

# VOGUE



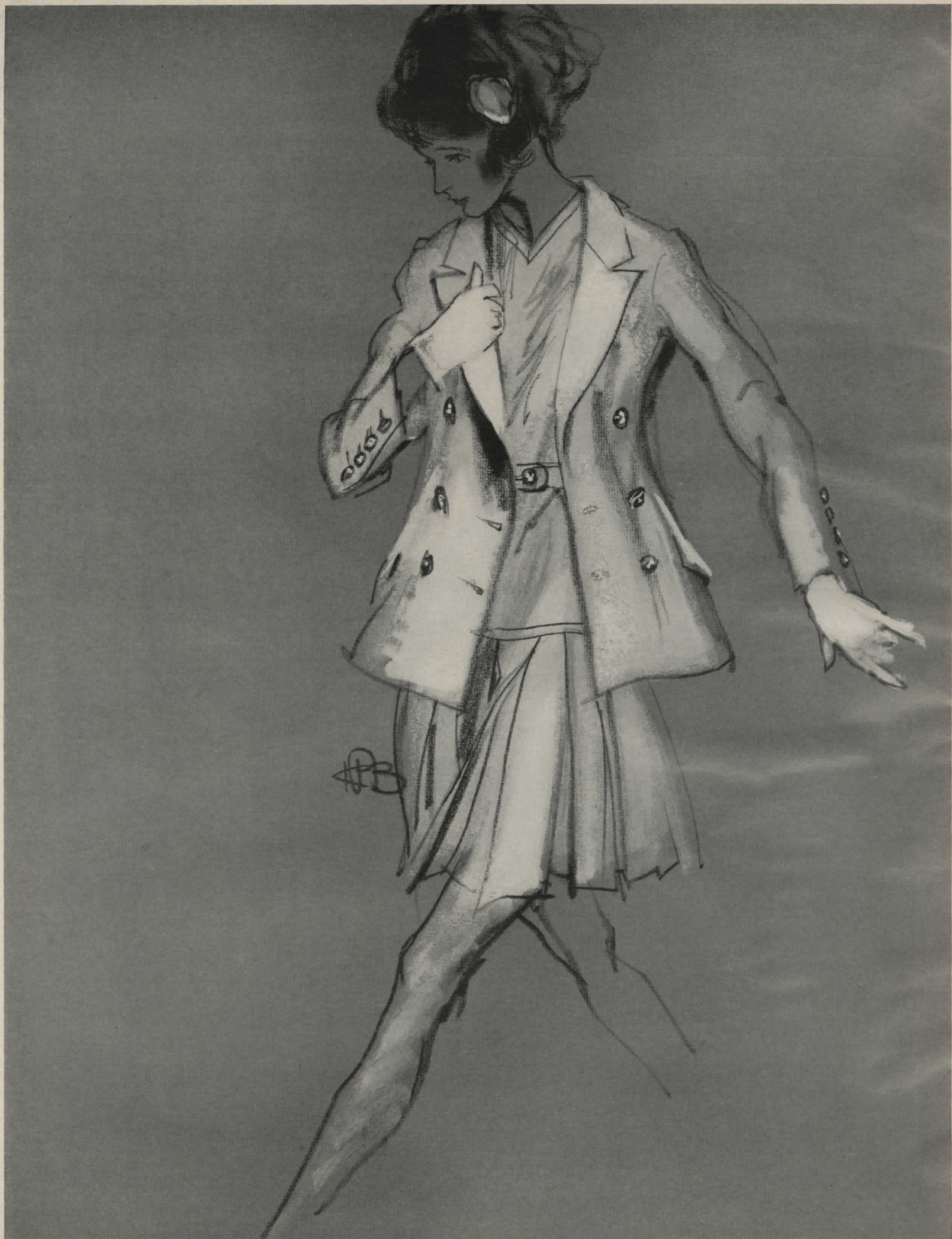
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# VOGUE

AMERICAN BRITISH FRENCH ITALIAN AUSTRALIAN

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PENN

COVER: A rainbow of colour from the American Spring Collections—layers and layers of printed silk chiffon for evening—a long dress wrapped in a large feathered shawl (shown full-length, page 143) . . . Makeup with a wonderful spring of colour to it—a smudge of golden Ivory Shadowcreme under the brow, soft Pink on the lids, and a shimmer of Coral on the mouth; three live ones from Alexandra de Markoff. Dress by Elinor Simmons for Malcolm Starr, Saks Fifth Avenue; Halle's, Cleveland; Harzfeld's; Neiman-Marcus. Hair jewels: K.J.L. for Breck Hair Color. Suga coiffure; Tovar-Tresses hairpieces.

