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THE SPRING COLLECTIONS 86

"What we see evolving in the Eighties is the sense that all fashion influences are entirely female oriented." That statement was made by Oscar de la Renta, who would scarcely have thought of making it a year ago. For it would simply not have been true, even in America which, notwithstanding all the business women fired with managerial ambition and imbued with proverbial male toughness where moneymaking is concerned, has never totally banned the weapons of seduction from fashion, dutifully adhering – at least by day – to the sportswear style in the field of masculine-feminine tensions. Stoutly opposed to the term "androgynous" – a somewhat incongruous buzzword in the vocabulary of fashion, that has already lost something of its punch – de la Renta claims: "I feel that fashion can exist without losing the romance of being a woman." And Bob Mackie adds enthusiastically: "In a true celebration of femininity, the Spring collection is a tribute to the romantic woman and her sense of fantasy."

Why this abrupt change is outlook that is remodelling not only the New York fashion scene but happenings in European fashion centres as well? What kind of aspirations are involved and to what extent can they be satisfied? The question is still an open one, the die is still not cast in the treatment of the new-found femininity. But right now, TV prima donnas from "Dallas" and "Denver" and even the always-spick-and-span Nancy Reagan are obviously triumphing over the casual, self-assertive career woman. Marilyn Monroe leaves Laureen Bacall in the shade. Somewhat primly, Audrey Hepburn joins in. And Frank Sinatra's sentimental serenade "I got you under the skin" as background music diffuses a whiff of nostalgia. Back to the dream factory.

Shape is the password for the new silhouettes, for which "slim" is a tacit prerequisite. The oversizes, voluminous casings and layers that permitted the gracious game of hide-and-seek have vanished. The close sitting cashmere pullover and simple short jersey shift have become the trademarks of a style that traces the body contours and underscores the female figure on the one hand while propagating emphatic understatement on the other. For day fashions are often tremendously simple. The pullover and pencil skirt or blouse and classic slacks are promoted to the ranks of fashion showpieces. Top-flight designers unhesitatingly send over the catwalk quite ordinary little straight dresses, with above-the-knee hemlines and short sleeves, and white collar and trimmings as sole decorations, and no "accompaniment" whatever: the complete antithesis of the versatile separates style, very popular till recently but now definitely losing ground. Sleek collarless costumes with short or longish, tailored and not-so-tailored jackets are teamed with slim cassiques and tunics and skimpy drape dresses in jersey or crêpe de Chine to play up the latest sophisticated simplicity.

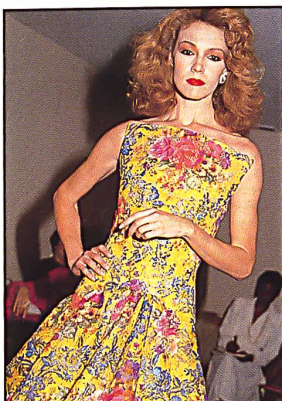
But only in the evening does New York give fitting expression to "the romance of being a woman". This evening is long on numerous counts: long parades of long dresses constitute the kernel and climax of most American designer collections, if not the collection itself – as in the case of the more outspoken specialists. And the list of social functions for which elegant and seductive dressing is de rigueur is long, too. Because in the evening, the American woman wants to show what she's got, both literally and figuratively. And the fashion trendsetters lend a hand with gusto and fantasy: women are streamlined at Caroline Herrera, slightly provocative at Giorgio Sant'Angelo, pretty as a picture by Mainbocher at Bill Blass, romantic at Oscar de la Renta, and sirenish in shiny silk and scintillating sequins at Scaasi. Fabrics – among which Swiss novelties loom large – express these many and varied stylistic possibilities.

