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Swiss handkerchiefs in the United States

The great success enjoyed by small Swiss handkerchiefs in the United States is due partly to the variety of their designs and partly to the fact that they answer so admirably the tastes of the buying public. Producing circles in St. Gall therefore thought it worthwhile seeking to promote a certain cooperation with America — not on the commercial but rather on the artistic level this time — with a view to making the handkerchiefs of St. Gall better known on the other side of the Atlantic. Last fall, the Office for the Promotion of the Swiss Cotton and Embroidery Industry organised a competition open to all students in schools of applied arts throughout the United States ; the jury received some 400 entries from 200 competitors, bearing witness to the great interest aroused by this competition.

According to the regulations, competitors had simply to « design a cotton handkerchief », and were allowed to send in two entries for printed, embroidered or lace handkerchiefs. The jury, which judged the designs submitted at the beginning of this year, comprised five well-known fashion writers : Elizabeth Blackwell of *Madeleine*, Estelle Brent of *McCall's Magazine*, Margaret Ingersoll of *Vogue*, Eugenia Sheppard of *The New York Herald Tribune* and Matilda Taylor of *Women's Wear Daily*. The first two prizes were won by girl students from the Moore Institute of Art in Philadelphia. The prize-winning entry represented white roses indicated simply in lightly drawn outline on a violet and blue-green ground, while the second prize was awarded for a design consisting of the interplay of surfaces and colors, also intended for a printed handkerchief. Many of the designs were for embroidered and lace handkerchiefs, but these were less successful on the whole.

The first prize, won by a 22 year-old student, Miss Joan Beatty, was a trip to Switzerland. On March 22nd, the lucky winner landed at Kloten airport in a Swissair plane, a little overwhelmed by the flight — which was her first — and the host of new impressions, but happy and eager to make the most of her two weeks stay in Switzerland by seeing and doing as much as possible.

First of all she went to St. Gall, then on an excursion to the Säntis, followed by dinner in an old castle, whose history and age much impressed her. Next came a visit to the handkerchief collections of St. Gall, and excursions to Lucerne, the Rhine falls and Zurich.

In St. Gall and the neighboring districts, she was shown everything likely to be of interest to a young American girl, and when she left for Philadelphia two weeks later, she had, she confided in us, seen enough during her short stay to make her want to come back later and see more. In June she will be taking her examination for the certificate of fabric designer, having already sold four successful designs to American firms while still a student. Afterwards she hopes to find a good job in New York, and later to make true her dream of a trip to Paris.

While the competition aroused interest in Swiss handkerchiefs among future American designers, the many

displays in shop windows as well as special TV programs made this charming Swiss speciality familiar to a wide public, who will now be on the lookout for these dainty creations of the Swiss textile industry in the United States itself or while visiting Europe on business or pleasure.



Miss Joan Beatty s'essaye à jouer du tympanon dans un orchestre champêtre appenzellois.

Miss Joan Beatty trying her skill at the dulcimer with a rustic Appenzel band.

Miss Joan Beatty ejerciéndose a tocar el tampano con una orquesta rústica de Appenzel.

Miss Joan Beatty versucht sich am Hackbrett-Spiel in einer Appenzeller Ländlerkapelle.

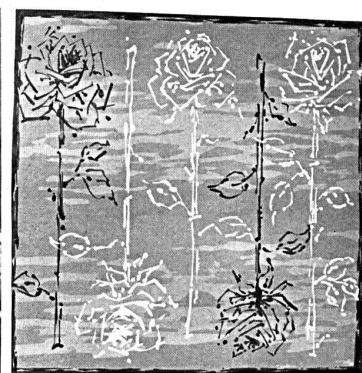


En conversation avec une brodeuse appenzelloise.

Chatting with an Appenzell embroiderer.

Charlando con una bordadora de Appenzell.

Im Gespräch mit einer Appenzeller Handstickerin.



Le dessin de mouchoir qui valut le premier prix à Miss Joan Beatty.

The handkerchief design that won Miss Joan Beatty first prize.

Dibujo para pañuelo con el que Miss Joan Beatty obtuvo el primer premio.

Die prämierte Taschentuch-Zeichnung von Miss Joan Beatty.

Knitwear Festival among the flowers at G 59

When a town like Zurich officially places its lakeside parks at the disposal, first of all, of Switzerland's women's organisations for the 1958 Saffa Exhibition and then, a year later, of gardeners and landscape gardeners for the First Swiss Horticultural Exhibition, known as « G 59 », success with the general public is assured. When the Muses and Fashion are added to women and flowers, everything is bound to be perfect.

Hence the success of the festival of « Knitwear among the flowers », so admirably organised by the Press Department of the Swiss Association of Hosiery and Knitwear Manufacturers under the auspices of the Zurich Tourist Office, which is always ready to help on such occasions. Those taking part in the organisation also included Heberlein & Co. Ltd., yarn manufacturers of Wattwil (« Helanca »), the Swiss Viscose Co. at Emmenbrücke (Nylsuisse and rayon) as well as Feldmühle Co. Ltd. at Rorschach (rayon). The setting for this lovely display was the G 59 Rotunda Palace. Anyone taking a stroll before the show round the rotunda, through the dell of azaleas, the rose beds or the garden of woodland flowers, could not fail, as he breathed the heady scent of the flowers and admired the beauty of their forms and colours, to realise the very close relationship existing between flowers, women and fashion. The magnificent golden lilies bowed their heads like graceful ballerinas before the admiring visitors.

The dancers — for there were real dancers too, both big and small — were no less graceful in their movements and were enthusiastically applauded by the public. Short ballets and acrobatic dances based on the different hours of the day and performed by small boys and girls of all ages, as well as some professional ballerinas, introduced the different displays. From the morning dreams of child-flowers to the final rondo, by way of the dance of the gnomes, the march of the pyjamas and the mirror dance, visitors were treated to an outstanding display of dancing and fashions, both of great beauty and good taste. Little fairies in dainty Nylsuisse negligés, gnomes dressed in « Helanca » tights and the traditional pointed caps, adorable little misses in panties and vests of polka dot Helanca knitted fabrics, roguish little fellows no taller



than Tom Thumb, in their track suits and pullovers of Ban-Lon Nylsuisse, a host of naiads and elves and, finally, fully fledged dancers in cocktail dresses made of viscose straw... all were so charming that one could almost have forgotten the reason behind this performance. But the charming mannequins who appeared after each number to present a wider collection of knitted models of the type previously introduced, reminded fashion writers of the reality. These mannequins showed Nylsuisse tricot for camping, for the beach and tennis as well as for after-ski outfits in such bold combinations that my right-hand neighbour could not restrain her spontaneous cries of sheer joy or amazement. Nineteen Swiss hosiery and knitwear manufacturers once again gave proof of their well-known mastery and skill.

But the Swiss nylon industry does not manufacture frills and frivolities alone, as visitors were able to see for themselves shortly afterwards on the motor ship « Saentis »; it also manufactures sturdier articles for industrial and technical purposes. After an amusing speech in the presence of the authorities and representatives of industrial and trade circles as well as the press, the Zurich fleet was solemnly presented with a light green « Nylcor » cable, 260 feet long and weighing only 46 lb., a gift of the Swiss nylon industry.

Elsi Bräker

