

LEISA BROWNE

FOURTH YEAR FASHION (NEW STRUCTURE)

THESIS

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## INTRODUCTION

IT IS EASY TO SEE THAT WE ARE ALL LIVING IN A TIME OF RAPID AND RADICAL SOCIAL CHANGES IN THE 1990'S. IN THE EARLY 1980'S THIS WAS ALSO THE CASE. IT IS MUCH LESS EASY TO GRASP THE FACT THAT SUCH CHANGE WILL INEVITABLY AFFECT THE NATURE OF THOSE DISCIPLINES THAT BOTH REFLECT OUR SOCIETY AND HELP TO SHAPE IT.

I WANT TO SHOW THE RELATIONSHIP AND SYMBIOSIS OF FASHION, STREET CULTURE, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS IN THE BRITAIN OF THE 1980'S. I WILL DESCRIBE HOW THE POLITICAL POLICIES OF THE RULING PARTY AND ESPECIALLY IT'S LEADER PRODUCED QUITE A UNIQUE SET OF ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES. ON ONE HAND PRODUCING INCREDIBLE UNEMPLOYMENT AND DEVASTATION IN INDUSTRY, AND ON THE OTHER PRODUCING A HARD COMPETITIVE CULTURE OF ENTERPRISE IN WHICH THE TALENTED, THE HARDWORKING AND, OF COURSE ,THE LUCKY THRIVED.

I WILL DESCRIBE HOW STREET FASHION DEVELOPED FROM RAW BEGINNINGS TO MAINSTREAM ESTABLISHMENT, HOW IT WAS TAKEN UP BY A COTERIE OF TALENTED, BUT UNBUSINESS LIKE YOUNG DESIGNERS, WHO BROUGHT A FRESH PERSPECTIVE AND VERVE TO THE TIRED FACE OF 1970'S FASHION. I WILL ALSO DESCRIBE THE SUB-CULTURES OF FASHION AND THE OFTEN BIZARRE CUL-DE-SACS THAT DEVELOPED. BUT THESE 'FLASHES' ALSO HAD THEIR RELEVANCE IN DEVELOPING FASHION CHANGES THROUGHOUT THE EIGHTIES.

I WILL SHOW HOW 'PHOENIX LIKE' OUT OF THE ASHES OF THE QUITE HORRENDOUS FAILURES OF THESE BRASH YOUNG FASHION HOUSES HAVE



-2-

EMERGED SOME SURVIVORS WHOSE TALENT IS STILL THERE. IN FACT IT HAS INCREASED IN SOME CASES AND HAS BEEN TEMPERED AND STRENGTHENED BY THE DIFFICULTIES THEY HAVE FOUGHT THROUGH.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BRITAIN IN THE 1980'S POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY

A major influence on fashion in the United Kingdom during the 1980's was a person who was not particularly interested in fashion, but who through the major changes she made in British Society, also brought about changes within the fashion industry. That person was of course, Margaret Thatcher (Prime Minister of Great Britain for 11 years).

"Margaret Thatcher gave her name to a philosophy, and to a period of history, the 1980's in Britain will always be the **THATCHER** years".1.(Fig.1.)

From the time Mrs Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1979 to resignation in November 1990, it was a period of unusual conflict and strife in British society and in British relationships with her Common Market partners, i.e. Francois Mitterrand, Helmut Kohl, and Jacques Delors. This can be attributed to the personality and style of Mrs Thatcher and to the policies she pursued with such vigour. "Don't look back look forward" she said. Her stamina for stupendously long hours, and her capacity to work days on-end with little sleep, has partly been fostered to convey the "Superwoman Impression" .2.

During her Premiership were such notable events as the Steel Workers Strike of 1981, and the Miners Strike of 1985. Through

the breaking of these and other strikes and through a relentless programme of legislation, she destroyed the power which the trade union had built up since the Second World War. "Her achievements in office are extraordinary by any measure. The balance of Industrial Power has been resolved decisively against trade unions, and in favour of Management".<sup>3</sup>.

She also had a major effect on Industry by refusing to provide relief to Industry during the Industrial Slump of the early eighties." Competition and free Market's were two major tenets of her philosophy. Competition was good for Industry, if they went bust, too bad".<sup>4</sup>.(Fig.2.)

She believed that the market must help itself, and that the business of Government was to deal with monetary policy and to bring down inflation. The result was unemployment on a massive scale, and uneconomic Companies tumbled like 'Nine Pins'. The survivors were much leaner, fitter companies and much more competitive than what had gone before.(Fig.3.)

A side effect of this was to create an enterprise culture. A meritocracy that would be rewarded for effect. Many individuals, such as Stevie Stewart/ David Holah (Bodymap) Paul Bernstock and Thelma Speirs (Bernstock/Speirs) and John Richmond were encouraged to set up fashion companies in this climate. It also produced the YUPPIE, the young successful person earning lots of



money, who was a prime customer for this consumer market. Because of his/her large income, they were able to indulge themselves with all the latest things from FILOFAXES (Personal organiser) Designer Clothes, Designer Cars, Designer Pocket Computer.

In the middle of all this social and industrial change, Margaret Thatcher also fought a successful shooting war in the Falklands against Argentina, and a bloodless war against her Common Market Partners for a reduction of Britains Contribution to the European Economic Community. She won both of these wars, which increased her popularity with her supporters.

Conversely this enterprise culture that she was creating was anathema to many people. It seemed heartless with its money-grabbing "Devil take the hindmost" attitude. The reduction and impoverishment of the National Health Service was also resented by a great many people, especially supporters of the LABOUR PARTY in Britain.

This impoverishment created an underclass, who still exist within Britain and a body of people who felt alienated from the mainstream. This alienated group created alternative sub-culture and fashion, such as the "Fashionclubwonderland" that was prominent in Britain in the early 1980's. People like Bodymap (Stevie Stewart and David Holah) was an integral part of this, as they were young and naive. They started with an underground

movement with Clubland and their Stall in London's Camden Market, and got dragged into the mainstream philosophy of setting up business of the early 1980's.

In 1986 they ended up been swallowed by the very policies which encouraged them in the first place to set up in business. The fashion and club scene of the eighties reflected this. The more outrageous the better, they did not want to get dragged into the mainstream, but they somehow fell into it, as was Leigh Bowery and Trojan. I will talk about this more extensively in my future chapters.

Thatcher made Britain a land fit for the selfish, they were the \*ME\* generation, and they didn't even realise it.



Fig. 1







*The changing faces of Mrs Thatcher. ABOVE: at the 1981 Conservative Party conference.*



*A file picture of the Tory Leader in 1983.*

**Fig.2**



*Mrs Thatcher in 1987.*



*Mrs Thatcher this year.*

**Fig. 3**



## CHAPTER TWO

Development of the individual through new social cultures as a response to Thatchers Britain.

"Nothing succeeds like excess" Oscar Wilde .1.

"Fashion is in many ways an extreme in cultural activity".2.

Michael R. Solomon

In the early 1980's there was a night club called 'Taboo'. It's venue was 'Maximus' in Leicester Square in London, and was hosted by a young designer called Leigh Bowery, he also titled himself as a work of art/art form. The philosophy behind Taboo was that there were not any (taboo's) and everything was done there in excess.(Fig.4.) I was brought there when I was 17 by a graduate of the National College of Art and Design -Kenny Smith, now calling himself 'Kenny-Kenny'. He became an infamous host of a New York club and is as well known in New York as Leigh Bowery was in London in the 1980's. At the time I remember being shocked, stunned and even delighted at the amazing and incredible dress and behaviour of the crowd.(Fig.5.) In Diana Vreeland(ex editor of Harpers and Queen and Socialite in the 30's in Paris, London and New York) own words, "everything is new, at least everything is new the first time around".3. and this was my first encounter of London's club/fashion scene in the early 1980's, it was all so new and so interesting.



Everybody at the club was wearing London's 'designer' clothing, labels like, Bodymap, Rachael Auburn and John Richmond.

Everywhere was a spectacle, bums out of tight trousers, lace body suits, frilly see-through tops and bottoms, platforms and very avant garde make-up (lips painted on the sides of face's and other such originality in style).

Kenny Smith was working for Rachael Auburn, the designer/club host at the time (about 1985) and I was given a 'Rachael Auburn' ensemble to wear. It was a gold lame frilly belly top, a pair of frilly baby pink shorts, gold tights and a pair of luminous yellow patent platform shoes. I had been forewarned about Taboo's fashion conscious door policy, which was very strict. The door man Mark, was known to hold a mirror to some asking, "would you let yourselves in?".4. "Ones style of dress is one's signature/a reaction against mass society/people are beginning to re-discover their individuality and to emphasize it more".M.Solomon .5.

