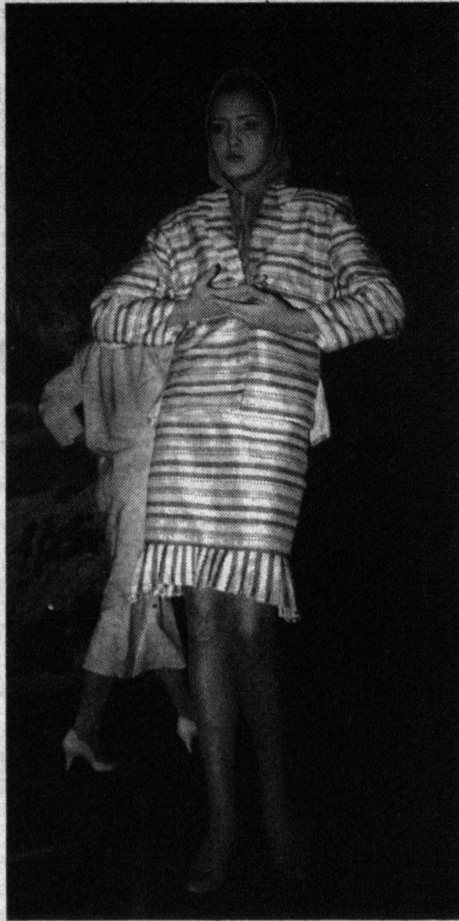


# WHAT·U·WEAR

by Jerome Ryckborst

Designers come a dime-a-dozen. Few deserve attention. The fashion industry is a tough business, not at all as glamorous as the fashion press would have us believe. Success comes only to those who under-



stand why the business works. This holds throughout the industry — for marketing, manufacturing and designing alike.

Stanley Carroll is a designer who understands fashion. Carroll is Edmonton-based by choice. The back-stabbing politics of the big city fashion scene restrict a designer's freedom and creativity. Besides, if you're good you can make it anywhere. Stanley Carroll is making it big in Edmonton.

A common view in the industry is that designers should sense what consumers want. Carroll takes it a step beyond.

"A designer should do more than provide clothing. Clothing is a commodity, but fashion is more. It is the responsibility of the designer to challenge people's minds. Clothing is fashion if it is done well."

The commercial industry sees fashion differently. Fashion is what the public sees as currently appropriate. Manufacturers and retailers introduce new styles to consumers. New fashions are contagious — they spread like a social disease. Commercial fashion leaves little room for the designer's ideas.

True design reflects social trends, social thinking. Carroll says his designs are revolutionary in nature. He wants to overthrow, to turn the tables, because "by the time the ideological design decision is washed down to the retailer" there is nothing left of the designer. What you see on the racks "are not design creations, they're business decisions." By designing and selling in his own store, none of Carroll's ideology is lost.

"Fashion is a tool for expression." Clothing is the real fashion medium; clothing delivers the message. Says Carroll: "People have short attention spans, so a fashion message should be graphic." For a

fashion show designers will emphasize the new design line. The audience can see at first glance what the designer has to say. "The message gets overstated during the shows. It's revolutionary thought put into a graphical context."

Fashion can be political too. Few commercial lines dare to make overt comments. BENNETTON clothing stores are very conscious of the growing political interest in world affairs. For the past year Benetton's advertising has been selling both their clothing line and their view of world peace.

Stanley Carroll's collection also reflects what people think about and talk about on a daily basis. His fashion shows typically include foreign flags, garments bearing political symbols or badges, and models with messages written on their faces: C.C.C.P. or Gainers. "Fashion should make people think."

It is unlikely you'll see Stanley Carroll designs sharing the stage with other designers. This ensures ideologies will not conflict.

Carroll stays away from hiring professional models for his shows.

"Beautiful people need the least clothing help." Carroll emphasizes that his fashion is for everyone. "I've seen people with far-from-perfect figures look better than models in my clothes. Using professional models can backfire. People have a hard time identifying with the models." The audience may not believe they could wear what a model is showing.

