

# Bunka fashion in Swiss textiles

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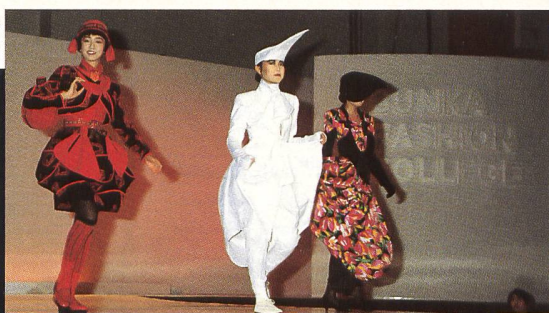
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TEXT  
BY  
CHARLOTTE  
KUMMER



文化服装学院

# F A S H I O N I N S W I S S T E X T I L E S

The annual Bunka Festival Fashion Show is THE event of the year at Japan's most prestigious fashion school. This year it was also a triumph for the Swiss textile industry. All 180 models of the budding fashion designers were made solely from exclusive Swiss textile novelties. Sixteen Swiss textile firms placed at the fashion students' disposal an unrestricted choice of novelties from their Summer 1987 collections entirely free of charge. No other foreign textile industry has ever conducted an advertising and good will action of this magnitude in Japan and the interest it aroused was on the same scale. Over 20,000 visitors to the four-day Festival were bedazzled by the Japanese fashion and Swiss textile creations. The opening festivities were attended by Japan's fashion elite, leading industrialists, business men, prominent personalities of the Swiss textile industry and a host of guests of honour, the most distinguished of whom were their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Tomohito of Mikasa.

Initiated and sponsored by the Publicity Centre for Swiss Textiles, the Fashion Show was a resounding success, and it is confidently expected that the contacts made in Tokyo will blossom into long, fruitful and creative relationships with Japan's future stylists.



Japan is a major, long-established outlet for the Swiss textile industry, due in part to monetary policy. In the eighties, textile exports to Japan have risen by 25.5% and with its present volume of 77 million Swiss francs, Japan is the tenth-ranking consumer on Switzerland's textile foreign trade balance. It has also become an external source of creative impulses for the entire European couture community. The origins of the connections between the Swiss textile industry and the Japanese market can be traced back, to varying degrees, to the last century. But not until the seventies and eighties did the outstanding co-operation in the field of fashion reap its first successes. At the 1982 and 1985 "Rencontres du Jeune Talent" in St. Gall, the young designers from the Bunka Fashion College cut a brilliant dash with their prodigiously imaginative creations. The bonds forged on these occasions have grown stronger over the years, reaching their most exciting climax to date at this year's Bunka Festival Fashion Show.

The Japanese fashion students' enthusiasm for the beauty of Swiss fabrics and embroideries that they had the opportunity to work with in St. Gall sparked the idea of a Bunka College Fashion Show exclusively with Swiss textiles. Sixteen Swiss textile firms spontaneously offered to provide the Bunka Fashion College with any novelties the students cared to select from their Summer 1987 collections free of charge as well as the necessary funds to stage such a show. The organization was entrusted to the Publicity Centre for Swiss Textiles. As the Centre's Director Hansjörg Rau explained, the aim of this event was "an effective image advertising among the Japanese trade public and the Japanese public. In this way, thousands of Fashion students, who will later be employed in all branches of the Japanese apparel industry, will become acquainted with the outstanding quality and fashion potential of the Swiss range." The students' reaction when it came to choosing the exclusive novelties illustrated what a promising venture this is. "As we looked at each of the materials, our ideas blossomed and every student desired to try his or her hand at a creation. We would like to design clothes which make use of the inherent beauty of the material. Our encounter with Swiss textiles had a revolutionary effect on our thinking."

Bunka President Mrs. Chie Koike and Chairman Sunao Onuma issued the invitations to the annual Bunka Festival Fashion Show to be held on 1 November 1986. Some 250 guests who attended the première were profoundly impressed by the powerful creativity and two-way current of inspiration between designer and textile material. Japan's leading fashion stylists – Yoji Yamamoto of Y's, Norio Suzuki, Takezo Toyoguchi of Tokyo New Star and Ruki Matsumoto of Batsu followed the Show, professionally organized and presented by the students, with the same keen interest as Ikko Sugimoto, Chairman of the Japan Apparel Industry, Ken Mori, Chairman of the Nippon Design Culture Association, President of Hanae Mori International and Nobuyuki Ota, Director of Tokyo Fashion Designers' Association, and Mr. Tsuyuki, Chairman of Isetan Department Store and Mr. Nagashima, President of Keio Department Store. The presence of the Swiss textile Gotha gave a clue to the enormous importance of this event for Swiss industry. Principal guests of honour were Prince and Princess Tomohito of Mikasa, who opened the Bunka Festival at an impressive ceremony.

