

The *First Brazilian Fashion Show* held in 1952, In the City of São Paulo, by Newly Immigrant Italians

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Abstract

This article rescues and analyzes the facts and characters involved in the promotion of the First Brazilian Fashion Show, which took place on November 6, 1952 at the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP), by an Italian couple who had recently emigrated to Brazil: Pietro Maria Bardi and Achillina (or Lina) Bo Bardi, he journalist and art dealer, she architect. The social, economic and ideological motivations that made possible this pioneering and extemporaneous event in the history of fashion in the country are highlighted, as well as its oblique relationships with the emergence of the field of fashion creation in Brazil and Italy.

Keywords: Fashion; History; Art; Italian immigration; Modernism.

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Introduction

Brazil has been conformed since its beginnings as a multifaceted society, as results of its population having formed from the displacement to its territory of contingents from different nations. Mostly Portuguese colonizers and enslaved Africans — from 1500 to the imperial period (1822–1889) — and, throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, immigrants from various nations, stimulated by state policies, expressively those from Italy, during the period of the so-called *Great Italian Immigration*, between 1860 and 1920. The statistics are eloquent, albeit imprecise: according to historian João Fábio Bertanha,¹ around 1.5 million, positioning the country as the sixth destination for emigrants from that country, in the period.² The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) indicates a contingent of 1.5 million Italians who arrived in Brazil only between 1884 and 1959;³ in any case, the numbers are relevant. This last data includes part of a second period of more intense flow of Italians to Brazil, which occurred during and after World War II (1939 to 1945), among which many were intellectuals and artists who built relevant professional trajectories in the new homeland, in areas such as theater, cinema, architecture etc.

In the creation of fashion, a milestone in which we will focus was the initiative of a couple of post-war Italian immigrants: Pietro Maria Bardi (1900, La Spezia — 1999, SP) and Achillina Bo (or Lina Bo Bardi, 1914, Rome — 1992, SP); he was a journalist and art dealer, she an architect.⁴ On their initiative, on November 6, 1952, the First Brazilian Fashion Show was held at the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP), an event that took place on a date close to the First Italian High Fashion Show, which had held in Florence on February 12, 1951, organized by Count Giovanni Battista Giorgini for international buyers, a landmark in the projection of Italian fashion on the world scene. Although there is no direct relationship between these two events, the temporal proximity suggests to a significant historical parallel. It is possible to observe in both the common purpose of establishing an affirmative aesthetic of national fashion capable of confronting the hegemony then maintained by France in the field. However, the paths taken and the results obtained were diverse, if not opposite: in the Italian case, the show had great international repercussion, fixed itself in the historical calendar of Italian fashion. On the other hand, the Brazilian event had repercussions only internally, submerging later in obscurity for decades,⁵ which is explained by the fact that it was an oblique episode in the development of professional fashion creation in the country, motivated by subjective and ideological reasons to its creators, characters linked to modernist thought, and then, recently emigrated to Brazil, as already mentioned. Therefore, still with little knowledge of the complex socioeconomic reality of the country that hosted them.

To substantiate these arguments, it is necessary to briefly rescue the trajectories of the aforementioned characters: Pietro Maria Bardi had built an eminent career as a journalist and gallery owner in Italy, between the 1920s and 1940s, militating in favor of modern arts, in particular the rationalist architecture, influenced by the French architect Le Corbusier,⁶ having defended with the fascist government its institutionalization as “official art of the State”. Affiliated to the Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF), in 1930 Bardi assumed the direction of the Galleria d'Arte di Roma, of the National Fascist Syndicate

1. João Fábio Bertanha, *Os Italianos* 2nd edition (São Paulo: Contexto, 2005), 88.
2. Brazil ranks below the US, France, Switzerland, Argentina and Germany. Angelo Trento. *Do outro lado do Atlântico — um século de imigração italiana no Brasil* (São Paulo: Nobel, 1988), 574.
3. Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) — *Estatísticas do povoamento/Imigração por nacionalidade* <https://brasil500anos.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas-do-povoamento/imigracao-por-nacionalidade>.
4. Graduated in architecture at the Università degli Studi di Roma (1934–39), with her thesis of honor entitled *Nucleo Assistenziale di Maternità e Infanzia*.
5. The historical recovery of this pioneering event is due to the following sources: Luís André do Prado and João Braga, *História da moda no Brasil, das influências às autorreferências* (São Paulo: Pyxis/Disal, 2011), 216–221. Patrícia Sant'Anna, *Coleção Rhodia: Arte e design de moda nos anos sessenta no Brasil*. PhD thesis in History of Art IFCH/Unicamp (Campinas, 2010).
6. Pseudonym of Charles-Edouard Jeanneret-Gris (1887–1965), French-Swiss architect who established the “rationalist” concept based on “Five Architectural Principles: free plan, roof-terrace, pilotis, free frames and large openings”. Dilva Frazão, “Le Corbusier,” *E-biography*. https://www.ebiografia.com/le_corbusier/.

