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**NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN**

**FACULTY OF DESIGN**

**DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILES**

***"THE KNITWEAR INDUSTRY IN IRELAND"***

***DEIRDRE FITZGERALD,***

***A CASE STUDY***

**BY MARIA BYRNE**

**Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design and  
Complementary Studies in candidacy for the degree of Bachelor of  
Design in Fashion Design.**

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*Deirdre Fitzgerald, A Case Study.*

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# INTRODUCTION

"There are few secondary sources dealing with Irish fashion apart from consistently good and useful, but usually brief articles in newspapers and magazines"

(McCrum, 1986, p.5).

Irish knitwear has changed radically in the last twenty years but as Elizabeth McCrum pointed out, like other areas of Irish fashion, it hasn't been documented very well, I would like to examine recent knitwear in Ireland in the light of one designer, Deirdre Fitzgerald. I have selected her because her work demonstrates that there is room for graduates to work in Ireland and is a valuable model to upcoming students.

I have researched this thesis by working closely with Deirdre Fitzgerald who has been very helpful and informative. I have looked at journalistic coverage of her work in newspapers and magazines. I have also considered the design, fabric and manufacture of her clothes, and the retail outlets that sell her work. In the broader context I have carried out a series of interviews with people and agencies who support the industry in terms of training, finance, management, marketing and promotional areas.

I have tried to examine the development of knitwear in the 1970's from a sensible craft producing established forms of clothing to the innovative garments with more creative expression of the 1990's. This research has been supported through secondary source reading of *"Contemporary Fashion"*, *"Vogue - History of 20th Century Fashion"* and periodicals of the period.

Another aim of this research is to examine the recent growth in Irish knitwear as an element of Irish fashion. Knitwear as a category is interesting in that it falls equally into the world of crafts and that of fashion. Deirdre Fitzgerald's clothes are sold as fashion while many of her manufacturing concerns relate to craft.



Today, knitting is no longer a folk craft but more of a structured small industry supported through the government agencies which range from The Crafts Council, The Trade Board, Enterprise Boards to F.A.S. With their help Irish knitting has become recognised as a serious commercial business. This opens new ways of approaching knitwear for Irish designers.

This thesis will examine the work of Deirdre Fitzgerald, a successful young Irish knitwear designer, from 1988 to 1998. As a designer she indicates the need to be individual but her dedication and commitment to her work has also been an important factor in determining her success.

Fitzgerald's work and her practice will be located in the broader context of handmade knitwear in late 20th century Ireland in order to examine the influence of other people around her and how they help to clarify what she is doing.





# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **THE NEW KNITWEAR**

- The new perceptions of knitwear which were established in the 1970's





"Early knitting was neither showy nor costly: hence knitting played no part in fashion"

(Rutt, 1905, p.25).

Traditionally in society knitting was viewed as a means of creating warm durable clothes that would also display the skills of the maker with whom the wearer was often closely associated. Knitting was largely carried out in the domestic environment and engaged in almost exclusively by women.

Knitting was essentially a sensible craft. It was a thrifty means of making warm clothes in times of economic recession. During the first world war young middle class women took up knitting for the first time to make clothes for their husbands at war. By 1914 women had to depend on their own skills to compensate for the lack of finance. Knitting was the business of *"Make do and Mend"* (Menkes, 1983, p.4) thus it played little part in high fashion, it was allocated a more modest role.

A brief study of 1960's and 1980's *"Woman's Way"* magazine shows how knitting was viewed in Ireland. The contents of the magazine for Friday, October 3rd, 1969 lists the sections to be covered as; General Advice, Shopping, Cookery, Home, Fashion and Beauty, Short Stories and Serials. Knitting is covered under the title 'Home' which clearly indicates its status as a domestic craft. The magazine gives a budget pattern service outlining ways to economise on wool but also illustrating the practicality of the craft. *"Woman's Way"* as October 10th, 1969 incorporates a 'knit fit page' discussing the problems of knitting and giving advice on knitting techniques. It gives patterns for young boys and girls which also suggests that the mother is knitting as a means of providing for her family. "Knit Yourself A Reputation" is the title of a pattern page on the 3rd October, 1969. The craft was held in low esteem by the fashion industry because of the strong connection perceived between it and economy as well as woman's work or house work.





On the 16th January 1989 edition "Knitting" is a heading in the table of contents, this suggests an increased importance for the craft. A reference throughout the magazine states "there's lots of sophistication in this sweater" which implies a more aspirational role for the craft. Originally the emphasis in knitting was on the function of the garment, now to a large extent the creative elements were given priority.

The whole perception of knitting changed in the 1970's. While still primarily viewed as a functional craft knitting broke out of its original boundaries and developed into an important part of fashion. This was contributed to by two factors. Firstly, knitting was no longer viewed solely as a domestic craft, it was practised by young fashion conscious trend setters.

"Knitting today is no longer granny's preserve. Now needles are in the hands of the young. The role of the older generation was to pass on its crafts and skills"

(Menkes, 1983 p.8).

Secondly, the British designers of the nineteen seventies; Bill Gibb, Kaffe Fassett and Patricia Roberts revolutionised perceptions of knitwear and integrated it into high fashion.

The 1970's provided the environment for revolutionary ideas about knitwear. The decade was characterised by social fragmentation, economic decline and a general disenchantment. There was a move away from modernism towards the past and cultures of the East. The 'hippie culture' became an important aspect of fashion and especially helped the craft of knitting.

The Hippies looked for an alternative society and social convention was abandoned for a philosophy of self expression and inner thinking. A more personalised approach was taken to dress which lead to an immense variety of choice.

"There was no need for consistency in self image. There was no one look."

(Mulvagh, 1988, p.315).





An interest in the Orient was expressed in hippie clothes, which tended to be home-made and decorated with political symbols, notably flowers which was an emblem of peace. Decoration of beads and ethnic jewellery played an integral part of hippie dress. The emphasis was on "do it yourself fashion".

There was a return to the values of traditional crafts, which contributed to a revival of interest in hand decorated textiles. A strong ecological basis existed in fashion and a return of the homespun look also meant that hand knits moved back into fashion. The 1960's and 70's trend towards all the creative crafts re-established knitting's fashionable image.

Fashion magazines encouraged the gypsy look which consisted of beading, ornamentation and patterned fabrics. British "*Vogue*" featured the hand crafts of Zandra Rhodes, Kaffe Fassett and Ossie Clark. Bill Gibb, who was renowned for his leather work, appliqué and elaborate knits was chosen as British designer of the year in 1970.

Figure 1 shows a knitted top from "*Vogue*" in 1948. It is a plain and conservative tightly knitted garment with set in sleeves neatly buttoned in the front. It is knitted in the same stitch throughout and all of the one colour. This sort of garment was thrown into dowdy relief when, in the late 1960's, Bill Gibb, Patricia Roberts and Kaffe Fassett introduced exciting new approaches to colour, pattern and texture in knitwear.

Bill Gibb was a prominent fashion designer in the 1970's. Influenced by ethnic culture, he combined fabrics, colour and decoration to produce exciting creations. Mont Black of Baccarat describes him as "the greatest designer of the decade who made the clothes of the hippies into clothes that people could wear"

(Schneebeli, 1986, p.13).



Gibb's designs of the 1970's were of such a high standard that they verged into couture. He is renowned for his evening gowns which were embellished with appliqué or heavy embroidered nets, lace silks and brocades. There is no knitwear in a Bill Gibb cloak design in Fig. 2 but it shows his fine appreciation for texture.

Bill Gibb had a strong feeling for knitwear which he attributed to his Celtic roots. He unites unusual combinations of pattern and colour (Fig. 3). The obvious variation of scale in pattern introduces a new approach in knitting, demonstrated by a controlled use of mixed motifs, with various scales used in the one dress.

Another Bill Gibb design may be seen in Fig. 4. In muted shades of grey and beige he combines three distinct scales of pattern which give depth to an apparently simple shape. The matching leg warmers add a touch of ethnic<sup>it</sup>acy and fantasy - both desirable traits within a "hippie" culture. With works such as this Gibb directed knitwear towards the young market.

" Bill Gibb's theatrical love of layers of contrasting textures and patterns, matches the exoticism of mid-seventies youth".

(Polan, 1986, p.9).

Bill Gibb's adventurous use of ornamentation, colour and shape had considerable influence on the craft of knitting. He was greatly admired by Kaffe Fassett who later became known as the 'King of Knitting'.

"He started my knitting career and brought a fresh sense of shape to our collections"

(Rancer, 1988, p.23)

Kaffe Fassett revolutionised ideas about what can be done with yarn. He introduced a new approach to colour and design.

"Fassett's techniques aren't new but his approach to knitting is fresh"

(Green, 1980, p.53)

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Fassett did not influence knitting technique nor was he interested in a variety of rules or stitches. He used stocking stitch and rib. Changes in shape and style did not influence Fassett, he designed one size which was asexual.

Using only one basic stitch but as many as two hundred colours in a garment Fassett's first cardigan (Fig. 5) sold for £100 in Spring, 1969 and earned a full page in *"Vogue"*.

"For him colour, pattern and texture are the most important, styling is secondary"

(Green, 1980, p.185).

Fassett's knitting covered a wide colour spectrum, the jewel colours of antique textiles, the deep red and Persian blue of old rugs and the rich browns of India. His use of exotic colours and shades greatly influenced knitting.

"My world is colour" Kaffe Fassett says simply. "I will make anything that has to do with exciting colour"

(Menkes, 1983, p.39).

Many sources inspire Fassett's patterns, ethnic decorative arts, Turkish Kilims, Islamic tiles, Chinese pots, brocades, ancient walls and maps. According to Fassett:

"Knitting is about pattern not pictures, you can always make a complex picture into a pattern without repeating or formalising it"

(Fassett, 1985, p.8).

Fassett's other major innovation lay in his approach to textures. Using several different yarns in the one garment, mohair, chenille, silk, tweed, cotton and wool, he also combined finer fabrics and knit them together as one, this enabled him to get more variation of tone and texture.

Fassett made knitting his full time profession. He was one of the few at that time to invest their skill, time and ambition in knitting alone.



Patricia Roberts is another English designer who contributed greatly to the knitting revolution in the seventies. Her name is linked to all aspects of the industry, not only because of her designs but also because her stylish pattern books did much to change knitting's old fashioned image as a domestic activity.

Roberts' "knitwear is recognised through its sophisticated stitch craft"  
(McCready, 1995, p.443).

She skilfully explores new techniques to create special stitches and textural effects. The child's sweater (Fig. 6) demonstrates her use of stitches to enhance areas of surface detail. The mohair yarn gives an extra textural effect which along with colour are dominant features of her work. A detail of the woman's cardigan may be seen in Fig. 7. It shows a variation in stitch type and use of colour with textural areas used regularly throughout the pattern.

Fig. 8 shows a combination of many different types of pattern and also the use of a variation of yarns to further increase surface interest by, for example contrasting fluffy mohair with smooth yarns.

These three designers led the knitwear revolution of the nineteen seventies. Their innovations infiltrated the industry world-wide. Ireland already had a rich knitwear tradition into which these ideas were warmly welcomed. The inherent skills and traditional techniques within Irish society provided an excellent basis for the new ideas which lead to more creative garments and the fashion role of the craft here became more important.

Pat Crowley opened her own hand knitting business in 1967. Despite come vicissitudes she established an international reputation in the seventies. She was one of the first Irish designers to produce fashionable, youthful and casual garments in crochet (Fig. 9).





Cyril Cullen set up a knitwear company in the mid-seventies which continues to flourish. His style of the seventies, although rooted in Irish tradition introduced an element that was modern and youthful (Fig. 10). He, along with other designers helped to pave the way for the new generation of knitwear designers in the eighties and nineties. The knitwear industry continued to diversify and now in the 20th century we see a tremendous number of new knitwear designer labels being launched as the demand is there for interesting knitwear at many different levels of the market.

The world in which Deirdre Fitzgerald is working involves a whole range of knitwear designers. Lainey Keogh and Lyn Mar are probably the most famous and are her direct competitors in Ireland. Keogh was a recipient of the 1987 'Prix d'Or' competition which gave her an international reputation. Mar won The Late Late Show overall Irish designer of 1997, she also won the evening category award. There are however, many other designers who do not have such a high profile in the fashion context. These include Jean Miller, Gertrude Sampson, Maggie Jackson, Eily Doolan among many others.

It is not surprising that the designers who have transformed knitting from conservative styles to elegant and exciting garments are almost entirely female.

"Knitting is women's work. I prefer to call it women's art"  
(Menkes, 1983, p.8).

From a survey carried out in the Dublin area of the people working in the crafts sector, it was estimated that 65% were women and 35% men.

In Ireland, the craft industry is largely confined to women while in other parts of the world men take a more prominent role, this may also effect the pricing structure. The Welsh knitwear designer Julien MacDonald has achieved considerable success on an international scale. His garments have exorbitant prices e.g. £4,800 for a short knit dress. Lainey Keogh also has an international profile, she is the most



expensive knitwear designer in Ireland e.g. a 'Lainey' sweater costs £537 while a Deirdre Fitzgerald sweater has a price of £229. More innovative pieces by Keogh can cost up to £3,000, but her pricing structure would by no means compare with those of MacDonald's. Does this suggest that a knitted piece by a male designer is more valued than that produced by a female designer?

Knitting is a labour-intensive business, it is also a time consuming craft which makes it more costly to produce than other elements of fashion yet the retail price does not differ immensely.

Through the great innovations of the seventies and the continuity of creative ideas among Irish designers, the craft of Irish knitting has merged with high fashion and has achieved an international profile in the process. Irish designers feel that they can offer their uniqueness in fashion knitwear. The garments though contemporary in style have embodied cultural meaning.





## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE KNITWEAR INDUSTRY**



According to Sean Bailey in the Crafts Council of Ireland, (Interview on 18th Dec. '97) there are two reasons for the changes of knitwear 'craft' becoming fashion and the craft industry becoming recognised as an important part of economic growth. Prior to 1970, 20th century Irish knitwear was dominated by the Aran stitch. From then on however foreign buyers began to look for alternatives to this traditional pattern. Irish craft makers began to experiment with the basic design to produce more innovative garments. The new market for craft knitwear called for something that was more appealing and up to date.

Secondly, craft was not seen as a business before the 1960's, it was more of a hobby which people pursued as a leisure activity. In the 1970's however state bodies were set up to support the craft industry.

Kilkenny Design was set up in 1964 to promote and improve Irish design. It allocated workshops in Kilkenny for crafts people as well as display rooms. The setting up of this company revolutionised public awareness of craft and design, in Ireland. It also played an essential part in maintaining further developments in craft.

