

# Falling for fashion

## Designers' collections have love affair with body

BY STANLEY WINKELMAN

Fall 1994 is a season of contrasts, with diaphanous, stretchy and slinky fabrics playing hide-and-seek with women's bodies.

These fabrics love the skin, providing skin-hugging sexiness or a second skin as Karl Lagerfeld defines it in his innovative Lagerfeld line.

Paris is never dull. More than ever it is the center of world fashion design. This season Rifat Ozbek, the Turkish-oriented Englishman, joined Vivienne Westwood and John Galiano, two of the best English designers, along with the Asians, the Italians, the Dutch, the Germans and the French to complete a very cosmopolitan line-up.

Karl Lagerfeld continues as the great fashion genius with his Lagerfeld, Chloe, Chanel and Fendi Pret-a-Porter collections. Just when you think Lagerfeld has lost the plot, he rewrites the script and calls for action.

The Chanel collection was full of new ideas. First came the fluffly fake fur remakes of the original Chanel suit in black and white and in pastels. Then came black nylon fatigue trousers and parkas. Supermodels whizzed down the runway in fake fur skating skirts and earmuffs, quilted ski suits, fuzzy Eskimo hats and fluorescent goggles.

### Jogging influence

Lagerfeld turned his sights on "le jogging" with black-and-white stripe track pants worn inside high-heeled, thigh-high boots. The show's finale involved a large, dramatic group of black sequin, ultra-short cocktail dresses at just below hipbone length, many with a rose attached to the bodice.

Vivienne Westwood, the daring English designer who, like Lagerfeld, is a free-thinking creator, was widely criticized in the British press for degrading the female body. She did, in fact, produce a ladylike collection, in a move toward elegance.

Many trends were scattered along the international runways — fluffly fabrics including fake fur, cropped sweaters, short skirts with long jackets for both day and evening, and ethnic influences from around the world.

Skirt lengths continue short to very short, worn with fingertip jackets, tunics, short coats, sweaters and, in some cases, long coats. The short shorts in wool for daytime and satin or velvet for evening are an extension of the very short skirt fashion. The long tapered pant for daytime and the trouser for evening are alternatives to the short skirt.

In contrast to last year, for 1994 there will be a great deal of bright color, often teamed with black or brown. Leg emphasis continues with solid color tights, many in very bright colors and others in lace or dramatic patterns, often matching shoes or boots.

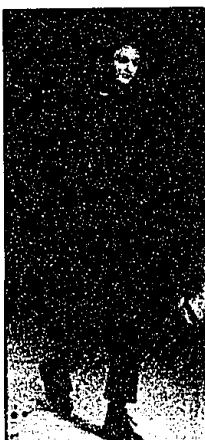
### He's an inspiration

Karl Lagerfeld's ability to design four individual collections — each with its own themes and character, and at the same time be the inspirational source of new ideas for the entire fashion world — is truly incredible.

The Lagerfeld collection is his most advanced and experimental with its see-through plastic boots, second-skin brilliantly colored dresses with matching or contrasting opaque tights in brilliant orange, pink, red, yellow or purple, and birds' nest hairstyles.

Lagerfeld used the new stretch fabric as a second skin and as a new fashion base for hanging sweaters, jackets and coats on the body with the brilliant colors coming through. The second skin will become a major fashion influence in the future. In the fast-paced runway show it appeared to be the new, modern way of dressing. As King Karl said backstage, "It is right for the times."

The Lagerfeld Chloe collection, geared to the expression of modern romance, was inspired by northern climates. Styling was fresh, with flowing, young dresses



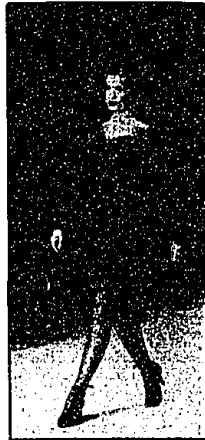
**Christian Lacroix:** Outfit from his Bazaar Sportswear includes denim combination fingertip-length lined jacket and ankle-length denim jean.



**Valentino style:** Paisley-printed tights and long scarf accent black short-skirt suit with long jacket.



**Chloe creation:** Lagerfeld-designed mid-thigh grey wool jersey dress is paired with orange tights and matching high-heeled suede boots.



**Yves St. Laurent:** Black sequined dress has three roses at sweetheart neckline and black fake-fur edging at neck, ends of sleeves and bottom of skirt.

and coats. The short ruby-red velvet party dresses were inspirational and whimsical. The long ball gowns in gorgeous, brilliantly colorful prints were magnificent.

### Lacroix does denim

Christian Lacroix introduced his Bazaar Sportswear Collection composed of jeans and knitwear. Lacroix showed long and short skirts with striped ethnic influences, together with satin jeans and rough sheepskin jackets. Lacroix's main label offered a colorful collection of fabric combinations, textures and color that was outstanding in terms of individual costumes.

Valentino provided the most glamorous collection. His clothes were dark with highlight colors of oatmeal, ivory and red.

Andres Courreges was on stage with Jean Castelbajac at the end of Castelbajac's collection of white coats with primary color blocks over white skirts or trousers and white knee socks, all trimmed with blocks of primary color.

In summary, the fall season's innovations auger well for retailers and their customers now and into the 21st century.

Stanley Winkelman covers the European fashion scene.

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