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" The 1960's Fashion Revival "

A Critical Assessment .

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Having completed my Thesis, I wish to take this opportunity to thank John Hutchinson, for the guidance and assistance he has given, helping me to attain my objective in completing my Thesis.





Documented, imitated, derided, psychoanalysed and frequently condemned in it's own time, the Sixties promises to be the most confusing and misunderstood decade of the Twentieth Century. The years have borne out this prediction (from Goodbye Baby and Amen by David Bailey and Peter Evans Published in 1969), as well as revealing an enduring fascination and affection for this period, both among those who were<sup>there</sup> and those for whom it is simply history.

This Dissertation provides an opportunity to reflect the mood and preoccupations of the Sixties. It also provides an opportunity to look to the present and how in the 1990's Fashion seems to be essentially inspired by the past and more particularly the Sixties Decade.

In the following Chapters, the 1960's will be looked at closely, first through society and secondly through fashion and the revolutionary changes that occurred throughout the Decade.

The 1990's form the second part of this Thesis. Again the 1990's will be examined through the social tendencies of the present period and through fashion. This is an important section as we will discover how in the present time the past had invaded the future. Society and fashion today, seem set on reviving the past. With this in mind the 1960's Fashion Revival will be analysed and it is here where I<sup>will</sup> try to assess how accurately the 1960's have been Revived.

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The 1960's are remembered by many as the decade of political revolutions, mostly they were mere demos. The real revolution was the one which gave the young an economic power and voice, a style and culture all of their own. 1.

The swinging sixties as it became known, was a decade in which fashion conveyed the lighter side of life. People, particularly the young began to reject the postwar concept that clothes should be desirable and feminine, they no longer wanted to resemble their parents in terms of appearance. The youth of the 1960's wanted and needed a culture and style all of their own. Barbara Hulanicki (BIBA) reflected the attitude of the young people of the time when she said 'Couture was a stale world of movement producing clothes for the kept middle aged woman.'

During the sixties people witnessed expansion, major social change, new style in popular music and a fashion industry which began to cater exclusively for the young. Fashion differed from previous eras in that 1960 onwards saw a wider group of people following fashion than ever before. The 1960's were a postwar period, it was also a decade which saw England truly emerge from its postwar depression and become a Country of joyful and envied achievement. These achievements came in the form of Fashion, Art and Popular Music. However the achievements of the younger generation of the 1960's were not to go unrecognised either. One achievement in question proved to be the single most surprising characteristic of the revolution in taste which took place in the 1960's and was the domination by the style habits of the young working class. Previous upheavals had been led from above, their direction dictated by the intelligent Bourgeoisie. Now it was the attitudes of the working class youth which spread upwards and outwards to stimulate other class and age groups.

This surprising characteristic meant that from the 1960's onwards Fashion went up from the streets rather than down from the elite. Britain did not suddenly become classless but rather the cultures of different classes no longer clashed.

Sixties Fashion was regarded as a reflection of the arrival of the Pill and the permissive society, but like so much else, sixties chic had its roots in the 1950's.

The late 1950's were important in terms of Fashion as it was in 1956 rather than 1960 which saw the beginning of the change of the seriousness and stuffiness of the late 40's and early 50's to the more open and hedonistic society of the 1960's. It was these changes which paved the way for the rebellious sixties.

The 1950's were considered the decade or age of affluence, conservatism and women back in the home. In the late fifties Fashion and the young were to defy their parents and society. The main reason for this defiance was probably due to the fact that during the fifties, Fashion particularly for women, had a "Touch-me-not" remoteness about it. Fashion exclusive for the young went totally uncatered for. Colin McInnes, Author of "Absolute Beginners" seemed to bring the point home when he said of his elder Brother

He's one of the generation that grow up before teenagers existed .... in poor Vernons era there just weren't any; can you believe it ? In those days you were just an overgrown boy or undergrown man. Life just didn't seem to cater for anything else in between. 2.

Therefore the fashionable age seemed to be somewhere between 30 and 40. Certainly the youth of the 1950's did not seem to have a lot to be cheerful about in terms of appearance. However things were about to change. Women would no longer have to look orderly and feminine just by the make-up and clothes they wore.

From 1958 onwards prosperity was on the increase in Britain. The Conservatives were in power and it was a thirteen year period which saw a 50% increase in wages particularly for the young since the pre-war years. This increase in prosperity meant that people began to have more money at their disposal, this was particularly advantageous for the younger generation. For the first time the youth had money in their pockets and they constituted a brand new stratum of society. This was a crucially important factor in determining the atmosphere of the 1960's. With this new found wealth the younger generation no longer had to rely on their parents for financial assistance. They were now independent enough to choose and pay for the lifestyle they wanted. With this new financial independence the youth could choose to live away from home if they wished. With the tendency to move away from home, young people began to follow their own codes of behaviour and beliefs. With the new found beliefs and codes of behaviour teenagers began to question society: Why should they look grown-up or old when they were young ? What relevance did couture have on their lives ?



Towards the end of the 50's and beginning of the 60's it was now evident that "AGE" seemed to define the social divide as opposed to class which had so often been the case in the earlier part of the fifties. The seriousness and stuffiness of the late 40's and early 50's was about to change. From 1956 onwards Britain was to witness a society which was to become more open and hedonistic.

1960 had arrived and with it came Andy Warhol, The Beatles and Twiggy. To be middle aged in the sixties became depressing and contrary to it being the fashion in the 50's. From 1960 onwards everything was aimed exclusively at the young.

Fashion exclusively for the young at the start of the decade were still hard to come by. Department Stores were beginning to open sections in their Stores that were aimed especially for 17-25 year olds (C&A, Dorothy Perkins). Professor George B. Sproles quoted;

Fashion is a way of behaving that is temporarily adopted by a discernible proportion of members of a social group because that chosen behaviour is perceived to be socially appropriate for the time and situation. 3.

Fashion became exclusively young and seemed only appropriate given the younger generations new found voice and independence.

I will discuss in more detail fashion during the 1960's in the following chapter. However, if fashion was to become exclusively young and new, then so also was the way in which it was to be photographed.

Through the art of photography models began to take on new roles, they became Media Stars. These new and innovative methods of photography were made possible as Fashion Magazines such as "Vogue" or "Queen" gave their photographers more scope and artistic licence. This new artistic licence enabled their work to take on a new and exciting manner. William Klein was very influential in this respect as he used new and exciting concepts of photographing fashion. Scenes of urban dereliction or passing traffic became the backdrop for photo shots. Models also began to be photographed as never before, they were photographed running, jumping, even flying through the air.

This new approach of photographing clothes and models changed attitudes towards fashion and the way clothes were worn. Pictures or photographs helped to create a mood or look of the young swinging image of the sixties. One such image was a photograph of Twiggy taken in the 1960's (Elle 1990)





Figure 1



The photography seems to epitomise the feeling or image of the period. The image brings across the vigour, youthfulness and excitement all felt at that time. The photograph clearly shows how successful photographers became at placing models in exciting new roles. (Figure 1)

This picture sums up the most dominating decade of British Fashion. It conveys a very strong feeling of what Fashion photography should be all about.

It's a caught moment, you can almost hear the sound of the Engine, and you can see from Twiggy's expression that she is having a good time. The best fashion photographers set up a scene carefully, then step back and allow something to take over.

You'd stop and look at this because it's such a dramatic image and you'd take time to look at what it is composed of. That's what makes a really good fashion photograph. 4.

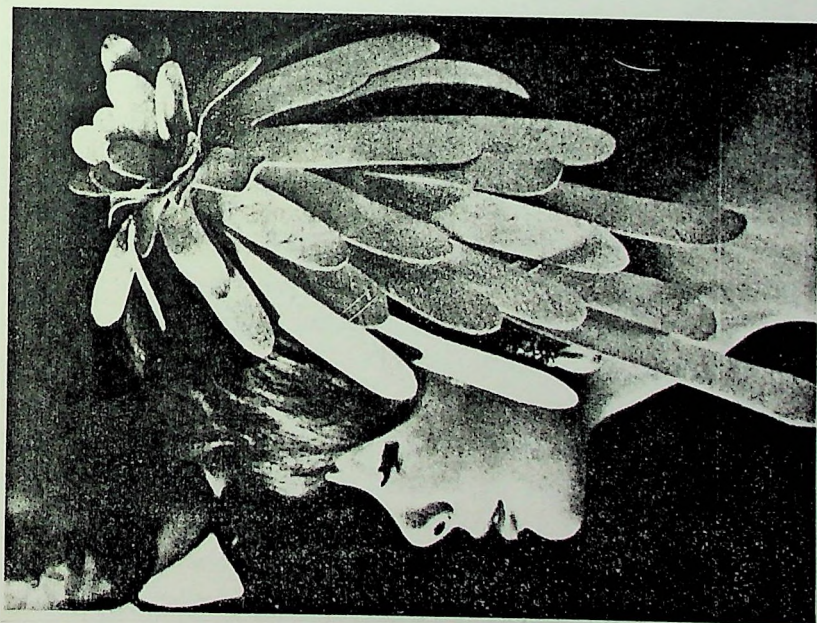
The Model photographed in the picture was Leslie Hornby better known as Twiggy. Together with Jean Shrimpton (Figure 2) they both became household names in the sixties.

