

P9623

08.15

Adq. 5100

Sesión

6

7

Adq. 5100

5186

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
Programa Universitario de Estudios de Género

Seminario **Vestido, moda y cultura**
Construcción y comunicación de
identidades sociales diversas: del vestido
medieval al estilo *dark*.

Sesión 6 1930 a 1945: años difíciles

DOE, Tamasin (1998), *Patrick Cox: Wit, Irony, and Footwear*, East Sussex: The Ivy Press, pp. 14-17, 34-41.

On the runway

COX CALLS HIMSELF a control freak but it was his collaboration with designers that put his shoes on catwalks—at eye-level with every important designer, fashion editor, and pop star. Talking about those first collections, Cox says, “I’m not a team player but early in my career it was useful to be around other people, bouncing ideas off them.” Often it also meant having to fund his own work, especially with the smaller, newer fashion designers who attract important media attention. For Cox, his work for Vivienne Westwood, John Galliano, John Flett, and Anna Sui was to be his springboard into business.

In 1983, when London clubland was the axis around which the music and fashion worlds circled, clothes were the measure of a person. Those who didn’t make the effort to enter into the costume fantasy were left outside on the sidewalk, unable to get past the door staff who were de facto style police. It was at one such club, the Pink Pussy, that Cox was invited into the inner sanctum of Vivienne Westwood’s entourage when he was spotted by staff from her World’s End and Nostalgia of Mud shops. They recognized him and liked the cut of his outfit, so they asked him if he wanted to hang with them. It may sound puerile today, but at the time it was an invitation to mix with a cool

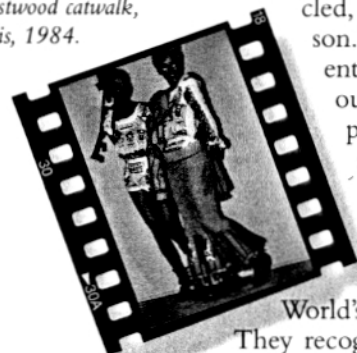
elite of fashion designers and stars. Cox was to meet Westwood, who went on to become a valuable patron.

In 1984, just three weeks before her March show, Westwood asked Cox to provide shoes for her “Clint Eastwood” collection, which was to be shown in a courtyard at the Louvre in Paris. Cox traipsed over to France by train and ferry with his sample bag. His assortment of hand-made samples included a pair that had not been requested: knotted gold leather mules. Cox knew they were a risk—at a time when the accepted style kept feet flat on the ground, the sole was a mighty platform.

Westwood’s reaction when she saw the shoes—“How hideous, how Seventies”—could hardly be described as enthusiastic. But events took an unpredictable turn. “On the day of the show, we watched the clothes truck arrive. What we actually got was a few completed outfits, a pile of sewing machines, and the rest of the collection pinned to rolls of fabric... The Italians [manufacturers] hadn’t finished the collection... We were sent into the audience to find Stephen Jones [milliner] and Stephen Linard [designer], in fact just about anybody who could sew, to bring them backstage and get them working.”

With minutes to go, the “Clint Eastwood” collection was still in production and the backstage area was “utter, utter chaos, with everyone fighting and bitching.” At that point, Cox was

Inset: Vivienne Westwood catwalk, Paris, 1984.



PATENT PLATFORM
For Vivienne Westwood, 1984

Cox suggested the rounded sole and patent finish on this early platform, which features an extended tongue lapping from an ankle strap.

*Doe, Tamasin (1998),
Patrick Cox: Wit, Irony and Footwear, East
Sussex: The Ivy Press, pp. 14-17, 34-41.*

GOLD PLATFORM
For Vivienne Westwood,
1984

Fate was on Cox’s side when disaster struck Westwood’s Paris show, and platforms went on to become a Vivienne Westwood mainstay.



d stars. Cox was to
on to become a

before her March
o provide shoes for
tion, which was to
he Louvre in Paris.

by train and ferry
sortment of hand-
r that had not been
ather mules. Cox
a time when the
on the ground, the

hen she saw the
Seventies"—could
asiastic. But events
'On the day of the
truck arrive. What
ompleted outfits, a
the rest of the col-
bric... The Italians
d the collection...
ice to find Stephen

Linard [designer],
who could sew, to
t them working."