"The success of the Irish craft industry during the 1970's and the 1980's as measured by the trading and employment record was achieved in most adverse trading circumstances and is mainly attributable to the development policies pursued by the industry and government in that period"

*(Sectoral Consultative Committee, 1993, p.117).*

The Crafts Council of Ireland was established in 1976 and is the national agency for design and economic development for the craft industry in the Republic of Ireland. It advises the government and other state agencies on issues affecting the crafts sector, it acts as a promotional and marketing body, it also provides craft and design training. Irish craft businesses are usually small in scale. The council takes a particular interest in those small manufacturers who use traditional, labour intensive production techniques requiring high levels of skill.



The Crafts Council organises Ireland's largest manufacturing trade fair "Showcase Ireland" which takes place in January in the R.D.S. each year. It encourages home and international trade. Buyers from America and Europe come to the show, this enables Irish craft industries to get sizeable export orders. Of the IR£23.4 million orders taken in January 1995, just over 50% was for export. Knitwear proves to be a good seller at this trade fair, with an estimated market of approximately £100m.

"Showcase Ireland" has been a very successful trade fair. In 1977 there were 35 exhibitors at the show. In 1997, 578 small enterprises displayed their work, which illustrates the development of the crafts sector (see appendix no. 1).

Occasionally the Crafts Council has sent exhibitors abroad to show their work on the continent to buyers who may not come to "Showcase". This creates an interest in Irish work and encourages crafts people to look to international markets.

The Crafts Council found that management and marketing qualities were very weak in the crafts sector and sought ways to overcome them.

The Crafts Council run a two year craft and design business development course. Established in 1989, the whole objective of this course is to equip crafts people and designers with the necessary skills to set up as entrepreneurs, perhaps with the potential to further create employment in their business and to ensure long-term viability. Throughout the course each trainee is helped to develop business skills with the help of a team of people selected accordingly. Mentors are drawn from the craft and design industry. They give advice on design production and promotion in the light of their commercial experience.





The trainees are given the opportunity to sell their work in the councils galleries in Dublin and Kilkenny. They are advised to carry out realistic and precise market research, to be aware of the quality and standards in that market segment before setting up their own business. The young entrepreneurs can show and test their work in "Showcase Ireland" which promotes the trainees and individual businesses in a group stand in the "New Faces Sector". Although the fair is not relevant to every range of work, for the vast majority of course participants it provides an essential springboard for their career.

The training programme developed by the Crafts Council has been extremely successful in establishing new enterprises. Over the period 1989-1995 the course showed an average of 70% success for new entrants. To date, nine knitwear people have done the business development course and are now running successful labels e.g. Bernie McCoy, Liesa O'Keefe.

The Crafts Council has also been involved in establishing the "CAD and CAM" training for the Irish knitwear industry. It takes place in the Limerick School of Art and Design with the primary aim being to educate people in the technologies that have been rapidly adopted by the Irish knitwear trade and to help graduates find employment in the industry. The course aims to protect Ireland's established markets and to develop new outlets by providing training in advanced design and production technologies. It is important to distinguish between the two types of knitwear training provided by the Crafts Council. It recognises hand knitting and machine knitting as a craft while the CAD and CAM courses are directed more towards industry and large scale production.

The Crafts Council specifically deals with issues relating to crafts. However, like all enterprises, the crafts sector needs to benefit from employment, marketing and financial schemes. The government realised that small Irish industries in the past did



not have the infrastructure to survive on their own and set up a number of state bodies to give them assistance.

Forbairt was established on 1st January, 1994. It provides support services to Irish industry, it covers a wide range of commercial activities including management-development for innovative enterprises and financial services. It deals with industries which employ over ten people. Its main aim is to assist and encourage a continuing strong performance by Irish industry.

The government set up The Enterprise Board in 1993 as an advisory and support agency in the city for those enterprises employing under ten people. Each board works to develop economic potential, stimulate business activity and support enterprise initiatives in their own area. The board does not have a direct policy to provide for the crafts sector as opposed to any other sector but has aided a number of craft industries (see appendix no. 2).

The Enterprise Board is a grant giving agency, it offers three different types of grants - feasibility study grants, capital grants and employment grants. It is necessary to assess the needs, capabilities and aspirations of each sector of the craft industry individually in order to provide the services that best suit their requirements.

As a promotion and marketing body "An Bord Trachtala" was set up. It helps to assist indigenous manufacturing and service companies to win increased business in Ireland, other European markets and throughout the world.

"Successful marketing is the key issue on which the future of all craft based industries depends"

*(Sectoral Consultative Committee, 1993, p.206)*





The board would encourage crafts people to look to export markets and not to depend solely on the domestic or tourist market which may be limited in scope and unstable over time.

"To sustain the development of small specialists firms call for an overriding emphasis on exports"

(Irish Trade board 1996, p.204)

The board identifies opportunities in the market and helps to create a demand for Irish products and services.

An Bord Trachtala is responsible for the organisation of promotional campaigns such as "Look To Our Own" in 1991 and "The Look Is Naturally Irish" in 1992. Within those schemes they represent a number of knitwear designers. An Bord Trachtala is currently working on "The Look Is Ireland" which began in November 1997. It represents twenty one companies including those with a large turnover e.g. Erin Knitwear Ltd., Gaeltarra Knitwear Ltd. A company can subscribe for £500 a year. These promotional campaigns establish a strong Irish "image".

According to research carried out by An Bord Trachtala, Irish culture is perceived to have a strong personality which is something that can be used as an effective promotional ploy. Marketing consultants constantly stress the importance of maintaining an Irish identity.

Trade figures show that Irish knitwear manufacturers account for approximately 20% of the Irish market for ladies knitwear.

"Irish knitwear industries have been particularly successful in recent years with new contemporary designs and fashions contributing strongly to their increased share in the market".

(Irish Trade Board, 1996, p.245).



The Irish Knitwear Exporters Guild was established in 1985 as a promotional and marketing body. It started with seven companies, it now represents twenty four of varying sizes. The organisation offers a quality symbol which can be used on promotional material, on labels etc. Although competing companies they respect each others individual policies while realising that a marketing base and working closely with An Bord Trachtala is essential for plans which ultimately mean more export sales. The Guild discuss promotional marketing plans, trade show and yarn fairs, fashion forecasts and many other areas that are relevant for the development of the industry.

"The efforts of The Irish Knitwear Exporters Guild have been particularly significant in establishing a marketing front abroad"

(Floyd, 1992, p.4).

The Guild is responsible for about £35 million worth of Irish knitwear export sales out of an Irish total of around £62 million. The Irish Knitwear Exporters Guild run a design award scheme which gives graduates experience with members of the guild, it also helps to encourage and train young knitwear designers.

F.A.S. is another government agency which provides training, among other things to equip people with the necessary skills to work in the clothing industry. They also find placements for these trainees with designers or manufacturing companies.

While all these developments are very worthwhile, the crafts sector would be helped further by the lowering of tax rates and V.A.T. rates which mitigate against the development of small enterprises. The majority of small craft industries do not get paid within the 30 days credit, this can lead to financial difficulties within a small business. Such problems are very disturbing considering that the small industry plays an important part in establishing economic and cultural benefits. Small scale, owner-managed businesses in the knitwear industry concentrate on the quality of the product, they express a responsiveness to customer and to fashion changes. Small industries



can act as the foundation for larger companies and play a vital role in the development of the industry.

"The small firm in Irish textiles and clothing has over the years had an influence disproportionate to its size on the development of these industries e.g. products such as Donegal tweed, Aran sweaters and Cyril Cullen individual stylings were all products of small Irish firms and lead to the export drive of Irish fashions in international markets "

*(Sectoral Consultative Committee, 1983 p.203)*

Craft in Ireland has become an important factor of economic development in that it establishes the credibility and reputation of the country with regard to individuality, quality and excellence.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

REPORT OF THE  
COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
LAND OFFICE  
OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
FOR THE YEAR 1891

ALBANY: J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.,  
PRINTERS, 1892.

## **A CASE STUDY**

### **DEIRDRE FITZGERALD : THE STORY OF ONE SMALL FASHION KNITWEAR BUSINESS**

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **DEIRDRE FITZGERALD : THE BUSINESS WOMAN**

Page 100

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
LIBRARY

CHICAGO, ILL.

1960

Deirdre Fitzgerald is an example of a designer who can survive independently in Ireland with a small work force and production range. Her practice is based on individual design strengths but also on good management and business skills.

On graduating from college she immediately ventured into business with the "Francoboli" label. It existed for eighteen months and was a valuable learning period for her as it taught her how to run a business. She launched her own label in 1991 with a lot of personal support from her family. Her father, who is an accountant gave her much advice and assistance in areas such as administration, accounts and understanding the daily overheads involved in running an enterprise.

Deirdre Fitzgerald started her business from a house she bought, she assigned three rooms to the business, one room acted as an office, another for finishing and pressing garments, the third is used for sampling and production.

In the initial stages Fitzgerald encountered some of the problems associated with setting up an enterprise that was craft based and which required a lot of time consuming skills but also needed the organisation, planning and marketing of a business. She found it difficult to know what kind of staff to employ, whether it should be someone to work on accounts or someone to finish garments.

The state agencies established over the previous decade were of considerable importance to her success. In her early career, she was very fortunate to be included in the promotional schemes "Look To Our Own" and "All Is Ireland" which were run in conjunction with An Bord Trachtála. The "Look To Our Own" scheme began in Feb. 1991. It represented Irish fabric and knitwear designers, of whom Deirdre Fitzgerald was one. It was a promotional campaign and advertised the designers work in Irish magazines. An advertisement in "U" magazine (April, 1991) may be seen in Fig. 11. The designers work is presented in a plain, informative way. A more styled





and glamorous advertisement for the campaign (Fig. 12) appeared in *"Image"* (Sept. 1991) and Fitzgerald's work was selected for that atmospheric shot. The scheme promoted style and innovation but also quality. The designers in this promotion could use a "Look To Our Own" swing tag on their clothes, in this way the work was easily recognisable as being by an Irish designer.

Deirdre Fitzgerald also got recognition in the "All Is Ireland" campaign which took place from the 8th August to the 12th September 1992 to promote Irish companies. A number of buyers came to Ireland to pick out designer labels they would wish to promote and sell in British established stores. They chose Deirdre Fitzgerald, Lainey Keogh and Edel McBride, commenting that these designers gave a contemporary image to Irish knitwear.

"Although the making methods of the chosen goods are mainly traditional, the merchandise is indicative of the Ireland of today, the Ireland of the nineties"  
(Lynch, 1992, p.17).

The U.K. market was very appealing with international labels being stocked in many stores such as Harvey Nicholls and Liberties etc. Entry to this market required large quantities of production, it also demanded sample ranges well in advance for promotional purposes. Fitzgerald's small business at this time was unable to meet the requirements. In 1998, her business is well established and she is in the initial stages of developing direct accounts with U.K. outlets. She has been exhibiting in *"Showcase"* since 1993 which has contributed immensely to her market sales. Through this fair she has been recognised by foreign buyers and has succeeded in getting important outlets abroad. A photograph of her stand in '98 may be seen in Fig. 13.

Fitzgerald sought promotional and marketing aid from the Trade Board. In 1996 she received a grant to cover up to 50% of the cost in producing her catalogue. She has received travel bursaries that the Trade Board run for designers which enabled





her to visit international trade fairs; Pittafileti in Italy and Expofil in Paris. This was also an essential asset in extending her awareness and knowledge of other designers' work.

Fitzgerald also benefited from the Employment Incentive Schemes organised by F.A.S. With this assistance she employed her first member of staff in 1993, to work on administration. Since then, she has received other grants to employ a garment assembler in 1996 and a knitter to make sample garments in 1997.

In recent years Fitzgerald has increased her number of outworkers who knit from their own home. In the beginning she employed one outworker, now the business has expanded to employing forty two outworkers and two knitting groups.

### **Deirdre Fitzgerald's Manufacturing System**

The process for creating high quality garments must be carefully monitored and controlled throughout the entire process - from selecting yarn fibres and designing the garment to the knitting and finishing procedure.

Fitzgerald concentrates on the design aspects herself - (she has two collections each year). She creates the style for each range, chooses the yarn and works out stitch structures. She produces hand and machine knits, of her thirty designs in her Spring/Summer collection '97 five were time consuming <sup>hand</sup> knits (see appendix no. 3 for figures).

Fitzgerald does not translate stitches or colours directly from a research source but prefers to use the yarn to create a certain texture. Initially she used chenille, cottons, linens and silks; now she also uses a selection of synthetic yarns which give more of a variation in texture. Her practise mainly uses the four ply knitting machine with the lace carriage used in some collections to create more open work.



She has technical work to take care of. By doing a tension sample to monitor the stitches per inch and the number of rows per inch she can write up a pattern. Each pattern is then given a name, the season and a code number. "Honey-bun" is an example of a pattern name, the origin of a name can vary, in some seasons it may come from the yarn or stitch which she experimented with, in other seasons, it may derive from a theme or mood from which she sought inspiration. As the volume of her business is continually growing, it is not possible to have a specific name for each design, a simple code no. is often used instead. Recording each pattern carefully ensures that she has an efficient account of the styles for each season.

Once Fitzgerald has written up the pattern, she does a working drawing of her design (Fig. 14) to indicate the dimensions and the position of decoration etc. The pattern and working drawing are sent to an outworker along with a knit sample showing the textural design and a punch card. (This card is the pattern which goes through the machine to create the stitch). The knitting machines held by outworkers can cause certain problems such as a difference in tension which will effect the overall size of the finished garment.

The knitted pieces that come back from the outworkers are ready to be sewn up, this is done using a linking machine. Fitzgerald's success as a business has been her ability to maintain high standards of quality and efficiency in her orders, to ensure this, each garment is given a tag stating the name of the knitter and the style number. Each knitters work is stocked separately so that it can be assessed very quickly to guarantee its quality but also to confirm that the size of the knitted garment is proportionally right. In order to control time efficiency, she keeps designs of a similar range to the one outworker, as the knitter is already familiar with the pattern.

The garments are then buttoned by hand and some of the designs require a lot of time consuming hand decoration such as the crochet motifs and embroidery. The





crochet flowers are made by an outworker but appliquéd on to the garment in Fitzgerald's workshop. The garments are labelled with a "Deirdre Fitzgerald" and a "Made In Ireland" label, the initial knitters tag is removed and the garments are packed for the shops.

Fitzgerald has changed her label over the last year, she has developed a new one which combines well with all her designs. She realised that her initial label (Fig. 15 ) was not giving the right signal about the work. This demonstrates her business sense and also her ability to take an objective view of all the components of her style. Her previous label is woven (Fig. 16). The design is decorative, her name is in the centre and is enhanced by the use of leaves and flowers. Her new label is also woven but the design is simpler in form, her name is the dominant feature and there are no images to distract from it. Fitzgerald's design for the garment care information tag has also changed. The initial label had an organic design (Fig. 17), her present one has a choice of two images (Fig. 18). She writes the requirements for the care instructions herself, these are based on the type of yarn used in the garment.

The care label is headlined "Handcrafted in Ireland" this establishes the origin of the garment but also makes it clear that it is one which has been carefully created. It also reinforces the point that the garment is a personalised piece of work allowing the customer to identify with the origin and the creator. The fact that she operates from her own home also personalises her work.

