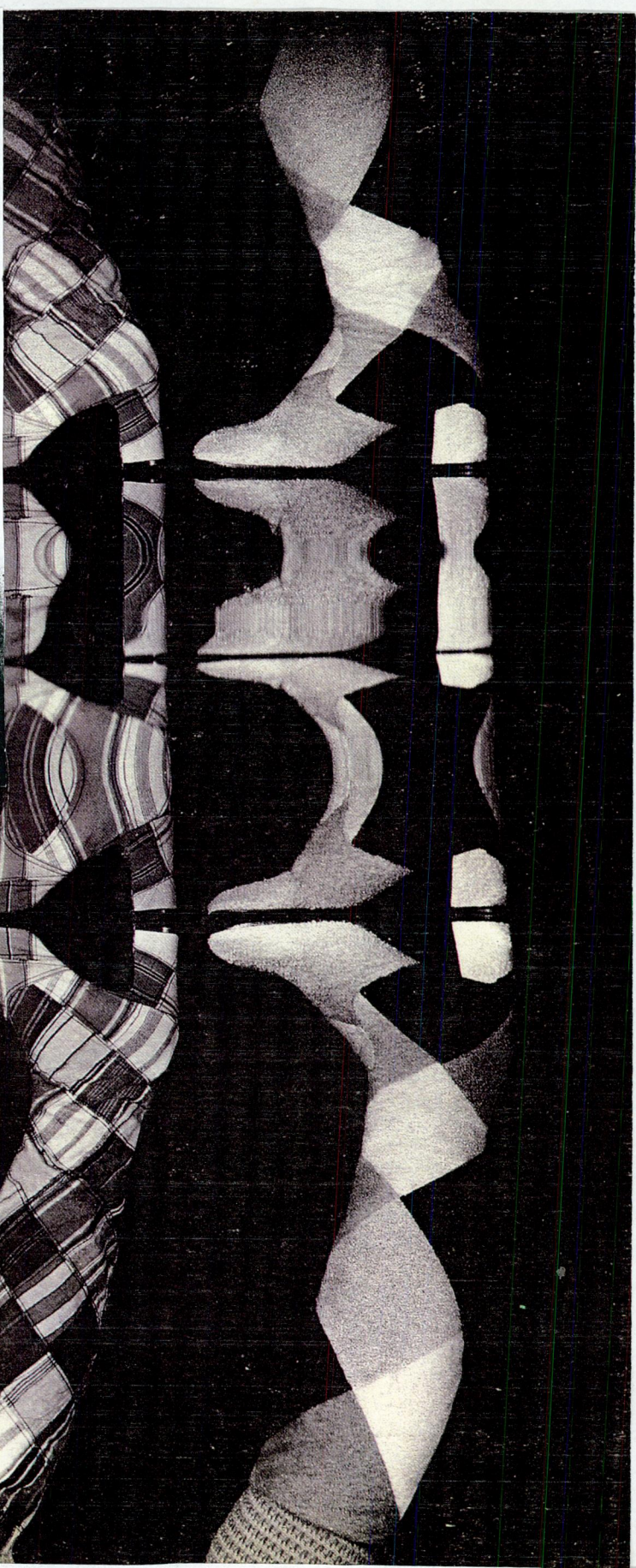
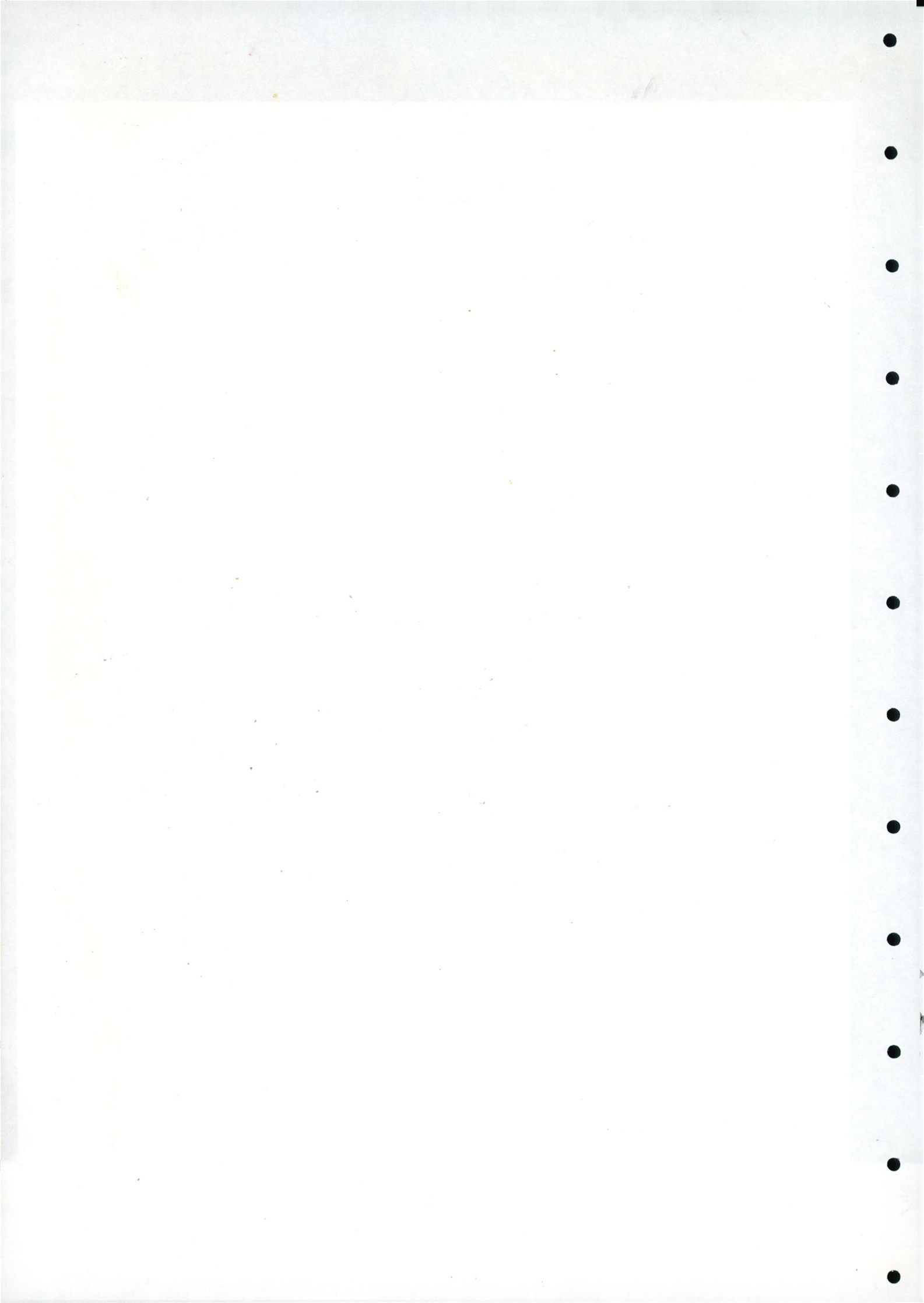


