

FASHION

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Fashion Insight

the monthly business section that keeps you in touch with profit-making ideas. Starts page 11

LEVI STRAUSS OWNED DOCKERS HITS EUROPE

Dockers, the cotton trousers owned by Levi Strauss, is to be rolled out across the UK and mainland Europe over the next year, writes William...

One of the biggest clothing brands in the world, Dockers is being trialed in Sweden before being launched into the German market next year. Its Stockholm-based European division is currently seeking a UK partner to market and distribute the brand.

The company plans to build the menswear brand in Europe through middle market casual retailers, which would include multiples and department stores in the UK. It is selling to 85-90 stores in Germany for next season, the majority of which are independents.

Individual sales teams will be set up in each country and national marketing controllers will be reporting directly to Dockers Europe's headquarters, which is moving from Stockholm to Amsterdam. The company aims to launch in other European countries such as France, Spain, Italy and the UK.

(continues)

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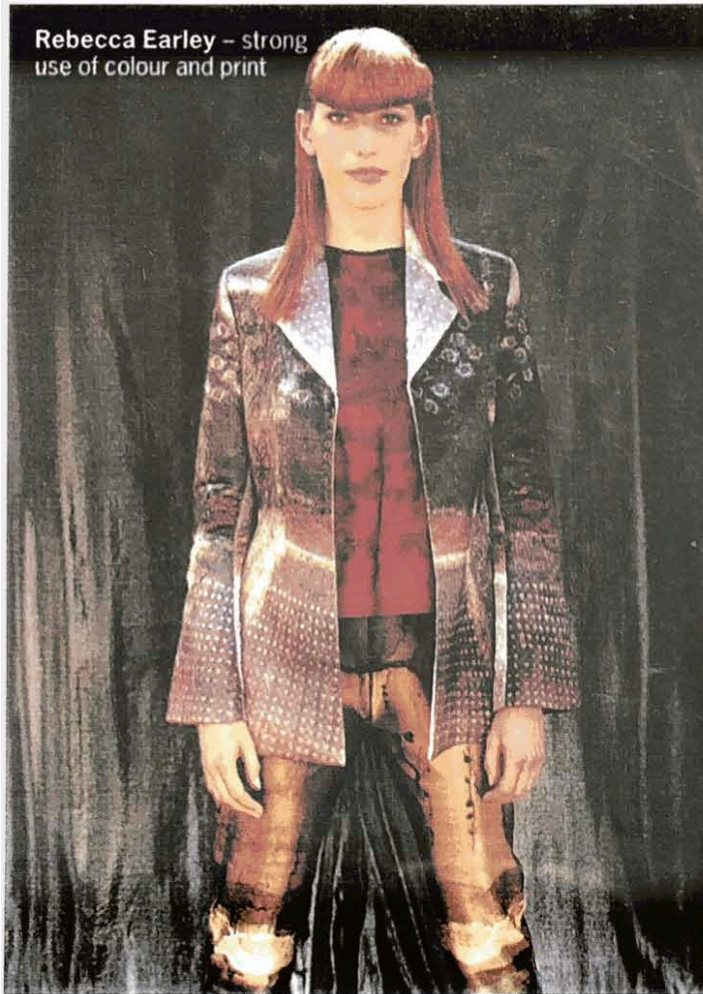
Plus: Menswear: Zegna, Top Man homo promo. Womenswear: Talbots. Ge
Alders, Matalan, Lee Cooper. Childrenswear: BoBo by mail. Accessories: Tate

