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PIERRE CARDIN

Caroline Ractt

A Lavish Show

The couture collections are somewhat similar to the famous Lido Revue in the Champs-Elysées. Eternally lavish, to anyone who visits it from time to time, with friends up from the country or entertaining business connections from abroad, it looks pretty much the same as it did the last time he was there. And yet, the regular patron notices the changes, appreciates the new sketches, applauds the graceful evolutions of the inimitable Bluebell Girls, the new costumes, the skilful lighting effects...

To the layman, the lavish show of Couture varies very little too from one season to the next, since it is almost always the logical outcome and fruition of the best ideas sown during the previous months, which have germinated and borne fruit, when the time was ripe. And yet, in six months everything has changed. To begin with, the weight of the clothes — heavier for winter, lighter for summer. Imperceptibly, waists have changed position, shoulders and arm-holes have a new look, skirts have been lengthened or shortened. Fabrics and colours are no longer the same. It's not much, you'll say. But it is quite enough however, two months later, to make an outfit either the height of fashion or completely outdated.

"They" have not consulted each other. "They" have been working in the secrecy of their studios. But between them, "they" have managed to produce a new fashion with a common theme running right through it. What could be more different than the styles of Chanel and Balenciaga? What could be less similar than a dress by Dior one by Grès? Agreed, but in the final analysis, any given season, all their creations have a family resemblance about them.

* * *

Obviously fashion reporters have less grist to their mill in the periods of subtle change than when the whole fashion scene is turned topsy-turvy. They search avidly through the programmes of the showings for any features which the designer might have been wishing to emphasize. But, in the end, their bubble of hope and expectation is pricked and they are happy to be able to define a few general trends.

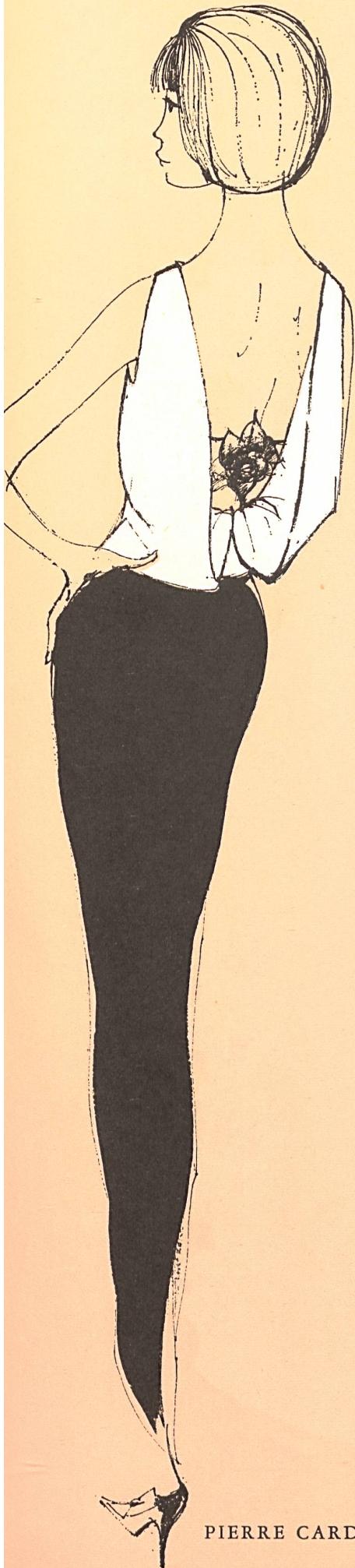
Here they are then, for the 1963 spring season, just as they come to mind. First of all, it seems as though the narrow, sloping shoulder, with its low placed sleeves, is on the way out. The top man, Dior, alias Marc Bohan, has widened shoulders (shades of the



PIERRE CARDIN



JEAN PATOU



PIERRE CARDIN

Maggy Rouff style of about the year 1945 !), has hesitantly proposed the leg-of-mutton sleeves of the turn of the century, and raised sleeves high on the shoulder.

A second trend, and this can only be the work of Haute Couture, is the accent on stand-away collars on suits and dresses. Technically, this is a very difficult feat to achieve, since the collar no longer has the neck to rest on but has to rely on the top of the shoulders for support, which presupposes a skill and an ingenuity that only Couture could possess.

Incidentally, a short while ago there was a big argument in the columns of "Figaro", between several top couturiers and a number of leading ready-to-wear manufacturers, on the exact demarcation line between Couture and ready-to-wear. Obviously what distinguishes one from the other is the difficulty of the cut and especially the execution. It is not the seeming complication of a model which makes it difficult to copy, but the necessity of being able to adapt it, without fittings, to the general run of feminine body-structures. Enough of digressions however, let's get back to our dresses, tailormades and coats for the spring.

Since the progress achieved in the cut of women's undergarments, in particular the rare perfection of the modern brassière, many dresses have given the impression of wishing to emphasize the bust. Admittedly, this trend continues, but one has the impression — is it because the curves of today's mannequins have a tendency to be rather less obtrusive? — that the couturier is more concerned this season with the general effect of the top as a whole than with the bust alone. The tops of dresses and tailormades have been consciously widened. There are bat-wing or bird-man tailormades, bloused suits, dresses whose sleeves flap in the wind like flags, cape-coats. And to emphasize the trend, the artist's collar with the wide lavallière bow is well to the fore in almost all the collections.

Other comparative novelties include a great many redingotes and tunic dresses. In the field of fabrics: a profusion of linens, printed mousselines, lace: the harbingers of fine days to come.

Linens with big and boldly coloured flowers predominate and conjure up memories, among those of us old enough to remember, of Paul Poiret in his heyday. Evening dresses are lavishly decorated and beaded.

There is no escaping the fact, a dress has to be decked with jewels and spangles to give a really luxurious effect, and beaded evening dresses — like Valentine's mauve dress in Françoise Sagan's new play — hold the centre of the stage this season.

There is nothing special to say about the colours, which apart from the classical blacks and vernal navy-blues and whites reproduce the whole range of possible shades.

Knee-length skirts, shoes with lower heels, made of the same fabric as the dress, hats generally plonked straight on the head, fancy bowler shapes, or little hoods thrown back to frame the face, these are the ingredients that go to make the 1963 line.