Fitzgerald's new design for her promotional material is moving away from an organic look and is replaced by one which is plainer and more widely applicable (Fig. 19).

During the past few years, the Government has been  
concerned with the problem of the unemployed  
and the need for a more efficient system of  
distribution of goods and services.

The Government has been working to improve the  
economy and to create more jobs for the  
unemployed. It has been successful in  
reducing the unemployment rate and in  
increasing the production of goods and  
services. The Government has also been  
working to improve the distribution of  
goods and services, and to ensure that  
everyone has access to the basic necessities  
of life.

The Government has been successful in  
achieving these goals, and it is now  
working to improve the economy further.  
It is planning to create more jobs for  
the unemployed, and to increase the  
production of goods and services. It is  
also planning to improve the distribution  
of goods and services, and to ensure  
that everyone has access to the basic  
necessities of life.

The Government is committed to  
improving the economy and to creating  
more jobs for the unemployed. It is  
planning to continue its efforts to  
reduce the unemployment rate and to  
increase the production of goods and  
services. It is also planning to  
improve the distribution of goods and  
services, and to ensure that everyone  
has access to the basic necessities of  
life.

Fitzgerald's awareness of the market and her ability to comply with customer demands has been one of her essential business strengths, giving a strong client base. In her early career she built up a distinctive style which was expressed through the shape, the decoration and the colour. A similar mood and style could be traced through each collection. The garments had a long lasting appeal, the work and detail within the clothes suggest a craft piece while the shapes and colour relate to a fashion garment.

In 1997 Fitzgerald refocused her marketing efforts which helped to strengthen her design range. She started to divide her collection into three separate areas which carried her earlier style through but also incorporated more fashionable pieces using unusual yarns. As a result, her label was appealing to a wider part of the market.

Fitzgerald's business skills have adopted customer demands as part of her strategy to ensure continued success. She recognised the difficulty people have in co-ordinating designer knitted garments. She created fabric clothes which made her knitted pieces more desirable but also helped to broaden her collection. Her business sense is also displayed in her ability to deliver on time. She efficiently controls the time for new sample ranges which is often a determining factor for many young designers.

Deirdre Fitzgerald has established a strong customer base at home, she is also building on her export market. A record of her sales for 1997 consisted of 80% sold in the home market and 20% exports.

At home Fitzgerald has various outlets in Dublin and throughout the country. These include The Design Centre, Khan, Tres Chic and Diffusion. She also sells in Beccara in Tullamore, Cleo in Kerry, Delia Connell in Co. Westmeath, Malley in Co.





Tipperary, The Design Centre in Kilkenny and the Sunday Gate in Drogheda. These are only some of her large range of retail outlets.

Fitzgerald's biggest retail outlet in Dublin is The Design Centre. She has been selling here for seven years. In her early career she found the centre very supportive, the staff were also enthusiastic. The fact that her clothes sold consistently well here was an essential asset in establishing her label. The Design Centre hold two fashion shows annually which helps to promote her work. Initially she had one rail in the shop, now she occupies two (Fig. 20). Deirdre Fitzgerald's prices vary from £89 for a fabric skirt to £249 for a knitted dress. She sells a wide selection of her designs here, her classic as well as her more innovative styles. In this shop, Lyn Mar who has a similar price range would be Fitzgerald's main competitor. The way in which her work is displayed may be seen in Fig. 21.

Khan in Blackrock sell the Deirdre Fitzgerald label along with Lyn Mar, Lainey Keogh and Catriona McCarthy. The knitwear in this shop is displayed on rails (Fig.22), some cardigans and sweaters are also stocked on shelves which are assigned to the different styles. They stock less of Lainey Keogh's work because it is so expensive. Catriona McCarthy's price range from £129 to £170. Deirdre Fitzgerald's and Lyn Mar's prices are similar, a garment starting from £229.

Tres Chic in Malahide is another good outlet for Fitzgerald's work. They sell a broad range of knitwear designer labels. These include Hot Dot, Glynis Robins, Lizzy Ann, Deirdre Fitzgerald, and Lyn Mar. Lizzy Ann is the least expensive label, her prices are all under £200. Deirdre Fitzgerald, Hot Dot and Lyn Mar labels are more popular. Deirdre Fitzgerald's prices range from £229 - £270, this particular garment in Fig. 23 is £269. Her styles that sell here are mainly for day-wear with some pieces for evening-wear. The buyer for this shop maintains that Fitzgerald's range of colours and designs combine well with other clothes. In Fig. 24 her lemon style cardigan is displayed over a Caracus Shirt. Hot Dog prices range from £239 - £249, these include machine and handknit sweaters. The Lyn Mar label ranges from a cardigan style at £229 to a three piece suit for £547, it can be bought as a complete





outfit or in separate pieces. This label sells well for special occasions, it may also be sold as day-wear. It is important to consider Deirdre Fitzgerald's price ranges in relation to other designers of the same category in order to establish her position in the market.

Fitzgerald's export market which she started in 1994 is continuing to expand and has become a great asset to her business. She has regular orders each season in her outlets in Belgium and America. She is in the very early stages of developing her British market.

With the aid of the state bodies, the support of her father and her own dedication and commitment, Fitzgerald runs a well organised business which pays particular attention to quality control and time efficiency. She recognises the importance of successful marketing and all the components which help to establish a strong label. Her current collections have diversified to appeal to a much broader range of the market, this shows her strength as a designer but also her coinciding business skills which continually work to strengthen her position in the market.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DEIRDRE FITZGERALD : THE DESIGNER**



Deirdre Fitzgerald's interest in art and fashion emerged in her childhood. Her mother was a very creative person and encouraged her daughters to use their imagination to make and create their own toys. From her grandmother she inherited a love for very fine crochet. This whole interest in crafts influenced and encouraged her to be creative. She went to the Dominican College, Sion Hill, Co. Dublin, attending many art classes outside school. She enrolled in N.C.A.D. in 1984.

In the fashion course at college, knitwear and fabric creation were an area of interest to her, she incorporated knit into the majority of her college projects. Fitzgerald was influenced by the work of Terry Mander, especially by her emphasis on structure. She admired Elsa Schaperilli, Christian Lacroix and Erte for their lavish decoration. She was inspired by medieval and theatrical themes which often incorporated lavish, ornate and decorative textures. Her thesis work involved a study of costume jewellery. Fig. 25 illustrates one of her college boards and demonstrates her interest in intricate decoration, pattern and structure. The drawings are the basis for the creation of stitch structures for knitwear.

A photograph of Fitzgerald as a student (Fig. 26) shows her wearing a short skirt and jumper which she made and designed herself in 1986. She made her own clothes from mid teens onwards. She also designed and knitted garments for friends which gave her the opportunity to experiment and develop her skills in knitwear.

Her diploma work from 1988 can be seen in Fig. 27. An emphasis on structure is suggested by the large use of rib and the regularity of pattern throughout the garment. Although we can see that knitwear is her main focus, the shapes that later become her signature have not yet emerged. The garments show a rather crude construction and the decoration is heavily treated. More of a development towards her style may be seen in her degree work (Fig. 28). It demonstrates a more united use of colour and decoration as pattern is used regularly throughout the garment.





Fitzgerald's college work demonstrates an interest in decoration and creating textural effects. She is also exploring shape which becomes a more prominent feature of her later work.

Within a few months of graduating from college in 1989, Fitzgerald formed a partnership with Lorna Ross and set up the "Francoboli" label. Ross created fabric garments while Fitzgerald produced creative knitwear and crochet.

The "Francoboli" label was worn by young fashion conscious people seeking an individual image. Their targeted customers tended to be in the 18-30 age bracket. The garments were styled to give an assertive confident look (Figs. 29 and 30).

The "Francoboli" label flourished and Fitzgerald continued to experiment with shape, colour and decoration to perfect an individual style which is clearly seen in the setting up of her own label in 1991. She explores shape and uses beading and decorative appliquéd crochet flowers to enhance certain areas of her work.

"Deirdre Fitzgerald's stylised patterns on feminine swinging shapes are arty but pretty as well"

(Williams, 1991, p.12).

Fitzgerald's innovative use of shape is shown in her creation of swing style cardigans and dresses (Fig. 31).

"Deirdre Fitzgerald has perfected the swing style cardigan"

(Callaghan, 1994, p.11).

Fitzgerald works with a wide range of shapes, the swing style contrasts with more fitted and neatly shaped garments. Figs. 32 and 33 show twin sets combined with the idea of layering which is something that she incorporated into her work. The jumper underneath the waistcoat is longer to create interest (Fig. 32).

Fitzgerald's interest in surface decoration is demonstrated through crochet appliquéd flowers. In her early work these flowers were created in different bright



colours (Fig. 34) contrasting with the strong base colour. In later styles the colour schemes have become more muted and mono-chromatic and the flowers are created in a shade of the main body of the garment (Fig. 35). In some styles the crochet appliquéd flowers are grouped more closely to build up rich textural effects (Fig. 36). She works with the yarn to create areas of relief. The jumper in Fig. 37 has an almost sculptural look, but yet is very soft, this displays her ability to create images that are both structured and non-structured.

Fitzgerald's work illustrates a creative use of the crochet craft when for example, as a decorative feature, she designed a band of chenille lace open-work to edge and finish a jacket (Fig. 38). Complete crochet garments were often used as part of Fitzgerald's earlier collections e.g. Fig. 39 where a luxurious fashion garment is created by using chenille yarn.

Creating crochet garments is a highly time consuming craft, she now uses it as a finish on the borders of the garments and as a form of decoration in the creation of decorative flower motifs. A much plainer type of flower motif is now available ready made (Fig. 40) which can be dyed to any desired colour, these combine well with some of her current ranges (Fig. <sup>60</sup>58).

### **The Styling Of Deirdre Fitzgerald's Clothes**

Deirdre Fitzgerald's clothes have featured in various magazines and papers. Each magazine has their own stylist who may portray her work in a different way. Fitzgerald feels that it is good to have a few people involved in this area as new ideas can interpret her work in a way she may not have thought of herself. A garment from her Spring/Summer collection 1996 (Fig. 41) featured in an article by Eivilin Roden. The lace outfit is very delicate. It is placed in an equally decorative surrounding of a romantic woodland setting. The styling of this garment is very different to that in Fig. 42 where the cream cotton chenille lace sweater with a waistcoat of similar yarn is





worn with a short suede skirt and large boots to create a more tough image. This appears to be directed towards the younger market. It is interesting to note how the same garment can be styled and accessorized differently to suit a younger or older look.

A slightly older woman wearing the same style of jumper in 'real life' may be seen in Fig. 43. Jo Meade, a regular customer of Fitzgerald's wears it in a different way to that styled in the magazine. She prefers a simple style of dress, here, a brown wool skirt accompanies the jumper. Obviously, if the same garment can appeal to both an older and younger taste, it widens the market for that garment.

Different ways of styling and wearing the same clothes can create quite different effects. For example Marie Flanagan (Fig. 44), another customer of Fitzgerald's wears the same cardigan as in fig. 45. In the 'real life' styling, the cardigan is worn with jeans and a polo-neck. Marie Flanagan does not aim to glamorise the cardigan but wears it as a practical part of her dress. In Fig. 45 combining it with other garments by the designer and the beads make it a 'special' design. The way in which it is worn in Fig. 46 does not give the sophistication of a 'designer' label. It appears as a sensible warm cardigan which may have come from any level of the market.

Jean Robinson (Fig. 46) wears a dress from Fitzgerald's Spring/Summer collection '97. She bought it to <sup>wear</sup> to her friend's wedding. Made from viscose ribbon ciak, it has a retail price of £249. The dress is co-ordinated with suitable jewellery, with a 'flower' design of a similar shape to those decorating the dress. The hat however dominates somewhat the overall outfit and distracts from the dress. The hat is strong and graphic in its contrast of navy and white checks with a large bow. Unlike the other images where the Deirdre Fitzgerald label is worn casually, this is an example of a person doing her own more formal 'styling'.





Fitzgerald designed some wedding outfits in which she created the complete attire. In Fig. 47 the hat has a similar mood and style to the dress, the brim has some small decorative daisy flowers appliquéd on to it, relating to those on the bodice part of the dress. The hat worn by this person serves to complete the attire without distracting from the dress as in Fig. 46.

Fig. 48 shows a styled version of a garment from Spring/Summer '97. The cardigan appears to be worn with a cream trousers which blend well and give a 'classic' look. The same cardigan worn by another one of Fitzgerald's customers may be seen in Fig. 49. She wears a black top underneath it. The dramatic contrast of the black beneath the white makes the cardigan appear in a 'harsh' form in comparison to the 'softness' displayed in Fig. 48. The officially styled or idealised images differ immensely with the garments in real life.

### **Deirdre Fitzgerald's Current Ranges**

In 1997 Fitzgerald's styles diversified to reach different levels of the market. She divided her collection into three separate ranges. One range includes a selection of casual cardigans which are very relaxed, they can be worn with a variety of garments (Fig. 50). For this range she uses yarns like rock, silkpile, astrid (Fig. 51).

Another range is more structured. It gives a 'classic' look and tends to be worn as a complete outfit for daywear e.g. Fig. 52 shows a swing style cardigan and co-ordinating skirt, it is richly textured around the neckline with crochet appliquéd flowers. Cyno's and Sushi (Fig. 53) are the yarns which she uses for this collection.

Fitzgerald's main objective in 1997 was to create more conversational pieces, garments which have a particular 'attitude', this is clearly seen in her leaf skirt, Fig. 54. It demonstrates a strong use of colour, the black yarn contrasts sharply with



the red tights. Pattern is a dominant feature, it is also very regular which implies a sense of structure, it is powerful and captures a 'mood' to give an 'attitude' which contrasts with the softly textured motifs in the first of her three ranges (Fig. 50). She uses a more structured yarn in this skirt. Her other ranges use soft yarns which fall gently on the body (Fig. 52).

For her third range she has created styles for evening-wear. In Fig. 55 the garment softly outlines the body. The criss-cross binding is revealing and requires a certain amount of courage to wear it. The other two ranges are more easily worn and do not call for so much 'attitude' from the wearer. Her 1997 creations cover a broader design range but also illustrate the diversity of knitwear.

"Young designers have transformed the face of knitwear. From the days of classic cashmere and pearls, when Arans were worn with jeans and crochet and chenille had crafty connotations, knitwear has turned chameleon, as good for evening as it is in the country".

(George, Sept. 1990, p.90).

Deirdre Fitzgerald's designs have been shaped by trends in fashion but also by her close competitors, Lyn Mar and Lainey Keogh and how they are influencing the market.

In previous years some connections may be seen between the work of these designers. The crochet pieces by Fitzgerald in 1991 (Fig. 56) are very like those of Keogh's 1993 collection (see Fig. 57), they show a similar style of garment with crochet flowers in various colours appliquéd on to both pieces.