"Clint Eastwood"
tion and the back-
ios, with everyone
at point. Cox was

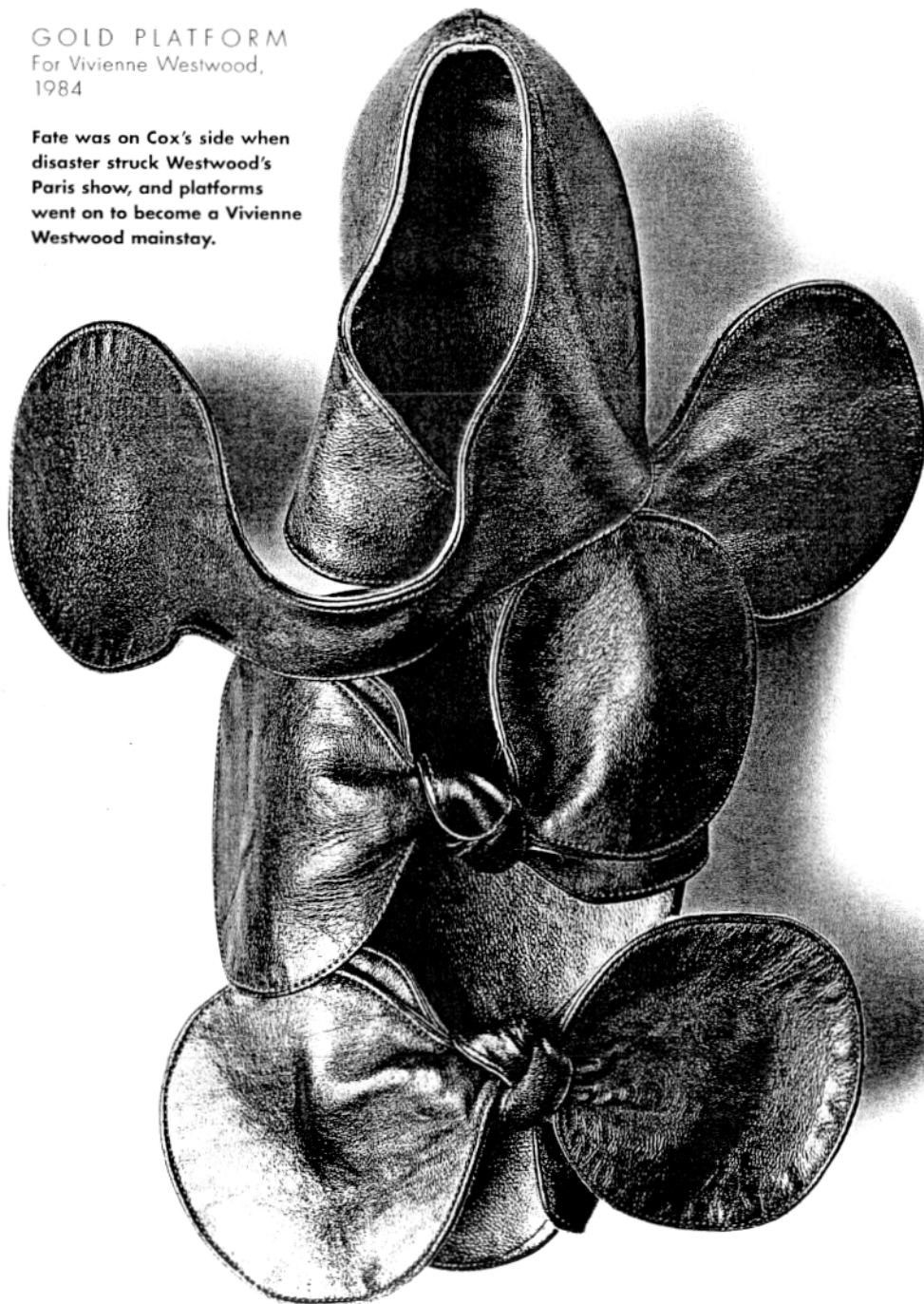
TENT PLATFORM Vivienne Westwood, 1984

suggested the rounded sole
patent finish on this early
form, which features an
nded tongue lapping from an
le strap.

210

GOLD PLATFORM For Vivienne Westwood, 1984

Fate was on Cox's side when
disaster struck Westwood's
Paris show, and platforms
went on to become a Vivienne
Westwood mainstay.