Couture is permanently in danger. At the most, two thousand clients, apart from the professional buyers and the copying rights. Exorbitant overheads, crippling social charges, sums that defy all logic invested in the preparation of the collections, whence prices that take one's breath away. But the precariousness of its situation is the very lifeblood of Couture, the source of its vitality. Spurred on by danger, it is always seeking to surpass itself. And, in spite of everything, Paris remains its stronghold, a magnetic stronghold since no season passes without some foreign couturier coming to try his luck in the metropolis of fashion.

Of the thirty-odd couturiers that regularly make the headlines, only few are of the real old guard: Lanvin, Patou, Maggy-Rouff, Jacques Heim, Chanel; slightly more of the not so old: Ricci, Carven, Dior, Griffe, Balmain, Dessès, Grès, Balenciaga, Givenchy, de Rauch. And, what a host of new ones! Pierre Cardin, J.-L. Scherrer, Louis Féraud, André Courrèges, Guy Laroche, Yves St-Laurent, Jacques Estérel, Ferreras, Michel Goma, Roberto Capucci, Simonetta and Fabiani, Philippe Venet, Yorn... and a whole galaxy of others whom we apologize for not mentioning.

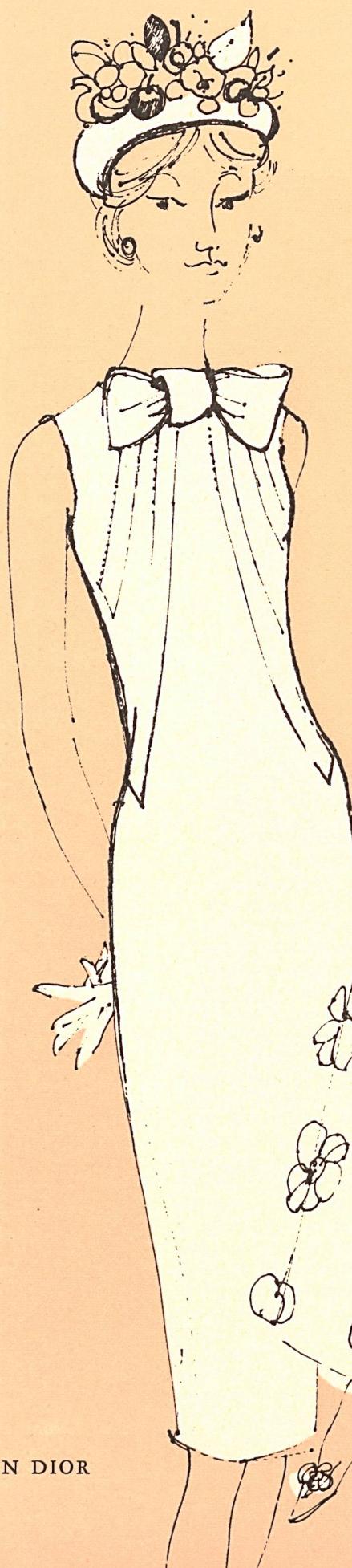
On different occasions in this periodical we have evoked the theme of the torch handed on from one newcomer to the next. And this is the truth, the strength of the Paris school; in couture as in painting.

Not everybody can buy a Rolls Royce, a Ferrari or a Jaguar, drive a car with bodywork by Farina or Bertone, but it is these luxury models that pave the way for the massproduction cars and raise their level.

There are few women who can buy a Dior or a Balenciaga dress, but these fabulous dream dresses are the ones that set the fashion for women all over the world, once the necessary simplifications have been made. And we must not forget to mention the part played by the creators of textiles in this grandiose parade, in this symphony of beauty and colour.

Come on now! Things are not so bad in Parisian Couture... another season, another success. Could anyone wish for more?

Gala.



CHRISTIAN DIOR



JEAN PATOU

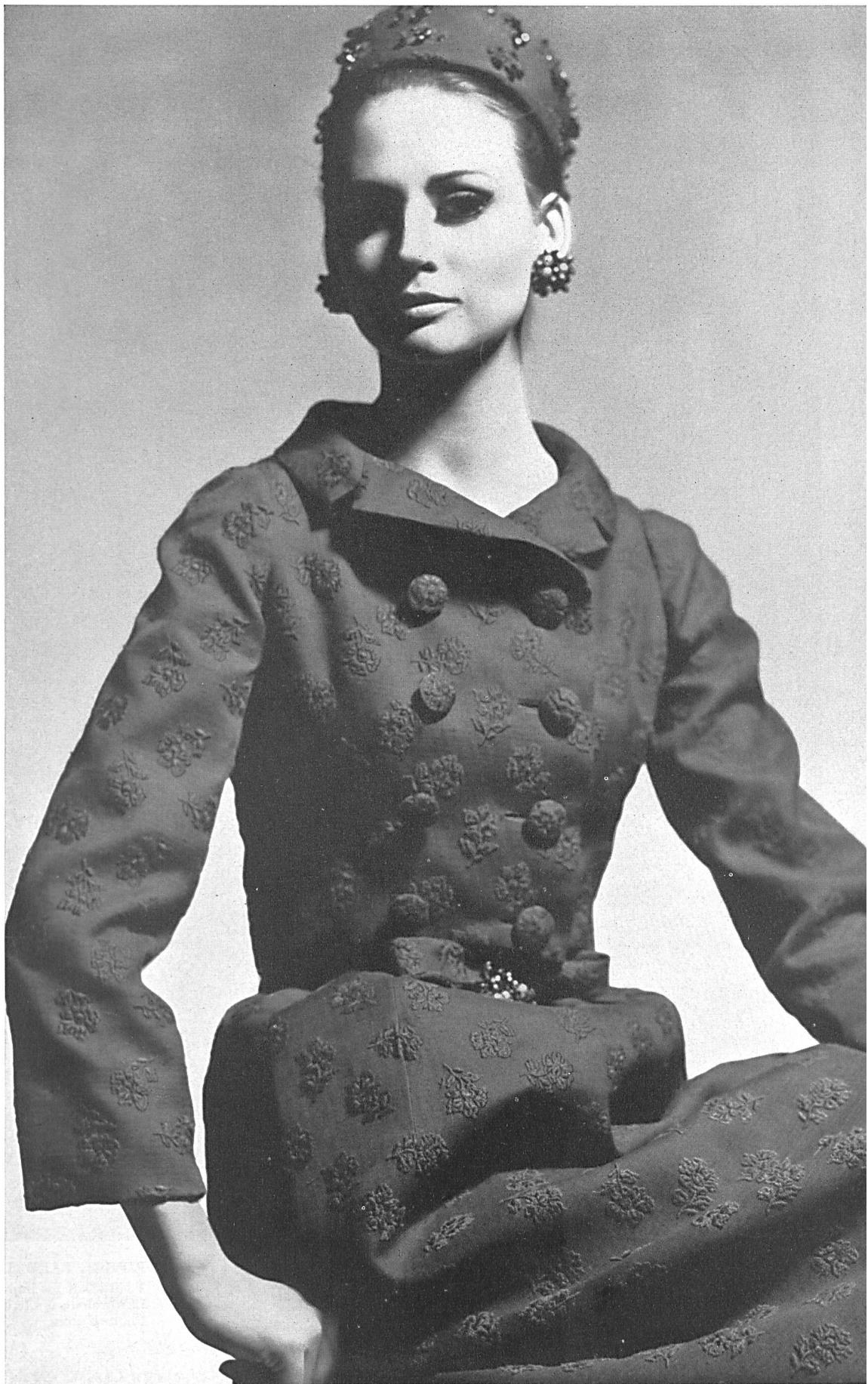
Dans les collections: les nouveautés de Zurich