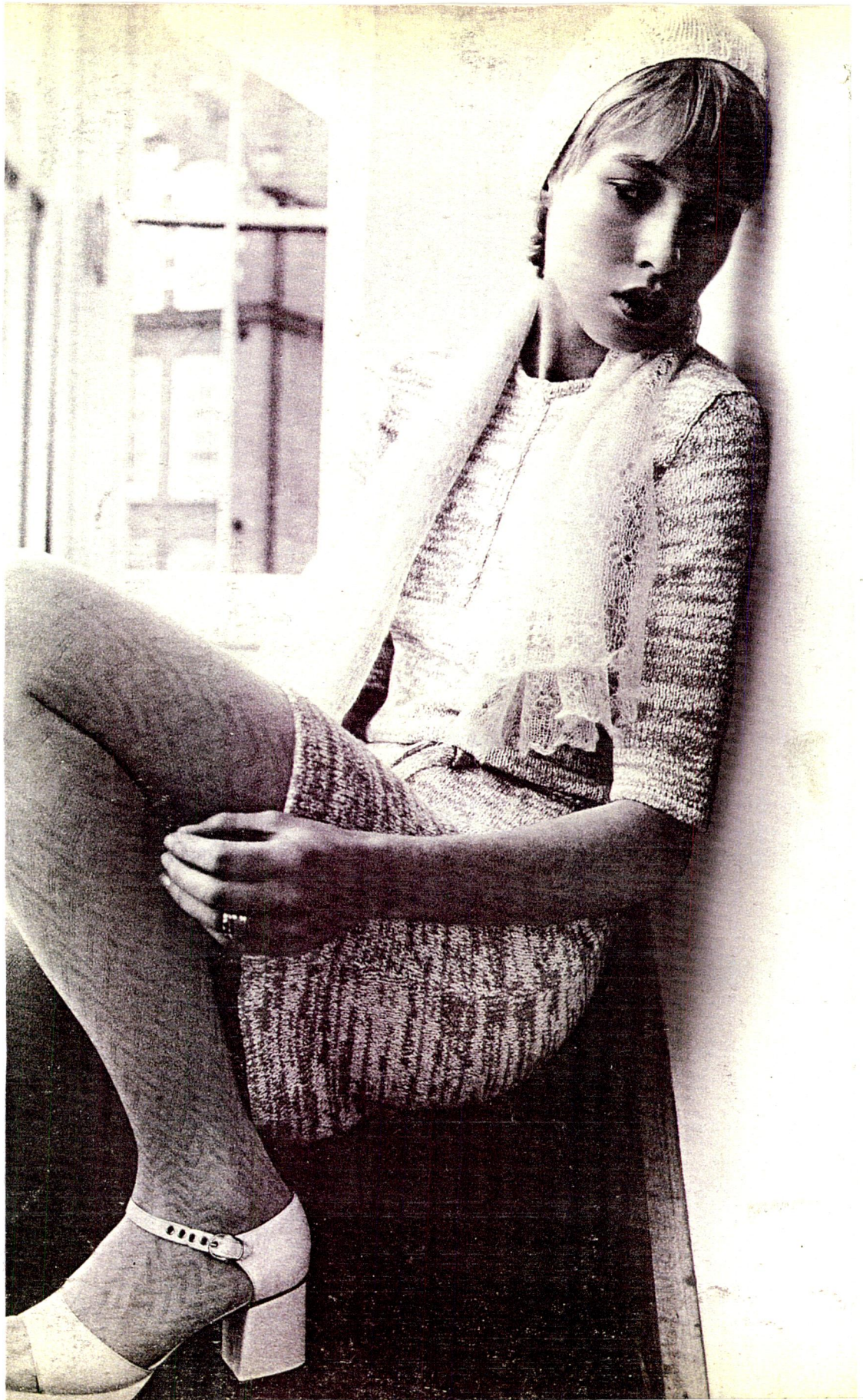
Fig. 44 60's Nostalgia

Laura Ashley new-Victorian floral print dress, 1969.

