

# Knapp: A knack for texture

**N**EW YORK — It took a restless Sonja Knapp three days to get into New York because of the big snow.

Ungaro's fabric designer and close friend, visiting from Paris after a seven-year absence, said she spent two nights in Montreal in a Howard Johnson motel "but not eating ice-cream cones, not with all the snow; it was too cold. It was fun being stranded there. I was in the same pants outfit for three days and had to buy T-shirts to refresh my wardrobe. The funniest thing at the motel was seeing this serious French businessman wearing the same T-shirt with the big red 'Montreal' word on it under his business suit with a ves

Knapp, who was a graphic designer before joining Ungaro as a fabric designer, talks about her textiles and her reasons for coming.

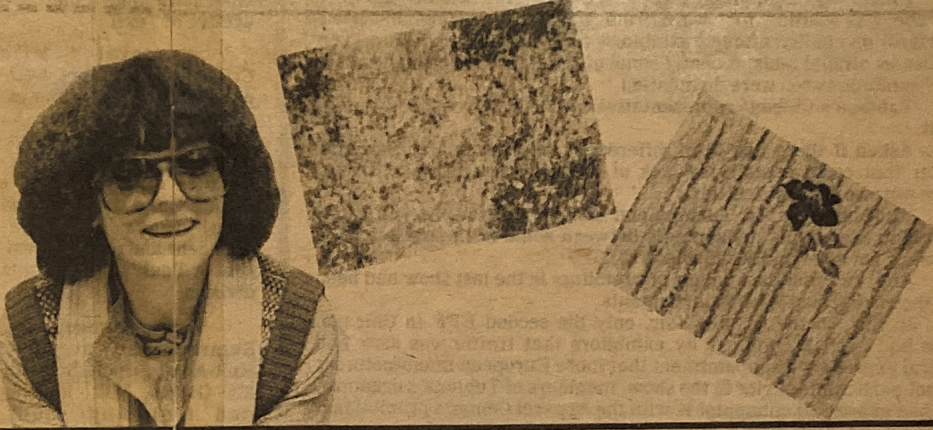
"The most difficult thing I did in the re-

late in color and pattern. I like flowers — not real but impressionistic ones that blend in with the cloth and the body so that a woman wearing the clothes is not overwhelmed by them. They are like the patterns in the ethnic clothing Indians and Japanese wear in layers. They do not clash."

Her favorite cloth for prints is silk, especially silk crepe de chine. "Ungaro only likes to work on these," she says, "and now, I'm finding it very interesting to do prints on mohair and brushed mohair."

These are some of the cloths she's thinking about for winter '78 because she and Ungaro have just picked the fall-winter '78 colors which are "soft and in pastel tones, and very dark, like using dark browns together."

First on Knapp's agenda: New York to familiarize herself with Ungaro's Madison Ave. boutique, since she has never seen it (it opened in September, 1977), and visit shops,



WWD photo by John Bright

Sonja Knapp, in what Knapp describes as her new kinky hairdo—with two of her new winter '78 faux unis texture prints. The gray on natural plaid and floral stripe, on brushed cashmere-hand silk, are printed by Isa, Milan.

cent spring couture collection was the velvet and satin prints which were used together in a faux unis mood. I wanted to achieve a tonal quality in the colors — three shades of black, three shades of blue and three shades of Chinese lacquer red — but it was hard to get my designs printed that way. I find it is always difficult to get my designs printed."

Most of them are done by Italians. Among the ones with which she deals — Lucchini, Rainbow, Sisan and a new printer from Milan, — Isa. Isa is putting her newest faux unis texture plaids and floral stripes — they do not have a single definite line in them — on brushed silk fabrics with a cashmere hand. These fabrics will surface in the capsule boutique collection Ungaro will show for fall '78.

She says she goes about designing "with a discussion of the collection with Ungaro first, about whether it's going to be soft or aggressive. According to what he tells me, the prints and colors come out. If he decides the silhouettes are to be full, then I think small prints. If it's a layered message, I will think in terms of prints that can be put together. Mostly, they are different prints

especially those in Greenwich Village and Soho, and the galleries in Soho. "New York has changed," she says. "It's full of pep and lightness and has a European climate. The people look more sophisticated — especially the young. They are well put together and creative about the way they do it. I saw a girl with satin pants, a heavy knit sweater and a fur jacket. She was well put together."

What does she think about American fabrics? "For inexpensive fabrics they are good for what they are. I have used some — Ultrasuede and Qiana silk-like fabrics when they first were introduced. As for polyester, I would not use them. Ungaro doesn't like them. He prefers natural-fiber fabrics."

What are she and Ungaro thinking about now that he's finished his latest collection?

"Among his ideas are more coordinated looks in home furnishings besides linens and towels. The same look we have in clothes, he wants to put in the home — on walls and the floors, a blending of colors and prints in textiles that are not used in home furnishings, such as cashmere and mohair."

— MARGARET MAZZARACO