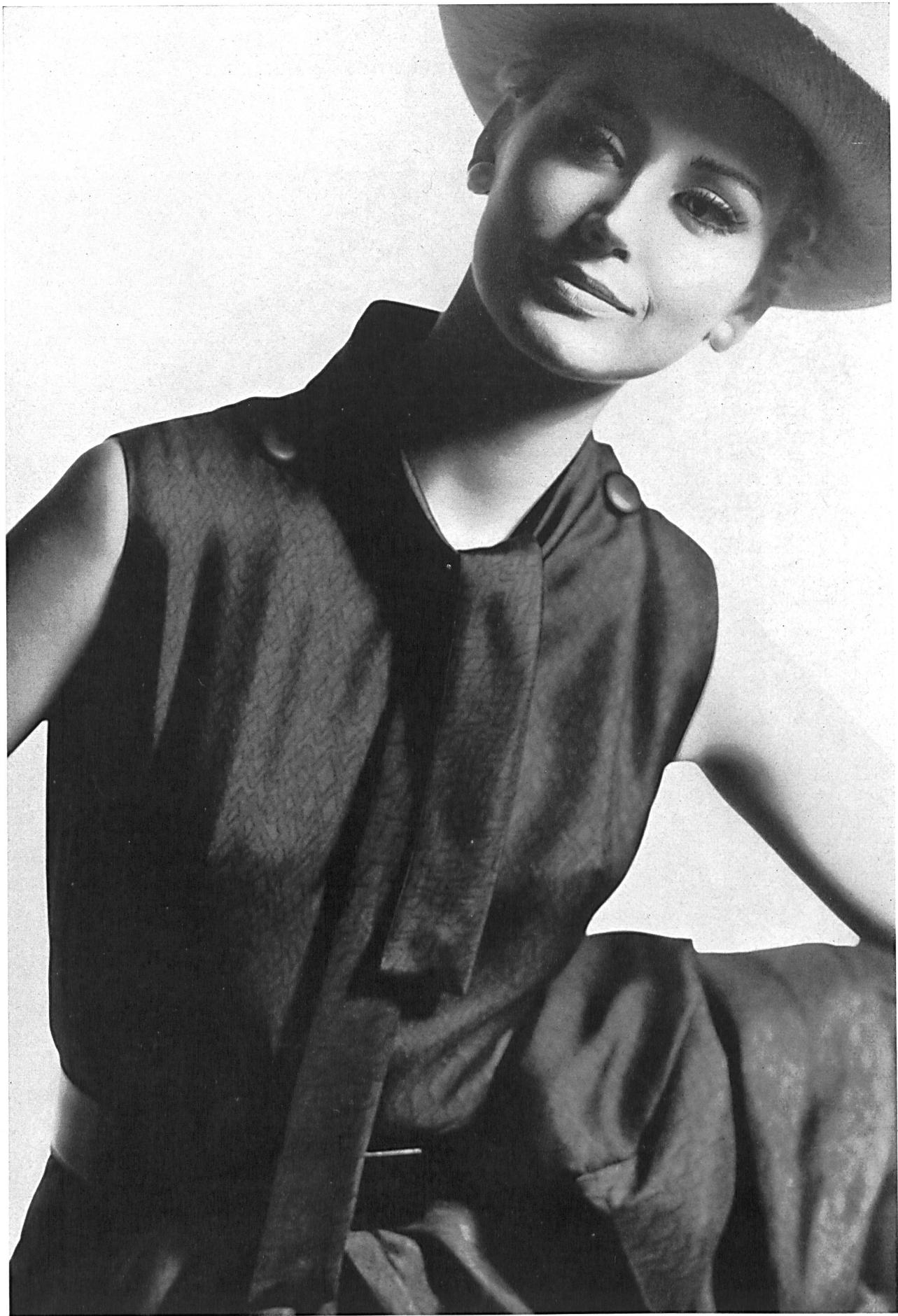
MODÈLES EXCLUSIFS – REPRODUCTION INTERDITE

CHRISTIAN DIOR

«Gazar brodé» de
L. Abraham & Cie, Soieries S.A.,
Zurich

Photo Kublin





PIERRE BALMAIN
Twill «Doucine imprimé» de
L. Abraham & Cie, Soieries S.A., Zurich
Photo Kublin



YVES SAINT-LAURENT

«Rosco imprimé» et blouse en twill «Doucine imprimé» de
L. Abraham & Cie, Soieries S.A., Zurich
Photo Kublin