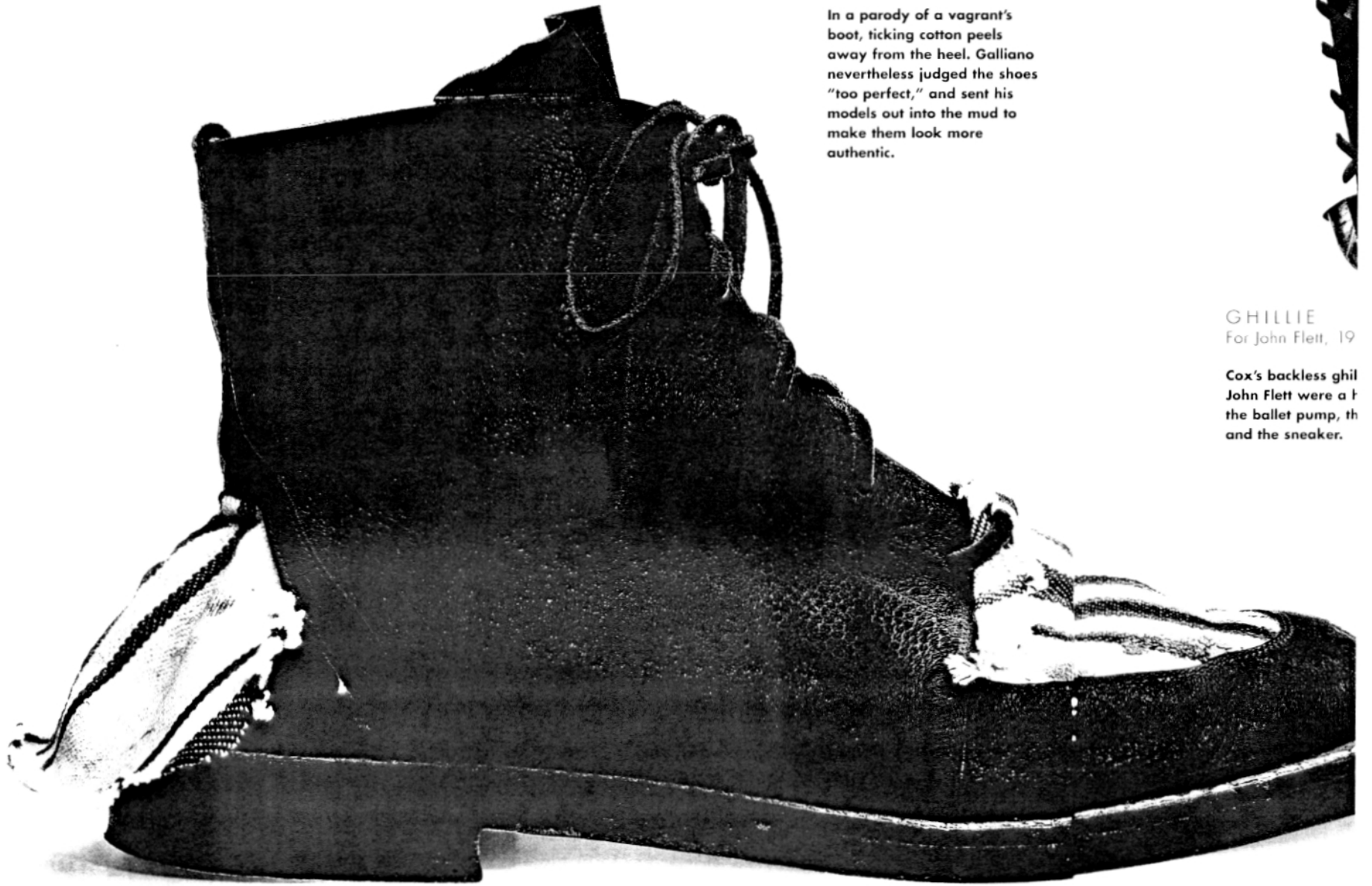
SUEDE WEDGE For John Galliano, 1987

A low suede pump is
embellished with a ruffled
cotton ankle strap.

"BROKEN HEEL DOLLY SHOE" For John Flett, 1986

The carved wooden heel
was designed to conjure up
the image of "a working
girl staggering home from
her night of labor on the
streets."





"HOBO BOOT"
For John Galiano, 1985

In a parody of a vagrant's boot, ticking cotton peels away from the heel. Galiano nevertheless judged the shoes "too perfect," and sent his models out into the mud to make them look more authentic.

GHILLIE
For John Flett, 19

Cox's backless ghil John Flett were a t the ballet pump, th and the sneaker.

"HOBO BOOT"
For John Galliano, 1985

In a parody of a vagrant's boot, ticking cotton peels away from the heel. Galliano nevertheless judged the shoes "too perfect," and sent his models out into the mud to make them look more authentic.



GHILLIE
For John Flett, 1986

Cox's backless ghillies for John Flett were a hybrid of the ballet pump, the mule and the sneaker.



appointed stylist. "I was like holding up a jacket and skirt, shouting 'Does this go?' to anyone who could hear me. In the end we just threw the clothes and shoes in a huge pile in the middle of the floor and told the girls [models] to do it themselves. They all went for the sandals because they were so new. They were actually fighting for them." The platform went on to become a Westwood mainstay. In 1993 Naomi Campbell famously took a tumble from a nine-inch pair which, in effect, were the great-great-granddaughters of Cox's mules.

Cox went on to work with the design partnership Bodymap, while still a student. David Hollah and Stevie Stewart wanted some fringed moccasins in fluorescent orange and green. "I hand-stitched them at college—my fingers were bleeding because of these bloody moccasins. The shoes sucked up the spray paint until they were stiff with it. Only then did they actually look fluorescent." As it turned out, those "bloody moccasins" later became the template for the construction of Wannabes.

