

Alessandra Lopez y Royo,  
Contemporary Indonesian Fashion: Through the  
Looking Glass,  
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Nowadays, considering the current panorama of fashion studies, it can be asserted that the book written by Alessandra Lopez y Royo is an important contribution to a more international approach in the analysis of global fashion.

The manuscript is a almost personal meditation about the fashion behaviour in Indonesia, as well as “a journey through fashion in today’s Indonesia, looking at several of its facets, from its making to its presentation, mediation, and consumption”. (p. 47)

The author, whose background in fashion is itself multifaceted since she is an academic, a fashion activist and a model, shared her thoughts about Indonesian fashion starting from her experience in Jakarta. Page by page, she brings the reader to the Indonesian culture: right from the very beginning of the book, the reader will abandon the “western perception” of Indonesian fashion, discovering the contemporary (and global) Indonesian fashion system.

To better understand today’s Indonesian fashion, it is necessary to start from the roots of this culture, from the historical events that shaped both the society and the attire. Alessandra Lopez y Royo provides a clear time line: the pre-colonial Indonesia and the colonial period; the post-independence Indonesia; the new order; the 1970s and the post-reformasi; up to nowadays. Each of this period was marked by a significant change in the society that also reflected in garments (the *Kemben* first, than the *Kabaya* and so on).

Following the path of the Indonesian history to the present day, analysing today’s Indonesian fashion it would be less shocking for those used to thinking of fashion as a western phenomenon, just considering of the contemporary fashion capital of Indonesia: Jakarta.

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Jakarta is not only the city of majestic shopping malls with a range of international fashion events, indeed, the Indonesian capital hosts such events as the Indonesian Fashion week or the IPMI Trend Show. These events are not only a chance to present Indonesian designers, but also a way to mark long-lasting collaborations with international fashion schools or fashion magazines (e.g. Harper's Bazaar).

In addition, the collaboration with the international fashion press should not be underestimated because the mediation of fashion in Indonesia remains mostly printed. However, the messages conveyed by media possess more contemporary messages such as pollution, discriminations, etc. (i.e. *Magdlene* is an openly feminist magazine). This contributes to transforming the Indonesian fashion's landscape into an arena for activism.

Indonesian fashion is extraordinarily contemporary and global. Due to this fact, it is continuously changing. The way fashion is consumed, presented and mediated; shows that the impact of fashion on an ordinary woman will be reconfigured again and again in Indonesia as well as in the rest of the world, and the iconography of this book highlights this phenomenon.

In conclusion, this journey into Indonesian fashion with the author highlights that fashion can be fluid, everywhere.