

New York fashion : Designer portrait

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NEW
YORK
FASHION

“Life is good”, says America’s most celebrated fashion designer, looking back on 30 years in the fashion business. He has good reasons. His deluxe ready-to-wear enjoys the same prestige as the custom-made Parisian couture. His perfume is an awardwinner, his recently launched fur collection an instant success. His exceptional talent has won him numerous fashion prizes, election to the Coty Hall of Fame, and retrospectives at the Los Angeles Museum of Art and the Fashion Institute of Technology. The Metropolitan in New York, the Smithsonian in Washington, and every other major museum throughout America exhibit examples of his work. While he is still very much alive and active, his name has already become a symbol, metaphoric to the lifestyle of the very rich and very beautiful. From Dallas to Denver, to bestseller author Sidney Sheldon’s Lucy Wyatt in “Master of the Game”, the leading lady is dressed in a



galanos

Any connoisseur of high fashion will instantly spot a Galanos design by its cut, its line and certain details that are done by no one else. Asked about his secret of success, the designer simply states: “I just concentrate on making the most elegant, beautiful, expensive ready-to-wear clothes in the country, using the same technique and workmanship that the French couture employs.” All his designs, from daytime coats, suits and dresses to his much admired evening wear, have deceptive simplicity, and within that simplicity there are intricate details which are noted but not noticeable. The Galanos look portrays an international chic that easily transcends continents and seasons, and is recognized by the most elegant women on either side of the Atlantic.

“I am considered the American equivalent of French couture”

Born in Philadelphia in 1924 of Greek parents, James Galanos' rise to fame started on an arduous route. After studies at the Traphagen School of Fashion in New York and an apprenticeship in 1947/48 with couturier Robert Piguet in Paris, he was unable to gain a foothold in the Seventh Avenue fashion industry. In 1951, he went to California to open his own small dress house on \$200 of borrowed capital. His first New York showing three years later was a spectacular success, win-

ning him orders worth \$400,000 and a nomination for the Neiman-Marcus Design Award and the Coty American Fashion Critics' "Winnie". Although the volume of his business and the staff employed increased many times since, Galanos has essentially remained a one-man business, unique in the fashion industry.

“Most of all, I love to work”

Hardworking and perfectionist, James Galanos himself chooses the fabrics, creates the designs, and oversees the manufacturing. Twice a year, in February and August, he brings his collections to New York, takes charge of the show, and handles the selling afterward. He is his own business manager, sales director and PR-promotor. Five to six weeks each season, he meets his ultimate customers at personal appearances sponsored by such renowned retail outlets as Bergdorf-Goodman, Neiman-Marcus, Magnin, Saks and Martha, of whom he says: “I have had a nice working relationship with Martha Phillips for the past 25 years. She has a way of getting things out of you which is what makes working with her so stimulating. She is a challenge, and I like challenges.”

▷ Left: Degradé print on jacquard-patterned pure silk crêpe de Chine / Right: Oversized checks printed on houndstooth-patterned pure silk crêpe de Chine.

DESIGNER PORTRAIT

”From the materials come the inspirations”

Another personal contact which James Galanos values, is his relationship with Gustav Zumsteg of Abraham Silks. Reluctant to talk about his own merits, he eloquently promotes those of others: "I have been working with Abraham for many years, and I now fly specially to Zurich to spend several days there each season. At Abraham's everything is perfection. They are very artistic, the taste level is terrific. Their experimentations with colors and textures are exceptional, and the quality is immaculate. They have, of course, certain classics which are their trademark. But within that classic look there is always an amazing newness each season. I have a close relationship with Mr. Zumsteg, and also with Manfred G6rgemanns, who is very talented. Whatever fabrics I select are mine exclusive in America. Although they have their price, we are very successful with Abraham fabrics."

”Swiss fabrics are probably the most well-produced”

Since the beginning, Galanos has only been using the finest fabrics available (all European). At prices ranging from \$3,000 to \$7,000 and upward, even his affluent customers consider the acquisition of one of his creations an investment. With this in mind, he usually tries to buy fabrics that span the seasons, such as the luxury silk satin from Schubi-ger, whose quality, high sheen and unparalleled riches in the black coloration he greatly admires. Whereas he has shied away from the embroidered cottons and organzas of his early career, he has used some of the elaborate novelty embroideries from Schlaepfer and Forster Willi these past few seasons. He is equally complimentary about Swiss deliveries: "The Swiss are meticulous, and the quality control is excellent. Their silks come in much cleaner than most of the silks from other countries. It is a pleasure to open the packages."