John Galliano became another client after he saw Westwood's "Clint Eastwood" show. His own "Fallen Angel" collection was styled with plaster—some of it thrown at the audience, the rest decorating the heads and bodies of the models. It was a grungy look, at a muddy venue (a tent at the Duke of York's Barracks on the King's Road). Cox recalls how when Galliano was presented with his too-perfect leather and ticking hobo boots, "he got somebody to distract me while he sent the models outside to scuff the shoes with mud. When I saw them trooping back I screamed, 'What have you done, the shoes are mine, you're not paying for them!' John turned to me and said, 'But Patrick, it's designer mud.'"

Inset: John Galliano catwalk, 1986.



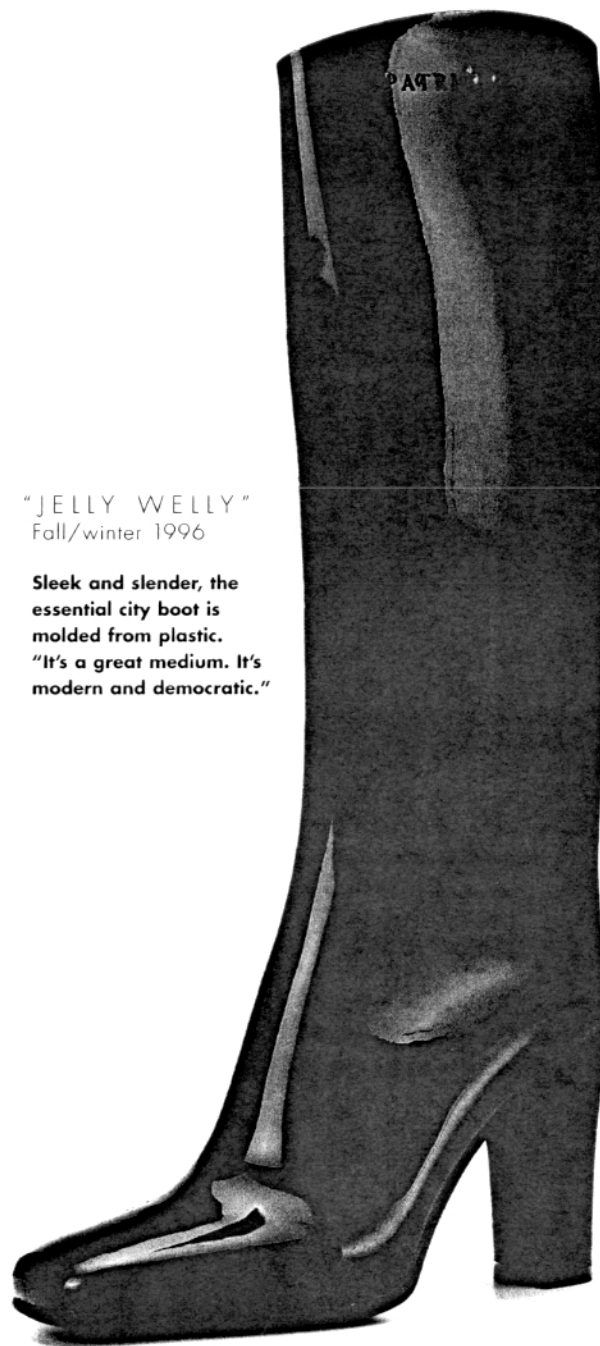
Plastic fantastic

PATRICK COX LOVES plastic in the way that kids love plasticine. With it he plays with shapes and contours which cannot be achieved with leather and fabric. "It's a great medium. It's modern and democratic. It's also playful. It releases you from a thousand constraints. When I lived in Nigeria, everyone who wasn't in business wore plastic shoes—incredibly vivid shoes that couldn't have been made in anything else." Color is one of many reasons why Cox has pushed the development of plastics in footwear. His most popular styles to date are vivid jellies: kitsch sandals molded into rubbery styles. These are designs to brighten up the day, to bring a smile to people's faces.

This combination of humor and unpretentiousness is the reason why Cox has ignored the usual snobberies attached to plastic. "It has always been an alternative to leather shoes. At their best they're cheap with fake leather detailing. Mine rejoice in the fact that they're plastic... There's no pretend stitching or styling to suggest, even for a second, that they are anything other than what they are."