of Fine Arts; he was also editor of the *L'Ambrosiano* newspaper, which supported the regime.⁷ He met Lina Bo while acting at the Studio d'Arte Palma in Rome; she is equally dedicated to modern architecture, but linked to the left, having worked in the magazine *Domus* (1944), by Giò Ponti⁸, and in the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in 1943.⁹ They married in 1946, when reconstruction began in the aftermath World War II, already with a plan to emigrate to Brazil, “bringing in their luggage a large part of Bardi’s art collection”, with the objective of setting up exhibitions in Latin American countries. Canas assert that, for Lina, “there was little hope of staying in the country and being able to participate in its reconstruction, especially after the takeover by the Christian Democrats; and for Bardi, staying in Italy would entail the risk of revoking the right to exercise his activities as a journalist and critic, due to his professional performance during the period of fascism.”¹⁰ In turn, Tentori, Bardi’s Italian biographer, suggests that his conversion to democracy would not have been a “simple and painless” process, motivating his emigration to Brazil.¹¹



Figure 1: Pietro Maria Bardi and Lina Bo. Photo Henri Ballot; *O Cruzeiro*, São Paulo, 1951. MASP Collection.

The Problem of Brazilian Fashion

The first of them took place in Rio de Janeiro, when the couple would have been introduced to the Brazilian communications magnate Assis Chateaubriand.¹² The latter, in turn, invited Bardi to take up the position of curator of an art gallery he intended to open in the capital of the state (province) of São Paulo — and which became MASP, today one of the most important art museums in the Southern Hemi-

7. Adriano Tomitao Canas, *MASP: Museu Laboratório Projeto de museu para a cidade: 1947-1957*. PhD thesis at the Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo (FAU/USP). São Paulo: 2010.

8. Giò Ponti (1891-1979), Italian architect and design “influenced by two seemingly incompatible styles: the Novecento Italiano — a Milanese neoclassical conservative movement founded in the 1920s and supported by the dictator Benito Mussolini — and the modernism of the 1930s”. Dominic Lutyens, “Gio Ponti: o designer italiano do pós-guerra,” *BBC Culture*, 5 Feb. 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/vert-cul-47009220>.

9. Ethel Leon, *Instituto de Arte Contemporânea (IAC), Escola de Desenho Industrial do Masp (1951-1953), Primeiros estudos*, Dissertation at the Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo (FAU/USP); São Paulo, 2006, 196.

10. Adriano Tomitão Canas, São Paulo: 2010.

11. Francesco Tentori, *P.M. Bardi: com as crônicas artísticas do “L'Ambrosiano” 1930-1933* (São Paulo: Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi/Imprensa Oficial do Estado, [1990] 2000), 164.

12. Adriano Tomitão Canas, São Paulo, 2010.



Figure 2: *First Brazilian Fashion Show* — catalog cover; São Paulo, Nov. 1952, MASP Collection.

sphere. Bardi found in Chateaubriand an “authoritarian, violent and modernizing” entrepreneur,¹³ with enough power to raise financial resources from the local elites to support his artistic projects.

Among the members of this elite, there were industrialists from the then prosperous Brazilian textile industry, occupied in promoting their main product: cotton fabric, still seen in foreign and domestic markets as not very noble. At that point, the European textile park was starting to recover from the damage suffered during World War II — a period in which Brazilian textiles factories had prospered due to the destruction of European industrial park by the war and the fact that Brazil had remained neutral in the conflict, only taking a stand in favor of the Allies in 1942:¹⁴

Brazil took advantage of this opportunity, increasing its exports by 15 times and becoming in this period the second largest textile producer in the world. ...in 1945, when Hitler’s troops surrendered, Brazilian industries produced more than a billion meters of fabric.¹⁵