Fig. 45

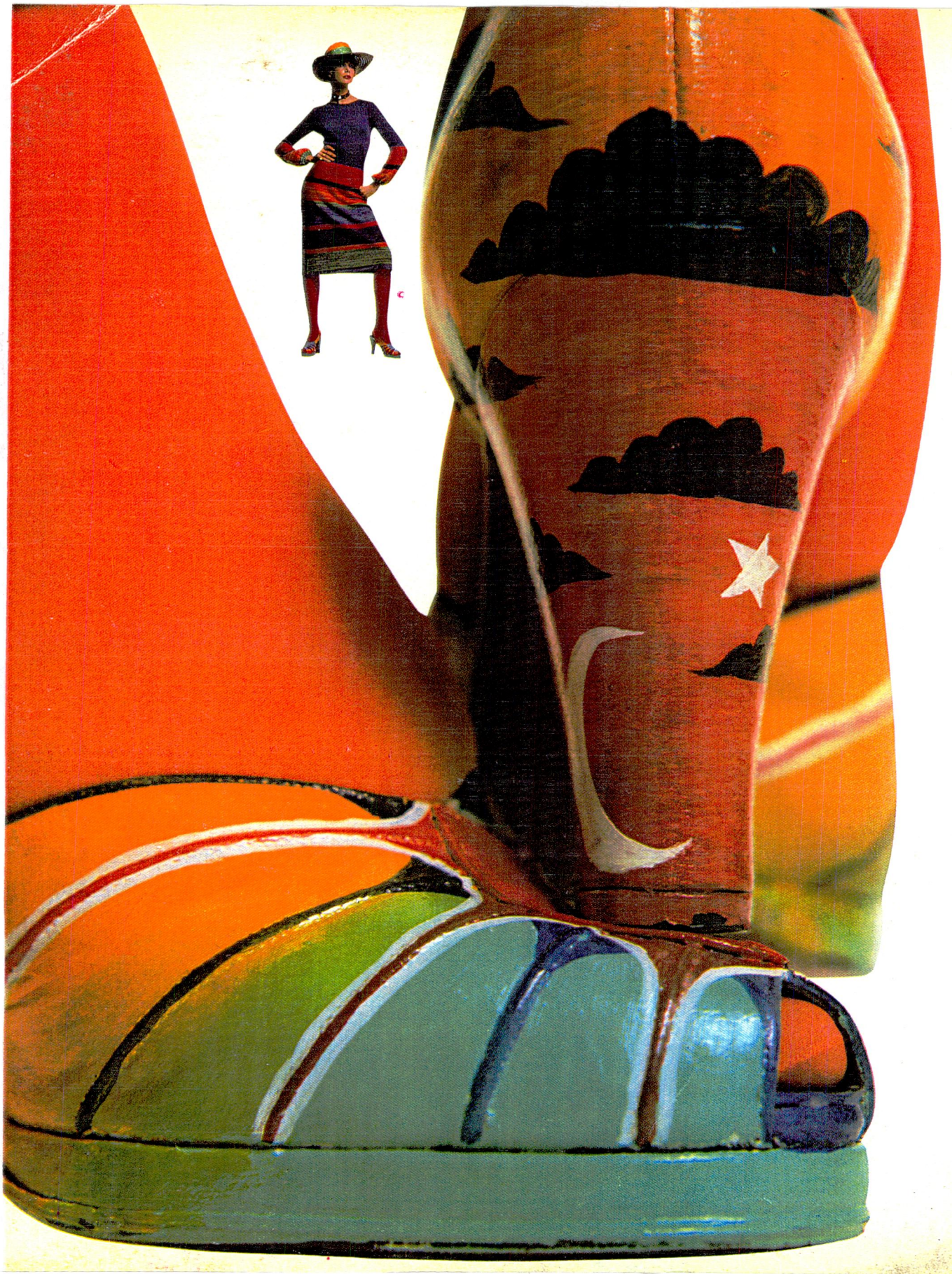
Harlequin, patchwork and cork wedge star studded knee length boots. Chelsea Cobbler, 1971.





White patent sandals with platform and block heel. Ravel, 1970.





Hand-painted platform soled high heel, slingback sandals. Mr. Freedom, 1971.

