



STITCH



"Fashion is the reflection of our time and if it does not express the atmosphere of its time, it means nothing."

-Yves Saint Laurent

SYNOPSIS:

"*Stitch*" is an hour long limited series about the brutal arms race to control the international fashion world as waged by two mercurial, conniving, revolutionary, and brilliant young designers in 1970's Paris: Otto Schumaker and Pierre Saint Moreau. These two men both came from the provinces, dreaming of the City of Lights. They come up together as darling proteges of the House of Dior but eventually find acclaim in their own rite after the master's passing. And they shared more than an eye for design and a cutthroat will to success. They shared lovers, muses, salons, and the spotlight afforded to young couturiers in that time. They wielded their loyal cliques as weapons for power plays and sources of gossip, inspiration, and protection. They reveled in the delicious pleasures left in the wake of the turning cultural tide of the 1960's. And too much was never ever enough.

Otto and Pierre may have started as stodgy clothiers for elegant ladies, designing fancy evening wear for the French aristocracy. But by the 70's, they acted as tuning forks of the culture and channeled the protest movement of the late 60's, the exoticism of foreign cultures, and the rock and roll swagger that was emerging in London and New York into their lines. They designed for women and made sex appeal and gender fluidity front and center in their designs. And as such, they became celebrities in their own right and partook in the spoils afforded to them. After all, hedonism reigned supreme and the seduction of glamour promised a life less ordinary for everyone in their gorgeous, paranoid, and glamorous circle.

The rivalry that had been brewing since their school days eventually would erupt and become a driving force in Parisian chic. And as they entered into a high-stakes, high-profile vendetta to control the style of the city and its denizens, they changed the face of fashion forever.

Inspired by the unbelievably true story of Yves Saint Laurent and Karl Lagerfeld.

TONE:

You think Project Runway has back stabbing and depravity? You think Sex in the City changed the way women thought about fashion? You ain't seen nothing yet. Our show will have the cunning ruthlessness of "*Game of Thrones*" combined with the delicious styling and period detail of "*Mad Men*." Played out in resplendent couture houses, sumptuous cafes, bustling boulevards, plush backrooms, decadent nightclubs, and decorated runways of the epicenter of fashion. Picture a smoke-filled Cafe De Flore in bohemian Saint Germain, empty bottles of absinthe and champagne, tables full of models, designers, dreamers, poseurs, and schemers. All cheek bones, hungry eyes, and stolen looks. Everyone jockeying for position, each with their own craven agenda, desperate to be touched by the God-like designers who bestowed beauty on all whom they touched. Set to "Venus in Furs," Velvet Underground's rapturous ode to sadomasochism. Now we're getting closer.

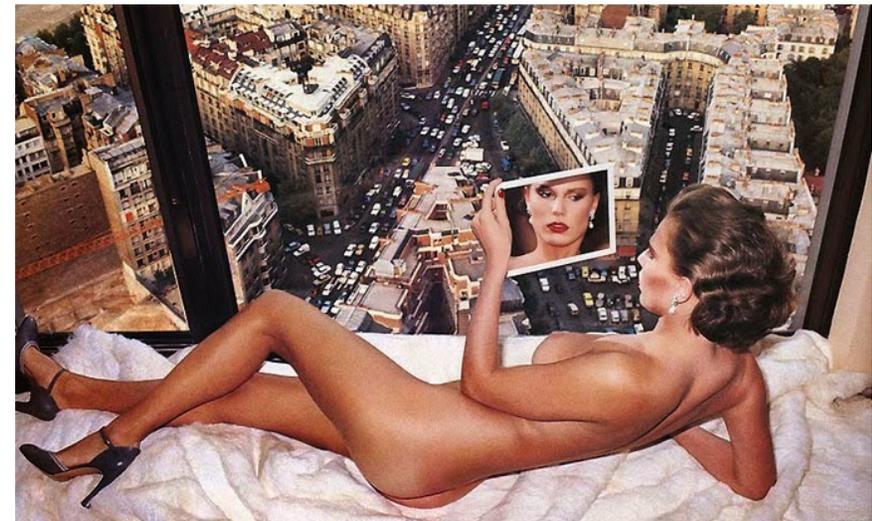
SETTING:

In the late 60's, France was coming out of the deprivations of the war and a collective trauma still remained by the uncertain future ahead. Though hard to believe, the city still felt like a dead suburb; the bars closed early, there was little street life to speak of and no music or dancing spilling out from the cabarets As photo agent Xavier Moreau remembered "We lived little lives. We took our empty bottle to the dairy to collect milk. We made soup with vegetable peelings. At the same time we grew up with a huge hunger, a desire to be someone, to rejoice."