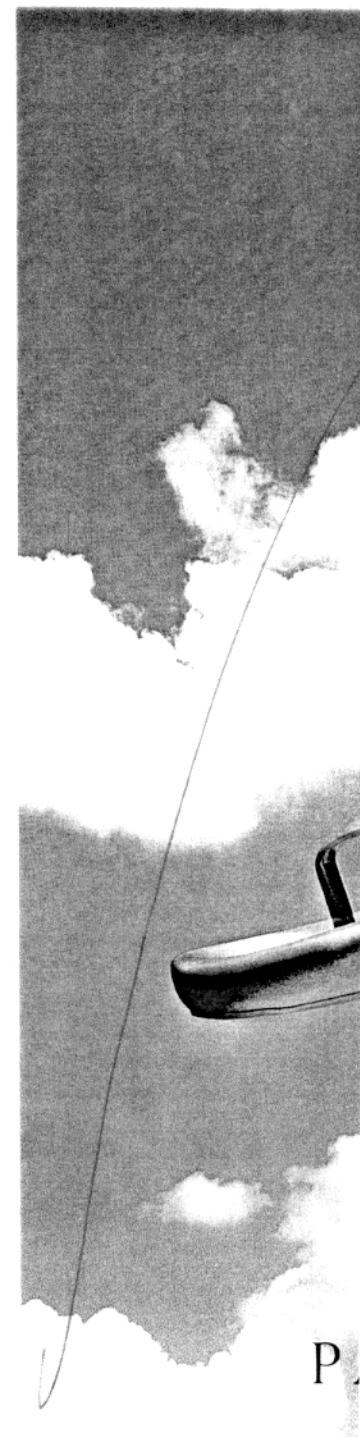
Cox has introduced a lightweight thong for men and women, molded from indestructible plastic. "These are very ergonomic shoes. We use plastic for designs that couldn't be done in leather—sometimes transparent, sometimes sharply sculptured. I love the fact that these shoes are a product of the late twentieth century. They're spat out of the machine—it's an act of pure engineering, more like making a car." Despite appearances, production is still a skilled process. "Engineers work on lathes and molds to catch my ideas and it's important they get it right first time. Unlike the process for my leather work, you don't get a second try—the molds are incredibly expensive."

One jelly design, which bears a miniature tourist attraction buried in the water-filled heel,



"JELLY WELLY"
Fall/winter 1996

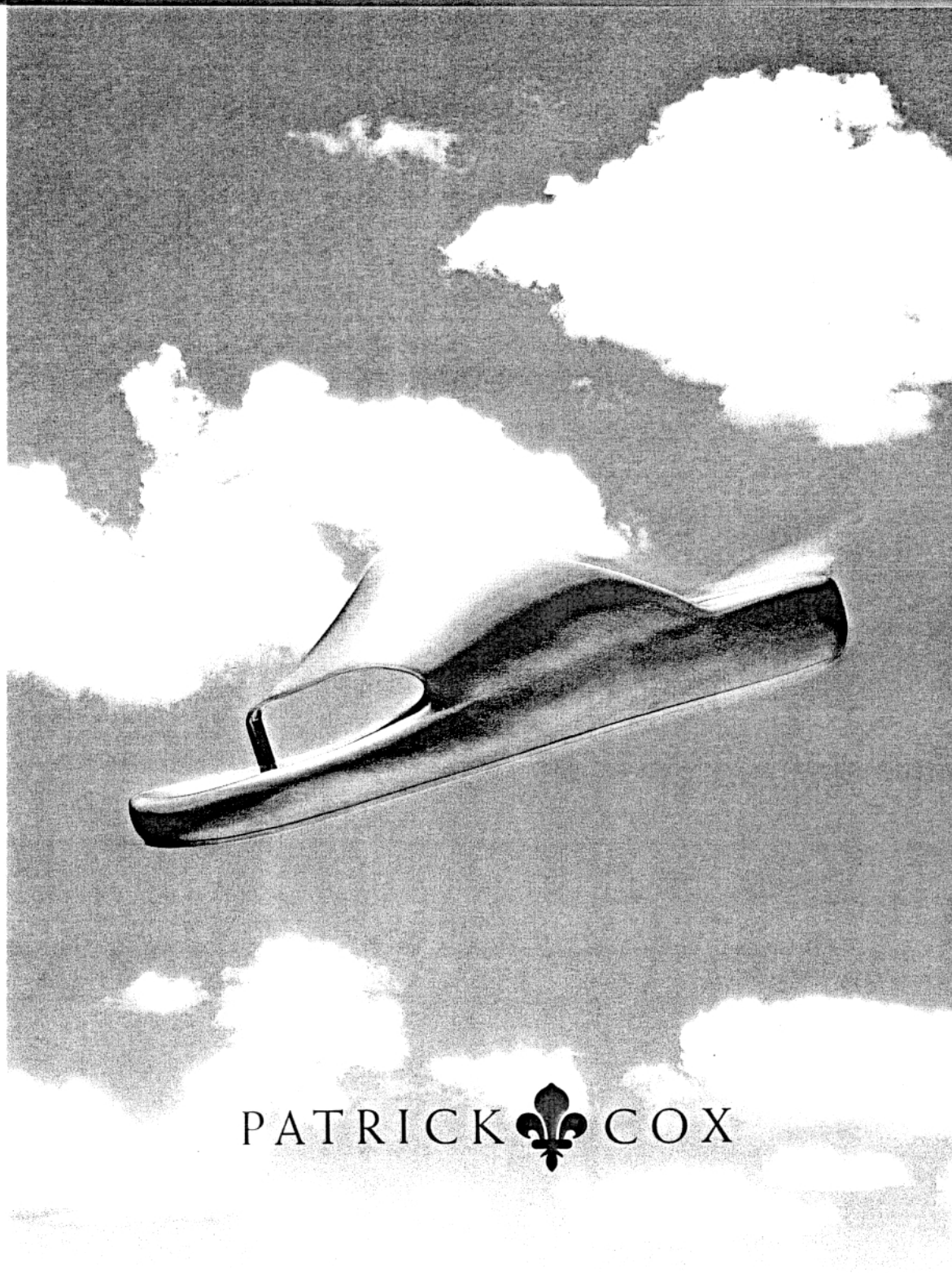
Sleek and slender, the essential city boot is molded from plastic.
"It's a great medium. It's modern and democratic."