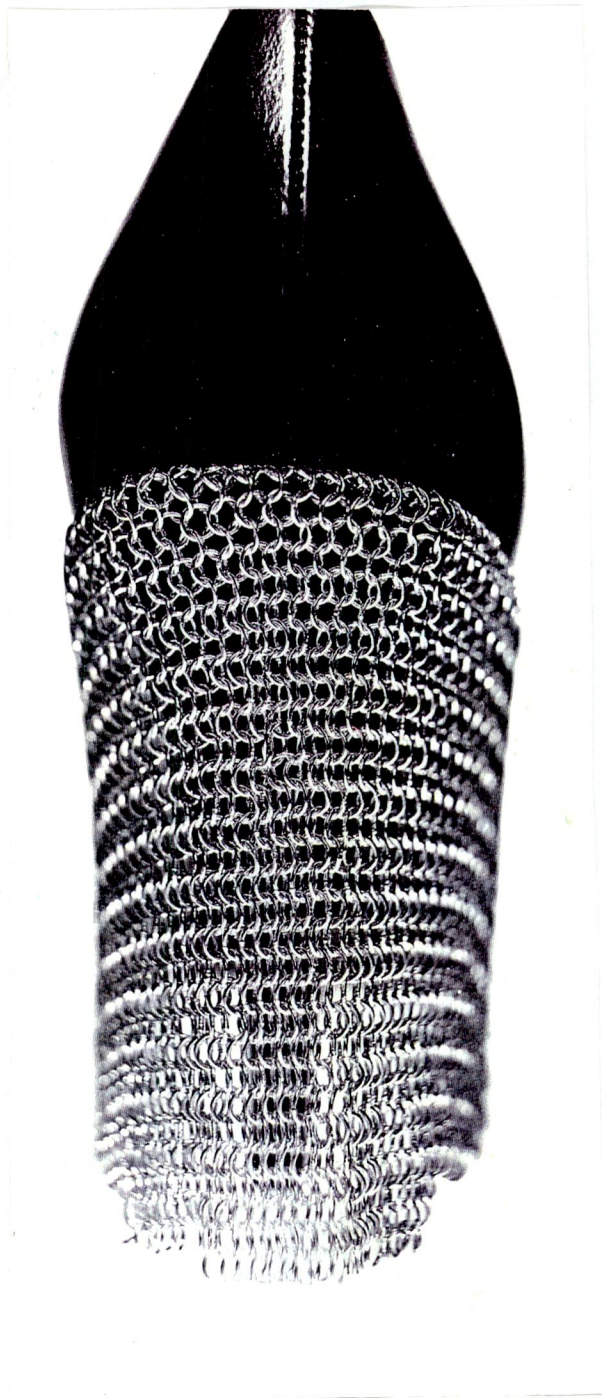
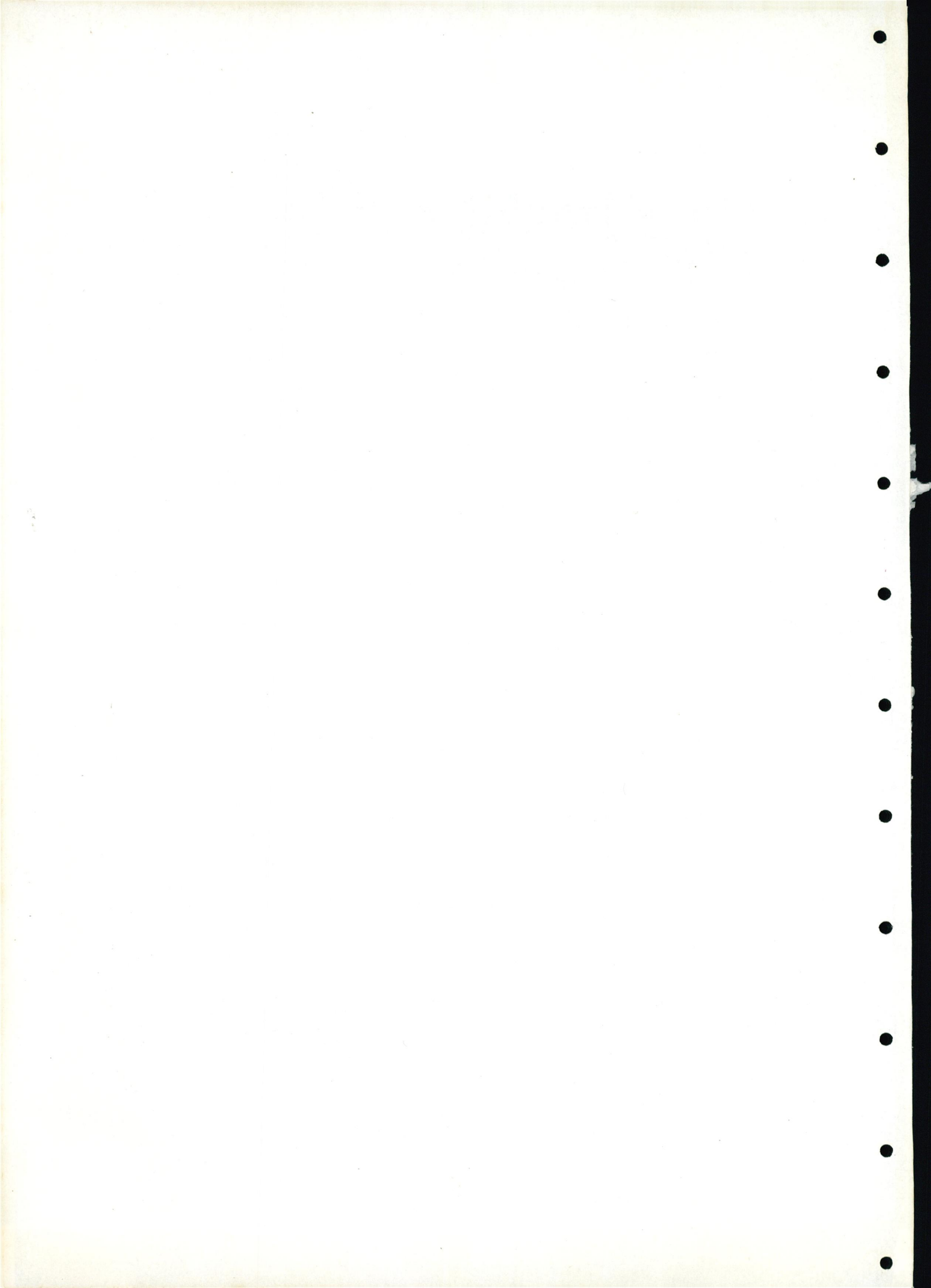


Fig. 46

Main Picture
'Chain Reaction' shoe by Patrick Cox. 'Rasta' shoe. Patrick Cox, 1987 - 88.

PATRICK  COX

Fig. 47 Metallic gold leather T-bar sandal, originally a 1970's design. Patrick Cox (The Face, Sept., 1996).