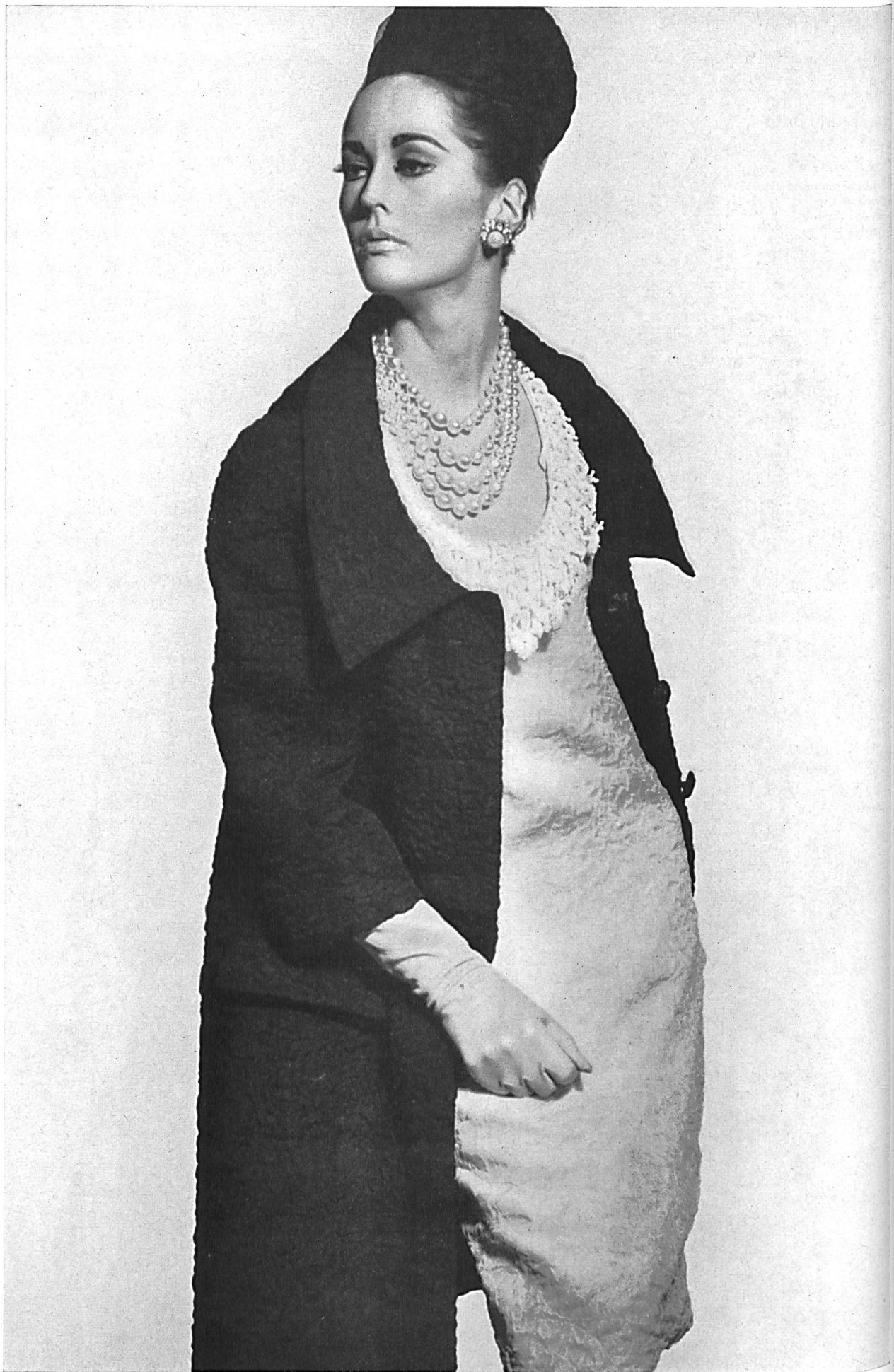


COURREGES

«Rosco imprimé» de
L. Abraham & Cie,
Soieries S.A., Zurich
Photo Rév.

VES SAINT-LAURENT
will «Unduki imprimé» de
Abraham & Cie,
ieries S.A., Zurich
oto Kublin