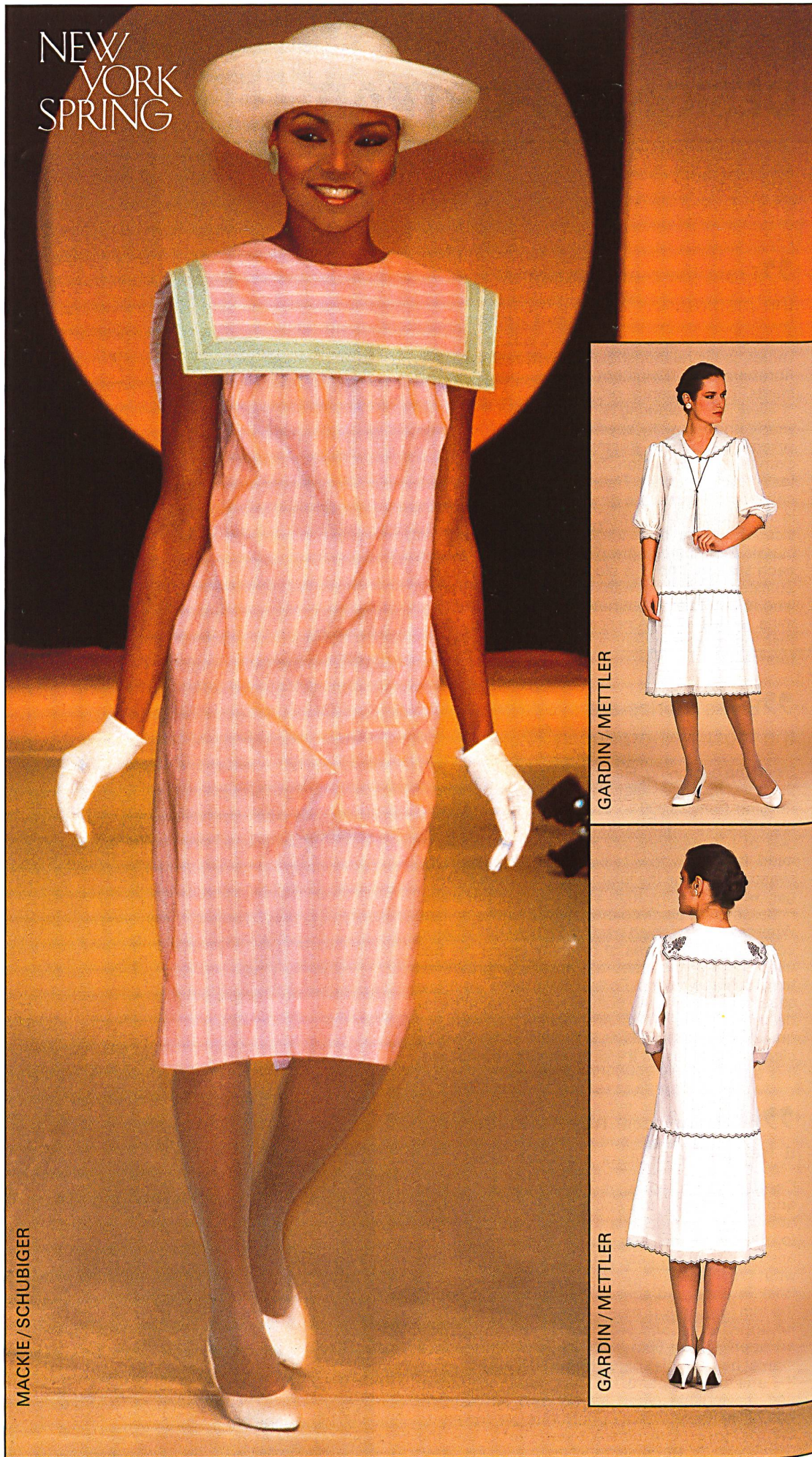
”In design, one has to have a free mind”

Contrary to his ladies who lead busy social lives and travel all over the world, "Jimmy" Galanos, as he is always called, prefers to stay aloof. "One has to design in the abstract if one wants to be aesthetic or make beautiful clothes. I try to design what I feel I like."

Brisk in pace and speech during working hours, the trim, elegantly dressed designer, whose youthful appearance and vivacious temperament defy an approaching 60th birthday, is a Renaissance man at heart. In his spare time he collects books on the arts and sculpture. He loves music, the opera, and playing the piano for his own amusement. Whenever there is an opportunity, he travels to Europe, to explore different parts or to sail the Greek Islands. But most of all, he enjoys his work.