But all that changed during the summer of 1968.

Over a few weeks, students took to the streets to protest President De Gaulle's autocratic reign and the de facto bourgeois restraint on culture. There was a gale-force wind of liberation whipping through the streets and salons of Paris, blowing up skirts and knocking over rules of social convention. There was violence and euphoria on the streets. Cars burned in the blue black Saint Germaine night. France exploded like a champagne bottle left out in the sun.

By the 1970's, this passionate and nihilistic sensibility translated to fashion and sexuality. No more did women want to be disguised or constricted. They wanted to be free and in control of their bodies. All over town, the French youth were expressing themselves by fucking and fighting. Drinking and drugging. And for Otto and Pierre, they'd be damed if they didn't help these young people dress the part.



CHARACTERS



YVES SAINT MOREAU

Gay mercurial fashion designer from Algeria. Reinvents haute couture in the late 60's and early 70's. Initially an introvert and painfully shy, he discovers the liberating erasura afforded to him by getting lost in drugs, sex, hedonism. Manic depressive. Tall, thin, delicate features, extremely nervous and always morose. Introduced the tuxedo suit for women and was known for his use of non-European cultural references, non-white models, and gender fluidity. He was the most celebrated artist of his time, extending well beyond the world of fashion.



OTTO SCHUMACHER

Bisexual designer from German who came into money. More interested in ready to wear lines than high fashion. Outwardly flamboyant but very private and heavily guarded. Always watching and observing so that he could vampirize a style or culture. One of the most well known cultural appropriators. Constantly reinvents his mythology and his social circle to serve his purpose. Even though he was an inferior designer to Yves, he was a relentless schemer and his ambitions were unparalleled.



PIERRE BERTRAND

A savvy and powerful art collector. Eventually becomes Moreau's business partner and lover after becoming transfixed with the fashion scene and in particular its enfant terrible. Decides to become Yves's patron, benefactor, lover, and jailer all in one. Controls every aspect of the Moreau empire and legacy and sacrificed himself so as to appease the whims of the temperamental and extremely disturbed artist. Very confident in his homosexuality, boasting of his conquests. (He once told Andy Warhol about his cock ring).



FRANCOIS DE BASHIER

Debauched aristocrat who sleeps with both Yves and Otto. Total dandy who uses a cane, wears flamboyant suits, and has an extraordinary appetite for drugs and sex. Comes to Paris in the late 60's to make a name for himself but doesn't have any skills - so he gloms onto the fashion set. Otto wields him as a weapon and instructs him to seduce YSM in order to sabotage his business. He eventually succumbs to a heroin addiction and contracts AIDS.



BETINA CATROUX

Famed for her long white-blond hair, lanky body, gaunt features, and androgynous appearance. Yves called her his twin and she became one of his devout muses, traveling all over the world with him. Was constantly trying to be poached by Otto but was wholeheartedly devoted to Yves and Pierre. Also, a depressive who escaped her ennui through drugs and sex.



LOU LOU LA FEM:

A North African woman whom Pierre and Yves met in Morocco on one of their excursions. She helped inspire Saint Laurent's 1966 women's tuxedo Le Smoking and his see through blouses. Was a very free spirit and designer in her own right and would often create pieces using scraps of fabric or random odd household item. Yves and Pierre were so infatuated with her that they gave her a job as design director of Yves studio.

PILOT:

-In a rushed and frenetic montage, Otto Schumaker, a flamboyant German designer, drapes various piles of clothing in wild combination over a brooding beauty named Victoire. They are in the middle of a raised dais, surrounded on three sides by mirrors. From off screen, we hear a soft shy voice who whispers his disapproval. A paisley scarf. "No." A torn kimono. "Not quite." A satin smoking jacket. "Gorgeous but isn't right." A chiffon blouse. "Doesn't move me." Otto has had enough. He grabs a pair of long stainless steel scissors to cut out the heart of his tormentor, a younger designer named Yves Saint Moreau, who sits nearby wearing a dark suit and tie and slim fitted white surgeon's jacket. Otto holds the weapon to Yves's neck with a rueful smile. He then rushes over to Victoire and cuts off all her clothing so she is just wearing high heels and diamonds. He pushes her up against the mirror, removes himself from his pants, and takes her from behind - the whole time grunting violently at Yves who continues to smoke thoughtfully while he watches the show. "Now that's what we need to capture," Yves remarks as he delicately put out his cigarette and exits the studio. Otto falls back onto the ground, spent and delirious.