P.



214.



ADVERTISING
IMAGE
Spring/summer 1997

Cox's ergonomic thong
flies across the advertising
image. "We use plastic for
designs that couldn't be
done in leather... I love the
fact that these shoes are
a product of the late
twentieth century."

PATRICK  COX

has become a collector's item. In the style of a snow-shaker, the scene is bathed in a rain of glitter when the wearer walks. While Cox was researching this idea, he spent days trying to explain the concept to a South American factory which produces six million jellies every month. "I went to the center of London and bought those double-decker buses and miniature black cabs, while my friends went out to tourist stores next to the Statue of Liberty and the Eiffel Tower to pick up trinkets. I arrived in Brazil and dumped them on the table at the

manufacturer's. They looked at me as if I was nuts. They were obviously thinking, 'What on earth have we got ourselves into?' For a while they couldn't get a grip on what I was saying. Without fluent Portuguese I couldn't explain that the Eiffel Tower actually went in the heel..."

Cox wanted to make a tourist jelly for Brazil, too, but there was a hitch. "We wanted to use the famous Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio. The manufacturer had to explain to me that the concept of walking on a pair of Christs wouldn't go down too well in a Catholic country."



JELLY WEDGE
Spring/summer 1996

Wash-clean, beach-happy footwear. Cox's plastic mules parody expensive leather styles but glory in the fact that they are virtually indestructible.



215

ooked at me as if I was
asly thinking, 'What on
elves into?' For a while
o on what I was saying.
uese I couldn't explain
ally went in the heel..."
e a tourist jelly for Brazil,
h. "We wanted to use the
emer statue in Rio. The
plain to me that the con-
ir of Christs wouldn't go
olic country."

JELLY WEDGE
Spring/summer 1996

Wash-clean, beach-happy
footwear. Cox's plastic
mules parody expensive
leather styles but glory in
the fact that they are
virtually indestructible.