one or two lines
Weak key question

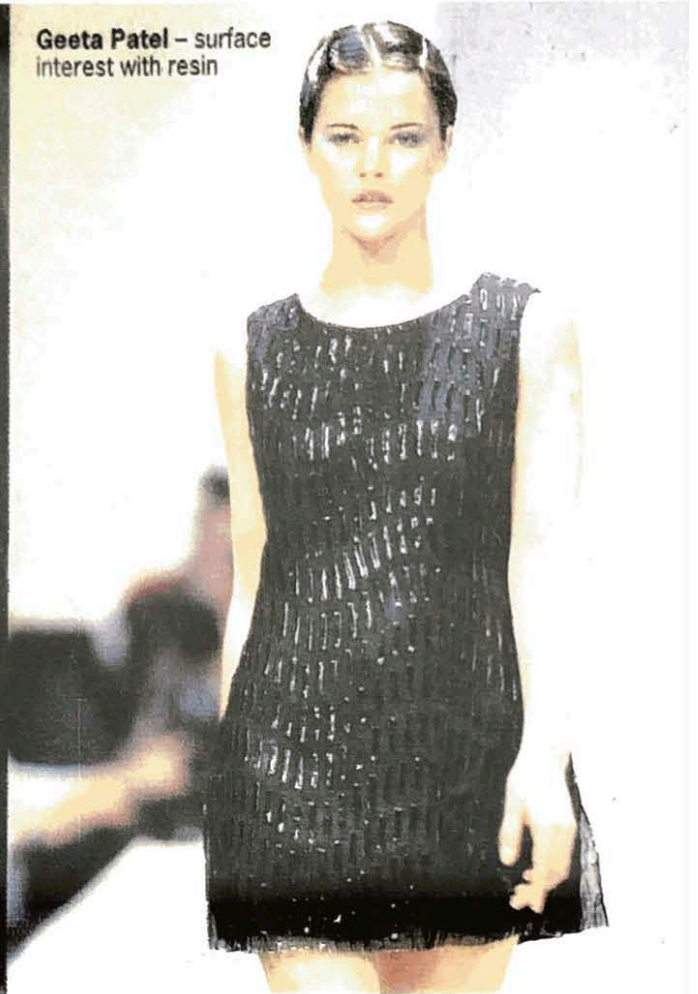
style notebook

THE UK HAS
INNOVATIVE
AT TWO NEW
BY COMBIN

Rebecca Earley – strong
use of colour and print



Geeta Patel – surface
interest with resin



THE UK has always been at the forefront of innovation in both the fields of street style and print design for fashion fabrics. The credibility of our street style is well recognised, whereas our strength in print design is fairly under exploited. Names such as Timney Fowler, The Cloth, BodyMap and, originally, William Morris have paved the way for countless young print designers, who are creating print with a final product in mind. Because UK companies operate in a more intimate way – working with small orders – they can afford to tailor a print to the silhouette of a finished garment. This is something that the overworked and automated mills in Italy cannot do. All too often print for fashion fabrics is targeted at the pan-industry and is very detached from the needs and wants of fashion designers. Young UK printers have always been sympathetic to these needs and for that reason are seen as the most forward thinking, if not the most technologically perfect.

Two new print designers, who graduated from Central St Martin's School of Art this year, specialising in print and fabric technique, are set to keep the afore mentioned reputation alive. Both trained in fashion design, it is very apparent when looking at the collections from Rebecca Earley and Geeta Patel that they are fashion designers who know how to use print, and not artists who chain themselves to a print table. When Patel designs an embossed transparent fabric, she thinks about what will show underneath. In the same way, when Earley breaks through an amber sea of satin with a delicate print of doily lace, she knows where the strip of lace should

run in the garment before she prints the fabric.