CHRISTIAN DIOR

Cloqué de soie «Fripón» de
L. Abraham & Cie, Soieries S.A., Zurich
Photo Kublin

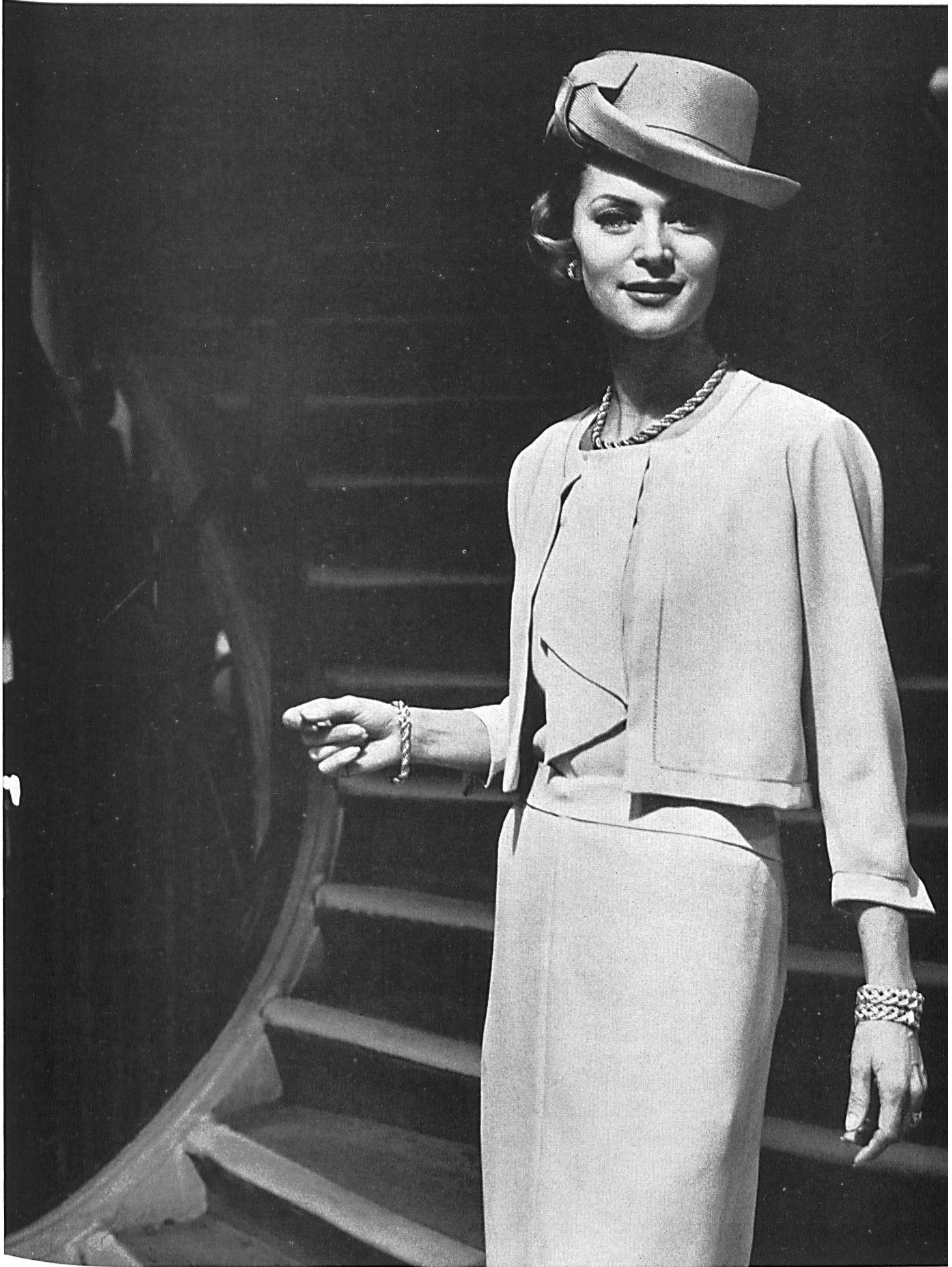
MICHEL GOMA

Cloqué de coton «Roko» de
L. Abraham & Cie, Soieries S.A., Zurich
Photo Kublin





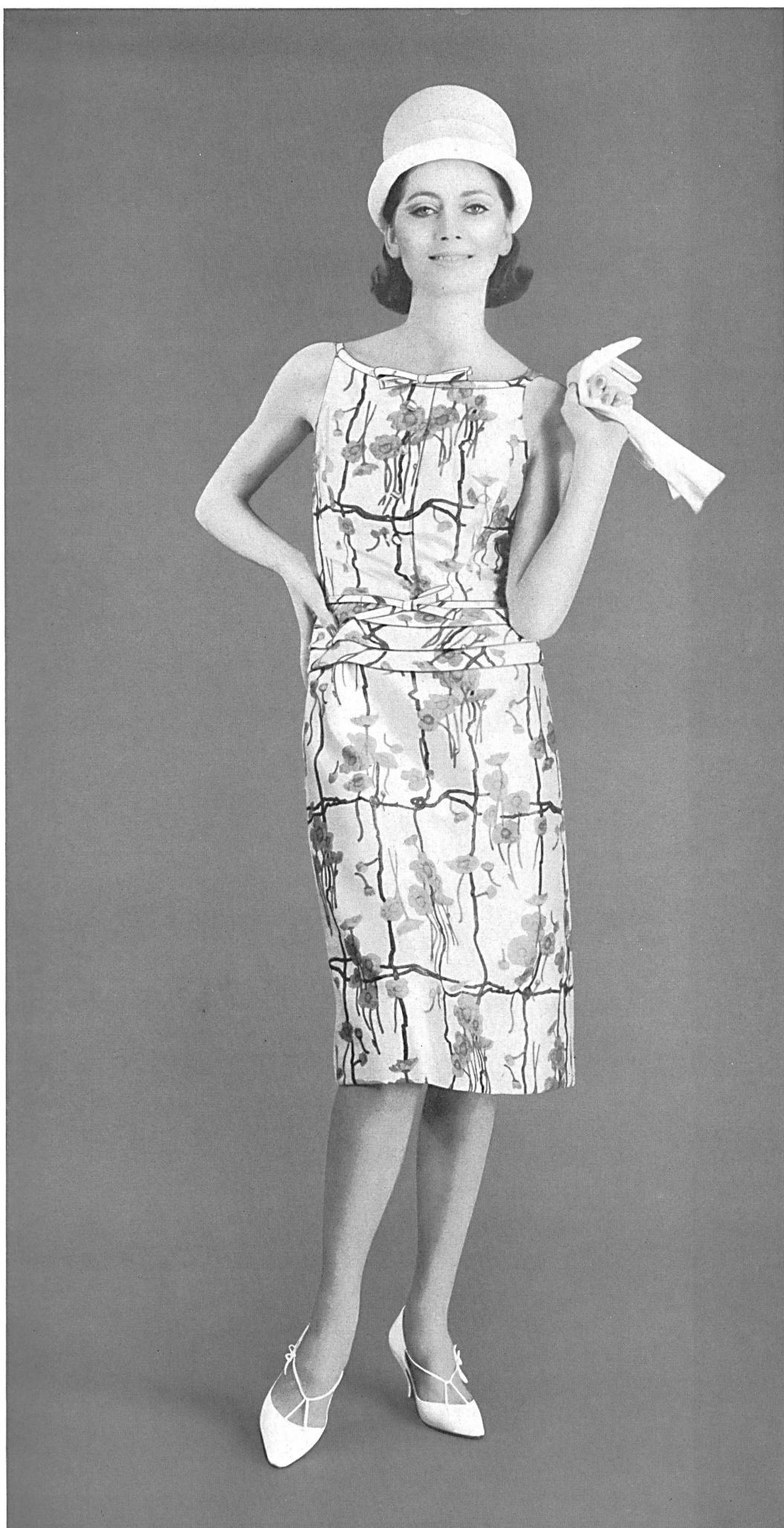
MAURICE ROGER
Crêpe «Musola» de Lamarre, Paris
Tissé par les Soieries Stehli S.A.
Zurich