The many and varied events of the 1986 Bunka Fashion Festival added up to a dazzling and compelling display of East-West synthesis of fashion flair – a perfect marriage of Japanese fashion design and superlative fashion textiles from Switzerland.



**Frank Hamburger, Chairman of the St. Gall Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

The pursuit of perfection and the very high standard of creativity and quality which the Japanese and the Swiss textile industries have in common have formed the common ground for the successful trade relations that have existed between the two countries for many years, according to Frank Hamburger. Marked by tradition, these trade relations have developed into close and friendly contacts between the Japanese fashion world and its Swiss suppliers. It is obvious that "thus the way would lead directly and indirectly to the prestigious Bunka Fashion College, which no doubt has been and always will be the nucleus of an ever-growing and influential Japanese fashion industry, still young, but already recognized all over the world". Frank Hamburger believes that this encounter and the work with Swiss textile experts is a challenge to the Bunka students but that "at the same time it may serve as an inspiration to the trade!"



**Mrs. Chie Koike  
President of the Bunka Fashion College**

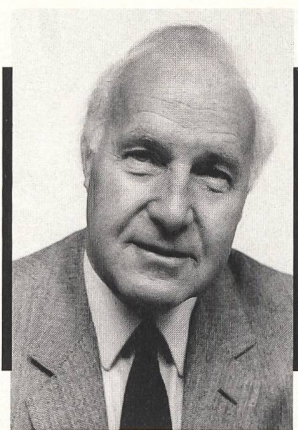
As President of the Bunka Fashion College, Mrs. Koike was particularly grateful for the opportunity of working with exclusive Swiss textiles. With the extensive cooperation of the Publicity Centre for Swiss Textiles, this fashion show was able to produce all its creations with Swiss textiles. The first contacts with Switzerland 10 years ago have proved exceptionally fruitful: "Our students visited Switzerland and reported on the wonder of Swiss textiles... and on the warm reception they were given. Moreover, twice in the past few years we have received invitations with the students and been able to pursue a more intimate exchange." On this special occasion, all the students were able to execute their ideas using Swiss textiles and "we opened the show with great excitement. To our young students, this kind of friendly exchange in the fashion world has been a wonderful present."



**Dr. D. Chenaux-Repond  
Ambassador of Switzerland in Tokyo**

The intense trade and industrial relations between Japan and Switzerland, said Ambassador Chenaux-Repond, are a source of considerable satisfaction. This is particularly true for the Swiss textile industry, whose representatives took up the challenge of the not always easy but nevertheless rewarding Japanese market at an early moment. "For almost a century now the sheer size of this market and its strong preference for products of the highest quality have repeatedly offered opportunities to Swiss embroideries and fabrics." But, as always, where competition abounds, new approaches have to be found, to marketing as well as to products themselves, if a business strategy is to make new inroads into a world of increasingly demanding consumers. Personal contacts like those that exist between Bunka Fashion College and the Swiss textile industry are indispensable. "The direct contact between all concerned circles... is just the stimulus needed for further intensification of the already important but still strongly expandable ties in the textile business between Japan and Switzerland."





**Werner Kobel**  
**Chairman of the Publicity Centre**  
**for Swiss Textiles**

In his preface to the Bunka Festival brochure, Werner Kobel highlighted the close ties that have been forged between Bunka Fashion College and the Swiss textile industry since the successful *Rencontres du Jeune Talent* in St. Gall.

The Publicity Centre for Swiss Textiles, acting on behalf of the Swiss textile exporters, is happy and proud of being able to assist the Bunka Fashion College of Tokyo in organizing and financing this year's traditional fashion show. The symbiosis of Japanese fashion styling and Swiss textile creations, claims Werner Kobel, is "a shining example of harmonious collaboration between two different cultures on the worldwide field of fashion."