Twiggy epitomised the boyish look of the 1960's. Twiggy was so skinny she was almost skeletal, and would not have been given any audition in the 1950's. However in the 1960's Twiggy became the face of the year (1966) and arguably of the decade.

Jean Shrimpton along with Twiggy became one of the most photographed women of the 1960's. While Twiggy portrayed the boyish image of the sixties, Jean Shrimpton presented a more feminine image.

By 1964 swinging London was well underway. Energetic Pop Music and clothes which became less conventional and class conscious were a form of international communication amongst the younger generation. London was enjoying a reputation for being a swinging city with a lively youth population.

Energetic/Pop Music was well underway by 1964. Popular Music according to Plato was a potential danger to the state, as not only did it reflect a mood but it could actually create one. If any one band was responsible for creating a mood in society then The Beatles would have to plead guilty. The Beatles from the industrial north began their career as The Silver Beatles in The Cavern in Liverpool. "The Times" Newspaper opined that the influence of The Beatles,



JEAN SHRIMPTON

Figure 2



Enabled millions more to crack the barriers that existed between classes, between London culture and that of the Provinces, between Scouse and Geordie and the accents of the BBC and Oxbridge. Their style of dress and hair and their irreverent behaviour led the youth of Britain to a new independent identity. The Beatles were not the most outrageous or iconoclastic members of the Pop Scene but their example was the most influential. 5.

If The Beatles music was influential then so also was the way they dressed. They soon became the four most copied men in Britain in terms of clothes and hairstyles.

The sixties were well underway. However today if we find the fashion of the sixties the most sexually stereo-type clothing of the century, at the time women did feel a sense of liberation.

The fifties had been so sinful, so old. In my twenty-first Birthday photograph my dark lips, vaselined lips, tightly waved hair, stiff black dress and pearl necklace age me poignantly. But by the time I reach thirty I'm dressed like a Kate Greenaway child in white stockings, flat shoes and high-waisted dresses. With my cropped hair I look about twelve years old. 6.

The sixties moved at a very fast rate. Everything seemed to cater for a society whose different needs seemed to be here one day and gone the next. However to say everyone was in favour of the sixties would be grossly untrue. **The Neophiliacs** was the first book to look at the sixties critically. Christopher Booker depicted a Godless society intoxicated by a dream fantasy based on 'Frantic Euphoria' mass hysteria and hallucinations contributing to a gigantic public charade.

As we have seen to be middle-aged during the sixties was considered depressing. However, how exactly did it feel to be middle-aged during this time. The middle-aged population of the sixties grew up at a time when teenagers did not exist. In the 1950's young people went totally uncatered for. Therefore if we try to imagine how it was for this group of people who grew up without the independence or voice of the younger generation of the sixties, then it seems understandable that they would be unable to relate to them. The older generation did not know what it was like to be able to choose the clothes and lifestyle they wanted. Therefore the middle-aged population was regarded by the youth as self-conscious, pompous, conformist and old fashioned.

The 1960's as I have said already moved at a very fast pace. A perfect example of this came towards the end of the decade when 1966 was declared the year of the Mini.

However twelve months later hemlines had dropped dramatically and optimism along with them. Once again as is so often the case in fashion the future was abandoned for the romantic past. The social context and attitudes at this particular time were reflected in the fallen optimism of the younger generation by 1967.

The mood of the sixties had changed. The early enthusiasm and vitality at the beginning of the decade had lost its impact. Disillusionment had set in and unemployment and inflation were beginning to rise instead of prosperity as was witnessed in the late fifties and early sixties. The world had witnessed assassinations of such Leaders as Martin Luther King and President John F. Kennedy. The horrors of the Vietnam War were being relayed in comfortable homes which seemed to fall on complacent viewers. By 1967 the younger generation no longer felt liberated by the clothes they wore, they began to feel a sense of crisis questioning and confusion. The Mini and the little girl styling of the 60's no longer felt liberating instead they type-casted women as sex symbols. Popular Music and Pop Stars were also beginning to convey their feelings through their music. 'The Rolling Stones' seemed to echo the feelings of the time (1967) when they sang "Can't get no satisfaction".

By the end of the decade fashion and popular music seemed to move away from the future and modernism and seemed to turn it/s interest/s towards times past and cultures of the East. The remaining years of the 1960's witnessed an alarming increase in Drug taking. The most important movement of the time were the Hippies and Flower Power. The Hippies were so disillusioned with the present society that they sought to find an alternative one. The interest in Eastern culture and mysticism was reflected by the Hippies' clothes, which tended to be home-made and decorated with Political symbols such as flowers and peace signs.

The sixties ended quietly. There was no major economic disaster or world war, instead just a feeling that the party was coming to an end. The younger generation had suddenly become disillusioned and confused with life, with such issues as the Vietnam War the future didn't seem to hold out much hope in getting better for them. Fashion had become less positive. As people rejected the clothes which were associated with the high-sixties and seemed to find nostalgia for the past more interesting than <sup>they</sup>serging ahead into the future.

The end of the sixties saw the decade which was regarded as the lighter side of life change dramatically to a decade which had developed into the beginning of the more serious seventies.

In the end, it should be clear that the Kaleidoscope of sins and boons which galloped through the decade left the country entirely different from what it had been before. 7.





For the Fashion Designers of the 1960's, the body was a vehicle of design, a human canvas on which a mood or idea could be painted. 8.

The sixties as we have already seen were a time when innovation and the whole idea of progress shone with untarnished brilliance. The 1960's were all about being young, and it was a time which catered exclusively for the younger generation. The fifties had so little to offer young people in terms of fashion, so inevitably they ended up looking like carbon copies of their parents. However as we have seen already this changed dramatically during the 1960's. The young wanted to savour their youth and wanted to express this feeling through the clothes they wore. These changes were brought about through social change and were mirrored by the changes in fashion. Fashion accelerated at such a fast pace during the sixties for several reasons. The first was that the youth had gained new financial independence and a voice and culture all of their own. They no longer had to dress in the stuffy serious clothes of the fifties. Therefore they wanted and needed a style and culture all of their own.

Fashion and the sixties themselves moved at a very fast rate. Never before had people witnessed mini skirts, plastic boots, Bee Hive hairstyles, they were completely new to the 1960's. All these changes were centred in London. From about 1963 onwards London became the city everyone apparently wanted to be. London became a newly vigorous, youthful, colourful and exciting place to be pulsing with bright innovation and sudden talent.

One bright innovator of the sixties was the Fashion Designer Mary Quant. Quant believed that adult appearance in the sixties was very unattractive, alarming, terrifying, stilted, confined and ugly. It was something she did not want to become or grow in to. Mary Quant was one of the first Designers to realise that the young did not want to dress like their parents. Quant was one of the first designers to hand over young fashion to the younger generation.

Quant began her career in fashion by buying Butterick Patterns and altering them. Fabrics were bought over the counter at Harrods as Quant was unaware she could obtain them by wholesale. Mary Quant was able to stay in business by selling her daily out-put of dresses before she could afford to buy material for the following day.