A recent dress by Keogh may be seen in Fig. 58. Her designs mainly use a decorative stitch over the complete body of the garment with some more detailed areas. Fig. 21 shows a Mar creation, her designs are more sober and use a plainer

59



bodice and decorative stitches play on an irregularity of line. She has a similar price range to Fitzgerald (see chapter 3, p.32).

Currently all three designers are displaying more individual styles. While each designer caters for the different areas of evening and day wear, their choice of yarn and creation of stitch structures differs immensely.

An examination of the work of her competitors shows that Fitzgerald has found her own individual voice and the marketing skills and persistence which enabled her to overcome initial inexperience prove that she can withstand the pressures of small industry. Her ability to diversify her design range combined with her business acumen should continue to ensure her success.





# CONCLUSION

Deirdre Fitzgerald may be seen as an inspiration to students in that her success has grown from her training as a fashion designer. In this she differs from her better known contemporaries Lyn Mar and Lainey Keogh who began their knitting as a 'hobby' and as an 'act of love' and their careers developed from that. Her background in fashion is advantageous to her at present as she is diversifying her design range and including fabric garments to co-ordinate with the knitwear. Fig. 60 shows one of these outfits, this is an interesting venture for someone who became recognised solely as a knitwear designer. Her ability to diversify in this way will also strengthen her position in relation to her competitors.

In Fig. 60 non hand-made flowers are used. They are mass produced and their inclusion here reinforces the notion that fashion knitwear does not have to be craft-based.

Through recent decades it has proved possible to commercialise what was originally a craft industry. The craft origins are still represented in the current manufacturing systems which requires a broad skill base among women in the country. However, this process may not be sustainable in the future considering the majority of Fitzgerald's outworkers are ageing and there is no evidence that younger knitters have either the skill or the motivation to do this work. Until recently all children were taught to knit at national school but this is no longer the case. Enterprises such as Deirdre Fitzgerald's depend on a supply of skilled labour so it is unlikely that her work practise can continue unchanged.

Fitzgerald's manufacturing process involves using the four ply domestic knitting machine which the outworkers own themselves. With the advancement of more computerised technology 'passap' machines and the 'CAD-CAM' system are now



more widely used in the knitwear business which do not require the same amount of hand manipulation as that involved in the domestic machine. With advancements such as these, it is unlikely that a craft based operation requiring outworkers will continue into the future. These new directions raise questions for the years ahead - will Ireland retain its current reputation for producing fashionable and desirable knitwear? At present, all aspects of Irish culture are highly regarded on an international scale. The Irish fashion knitwear industry needs to work carefully to hold its position should this reputation fade.

The great achievements of Irish fashion are clearly evident over recent decades as fashion knitwear has emerged from a solely craft based hobby. Elizabeth McCrum writes:

"Irish fashion often has a sense of allusion, historic, literary or cultural"  
(Fabric and Form, p.119, 1996)

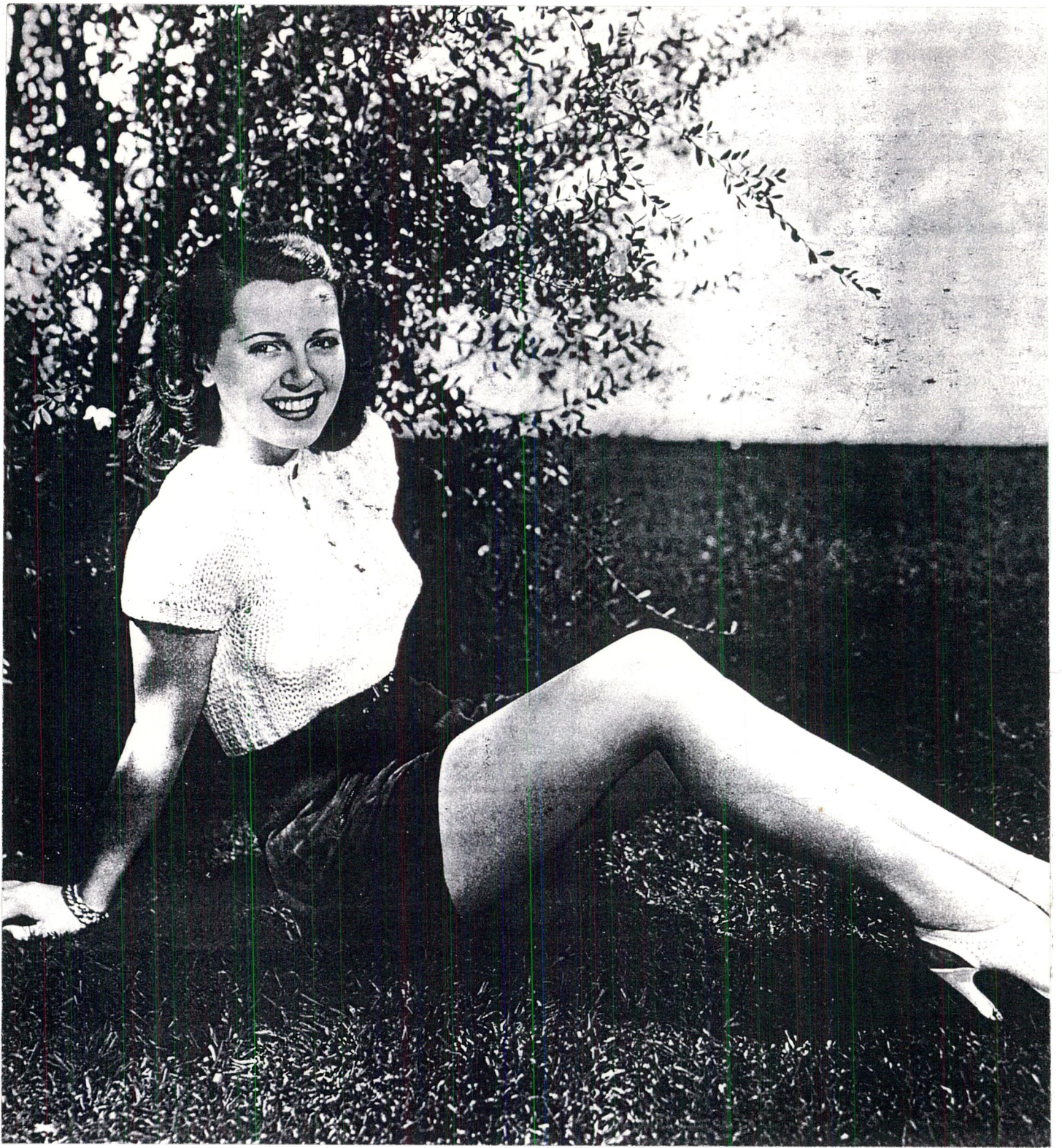
Irish knitwear can certainly relate to this. Designers like Deirdre Fitzgerald who demonstrate a combination of business acumen and designer skill show that it is possible to survive independently in Ireland, in this sense she is an inspiration to upcoming Irish designers.



## **ILLUSTRATIONS**







**Fig. 1:** Knitted garment of 1948, Vogue.

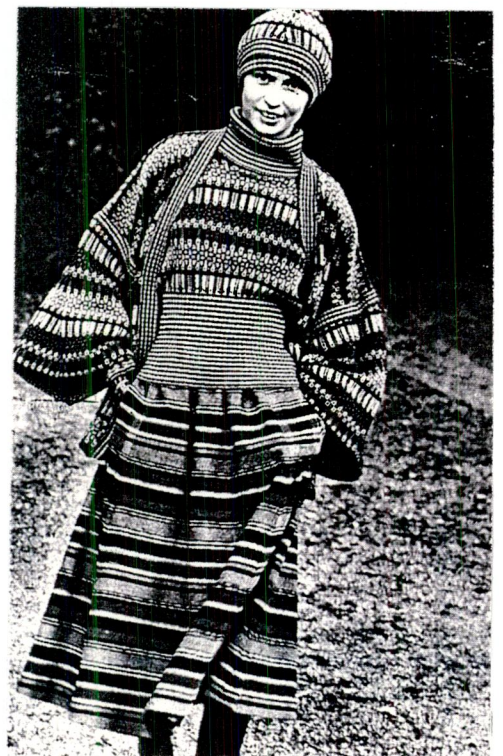




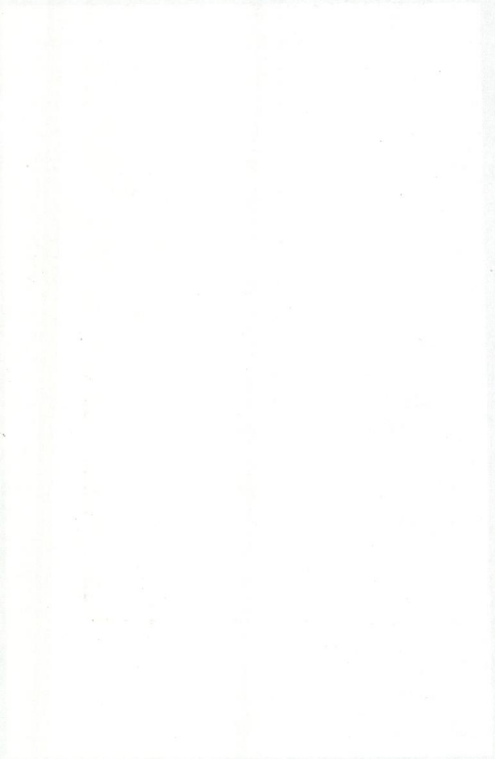
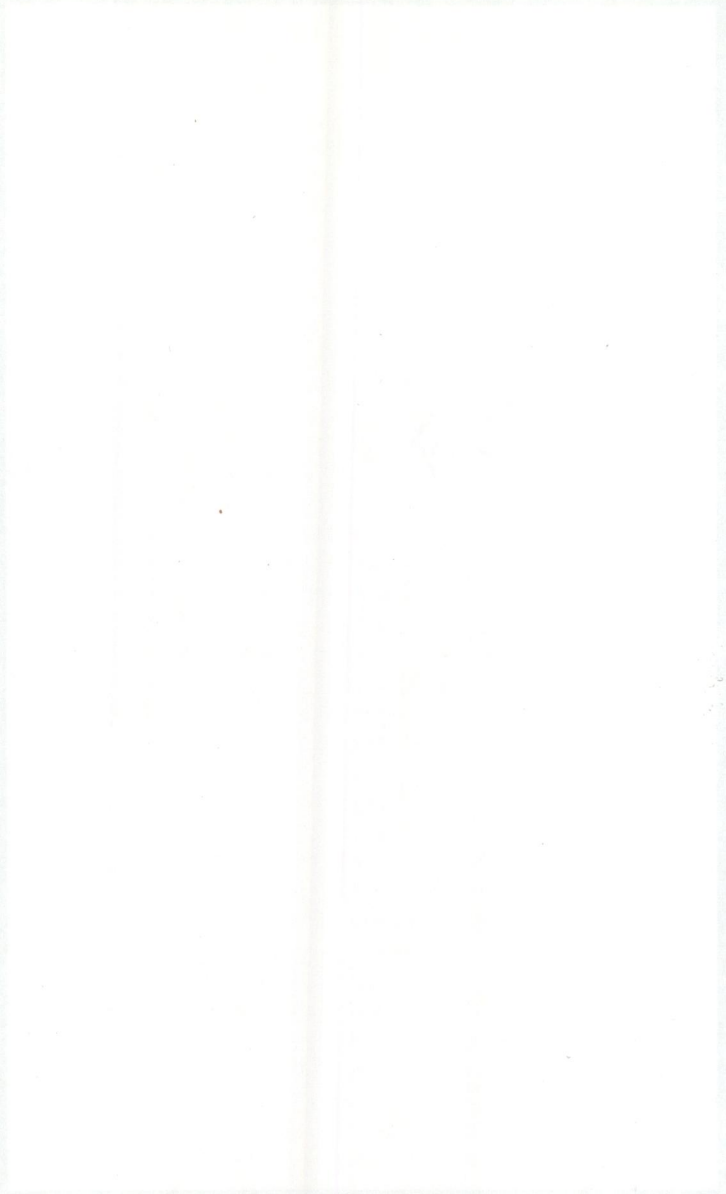


**Fig. 2:**  
A Bill Gibb design, *Vogue*  
History of 20th Century  
Fashion, 1973.

**Fig. 3:**  
Bill Gibb's first commercial knitted  
outfit, 1974.



10/10/10  
10/10/10  
10/10/10



10/10/10  
10/10/10  
10/10/10





Fig. 4: A Bill Gibb knitted outfit, The Knitwear Revolution.







**Fig. 5:** Kaffe Fassett's first knitted cardigan, *Glorious Knitting*, 1969.

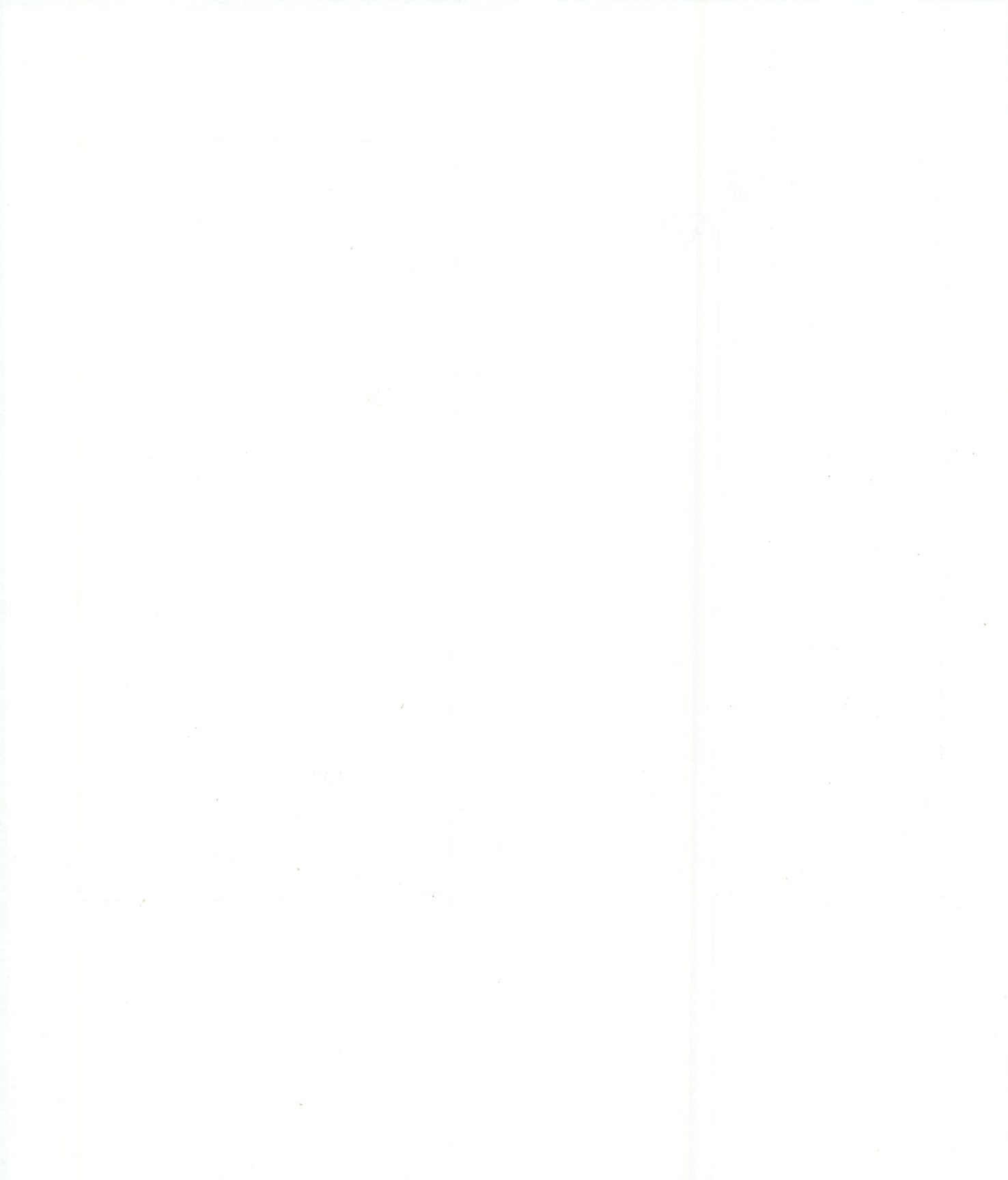






Fig. 6: Patricia Roberts Knitwear, The Knitwear Revolution.