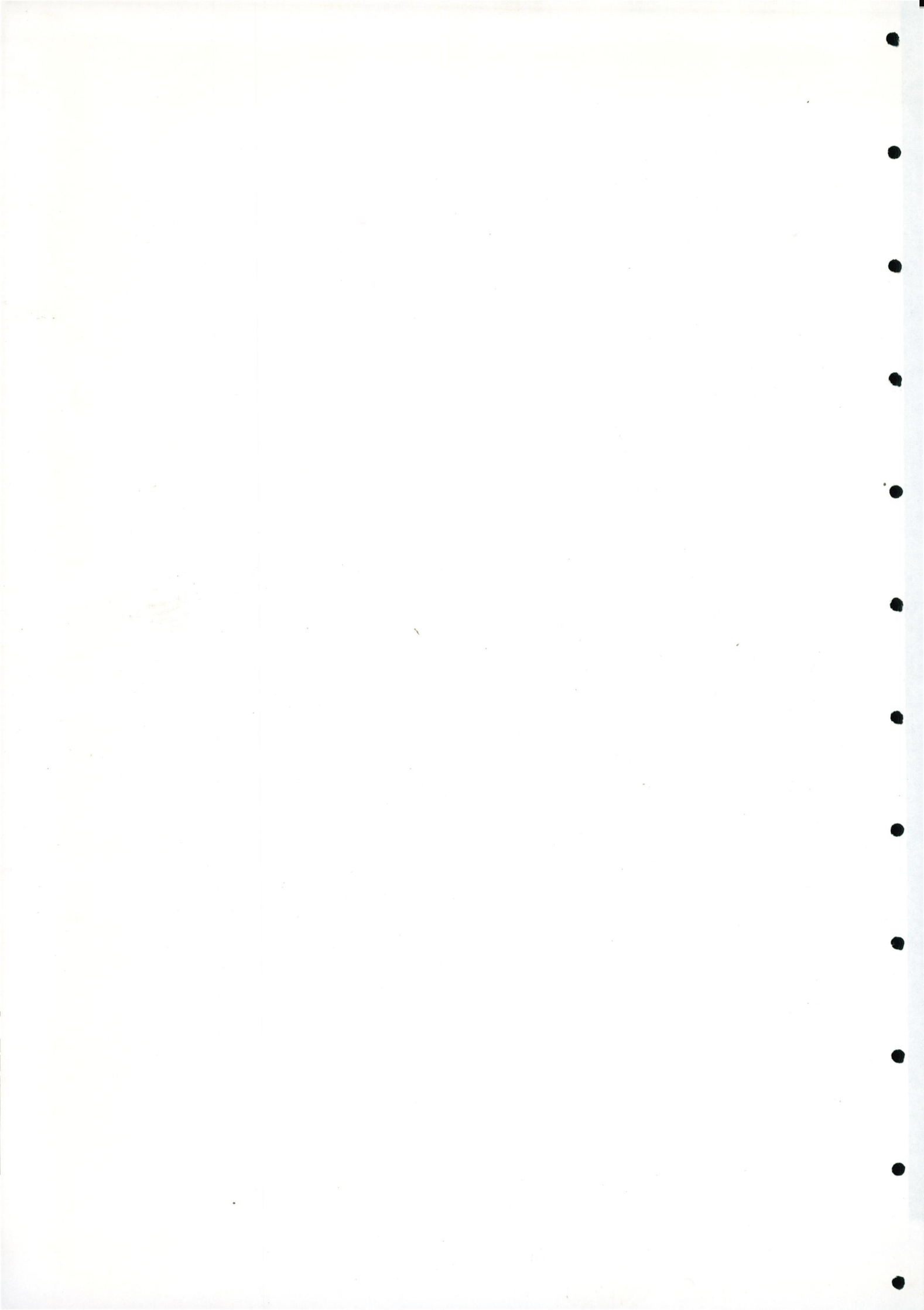


PATRICK  COX

SHOES & BAGS

8 Symons Street, London SW3 2TJ

Purple leather matching shoes and handbag. Shoe with ankle strap and black piping detail on toe - trading on the Biba Reval? Patrick Cox (The Face, Mar., 1997).





Red patent, T-bar shoes with black stack heel. Patrick Cox (Observer Life, Jan., 1997).