The resumption of the international market by European and American textiles in the post-war period strongly impacted Brazilian textile exports, making the industries in the segment turn to the domestic consumer, still facing competition from the imported product, which required greater investments in qualification and promotion of cotton fibre, the reason for a series of media initiatives carried out in partnership with the Diários Associados de Chateaubriand, some also involving MASP, whose inauguration took place on October 2, 1947. The Museum’s first headquarters occupied the second floor of the Diários Associados building, in São Paulo, located at center of Capital, with a project by the French architect Jacques Pilon. The gallery foreseen in the original project received adjustments proposed by

13. Ethel Leon, São Paulo: 2013.

14. Boris Fausto. *Getulio Vargas: o poder e o sorriso* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2006).

15. Renata M. L. Fujita and Maria José Jorent, “A indústria têxtil no Brasil: uma perspectiva histórica e cultural,” *Revista ModaPalavra (e-Periódico)*, Vol.8, n.15, Jan./Jul.2015. <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/5140/514051496008.pdf>.

Lina Bo, to host MASP¹⁶ and its financial support was always implicated in the interaction of interests between Chateaubriand and members of the country's financial elite, which may have motivated the Bardi couple to create, in March 1951, the Institute of Contemporary Art (IAC), integrated into the Museum, with the objective of form professionals specialized in advertising, creation and industrial design, areas in which the country was still lacking in manpower. Note that Pietro Maria Bardi was a follower of "rationalist" art, and Lina was influenced by Ponti, who "worked with a broad vision of the architect's field of action — from spatial design to the city, from furniture to utensils —, and sought to incorporate cultural values arising from the country's artisanal production."¹⁷

The IAC/MASP started to offer pioneering open courses in Brazil in Industrial Design and Advertising, following the guidelines of the Bauhaus, German avant-garde art school, and the Chicago Institute of Design, important references in the segment at that time. They were implemented on March 1, 1951, first initiative in Brazil to form industrial designers.¹⁸ According to Bardi, the purpose was, "through the applied arts, to form a clear awareness of the social function of art."¹⁹ To spread such ideas, "while proposing the school, the Bardi founded the *Habitat* magazine and fought against the dominant taste, decoration, preaching in favor of industrial design."²⁰ The initiative attracted students, thanks to the wide dissemination provided by *Diários Associados*, and the IAC advanced in its goals, which also included the creation of the Brazilian Fashion Study Center. In a 1951 article in *Habitat*,²¹ Bardi justified the approximation between museum and fashion, through "a school for seamstresses and artisans who are dedicated to the collateral problems of [Brazilian] fashion"²² — undoubtedly the first institution of its kind in Brazil.²³ In his view:

Fashion is one of the important activities in the field of art and, even with its transient and variable fuses, it is linked with reciprocal influences that bring fashion into man's life. ...The dress is for the body as style is for an age. On the other hand, it should be noted that a beautiful outfit is worth as much as a good painting. Fashion is always the consequence of a way of thinking and living...²⁴

Also in 1951, MASP created a Costumes Section²⁵ with the purpose of composing a collection of antique and contemporary costumes. To obtain donations of items to this collection, in August, at the Pinacoteca, it held the *Ancient and Modern Costumes Parade*, featuring pieces by Christian Dior and a *Custom of the year 2045*, designed for the occasion by Salvador Dalí.²⁶ The event had the support of Casa Vogue, a store run by businessman Paulo Franco, then a reference in the trade of originals and

16. Fernando Morais, *Chatô, o Rei do Brasil*. (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1994), 191.

17. Giancarlo Latorraca, "Maneiras de expor: arquitetura expositiva de Lina Bo Bardi," *Catálogo da exposição*, 16 Aug–09 Nov. São Paulo: 2014.

18. Only in 1962 that disciplines directed at design emerged at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of São Paulo (FAU-USP). Ehtel Leon. São Paulo: 2006, p. 20.

19. *Ibdi*, p. 25.

20. *Ibdi*, p. 25.

21. Fabiana T. Stuchi, *Revista Habitat: um olhar moderno sobre os anos 50 em São Paulo*, Dissertação à Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo (FAU-USP), São Paulo: 2007.

22. *Habitat, Revista de Arte do Brasil*, nº 8; Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP). São Paulo: 1952.

23. Piero Maria Bardi, "Visão retrospectiva da moda desde a época feudal até hoje," *Diário de S. Paulo*, 07 de mar. 1951. In: Maria Cláudia Bonadio, "A moda no Masp de Pietro Maria Bardi (1947–1987)," *Anais do Museu Paulista: História e Cultura Material*, Vol. 22, n. 2; Jul./Dec. São Paulo: 2014, 45.