## 文 化 服 装 学 院



### BUNKA COLLEGE

### AT A GLANCE

name for themselves far beyond the confines of their homeland. Founded in 1920 as a bridal school, Bunka Fashion College now offers a comprehensive curriculum geared to state-of-the-art technology for talented young people of both sexes. In addition to the courses on Fashion Design, Marketing and Merchandizing, and Business Management, students receive a solid grounding in all manual aspects of their future profession. Tailoring forms part of the basic training. Special emphasis is laid on the fine arts and all significant cultural factors. The College possesses its own well-stocked library, audiovisual research library and costume museum. Other aspects of the programme of studies include laboratory work in textile science and a detailed study of the apparel industry. Graduates from Bunka will not be taken unawares by future developments – they will have helped to shape them.

The Bunka Fashion College, Japan's foremost institution for graduate and postgraduate education in fashion, has an enrolment of 5000 students. Located in the heart of Tokyo's fashion district, the College is an internationally recognized breeding ground for a future elite of fashion designers. Former students, both men and women, have begun to write fashion history: Kenzo Takeda, Mitsuhiro Matsuda and Junko Koshino have already made a

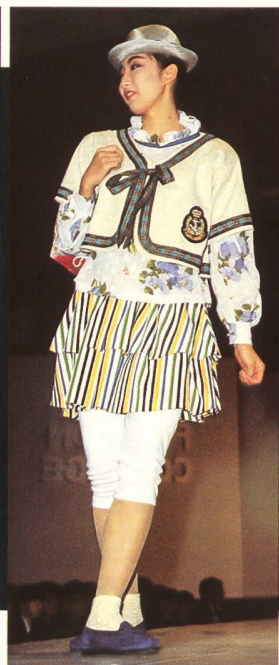
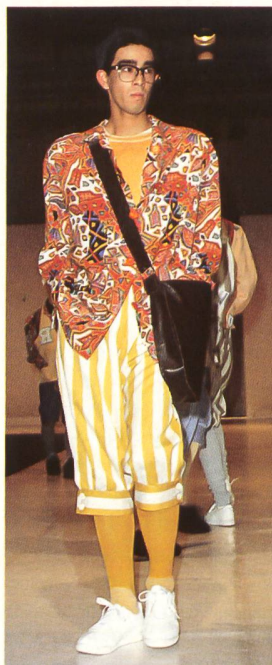
### The 16 Swiss textile companies sponsoring the event

### BUNKA FASHION IN SWISS TEXTILES:

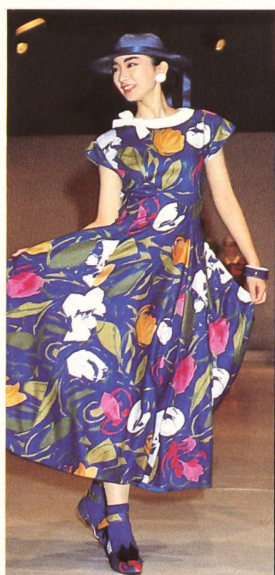
*Abraham AG, Zürich*  
*Bischoff Textil AG, St. Gallen*  
*Christian Fischbacher CO. AG, St. Gallen*  
*Forster Willi + CO. AG, St. Gallen*  
*Hausammann + Moos AG, Weisslingen*  
*Mettler + CO. AG, St. Gallen*  
*A. Naef AG, Flawil*  
*Reichenbach + CO. AG, St. Gallen*

*Jacob Rohrer AG, Rebstein*  
*Jakob Schlaepfer + CO. AG, St. Gallen*  
*E. Schubiger + CIE AG, Uznach*  
*Stehli Seiden AG, Obfelden*  
*AG Stünzi Söhne, Lachen*  
*Taco AG, Glattbrugg*  
*Weisbrod-Zürcher AG, Hausen am Albis*  
*Wetter + CO. AG, Herisau*





## B U N K A F A S H I O N I N



### Japan's young designers chose novelties from Switzerland

Simplicity and elegance are basic form criteria of Japanese fashion taste. Abstraction and reduction are the keynotes of contemporary designers' styling. If the opening of the frontiers of the Land of the Rising Sun led to a unilateral Westernization, the current was reversed in the late seventies and early eighties. So strongly, in fact, that Western fashions bore a Japanese imprint for a considerable time. Gradually, the ebb and flow of inspiration levelled out and today a creative reciprocity exists.

Despite the overall Western impression, the Bunka College Fashion Show also portrayed typical elements of Japanese style and form. Next summer's European fashion themes – for example, city chic, folklore, beach or romantic – kept the young designers on their toes. Yet their creations were independent, reflecting their mastery of Japanese form. The breadth and depth of the students' information, their maturity and cool professionalism were most impressive.