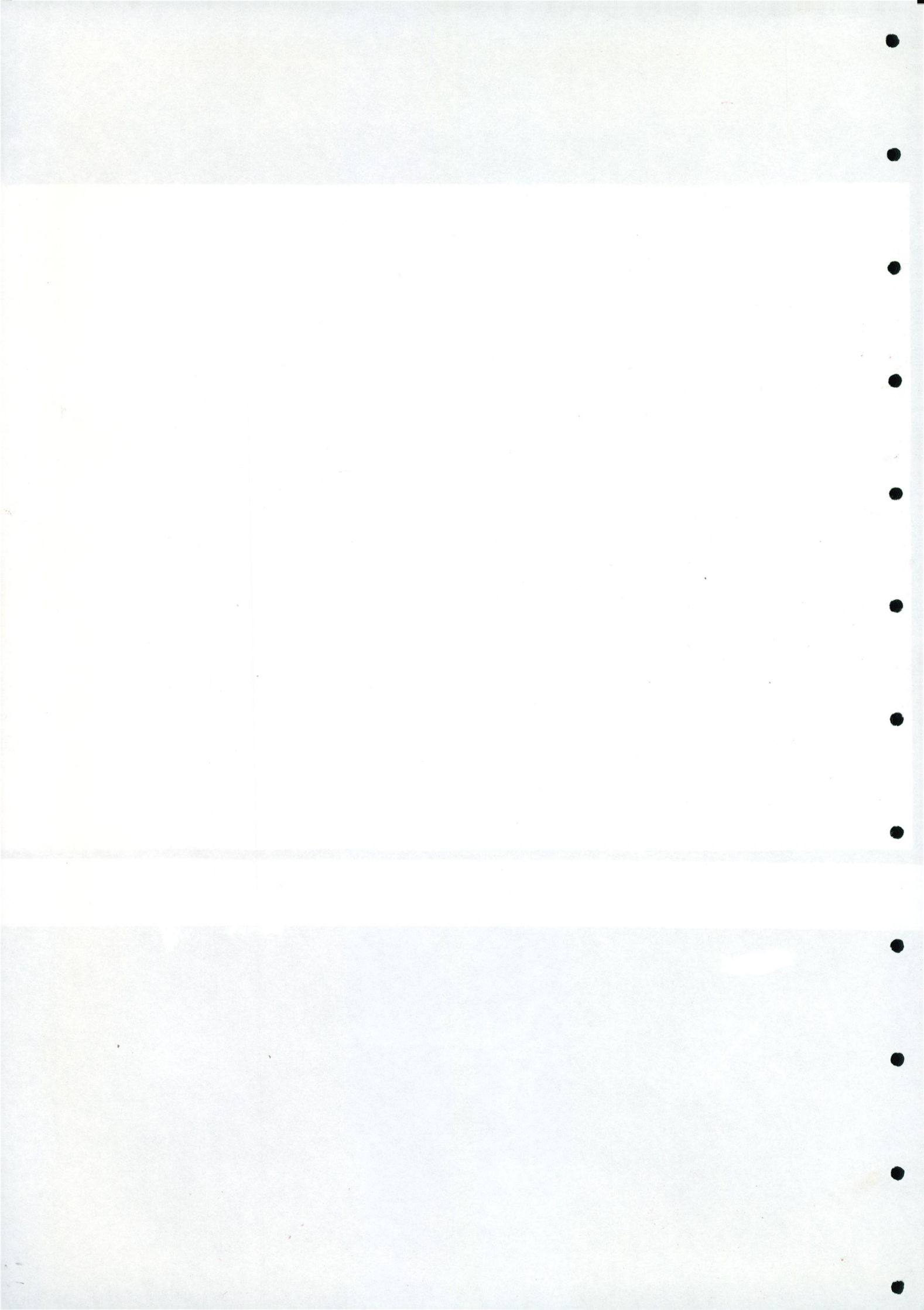




Fig. 48

Green and rose suede sandal with ankle straps, appliquéd detail and comfortable crepe sole. Manolo Blahnik, 1971.



Black flimsy sandals with two inch heel and flower detail. Manolo Blahnik, (I-D March 1997)





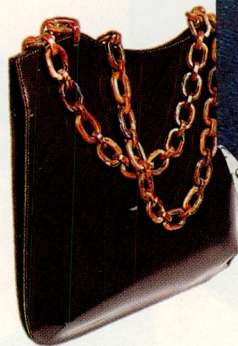
MANOLO BLAHNIK

Advertisement for Trademark Summer Sandals Manolo Blahnik, (Vogue, Mar., 1997).



Spring co

e coat replaced the jacket as the
am it with 1970s-inspired bags a



Wool coat, £120, Next/Next Directory, M27677G19; lacy viscra-mix vest, £22, Etam. Leather shopping bag with cut-out pattern, £145, Russell & Bromley. Peep-toe suede court shoes, £55, Carvela

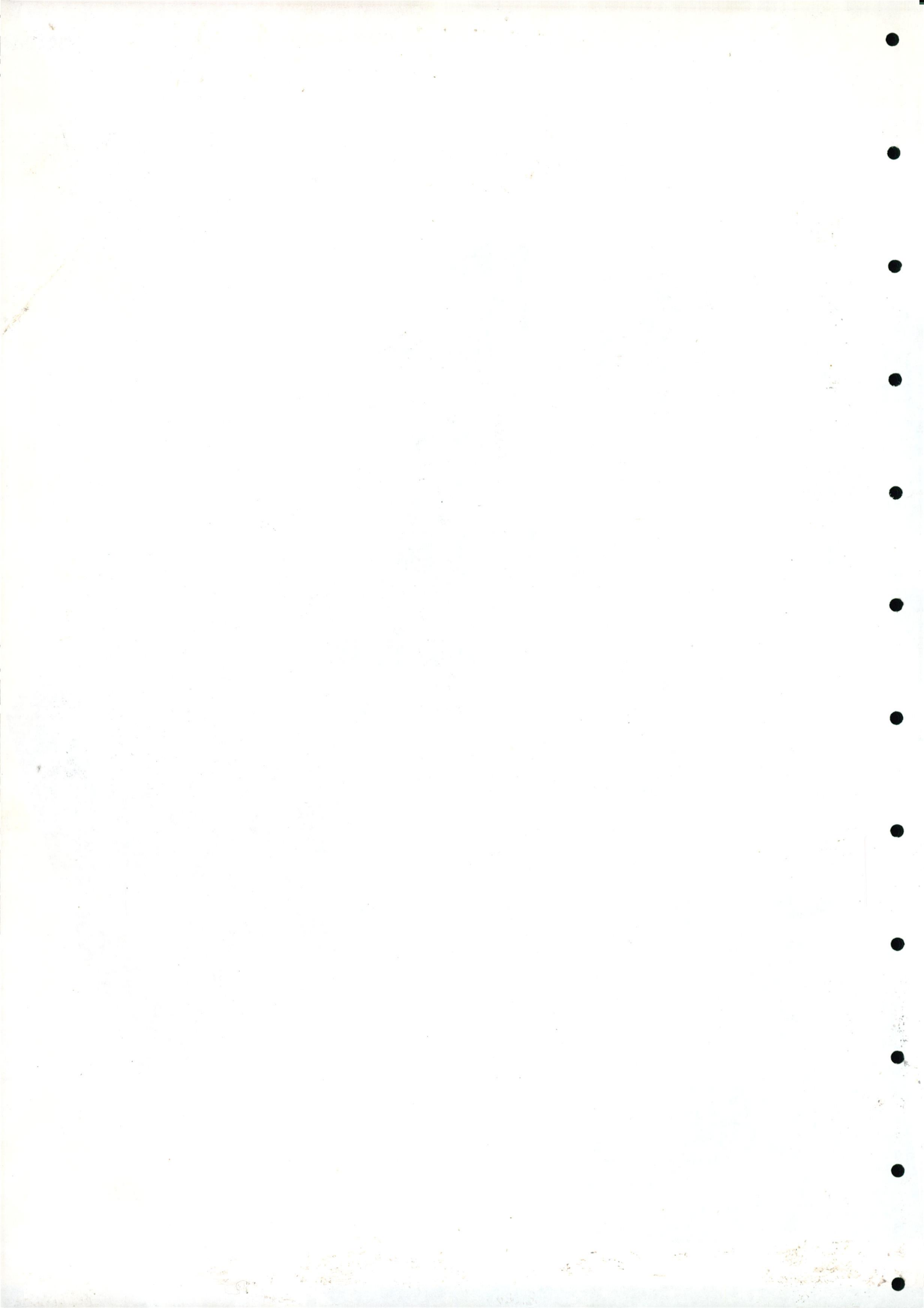
● Viscose-mix coat, £99, Benetton; cap-sleeved viscose/elastane T-shirt (just seen), £35, French Connection. ● Leather bag with link tortoiseshell handle, £119, Carvela. ● Checked leather shoes, £79, Kurt Geiger