PE

BY JOLE FONTANA

Photos: Christopher Moore

SCAASI BOUTIQUE
SCHLAEPFER



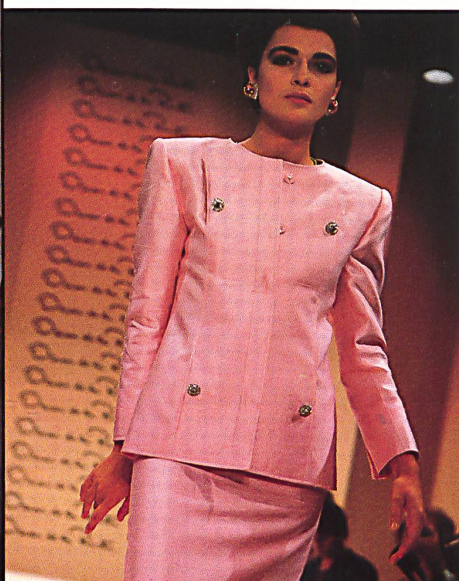
PAULINE TRIGÈRE
FISCHBACHER



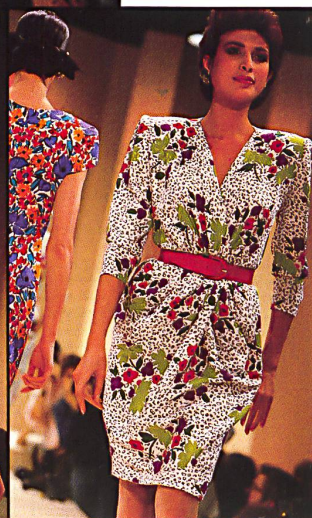
CAROLINA HERRERA
FISCHBACHER



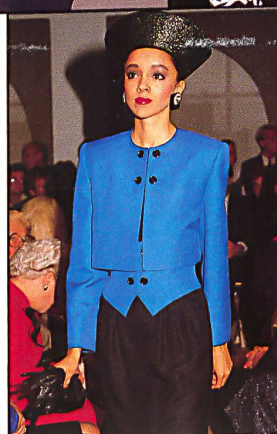
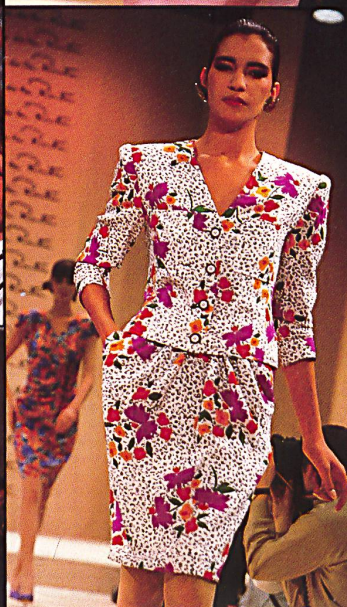
OSCAR DE LA RENTA
SCHUBIGER



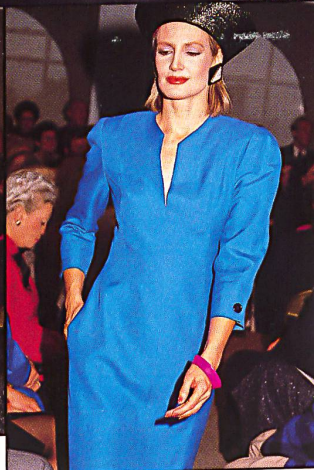
OSCAR DE LA RENTA
ABRAHAM



OSCAR DE LA RENTA
ABRAHAM



ADELE SIMPSON
WEISBROD-ZÜRRER



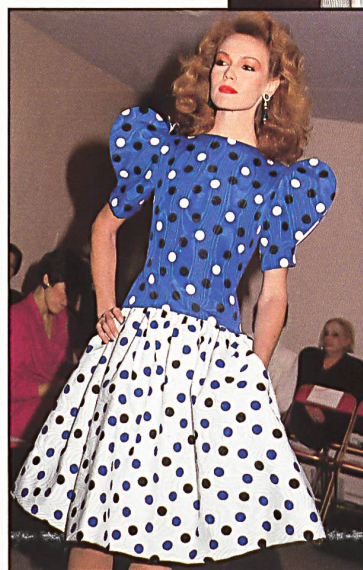
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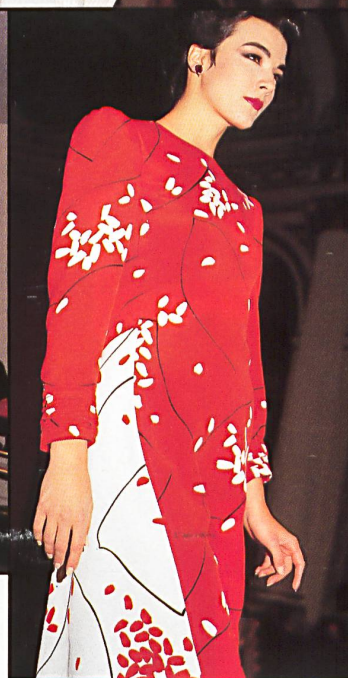
FRESH ATTITUDE