One girl was turned away at the door three weeks in a row "because she was fat and unfashionable, so she starved herself and bought a John Galliano outfit from Brown's, When she came back we let her in but as the door opened the crowd surged in and knocked her over, she was trampled on and could not move because

she was so weak from dieting".6. Leigh Bowery's comment on the situation in an interview with The Face in 1985.

As Taboo's reputation grew, so did its impressive guest list. You either had to be famous like designers John Galliano, John Richmond, John Flett(R.I.P), and Antony Price (Designer for Roxy Music in the late 70's). Or outrageous like Stevie Stewart or David Holah from Bodymap.(Fig.6.) Artists like Duggie Fields, Leigh Bowery and his friend Trojan (painter/personality). (Fig.7.) Only the young and glamorous were welcome. "There were people who knew that I loved clothes, a certain night life and that I loved to tango." - Diana Vreeland.7.

Leigh Bowery, the host of Taboo, had several look's,(Fig.8.) 'the Polka dot Look', which was enormous polka dots which were stuck to his clothing and painted onto his face and his bald head. Another look was the 'Policeman Look' which took the shape of a cartoon policeman caricature, with a plastic uniform, hat and truncheon. Other concepts for his image were his 'ink on a boiled egg look', which was coloured wax poured onto his bald head. Outrageous was de rigueur for both the action and the dress at the time in Taboo; the more over the top you went , the better. Boy George singer with the pop group 'Culture Club'(Fig.9.)and personality was also a regular at Taboo. He said

at the time (1985), "For me, Leigh Bowery is Taboo - without him it would be another sweaty run down jewish discotheque, he gives the place it's vitality and its worth going every week just to see who's face he is going to split in next or how big his lips are going to be." 8. Trojon was Leigh Bowery's flat mate as well as his soul mate. Trojon, originally Gary Gater was a painter. The Face said in an article about Trojon in 1986 "nothing could shock Trojon's friends at taboo nothing except his death. Trojon made a 'mask out of his alienation' and wore it to night clubs, he died in August 1986 of a drug overdose". (Fig.10) With him died the new generation, their lives measured in pills, pills, powers and flashbulbs." 9. He was the epitome of London in the 1980's. The time of fashionclubwonderland.

The Observer printed a photo of Trojon 's 'Picasso' make-up in their end of year issue, a mouth hanging to one side, eyes enlarged, nose flattened into a childish 2D profile. It looked like Leigh Bowery's make-up. The caption betrayed their uncertainty. "Was this", they asked "the face of '84 ?". 10. it was in my opinion a reflection of the fashionclubwonderland of the 1980's in London. A time when fashion was de-constructed. Even the clothes and make-up of Leigh Bowery, clashing colours and prints vaudeville-type clothes and clashing make-up (Fig.11) were really a kind of anti-fashion of 'morbid glamour'. "In the ice pool of London's art conscious style fixated attention hungry



media culture where fashions die the instant they are born, who would dare point at the emperors new clothes. Echoing the 1980's in London Trojon described himself as "an artist and a prostitute thrilled by extremes, deformities, the garish and the grotesque." .12.

"I was the girl of the year. Everything I did was really, underneath, I guess, motivated by psychological disturbances, I'd make a mask out of my face because I didn't realise I was quite beautiful. I'd freak out in a very beautiful way. And it was all taken as a fashion trend." - Edie Sedwick.13.

Nightlife, club life, seemed to me to be the main source of inspiration to young designers at the time(Fig.12/13/14/15) i.e. Bernstock/Spears hat makers and club goers Holah/Stewart, designers for Bodymap and friends of the fashionable amongst others."How I miss the fringe!It was there in the sixties - because of the dancing... The music!I've known two great decades in my life ,the twenties and the sixties and I'm always comparing them because of the music, Music is everything ,and in those two decades you got something, so sharp so new..."Diana Vreeland.14..

Leigh Bowery and Trojon revelled in attention from the press and the controversy of their attire and attitude. Throughout 1984 they were feted in magazines as prize specimens of London's nocturnal fashion zoo.

The influence was apparent in Bodymap's collections for 1985 with similar clothing on their catwalk to Leigh Bowery's and Trojon's style in Taboo. The collection was aptly called 'Psychedelic Drag'. Michael Clarke (the 'punk' ballet dancer) asked Leigh Bowery and David Holah from Bodymap to design costumes for his contemporary ballet to be held in Sadlers Wells theatre, Islington, North London. With Trojon's make-up and sets - "giant lemons, Y fronts and fried egg trees".<sup>15</sup> - Michael Clarke was able to lift his performance out of the boring confines of modern dance. He was hailed the first 'Punk ballerina', I attended two of his contemporary Ballets both held in the Sadlers Wells Theatre in Islington North London. The costumes designed by DAVID HOLAH from BODYMAP (Fig.16) and the music by the group THE FALL, and the choreography by Michael Clarke, echoed "THE URBAN ICONOGRAPHY OF NIGHTCLUBFASHION LAND".<sup>16</sup> Another "ICON" of the early eighties was BOY GEORGE who was also involved in London 'NIGHTCLUBFASHIONLAND', he was a big influence on street fashion style. His first exposure was with a song called "DO YOU REALLY WANT TO HURT ME", which climbed to number one in the popular charts. He was dressed very originally, even avant garde, his hair plaited, feminine make-up, a long ethnic type dress with bloomers underneath, and a little straw hat on the back of his head. His look was copied throughout London and abroad.

He looked androgynous, almost as though in drag. Not only, was

he dressed to make heads turn, and to make people sit-up and take notice of him, but he could genuinely sing and had the 'MEDIA ICON' personality to carry the exposure.

He said in an interview with THE FACE "I just want to do a couple of avant garde things, that express what I want to say, I want people to realise that you can have a brain, and still wear stilettos".17.

At the height of culture clubs success, BOY GEORGE made a lot of money, and said in an interview "I think I spend about £400,000 per year on clothes if I spend it's to get excited, if I go into BAZAAR and spend £8,000 on clothes I get such a high, it makes me so happy to run around TABOO in my labels".18. The eighties was a decade of image and style, and this was reflected in peoples manic search for new ideas and for a novelty in dress.

" All the clothes at Paraphernalia were experimental, always changing - it had everything to do with the time, the moment. We were giving the customer something brand new, something that she didn't have a clue she wanted...."Betsy Johnson on 'Edie'.19.

" Fashion is nothing more and nothing less than the sematic encryption, transmission and interpretation of social meaning" M.Solomon (The psychology of fashion).20.





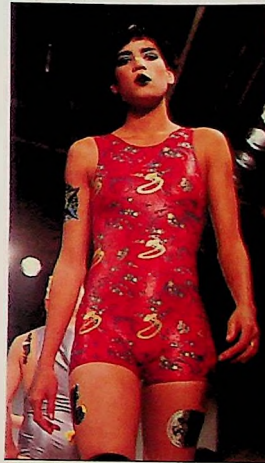
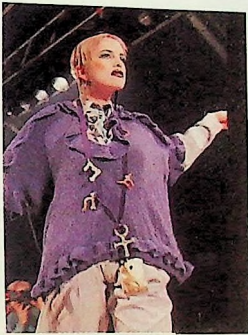
**BOWTIE**

Fig 4



Fig. 5





Model Veronica Webb, above, in cosmic Bodymap, 1985



Fig. 6







Fig 7





Fig. 8





Fig. 9





Fig. 10



Fig. 11





Stars and dildoes at De-De's, 1984. Photo Derek Ridgers



Bare-faced chic at Tebo's, 1985. Mark Golding RIP. Photo Derek Ridgers



Wig on the artist at Nick Trulock's, 1986. Photo Derek Ridgers



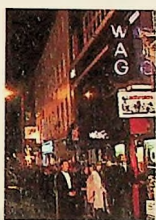
The better skater at Delirium, 1987. Photo David Swindells



Retro backsides at Discotheque, 1988. Photo David Swindells



The sweet of the Jazz Room, 1934. Photo David Johnson



You'll be lucky. The queue at the Wag, one night in 1985. Photo David Swindells



Leigh Bowery, the days of Subo, 1986. Photo Derek Ridgers



Faigground fun at Westworld, 1987. Photo Oliver Maxwell



Acid trip, 1988. Tomorrow never knew. Photo Oliver Maxwell



Nick Trulock, the man behind De-De's, 1984.