The clothes that Mary Quant designed were versatile, classless and simple. Pinafores in striped, checked or grey flannel cloth, mannish tailored hipster trousers and skirts..(Figure 3)

Mary Quant was the first to understand and create a look for a new generation. The "Touch-me-not" remoteness of fashion has disappeared and teenagers no longer felt that their clothes would make them look old fashioned, restricted or serious as they had felt in the fifties. Being young herself, Mary Quant was able to identify with the problems of the younger generation. Quant jolted England and a sizeable part of the World out of its conventional ideas about clothes with innovative Designs such as the mini and pinafore, Mary Quant went on to leave no stone unturned. Quant explored other ideas of fashion and by the end of the decade she had designed everything from Tights to Rainwear, and became involved in cosmetics

Synthetic Fibres and Fabrics became popular in the sixties. These Fabrics seemed to fit in with the society of the fast moving sixties. Fabrics appealed to Manufacturers as they suited the "here to-day, gone tomorrow" attitude of the sixties fashion. Easy care and washability was one of the main advantages and sales features and much attention was put into the sales promotion of synthetic fibres. A whole new generation of synthetic fibres based on coal and oil products had been developed e.g. Rayon, Polyester, Nylon, PVC and Lycra. All these new fibres promised new qualities of durability, easycare and fashion styling. With these new developments in synthetic fibres this meant that Designers could experiment in working with such fabrics as PVC or Plastic, and it was Mary Quant who was one of the first designers to launch a PVC Collection.

P.V.C. became popular during the sixties as it became a cheaper alternative to leather, another reason was because fashion came and went at such a fast pace that using PVC made more sense than expensive leather. PVC and Plastic was a very important discovery as it was soon to be used for everything from coats to boots.





Figure 3



By 1966 Mary Quant had revolutionised everything from Tights to Eyelashes. This year Mary Quant was awarded the Hall of Fame Award at the British Fashion Week in November, for her services to the world of Fashion. It was Designers such as Quant who in the sixties seemed <sup>^</sup> and did turn fashion right around from the way it had been in the 1950's. While Mary Quant was being heralded a "Tour De Force" in the sixties then to some Pierre Cardin and Andre Courreges were the sixties themselves.

While Mary Quant's Designs catered for young working class people, Courreges and Cardin's clothes were what was considered "Architectural". The reason for this was that the clothes they designed had an actual shape and were more like pieces designed by an Engineer or Architect. The garments never ever looked if they happened naturally, but showed the skill and technique was part of the process. These clothes were to change the shape of a woman's body; They celebrated the shape without mirroring it. The two designers used shapes which related to and commented on the female figure. Work methods of these Couturiers have tended to dictate the use of fabrics that hold their shapes. In contrast to Mary Quant, Courreges and Cardin very rarely resorted to using printed fabrics, preferring to highlight their construction with obvious seams. Construction to Cardin and Courreges proved pattern enough for the Designers who also prefer to use single colours in a striking blast.

That shrewd fanaticist who has tacked his name onto just about anything than can be mailed, glued, backed molded, bolted, braced, bottled, open, shut, pushed and pulled. 9.

The previous Quote was how "Time" Magazine described Pierre Cardin.

Cardin was in love with science fiction, with Astronauts, the Cosmos and the future. During the 1960's Cardin was considered the most controversial Designer in Paris. Scorned by some and admired by others he is a veritable whirlwind of frenetic energy. Cardin's first love science fiction was strongly reflected in his work. In 1974 Vogue wrote;

He is the great Messiah of the Fashion World, intent on communicating his ideas to an astonished world. 10.

Cardin's designs were very innovative, as he believed in experimenting with external shapes such as the 'Rectangle', the Diamond and Circle, which transformed into endlessly new forms which became wearable garments. Cardin created such new shapes as the Bubble Dress. (Figure 4)

This was a dress that was tied at the hem and was said to resemble an up-side-down mailbag. While many designers of the sixties were set to design affordable fashion Cardin was determined to be an innovative designer, he also experimented, as we have already learned, with





Figure 4



geometric shapes, the results being cut out dresses and target dresses, / If we thought the catsuit was a modern day design then we would be wrong, Cardin introduced such shapes as the Catsuit and Hotpants which have today in the 1990's become such popular shapes. During the 1960's Cardin's work was regarded as being very outlandish but became universally accepted by the young and stylish. Cardin's innovative ideas have proved inspirational to todays designers and such design features as the cut-away dress is proving a popular shape during todays 1960's revival.

If science fiction was Cardin's first love, then dressing real people was his second. In 1950 all Pierre Cardin could think about was Dressing the people in the street.

' I had some of the most fashionable customers in the world, but I had a passion to dress real people'. 11.

This passion lead to Cardin becoming the first Haute Couturier to design ready to wear in 1964. Today Cardin is regarded as one of the Elder Statemen of Fashion and

' If the current sixties revival is sometimes galling to a man who has seen it all before, he can afford the last laugh. He did after all do it first'. 12.

For the Couturiers of Paris, the 1960's do not hold fond memories. The sixties witnessed a change in attitude towards Parisian fashion as it was London where everyone now wanted to be. While London was becoming the fashion capital Paris was becoming less relevant to fashion followers through out Europe. With the new young generation of fashion followers of the sixties, Paris had to go along with the youth explosion or fear getting left behind.

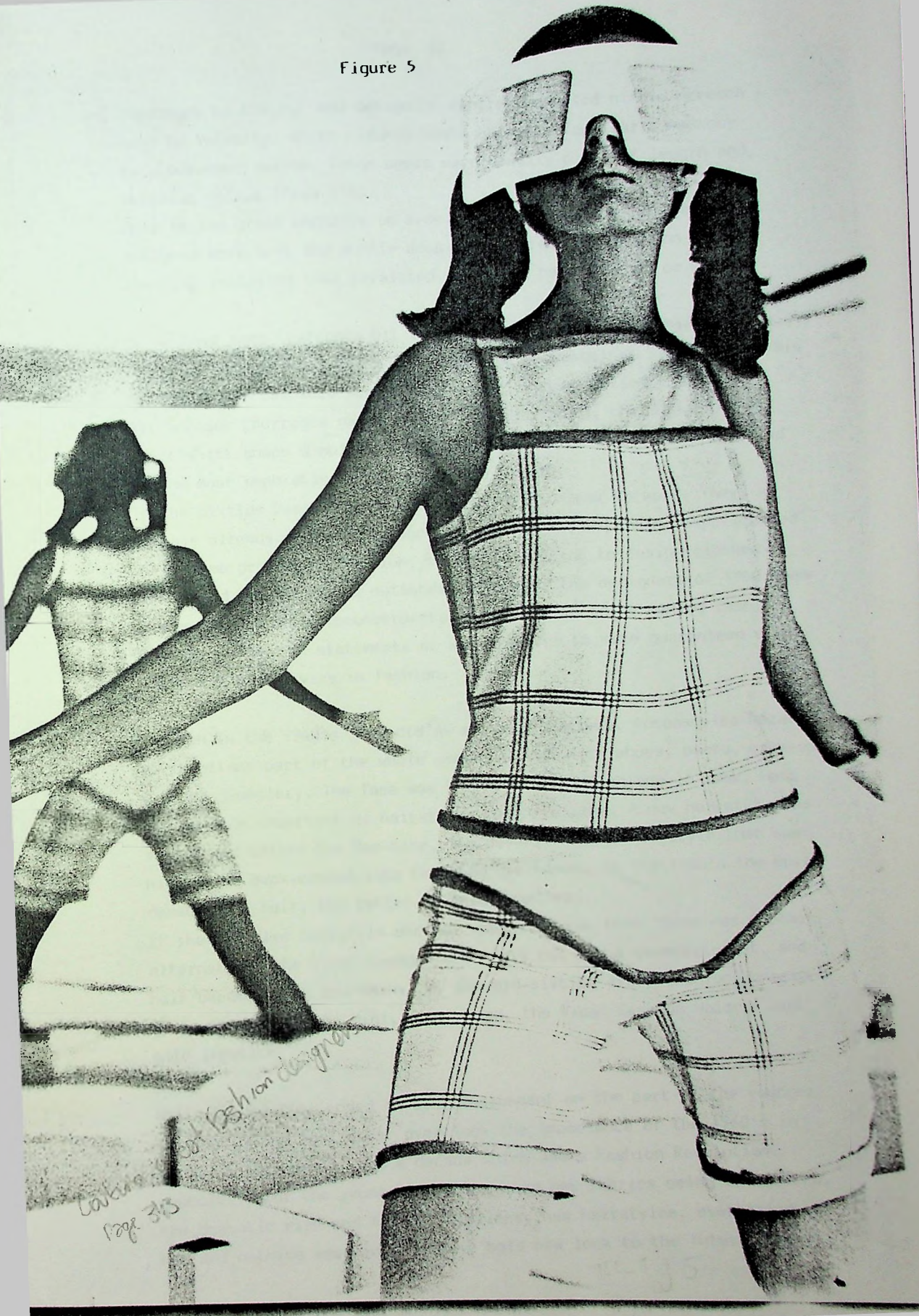
Andre Courreges as we have seen, was , along with Cardin regarded as the sixties themselves. Mini skirts, skinny-legged hip huggers, bare mid-riffs wer all Courreges looks, which he adopted for everyone. Courrege, who formally had trained with Balenciaga hit the fashion headline with his "Space Age" collection of 1964. This collection combined the Parisian traditions of perfect cut, combined with high quality materials. Just as Cardin's first love seemed to be science fiction, so also was Courreges fascinated with Space, Vogue commented ;

