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B. AMORE: NO BORDERS! ART OUT OF THE SHADOWS

2014 BREAKOUT ARTIST: JUAN JOSE BARBOZA-GUBO
| MIT MUSEUM'S KINETIC ART SHOWCASE | '60S POP
COLORBURST AT ATHM & THE CURRIER | MING
CHO LEE'S STAGE DESIGNS AT YALE | TRENT BELL:
CAPTIVE PHOTOGRAPHY AT ENGINE

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Lanz Originals, Inc.,
California, "Fabric Detail of a
Skirt," 1969, acrylic, irregular
twill weave, screen-printed.

COLOR REVOLUTION

STYLE MEETS SCIENCE IN THE 1960S

AMERICAN TEXTILE
HISTORY MUSEUM
491 DUTTON STREET
LOWELL,
MASSACHUSETTS
THROUGH
JANUARY 26

"Groovy" was the 1960s equivalent of today's "Awesome." As a writer, a product of the 1960s and a psychology undergraduate, I love to compare the cultures of then and now – and the language we use to express ourselves. In the psychedelic '60s you'd hear, "That's a gas!" "What a boss album!" "He's such a dork." "I look grody today." "Do you dig it?"

It was back when thongs were the

flips flops you wore on your feet – not in your butt crack. "Heavy" meant deep or meaningful. Nifty was the equivalent of cool. Skuzzy was what you called your outfit when it wasn't measuring up. "Sock it to me" meant to say what you have to say. Spiffy meant the same as cool. There were more – teenybopper, uptight, etc.

Some of the '60s slang has stuck over time. You'll still hear it in the

new millennium: hunk, neat, bummer, ditz, cool, gross, zit, along with many others. But the fashions of the era? Well, answer that for yourself.

"Color Revolution: Style Meets Science in the 1960s," currently on view at the American Textile History Museum in Lowell, Mass., is an exhibition that will inform and delight. The explosion of color and graphic designs labeled "Op, Pop, Psychedelic, Neon,

Day-Glo" were what defined the 1960s generation. The end of World War II in 1945 found textile and clothing designers, chemists and engineers experimenting with new fibers, dyes and printing techniques. Thanks to the new synthetics that married mechanized screen-printing with a lack of inhibition about color, you find yourself at the place that fostered the fashions that defined a generation.

FUN, FUN, FUN

The show is just plain fun! The colorful onslaught – complete with a neon green wall as a backdrop – just makes you smile. It's all there: cutaway fashions, the mod "Flower Power" psychedelic prints, paisleys, paper dresses, stylized floral prints, caftans, mock Nehru necklines, jumpsuits and, of course, mini-skirts and bell-bottoms.

The pantsuit also made the cut. While suitable for women to wear to the office or out to lunch with friends, pantsuits were frowned upon for anything other than casual wear or active sports back then, so women would often wear a tunic top with slacks. If a restaurant refused to admit a woman wearing pants – which was known to happen – she could remove them in the rest room and enter wearing a more socially acceptable mini-dress.

Artists such as Peter Max and Heinz Edelman popularized the psychedelic graphic style the '60s are known for, using flat expanses of saturated color and cartoon-like shapes in all kinds of designs: floral, abstract, landscape.



Green River, Creedence Clearwater Revival, circa 1969 fashion display.

Max was well known for his commercial artwork and posters, and Edelman designed the animated film "Yellow Submarine" based on the Beatles song of the same name.

Adding to the ambiance at the Color Revolution exhibition is the blaring music in the background – many of the songs were chosen for their color association. You can't help but sing along to "Strawberry Fields," "Mellow Yellow," "Purple Haze," "It's a Sign of the Times," etc. – all coordinating with vignettes set up to represent those colors.

And the accessories! Kooky sunglasses. Pantyhose (yes – party-

hose!) in neon bright colors. A Beatles sweater pin. Triangular-shaped headscarves. Dangly earrings looking like early-version disco balls.

Typical of most cultural icons, fashions often cycle back. So, many of the features of the 1960s fashions are again trending in our current couture realm. Modified perhaps, but nonetheless reappearing. Ruffles. More subtly flared pants. Bold colors and graphic prints. Even pantyhose are reappearing – thanks to such trendsetters as Duchess Kate Middleton – challenging the stark, barelegged look. It's a sign of the times!

Linda Chestney

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