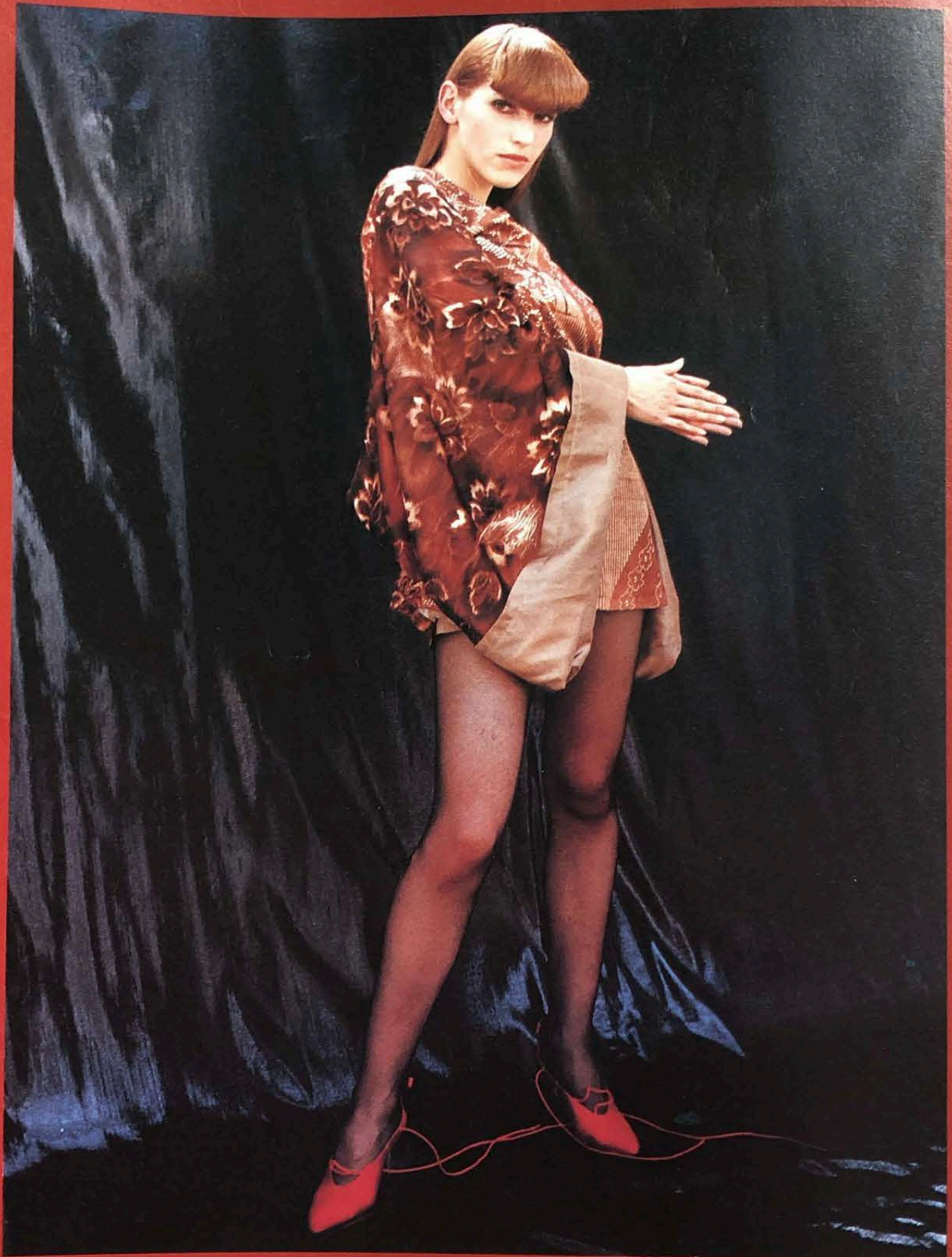
Historically too many print/fashion designers would create simple basics, such as leggings and tunics, with the argument that the print was strong enough to do all of the talking. Earley and Patel have dismissed this idea, with collections that are as strong on silhouette and fashion content as they are in their fabrication. The rare combination of print and cut working together beautifully.

Patel is particularly talented at constructing fabrics. More than just printing onto cloth, she thinks in a three-dimensional way. Her graduation collection uses the technique of dripping resin onto lightweight fabrics – the result is a collection of featherweight dresses that look damp with delicate patterns. For the coming summer season she will be producing a collection of monochrome dresses and embossing the fabric with sheer florals which she will show to buyers from her own studio.

Earley is stronger in print design. Her graduation collection is receiving so much acclaim that Jones in Covent Garden is taking on the collection to sit alongside Demeulemeester and Dries Van Noten on the rails. A combination of delicate heat transfer prints such as lace and top fabric is combined with the graphic imagery of modern iconography such as the seaming of a pair of men's Y-fronts. Earley is gearing herself up for a summer collection which promises to be equally as strong.

● Contacts: Geeta Patel – 081 902 9812. Rebecca Earley – 081 671 4192

SINGAPORE SLING



A fragrant mix of the opulent orient with the future imperfect of techno tribes. The contrast of the ancient and a hard-edged computer age. Blade Runner influences have a cutting edge on the season ahead. Autumn/winter 94-95 will be rich with decorative chinoiserie and takes the kimono cut to extreme lengths. Fabrics are, however, very modern with stretch synthetics and sheers playing a major role – foil prints in traditional patterns are layered. Silhouettes are dangerous and sinister with almost modern geisha sex appeal. Colour takes its inspiration from the lacquered tones of amber, red and ebony, with blossom, amethyst and highlights of chrome. A new spin on turning Japanese.

Adrian Clark

(this page) Hand-printed jacket, £368, and lace print trousers, £138 (wholesale price available upon request) by **Rebecca Earley**, Lacquer red satin T-shirt with glitter pagoda print, £95 by **Katharine Hamnett**, Chocolate chiffon tank top, £44 by **John Rocha**

Credits: Photography – **Gavin Fernandes** assisted by **Daniel Pegdon-Smith**, Make Up – **Esther Bihore** at **Marina Jones**, Hair – **Adam Bryant** for **Toni & Guy**, Stylist – **Adrian Clark**, Model – **Abe**, Shot on location at **The Worx studio**, **NI**.

- All prices quoted are the exact wholesale prices at the time of going to press, except where otherwise stated.
- Rebecca Earley is one of a new wave of UK-based print designers that are earning a reputation for their directional approach to fabric design. We feature two such designers in Style Notebook (page 28).

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