

By Walter Blum

**A** GIRL named Jeanne Colon came bustling into our office recently wearing long black hair, a psychedelic dress and the haunting face of a Latin saint. The dress was real. But the girl, and the face, suggested something vaguely out of a dream. Miss Colon, it developed, is a designer of clothes. She is also something of a free spirit, and what she thinks about the wearing of clothes cannot be called exactly conventional.

"I like to feel naked," she explained. "I like to feel as if I don't have anything on at all."

Now, all this would seem as if Miss Colon is advocating the immediate abolition of wearing apparel. Far from it. What she is saying, simply, is that people's clothes should be a lot more comfortable, a lot less restrictive. She would like, for instance, to do away with undergarments.

"I can remember when I wore girdles and straps," she mused. "How disagreeable it was. And all that worry, too, about the blouse coming loose from the slip, and the buttons popping out. I don't think that's necessary, do you?"

One could only nod in sympathy. Miss Colon then went on to describe her own designs, which she calls "organic."

By organic, she means a garment should be natural and flowing, the wearer should wear the dress and not the other way around. So she uses only natural fabrics, like cotton or silk, is lavish with lace and avoids zippers and buttons. When an opening needs to be closed, she substitutes abalone shell or bone. And she despises shoes. "They feel like they were made for diamond-shaped feet," she says.

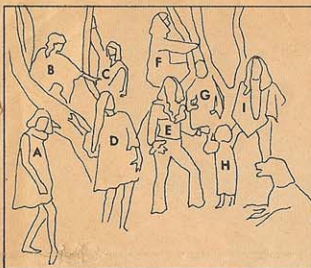
Miss Colon also does men's pants and shirts, which she calls "love shirts" because "every shirt is individually styled, and I make each one with love for the wearer."

She was not always a designer. Born in Antioch, educated at San Jose State and the University of Miami, Jeanne started out as a marine biologist. Disillusioned because it seemed to her the profession was being "segregated by sex," she drifted to the Big Sur, spent the next three years there "learning about life and living" until her money ran out.

Having uncovered a talent for dressmaking, she then moved to Berkeley where she set up a tiny atelier and where she now works, surrounded by dresses, smoking cigarettes and burning incense and raising her 3-year-old daughter, Amber Rose, who actually was given seven names so that, says Jeanne, when she grows up "she can choose whatever name she likes best."

Three stores have picked up Miss Colon's fashions — in San Francisco, a shop called Oscar's Wild and Woolly (for men's clothes); and in Berkeley, two stores: Red Square and Generation II.

Each piece of clothing is hand-made by Jeanne, and no two are alike. All are relatively inexpensive. Except for the unique "San Francisco Fog Suit," which makes its wearer look a little like a giraffe, most outfits sell for under \$30, and a large number go for less than \$25. **END**



Out on several limbs, these far-out fashions by Jeanne Colon are modeled by some of Jeanne's friends. The friends: A. Jana Miles, professional model, wears a psychedelic hooded silk print; B. Michele Sevrin, a "love knot" dress of patterned silk; C. Bard Dupont, bell-bottomed peone pants and a pull-over shirt; D. Liane Chu, owner-manager of Berkeley's Red Square boutique, a peacock's eye "butterfly" dress; E. Jeanne herself, in corduroy hip-hugger pants (with a Spanish influence), hand-crocheted lace top and body neck-

lace; F. art and dance student Jacqueline Chris in a San Francisco Fog Suit, ideal for open convertibles; G. Maureen Kirby in a man's shirt of Irish linen and hand-crocheted lace copied from a 1780 French model; H. Amber Rose, Jeanne's daughter, in a washable cotton tot's dress with widely belled sleeves; I. Janis Joplin, lead singer of Big Brother and the Holding Company, in a poncho of antique Moroccan fabric over velvet peone pants. And George, the dog, who immodestly declined an outfit.

BERKELEY'S  
JEANNE COLON:

Designer

Out on a Limb