-A wet boulevard after the rain. The street lights hazy and blooming in the dusk. A group of youthful students drunk on absinthe spill out from a cafe, trying to chase the night's buzz to see where it leads. The girl in the group is dressed in flowing trousers and a boat neck sailor's shirt with a red scarf. She kisses another woman and the two frolic out into the night. And now a different angle, obscured and telephoto. We're watching them from the shadows. From out of the darkness, a cigarette lights up. At the other end of the red ember is Yves. He's takes pains to remain cloaked in darkness so that he doesn't betray his most natural mode: that of a voyeur.

-Yves barrels back into his drawing studio. Swathes of fabric are everywhere. A few models are being measured and fit by assistants. Yves begins to furiously sketch. Over his shoulder, we recognize bits and pieces of the drawings as being inspired by the student's clothing we just saw. "Work is for the day, Yves. The night belongs to us, mon frere." Sprawled on a chaise lounge is Otto and Victoire. They are eating a plate of raw carpaccio by the fistfull. Yves explains that inspiration waits for no man. And neither does Christian Dior. Victoire replies that neither man has anything to worry about as far as their already impressive careers. They are the twin pillars of the House of Dior. It would crumble without Yves Saint Mureau and Otto Schumaker. Otto: "Let it fall. Out of the rubble will rise a golden phoenix of inspiration to break the ossified mold preserved in amber. Fashion means getting dressed in fineries to go the opera. Might as well be dressing for a funeral. It should feel vital, free, revolutionary." Yves says he'll drink to that. A smile spread across Otto's face. "Indeed."

-The three of them hop into Otto's dark blue Mercedes sports car and speed off into the night. In an energetic montage, we see the champagne flowing like water. Oysters knocked back. Cigarettes removed from gold plated carrying cases. Two models jump on a table and start tonguing each other. They hit brasseries and bars and galleries. Everywhere they go, they're celebrated and revered. It's an amazing alcohol-fueled debauched night where we get to see how the Parisian hoi-polloi live; full of energy and verve and spirit. All three end up back in Otto's pied-a-terre sleeping under a Turkish rug

as the sun rises. Yves gently caresses both Otto and Victoire but that is as far as he will let himself go. They drift off to sleep.

-Birds are chirping. Morning dew is settling over Paris. And suddenly we're disturbed by a loud phone call. Victoire answers and is told the news. A tear runs down her cheek. She tells Yves and Otto that Dior has died. The two men look at each other and get dressed and field the inevitable press inquiry.

-Now at a press conference, the business manager at House of Dior fields difficult questions from the fashion press. Fashion is not just a lark after all. It's huge business in Paris and is a major industry employing thousands of Parisians and fueling a retail economy. It's announced that Yves will take over the famous couture house. Otto is understandably devastated that he is being passed over. But he puts on a good face for his friend and congratulates Yves for the tremendous accomplishment; the youngest creative director in the history of the esteemed house. Yves is excited but terrified of failing.

-Later that night, Yves is feted at a fancy dinner with a murder's row of Parisian cultural scene: Pierre Cardin. Paloma Picasso. Mick Jagger. Andy Warhol. And a dashing foppish duke named Francois De Bashier who has a cane and a paisley suit. He regales the guests with his outlandish stories. On the other side of the room, we finally get a sense of just how severe Yves's social phobia and intense shyness really is. He nearly hyperventilates and excuses himself to the balcony where he contemplates killing himself. Just then a hand is placed on his shoulder. "Careful now. The view is fantastic. But the fall can be devastating." This is Pierre Bertrand, an esteemed gay art collector. YSM feels an immediate connection and confesses his fears and his desires. Pierre listens and says that all you need is a helping hand, and he offers to it him. This is the start of their symbiotic relationship where "his strength meant I could rest on him when I was out of breath."

-Now we're with Otto. He is working on a pret-a-porter collection in his design studio, a far cry from the fanfare, pageantry, and prestige of Dior's haute couture. But fashionable nonetheless. He models some of the clothing on Victoire. She says it's very good. Otto rips it off her and tears it to shreds. She stands there, totally nude and totally frightened. "I don't want to be very good. I want to be the best." He goes back to the drawing board, literally and figuratively.

-Yves is working around the clock on his collection for the House of Dior, called the Beat Collection. Short alligator-skin jacket with fur trim and abbreviated sleeves. Lots of black in the collection which was shocking to the puritanical stuffiness of the House of Dior. Yves constantly doubts himself but Bertrand gives him the strength and confidence to fight on.