The clean look has always played a role in American fashions. The neatness that exhales freshness and exudes optimism is as integral a feature of everyday life in New York's office blocks and sidewalks as Saks is of Fifth Avenue. In Spring 86 this fresh attitude is to be achieved with lots of white – white satin-backed shantung (Schubiger), prints on white grounds – piqué (Fischbacher), silk crêpe and moiré ottoman (Abraham). Snow-white collars and trimmings are all-important details.

CAROLINA HERRERA
FISCHBACHER



SCAASI BOUTIQUE
ABRAHAM



CAROLINA HERRERA
ABRAHAM

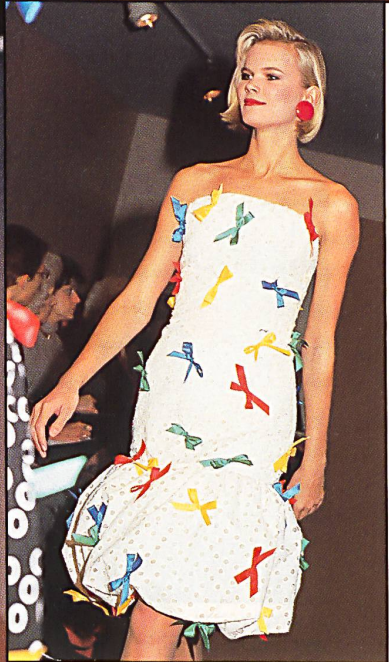


CAROLINA HERRERA
FISCHBACHER



CAROLINA HERRERA
FISCHBACHER

OSCAR DE LA RENTA / SCHUBIGER



SCAASI BOUTIQUE
SCHLAEPFER

OSCAR DE LA RENTA
SCHUBIGER

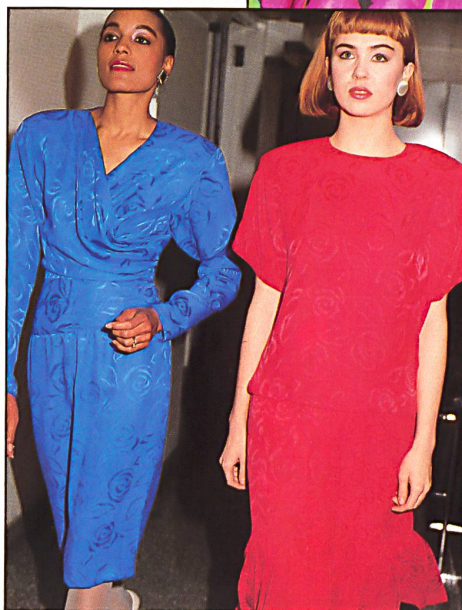
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ABRAHAM

NEW
YORK
FASHION

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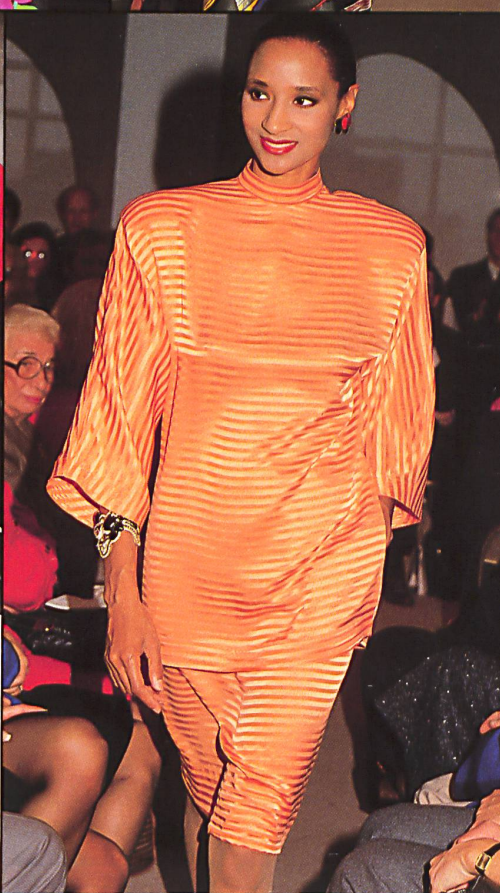
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CAROLINA HERRERA
ABRAHAM