Stanley Carroll's garments are manufactured in Edmonton. They have sold in Toronto, Montreal, Saskatchewan and Vancouver. In Calgary they are available at PRIMITIVE near Kensington



Stanley Carroll

on 10th; in Edmonton at BOUNCE, Stanley Carroll's boutique on Whyte at 104th, and at MAD RAGS, downtown on 101st Street.

What's fascinating about these clothes is the attention to both silhouette and detailing. Carroll calls this the "total look."

It is great to see this attention. It reflects dedication. Each time I return to the store (BOUNCE) it's busy. That's a great sign. It shows that design can viably and successfully hold its own in the fashion business.

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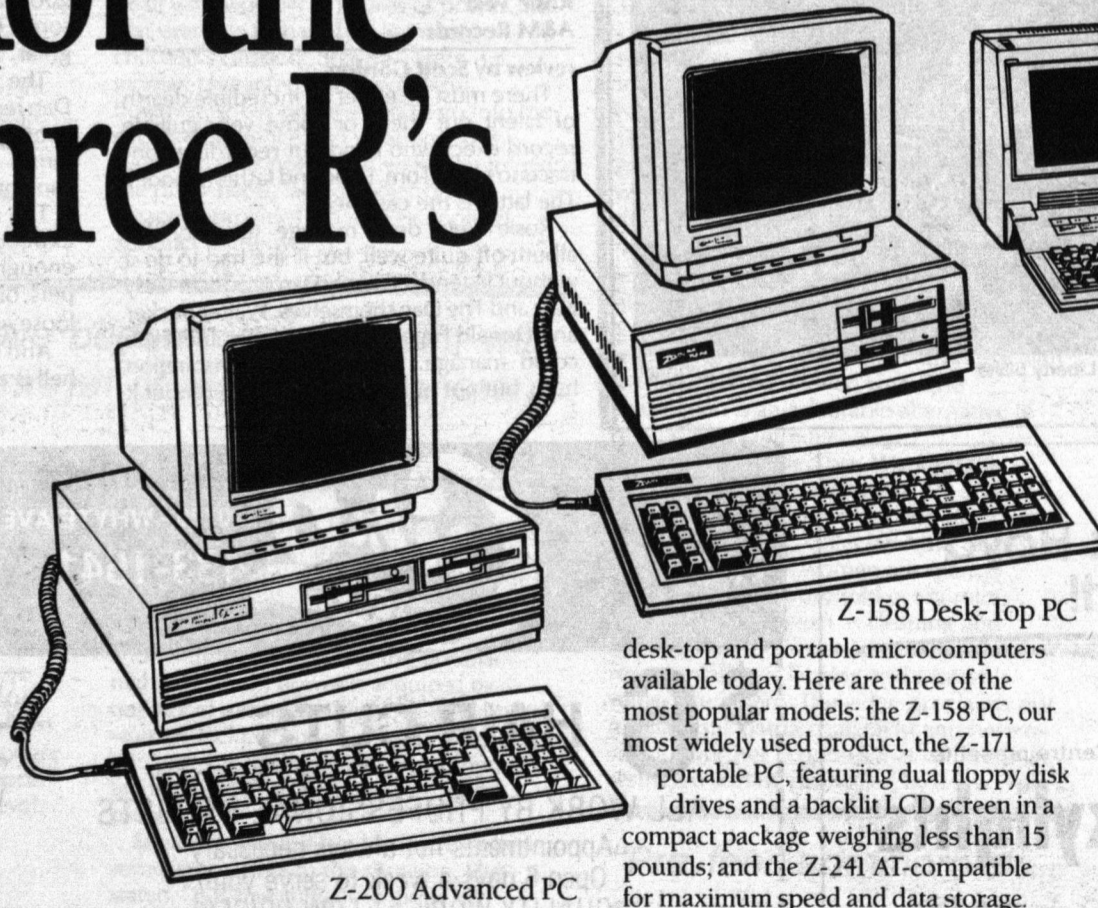
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\*Source: Evans Research Corporation 1986 Buyers' Intentions Survey



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