



# EMILIO PUCCI

Fashions of the

# PSYCHEDELIC SIXTIES

Emilio Pucci left an eternal legacy to the world of fashion in the sixties by altering women's sportswear with stretchy knits, psychedelic prints, and vibrant colors all of which freely liberated the active women of the sixties to enjoy fashion in the way Pucci intended it.

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# The Psychedelic Sixties

The 1960s were plagued with social movements, fashion fads, and vibrantly energetic music and art.

The era of the sixties was filled with “sweeping social change” of the Peace Movement and Flower Power to the Women’s Liberation Movement and the Space Race and countercultures of drugs, mods, and rockers (Victoria and Albert Museum, n.d.). Pop Art, Op Art, and Art Nouveau swept the country and infiltrated the fashion industry. Furthermore, as society became more active and travel more readily available, cultures from across the globe mimicked one another, primarily in the fashion scene. Emilio Pucci’s designs flaunted “the psychedelic patterns of the drug-fueled counter culture” (Victoria and Albert Museum, n.d.) and exhibited colors of the “natural landscapes of the Mediterranean and exotic cultures” the designer visited (Mansour, 2018). As culture changed daily, Emilio Pucci’s vibrant prints and wearable designs perpetuated the ever evolving sixties.



# Who Was Emilio Pucci in the Sixties?

An extraordinary designer who changed the face of women's "chic sportswear" and resort wear, Emilio Pucci, emerged on top of the fashion scene during the psychedelic sixties known for its drug scenes, Pop Art, and mod fashions (Emilio Pucci Home, n.d.). For the first time, the fashion world experienced bright, exuberant colors and moveable fabrics coined by the late Emilio Pucci.

Emilio Pucci was mercifully accidentally discovered by a photographer on the ski slopes when Pucci donned a friend in his own movable, ski suit seen in Figure 1. Pucci's journey soared from that miraculous discovery. He created a fashion empire to liberate women by pioneering the use of his own silk stretch jersey and cotton jersey which were "free moving stretch fabrics" that were "weightless, unlined, and wrinkle proof" (Mansour, 2018).

Figure 1. The Ski Suit, ca. 1947. (Emilio Pucci Website - About Emilio Pucci)

Figure 2. Emilio Pucci in his Salon, ca. 1960. (Photo by David Lees/The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images)

Figure 1

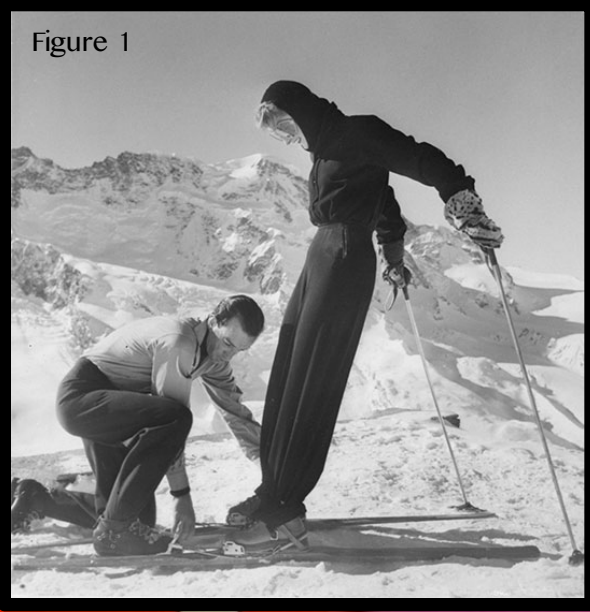
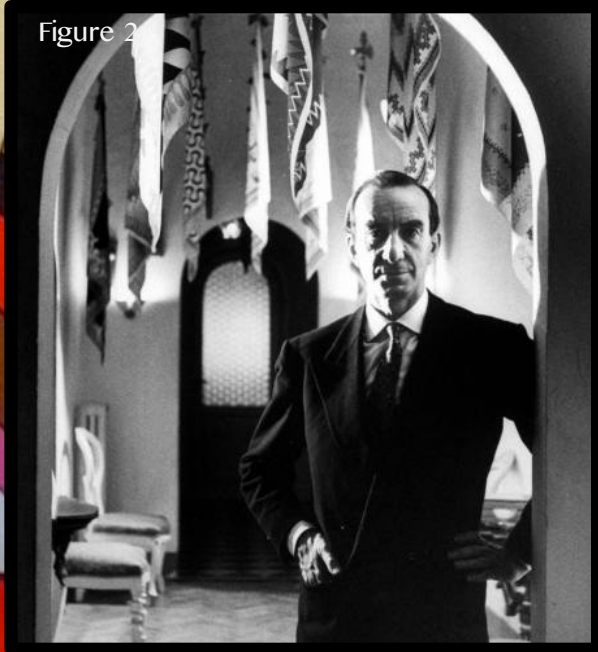