**Fig. 7:** Detailed Section of Patricia Roberts Knitwear, The Cutting Edge.









**Fig. 8:** Patricia Roberts design, Contemporary Fashion.







**Fig. 9:** Crochet dress by Pat Crowley, Fabric and Form.







**Fig. 10:** Cyril Cullen's Knitwear, Fabric and Form.





# Look to our own



Loretta Bloom  
Regine  
Castle Knitwear  
L. S. Ramsay  
Deirdre Fitzgerald

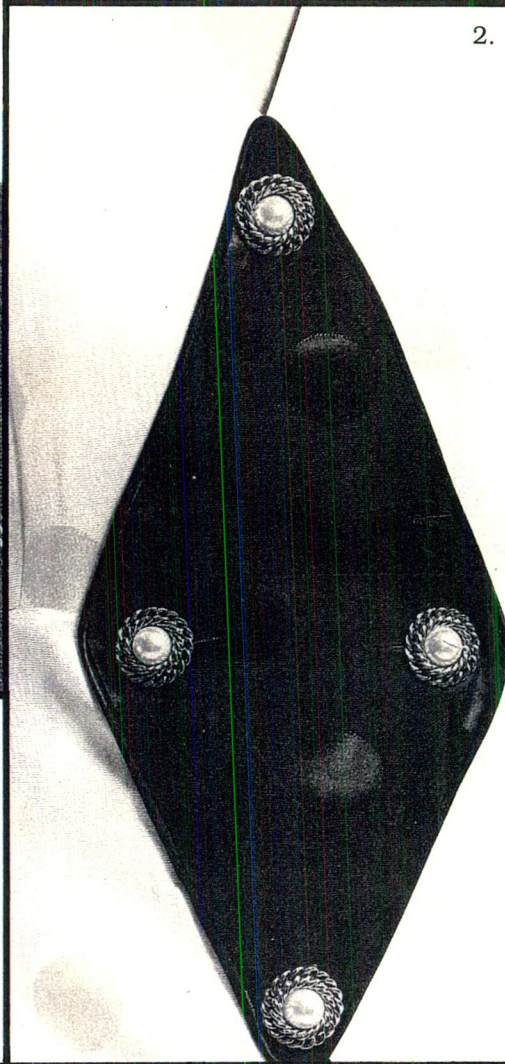
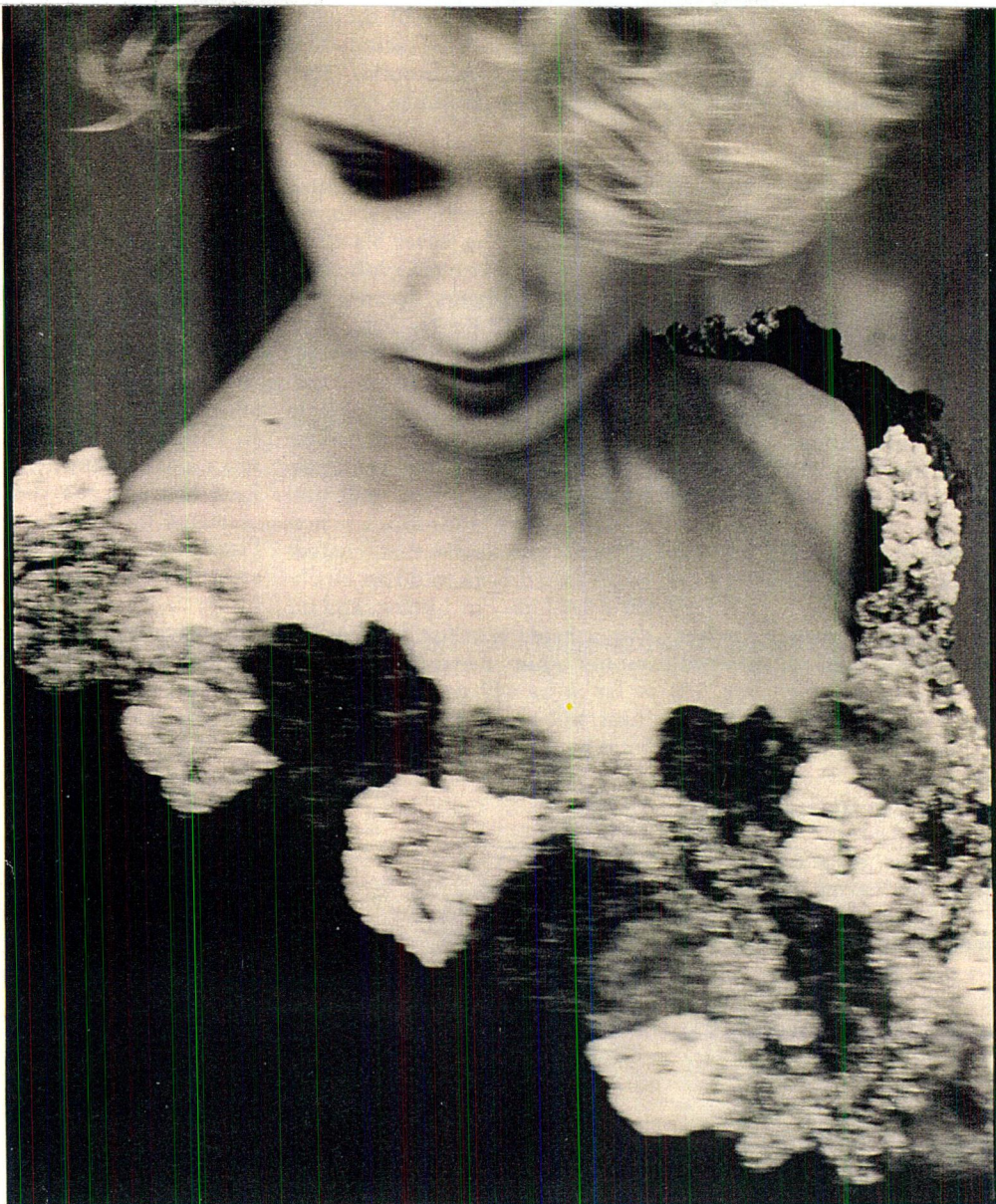


Fig. 11: Look to Our Own Advertisement, 'U' magazine, April 1991.







Part of life's rich pattern.

Knitwear from Irish Designers and Fashion Houses.  
Reflecting the pattern of our lives. With looks as diverse  
as the Irish countryside.

The warm, simple statement of pure new wool. Wool-  
rich blends and cotton mixes with a flair for the witty  
detail – the sure touch that sparkles with personality.  
Irish Fashion Houses and Irish designers bring us  
knitwear that's as personal as our lives – a part of the  
pattern that makes us what we are.  
So next time you're looking for labels, look to our own.

Look to our own.



Fig. 12: Look to Our Own Advertisements, 'Image' magazine, Sept. 1991.

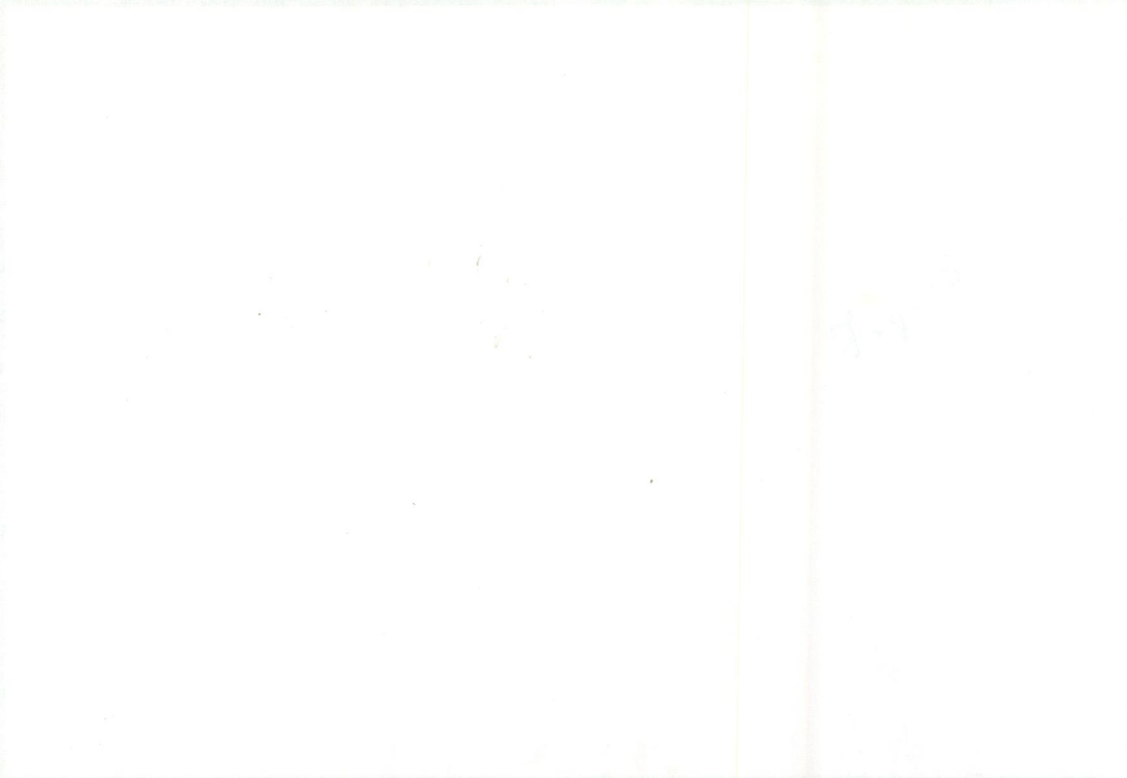


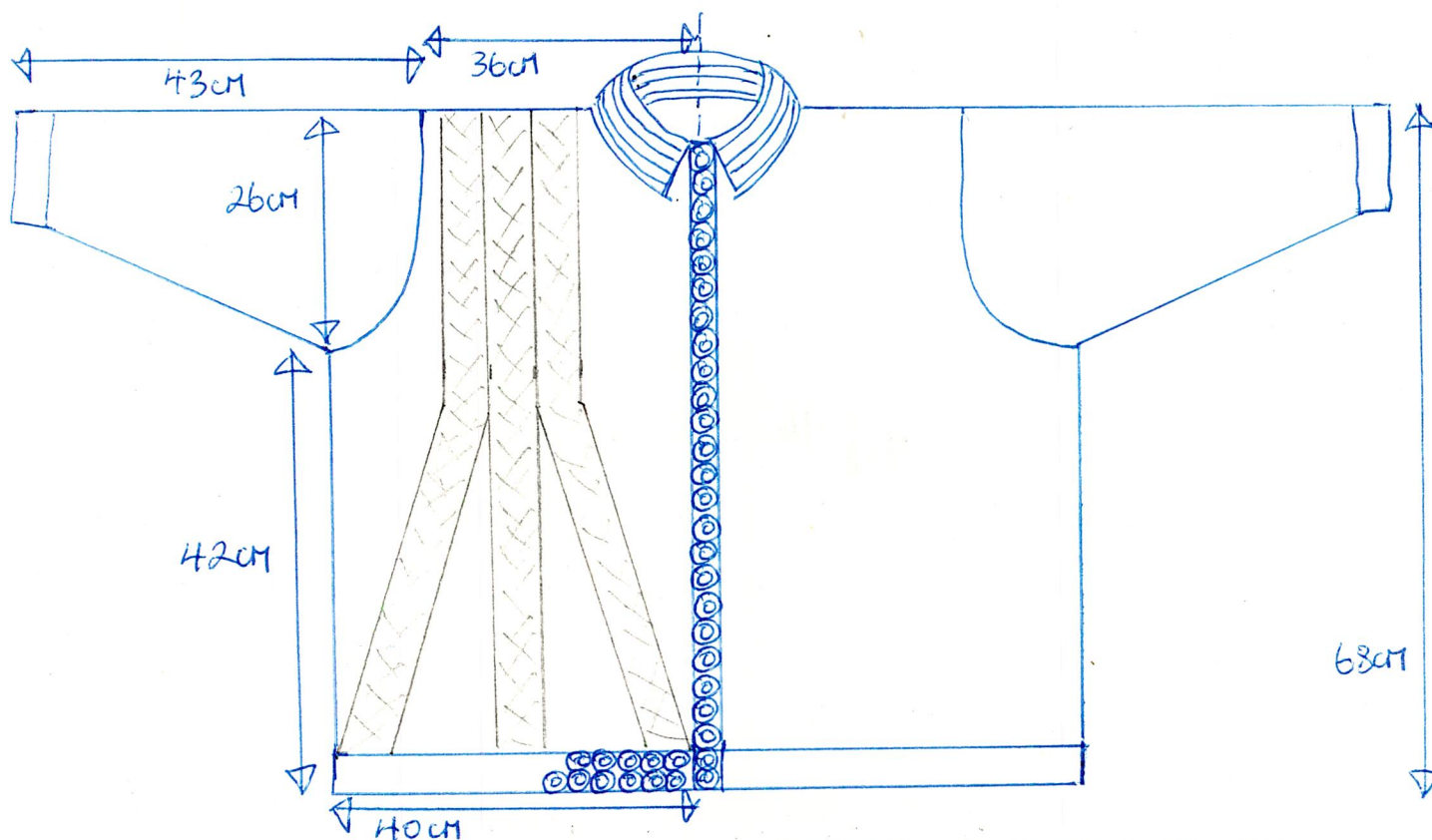




**Fig. 13:** Fitzgerald's stand at 'Showcase', 1998.







PLAITED CABLE CARDIGAN - DESIGNED FITZGERALD 194-95

**Fig. 14:** A Working Drawing indicating dimensions etc.







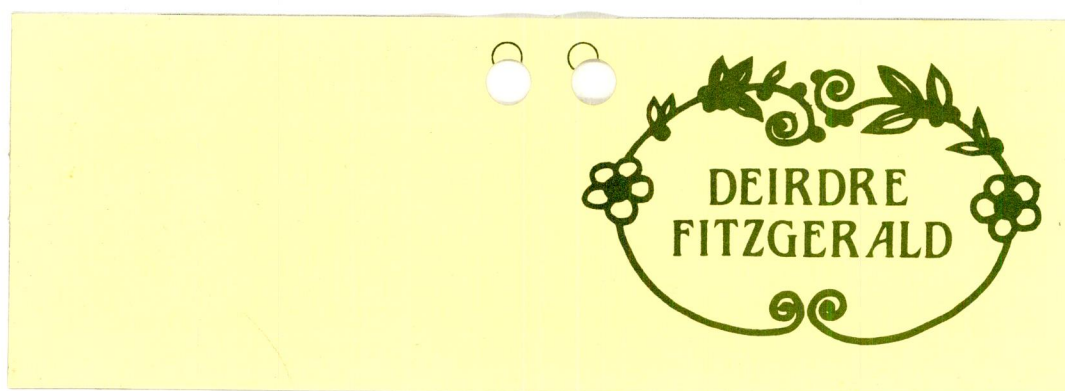
**Fig. 15:** Fitzgerald's earlier label.