CHANEL
Crêpe «Musola» de Lamarre, Paris



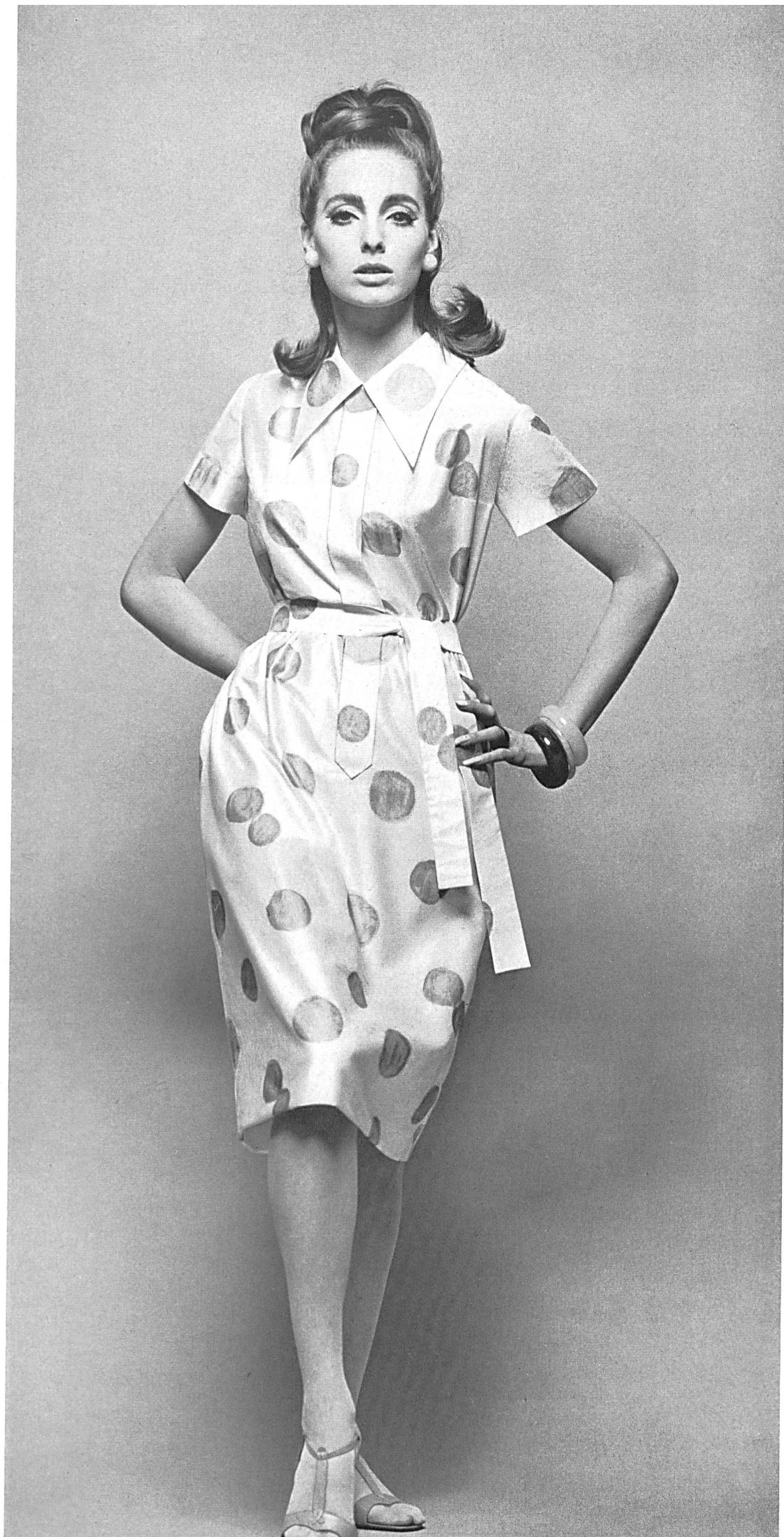
PIERRE CARDIN
Soie « Hirondelle » imprimée des
Tissages de Soieries Naef Frères S.A., Zurich
Photo Studio Mac Mahon



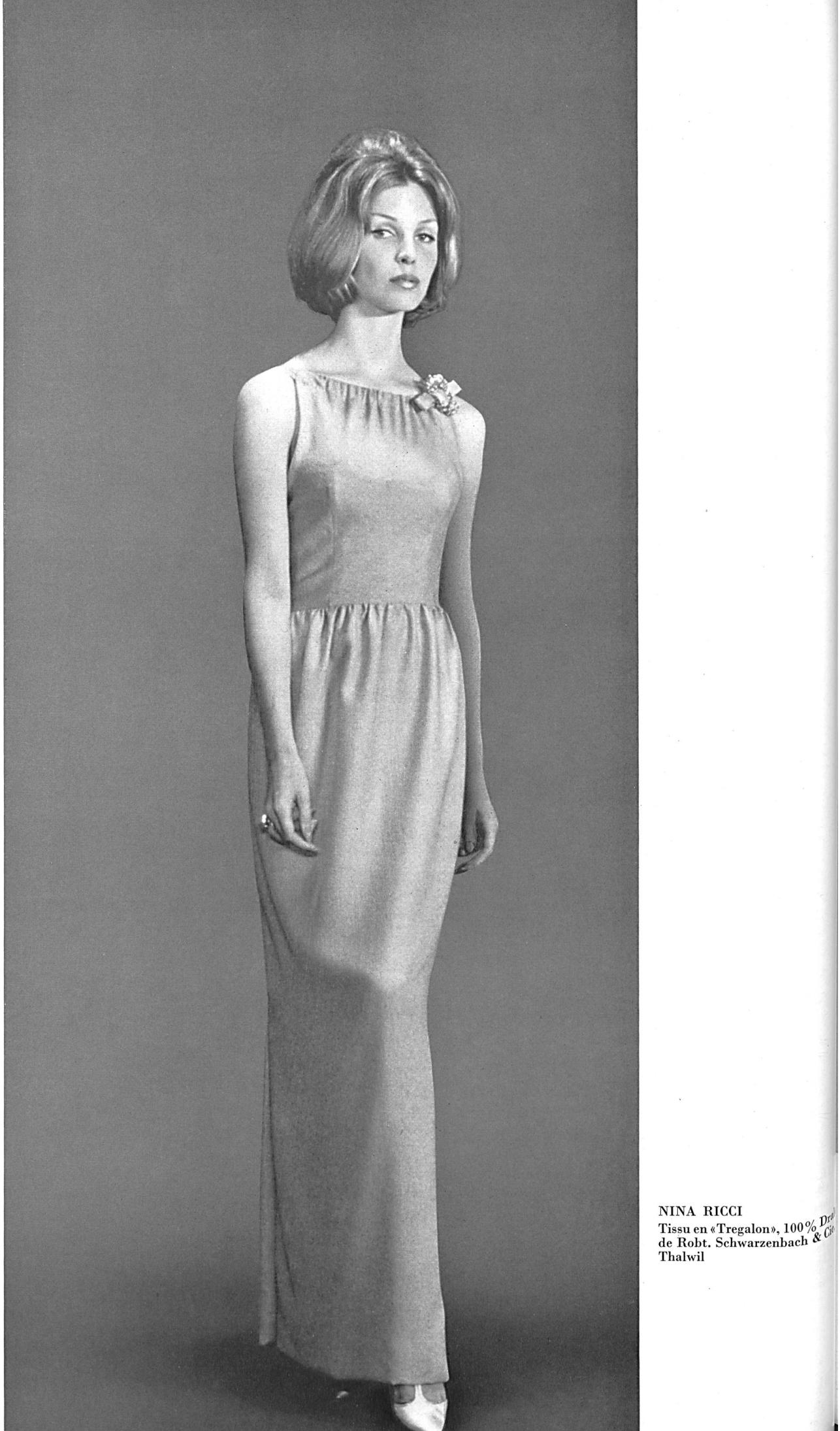
JACQUES HEIM
«Gonda» imprimé des
Tissages de Soieries
Naef Frères S.A., Zurich
Photo Studio Mac Mahon