Noel and Maurice Watson DJ Delirium, 1986. Photo David Swindells



At the Car Wash, 1987. Photo David Swindells

# INTER-CITY CLUBBING 1980-88: TOP 50

Danceteria, New York  
Palladium, New York  
Area, New York  
Save The Robots, New York  
Roxy Roller Rink, New York  
The Funhouse, New York  
Paradise Garage, New York  
Madame Rosa, New York  
Nells, New York  
The World, New York  
Tanagwa Cafe, Moscow  
Pinhacan, Tokyo  
Tokio, Tokyo  
Parliament, Edinburgh  
Hootchie-Coochie, Edinburgh  
Fire Island, Edinburgh  
Les Bains Douches, Paris  
Tango, Paris  
The Hacienda, Manchester  
Berlin, Manchester  
Legends, Manchester  
Otto Tutz, Barcelona  
Cuba, Marbella  
Steamer at the Leadmill, Sheffield  
The Black Hole, Washington DC  
Chapter III, Washington DC  
First Avenue, Minneapolis  
The Dug Out, Bristol  
The Rummur, Birmingham  
Powerhouse jazz all-dayers, Birmingham  
The Kipper Club, Birmingham  
Warehouse, Chicago  
Music Box, Chicago  
Powerhouse, Chicago  
Caister weekenders  
Livewire weekenders (Bognor, Barry Island, Prestatyn)  
Ku Club, Ibiza  
The Garage, Nottingham  
Paramata, Florence  
Rock City all-dayers, Nottingham  
Fragil, Lisbon  
Central England Soul Club  
Boccaccio, Ghent  
The Prestige, Antwerp  
The Sub Club, Glasgow  
The Music Institute, Detroit  
The Remont-Riveria, Warsaw  
Amnesia, Ibiza  
Sophienstrasse Jazz Club, East Berlin  
Le Palace, Paris



Glamour at the corporate disco Timeflight, 1986. Photo Derek Ridgers



Raving rave at a Meloid Waste warehouse party, 1986. Photo Derek Ridgers



A real splash party. Westworld, 1987. Photo Oliver Maxwell



Doing the Hare-groove at Shok-Shok, 1987. Photo David Swindells

# GREAT AFTER-HOURS

Roosterfish  
Pink Panther  
Euston Road  
D'Arbly Street  
Mananas  
Intensive Care  
Afters  
Wardour Street

# "MEMBERS ONLY"

(THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOUNCER)

"It's a private party"

"It's not a futuristic night you know, mate"

"Wat, you from Brixton are ya?"

"We don't like your sort 'round 'ere"

"No goths"

"No punks"

"No soulboys"

"No pouts"

"No Sloanes"

"It's club policy, mate"

"You're not coming in here dressed like that"

"It's full up"

"Tickets only"

"This isn't a nightclub"

"No trendies"

"No girls"

"No boys"

"No jeans"

"No trainers"

"No Radio One DJs"

"No footballers"

"You're too old"

"If you don't fuck off I'll break your legs"