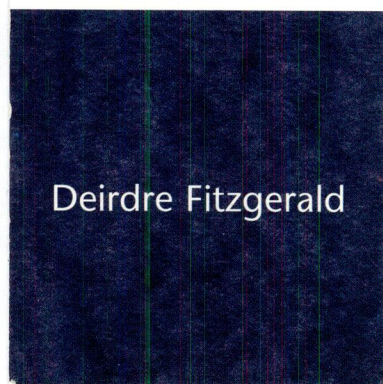
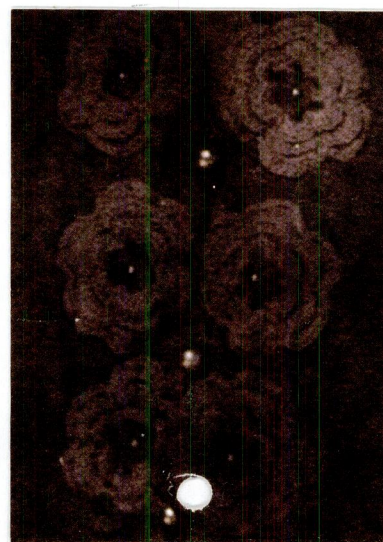
**Fig. 16:** Fitzgerald's current label, launched in 1997.





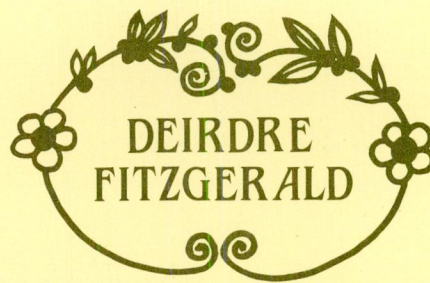


**Fig. 17:** Fitzgerald's earlier garment care label



**Fig. 18:** Fitzgerald's current garment care labels.





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**Fig. 19:** Fitzgerald's promotional material.







Fig. 20: Fitzgerald's work as displayed in The Design Centre.

20 (b)

20 (b)





**Fig. 21:** Mar's work as displayed in The Design Centre.



(21)





**Fig. 22:** Knitwear as displayed in Khan, Blackrock.





22101

2210

22101



**Fig. 23:** A popular Fitzgerald cardigan in Tres Chic, Malahide, Autumn 1997.



**Fig. 24:** Fitzgerald cardigan worn over 'caracus' shirt, Tres Chic, Malahide, Autumn 1997.



1952-1953  
1954-1955  
1956-1957

23

27-4



Fig. 25: Fitzgerald's College Board, 1987.







**Fig. 26:** Deirdre Fitzgerald as a student.









Fig. 27: Fitzgerald's Diploma Work, 1988.







**Fig. 28:** Fitzgerald's Degree Work, 1989.







**Fig. 29:** A Francoboli Collection, 1990.



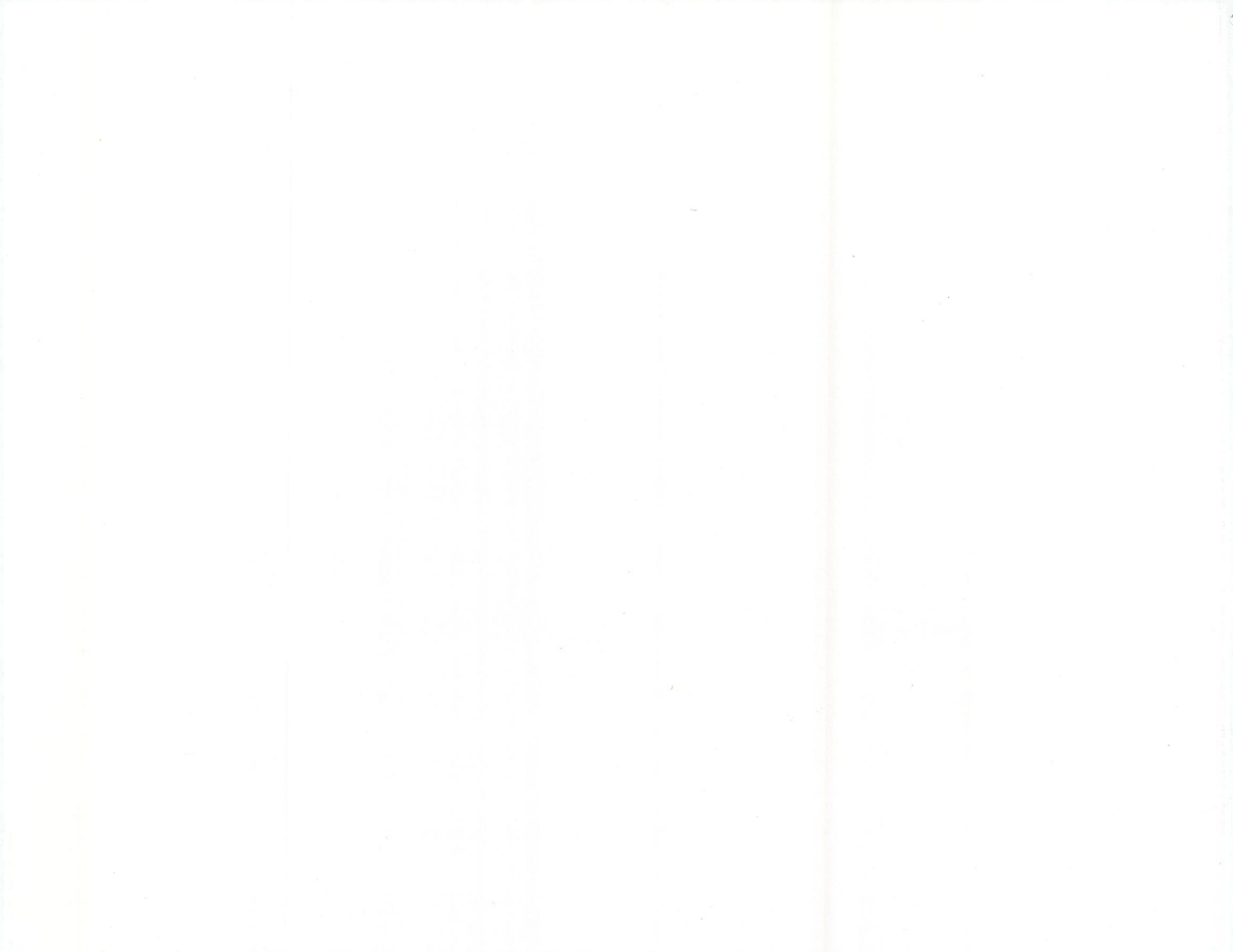






Fig. 30: A Francoboli outfit, 'U' Magazine, January 1991.





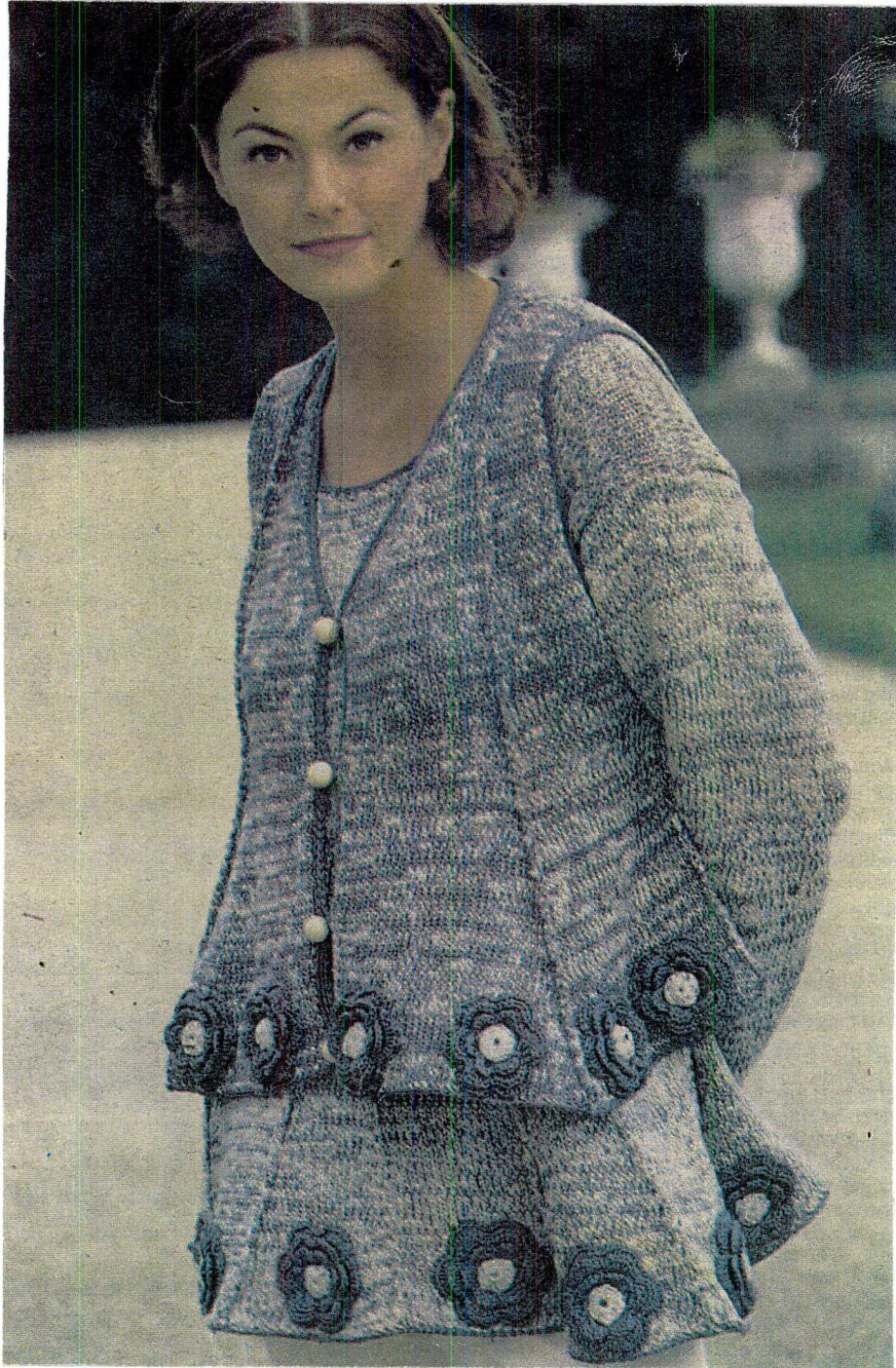




**Fig. 31:** Fitzgerald swing style dress, Autumn/Winter Collection 1991.







**Fig. 32:** A Fitzgerald Twin Set, The Tribune Magazine, February 19th, 1995









**Fig. 33:** A Fitzgerald Twin Set, Sunday Independent, September 21, 1995.







Fig. 34: A Fitzgerald swing style jumper, Autumn/Winter Collection, 1991.



