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DOWNTOWN...ON THE TROLLEY LINE

The fashion plate

McFadden designs art forms

By RUSTLE SHAND
American couture designer Mary McFadden sent her complete line to Hattie in Birmingham recently along with her museum-like jewelry collection. Her highly individualistic clothes are for the very elegant and original woman.

Coty award-winning designer McFadden started only five years ago with little more than a few tops and pants. She has quickly become one of the nation's leading designers.

Known for her hand painted clothes, she is a designer who considers fashion an art form. It is hard to imagine that her famous hand painted, minutely quilted, Aztec coat started out as a piece of plain white China silk. It is on similar pieces of silk that McFadden transfers her impressions of her favorite artists. Her "Faberre" Easter egg print hangs next to a Gauguin inspired long silk coat.

The polypourri of fashion she presents reflects her great interest in art as well as her penchant for world-wide travel. The cut of her silks create a marvelous "float" movement with the

body and the quilted shapes of her jackets and coats are inspired by the ancient peasant clothes of the Orient, Afghanistan and Russia.

HEADLINING her daytime things is a "roller-coaster" hem on a natural mohair skirt. The "roller-coaster" hem is the perfect ending to the soft skirt and is achieved by hemming the fuller skirt to its narrower silk lining.

Included in her daytime collection was a hand painted suede top for wear over a jump suit, as well as wool challis two-piece dresses.

McFadden also is known for her patented pleating process on synthetic fibers called Murli, which lends a museum quality to the body-hugging fabrics. "Rhubarb" pleating is her newest special process. Just introduced this season, it joins her "peacock" and "mushroom" Mori pleating.

Her designs are one of a kind. There is no mass production and no stock at all. Each garment is custom made as it is ordered.

One little costume for a gala evening consisted of a black silk marquise bolero jacket lined in China silk, designed to be worn over a black rhubarb-pleated long gown. The little jacket is laden with pearls, gold braid, rhinestones, gold sequins, crystals and shell flowers with gold bead centers and sells for \$5,000.

HER GALA designs are opulent. So opulent, in fact that she calls it her "Fort Knox collection." There are asymmetrical shoulders, petal scalloped beaded jackets, harem pants, princess line dresses and petal backs all created from gold, silver or rose lame.

Some of her jewelry is designed to be worn diagonally across the body. Her buckles are designed to slide onto silk rope and may be worn either around the waist or at the neckline.

Large plastic or glass beads, washed in 22K gold are \$210. A glass onion bead necklace, gold painted is \$399.

Gold hair pins, taken from the African who used them to wrap the hair around, or worn Geisha style in the back of a chignon, are \$40-\$50.



Mary McFadden wears one of her own hand-painted designs.



McFadden's black velvet cocktail suit is encrusted with silken balls and jet on macramé around the shoulders. It's worn with an ivory silk satin-backed crepe blouse.

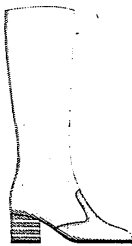
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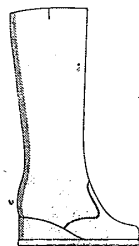
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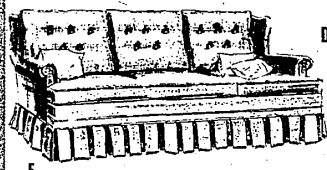
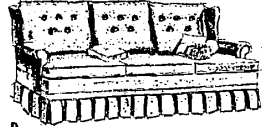
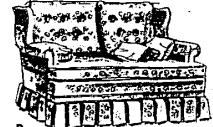
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