-After a grueling design session, the two men go out to brasserie. Across the bar they makes eyes with Betty Catroux, a sleek gamine beauty. The very definition of femme fatal. Yves is transfixed and, as if caught in her tractor beam, is transported across the room, floating on air. They chat each other and Yves declares his love for her on the spot.

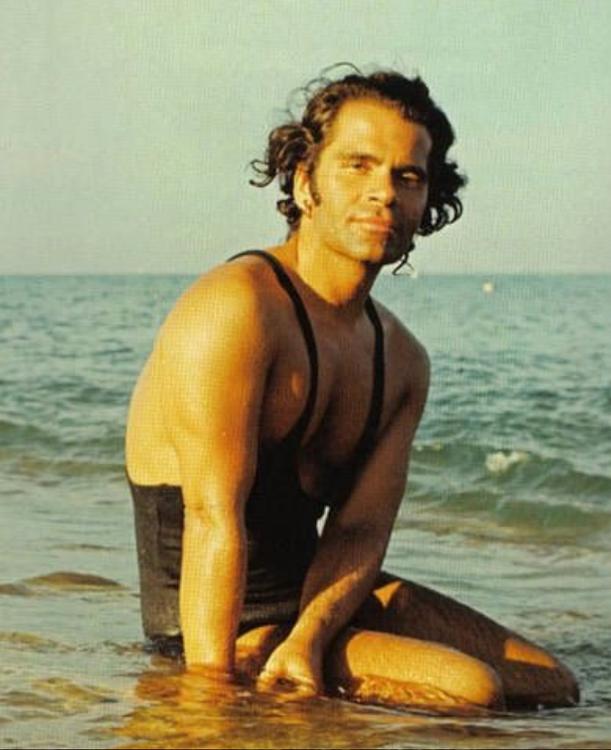
-Yves is about to launch his line at an over the top fashion show. But he's almost on the verge of exhaustion and can't think clearly. He starts to break down. Pierre gives him some cocaine to revive him. "Whats this?" Smelling salts. Yves takes a quick snort. Just enough to allay his nerves. But something turns in him. He likes it. A lot. We get the sense that it's through drugs and erasure that Yves can finally abandon his crippling self-consciousness.

-In the front room, people are waiting expectantly for the models. The fashion press is out in full force. Victoire and Otto are in the back. We also see De Bashier there as well. The show is a smash. Yves is elated.

-At the after party, De Bashier shows up, looking debonair and ravishing in coat tails and a top hat. Yves gives him a special handkerchief to wear. De Bashier presses it against his face and breathes in the smell. Says he'll always cherish it, his first gift from Saint Moreau, the patron saint of Parisian troublemakers. Yves: First gift of many, my dear man. They start flirting. Bertrand smells trouble. The devil recognizes his own, after all. He tells Yves to stop associating with De Bashier. Yves replies to Bertrand that jealousy is so bourgeoisie and then storms off to take his bow. Bertrand waits in the wings, watching his charge receive adulation and praise for his inaugural collection.

-De Bashier comes home to his well appointed castle. A figure in the dark asks him how'd he do. He replies "A moth doesn't resist a flame, does it" Otto steps out of the darkness and kisses De Bashier deeply. "Excellent. Keep it that way. Ah...what's this" De Bashier, referring to the handkerchief: "Yves gave it to me. It's mine." KL: How lovely. Lets see how it looks on the floor. Otto strips Jacques down and flips him around. He takes him from behind on the balustrade as a million city lights pulse below them, the energy barely dormant and ready to explode.





SERIES

-Otto inherits some money and begins to wield it as a weapon. He spend lavishly on his clique, bringing them on extravagant trips and lavishing them with drugs and clothes. Like Kanye West, he recognizes that fashion can be built on a cult of personality as well as design savvy. Attitude, afterall, is just as powerful and intoxicating as a killer hemline. Accordingly, he starts body building wearing an eccentric wardrobe: high heeled patent leather boots, swept back hair, colorful bow tie. All designed to give him the air of someone large than life. And then the pièce de résistance: the Japanese hand-held fan. Otto had transformed into a his own brand of a man about town; bizarre, omnipresent, unapproachable, and full of mystique.

-We reveal De Baschier to be Otto's lover who, upon Otto's instruction, seduces Yves. Baschier comes on strong to the shy couturier and introduces him to the one-two punch of S&M clubs and heavy drugs. One evening, Yves gets arrested after being involved in a fight. And Bertrand has to bail him out, much to his disappointment. He escorts him back to their well appointed home where Yves washes his face, changes his clothes, and then goes right back out again. No rest for the weary. Bertrand is naturally furious and senses that the changing winds of Paris are blowing young Yves to and fro. A change is necessary.

