



Paraphernalia, dress, copper lamé knit, circa 1967, USA, gift of Mrs. Ulrich Franzen.

**YOUTHQUAKE! THE 1960s FASHION REVOLUTION** has been organized by the graduate students in the Fashion Institute of Technology's MA program in Fashion and Textile Studies: History, Theory, Museum Practice.

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The Museum at **FIT**

Seventh Avenue and 27th Street  
New York City

The Museum at FIT is open Tuesday-Friday, noon-8 pm; Saturday, 10 am-5 pm.  
For more information, visit [fitnyc.edu/museum](http://fitnyc.edu/museum) or call 212 217.4558.

Cover: Dress with photograph of Bob Dylan by Harry Gordon, paper, black ink, 1968, England, gift of Estelle Ellis.

**YOUTHQUAKE!**  
THE 1960s FASHION REVOLUTION

March 6 — April 7, 2012

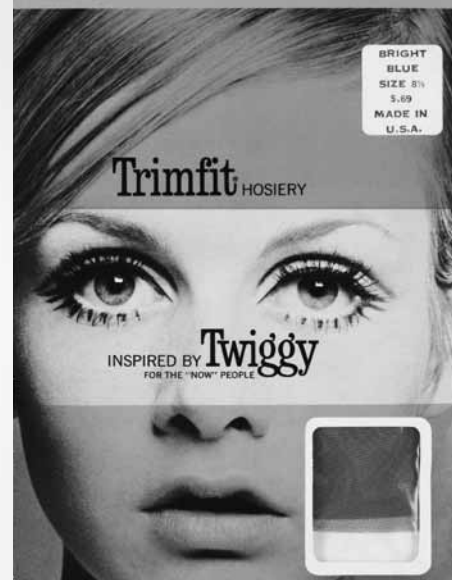


The Museum at **FIT**





John Stephen, man's shirt, printed cotton, circa 1965, England, gift of Valerie Steele.



Trimfit, tights "inspired by Twiggy" in original packaging, nylon, paper, 1967-68, USA, gift of Dorothy T. Globus.



Wing Dings, boots printed with images of the Beatles, cotton canvas, rubber, 1964, USA, museum purchase.



Paco Rabanne, handbag, gold metal, circa 1966, France, gift of Alida Miller-Frisch.



Giorgio di Sant'Angelo, ensemble, cotton, suede, shell, feathers, 1968, USA, gift of Marina Schiano.

*Youthquake! The 1960s Fashion Revolution* explores the dramatic impact of youth on fashion during a decade of sweeping political, social, and cultural change. *Vogue* magazine identified the “eruption of the young in every field” as a “youthquake,” a term that was quickly adopted by mass-marketers and high-fashion editors alike. Born of styles created on the streets and in boutiques, the youthquake revolutionized fashion.

The two leading youth subcultures of the 1960s were the Mods and the Hippies. Both groups challenged societal and sartorial traditions of the “establishment” with clothing that was daring, innovative, and often provocative. Prior to the 1960s, young people had little choice but to dress like their parents. “I always wanted young people to have a fashion of their own,” recalled pioneering British designer Mary Quant, whose London boutique Bazaar was among the first to cater specifically to the young. Quant credited her success to the changing times: “The clothes I made happened to fit in exactly with the teenage trend, with pop records, espresso bars, and jazz clubs.”

Quant and menswear designer John Stephen led a new generation of designers who were greatly influenced by the Mod aesthetic. British Mods embraced a lifestyle centered on music and clothing. Mod boys commissioned slim-cut suits based on costumes featured in Italian films. They also began to adopt bright colors and bold prints associated primarily with the clothing of the gay underground. Mod girls in short haircuts wore pants, shift dresses, and miniskirts. Increasingly shorter hems revealed an expanse of leg that could be decorated with thigh-high boots, tights, or even body paint.

London became the epicenter of youthquake fashion. A growing number of designers translated street-generated styles into marketable designs sold in small, independently owned boutiques that catered to youthful tastes. Colorful, crowded, and pulsing with loud music, boutiques provided a unique shopping experience for an increasingly powerful consumer class. They were breeding grounds for innovation, where designers experimented with cut, style, and nontraditional materials such as plastic and metal. Youthquake boutiques soon began to open internationally in fashion centers such as New York and Paris.

As the 17-year-old model Twiggy observed in 1967, “The world is all for youth now. I suppose because the young people have so much time and money to spend, all the businessmen say let’s cash in on youth.” American mass-market labels commissioned London designers to bring Mod styles to the United States, making the “London Look” one of Britain’s most profitable exports. Popular culture was a pervasive element in fashion: images of rock musicians such as the Beatles and Bob Dylan adorned shoes and paper dresses, while *Mademoiselle* magazine described Twiggy as “the lanky, enchanting British supermodel that everyone knows, even rural grandmothers.” Mass marketers were essential to the democratization of youthquake fashion, as they sold clothing and accessories that featured elements of the latest trends at affordable prices.

Youthquake styles challenged the long-held dominance of Parisian couture. Forward-thinking couturiers responded by embracing the spirit of youthful exuberance. They not only incorporated miniskirts and pantsuits into their

collections, but also recognized that ready-to-wear would be the future of fashion. In 1959, Pierre Cardin was suspended from the governing body of French couture, the *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture*, for daring to design ready-to-wear—at that time considered an affront to tradition. By 1967, the rules had changed, and two more of the most influential designers of the era, André Courrèges and Yves Saint Laurent, opened their own ready-to-wear boutiques.

As the decade progressed, Mod style ceded to the rising influence of the Hippies and their eclectic mix of secondhand and ethnic-inspired dress. Their embrace of Eastern modes of spiritualism, leftist politics, and hallucinogenic drugs was expressed in non-conformist clothing that was often adorned with psychedelic imagery. Despite the Hippies’ anti-consumerist stance, their style was quickly translated into high-fashion garments and accessories, and was co-opted by mass marketers. Designers such as Giorgio di Sant’Angelo created the “rich hippie” look with costly ready-to-wear versions of Hippie staples such as peasant blouses and maxi-length cotton skirts.

Every aspect of fashion—who created it, how it was made, and who could participate in it—had changed by the end of the 1960s. In the wake of the youthquake, no single look or designer dominated, and no one fashion authority reigned. As Sant’Angelo observed in 1968, “The Hippies made people unafraid of going their own way and now that they have tasted this new freedom they will never conform again.”

**Tracy Jenkins and Cassidy Zachary, Curators**