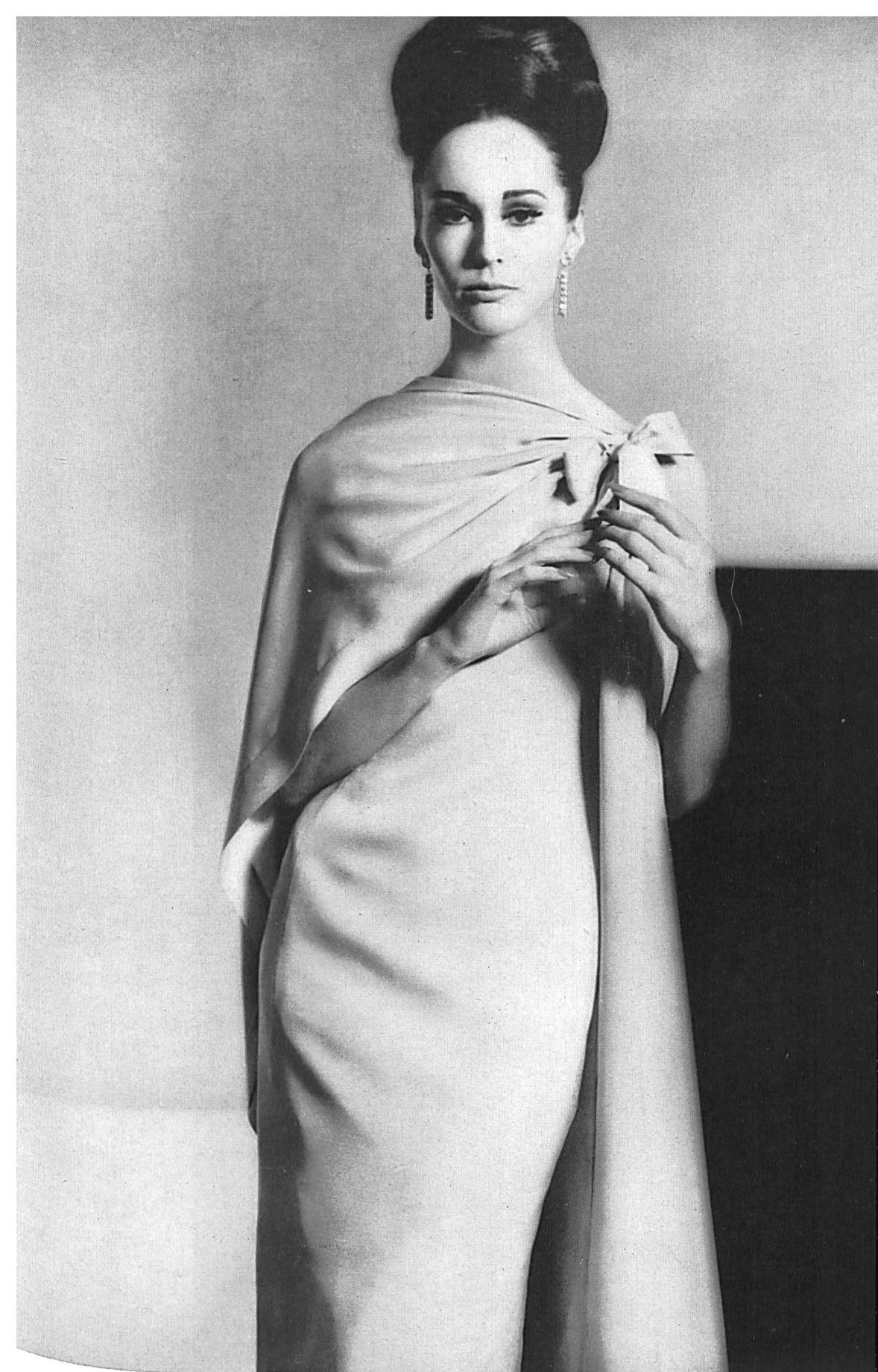
HERMES
Tissu «Swiss Lascara Nanking»
Weisbrod-Zürer Fils, Hausen
Grossiste à Paris: Robert Perris
Photo R. Laurent



JEANNE LANVIN
(«Boutique»)
«bégé-Super Atlantic» de
Bége S. A., tissus nouveauté,
Zurich
Grossiste à Paris:
Chatillon Mouly Roussel

