

Moda del Sol and Farreró prints

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and MUSEU DEL DISSENY DE BARCELONA

¹ The Textile Printing Museum (MEPM) of Premià de Mar has a collection of 483 fabric swatches of Farreró prints, from 1960 to 1980, that reflect the trends proposed by the Moda del Sol group for each season. In addition, the MEPM has a collection of samples and two printed dresses. The MEPM document archive contains the Moda del Sol colour charts from 1972 to 1983.

² MEPM. *Dossier de premsa de Jordi Joan Farreró* (Press file on Jordi Joan Farreró).

Moda del Sol was the first initiative to make Spanish prêt-à-porter known internationally. It provided a coordinated, fully up-to-date image of fashion, that guided the retail trade's purchases for the season. A group of industrialists joined together in 1963 to work as a team offering the same trends in colours, styles and fabrics. The project, led by designer Josep M. Fillol, brought together various companies with the common aim of internationalization. One notable textile industrialist who participated in the initiative was Jordi Joan Farreró, owner and director of Farreró, who, alongside his design director, Joaquina Masalles, revolutionized the print industry in Spain. In this article, we provide an overview of how Moda del Sol was founded and how it developed over its first twenty years, and of Farreró's trajectory during the period in which it formed part of the group.¹

Born in Girona, Jordi Joan Farreró was orphaned at an early age and started work in a shop. Later, he moved to Barcelona and was employed by a silk factory. He set up on his own in the post-war period, on the Ronda de Sant Pere in Barcelona, where he worked as an editor. His studio created drawings and interpreted or adapted original designs that had been purchased from abroad. Once each drawing had been approved, it was sent to be engraved in other workshops, where it was copied onto a photolith that was then used to engrave the screens. Screen printing was the primary system in the production of Farreró's prints.² The most accurate engravers of the time, based in Barcelona and the nearby town of Premià de Mar, were contracted to make the templates. They included prestigious names such as Estrada, a draftsman and teacher of engravers in Catalonia, as well as Puighermanal, Rotomarc and Virmit. The engraver produced a print on paper using the stencil to check the quality of the print. The photoliths were often drawn freehand, and it was vital to ensure that there were no imperfections and that the print would be successful. In addition, it was essential to check that no streaks could be seen, caused by the edges of the screen. When the stencils were ready, Farreró entrusted most of the production to other factories. He then sold the resulting fabric to clothing manufacturers and clothing stores, or he exported it. Farreró prints were

Printed *Mozart* gauze by Estampados Ferreró, from an original design by Joaquina Masalles (circa 1970), MEPM.



▲ Printed cotton fabric with Kao drawing (c. 1970), MEPM.

◀ Printed cotton cretonne (c. 1970), MEPM.



3 Interviews carried out by the author between 2016 and 2018 with the designer Joaquina Masalles.

available in all kinds of compositions: all-over print with motifs covering the entire background, non-repeating positioned images of exotic landscapes and figurative scenes, or one of the company's characteristic prints, the *degradé*.

Jordi J. Farreró had a passion for art and fine taste in prints, which led him to hire Joaquina Masalles Argilaga, a reliable person who brought innovation, precision and success to the business. Joaquina realised the importance of moving away from classic prints, particularly small floral designs. She joined the team to create innovative large compositions, known as *degradés*, which were exported to many different locations, from California to New Zealand and, of course, Europe.³ Prints in post-war Spain were not especially striking, but Joaquina Masalles had sufficient knowledge of printing and dressmaking



Cotton and printed polyester fabric, Montesol item with *Tropic* drawing (c. 1974), MEPM.

Printed fibranne, Gauguin item and *Sembrador* drawing (c. 1975), MEPM.



to adapt her designs to new trends in clothing. During the years of shortages after the war, Farreró broke the mould with large-format drawings, designed primarily for dresses that reflected the New Look of Christian Dior: corolla skirts with copious amounts of fabric of the highest quality, including the Karnak cotton that the company bought from J. Muñoz Ramonet. Masalles made sketches of the pieces according to the type of print: for dresses with large floral motifs near the hem that became smaller and more dispersed out on the fabric closer to the waist; or for outfits that featured a strong motif on the blouse but smaller motifs on the matching skirt. Farreró also innovated with colours, using striking, vibrant colours that caught the eyes of his customers.