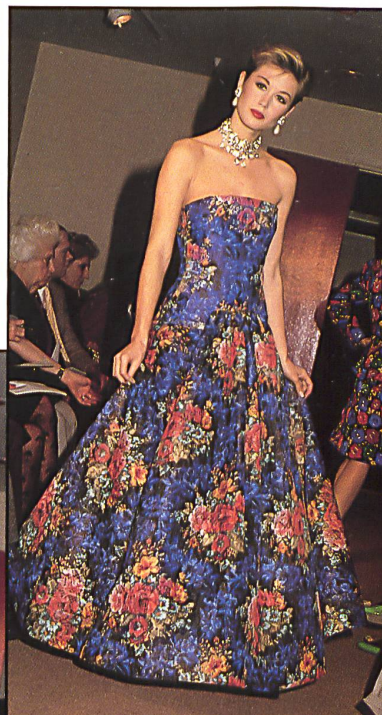


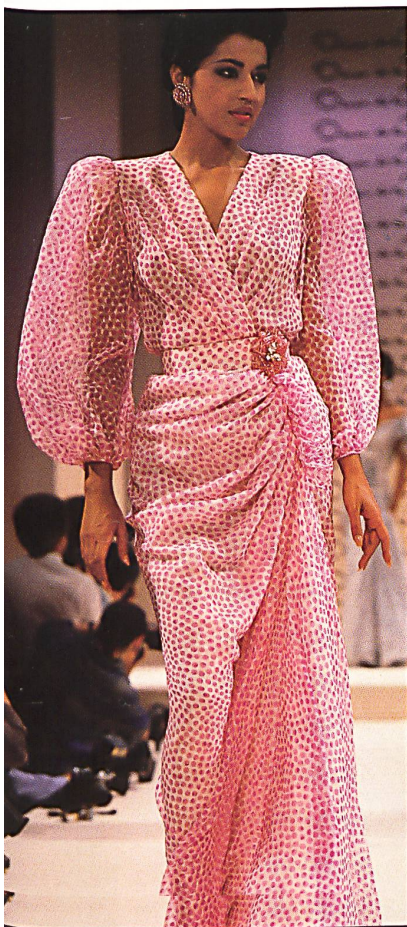
ALBERT NIPON
WEISBROD-ZÜRRER

ADELE SIMPSON
SCHUBIGER

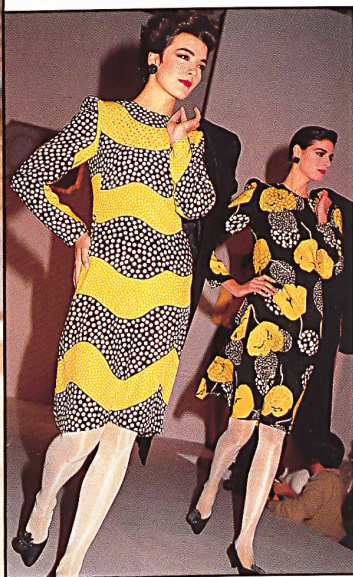


ALBERT NIPON / WEISBROD-ZÜRRER

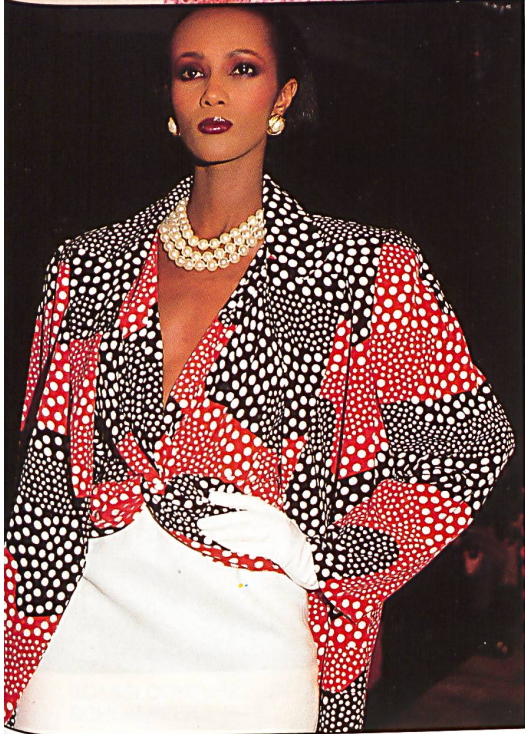




OSCAR DE LA RENTA
ABRAHAM



CAROLINA HERRERA
ABRAHAM



BILL BLASS
ABRAHAM

NEW FEMININITY

Fluid, flimsy, delicate materials set off to perfection the soft lines, slung and knotted effects and daring draperies that express the new-found romanticism and femininity. Sheer voile and semi-sheer gazar (Abraham), elegant printed woven lace (Schlaepfer), and