' Courreges clearly dreams of Moon Parties'. A

Courreges achieved a precise unadorned line through perfect cut and handling of the fabric. Correges used such new fabrics as Triple Gaberdine from Mattier for suits, dresses and trousers, that all seemed sculpted rather than sewn. (Figure 5)



Figure 5





Courreges by the cut and design he applied, enabled him to stretch legs to infinity. White kidskin boots became a familiar accessory for Courreges design. These boots were usually mid-calf length and white in colour.(Figure 6)

Despite the great emphasis on line, the clothes Andre Courreges designed were soft and subtle despite the great emphasis on line. The fine tailoring that persisted was never harsh, tight or angular.

As we have seen Courreges hit the fashion headlines in 1964 with his Space Age Collection. Using ice blues and pink against stark white, his garments were cut into simple shapes outlined by welted seams.

All through Courreges' garments were simple shapes, childlike in the short-shift shape simplicity and worn with babybonnets. This appealed to the most sophisticated women of the decade.

In the sixties Designers were never afraid to look forward. They, as we have already seen by the work of Courreges and Cardin, experimented with Theme or Science-Fiction, they were willing to design clothes that would be considered outlandish. However the designers of 1990 seem unlike their sixties counterparts, as they seem to be making fashion clothes instead of statements or would prefer to make guaranteed sales instead of new styles in fashion.


Fashion in the 1960's just didn't end with clothes. Accessories became an important part of the whole image; either with shoes, boots, make-up, wigs or jewellery. The face was the key to the fashionable look. Hats became less important as hairstyles began to rise. A new hairstyle was introduced called the Bee-hive. The Bee-hive was a hairstyle that saw hair being back-combed into towering Bee-hives. In the 1960's the more damaged the hair, the better it held together.

If the Bee-hive hairstyle did not appeal to you then there was another alternative; the Vidal Sassoon Bob. This cut was a geometric cut, and hair became slick and shiny. By the mid-sixties every fashion-conscious girl was wearing the Mini, flat pumps, the Vidal Sassoon Haircut and pale lipstick.

While the sixties ended in disillusionment on the part of the younger generation, we must never overlook the importance of the 1960's in terms of fashion. It was a decade which saw a Fashion Revolution, especially for the young. 1960 witnessed new fabrics being introduced, the dramatic rise and fall of hemlines, new hairstyles, everything was new and nothing was old, it was a bold new look to the future and



Figure 6



19. Vidal Sassoon's chunky, sculpted 'bob' on Grace Coddington. 20. Quant's sailcloth dungarees, called 'Plunkets' (after her husband), with a button apron top and flared legs, and black rayon shirt with long cuffs and a droopy collar. James Wedge's black straw hat with duck-tail brim at the back. 21. Jean Shrimpton models simple, classic corduroy jeans, wide black calfskin belt, fine Paisley patterned cotton jersey blouse, kid motoring hat and buffalo suede lace-ups. 22. Saint Laurent's double-breasted beige-fleece 'Pea' jacket. 23. Bill Blass's stone-brown cotton covert raincoat with a round, funnel-shaped neckline, textured stockings, gaiters and strapped Anzac hat. 24. Dior's warm red top-to-toe Russian midi-length coat edged with black fox fur, and Anello and Davide's boots. 25. Simonetta and Fabiani's thick red twill double-breasted top coat with deep, dropped shoulders formed by two welled seams curving into the short, wide arm-swinging sleeves. A broad, stitched martingale shapes the back. 26. Courrèges's white kid boots.



not to the past. The 1960's will always be a constant source of inspiration to all Designers because of the optimism and exictement it generated in all areas of life.

The young of the sixties got high on many things but the strongest Drug or substance was optimism and euphoria.



## 90's Context

1990 - From new age chic to sexy science, the release of Nelson Mandela to Resignation of Mrs Thatcher, Club Fanzines to Bleeps, the World Cup and Manchester and more Food Scares than one would care to remember. 1990 was the year when nobody danced the Lambada and everyone pretended they watched "The Simpsons". 13

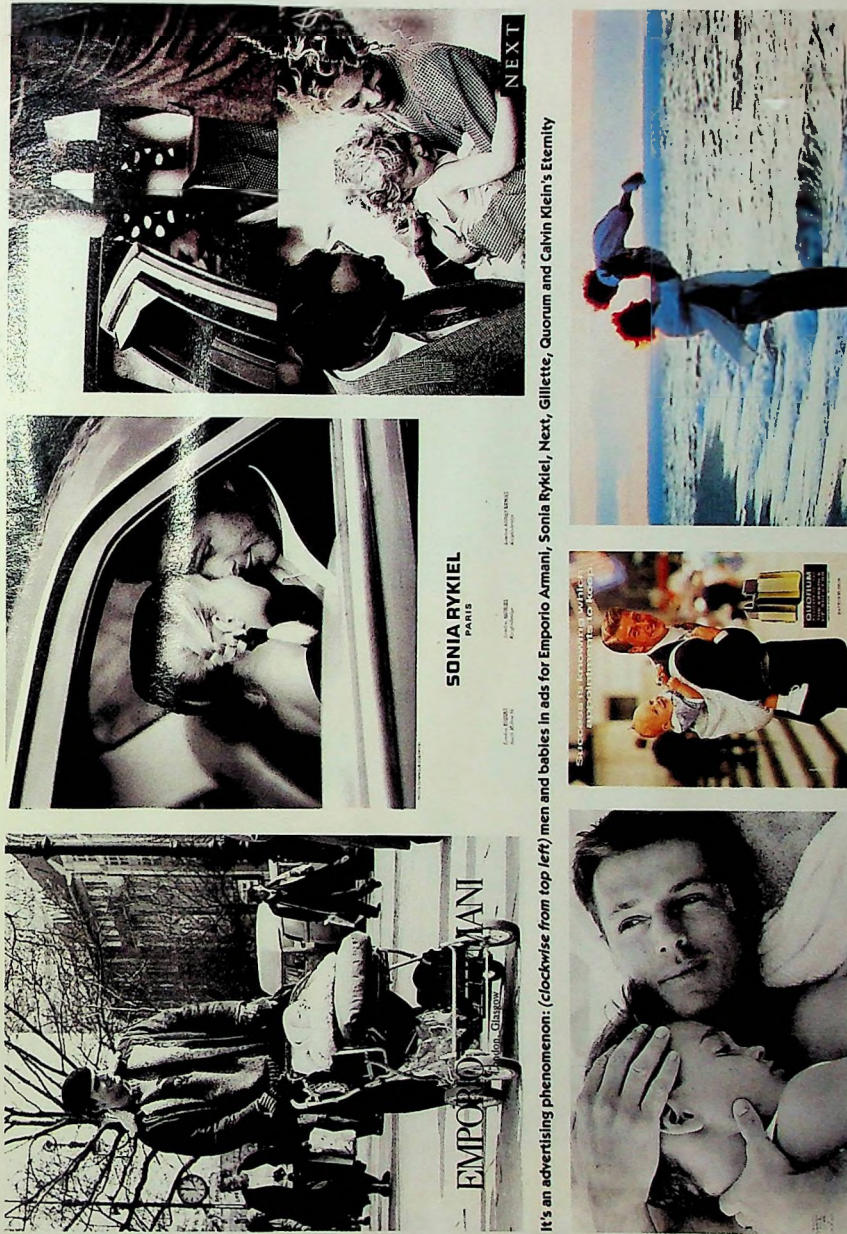
The beginning of the 1990's saw the "New Age" image come to the fore, everyone talked about the new age and Rifat Ozbeck based an entire Winter Collection around the new age, which proved to be his most influential collection to date. If white was to be the "new Age" colour then crystals were to accessorize it. Crystals became an essential accessory for fashionable clothing, work, play and general well being. Rifat Ozbeck produced a collection last season that was fashionable yet highly functional. The "New Age Family" modelled Ozbeck's collection and in the arms of the Father figure lay the newest accessory for the nineties - A baby. 1990 saw advertising agents, set on selling the new father. In the opinion column of "Creative Review" the question was; What will be the accessory of the nineties ? It's a successor to the Filofax, it's something that is a mark of achievement like a Mont Blanc Pen, but now people are changing, they're not as materialistic as they once were in the Eighties; obviously it's a baby. So through the power of advertising it is the Baby which has become the latest accessory of the nineties. (Figure 7)

As the old communist Countries of Eastern Europe held their first election, the Western Countries were rushing towards unity. Britain was finally joined to the rest of Europe (Mainland) via the Channel Tunnel, if only by a slim airshaft. However Eurotunnel vision for the Tories persisted and finally proved to be the downfall of the Iron Lady.