As the design director at Farreró, Joaquina Masalles occupied a key position in the company. In interviews, she comes across as tireless, meticulous and a perfectionist, with a great passion for her work. She travelled frequently to learn first-hand about foreign trends and to meet draftsmen from other countries, visiting the foremost print design studios in Europe, including Farcas in Como and Rome and Vernet in Lyon. During these visits she found out about the latest innovations and purchased drawings that she then worked on in the Barcelona studio, along with a team of five draftswomen and Jordi Curós, who spent some time at the company. Some customers demanded exclusive drawings that were made to order: showy designs for the businessman Rares from Australia, gaudy pieces for clients in California, and more classic designs for England and for Switzerland, where Farreró exported regularly as a route to the great fashion houses of Paris. Masalles personally attended to the orders of the most exclusive clients, among them Zorrilla, who supplied the fashion designers of Madrid. Once the design was approved, she supervised the engraving of the flat screens and the printing itself, which was carried out at Catalan factories, including Fibracolor.

Kismet printed item with *Nepal* drawing for export (c. 1978), MEPM. [See more](#).





Moda del Sol fashion show with prints by Joaquina Masalles (c. 1980), private collection.

Jordi Joan Farreró was involved in founding the Moda del Sol group. He played a significant role as president of the entity and organizer of various events. With him, the group presented its first collection in 1963 – the same year as the group’s foundation – in the function rooms of the Spanish Embassy in Paris. The initiative was successful, and in 1964 the group of industrialists who had participated in the first collection opened a registered office on Carrer de Roger de Llúria in Barcelona. The group showed its second major collection at the Gran Teatre del Liceu, on the occasion of the II Lonja Textil de España (Second Textile Market of Spain). Joaquina Masalles can still recall the excitement and anxiety of the build-up to the show at the Liceu, which featured Teresa Gimpera, a leading model, and some of the other most highly regarded models of the time.

The Moda del Sol project was led by the designer J. M. Fillol, who remained at its head until 1993. He was born in the Balearic Islands and trained in Paris, where he was introduced to the world of fashion and established working relationships with *couturiers*. According to Gema Ranero, who has studied the history of the group, Fillol combined elegance, convenience and comfort, and was also capable of distributing his designs widely. He was a pioneer of Spanish prêt-à-porter, which focused on the trends emerging from Paris and Milan. Moda del Sol became a benchmark for Spanish fashion through a variety of channels that brought the group considerable stability: fashion shows, colour ranges for each new season, trend books, a magazine, media presence, and so on. This careful dissemination of trends, which served as a platform to the international markets for many Spanish companies, both consolidated the group and respected the essence of each firm. Fillol knew how to increase the impact of the collections, which reached the most prestigious catwalks across the globe, including New York, Paris, London, Cologne and Düsseldorf.



Printed cotton and polyester fabric, Subur item and *Dean* model (1982), MEPM.

4 Design Museum of Barcelona. *Report by the National Institute of Fashion in Clothing*, 1983.

From 1965 onwards, *Moda del Sol* organized two fashion shows a year, for the spring-summer and autumn-winter collections. The interest attracted by the first four collections was such that the following shows were held in Barcelona (in the Hotel Ritz, in the gardens of the *Saló del Tinell* during the Annual Assembly of European Clothing Manufacturers, and at the Spanish National Dressmaking Fair) and Madrid, which was subsequently established as the official home of the shows. In 1967, *Moda del Sol* achieved particular success and took part in the International Fair of prêt-à-porter for women in Paris. The Spanish and international press published in-depth articles on the group, and for the first time *Moda del Sol* appeared in *Vogue*. The seventh and eighth collections were also presented in both Madrid and Barcelona. In 1968, the group was present at the international fair *Prêt-à-Porter Paris*, where it put on a show for the international press in the function rooms of the Spanish Embassy. In 1970, the group travelled to New York to present its new collection during the Spanish Week organized by Gimbel-Saks, the prestigious US department store. The event was noted in the national and international press, and the French edition of *Vogue* dedicated thirty pages to the group. This had an immediate effect on sales, which reached new heights and continued to grow over the following years.⁴

Moda del Sol published promotional colour charts, in poster format, with new colours, fabrics and styles. This gave the group's collections their own unique character and was designed to project a uniform image whilst leaving room for each designer to choose between the various proposals. The Instituto Nacional de la Moda en el Vestir (National Institute of Fashion in Clothing) compiled in-depth reports on the decisions in which *Moda del Sol* was involved each season. Meetings were held, in the strictest confidentiality, to

Promotion Colour Chart
for Moda del Sol for 1974, MEPM.