The dancefloor at Raw, 1987. Photo David Swindells



# THE CHRONOLOGY OF nightclubbing

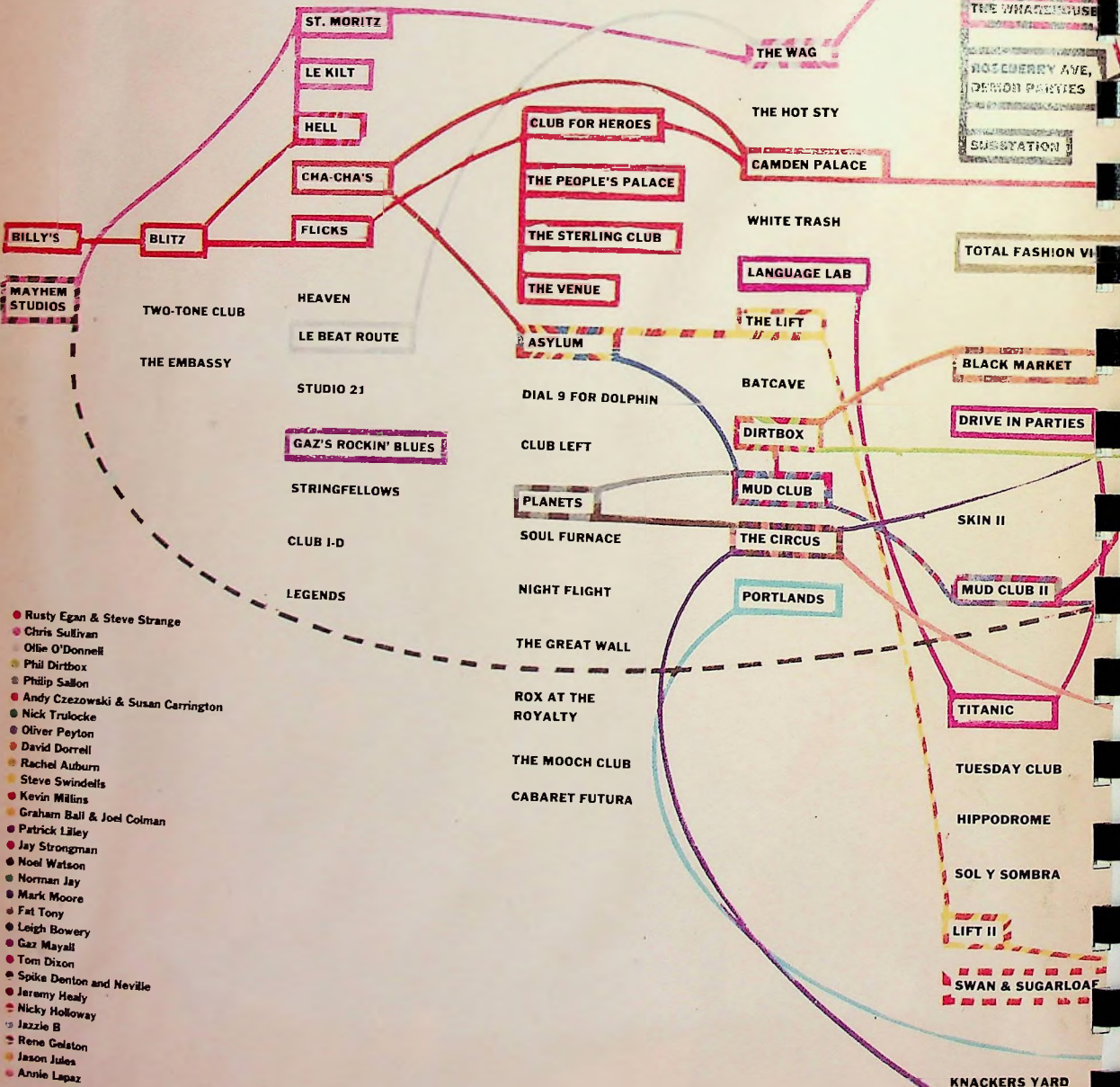


Fig. 13

1984

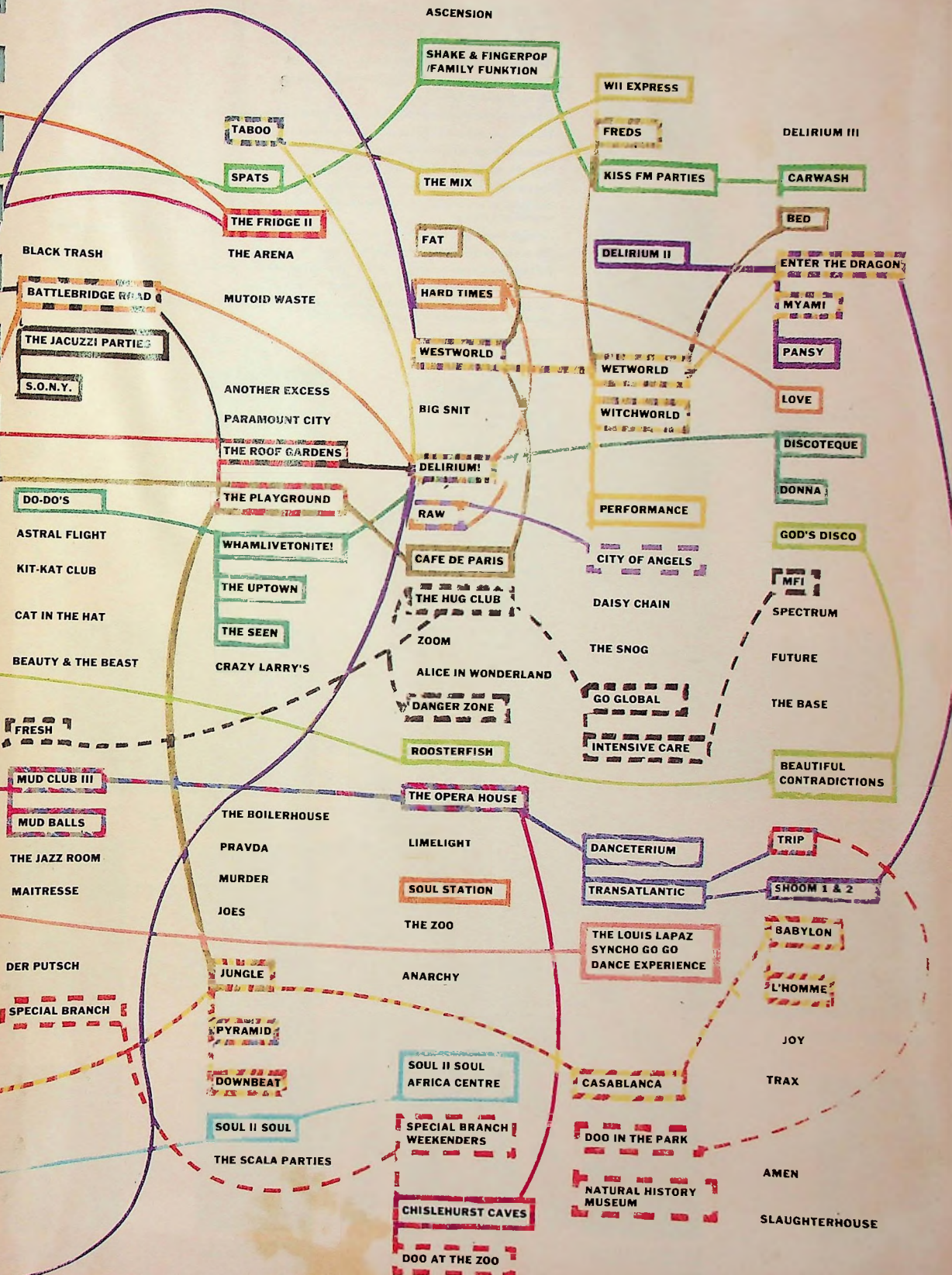


Fig. 14



## 50 DIS WHO'VE HELD SWAY

Rusty Egan  
Steve Lewis  
Jay Strongman  
Hector  
Jeffrey Hinton  
Rachel Auburn  
Jeremy Healy  
Mark Moore  
Paul Murphy  
Vaughn Toulouse  
Colin Faver  
Lascelle  
Fat Tony  
Dave Darrell  
Norman Jay  
Danny Rampling  
Noel & Maurice Watson  
Dave Hucker  
Baz Fe Jazz  
Giles Peterson  
Jo Hagan  
Jonathan More  
Paul Oakenfold  
Pete Tong  
Johnny Walker  
Mike Pickering  
Graeme Park  
Colin Curtis  
Bob Jones  
Camilla  
Greg Wilson  
Mike Shaft  
Keb Dango  
Pete Haight  
Boilerhouse Ben & Andy  
Rob Milton  
Nicky Holloway  
Jazze B & Soul II Soul  
Judge Jules  
Tim Westwood  
Horace  
Barrie Sharpe  
Justin Langlands  
Madhatter Trevor  
Steve Jackson  
Dick Wittingham  
Derek Boland  
Gordon Mac  
Matt Black



Fashion designer Maltosa Caplan at the Blitz, 1980. Photo Derek Ridgers



The Face of Eighties clubland, Chris Tolora at Le Kitt, 1980. Photo Derek Ridgers



Chris Sullivan at Hall, 1980. Photo Derek Ridgers

## APOCRYPHAL NIGHTS TO REMEMBER

The night a girl committed suicide because she couldn't get into the Wag  
The night Nick Trulocke bought a round of drinks  
The night Dave Darrell played all his records at the right speed  
The night Philip Sallon wasn't rude to anyone at the Mud  
The night someone got into the Cafe de Paris without paying  
The night Steve Swindells stayed in  
The night Dave Mahoney let off fireworks in the middle of Cambridge Circus shouting, "I love the smell of napalm!"  
The night someone got a cold can of lager at the Dirtbox  
The night George Michael paid to get into Do-Do's  
The night a girl who had died after being turned away from Taboo got in, only to faint from hunger at the door  
The night Nick Trulocke handed out a tenner to a surprised punter at the Soho Brasserie instead of a club flyer  
The night Row handed out invites folded into pill capsules and many swallowed them, waiting expectantly for something to happen  
The night three clubbers got lost in the tunnels at a one-off in Chislehurst Caves and weren't found for a week  
The weekend/all-dayer when no one took speed  
The night Boy George caused a bomb scare at Steve Strange's birthday party at the Embassy  
The night Jean Paul Gaultier was turned away at the door of Taboo  
The night Dave Mahoney organised a club trip to Whitstable Oyster Factory and the woman who lived there jumped out of the window in panic and broke her leg

## DOORMEN OF REPUTE

LONDON DIVISION  
Billy McIntosh (Wag)  
Winston (Wag)  
Rosemary (Limalight)  
Mark Golding RIP (Taboo)  
Scarlett (Cha-Cha)  
Fiona Deasley (Le Best Route)  
Big Alan (Gossals)  
Denzil Williams (White Trash)  
Wigan (various)  
Little Tony Gordon (Taboo, Ascension, Sacrosanct)  
James Labon (Language Lab)  
Kim Bowen (Club For Heroes)  
Kate Flett/Caryn Franklin (Do-Do's)  
Steve Strange (various)  
Philip Sallon (Mud Club)  
Patrick Lilley (everywhere)  
Julian Woolley (Culcross Hall, Battlebridge Road)  
Breeze (Jungle, Pyramid, Wag, everywhere)



Chris Sullivan and Olivia O'Donnell at the Wag in 1982, now a national institution. Photo David Johnson

## WAREHOUSES WE HAVE LOVED

Mayhem  
Fresh  
Hug Club  
Dirtbox  
Saturday Night Fish Fry  
No Passaran  
Demob  
Culcross Hall, Battlebridge Road  
Zoo  
Zoom  
Mirbold Waste  
Soul II Soul  
Shake & Fingerpop  
Film Flare  
Yoi  
Drive In - six to six  
Hudsonians  
Westworld  
Carwash



Chris Sullivan and Olivia O'Donnell at the Wag in 1982, now a national institution. Photo David Johnson



Philip Sallon: Queen of the night and proprietor of the Mud Club. Photo David Corie



Crystal at Skin II (at Skinlions) in 1983. Photo Derek Ridgers



Gossips in Meard Street, Soho, where London club culture really began



Cleobled goes public: the Blitz in 1979



Martin Degville at Billy's, 1978. Photo Derek Ridgers



Funk & tracks: Boy George at Le Best Route, 1980. Photo Derek Ridgers



Marilyn at Club For Heroes, 1981. Photo Derek Ridgers



DJ Tasty Tim at the Mud Club, at Foshberry, in 1982. Photo Derek Ridgers



Taking the goth out of Gotham City: the Batcave in 1983. Photo Derek Ridgers

Fig. 15







## CHAPTER THREE

### DEVELOPMENT OF SUB-CULTURES

#### FASHIONCLUBWONDERLAND IN THE 1980'S

"Blood, Sweat and a few years - the decade of 'I can do that'.1.

In 1981 'The Coffee Spoon' was a squat - "the place to see and be seen".2. just two doors up from the infamous Warren Street home of Boy George, singer/personality, Marilyn, singer/sidekick of Boy George, Stephen Jones, hat maker and others. " We hung out on sunday afternoons at the Coffee Spoon together sipping tea and planning how to take the establishment by storm".3. said Ian R.Webb, editor of Blitz Magazine and a friend of most fashionable people in London. Many did do just that.

'The Blitz Kids' - an expression created by the press, were discovered in March 1980 when Spandau Ballet - then contemporary 'strong on image' New Romantic style band, performed at the Scala cinema. Steve Dagger, was Spandau Ballet's manager at the time was the first to admit that "our crowd is more into fashion than music" .4. Steve Strange (Fig.17) who was hailed as the founder of the Blitz Kids said to the Sunday People on june 15th 1980 "we don't go for look alike garb, We believe everyone should go after his/her own look".5.

There was another 'set' called the 'Logan set', with sculptor

Andrew Logan at the head of the family; Divine, (Fig.18) John Walters the film director's protege, and artist's Duggie Fields, Kevin Whitney, Luciana Martinez and John Maybury, the film maker, amongst others.