NEW
YORK
SPRING



THE SAILOR DRESS

Crisp whites and pale pastels. Swiss-born designer Annemarie Gardin creates neat nauticals from Mettler's white cotton cheese-cloth. She adds a black embroidery trim from Jacob Rohner.

Bob Mackie's pink chemise has a squared sailor collar with contrast edging. The striped pure silk fabric is from Schubiger.

Daytime fashions go nautical.

MACKIE/SCHUBIGER

GARDIN/METTLER

GARDIN/METTLER

A TOUCH OF LACE

Reminiscent of the South: Two-piece cotton lawn dress by Soo Yung Lee. The dirndled skirt is topped with broderie anglaise border embroidery on cotton voile from Naef.

Gardin's peach-colored crêpe dress has gathered lace sleeves. The rayon crêpe fabric is from Stehli, the multi-colored embroidery on tulle from Jacob Rohner.

Summer takes on a romantic mood.

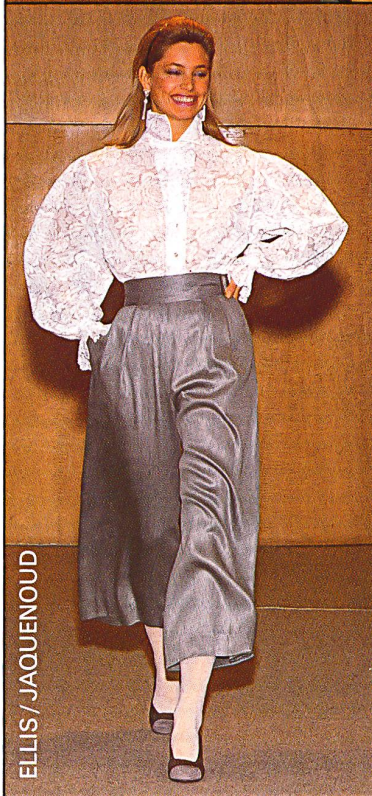
SOO YUNG LEE/NAEF



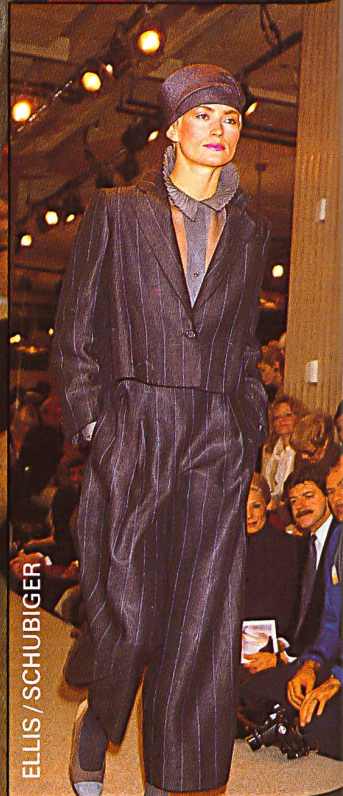
GARDIN/STEHLI

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ELLIS / JAQUENOUD



ELLIS / JAQUENOUD

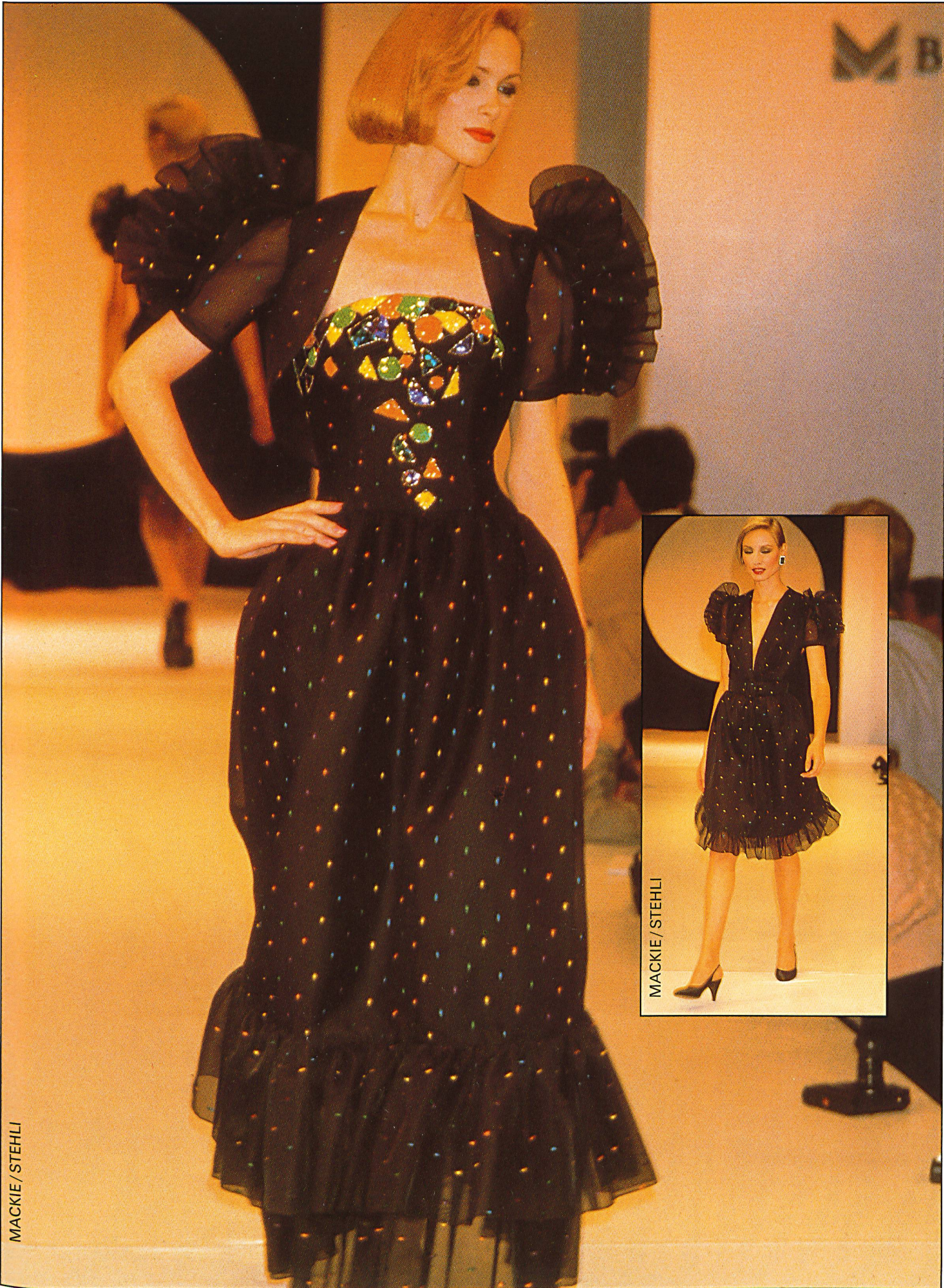


ELLIS / SCHUBIGER

THE EMBROIDERED ORGANDYS

A fresh approach to ensemble dressing. Perry Ellis plays grey satin against crisp cotton organdy with coin dot embroidery by Jaquenoud. His charcoal linen men's suit pairs with a blouse in black and white pin-check silk organza from Schubiger.

The long and short of Bob Mackie – add sparkle to basic black. His ruffled dresses in multicolored clip dot organdy from Stehli get an above-the-table treatment of beading.