Figure 2



# Emilio Pucci's Fashion Liberates Women's Sportswear

As the times permitted a more freeing, active lifestyle for women, fashion did not, until the power of Pucci began. Emilio Pucci's main fashion focus was "driven by the desire to liberate women, granting them unprecedented freedom of movement" (Mansour, 2018).



Figure 3

Pucci's unique fabrics featured "free flowing lines that followed the natural curves of the body" which was the contrary of decades of women's fashion constricting the body (Emilio Pucci Home, n.d.). Pucci's fashions created an active jet set lifestyle, mimicking his very own, with dresses, pants, leotards, tights, pyjama palazzo pants, and an array of accessories for his consumers. As seen in Figure 3, Pucci's sixties jumpsuit, coined Pucci Pyjamas, enabled an active, movable, trendsetting lifestyle for women. This Pyjama design mimicked the introduction of the pant silhouette into the sixties as the era became more progressive and mobile.

Figure 3. Culottes Evening Trouser Dress – Printed Silk Jersey, ca. 1968. (Victoria and Albert Museum, London)



Figure 4

Pucci revolutionized the use of prints, patterns, and psychedelic colors in women's fashion while still creating wearable, moving sportswear that did not inhibit the active lives of the sixties' woman. Pucci's silhouettes and styles, such as the full body leotard and matching cape seen in Figure 4, were the antithesis of the "rigid, structured" padded clothing women grew accustomed to (Mansour, 2018). The leotard exhibits the basis of Pucci's philosophy of creating free flowing, active, stretch pieces that still maintained the aesthetic of Pucci's psychedelic prints and cultivating high fashion chic trends.

Figure 4. Leotard in Pink Silk Jersey and Long, Terry cloth Cape– Vogue, ca. 1968. (Henry Clare/Conde Nast Collection/Getty Images)



# “Liberating Fashion Construction”



Figure 5. Tubular Mini Dress – Multicolor Silk Jersey, ca. 1965. (Museum at FIT)

Pucci created the basis of his fashion empire to liberate women by pioneering the use of his own silk stretch jersey and cotton jersey which were “free moving stretch fabrics” (Mansour, 2018). Pucci’s Tubular Mini Dress seen in Figure 5 exhibits his celebratory jersey fabrics. The use of jersey allowed stretch and buoyancy. Pucci, among other designers, was instrumental to the rise of “loose fitting dresses” for the active women (Victoria and Albert Museum, n.d.)

As the sixties demanded wearable sportswear and separates, Pucci delivered with collections of wearable, moving separates for the everyday woman. The liberating fashion constructed pieces exuded comfort, groovy trends mimicking the sixties environment, as well as exhibited a fashionable façade. The separate ensemble seen in Figure 6 was a conventional outfit sold on the floor at Saks Fifth Avenue in the 1960s.