1990 was the year foodscares were becoming quite frequent. Listeria was discovered in soft cheeses, B.S.T. in Milk and even pure spring water underwent a Nenzene panic. In fact the foodscares of 1990 could not have come at a worse time, as today people are more in tune with Dietary needs and are opting for healthy lifestyles and eating habits. Not only do people in the 1990's feel the need or obligation to project their inner selves, they also have shown their concern for the environment around them. Designers such as Katherine Hamnett have taken the subject of Ecology and have tried to assess the effect clothing and textiles have on the environment. Fund raisers have organised to raise money for Research to find alternatives to pesticides.



Figure 7



It's an advertising phenomenon: (clockwise from top left) men and babies in ads for Emporio Armani, Sonia Rykiel, Next, Gillette, Quorum and Calvin Klein's Eternity

With all the environmental concerns, Fashion Industries seem to be showing a strong preference for natural fibres. The result of this being that such fabrics as linen originally deemed unsuitable for manufacturing have been revived. This change in attitudes eventually meant the producers of synthetic fibres would suffer.

While synthetic fabrics became very popular in the sixties today in the nineties natural fabrics are preferred. This preference has resulted in many closures of synthetic fibre producing factories, The Courtald Factory in Manchester being a point in case. Animal fur has also received the same treatment. Anti-fur campaigners have been successful in changing or altering peoples attitude to wearing animal fur. The Campaigning has resulted in several large Department Stores no longer selling fur.

With the attitude of the mass population today being "a return to nature" this inevitably had its effect on the fashion industry. Life in the sixties moved at a very fast rate, everything was here today, gone tomorrow. Synthetic clothes were quite popular then as clothes were only expected to last a couple of months. 1990 witnesses a much slower pace of life and the lifecycle of clothes today are expected to be several years compared to the lifespan they had in the sixties.

The role of women has changed considerably from the way they were treated in the sixties. They are no longer stay at home housewives, but high rising career women if they chose. More women than ever before are going out to work. This means that the working women of today needs a working wardrobe that will not date rapidly and will have a life span of several years. Some of these desires were answered by what was termed as "Power Dressing". Padded shoulders and big Jackets were garments that made a Look that was artificial yet banal. However Power Dressing did thread the line between masculinity and femininity. This type of dressing however has been considered as a "supressed sexless Air Hostess look. However as the nineties progress we have yet to witness the new generation of professional women radicalising the working uniform. Trousers would seem one of the ways to radicalise the working womens uniform. However today, Trousers have completely lost their power to shock. They are no longer considered indecent or sexually provocative.

In general nothing seems to shock anymore. The Mini which caused such outrage in the sixties is widely accepted today. (Figure 8)

The leather jacket which in the fifties was regarded as a dress code of defiance, now no longer signals danger but is regarded as a modern classic.



Figure 8



*The shocker of the 1960s. . .  
Courrèges over-the-knee mini and  
boots. As noted, this looks tame to  
us, but at the time the public was  
shocked.*

Leather has become respectable whilst pretending to be wild; Double thinking style for a generation that has forgotten how to be angry.<sup>14</sup>

While leather has lost its shock element, so to has the Denim Jean, which was once also regarded as the uniform of defiance. Denim Jeans no longer are regarded as a mark of rebellion. The past thirty years has seen the Denim Jean have a varied history. During the sixties the Denim Jean was a symbol of youth, while during the 1970's they returned to their original function as protective working clothes in the form of Dungarees and Jackets. However during the 1980's and today in the 1990's the denim jacket has gone right to the other extreme and has become a Designer Item. The shape of the Jeans have remained the same, the only difference, yet the important one in some circles, is the Designer Label e.g. Westwood, Hamnett or Vanderbilt.

While the shock element has gone out of fashion so another characteristic of the 1990's becomes evident. From Music and Movies to Art and Fashion the past has invaded the future. Not long ago people spoke of future shock, the anxiety caused by rapid acceleration of culture. While Designers such as Courreges in the sixties designed with Moon Parties in mind, their nineties counterparts seem to have an inability to move beyond the frontiers explored by modernism in the middle decades of this century.

A culture that once staked its identity and its economy on our ability to invent new forms now finds itself time travelling back to the past for direction, for some opening or road that will carry us forward. Today's creators and consumers seem to reflect on history as it has become an adventure in science fiction itself. In the nineties, fashion designers and fashion seem to love to time-travel and even the most directional designers such as Vivienne Westwood and Rameo Gigli draw their inspiration strongly from the past.

1991 already seems to be the year of Oldies, re-runs, remakes and revivals from movies to graphics, to painting and plays. Modernism was supposed to move us into the future, it was one step ahead, the next wave, the world of tomorrow. However, how do you get to tomorrow, or do we want to? Designers and consumers seem to have a fondness for a particular time past. Are they condemning themselves to a cultural life of endless replay?

Revivals or re-runs are not so much about paucity of imagination on the part of the Designer, Writer or Musician, but more a response to society's nostalgia for a safer time or more glamorous one.



If we look to the social and economic situation of the nineties we can understand the need to look to a safer period for inspiration. The new decade has begun with War in the Middle East, which looked set to be a long drawn out conflict. It seems almost ironic that thirty years on, the same year as the sixties are making a come-back, that once again Anti-War protestors are demonstrating worldwide for peace.

If 1991 is the year when remakes, re-runs and revivals of the past have invaded the future, then the period in history which seems to be holding the most nostalgia would undoubtedly appear to be the sixties. This year Fashion, Music and Film all seem to be paying homage to the sixties. However why is it that no other decade in history seems to conjure up the nostalgia the sixties are always associated with. A reason or prediction made in 1962 quoted that one of the reasons why the 1960's have become such a cultural fetish is due probably to the fact that they were the last years the whole idea of progress shone with untarnished brilliance. Fran Lebonitz said;

The sixties were the last time there was any real invention. Rock and Roll was not great art, but it was a real invention, it changed a lot more than music. The kids today are listening to the same music I listened to then. 15

Lebonitz seems to feel that today's middle aged artists have nothing to fear from the young, and if previous Chart successes such as The Righteous Brothers, an old 60's Classic been revived, are anything to go by then Lebonitz has a valid point. Where as during the 1960's it was age which divided the social divide, in the 1990 it seems there is less of a generation gap. Mini's, marijuana and the Rolling Stones would seem to have less devastating effects on the middle aged population today than they would have had if they had been middle-aged during the sixties.

However did the sixties give us a false expectancy for future decades. During the fast moving sixties, people came to expect such frequent innovations. However in the 1990's the frequency seems to have slowed down to a point of stagnation. Would it seem that the Designers/Artists etc., today feel it safer to be stagnant than to invent something new? It would seem that creating something new now takes not only talent but courage also. Art Historian George Kubler suggested;

The world of cultural forms, in this view is like a landmass. We can discover it but it's dimensions are finite. We can mine the land for Resources but they are not inexhaustable. We can learn to recycle them, but we cannot count on endless raw supply. 16

## CHAPTER 4 : 1990's FASHION - 1960's REVIVAL

This chapter was the growth during fashion in the 1990s as looking the up dress and haircut followed by the youth of the decade. In the 1990s, "The New Age" of the fashion" as well as the new wave of fashion and designers have finally decided to look to the past for inspiration. In the 1990s, for a serious change, what women will not only look to a dress but also to a style which gave them their own personality. Because in the 1990s, the fashion was inspired by

"A woman of quality, for a woman who designs  
world."