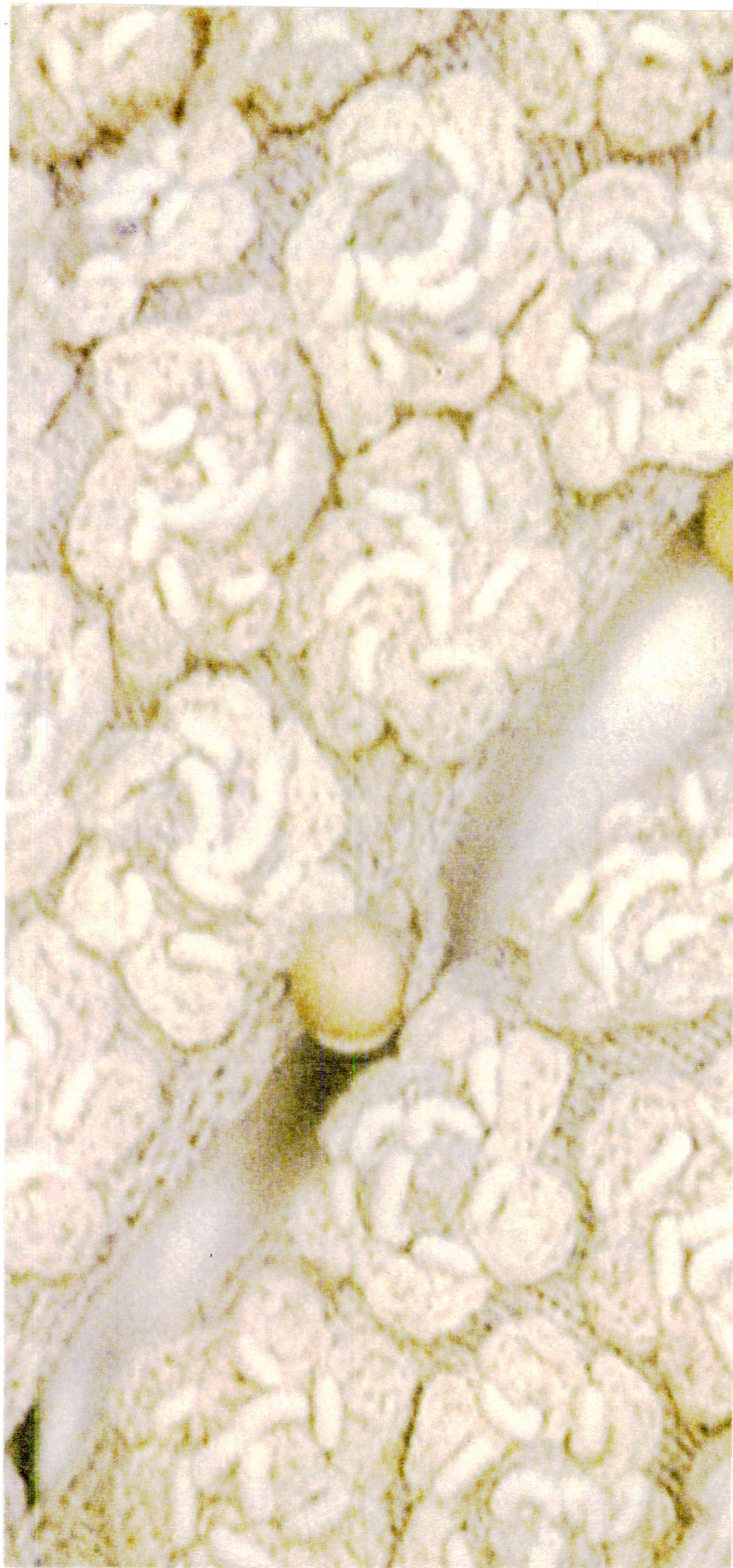


**Fig. 35:** Fitzgerald  
design, Sunday  
Independent, May  
3rd, 1995.







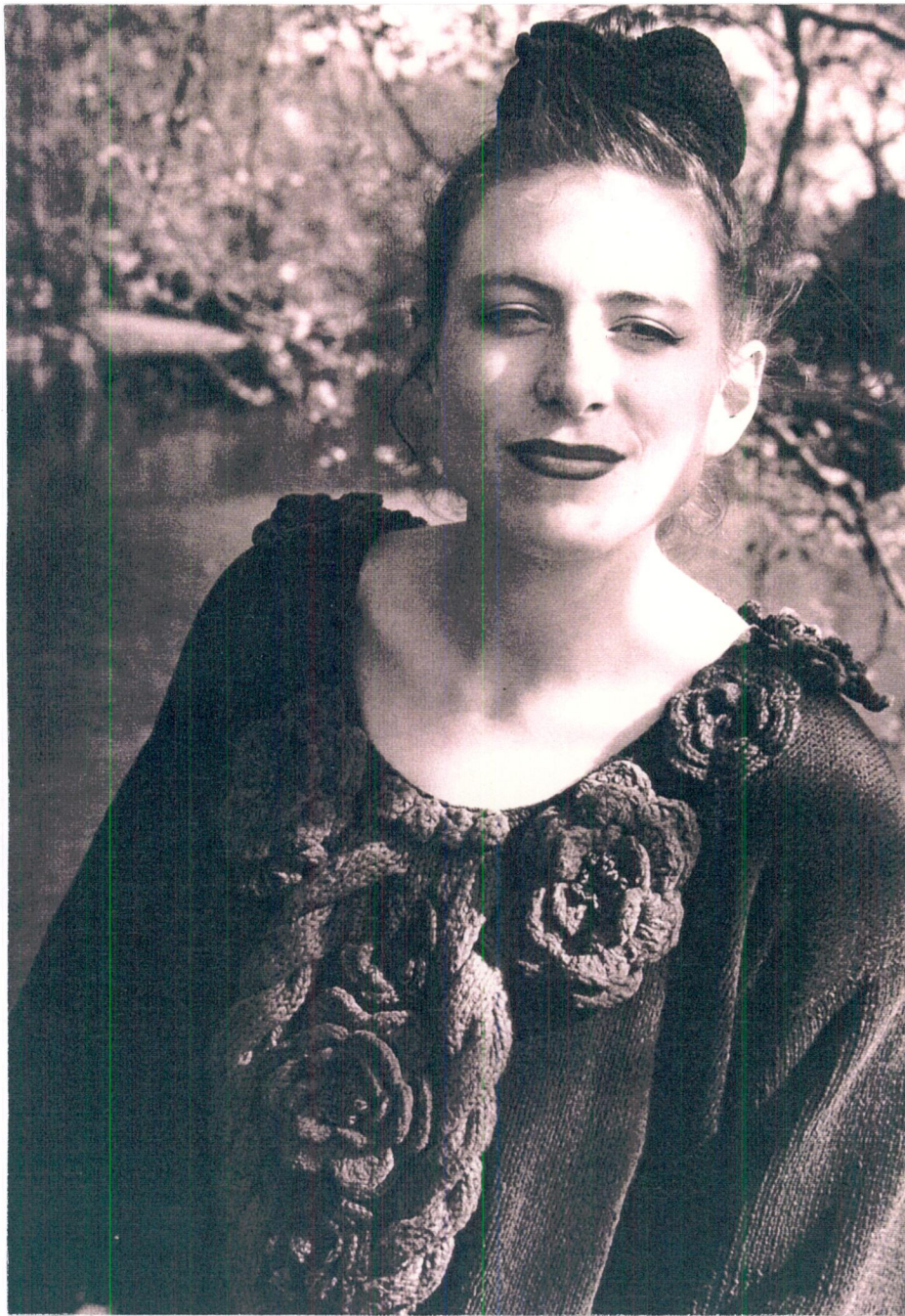


**Fig. 36:** Detailed section of Fitzgerald's work.





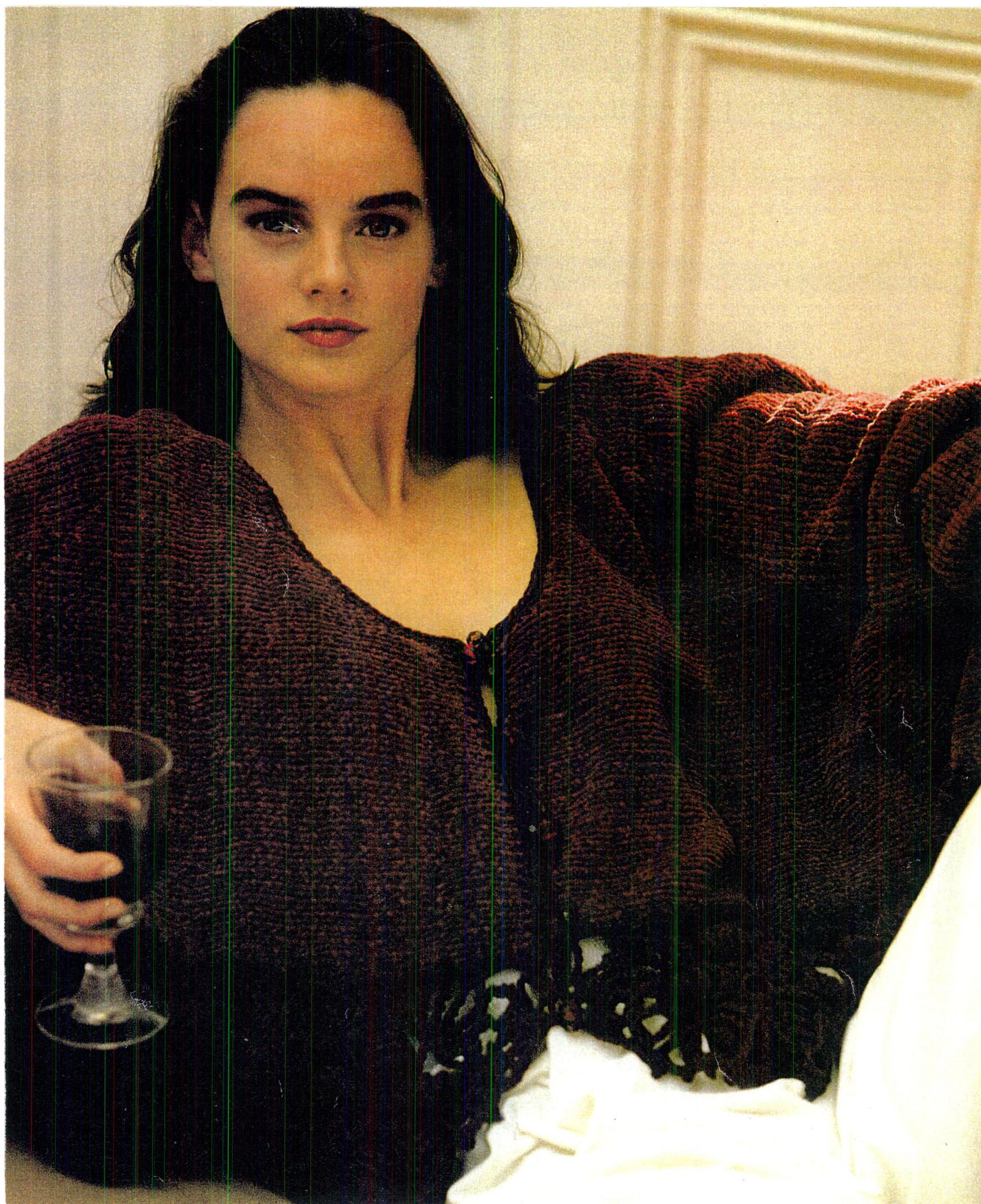




**Fig. 37:** Fitzgerald's design, Autumn/Winter 1994.







**Fig. 38:** A Fitzgerald chestnut swing cardigan, 'Image' Magazine, September 12th, 1991









**Fig. 39:** Crochet work by Fitzgerald, *The Telegraph Magazine*, August 12th, 1992.









**Fig. 40:** Non hand-made flower motifs.





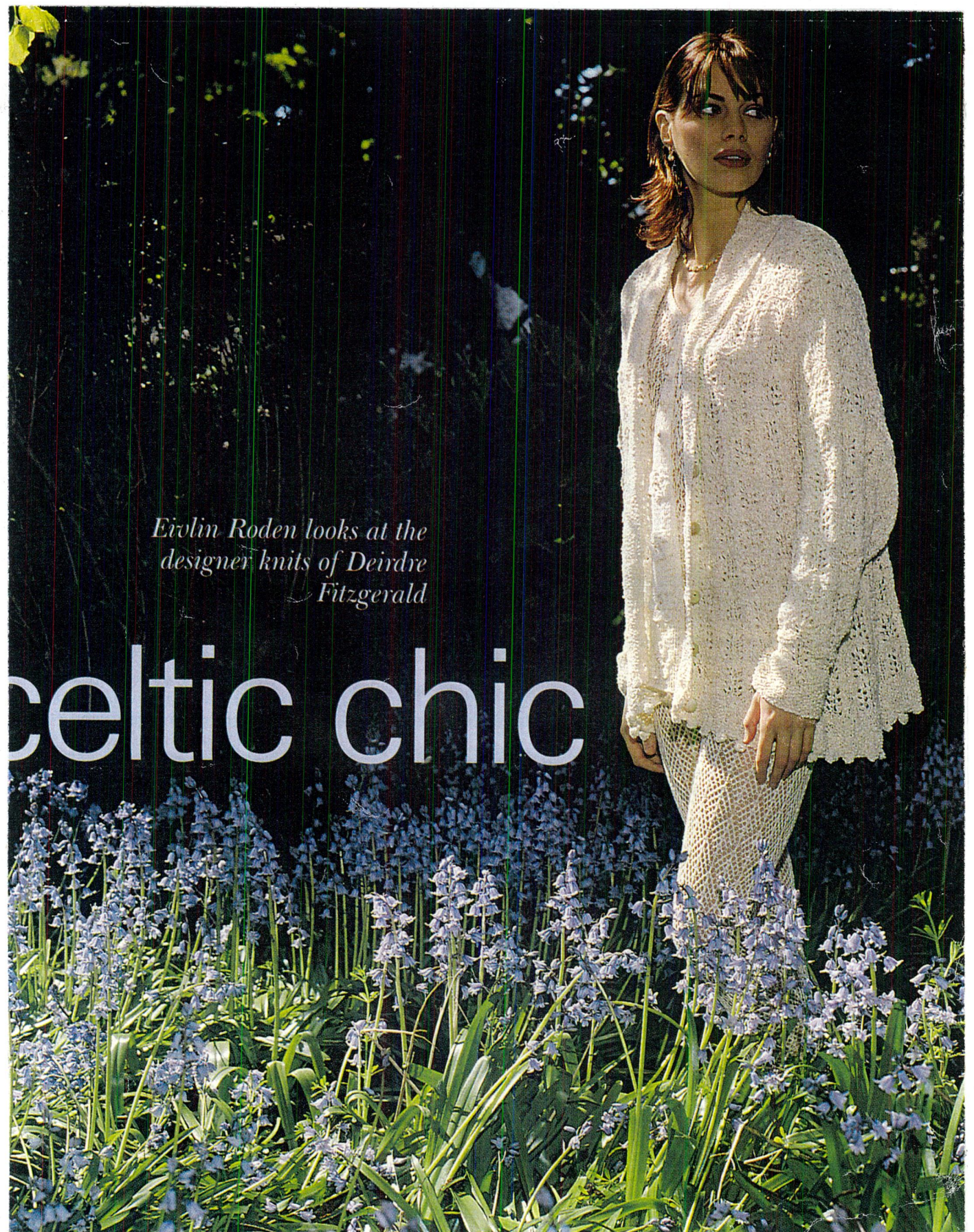


Fig. 41: Fitzgerald's lace outfit, R.T.E. Guide, June 7th, 1996





**ITZGERALD**



**Fig. 42:** A Fitzgerald styled sweater, 'Image' magazine, September/October 1995.







**Fig. 43:** Jo Meade wearing a Fitzgerald jumper, September 1997.





**Fig. 44:** Marie Flanagan wearing a Fitzgerald jumper, February 1997.









**Fig. 45:** A styled version of Fitzgerald's cardigan, Sunday Independent, June 13th 1997.









Fig. 46: Jean Robinson wearing a Fitzgerald dress, July 1997.