These were faces about town in the early 80's and they would frequent the clubs like Le Beatroute, the Ghetto, The Wag and Camden Palace. Vivian Westwood, designer/design innovator, showed for the very first time in Paris in 1982, opening with her Buffalo girls/boys collection. (Fig.19)

In London in 1982, designer Sue Clowes hit on a winner by giving Boy George an outfit to wear; mixing ethnic prints/ with religious symbolism and putting them on to tee-shirts and trousers and in Boy George's case, a baggy dress. When he went to the number one spot with the song "Do you really want to hurt me", Sue Clowes sold out of all her wild designs.

Stylist's Helen Roberts and Ray Petri were featured in The Face in 1982. Ex British Vogue magazine art director Terry Jones started I.D., a magazine that was aimed at and the recruited young talent including journalists Robin Deryck, Dylan Jones, Kate Flett and Caryn Franklin well known for her work on the



Clothes Show on BBC Television. Beth Summer and Alix Sharkey, also young journalists; all now names in the Media.

In 1983 the Japanese were invading Paris with their unstructured Bag Lady/Post Holocaust look. Comme des garçons / Designer Rai Cowbacogo and Yohji Yamamoto created new clothes that were layered, predominantly Black and easy to wear. The same year Hat Designer Paul Bernstock (of Bernstock/Speirs) joined forces with another of London's photographed 'trendies' Dencil Williams, to open the Nightclub 'WHITE TRASH'. Debbie Mason a fashion director said about the Club to 'ELLE' magazine "Fashion, gossip, and glamour fused as designers(Fig.20)( Jean Paul Gaultier, Bodymap, Rachel Auburn and Leigh Bowery) Media types and their entourages met and mixed".6.

In 1983 Vivienne Westwood, innovator of avant garde punk style in the 70's, moved into St. Christophers place in London's West End. Opening her 'NOSTALGIA OF MUD' store. She sold full length Jersey Togas, Satin Brassieres(worn on the outside), Mad oversized 'Chicken George' bowler hats, and her sack cloth covered court shoes.(Fig.21)

In 1984 Leigh Bowery was the queen of excess, painting his face lime green, and his lips and eyebrows with golden blue glitter.

"Leigh Bowery and his side kick Trojan were London's showpieces, and Boy George was its voice, it was *deja vous* on a grand scale. Annie Lennox, (of Eurthmics) was wearing Gary Glitters (of glam rock fame) old suit, Marilyn in lip gloss, and Bowery (Leigh), fell somewhere between sweet and Chicory Tip".7.

Evenings at the "Bell" - a Kings Cross Gay Pub far away from the West Ends, "Stringfellows" upmarket clubs, was the hippest place to be, and it was frequented by everyone from Boy George, Rachel Auburn, and the Bodymap Team. Brightest of them all were Bodymap, David Holah and Stevie Stewart, were rebels with a cause-Bodymapism. They turned the established world upside down creating clothes that did the same. "Querelle meets Olive Oil, The Cat in the Hat, takes a rumble with the Techno Fish, and Barbie takes a trip".8. were collections that thrilled and shocked everyone from London to Tokyo.(Fig.22)

Levi Jeans took journalists to Florence in Italy for a preview of its new T.V. Advert with Nick Kamen model/singer. In 1985 Levi sales went up by 400%.

Leigh Bowery now hosted 'Taboo', "A non-stop freak show and a haven for hedonists, heroin addicts and first year fashion students, high on the ecstasy of it all, excess was now



everything, clothes became costume, and casual sex was causing casualties".9.

In 1985 Health was big in the Media, not only for Jane Fonda and her Aerobic Work-Out, but people were dying from drug addition, and Aids. There was also other 'Aids' in the media too, it started with Live Aid organised by Bob Geldof and friends, for famine relief in Africa, followed by Art Aid and Fashion Aid. A popular magazine at the time said " How can we be greedy Yuppies, when we give so freely".10.

John Galliano Designer, left St.Martins School of Art as 'Student of the Year'. (Fig.23) Katherine Hamnett showed 'spy's' and 'Emma Peal' Catsuits, and launched 'Tomorrow Magazine' placing politics next to dresses, she also met Margaret Thatcher the British Prime Minister, with one of her political tee-shirts on saying "58% DON'T WANT PERSHING".11. She was also voted Designer of the Year 1984. "Fashion is not just an industry .It exists as a cultural phenomenon.It reflects the underlying thing.What Jung calls the collective unconscious".12.Katherine Hamnett(Fig.24)

Richmond /Cornejo (John Richmond/Maria Cornejo) designed together for four seasons at their studio in Worship Street in London until they went their separate ways in 1986. The duo are most

remembered for their Destroy-Disorientate-Disorder statement on their clothing. 1985 saw the opening of The Fridge night club in Brixton, South London, the release of Caravaggio and My beautiful Launderette, two controversial gay films.

Fashion editor of Blitz magazine Ian R. Webb enlisted 22 designers in 1986 to customise the classic Levi's denim jacket from an editorial spread and the project grew into a show at the 'Albany Theatre' produced by Mikel Rosen, who produced Bodymap's shows and was a fashion tutor in Middlesex Polytechnic. It included Margi Clarke - Actress in Film/Letter to Brezhnev. Tina Chow, fashion personality, Esther Rantzen - host of That's Life, a family show on BBC television, Daniel Day Lewis, actor (Now famous for his brilliant performance in the oscar winning film My Left Foot), Boy George and Curiosity Killed the Cat, English band made famous made famous by Andy Warhol.

The new Yohji Yamamoto store and Katherine Hamnett stores both opened up on London's Sloane Street, West London.

1985-?



Fig. 17



Steve Strange, above,  
capped in Stephen  
Jones' Egyptian hat.



Jeffrey Hinton photographed at Cha-Cha,  
the first night he played there. Pictured  
with club "host" Scarlett.



Fig. 18



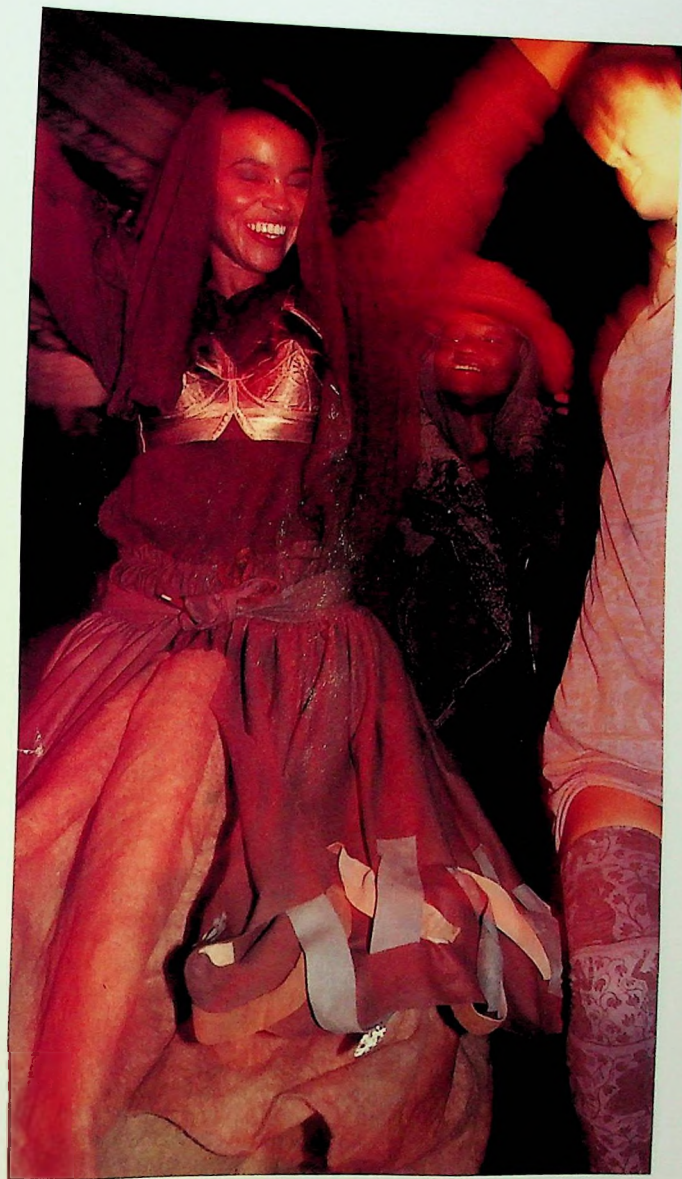


Fig.19





Fig. 20

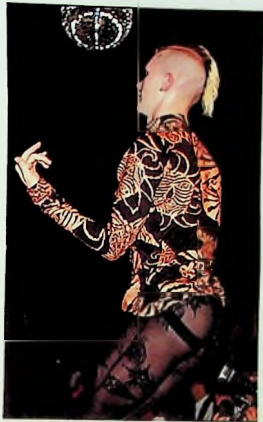




Fig. 21



# Fig. 22



Dancer Michael Clark, above,



The original Bodymap look, with prints by Hilde Smith, typified the strong, graphic image and easy yet eclectic sportswear that took the fashion world by storm in the early 80s

Nick Kamen, below, doing the Bodymap catwalk

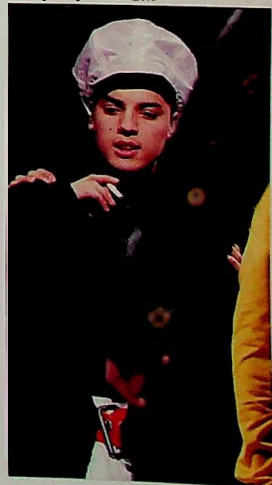






Fig. 23



**KATHARINE HAMNETT**  
**LONDON**

**Fig. 24**



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE FAMOUS FIVE (DESIGNERS IN THIS CONTEXT)

"Fashion is influenced by three factors, social norms, individual self expression, and technology." M. Solomon. 1.