The 1990s were a period when women and designers were looking to the past for inspiration. In the 1990s, the fashion was inspired by the 1960s. The 1990s were a period when women and designers were looking to the past for inspiration. In the 1990s, the fashion was inspired by the 1960s. The 1990s were a period when women and designers were looking to the past for inspiration. In the 1990s, the fashion was inspired by the 1960s.

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### 90's Fashion (60's Revival)

Fashion loves to time travel. Nothing conjures up a period so potently as it's Music and clothes. Fashion revivals are not so much about paucity of imagination on the part of the Designers more as a response to society nostalgia for a safer time or more glamorous one. 17

This season saw Designers paying homage to the sixties reflecting the optimism and excitement generated by the youth of the decade. As a new season began, "The New Age Image of the Nineties" of last season have been left behind and Designers have firmly decided to look to the past for inspiration. We look set for a sixties ~~simmer~~, when women will cut their hair in a Quant Bob and paint a thick black line above their false eyelashes. Britain in the sixties was regarded as

'A candle of creativity for a shocked but delighted world.' 18

The 1960's were a period which aimed and catered exclusively for the young. The question we may ask ourselves is; Why now at the beginning of the nineties do Designers begin to look back to the sixties for inspiration and ideas ? Fashion revivals are not so much about a lack of inspiration or imagination on the Designers part, revivals seem to be more of fondness for a particular time past or a safer one.

If we look to the social and economic situation of the nineties we can understand the Designers need to look to a safer period for inspiration. However good and accurate fashion revivals are, they are never as dramatic as they appear. The Designers have the advantage of approaching the items they find inspiring and ignoring the unsightly. While the clothes do have the aggression of yesteryear, they are also mixed with the nineties' innate love of luxury. So this season the Fashion Capitals of Europe all revived the sixties.

For Italy the sixties revival is proving most successful. The Designers of Milan have provided the most flamboyant revival of all. Italy missed the sixties the first time round as their economy took longer to boom than most after the war, and Italians and their Fashion remained conservative.

In the sixties Italy gave the world cheap shoes and knitwear and Silk Scarves. However it was not until the mid-seventies that milan or Italian Fashion began to make their impact on the World. The Italians always had wonderful Fabrics but were sadly lacking in original designers. Therefore Italy feel a need to Import Foreign Designers chiefly from Paris.

It was only in the past two decades that Italy is beginning to be praised for their original Designers. The Italians excel at the hot, slightly acid, colours reminiscent of the psychedelia of the sixties. Also it seems that it is the Italians that appear to be giving the 1960's revival most coverage. Italian Vogue, during the previous months have regularly featured the sixties revival. The Italians have carried off the revival so well that looking at some photoshoots in Vogue it seems difficult to distinguish the past from the present.

December's Issue of Vogue featured a 60's revival feature(figure 9) Features a outfit which seems to draw it's inspiration from the French Designer Andre Courreges. Courreges was renowned for his "Space Age" Collection in 1964. This was a collection that combined Parisian Traditions of perfect cut and the best and latest materials. The illustration shows the model wearing a clean-cut shift dress with tiny sleeves, white plastic kid boots and white bonnet. The make-up the model wears is pale, with thick black lines painted above the false eyelashes and her lips glossy and pale. The whole image epitomises the "space age" image Courreges created first in the sixties. Apart from the model in the photograph being a famous model of the nineties, there does not seem to be any other clear evidence that this is in fact a 1990 Fashion Feature, and not one shot in the 1960's as we would perceive it to be. The following illustrations (fig.10,11,12) also show how successfully the Italians have carried off the revival of the sixties.

Out of all the Italian Designers it is Gianni Versace who has captured the exuberant mood of the sixties most successfully with a dazzling display of colour and pattern. Gianni Versace was the first Designer to emerge as a true Italian Designer.

Fashion today according to Gianni Versace is nothing if not fully fledged art, and it is art and artist that he seems to draw his main inspiration from. Versace enjoys designing for bright women, women who are tuned into their times, who never let themselves be over powered by anything or anybody.

Andy Warhol proved very inspirational this season for Versace. Warhol who had a craze for pop art, turned to newspaper advertisements and comic strip cartoons for his inspiration. Warhol's famous Portrait of Marilyn Monroe proved inspirational for Versace Evening Wear. During the 1960's the body was regarded by designers as a vehicle for design, a human canvas on which a mood or idea could be painted. This once again has being carried forward into the 1990's by Gianni Versace with regard to his interpretation of the sixties.





Figure 9







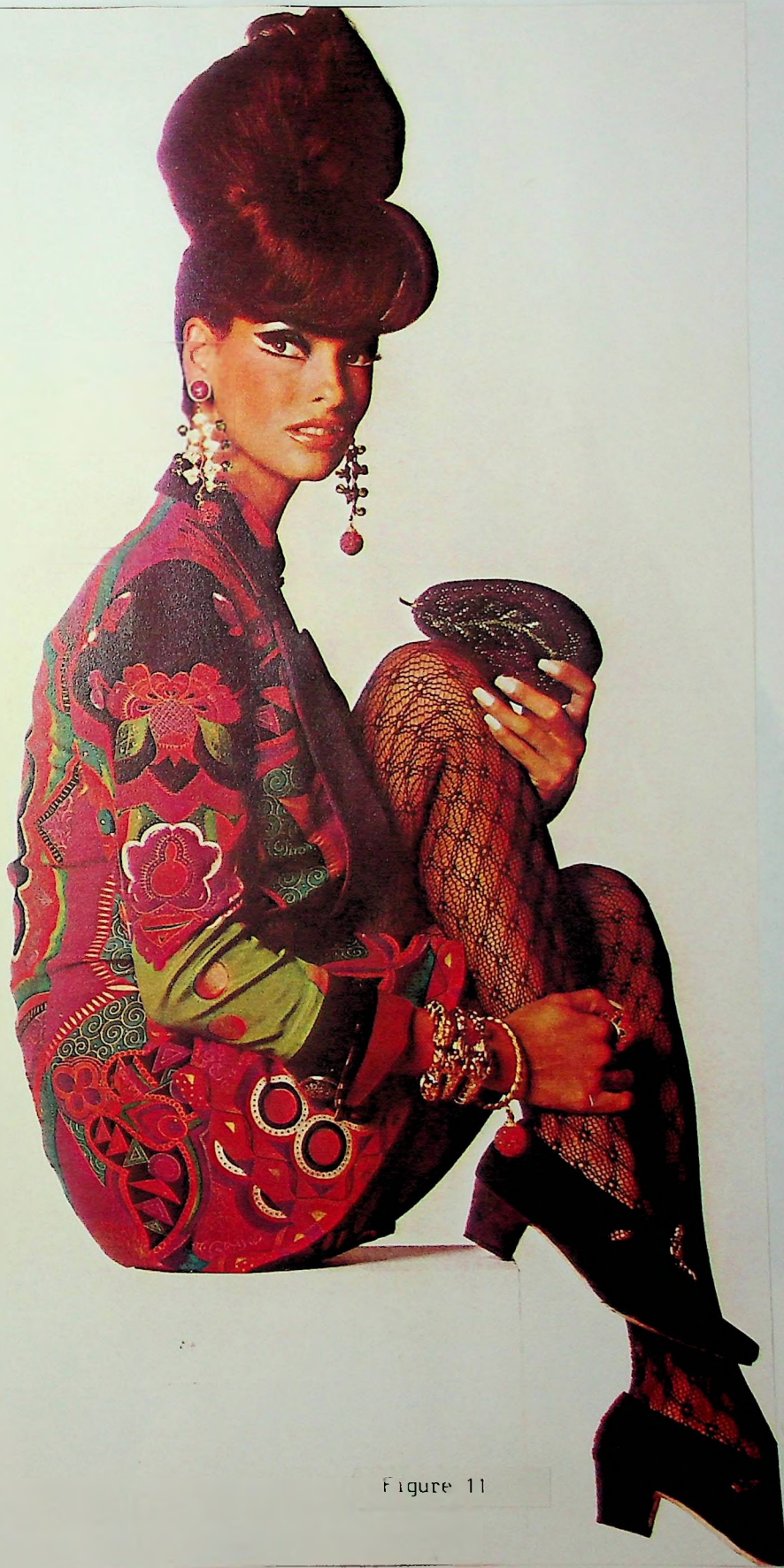


Figure 11

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Figure 12

17505



Certainly the models on the catwalk this season modelling Versace's Collection were canvas (!!) on which a Kaleidoscope of colours had to be painted. (Figure 13)