● Long double-breasted polyester/viscose jacket, £55, Bhs; viscose T-shirt (just seen), £39.99, JoYJo. ● Fringed suede bag, £55, Red Or Dead. ● High-heeled leather mules, £125, Russell & Bromley

● Belted wool coat, £84.99, Oasis. ● Suede satchel, £100, Lisa Johnson. ● Leather mules with buckle, £34.99, Jane Shilton

● Glazed-linen coat, £80, Warehouse. ● Leather bag with multi-strand handle, £140, Hervé Masson. ● Plastic mules, £65, Pied à terre Original. See Directory for stockist details

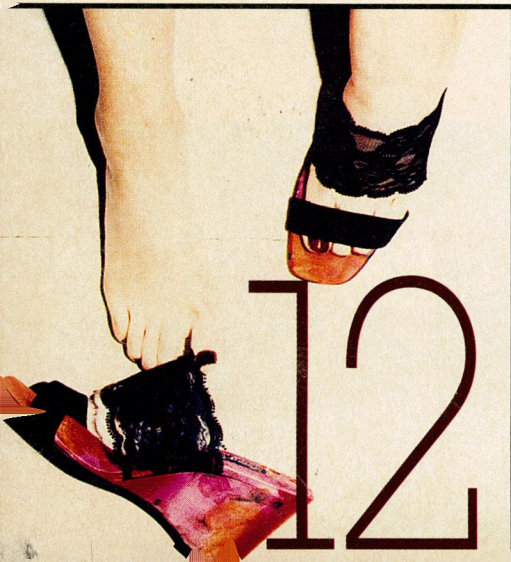








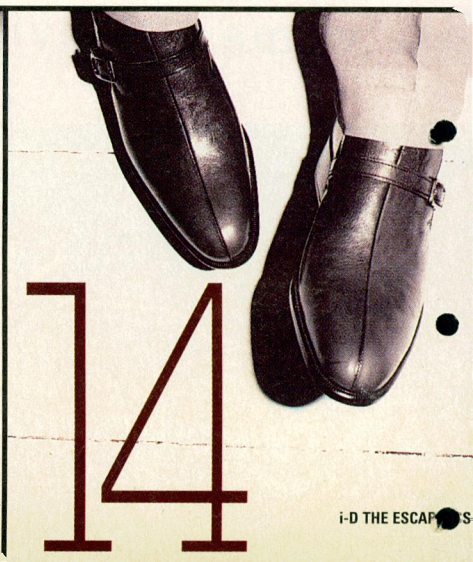
11 Antonella wears court shoes, £34.99, by Faith from 201 Oxford Street, London W1 and Hall Mall, Arndale Centre, Manchester, info on 0800 289 297; stretch jeans, £51, by Levi's as before. **12** Tash wears wedge mules, £79.99, by Russell & Bromley from 24-25 New Bond Street, London W1. **13** Antonella wears wedges, £205, by Martine Sitbon for Stephane Kelian from 48 Sloane Street, London SW1; tights, £7.50, from Gap as before. **14** Pete wears slip-ons, £130, by Zerouno from Jones, 13 Floral Street, London WC2; waxed linen pants, £117, by John Rocha from Liberty, Regent Street, London W1 and Strand, 22 Queen Victoria Street, Leeds.



12



13



14



Fig. 53 'New Look' Dior, 1947.