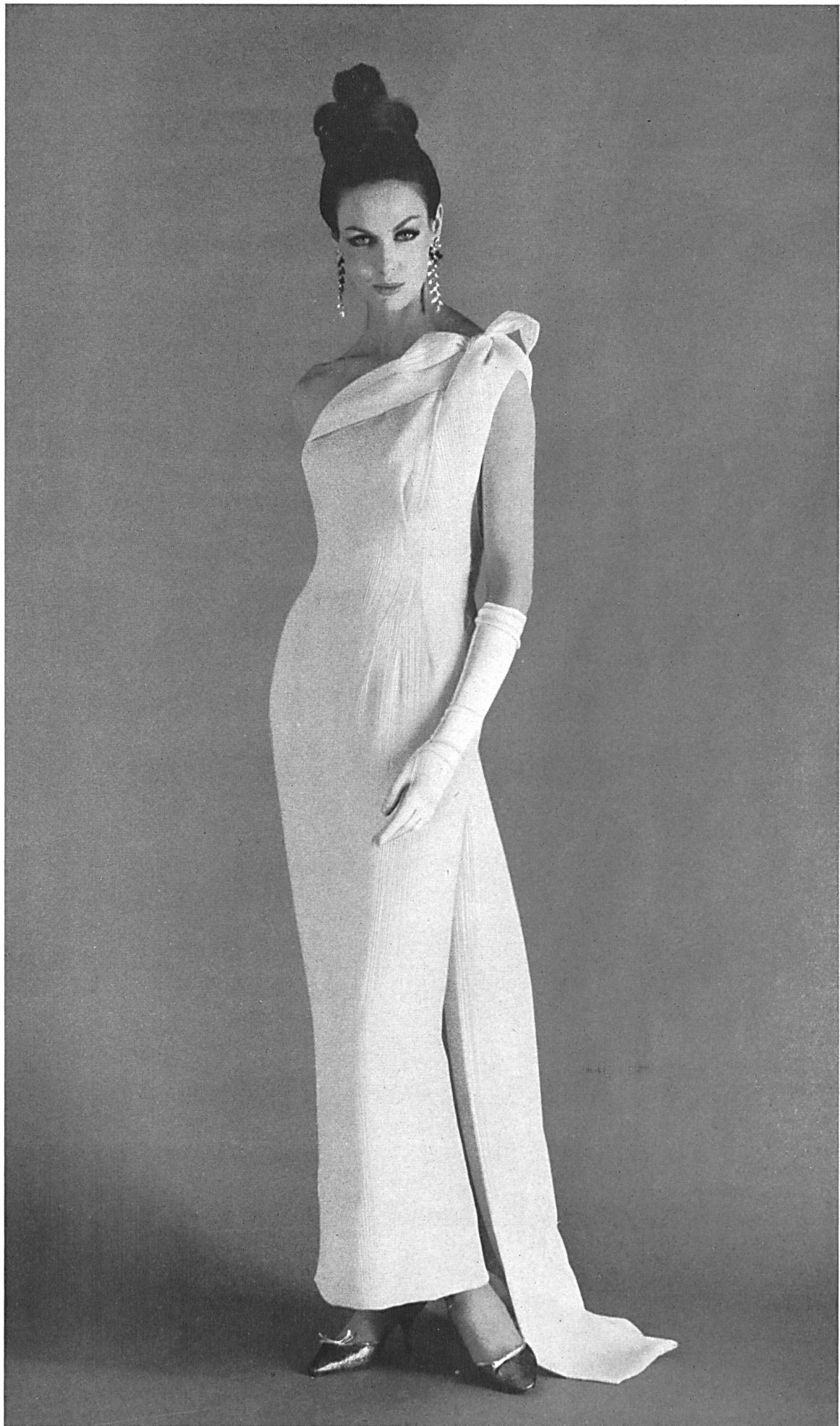


NINA RICCI
Tissu en «Tregalon», 100% ^{Dra}
de Robt. Schwarzenbach & Cie
Thalwil

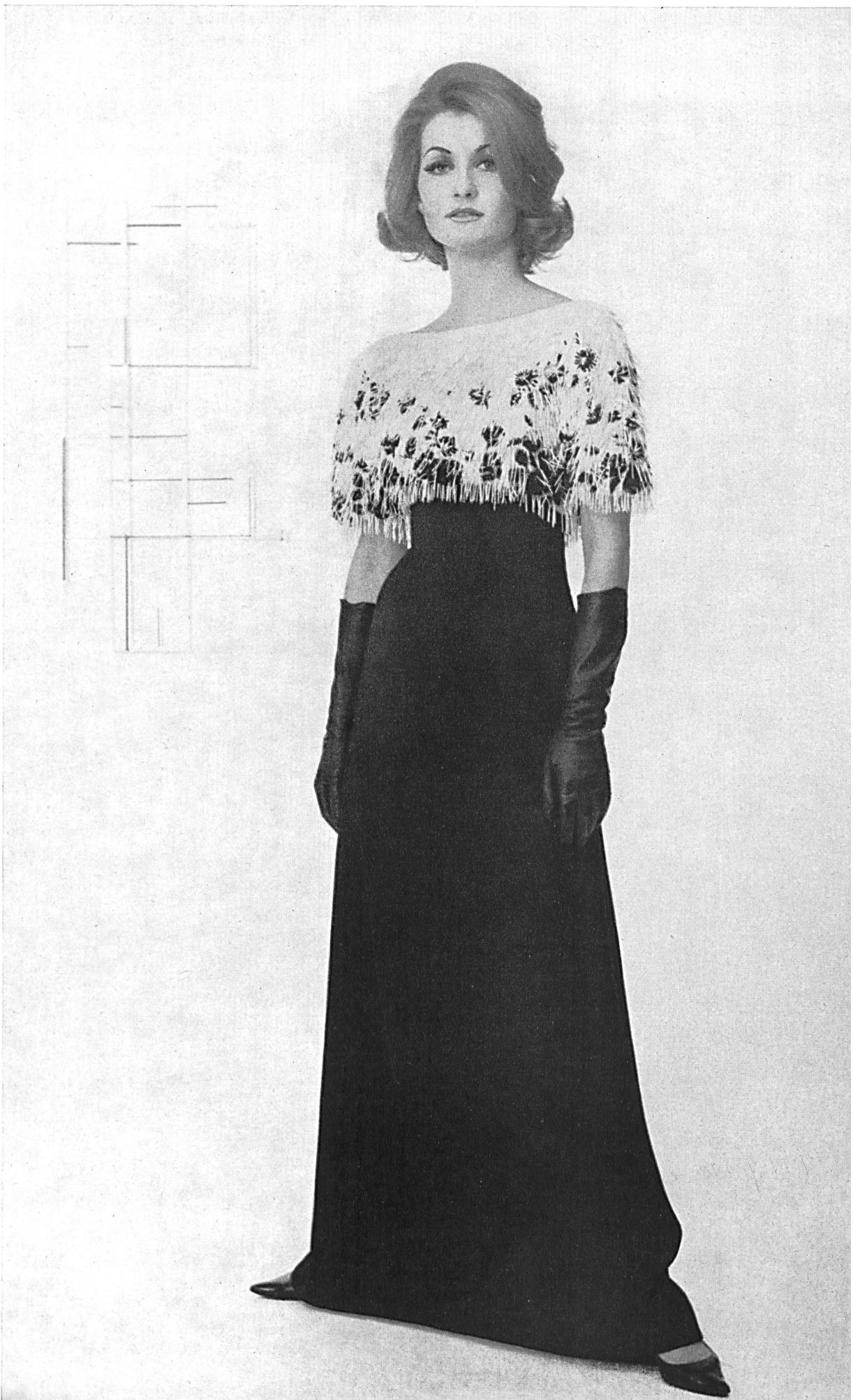


NINA RICCI

«Crêpe fleur», soie naturelle, de
Robt. Schwarzenbach & Cie, Thalwil
Photo Claude Ohm



CARVEN
Cloqué «Crystal» soie
naturelle de
Heer & Cie S.A., Thal
Grossiste à Paris:
Robert Burg & Cie



JEANNE LANVIN
Crêpe soie de la S.A.
Stünzi Fils, Horgen
Photo Maywald



Soie mousseline imprimée et soie « Gonda » imprimée
des Tissages de Soieries Naef Frères S. A., Zurich
Photo J.-L. Cuégan

Shantung satin soie des
Tissages de Soieries Naef Frères S. A., Zurich
Photo J.-L. Cuégan