24. *Ibdi*, 45.

25. Um instituto de costumes. *Habitat: Revista de Artes no Brasil*, n.3, Apr.–Jun., Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP). São Paulo: 1951, 45.

26. "The show was divided into three parts: Fashions of the Past exhibited pieces belonging to the collection of The Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Union Française des Arts du Costume (UFAC), produced in the 17th and 19th centuries, and a replica of a 16th century costume; Modas do Presente exhibited part of the Christian Dior collection of the period; and Fashions of the Future exhibited the 2045 Costume, created by Salvador Dalí, with modeling performed by Karinska, Russian couturier at Casa Vogue". In Soraia Pauli Scarpa, São Paulo: 2017, p. 169.

replicas of *haute couture* from Paris, in São Paulo.²⁷ Throughout 1951 and 1952, this Center for the Study of Brazilian Fashion at the IAC/MASP also started to develop fashion creation. Text in *Habitat* magazine mentions the fact that the IAC/MASP created a collection of costumes, executed by Casa Vogue, worn by ladies who were part of a “selected entourage” invited to the inauguration of the International Costume Center, installed in Palazzo Grassi, in Venice — of which Assis Chateaubriand would then be vice president. Report from the magazine *O Cruzeiro*, from Diários Associados, clarifies that it was a great ball, on September 14, 1951, inaugurating the institution created at the initiative of Franco Marinotti, who presided over Snia Viscosa, “a powerful Italian consortium that brings together 34 rayon and cellulose factories spread across Italy, Spain and Portugal.”²⁸



Figure 3: *Costume of the year 2045*, designed by Salvador Dalí; São Paulo, Aug. 1951. *Magazine O Cruzeiro*, facsimile, 1951. Author's Collection

Another event that involved garments created by the IAC/MASP, executed by Casa Vogue, was *The Seridó Cotton Party*, a grandiose ball with a Brazilian theme held on August 3, 1952, in Paris, at the Coberville Castle of the *couturière* Jacques Fath.²⁹ Here, however, our focus turns to the collection presented at the *First Brazilian Fashion Show* in 1952, an initiative justified by Bardi:

27. Four models from Casa Dior — Bettina, Sylvie, Sophie and Alla — were brought to Brazil to show all the pieces. The costume by Dalí and five pieces by Christian Dior were donated and became part of the Costume Section of MASP. *Habitat*, edição nº 2; Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), São Paulo, SP, 1951. In Prado and Braga, 2011, p. 217.
28. José Amadio, Veneza, em setembro. *O Cruzeiro*, ano XXVI, n. 46, 1 set. São Paulo: 1951, p. 90–94. A moda no Brasil. *Habitat: Revista das Artes no Brasil*, nº 7, Apr.–Jun., Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP). São Paulo: 1952, 76.
29. Danuza Leão, *Quase tudo: memórias de Danuza Leão* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2006), 199.



Figure 4: Sketches for the *First Brazilian Fashion Show* by Roberto Sambonet; IAC/MASP, São Paulo, 1952. MASP Collection



Figure 5: Sketches for the *First Brazilian Fashion Show* by Roberto Sambonet, *Habitat* magazine, MASP; São Paulo, Nov. 1952. MASP Collection

The position of Brazilian fashion is, apparently, situated in the following terms: our best dressmakers [sic] take a plane ticket, disembark at Le Bourget, cross Paris, send suitcases to the Palace Hotel and run to look for Christian Dior, Jacques Fath and other higher-ranking colleagues. They examine the collections, buy them, transport them here, and electrify the ladies of our society capable of shelling out the large sums they need. This is fashion in Brazil.³⁰

Bardi calls “dressmakers” importers of French *haute couture* who simply adjusted, adapted or produced copies of Parisian models — authorized or not. It was to change that situation that the team at the Center for the Study of Brazilian Fashion at the IAC/Masp started to dedicate itself to a legitimately national fashion, using raw materials, prints and, supposedly, modeling that referred to “a Brazilian visuality”. To parade the pieces created, a course on models was also set up at the institution.³¹

The professors at the IAC, mostly foreign artists and architects, were “starting their didactic activities,”³² even though they had relevant professional experience. The collection, consisting of 50 pieces, was created and produced collectively within the scope of the institution’s Industrial Design course. However, in the creative process, the role of another Italian couple also recently emigrated to Brazil gained greater evidence: Luisa (undated) and Roberto Sambonet (1924–1995), settled in the country since 1948 and integrated into the IAC/Masp team at year of its creation. Bardi himself explained that the project advisor was Luisa, supported by her husband, who graduated in architecture at the Milan Polytechnic and, in fine arts, at the Bergamo Academy: “And everything was produced at the Museum, from the design to the manufacture of the fabrics.”³³ Second Canas...