As we have seen artwork has proved the basis of Versaces Collection this season. However, how much of this is Versaces own idea or work and how does he justify his blatant use of such Artists work as Chagall, Leger or Kandinsky. According to Gianni Versace;

To use Art in a flat way without creative intervention is in bad taste, I mix it up; Russian Constructivism, Vasarely, Picasso, Chagall, Leger, Delaney, Kandinsky. It is the spirit of all these Art that inspires me. 19

And with this Collection Versaces certainly created his own works of Art; Coats, skirts, dresses - as always thigh-defyingly short, embroidery, sequins, beading-layered over prints and colour blocking. Versaces believes that the key is to put all the elements of life and culture together and come up with a distinctive statement that an individual can then interact through personal style. Versace, cleverly took classic Sixties shapes such as the shift dress and Baby Doll Dress and firmly placed his stamp on them. (Figure 14, 15, and 16)

While the Italians seem to be enjoying the Sixties revival, in London many Designers must be suffering from deja-vu, after all it was London which was fully absorbed in the Sixties first Time Round. However, a lot has changed since the Sixties, women in the 1960's found fashion liberating however now in the 1990's women have found their own definition of femininity. The Designers for whom it is second time around seemed to combine elements of 1960's and 1990's together. Jean Muir captured the innocently confident mood of the 1960's and combined it with confident looks of today. The result was a collection that was simple, soft, short and easy, however, it did lack the flamboyance of the Sixties.

It was the younger London Designers who seemed most successful at getting echoes of the Sixties across in their work, Arabella Pollen was inspired by Sixties Model Jean Shrimpton (Figure 17c), as her designs took to the catwalk modelled by girls presenting a feminine or dolly girl image. Their hair was slightly raised to the crown and fell long and loose onto the shoulders reminiscent of Jean Shrimpton's hairstyle of the 1960's.

While Cardin and Courreges were the Sixties to some, it was Pam Hogg who they seem to provide most inspiration for in London. Hogg produced a Collection of cut-out dressed combining Sixties pastiche peppered with sado-masochism