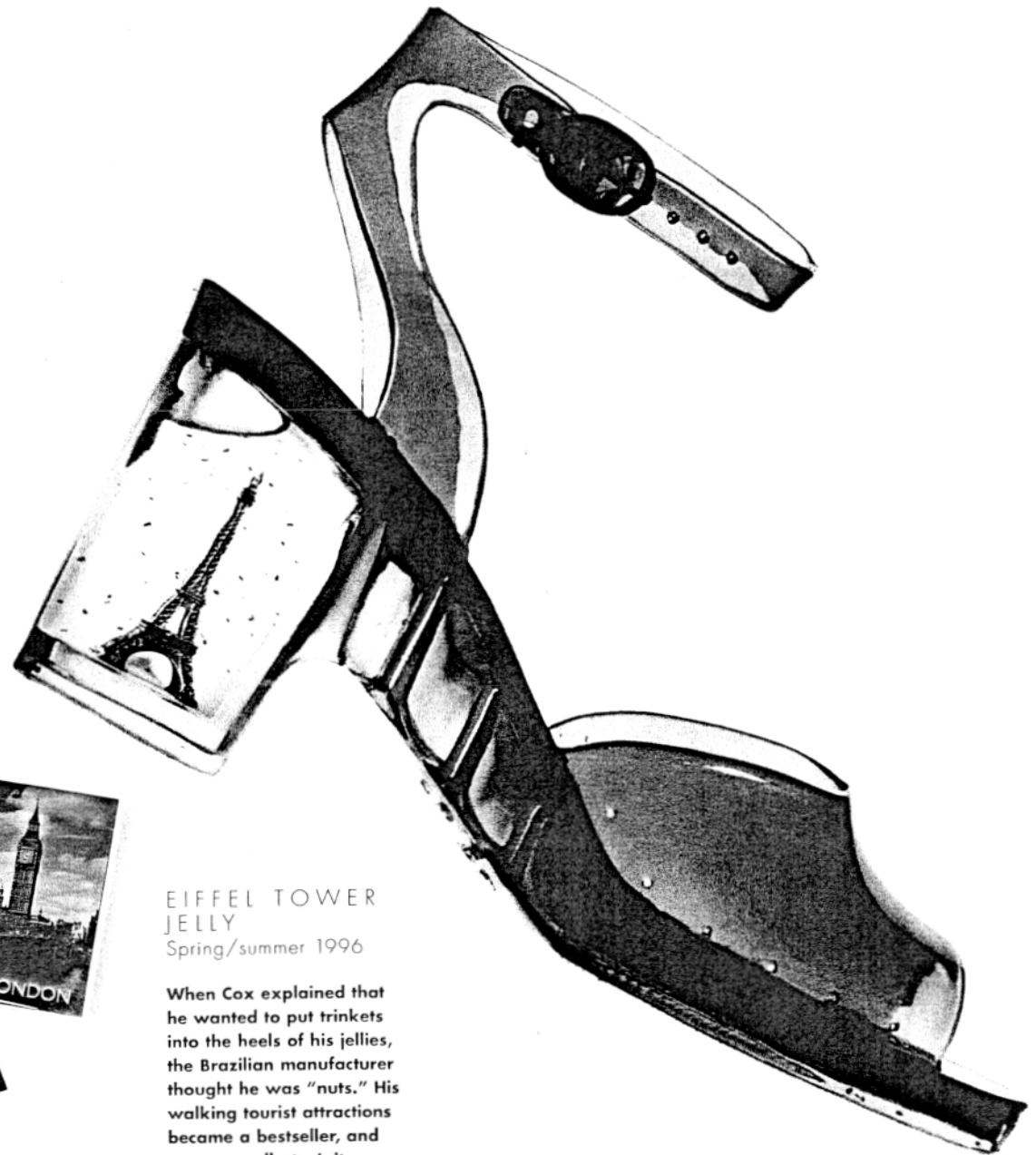


216



EIFFEL TOWER
JELLY
Spring/summer 1996

When Cox explained that
he wanted to put trinkets
into the heels of his jellies,
the Brazilian manufacturer
thought he was "nuts." His
walking tourist attractions
became a bestseller, and
are now collector's items.



TV addict

WHEN COX MOVED to Britain he had a problem. There were only four television channels and he didn't understand the chatty tradition of British radio. "People just talked all the time. Where was the music?" Cox had been brought up immersed in North American culture with its delivery of 24-hour entertainment; he admits that this terminally reduced his concentration span to the length of a four-minute record or half-hour TV programme.

Television has influenced every corner of what Cox does, and who he is. Even though he is Anglo-Canadian, his accent belongs somewhere on the western seaboard of the United States. Cox learned his language from a screen in the basement of his parents' house. "I was a TV kid from the start. When dad came home from his trips, I'd hardly look up from the set. I'd get home from school, switch it on, and disengage just like every other kid in the Western world. I was just a North American teenager... During the Seventies, TV was a whole chunk of your life. Also, in Edmonton it's so cold outside that for months at a time you don't get out much."

Rhoda Morgenstern, actress Valerie Harper's over-anxious New Yorker, is one of several TV heroines to have a Patrick Cox shoe last named after her. "My references are always more about TV and video than about the movies—I don't know Bette Davis' filmography off by heart, for instance." When he talks about the "Rhoda," a chunky platform reminiscent of 1976 (the year Harper won the Outstanding Lead Comedy Actress award for her televisual alter ego), Cox discusses the inspiration as though she is probably alive and

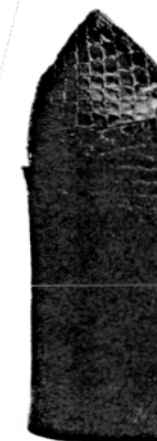


SEAMED
KNEE-BOOT
Fall/winter 1996

Inspired by *Charlie's Angels*, the knee-boot is squared off and cut from Seventies-style beige leather.

WHIPS S/
Spring/summer

Chunkiest of all, heel elevates a s bare sandal.



WEDGE SANDAL
Spring/summer 1997

The wedge is highlighted with a double wave of silver leather on a style that should have been worn by Rhoda Morgenstern, even if it wasn't.



217

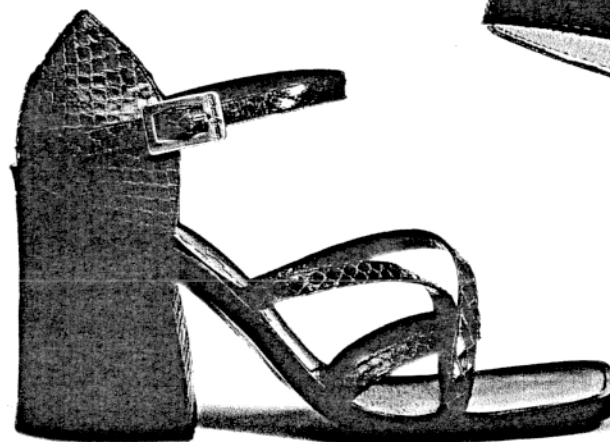


SEAMED
KNEE-BOOT
Fall/winter 1996

Inspired by *Charlie's Angels*, the knee-boot is squared off and cut from Seventies-style beige leather.