above all shimmering pure silk crêpe de Chine, figured fabrics and crêpe satins (from Abraham, Schubiger and Schlaepfer) are befittingly styled to delineate the soft womanly features of Spring fashions.



MODERN SIRENS

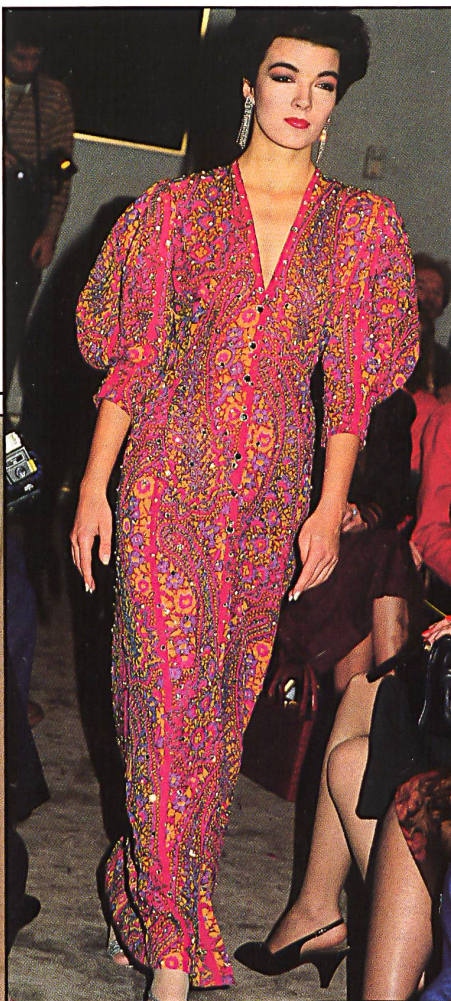
Sirens are dangerously fascinating mythological creatures in female guise who entice, seduce – and destroy. Now, while the element of danger may be lacking in fashion, enticement and seduction are very much present in the slender, curvaceous evening gowns with lavish drapes and décolletés that show off sumptuous fabrics in all their magnificence.