This Chapter is about "Glamour and greed of stardom and poverty of success and bankruptcy of creative integrity and moral outrage" 2. is the story of British fashion in the 1980's.

Stevie Stewart and David Holah (Bodymap), Paul Burnstock and Thelma Speirs (Burnstock/Speirs) and John Richmond (once Richmond/Cornejo) now just plain John Richmond, all graduated from college in 1982. Their hearts were high and their heads were large; they were rebels and their cause was knocking the stuffing out of established British style. They had all grown up in that stylistic fallow decade the 1970's. They didn't give a damn about labels but that was in the sensitive days when no one wore a price on their sleeves (1980). Those were the day's of optimism, of naivety perhaps; when 'careerist' was an insult and 'designer' meant a person and not a bottle of water (eau, eau). The style revolution of the 80's was not yet upon us, how could it be when the main characters still had not taken centre stage? Though they sensed around them the still muted rumblings of Japan's

avant garde the British had not let loose that volley of ideas that was to radically alter our perception of fashion. "Young british fashion is the most influential in the world for street fashion, as I believe its called. The quality may be atrocious but It's better than the sixties which was complete tat. Young fashion Isn't tat anymore." Murray Arbeid (London couturier) 3.

They had a message, it was loud, colourful, and to the hip young elite of London it was infinitely desirable. "We felt outrageous and that's what we wanted to do not to shock but to be avant garde, to punch something right into their (the fashion industry's) gut's, to say this is London look at what we are doing" -4. David Holah from Bodymap. They were young, they were idealists, they wanted success. And they got it. And much, much more, than any of them had bargained for. The dress rehearsal was held, ironically, in New York in 1983 at the first 'New London in New York' show organised by the then queen of alternative style Suzanne Bartsch. It shook the American lady's of the press "right down to the tips of their Manhattan beige shoes"- 5. They adored it. It was daring and exciting. The Americans are the bankers of fashion, the power to designers the world over. And in 1983 it was said by them that London fashion was the next big thing. Suddenly, the international circuit of buyers made London it's first port of call. What had been a side show rapidly became a circus.



It must be remembered that there is nothing so rare as new ideas in fashion. If there are none one can make something old seem new again. Look at the 60's revival in the 90's. But when there is genuinely something new the fashion industry will focus on it with a speed and a rapacity that is terrifying. However, the likes of Bodymap, Richmond/Cornejo and Burnstock-Speirs were too young and too naive to sense anything like fear. Just as if you applaud a child when it is naughty, it will be naughtier still, believing that is what you like so the young Londoner's rose to greater levels of anarchy, forgetting in the excitement that though ideas get you the attention, in the business of fashion it is product, Marketing, and Financial acumen that sells clothes.

How should they have known? In the early 80's, business ability was not a commodity that was emphasised in fashion courses. In that atmosphere of heady liberalism, panache seemed an adequate substitute for professionalism. In 1983 as many as twenty young designers fresh from college set up in business in London. Few survived. Bodymap, Bernstock/Speirs, and John Richmond did, but not without some tough lessons. It was Bodymap who in my opinion, more than any other design label, symbolised the excitement and the energy of British fashion, 'street style', in the early 80's. They were the symbol and then the scapegoat. As John Richmond now

describes it "Creatively, Bodymap were great but from a business point of view they killed it, it wasn't their fault, but unfortunately that's what happened because the press took them as the symbol. All of the responsibility was on their shoulders and when they went under so did the whole London movement"6.

This was the excitement in the early 80's surrounding young designers and encouraging other's to their folly to set up business.

In 1984, it seemed nothing could go wrong. Bodymap staged the first of the 'mega' catwalk show's (they had done a few small one's before that were to become the main event and the media circus of London fashion week. In one of their shows, friends Helen Terry and Boy George sang, Michael Clarke danced and the Stewart and Holah mothers, plus friends, of all age's and sizes modeled. Fashion and Bodymap were integral to the thriving music and club scene (fashionclubwonderland) of the early 80's. "If you were not at the club Taboo (Bodymap's personal catwalk) on a Thursday night, you were nowhere"7.7 . Every top model, fashion photographer, fashion stylist, film maker, designer and musician was there if they were in London. "It was" said Stevie Stewart "no big deal (Boy) George, Helen (Terry) and Michael (Clarke) ; they were all our friends. We had grown up together. Everybody worked very hard and then we could play a little. The impression



was of playing, because when we did go out we went wild".8.

Taboo may well have been 'home sweat home'(sic) to Bodymap and friends but to the press it was great fodder for selling news.

Youth, music, fashion, spiced with subversion and salted with radicalism. What a story. One American magazine went so far as to describe them as "a group of people who can be compared to the twenty's Virginia Woolf - Bloomsbury set and the Chelsea - Kings road - Quant 60's crowd".9. Everything was acceptable as long as it was good clean fun. Everything was fine as long as there was money in the bank. "It is a long time " continued the same American magazine "since big bucks and credibility have been allowed to go hand in hand in these circles. Previously it would have meant instant death. It is estimated that B-Basic (diffusion range of cheaper clothes by Bodymap) will bring in approximately 15 million dollar's in retail sales this year".10.

And that was precisely the problem / big bucks and credibility do not go 'hand in hand'. Bodymap were living 'hand to mouth'. They were borrowing against orders and with no capital but blind faith to keep them up against the bad times. The initial money came from a market stall that Stewart and Holah ran in Camden market in north London at week-ends. They sold re-dyed surplus and their own designs. When the orders started to pour in they went to a bank for a loan, and used Stevie Stewart's mothers house as collateral for this loan. "We had a small overdraft but before

we knew where we were, we were in for half a million. We just jumped from one place to the highest and we didn't know what the hell we were doing".Stevie Stewart.11.

The Bodymap label was a wild success. So wild that the designs were being plagiarised all over the world. The pair decided to rip themselves off as it were, and launched 'B-Basic', As I mentioned earlier a cheap range of their designs with cheaper fabric and a shorter length of time spent on production. They got involved with an American group in 1985, who were to produce both Bodymap and B-Basic labels and had the exclusive licence to distribute B-Basic all over the world. Then in 1986, things started to go badly wrong. The fabrics they were using were not good quality and started splitting at the seams, so they had to withdraw all production as obviously this was not satisfactory. A shop that owed them £35,000 went bankrupt.They were overdrawn by £60,000 and needed an extra £100,000 to pull themselves out of trouble . They had the orders and the goodwill .The bank refused. Then the American company that were producing B-Basic and Bodymap labels floundered, owing Bodymap tens of thousands of pounds.

At about the same time Bodymap launched their Barbie collection "Almost naked models and children cavorted on the catwalk, boys kissed boys and girls kissed girls, all to the sound of London's



finest urged on by London's strangest".12. It was too much for the Americans. "American buyers have been morally alarmed by the Bodymap show - they thought we were a bunch of homosexual, ambisexual drug takers who were into child pornography".13. The Buyers might have thought it, but the press said it. According to the Guardian,

"Bodymap , established for some seasons persist in crazed shows featuring friends and family but their clothes still a mishmash of 60's and 70's influences, no longer shock or look new and are as unwearable as ever".14.

The tide was turning , it was no longer good, clean fun. It was no longer money in the bank. Bodymap went into voluntary liquidation in 1986. It was a horrific time. Stevie Stewart saw the whole thing through, she said to the Guardian at the time (1986), "Nobody explained to us that the bailiffs would come in and take everything, we had £100,000 worth of fixtures and stock. I thought at worst that we could get at least £50,000. the whole lot went for £3,000. We had made plans with the bank to pay off the dept of £70,000. They did not want to wait for their money, and they let me know about it everyday. In the end we had to remortgage my mothers house to pay them back."15.