MACKIE / STEHLI

MACKIE / STEHLI

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THE BRIGHT SILKS

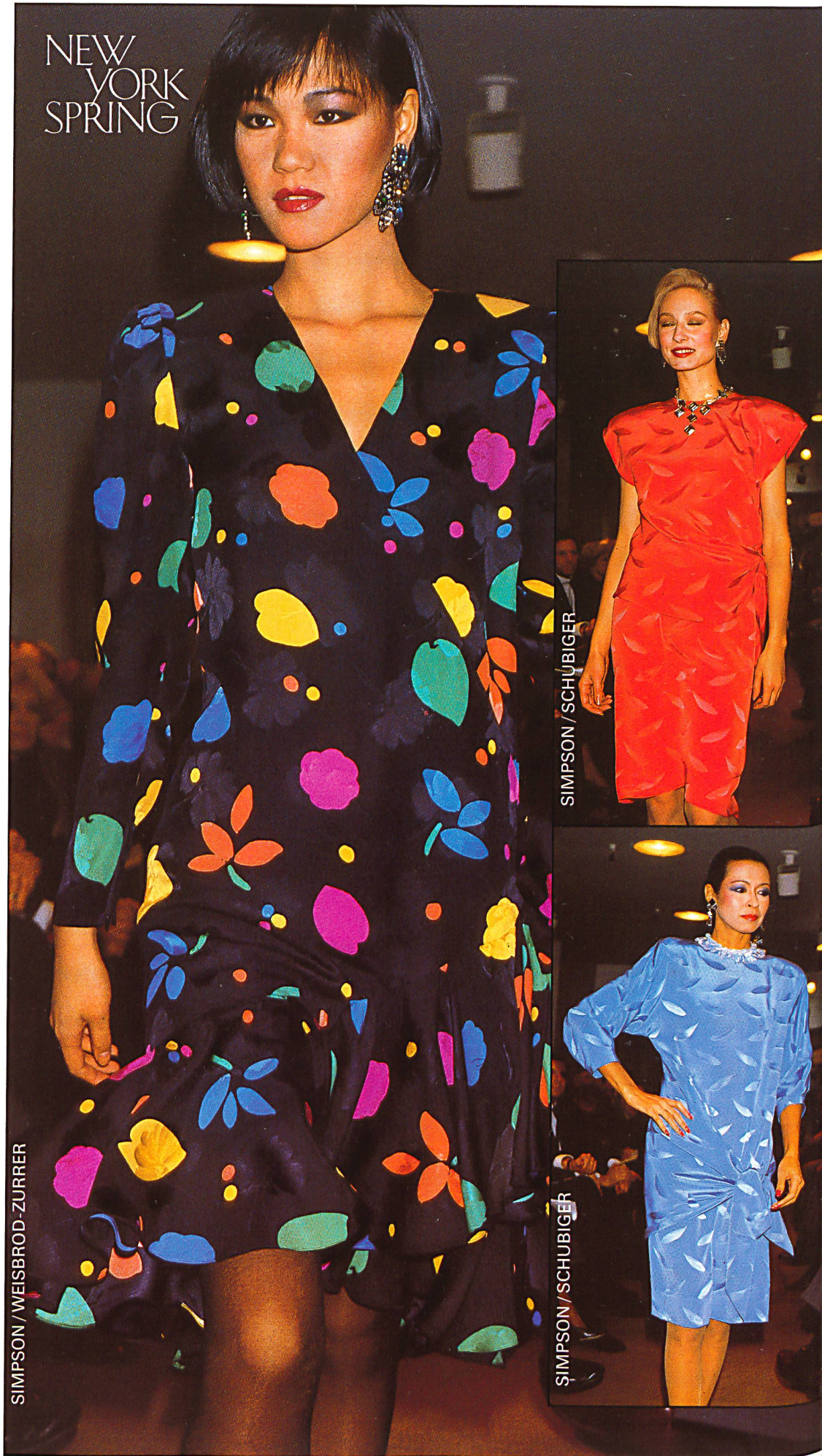
Bold, clear colors permeate the collections. Adele Simpson's shashed hip scarf dresses are in jacquard woven silks from Schubiger. Her bold flower print on black satin-backed silk crêpe by Weisbrod-Zurrer is draped on the hip and flounced at the hem.

Carolina Herrera sculpts a butterfly-backed slim column from Abraham's pink silk gazar. She creates the same effect in reverse using another Abraham print in blue silk gazar.

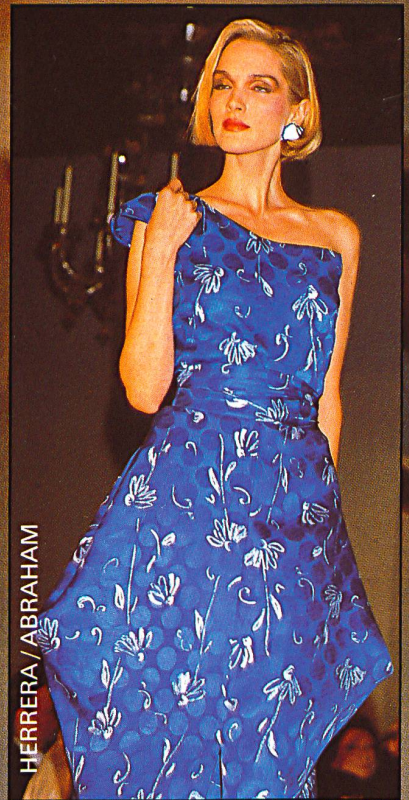
SIMPSON / WEISBROD-ZURRER

SIMPSON / SCHUBIGER

SIMPSON / SCHUBIGER



HERRERA / ABRAHAM



HERRERA / ABRAHAM