-As a way to escape the pressures and spotlight of Paris, Bertrand takes Yves to a summer home in Marrakesh. Here, Yves experiences a creative and personal renaissance. The colors, the sounds, the hash, the exoticism, the sexuality. North Africa was a sexual playground for the French homosexual elite. And Yves and Bertrand were no exception. They spared no indulgence. And they hosted lavish parties with models, hookers, and celebrities. Jack Nicholson and Mick Jagger even show up! This is where Yves and Bertrand meet Lou Lou La Fem, an eccentric muse who creates fanciful clothing out of table clothes, metal scraps, and discarded fabrics. They bring her back to Paris as a mascot/emblem of foreign lands and exotic adventures.

-Otto, meanwhile, plants his flag in Saint-Tropez. He takes to the seaside town and brings along his ragtag entourage. Everyone gets blitzed on drugs. But not Otto. Even though he seems wild and like some sort of stark fashionable retro futurist alien, he is intent on keeping his wits about him so as to navigate the brutal chess match that he is planning on waging against his former classmate and current competitor. When his entourage begins poking around in his past, he cuts them off like a gangrenous leg needing to be amputated. Clearly this guy has a dark secret in his past. (We hint that he possibly poisoned his sister in order to be the sole heir to his family fortune)

-Yves returns to Paris, recharged and full of zest. He starts to work on a new collection that heavily features the work of Mondrian. But the moment he's out of Bertrand's sight, the drugging comes back in full force. He continues to galavant around the S&M clubs with Bashier. And for the first time in his career, he almost misses a deadline. He is becoming erratic and difficult to work with. One evening he is walking down the boulevard and spots Victoire, emerging from a car

wearing another model's clothing. Yves freaks out. "Those are the wrong boots. And your hair, it's a vegetable patch!" He severs his relationship with Victoire. And now Betty Catroux and LouLou are installed as YSM's full time muses. In fashion, one day you are in. And the next you are out. That euphoria and paranoia define the medium. Now with the clique complete, the only thing left to do is celebrate. And how do they do that? Ruthlessly.

-Bertrand and Yves throw a massive bash to celebrate the launch of his fragrance "Opium" He packs more than 800 well-heeled guests — including Cher, Capote, Jack Nicholson, and Diana Vreeland — into an East Harbor yacht, where they were entertained by fireworks, the scent of some 2,000 Hawaiian orchids, and a 1,000-pound bronze Buddha. After the Champagne runs dry, everyone hustled to Studio 54 for the afterparty. Otto shows up in a one piece leather daddy suit but is denied entry by the bouncer. ("This is a classy affair, Mr. Schumaker). Such a slight he will not soon forget.

-Otto puts on his first solo runway show. In an effort to distinguish himself from his rival, he decides to go full camp. His line is full of petit black shorts, bra tops, loose skirts, and sheer tops. The fashion press eviscerates Otto, knocking him back on his heels. Lou Lou, by way of Nico from the Velvet Underground, discovers heroin and introduces it into her clique. It nearly destroys Betty. And De Bashier gets hooked. He constantly is imploring Yves to try it, leading them down a very dangerous path. As a result, Bertrand banishes De Bashier from seeing Yves once and for all. Says if ever sees him again, he'll rip his fabled cock ring right off and wear it on my pinkie finger. Message received.

-YSM famously crafted a woman's version of a tuxedo — "le smoking" — that simmered with the eroticism of androgyny. Paris goes crazy for it. YSM is now on an international stage - arguably the prototypical fashion designer. But he begins to fall deeply into depression. He cannot face the press or even at times leave his home. Bertrand covers for him as long as he can but eventually it becomes known that the belle of the ball isn't willing to dance anymore. This presents Otto with an opportunity. He decides to venture into accessories, designing furs, jewelry, and accessories. Finally, people flock to the collection. He is thrilled even though the press call him a hack and sell out. But he's laughing all the way to the bank.

-Our series ends at the dawn of the 1980's, when the era of "rapturous delight" whorled into a vortex of addiction, AIDS, and broken dreamers. Yves decides to retire from fashion and become a full time recluse. Bertrand concedes to his lover and business partner and basically seals him into a glorious prison of their own making where he lives out his days often alone. De Bashier ends up dying of AIDS, drug addicted and homeless. Otto meanwhile ascends the ladder, as fashion becomes more about branding than about artistry or craft. He celebrates with a large party, surrounded by sycophants and celebrities.

