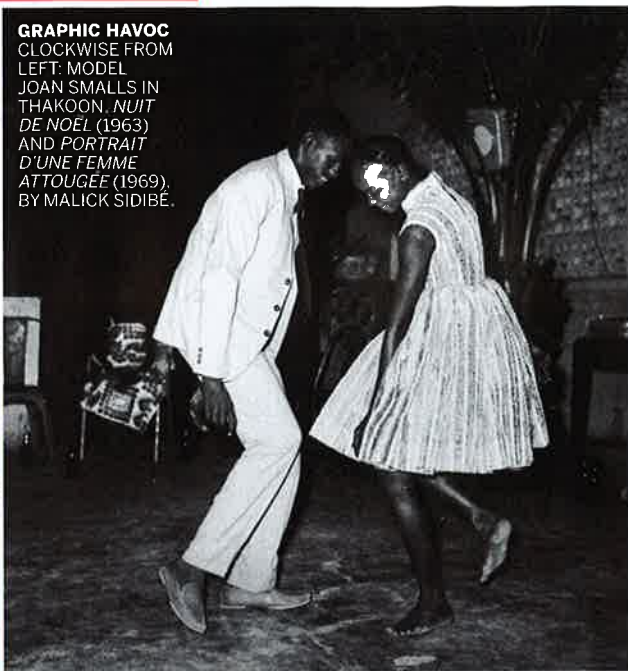




**GRAPHIC HAVOC**  
CLOCKWISE FROM  
LEFT: MODEL  
JOAN SMALLS IN  
THAKOON, *NUIT  
DE NOËL* (1963)  
AND *PORTRAIT  
D'UNE FEMME  
ATTOUGÉE* (1969).  
BY MALICK SIDIBÉ.



photographs of **Malick Sidibé** and came up with winning combinations of cotton tops and skirts in traditional woodcut prints. The silhouettes were also inspired, like a print dress of controlled volume with chalk embroidery and extended pleats he said came from “curtain hangings,” an evolution of **Christian Dior**’s cartridge pleats. Thakoon kept his favorite high-profile customer, **First Lady Michelle Obama**, in mind with a draped strapless long dress in handwashed coral silk with an

turban. But who is going to wear a turban except between sauna and massage at the spa? No one. Instead, each model had a neat headband embellished with a flat bow. In Pilati’s lineup was fashion statement after superlative fashion statement: a sexy crepe-de-Chine jumpsuit. A crisp blue denim trench coat. A short coral silk dress, flounced capelet attached, cinched with violet suede. A strapless white dress and a flame-red belt with a new cut of skirt, raised inset ruffles where front pockets would be, slim and flattering from behind. The finale, a smoking jacket worn with black short-shorts and superhigh diamanté heels, was not for everyone, but on model **Lindsey Wixson**, it looked like a winner for those who dare step out in something other than a dinner dress.

**Thakoon** has done remarkable research on prints he describes as “sixties Afrocentric.” He looked at the

exposed silver zipper for modernity.

For a dazzling red-carpet entrance, look to **Donna Karan**’s finale platinum draped, liquid lamé evening dress. As you know, she is one of those obsessive designers who dream drape and *frou* techniques. But she has other conceits, too, like a transparent black lace halter dress with a great flounced skirt worn with modest maillot briefs, a structured-shoulder jacket softened by sheer black pleated skirts that also came slashed, and a white jumpsuit cut like a dressing gown.

**Carolina Herrera** gave me a private viewing of her collection of 25 looks. “I love yellow because it reminds me of the sun,” she said as she began with a yellow cotton-faille coat worn over a silk-georgette sleeveless dress with one bias ruffle spilling down the front. For a big night, there was her one-shoulder evening column in cotton faille with huge black grosgrain ornaments planted on or intricately pulled through the fabric. The big news is her black-and-white houndstooth suit with easy trousers. Like Pilati, Herrera gets special applause for excellent editing. She was already throwing out a pair of lemon cotton straight legged trousers and a black-and-white sleeveless chiffon blouse. Everything was about design diversity, with thematic notes of print, texture, and the high fashion one anticipates chez Herrera.—**ANDRÉ LEON TALLEY**

## WORDS PERFECT

**A SASSY SUMMER** beach read is **Susan Fales-Hill**’s novel, *One Flight Up* (Atria), about four successful women who grapple with infidelity—as the perpetrators, not the victims. Friends since their days at the fictional Sibley School for Girls on Manhattan’s Upper East Side, they are good girls aching to go where they fear to tread, to an apartment they share for intimate rendezvous. The author, a former television writer and daughter of the late actress and singer **Josephine Premice**, admits she had to trash her first draft because her agent dubbed it dreadful. It’s not a roman-à-clef, she insists, but “a tribute to my multicultural tribe of women friends, my chosen family.”—**A.L.T.**



**PEN PAL**  
“A GOOD DAY  
IS WRITING FOR  
FOUR HOURS,”  
SAYS THE AUTHOR.  
PHOTOGRAPHED  
FOR *VOGUE*, 2007.