Bernstock/Speirs were part of the same wave that swept Bodymap right to the top of the fashion pile. In 1983 they were designing

hats for major designers i.e. Victor Edelstien and Bruce Olfield and were the 'darling's' of clubland. Carried along by their success, they decided to diverse into clothing. Paul Burnstock in an interview with ELLE magazine said "Looking back, we were probably egotistical, we had no concept of losing money, we all thought we would just go up, we never thought about coming down again, I suppose we were all jealous of Bodymap. They got all the attention, that's why we started the clothing line, We had never appreciated that we had a special talent. That we could make hats while others couldn't. It all seemed too easy. It's part of that British pre-conception that you must struggle to call yourself a designer."16.

They struggled for two years until, in 1986, the same year that Bodymap folded, they were forced to admit defeat and to close down the clothing label. Thelma Speirs, designer with Bernstock/Speirs, commented to ELLE magazine " We couldn't afford to go bankrupt, we just left the answering service on as everyone who called wanted money ".17. But because of the hats, which were still in high demand and cost little in terms of outlay, BERNSTOCK/SPEIRS were able to pull themselves back from the brink of Bankruptcy. John Richmond, Designer, never even faced his financial difficulties, his problems were of another sort entirely. After leaving Kingston polytechnic in 1980, he designed for an Italian Company called LANA LINO, while at the same time developing ideas for his own label collection, which



he sold to FIORUCCI, the Italian Company who proceeded to produce copies of the clothes under their own label. LANA LINO refused to pay him for past work, unless he signed a 10 year contract with them. John Richmond, preferring creative freedom declined the 'generous' offer.

In 1984 Richmond started a design partnership with his girlfriend Maria Cornejo- Richmond/Cornejo- which was in public a spectacular success, was privately a complete disaster. In 1986 the pair had a major contract with a Japanese Company, it had six shops in Japan, a shop opened by Joseph Egetti who was an entrepreneur, better known as Joseph Pour Le Tricot, for them in London and hyperbolic press exclaim. However, in 1987 the Richmond/Cornejo partnership terminated, due to their private relationship falling to pieces, and they finished after only designing together for four seasons. John Richmond was on his own again, he then brought the business back to Britain, and set himself up as a Designer in his own right under his own label John Richmond.

John Richmond is the most astute person in business out of all the young designers of this period. (He is still thriving in London in 1991) He told Sky Magazine that he learned from the experience, and said "You come straight out of College, and you are going to tear down the walls. When you get into Business, you

realise that there are no walls to tear down, when I started the 3D LABEL, DESTROY, DISORIENTATE, DISORDER, that is what I was going to do. Disorientate peoples attitudes to fashion. Put Men into Skirts, the same parallel as GAULTIER" .18. He was well known to wear a dress and high heels in the 80's, not to be a gender bender, but, to show his attitude to the subject of disorientating fashion.

There are those, incidently, who would say that JEAN PAUL GAULTIER is more influenced by Richmond than vice-versa. Gaultier has always been inspired by the London Street Scene. "What has Gaultier done that is so important ? except copy the Street look from London, and make it expensive, only that".19.

In 1986, Bodymap was in liquidation, Bernstock /Speirs were facing financial ruin and John Richmond was contemplating a personal and a business crisis. Boy George and Helen Terry were both coping with Heroin addition, and Trojan the 'Art/Form personality', and by his own words "PROSTITUTE" was dead. Young London was old news.

It was only a few years previously that Bodymap, Bernstock/Speirs and John Richmond had left College with such great hopes. The Industry between the years 1983 and 1988 had changed, and according to the British Clothing Industry Association consumer



expenditure had increased by almost 70%. "In 1988 there were more people working in the UK Industry than in Coal and oil extraction, or even the high technology Industries. In that year the clothing Industry produced goods valued at £6 Billion if you include knitwear".20.

George Davies was the Chairman and Chief Executive of "NEXT" a high street phenomenon, he said to Vogue in 1987 " If they can't make it work they are bad business people, what they are saying is that they are failures".21. Ironically George Davies was asked to leave Next in 1989, and the Next chain although it still exists, does so just about staying afloat. Because of low customer spending, high interest rates, and Next did not update their philosophy towards the end of the 1980's.

( Even if Industrially they could be classed as failures, I feel that this is unfair, after all they have made a very strong mark on British Fashion, from Bodymap's sweat and stretch designs, to Bernstock/Speirs crownless straw and Jersey toppler, to Richmond's subversive cutting, their ideas have been immortalised in British High Street fashions to-day.

But, in saying that, whatever happened to the international fame and fortune, the media seemed to promise the young designers of the London Fashion Scene of the 80's ? Why are Bodymap back to

working out of Stevie Stewart Mum's House, which has been remortgaged and was nearly lost in 1986, when they went into liquidation.

The complaint heard time after time again from the "NAME" designers (Label) is that they cannot get their clothes made in Britain to standards that can compete internationally, long term. There are plenty of things to blame, the Manufacturers, for their willingness only to produce large volumes for the Big Chains, rather than meet the small demands of the independent designer; the Government were not investing in the modernisation of Industry; The workers, for being unskilled; the British Women for not spending money on clothes, and being content with sub-standard merchandise.

Stephen Marks, Chairman of the French Connection and their designer label NICOLE FARHI, has no truck with excuses either, "Fashion is a fickle business by nature, every season there is another problem, and it's the job of the Guy running the business to sort it out".22.

Jean Muir, who has had a steady success as a British Designer for 28 Years, and has concerned herself behind the scenes, with design education and the promotion of British Fashion, she said "It's up to oneself, to make sure that one gets the clothes made.



I have clothes produced all over the United Kingdom, and they're as good as anything in world terms. None of our generation had people helping us. No other Government in History has given as much support, as this one (The Thatcher Regime) you can't just sit around and moan".23.

Plainly, the British success of the eighties has been in high street fashion. Look at the Chain Stores such as Next, Warehouse, Miss Selfridge, Principles, Hobbs, Jigsaw and Whistles. As Sir Ralph Halpern the Ex-Chairman of the Burton Group, said " Without large volume there would not be a manufacturing Industry, so I don't think that it is wise to criticize the fact that volume has grown with the development of high street retail. It's given a lot more choice to customers".24.

Yet the growth of the high street towards the end of the eighties, and the plight of the small independent designer are linked. John Wilson, Director of the British Clothing Industry Association (B.C.I.A) pointed out in 1988 "The Major manufacturers are into advanced technology, new factories. The picture of 'dark satanic mills' in the north is out of date ".25. The problem was that those modern factories were geared/and still are, to supplying major chains like the Marks and Spencers Group, the Burton Group, and the Next Chain. John Wilson also said "It's

unfair to ask a major manufacture to disrupt his production line, for the sake of making a few designer dresses. The small inner city factories are more likely to help the designers".26.

Critics of Government policy argue that the high national importance of the clothing and textile industry should have merited more support and intervention-grants for modernisation, machinery, re-training for promotion abroad.

There was no way eighties designers could actually learn good business practice, and planning, except by trial and error. They certainly had not been instructed in College of the methodology of business practice . While some began to make headway in organising their own business more sensibly, and efficiently. i.e. Katherine Hamnett and John Richmond, and Bernstock/Speirs. Others fell by the wayside, i.e. Bodymap. They were still the products and in some way the victims of their own education and expectations-what Katherine Hamnett called "Antiquated Art-Schooliness".27. It should hardly of been surprising that so many young designers proved to be one-hit wonders.

Mary Bromley, head of Design at Newcastle Polytechnic said in 1987 " Manufacturers have to realise, that a designer cannot come straight from college, and wave a Magic Wand overnight, they would not expect that of an Engineer, would they ?" 28.



In the meanwhile, the survivors of the young london fashion boom of the 1980's have adapted to current conditions. Notably, **John Richmond** with his **DESTROY** label, and now lately his **WILD** label, and his shop off Marshall Street in the West End of London, is thriving, even in this time of recession in 1991, his clothes are worn by people like **Sinead O'Connor**, to **New Kids on the Block**, he has earned international acclaim for his work.