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# 7

## STARTLERS: THE PULSA PEOPLE OF YALE UNIVERSITY

Pulsa—the modest but cracking team of seven Yale men who shape environments out of light and sound—doesn't care whether Pulsa's mass entertainments are considered art or fun. They live and work together with their wives outside New Haven, Connecticut, in a roomy, old farmhouse where they compose perhaps the most startling of their experiments. The farm is hardly a retreat.

Pulsa lives within its work. The farmhouse, wired for sound and light, steps up the signals from the world outside, blazes and crackles with messages from outdoors, noises from the highway, plays of light on snow, linked electronically in a wildly erratic light-sound symphony projected into all rooms of the house and put together by a computer.

For the past three years, the members of Pulsa, all thirty or under, all Yale graduates, have pooled their ideas, their money (up to now, largely from grants) and cultivated an easy anonymity. "We want everyone to be aware of everything," they said, collectively: "With no levels of secrecy leading to higher levels of control." Trying out ideas, they find their life together as important as their output.

In their present work at The Museum of Modern Art until March 1, the Pulsa group fits their premise that everything is Nature into this city setting. The Museum's garden filled with its own sculpture is separated from the street beyond by a high brick wall and surrounded on three sides by (Continued on page 219)

**Pulsa people**, the Yale University group, bridging the gap between art and science with light-sound environments, one of which is now in the garden of The Museum of Modern Art in New York, consists of these seven men: *foreground, left*, William Crosby; *right*, Patrick Clancy. *Second row, left to right*, Peter Kindlmann, David Rumsey, Michael Cain, William Duesing, Paul Fuge.

boundless areas they move through. This invented geography of the mind is an interrelated experience. No one element lives alone. No colour, no brushstroke, no void, no surface detail is separate from the whole. The artist put it better when he said: "I never wanted colour to be colour. I never wanted texture to be texture, or images to become shapes. I wanted them all to fuse together into a living spirit." Basic to this fusion is Still's sheer power of paint. Pigment can be cool and thin, but more often it boils. Not interested in concealing the stamp of his own hand, he freely admits that for him, "The paint is the instrument." The pigment becomes life, like a majestic river of controlled lava. It is little wonder this artist claims Rembrandt as "one of his early gods."

There are times when Clyfford Still reminds me of Mies van der Rohe, not that their work is in any way similar—only their attitude towards their

work. Mies once dismissed a prospective client who, bored with his austere purity, wanted him to come up with a new architectural formula. "What do you think I've been doing all my life?" Mies asked. Like him, Still thinks of each work as an inevitable link to the next. The paintings are never accidental but the connections between them inexorably direct the course they must follow. Also like Mies, as he grows older, Still refines, intensifies, at times re-assesses, but never feels the need to perform new tricks. Somehow both men, I think, have understood their place in history.

Except for the paintings in New Windsor, there are only two other important concentrations of the artist's work—a fine group in Buffalo, New York, at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery and the ones at Marlborough-Gerson, eighty per cent sold. In 1964 Still gave the Buffalo gallery thirty-one canvases ranging from 10,384 to 10,385th. (Continued on page 220)

## STARTLERS

(Continued from page 175)

the walls of buildings of various heights.

Pulsa saw this space as a canyon and fed "information" into the computer that controls the "environment" from every level of the "canyon" with photocells, cameras, and microphones. Such natural phenomena as the changing light, wind speed, temperature, and flow of people trigger the constantly accumulating computer programs. Lights may flash traveling at 1,000 mph, sounds from the sidewalk beyond the wall may be amplified, slowed, distorted. This feedback is often so subtle and complex that a person passing through the garden is often not aware of it. "Not the limited, static information of sculpture but actual phenomena," as one member of the group said.

Pulsa has a lot to do with the "empty" music of such composers as La Monte Young and Terry Riley, the system concepts of Ludwig von Bertalanffy, and

the environmental ideas of Buckminster Fuller, particularly his Utopia. Out of patience with the current superstitions about technology or the anti-urban bias of many environmentalists, Pulsa has an open-end scientific base. Pulsa was started in 1966 by David Rumsey, a filmmaker, who joined up with Michael Cain and Patrick Clancy, painters from the Yale graduate school. In 1967, they added to their New Haven loft Bill Crosby, who had been making light-sound pieces in New York. Soon after, Paul Fuge, a photographer and electrical designer, came with Peter Kindlmann, an engineer-physicist who teaches at Yale, and Bill Duesing, a photographer and former architecture student.

So far Pulsa's work has been subsidized partly by Yale University and the Graham Foundation for the Fine Arts, Chicago, and partly by industry. The split between science and the humanities doesn't exist for people of Pulsa. They go quietly on, thinking up environments, and hoping their passion will catch on.

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