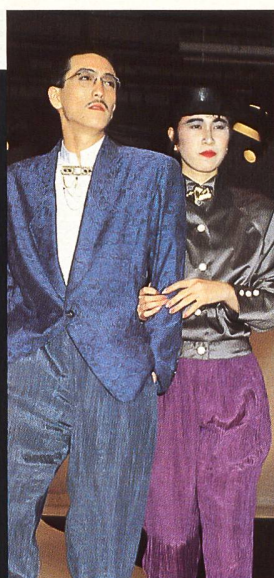
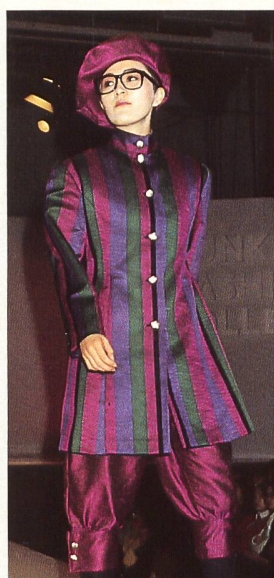
More than 300 different materials from Switzerland were worked up into the 180 models, and the Swiss textile industry granted the young fashion artists' every wish. By their profusion of creative ideas and technical perfection in the making up, the students proved themselves worthy of the generous gift. All four Departments of the College took part in the Fashion Show. The first tableau with fashion proposals in the "Lyric Style" was the work of the students enrolled in the Fashion Buying and Merchandising course. The second, "Prêt à Porter" came from the Fashion Technology course, the third, "Haute Couture" from the General Dressmaking course and all contributed to the wedding tableau. The accessories and hats were produced in the studios of the Fashion Craft course.

Five graduate students of the College, who now rank among Japan's "rising designers", also participated in the Fashion Show. One was Takako Matsuki, who took part with great distinction in the 1982 Rencontre du Jeune Talent in St. Gall. The first results of the contacts made then and the fruit of the creative collaboration between Japan's young designers and the Swiss textile industry are already big news.