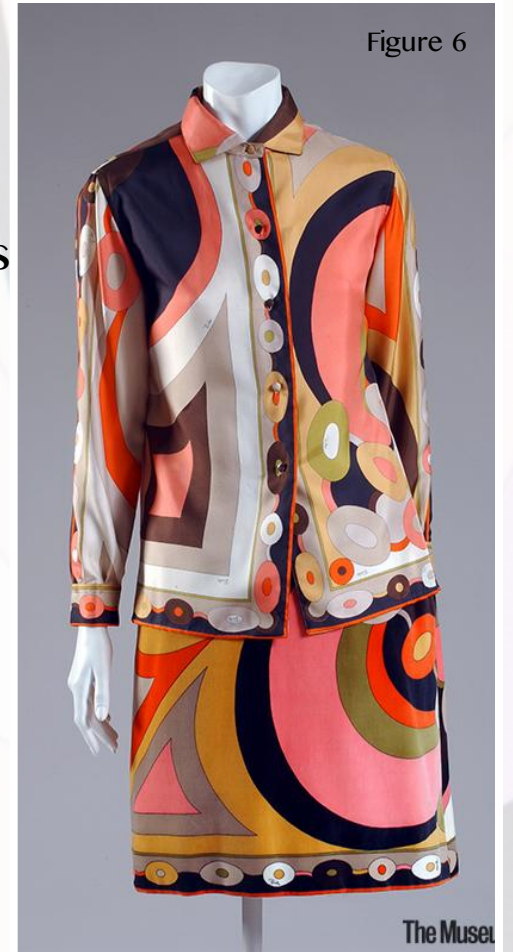


Figure 6. Silk Twill Shirt and Matching Velveteen Skirt– Saks Fifth Avenue, ca. 1967-69. (Museum at FIT)

## “Wearable, Moving Sportswear”



Figure 7



The psychedelic prints became the pattern of the decade and were a symbol of the culture. As Pucci traveled the world as a skier, bomber pilot, and active jet setter, he admired new vibrant colors and permeated his collection with “lemon yellows, azure blue, almond green, and bougainvillea pinks” (Mansour, 2018). Seen above in Figure 7, Pucci used eye-catching, psychedelic colors in his designs, mirroring the colors of the sixties culture.

Figure 7. Blue and Pink Patterned Mini Dress, ca. 1966. (Popperfoto Collection/Getty Images)

The 1960s subcultural scenes were defined by their kaleidoscopic colors and prints seen from music posters to t-shirts. Pucci looked to the culture around him to influence the prints with which he adorned his garments. In addition to subcultures, Pucci borrowed from “African Motifs and Bali Batiks” seen throughout his active, jet-set life (Mansour, 2018). The Prince of Prints used his psychedelic patterns on everything from dresses to free flowing capes as seen in Figure 8, to bags and glasses. The prints were the emblem of his collections.

Figure 8. Cape – Worn over Swimsuit or Jumpsuit at Resorts, ca. 1964. (The Kyoto Costume Institute – Digital Archives)

Figure 8



# The Prince of Prints

Pucci’s designs in the 1960s were instantaneously recognizable. Labeled “the Prince of Prints”, Pucci saturated his clothing with vibrant, psychedelic colors seen all over the era in Pop Art, music posters, and the drug countercultures.



# “THE PRINCE OF PRINTS”

The Prince of Prints created a liberating collection for women that had “the allure of couture but were shed of the impracticality...and had a cascade effect throughout the fashion industry” (Emilio Pucci Home, n.d.). Pucci’s “growing interest in ethnic style” was distinct in many pieces such as Figure 9, where African Motifs are the prominent inspiration (Victoria and Albert Museum, n.d.). Furthermore Pucci’s prints, although accessible to commonplace clientele were still used in high-fashion advertising, as seen in Figure 10, to catch the eye of the consumer base and were swirled around the media in the sixties. The luscious bright colors used by the Prince of Prints made the prints so likeable as they were the ultimate trend consumers wanted during this psychedelic counterculture era.

Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

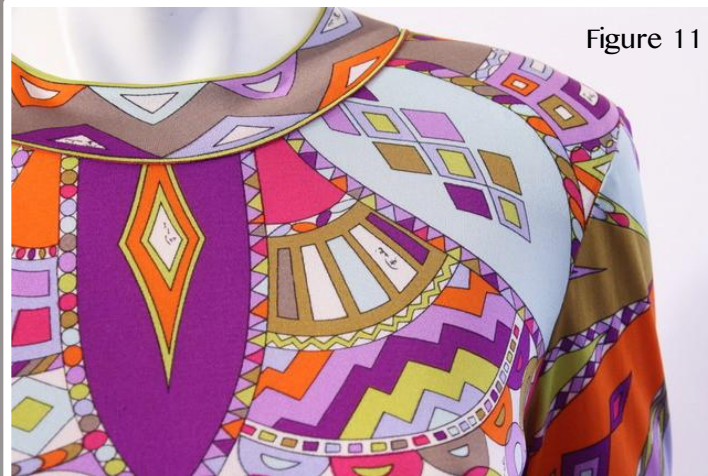


Figure 9. Multicolor Cotton Velveteen Mini Dress, ca. 1960. (Museum at FIT, NYC)  
Figure 10. Multicolored Cape, ca. 1965. (A&E Magazine - AEWorld, 2018)  
Figure 11. 1960s Vintage Emilio Pucci Dress, ca. 1960s. (Rice and Beans Vintage Online Shop)



# Emilio Pucci Was Highly Demanded in the Sixties

Emilio Pucci's psychedelic prints were everywhere during the era and were demanded by everyone. The liberating fashion construction took over the era and was seen everywhere from Ready to Wear to Marilyn Monroe and even First Lady Jackie Kennedy.



Figure 12

Jackie Kennedy was one of Pucci's most prominent patrons. Jackie wore a wide range of pieces from the Prince of Prints' collections. As seen in Figure 12, she used his pieces in her own 'Jackie' way by taking a Pucci Scarf and utilizing it as a headscarf. Jackie was a trendsetter and fashion icon of the sixties, so wearing a Pucci scarf helped bring light to the miraculous designs of Emilio Pucci.

Figure 12. Jackie Kennedy in Emilio Pucci Silk Scarf, ca. 1960s. (A&E Magazine – AEWORLD)



Figure 13

Another prominent symbol of the sixties, Marilyn Monroe, was a symbol that donned the Pucci name. Marilyn was a widely recognizable sex symbol of the sixties culture and a promoted figure in art, fashion, and pop culture. She was seen wearing Pucci among other designers as well as in extraordinary art pieces such as Warhol's Marilyn Pop Art, one of the many influential art styles of the era.

Figure 13. Marilyn Monroe wearing Peacock Patterned Pucci Dress, ca. 1962. (Bern Stern Collection/Getty Images)



# Pucci's colorful printed silks, clothing, and accessories migrated across the country...



Figure 14

Pucci created “futuristic uniforms for Braniff International Airlines Flight Attendants” (Mansour, 2018). Influenced by the Space Race, the prints adorned automobiles, and the Apollo spacecraft. The Flight Attendant Uniforms in Figure 14, exuded Pucci's ability. He did not stop at fashion apparel and accessories, but diversified into airlines, automobiles, and much more.

Figure 14. Pucci Styles for Braniff International Hostesses, ca. 1966. (Bettmann Collection/Getty Images)



Figure 15

Pucci expanded his empire into an array of accessories for his consumers, all of which maintain the the trademarked Pucci pattern. The Handbag seen in Figure 15, was one of many items Pucci used his patterns on including scarves, glasses, and shoes. Pucci's little ‘Emilio’ logo was stamped onto every aspect of the fashion sector.

Figure 15. Emilio Pucci Handbag, ca. 1966-67. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art)

## ... into cars, airlines, and celebrity street styles.



# EMILIO PUCCI

## THE PRINCE OF PRINTS

The Sixties exhibited a realm of drug countercultures and social movements associated with changing norms and fashion fads. The psychedelic, dynamic era produced a prominent designer in Emilio Pucci. Pucci symbolized the culture of the sixties through his psychedelic prints, vibrant colors, and liberating sportswear for women mirroring the societal masses. Emilio Pucci, The Prince of Prints and Colors, became the emblem of the psychedelic era.



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