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Letter from Italy

The Italian autumn/winter 1965/66 collections were shown almost simultaneously in Rome and Florence, but each of these cities has a cachet all its own: Florence favours reasonably priced couture, while Rome remains faithful to big glamour creations. In actual fact, the difference is not so great, for the two trends share many points in common: the fabrics, the line, the colours, etc.

Among the fabrics there were a great many crisp reversible woollens for coats, tailormades and town dresses; and for the evening, textured synthetic brocades, in gold

and silver on a white ground, and above all some lovely heavy embroideries, most of them of Swiss origin.

Cleancut lines mark the end of frou-frou, and only the very dressiest dresses still have a faint touch of romaniticism about them. Is it the influence of Courrèges? In our opinion, the impetus for this trend comes rather from two newcomers, who were the first to realize the move towards simplification that was in the air: Mila Schön, in Florence, with her attractive style perfect for the modern woman of taste, and Barocco of Rome, with his talents as designer and artist.

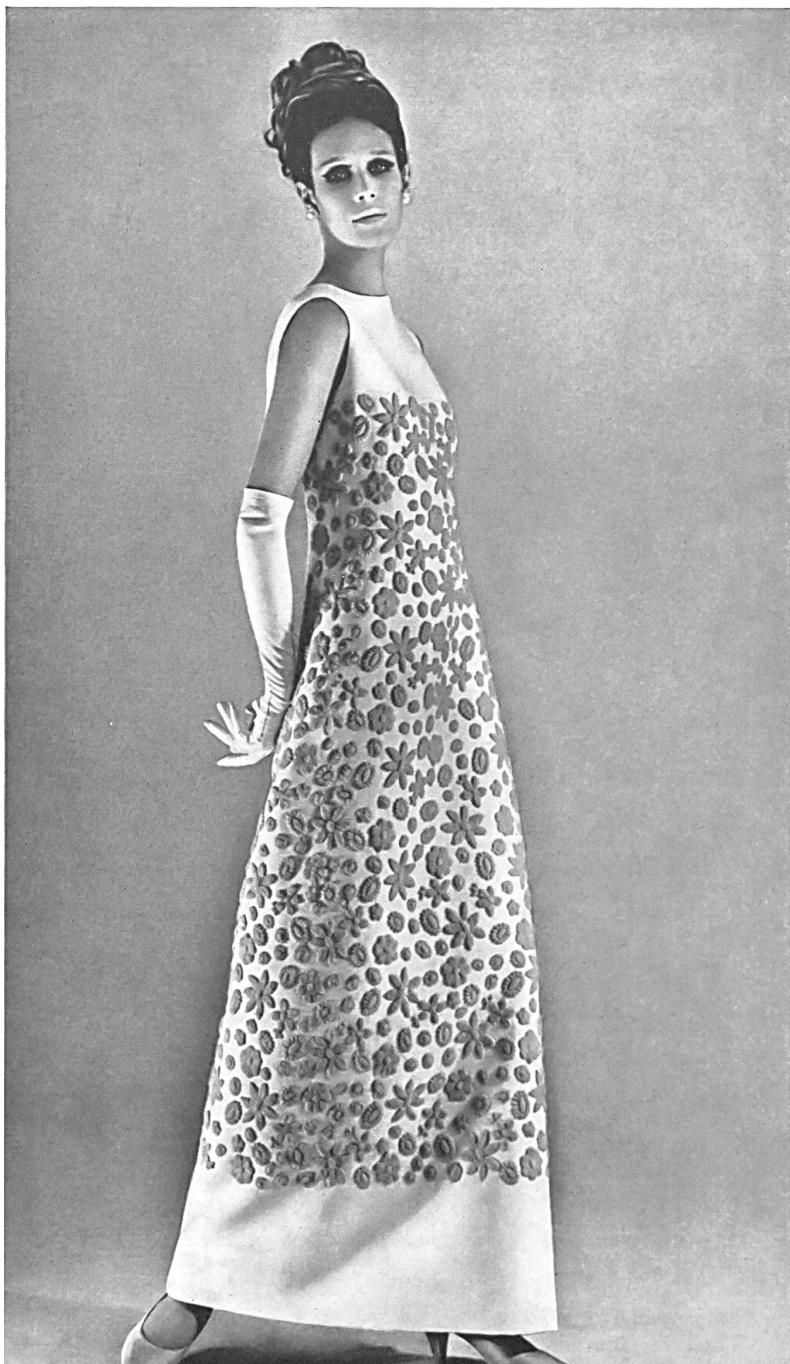
In Florence, in addition to the exotic leisure wear collections of the Marquis Pucci, it was Mila Schön, from Milan, who was so successful with her extremely well-made youthful collection emphasizing the simple line: cleancut shoulders, hardly any waist emphasis, hem stopping short at the knee. All her models were made in exclusive fabrics of great sumptuousness, in particular a number of St. Gall creations such as cut-out embroideries of velvet and tulle with new check designs, macramé guipures with superimposed flowers, etc. We even saw a new style bridal outfit topped by a cosmonaut's space helmet, above a gown and white boots, all—even the bouquet—in St. Gall woollen embroidery with large dots, on a cotton tulle ground.

Barocco, alias Mr. Gilles, a young Swiss couturier, has made a name for himself with a "condensed, anti-romantic, youthful and severe collection", as he puts it. This designer appreciates the fabrics of his native country, and his cocktail range is made almost entirely of heavy silks from Zurich. His most sensational creation however was a dressy St. Gall chenille embroidered black net coat, with an extremely sumptuous sheer effect.

Let us also mention Jole Veneziani, the famous Milan couturière, who has fallen completely under the spell of St. Gall embroideries which she saw being made during a recent trip to Switzerland; Schubert, too, uses cut out embroidery insertions for the evening as well as sometimes gigantic floral appliqué work in St. Gall guipure. Swiss guipure is also well to the fore at Gattinoni's, particularly in a sumptuous formal black dress with a very restrained line.

At Fontana's, finally, we saw a profusion of Swiss organza, used mainly for jabot collars framing deep décolletés, and big ruched cuffs: this was the most romantic of the Italian autumn winter 1965/66 collections.

Jole Rota-Bennato



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Broderie de laine sur organza de soie

Wool embroidery on silk organza

Bordado de lana sobre organza de seda

Wollstickerei auf Seidenorganza

Modèle: Jole Veneziani, Milan

Photo Tenca