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RIO-DE-JANEIRO

Swiss Textiles in the Tropics

Fickleness, inconstancy and capriciousness have always been the characteristics of fashion. Certain aspects corresponding more nearly to our psyche, succeed in being elevated to a sort of classicism. Others do not outlive a season's flowering but shine with a brilliance which, although less lasting, is none the less intense.

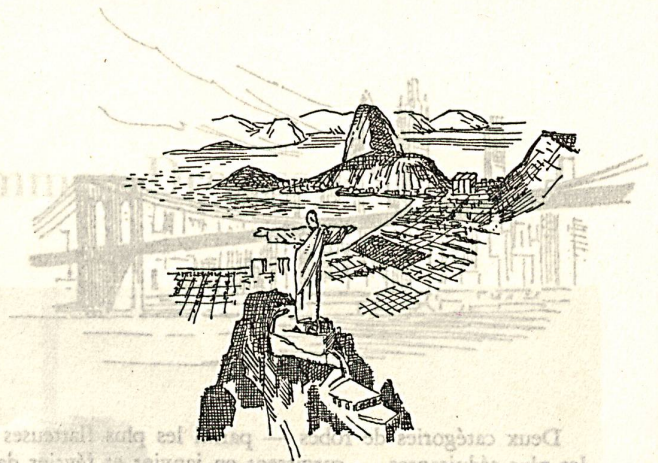
Brazil, which has always known so well how to adapt to its carefree nature the fashions that suited it best, has been able, in this field as elsewhere, to carry its exaggerations to the utmost limits by always emphasising its feeling for contrasts.

It is almost unbelievable, if one looks at it closely, that this country has been able to adopt and so successfully develop ideas that have come from overseas, without departing from a sometimes rigid classicism, which for years has been revolving round the same theme.

Let us take, for example, the field of printed fabrics.



Characteristic line of this season:
black bodice and skirt with bright
colours on a clear background.



When one imagines the quantity Brazil must consume, one would think, at first sight, that there must be an extraordinary variety of prints on the market. For there are few climates to equal this one for making it possible to wear all the year round dresses whose bright colours are allowed to run riot, and whose cut naturally requires less skill than plain dresses.

However in spite of such vast possibilities, the field of prints has always remained limited by custom. The designs, which are repeated ineluctably each year, are always flowers of the field, interpreted, arranged, stylised and adapted to all tastes, and every attempt to get away from them seems doomed to failure.

Finally, a great event occurred in October last, something unheard of in the annals of Brazilian fashion, which gave a new lease of life to the field of printed fabrics, with its wealth of possibilities, and everyone hopes this will mark the beginning of a new trend. The event we are speaking of is the first St. Paulo Biennial of Modern Art which, for three months, provoked a state of ferment, of revolution almost, extending even to the applied arts. It would perhaps have been more exact to say « abstract art » rather than « modern art », such was the predominance of the former over the latter.

From countries all over the world, hundreds of artists brought to Brazil what may be considered the best ideas in the field of art, and the influence left by their visit will certainly not be without its repercussions in the field of fashion.

Already its effects are everywhere apparent in the field of prints. The « flowers of the field » are losing ground before the modern conceptions figuring in the best collections of prints. There is a very noticeable tendency towards the seeking after simpler forms, colour harmonies conceived on a bolder scale, designs suggesting a new vision.

To comment on the theories aroused by this new movement — for which Brazil was not in the least prepared — would involve us much too deeply. It is perhaps this state of somnolence and the surprise that dissipated it that made possible this fine flight that is taking place in one of the most captivating fields of fashion — that of prints.

To-day — obstacles in the way of imports being less severe than they used to be — Switzerland, in its turn, will we feel sure be able to bring to this market that touch which has always given prestige to its textiles, thanks to the artistic and technical value of its products.

Fred Schlatter.