Figure 13



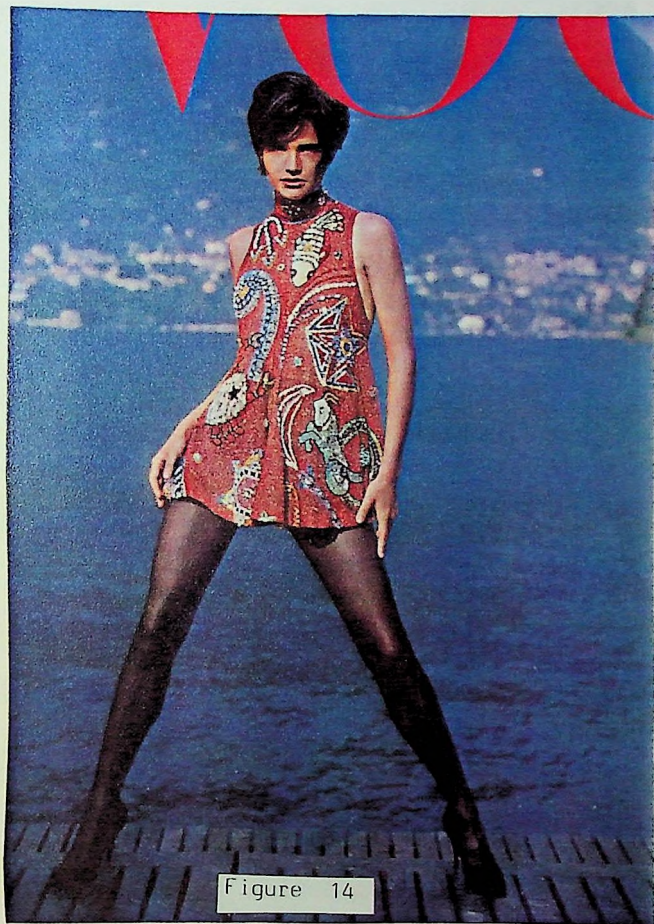


Figure 14



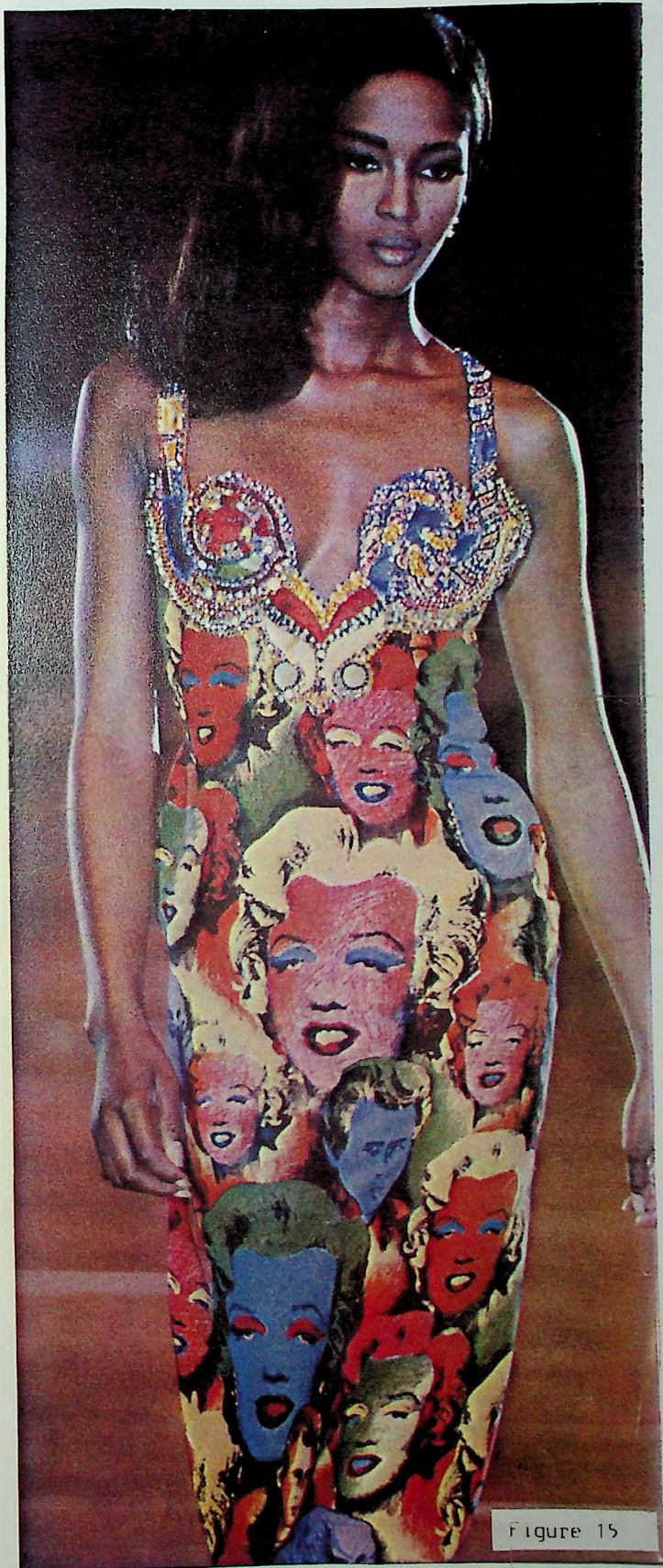


Figure 15



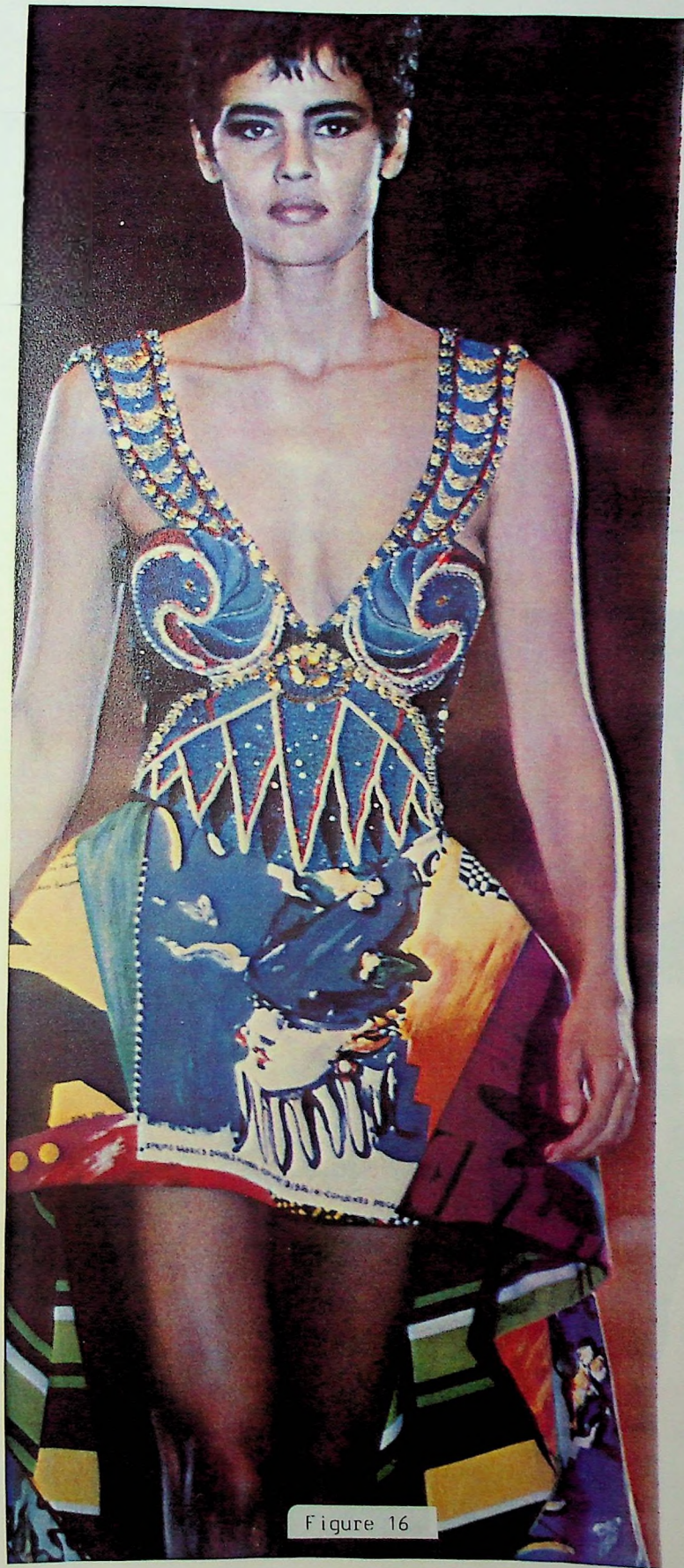


Figure 16

Figure 17a

Figure 17b

Figure 17c



Figure 17a



Figure 17b



Figure 17c



However, for London the Sixties Revival did not seem as inspirational as it did for their Italian counterparts. As we have seen, the advantages of Revivals are that Designers can exaggerate the pretty and ignore the unsightly, with regards to the 1960's Revival this Season London chose to do just that.

For the Couturiers of Paris, the Sixties do not hold fond memories. Elitism was their Raison D'etre. London became the fashion capital of the world. Paris' new version of the Sixties is a Hybrid. The clothes have all the jaunty aggression of yesteryear but it is tempered with an innate Parisian love of luxury. Sixties ethics of fun and affordability have been ignored by Parisians, as Designers (e.g. Christian Lacroix) pile the richest fabrics upon one another. It is here that one begins to wonder how successful Fashion Revivals actually are.

As is the case with Fashion Revivals, Designers can choose whether to exaggerate the pretty and ignore the unsightly. Therefore by doing this do designers actually lose sight of the impact fashion made during the sixties ? The Sixties as we have already seen in Chapter One was a Decade which witnessed new and revolutionary changes in Fashion, Music, Art and Society. Therefore to revive such an important Decade with regards to the new and innovative discoveries of the period is setting one-self a very difficult task.

## CONCLUSION



As we saw in Chapter Three one of the strongest sources of inspiration for Music, Movies, Art and Fashion of the 1990's is the past. With this ~~en~~ability to move forward, 1991, as we have seen is the year of the 1960's Revival. However what we must ask ourselves now is how successful is this Revival and does it really give us an accurate glimpse into the past. In this Chapter I will be giving my reasons why I feel the 1960 Revival is not a completely accurate one.

The Fashion Revival is paying homage to the Sixties, however the nineties have firmly marked their stamp on the proceedings. Emmanuelle Khanh saw the 1960's

'As a socialist kind of Fashion for a grand mass'.

This today is not the case in the Fashion Capitals of London, Paris and Milan. There is certainly not a socialist kind of fashion found in these three centres, rather it seems to cater for an elite few rather than a grand mass. While Mary Quant had declared that snobbery had gone out of fashion in the Sixties, second time around it has slowly crept back in, just in time for the Revival. Mary Quant's motto for fashion which was "Fun and affordability" may this time have fallen on deaf ears.

While a Sixties Summer is all we are getting, how accurate is it second time round? A few points may be brought to mind if we are to assess the Revival more accurately. If we start comparing the 1960's with the nineties version of the Decade we will find some noticeable differences.

The Paris Couture no longer dictated the way of Fashion in the sixties and London or swinging London as it became known was the Fashion Capital of the world. However today London seems to have fallen from grace and no longer seems to hold as relevant as it did in the 1960's. With Italian Designing and Designers becoming more important during the Seventies, Milan became a Fashion Capital to be reckoned with. With Britain's economic problems at the current time, the British Fashion Industry seems to be suffering. This has resulted in Designers deciding not to show their collection in London during Fashion week as they feel it is unorganised and does not seem to get the financial backing it needs and deserves. Designers Katherine Hammnet and John Galliano over the past two seasons have chosen not to show in London but opted for the bright lights of Paris. Given the choice other British Designers would follow the same pattern.

What is also interesting is that Milan boast several Top British Designers who work for large companies in Italy. Keith Varty who is Chief Designer at Byblos and Alaister Blair who recently took over as Chief Designer at the House of Balmain, are just two examples. Therefore while London still is a important Fashion centre it has however lost the former glory it received during the Sixties.

While the 1960's Fashion was aimed exclusively for the young, the Sixties Revival seems to have an older person in mind. In the Sixties clothes were to look as childlike as possible. However 1990 with the Sixties influence means that Fashion is more stylish than childish. If Fashion seems to be designed for the older woman, then it would appear the second time round, while the clothes still possess the vigour and colour they did in the Sixties, they seem to have a more sophisticated Client in mind. The whole essence of the Sixties was "Fashion for all". Designers, particularly Mary Quant, seemed to bear this in mind. The Nineties do see fun being an element in Fashion but affordability seems to be aimed at a high wage earner or the older woman.

If we were to look to the social or economic problems, we find that there is demographic problem which may explain why Designers are turning their attention to the older women (Mid Thirtys +). The demographic problem is one that concerns the ageing population. This decade will see the thirty upwards age group increasing and by the end of this century there will be a million less sixteen - twenty year olds in Britain alone. This could mean that such youthful and exciting Designers such as Gianni Versace may no longer appeal to the older women. This will result in a fashion industry that since the Sixties has focused towards the younger generation shifting it's emphasis to older client.

Today in the 1990's the role of the Designer has changed. In the 1960's innovation and new ideas were a frequent expectation. Designers were expected to create Fashion that was new and exciting. It was a Decade when anything was possible and Designers such as Cardin and Courreges as we have seen already could design clothes they enjoyed designing. However today in the Fashion World there has been a turn-around for the Fashion Designer.



Once the Flagship name of a Fashion House, the Designer was valued for his creative talents. Now he is priced for his ability to come to grips with commercial realities and to think in terms of sales figures rather than simple size 10 figures.

1. Parisian Boardroom eyes appointed German-born Karl Lagerfeld in 1983 to boost its fading image and so pump up the profits of its perfumes and licenced profits. The fact that any high street shop in this country worth its designer interpretations will always have a version of a little gilt-buttoned cardigan suit, is just one measure of Karl Lagerfeld's achievements.

Therefore it would appear that nowadays it is guaranteed sales and not bold new fashion statements that Designers are interested in. What started out as a service which was young and innovative in the 1960's today in the nineties fashion seems to have become a sensational entertainment at embarrassing high prices.

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