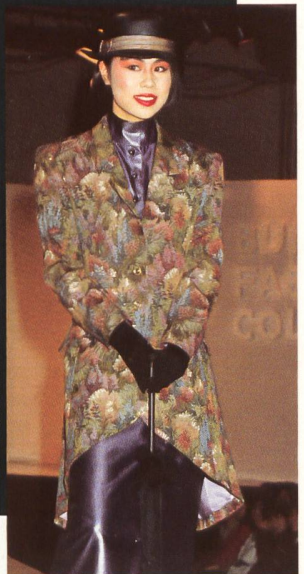
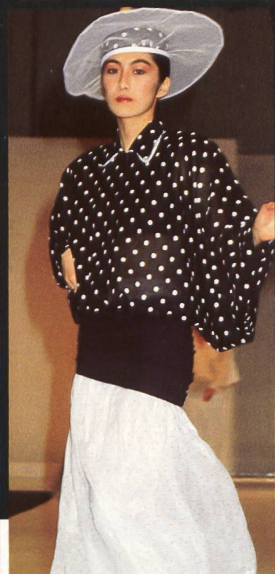
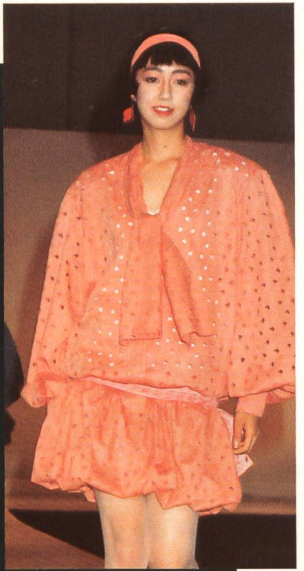
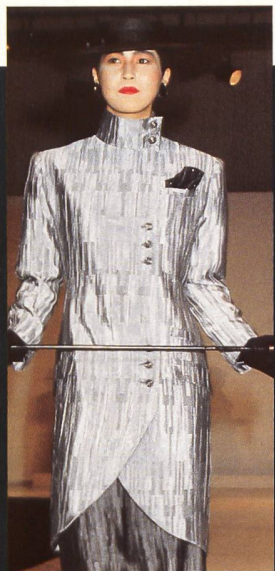
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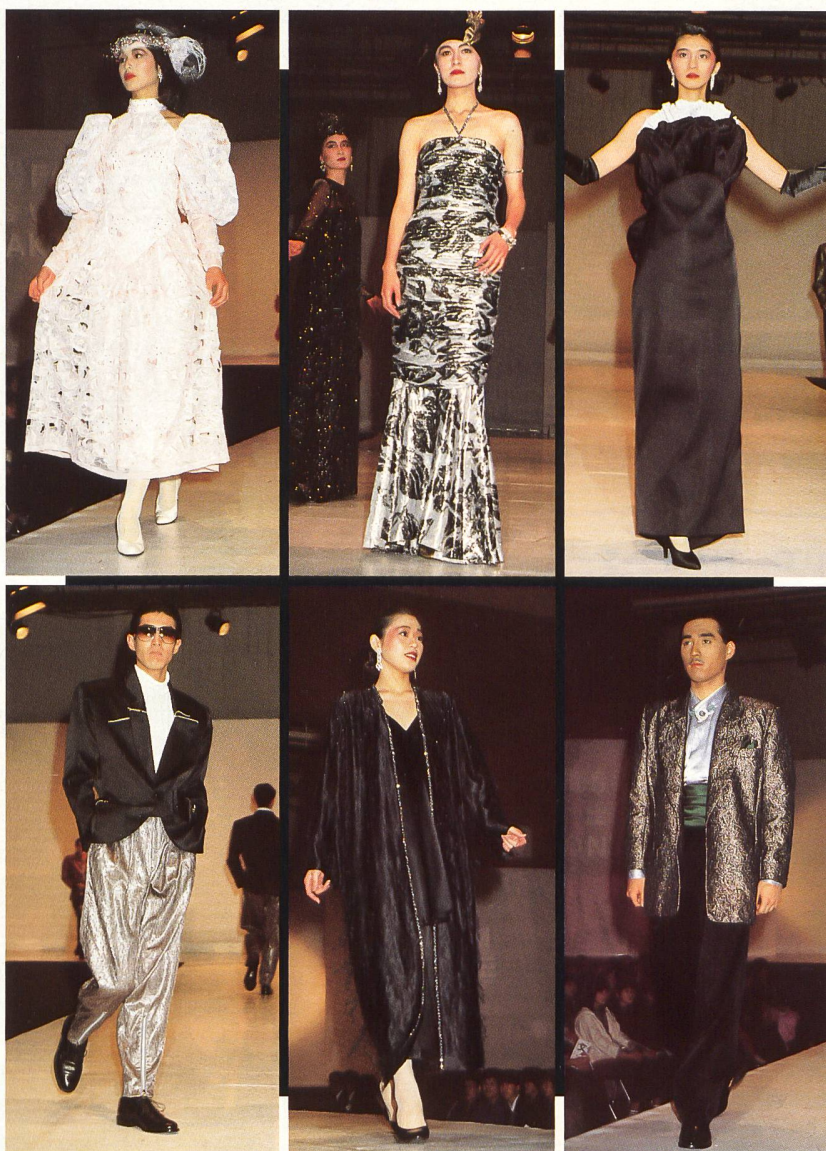
B U N K A F A S H I O N I N







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## B U N K A F A S H I O N



(From left to right) 1. Sunao Onuma, Chairman of the Bunka Fashion College/Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Tomohito of Mikasa/Mrs. and Mr. Chenaux-Repond, Ambassador of Switzerland in Tokyo.



A powerful drawcard was the special fabric display in the "Gallery", where visitors viewed and admired seventy select novelty specialities from Switzerland. The exhibition was donated to Bunka College.

## H I G H L I G H T S



(From left to right)  
2. Mrs. Chie Koike, President of the Bunka Fashion College/ Prince Tomohito of Mikasa/ Mrs. Chenaux-Repond.  
3. Mr. Frank Hamburger, Chairman of the St. Gall Chamber of Commerce and Industry/ Mrs. Chie Koike/ Mr. Hansjörg Rau, Director of the Publicity Centre for Swiss Textiles.  
4. Prince Tomohito of Mikasa/ Mrs. Chie Koike/ Mrs. Chenaux-Repond/ Mr. Sunao Onuma.  
5. Mr. Marcel Weiss, Member of the Publicity Centre for Swiss Textiles Board of Directors with organizing staff of the Bunka Fashion College.

The Swiss textile manufacturers gratified even the most exclusive wishes of the Japanese students, and the enthusiasm with which the students made up the superb fabrics was shared by the crowd of guests at the opening ceremony. Their Imperial Highnesses were just as delighted by the ravishing models as were the Swiss Ambassador, his wife and the representatives of the Swiss textile industry.