WHIPS SANDAL
Spring/summer 1997

Chunkiest of all, the flared heel elevates a square and bare sandal.



WEDGE SANDAL
Spring/summer 1997

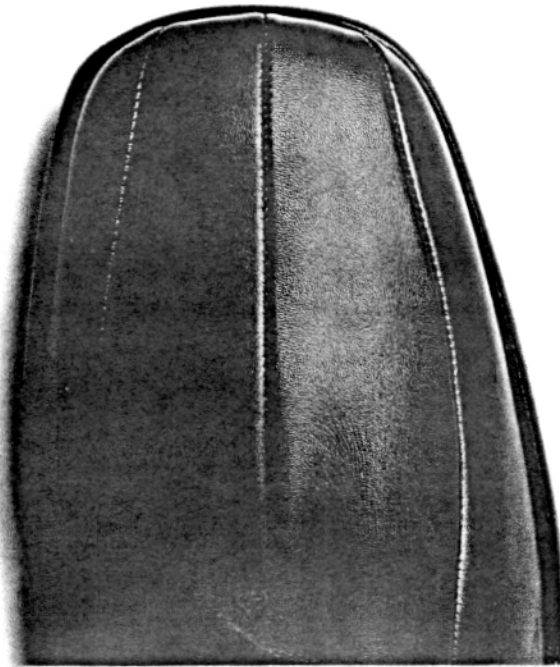
The wedge is highlighted with a double wave of silver leather on a style that should have been worn by Rhoda Morgenstern, even if it wasn't.





SEAMED BOOT
Fall/winter 1996

Inspired by *Starsky and Hutch's* pal Huggy Bear; Seventies hip is sewn into the flat, squared ankle boot for guys.



still living in Minneapolis. He pauses for a moment to work out if Mary Tyler Moore deserves her own last, but he thinks not; "She's too demure; kind of ladylike Sixties."

Rhoda has her place, but Cox becomes frantic at the thought of *Charlie's Angels*. Waving his arms and shaking his head as though lost in a mist of Farrah's hairspray, he says, "I was totally obsessed by Farrah, Kate, and Kelly. The styling was genius—it is still genius today." Cox now owns a lock of Farrah Fawcett's airy blonde hair and when he sits down to design she is still at the front of his mind. "It's all invented memory. I don't pull out cuttings and think, 'What a great sandal,' but I'm tuned in to the mood of what they were doing. It's about remembering the way she would pull a pistol out of that tiny clutch [purse] which had this amazing ability to swallow huge things. I think of a heel she could have run in. It's a flash of white leather."

The "TV memory" is all-embracing. "*Dukes of Hazzard, Starsky and Hutch, Dynasty, Star Trek*: they are all programed in my head; the way Krystal Carrington's hair flipped and Joan Collins's make-up stayed just-so through a fight." Now Cox heads a \$35-million business, he doesn't have too much time to get his TV fix. He suffers from "information anxiety" and claims, "I need to be bombarded with information. When I'm staying at a hotel, MTV or CNN chatters away in the corner. I say to Fabrizio, 'Oh look, it's 32 degrees in Riyadh today,' and he says, 'So what?'. He just doesn't get it—for me it's a quick hit."

BROGUE CO
Fall/winter 1996

A squared-off loafer i
raised on a chunky h



219

neapolis. He pauses for a moment to wonder if Mary Tyler Moore is the last, but he thinks not; "She's of ladylike Sixties."

place, but Cox becomes frustrated with the franchise of *Charlie's Angels*. Waving his hand over his head as though lost in a mistspray, he says, "I was totally into Kate, and Kelly. The styling was still genius today." Cox now has a new idea: to bring Fawcett's airy blonde hair down to design she is still at the top. "It's all invented memory. I'm going to think, 'What a great idea' and get into the mood of what I'm doing. It's about remembering the look. I'll pull a pistol out of that tiny pocket. She had this amazing ability to do it. I think of a heel she could have worn. A heel of white leather."

Cox's style is all-embracing. "*Dukes and Hutch, Dynasty, Star Trek: Voyager* are in my head; the way Joan's hair flipped and Joan stayed just-so through a decade of a \$35-million business, he has much time to get his TV fix. "information anxiety" and he's being bombarded with information. "I'm staying at a hotel, MTV or in the corner. I say to Fab: 'It's 32 degrees in Riyadh. So what?'. He just doesn't know. It's a quick hit."

BROGUE COURT Fall/winter 1996

A squared-off loafer is raised on a chunky heel.



SUEDE WEDGE MARY-JANE Fall/winter 1996

A classic flat-soled wedge with a Seventies feel, using color-variant suede.



COLOR-VARIANT MARY-JANE Fall/winter 1996

Another *Charlie's Angels* staple, the Mary-Jane is a glamour shoe. "The styling [on *Charlie's Angels*] was genius—it's still genius today."