5 MEPM. *Colour chart spring-summer 1972.*

6 MDB. *Information on fabrics for the 1972-1973 autumn/winter collection, according to guidelines of the Instituto Nacional Coordinador de la Moda Española (National Coordinating Institute of Spanish Fashion) and agreements adopted by the Comité Internacional de las Industrias del Vestir Femenino (International Committee of Women's Clothing Industries). File in the National Institute of Fashion in Clothing.*

establish motifs for knitwear, prints, women's, men's and children's clothing, colours, accessories and lingerie. The colour chart for the summer season of 1972 featured very bright prints and distinctive drawings with large, empty backgrounds, accompanied by narrative in the following style: *"the change is decisive and represents a return to happiness, which will make spring-summer 1972 a season bursting with the joy of life"*.⁵ For the following season, the group worked with abstract, geometric prints in the Persian style. Among the new lines there was always one particularly daring proposal. For autumn-winter 1972-1973, the concept of abstraction was proposed to create an *"Analytical, fantastical view of objects and things. A sensation of new dimensions, touching the frontiers of surrealism [...] An impression of movement, instability and weightlessness"*.⁶

The silk and print companies that formed part of Moda del Sol were from the city and province of Barcelona, with a few exceptions. The foremost companies in the sector belonged to the group, among them Vilumara, Viladomiu, and Farreró prints. The clothing manufacturers of Moda del Sol were spread out around Spain. The members of the group presented the autumn-winter

Yesinia Bambula dress and handkerchief. Light cotton gauze, rayon satin ribbons and fabric flowers. Kelson, Madrid (1976), Museu Tèxtil i de la Indumentària de Barcelona (MTIB 143.126).



7 MEPM. *Kelson and Moda del Sol*, 1976.

1974-1975 collection in the function rooms of the Paris Hotel Hilton, during a meeting of The Fashion Group, an entity that brought together creators from different countries. In 1975, Moda del Sol received special recognition: the Galena Award from television. The group won several editions of the RTVE award, on this occasion for the best footwear collection. The group was not solely focused on clothing, it also brought together companies specialized in footwear, accessories and even hairdressing. The company Kelson, for example, promoted the outfit “*Poncho made from rustic fabric, baggy trousers, cowboy boots, gloves and hat of thick tractor, so that the girl can cover the hard paths in the big city*”.⁷ The task of coordinating each of the catwalk models was exhaustive. Everything was considered, from hair to shoes, makeup, complements and accessories, and the results were broadcast on television. Fillol saw the opportunity that this new format provided to reach a wider audience, and although the full potential of

8 The Design Museum of Barcelona has a notebook of the journalist Magda Solé (R. 1989-56), in which she wrote her impressions of the fashion show of 1982 to later publish them in magazines with a wide audience.

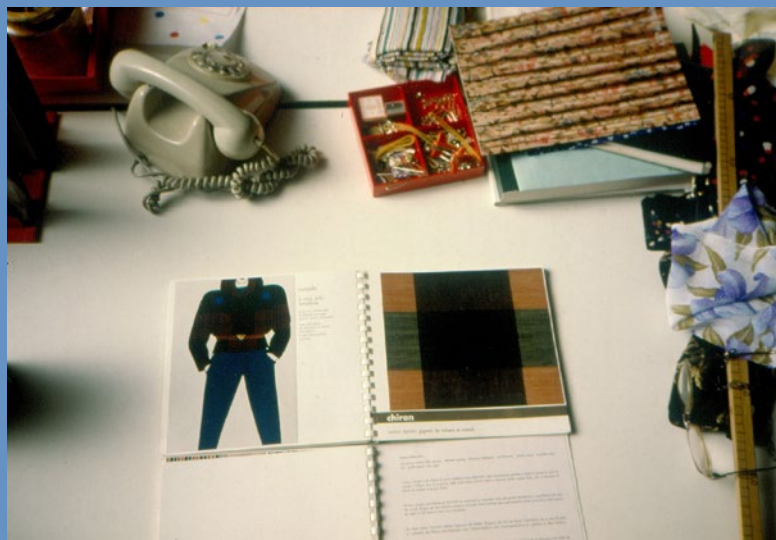
the televisual medium could not be harnessed, the shows were reported in news bulletins. Another tool for dissemination was the group's magazine, promoted by Fillol with the publication of the first issue in 1976.