Given the circumstances, in the nineties from the Designers point of view, the necessity must be to look outwards. The Department of Trade and Industry in Britain has decided to use **Bruce Olfield** (London Couturier) in it's campaign for tackling Europe in 1992

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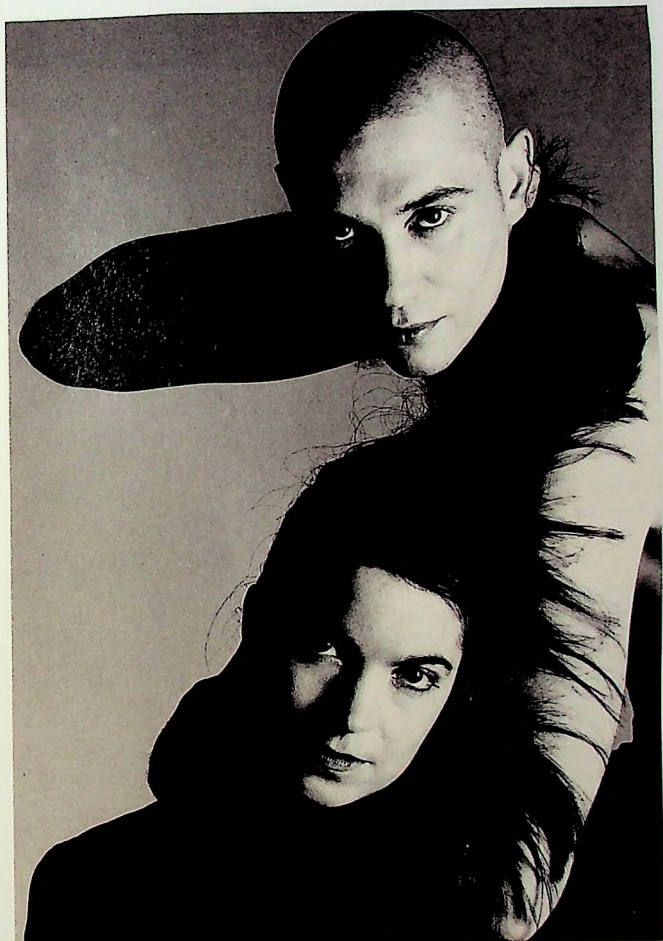


Fig 25



**BERNSTOCK/  
SPEIRS**



Fig 26





Fig. 27





● Body Map's winter '85 collection: ruffles and fringes with everything from patent boots to tiered wool dresses, posing pouches over trousers and plastic retro swimwear . . .



Fig. 28





THE P

Fig.  
29





Fig. 30



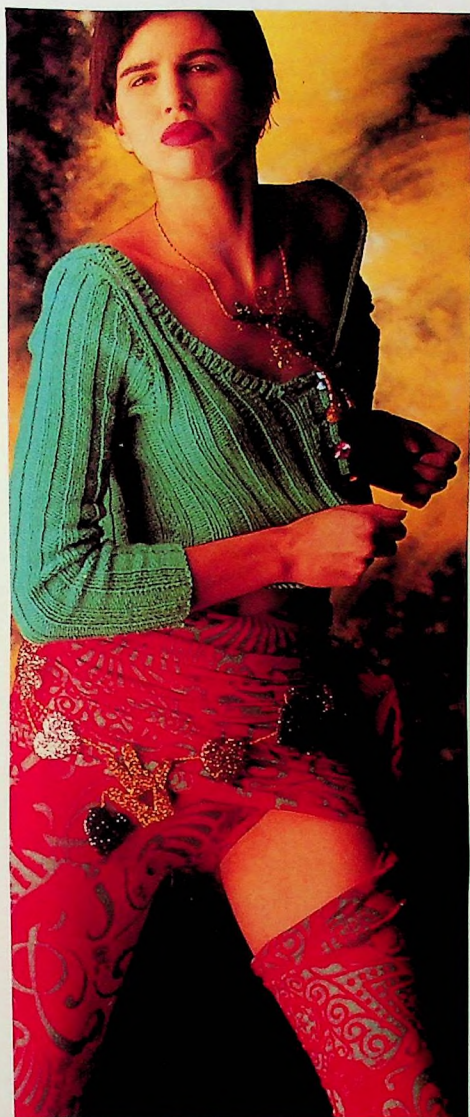


Fig 31



Fig. 32







Fig.34



# JOHN RICHMOND

Suit with double  
gold stripes: jacket  
(from £220),  
trousers (from  
£160), by John  
Richmond. Leather  
turret boots (£100)  
by Patrick Cox



Richmond/  
Cornejo's 1986  
Destroy/  
Disorientate/  
Disorder

Fig 35



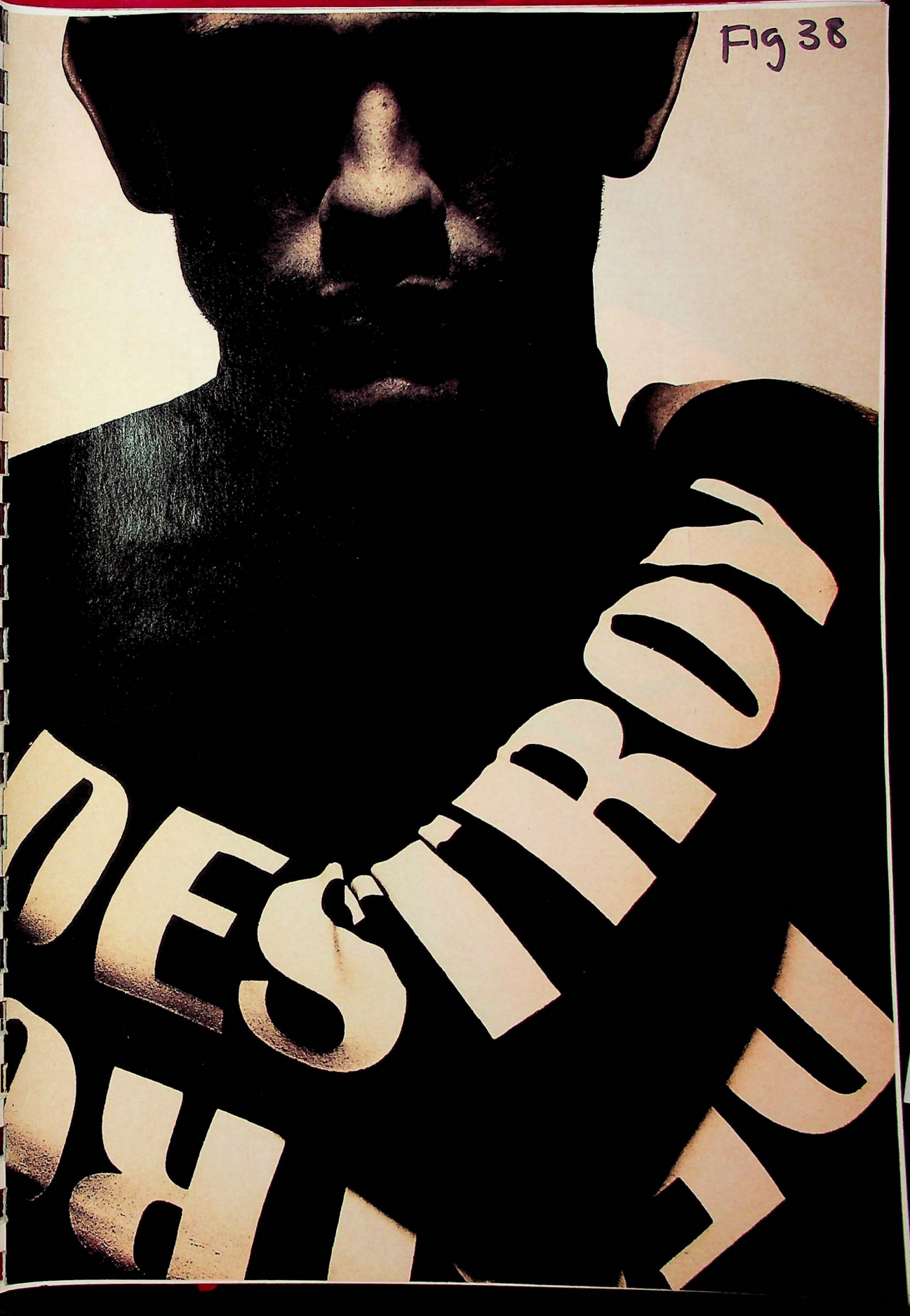


Fig.36





Fig 38





### CONCLUSION

THE POINT I ULTIMATELY WANT TO MAKE IS THAT NOTHING OR NOBODY STANDS ALONE. NO MATTER HOW LITTLE WE THINK OUR ACTIVITIES IMPINGE ON OTHER PARTS OF THE COMMUNITY, THEY DO HAVE AN EFFECT.

NONE OF THE PEOPLE I HAVE DESCRIBED OR AT LEAST VERY FEW OF THEM WERE AWARE OF HOW THEIR ACTIVITIES WERE HELPING TO CHANGE THE FACE OF FASHION.

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