**Fig. 47:** A wedding dress designed by Fitzgerald, August 30th, 1995.









**Fig. 48:** A Fitzgerald cardigan, Sunday Independent, May 16th 1997.



**Fig. 49:** Fitzgerald's customer wearing a cardigan from Spring/Summer Collection, 1997









**Fig. 50:** A design from Fitzgerald's Casual Range, 1997.







**Fig. 51:** Yarn from Fitzgerald's Casual Range, 1997.

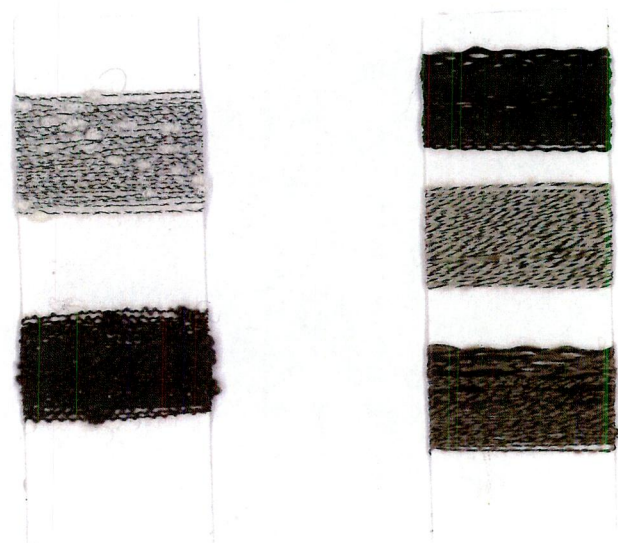




**Fig. 52:** A design from Fitzgerald's 'Classic' range, 1997.







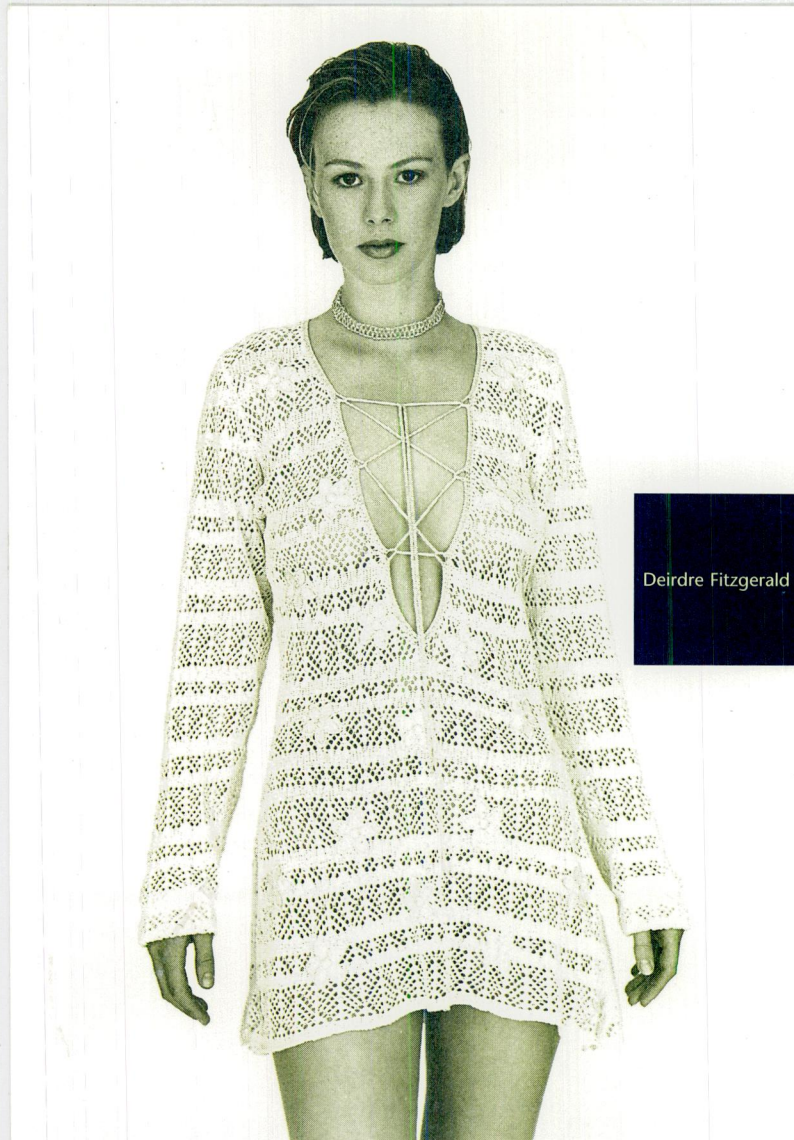
**Fig. 53:** Yarns from Fitzgerald's 'Classic' range, 1997.





**Fig. 54:** A Fitzgerald design from 1997, Drapers Record, May 11th 1997.





**Fig. 55:** A design from Fitzgerald's Evening Wear Collection, 1997.





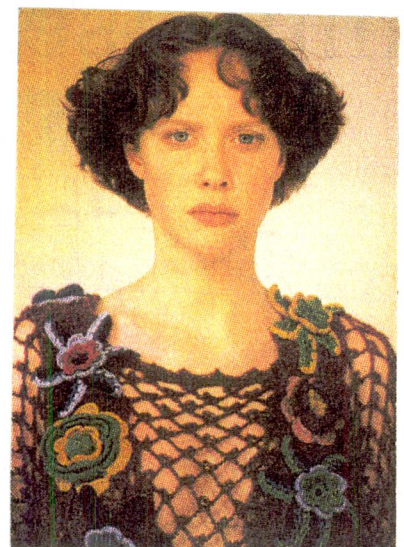




**Fig. 56:** A Deirdre Fitzgerald Crochet Design, 1991.







**Fig. 57:** Lainey Keogh's crochet designs, Sunday Independent, June 27th, 1993.







Fig. 58: A Lainey Keogh dress, Sunday Independent, February 1st 1998.









**Fig. 59:** A Lyn Mar outfit, Spring 1998.







**Fig. 60:** Fitzgerald's co-ordinated outfit, 1998.





# **APPENDICES**

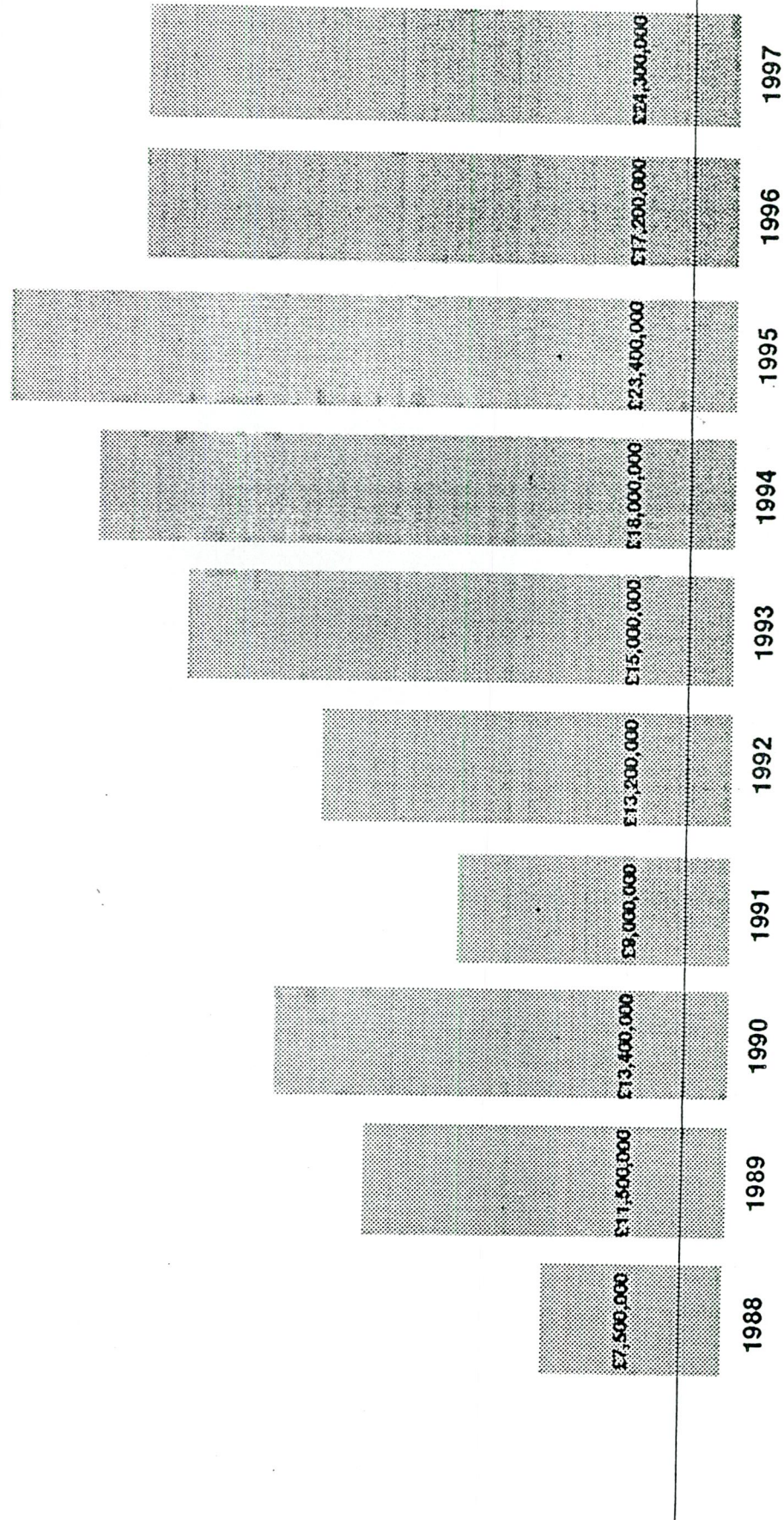






# Statistics from "Showcase Ireland"

Sales figures from 1988 to 1997

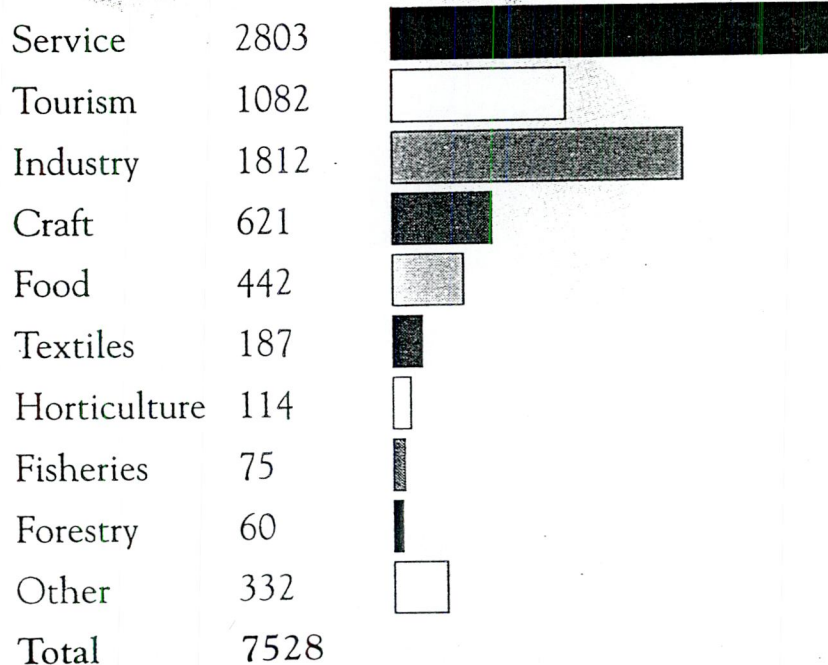


"Showcase '97"

Appendix. No.1



## Sources of new assisted enterprises



**No.2:** Statistics show a record of the enterprises the board has assisted within the different sectors.





## Spring/Summer 1997

All figures are approximates.

30 Designs: 25 machine-knit, 5 hand-knits.

83.5% of all designs were machine-knits.

16.5% of all designs were hand-knits.

Between 14th Feb. 1997 and 29th July 1997.

Delivered: 604 garments.

442 garments were machine-knits.

162 garments were hand knits.

27% of all garments delivered were handknits.

73% of all garments delivered were machine-knits.

No. 3: A record of Fitzgerald's Spring/Summer Collection 1997.





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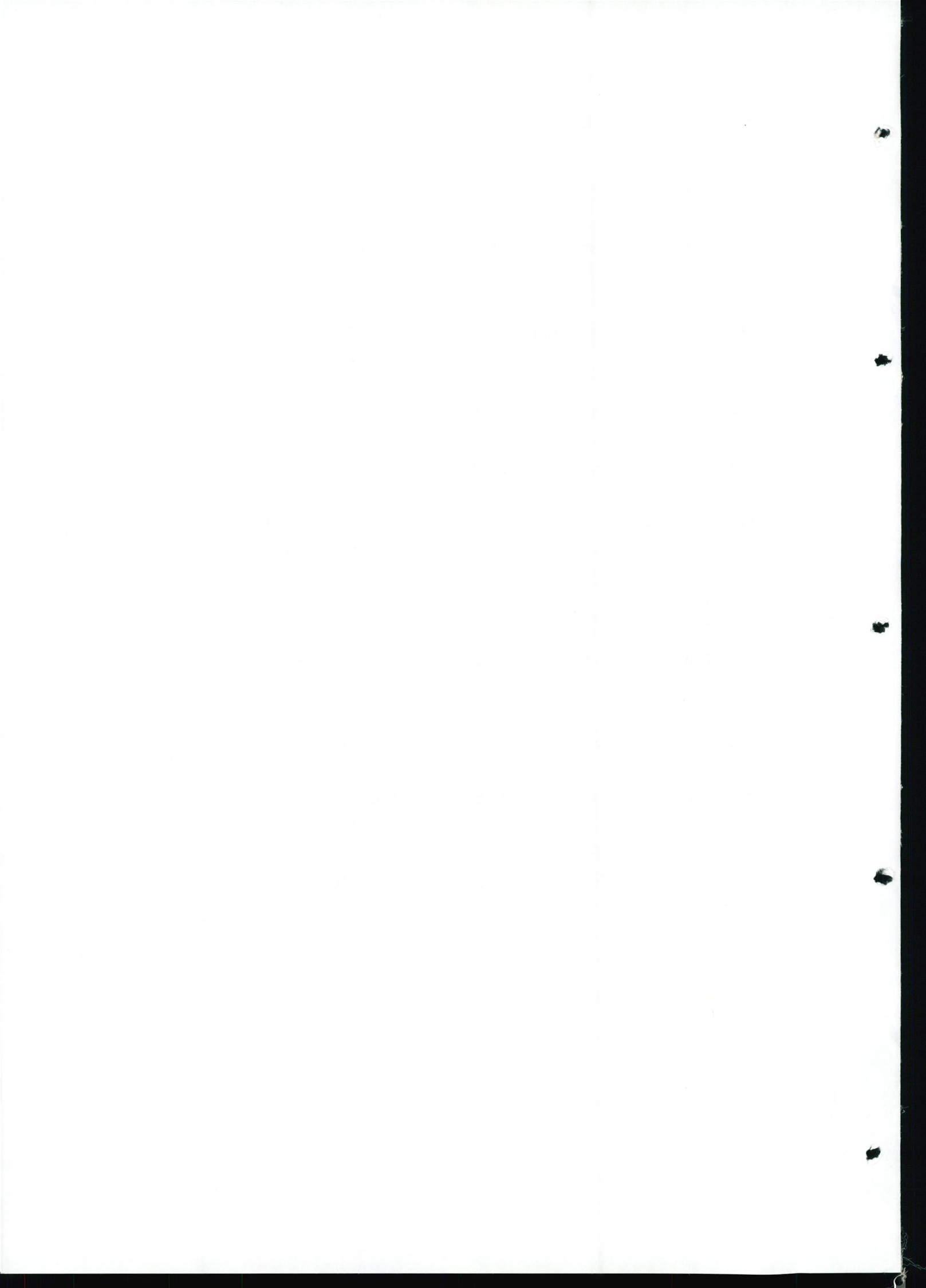
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