Moda del Sol set trends for all tastes, showing a clear commitment to diversity and bringing novelty to the fore. Several lines were combined in the same season. For example, in the spring-summer 1978 collection, the preference was for clear, clean designs. The proposal included prints with motifs imitating Ikat or warp printing; prints with large flowers; prints with very flat fruits and a very basic design; and prints inspired by the world of Broadway. The general effect was the use of simple drawings in pencil, charcoal or marker, outlined on fine, transparent fabrics; irregular forms which looked as if they had been cut out of paper and applied over a smooth, fine background, with discreet touches of neon in prints reminiscent of Broadway. In the 1970s, Kashmir drawings also became popular and were used to create clothing with a hippy aesthetic.

Joaquima Masalles spoke of her absolute dedication to obtaining the best effect in her designs. She spent long hours immersed in her work, creating designs with pencil, gouache, watercolours or Luma, a transparent paint. She paid careful attention to colours, searching until she found the right combinations. Masalles herself wrote the formulae for programming the colours. She oversaw five designers who interpreted her instructions: *"Raise the hue of the pink, lower that of the green..."*. Masalles remembers the passion and dedication of the team: "One is like that and enjoys it", she told us. She remembers the friendly relations with others she had dealings with in the company and in the group, and with engravers, printers and professionals from other countries. She also remembers meetings with other manufacturers and businesspeople in the Ronda de Sant Pere area of Barcelona, a place where many textile companies were located and where a convivial atmosphere existed between fellow professionals. Women who drew prints played a significant role in the industry at the time: Rosa Serrano, an independent professional, was one of the most renowned draftswomen in the country, as was Rosalia, who worked at the factory of La España Industrial in Barcelona. According to Masalles, it was an era in which being female never put her at a professional disadvantage; her skills were respected and she considers that success was merely a "question of setting your mind to it".

By 1979, fashion shows had become spectacles in their own right.⁸ The group moved its sales centre to the Certamen Imagen Moda, held for the first time that year in the Palacio Nacional de Congresos y Exposiciones. In 1981, Moda del Sol stepped up its publicity efforts again, presenting its first trend book to the specialist media, published in color with fashion illustrations, photographs of models, and fabric samples, all based on the concept of the latest trends.

Joaquima Masalles' work table with a trends notebook (c. 1980), private collection.



9 MDB. *Moda del Sol. Notebook of trends spring-summer 1982.*

10 MEPM. *Moda del Sol. Trend book spring-summer 1983.*

The publication of trend books expanded on the information previously transmitted through promotional colour charts, providing more detail and more samples, some of which were prints.

For the 1982 spring-summer season there were various proposals: small flowers characteristic of fabrics for patchwork, flat flowers in the Nordic style, informal American-style prints for young fashion, and Oriental drawings of Chinese-Japanese inspiration, with graphic designs and drawings typical of the East that were sometimes used as large non-repeating motifs taking up an entire item of clothing.⁹ In the 1982-1983 autumn-winter season, various clothing manufacturers participated, some of them long-standing members of the group: Africa, d'Orsay, Drape Coti, Famira, Francine, Gene Enrich, Himalaya, Indra, Kelson, Pipers, Pret Dam, Sanloret and Vegaski. For this season, textile firms proposed baroque fashions, British sports style, pioneer and small plant motifs. Prints were less prominent than in cold seasons, the motifs generally smaller and more discreet, and the colours usually muted. In 1983, *Moda del Sol* presented four lines for the warmer seasons: holidays, sports, romantic and sophisticated.¹⁰ By spring-summer 1983, clothes manufacturers had become more widely distributed across Spain and some textile companies left the *Moda del Sol* group. After twenty years, the fabric printers and textile manufacturers that remained in the group were Baher, Comercial Anónima Vila, Creaciones Malbor, Farreró, Francisco Pavón, Gelansa, Industrias Casacuberta, Lion Textil, Manufacturas Iborra, Manufacturas Soler, Mas Molas, Rosson Moda, Sedunion, Soleil, Sweetnit, Textil Caspe and Textil Dobert, all based in Barcelona or its province, and Textil Lizard from Béjar, close to Salamanca.

Moda del Sol would continue on its path, but without Farreró prints. Josep M. Fillol remained at the head of the group until 1993. He was succeeded by Nacho Ruiz, who held the position until 1998, and later by Miguel Marinero, until the group was dissolved in the early years of the twenty-first century. Joaquima Masalles began to work with the businessman J.M. Soler in 1983 and retired in 1998, after three decades of absolute dedication to fashion. René Metràs, father of a well-known art gallery owner and introducer of new trends in prints, said to her on more than one occasion: “*You’re the person who knows most about prints. You brought about the revolution*”. Farreró prints was at the forefront of fashion for years, breaking moulds and crossing frontiers. ●