SCAASI BOUTIQUE
SCHLAEPFER

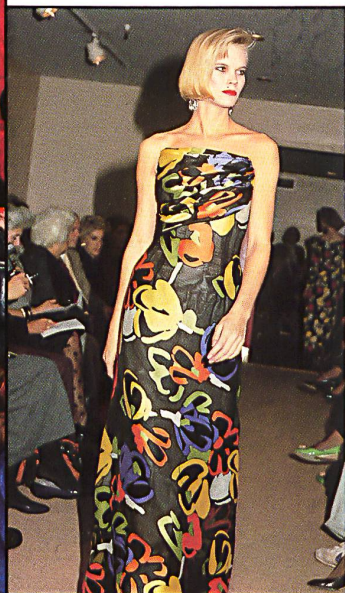


SCAASI BOUTIQUE
SCHLAEPFER

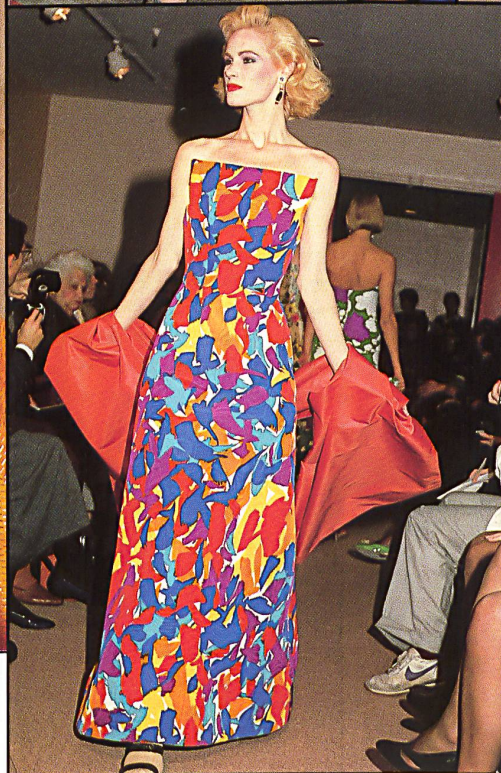
PAULINE TRIGÈRE
TACO



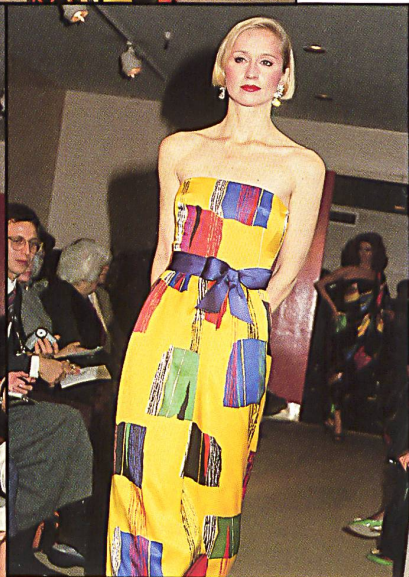
SCAASI BOUTIQUE
SCHLAEPFER



SCAASI COUTURE
SCHLAEPFER



SCAASI BOUTIQUE
ABRAHAM



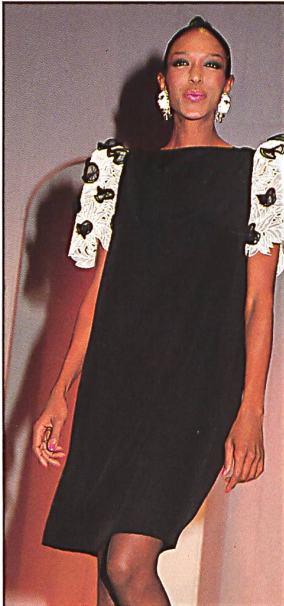
SCAASI BOUTIQUE
SCHLAEPFER

BOB MACKIE
FORSTER WILLI

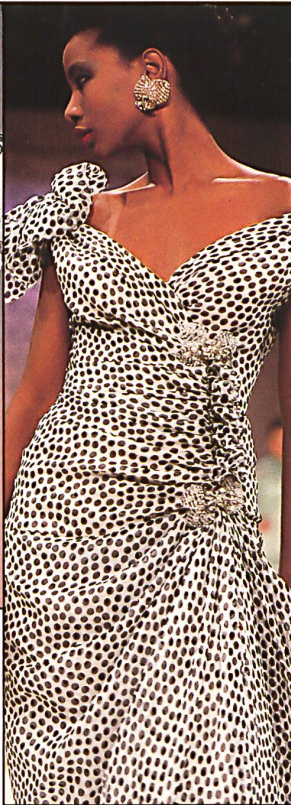


BLACK AND WHITE

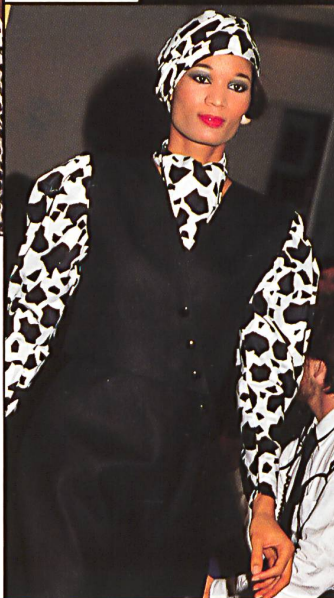
BOB MACKIE / FORSTER WILLI



BOB MACKIE
FORSTER WILLI



OSCAR DE LA RENTA
ABRAHAM



GEOFFREY BEENE
METTLER

PAULINE TRIGÈRE / FISCHBACHER