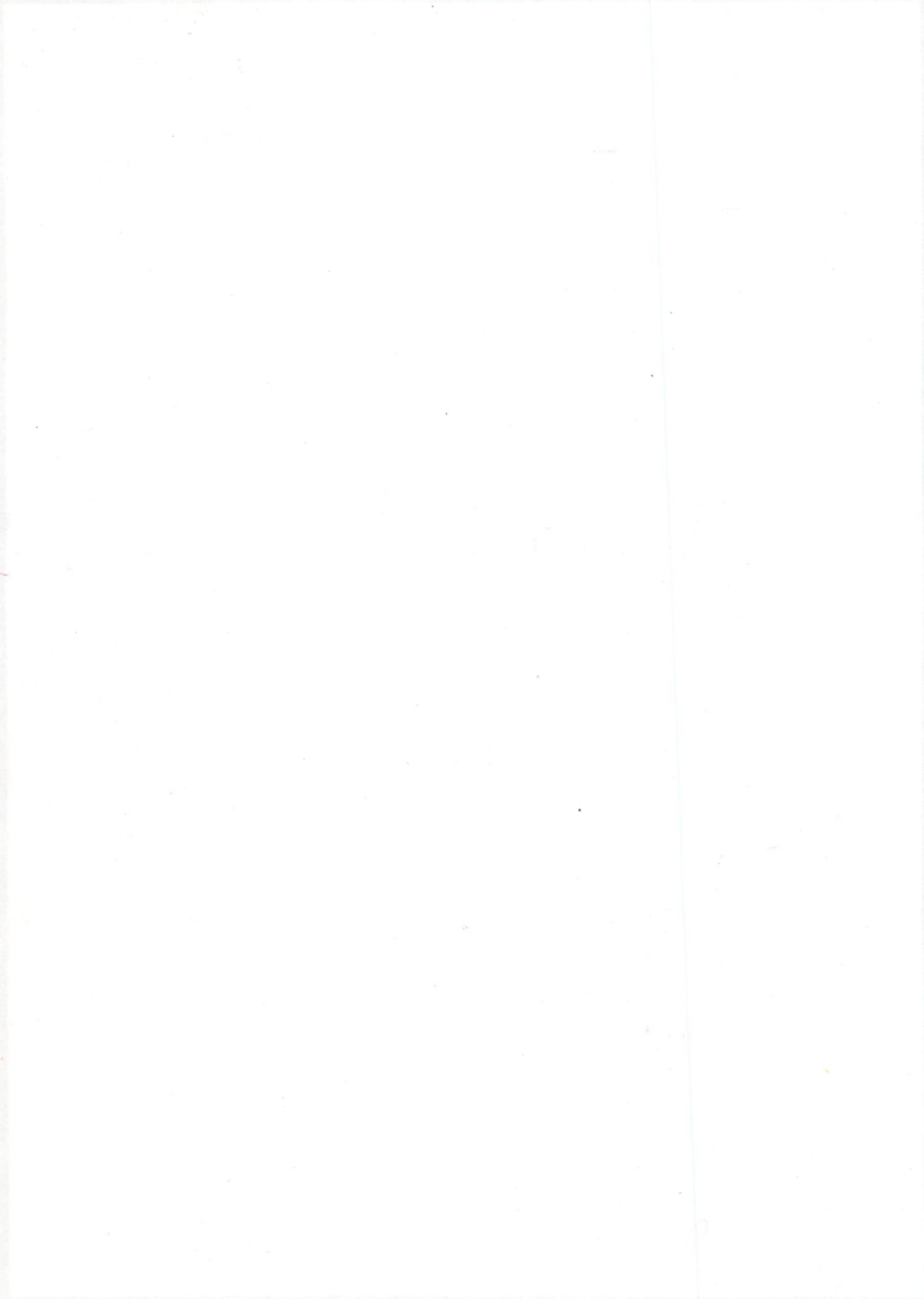




Fig. 54 1940's Utility style.





Fig. 55

Girl next door, V. Siren



Portobello Road,
London W11; boots
by Stephane Kelian
from 48 Sloane
Street, London SW1.



Faint, illegible text in the top left corner, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.



Jersey wrap dress by Wasteland; straw hat by K Mart, branches throughout US; disco shoes from Rosebowl Swap Meet (second Sunday of every month), Pasadena, California

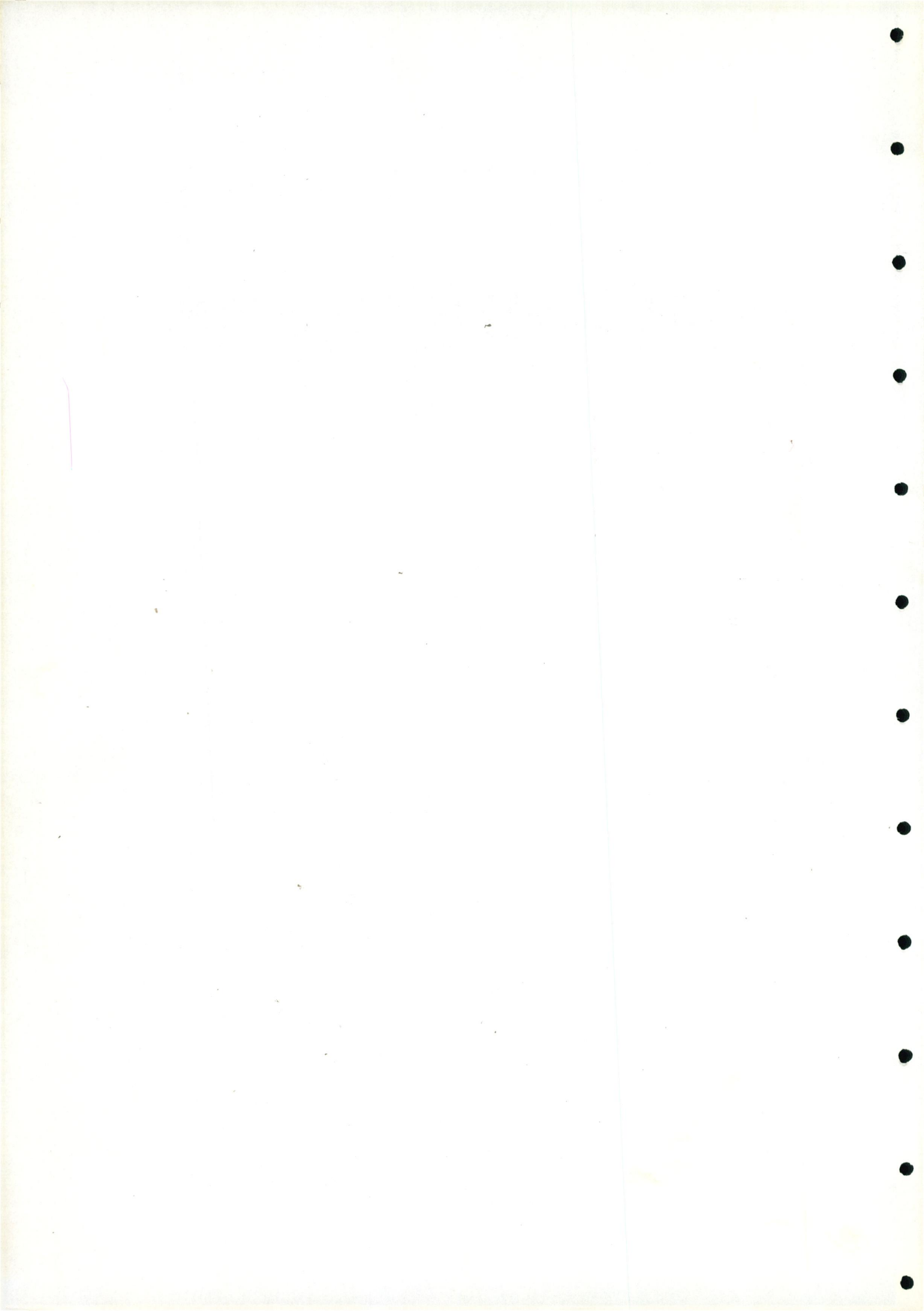




text
NICK COMPTON
photography
FRANÇOIS ROTGER
styling
NANCY ROHDE



58 Yellow stiletto, high heeled shoes with black lace, ankle tie. Manolo Blahnik for Antonio Berardi, 1996. (The Face, Dec. 1999)



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