Sambonet designed models and prints, as well as accessories such as hats, shoes and buttons. Klara Hartoch took care of the pattern design and weaving in her studio. Roberto Burl Marx, Carybé, Lilli Correa de Araujo designed prints and Lina Bo Bardi designed jewelry with Brazilian stones.³⁴

It was, therefore, the couple’s creation supported, in patterns and accessories, by the aforementioned artist-teachers. Luisa idealized and Roberto drew the models and sketches, with the purpose of engendering an aesthetic of “Brazilian national fashion”, having as reference — as was the case in other fields of the country’s arts — popular Amerindian and Afro-Brazilian cultures, encompassing handicrafts from different regions, since the fashion used by the national elite was imported. In an article in *Habitat* nº 9, Luisa argues:

The time has come to face the problem of Brazilian fashion. ... The English or French climate cannot suggest elements to those who live in Brazil. ... From the point of view of costumes, the effort used so far in adapting foreign fashion to the Brazilian market is inexplicable. All this energy and work could be channeled in one direction: that of taking advantage of local folklore, not losing sight of the possibilities of creating, in the future, elements of export.³⁵

Another article in the same magazine entitled “Fashion’s remote problem”, without a subscription, emphasizes the need to create a functional fashion for the country, “related to specific conditions of culture, climate, geography and also the anatomical structure of somatic elements and even color and

30. *Habitat: Revista das Artes no Brasil*, nº 8; Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP). São Paulo: 1952.

31. “Last among the museum’s activities, but not last in terms of efficiency and success, was the modeling course”. In *Crônicas — Fashion Models course* (without authorship); *Habitat: Revista de Artes do Brasil*, nº 8, Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), Jul./Sep. São Paulo: 1952, 86.

32. Adriano Tomitão Canas, “Roberto Sambonet em São Paulo: experiências no museu de arte e projetos para a cidade.” *Anais do IX Encontro de História da Arte (EHA)*, Unicamp. Campinas: 2013. <https://www.ifch.unicamp.br/eha/atas/2013/Adriano%20Tomião%20Canas.pdf>.

33. Pietro Maria Bardi, *História do MASP* (São Paulo: Empresa das Artes, 1992), 17.

34. Canas, A. T. Campinas: 2013.

35. Luisa Sambonet, “Uma moda brasileira.” *Habitat: revista das Artes do Brasil*, nº 9, Oct.–Dez.; Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP). São Paulo: 1952, 66.

skin.”³⁶ Stay, therefore, quite evidents the guidelines for the creative research and making of pieces only for women, using fabrics in tropical fibers and wefts with Amerindian ethnic motifs (marajoaras, iano-mâmi, guaraní etc.), braided of straw, patterns referenced, also, in Candomblé, in the fauna and flora of the tropics. As was usual in haute couture, the pieces were named after inspiring themes, such as: Itapetininga, Caraguatá, Iguassu, Poracás, Jacaré, Urubu, Cunhambebe, etc. (from Tupi-Guarani); Macumba, Cuíca, Mãe de Santo etc. (Afro-Brazilians); or even Carambola, Catete, Samba School, Favela, Jangada, Fruteiro, Pottery, Northeast, Balaio, Coconut Candy, Faísca (regional or tropical) etc. Texts by Habitat and other press vehicles about the event reinforce the purpose of creating a fashion “genuinely ours, based on our folklore, on our geographical, sentimental and ethnic reality,”³⁷ aimed, however, at upper and middle class ladies of local elite, mostly white, Eurodescendant and racist. The Jangada model, consisting of canvas pants and blouse, “to wear on the yacht”, referred to the simple beach clothes of the people of the Brazilian coast; the Balaio model — presented by the mulatto woman Glória (the only black model, and probably the first to show fashion in Brazil) —, “for walks in the countryside”, was almost seamless, in “hand-woven cotton with straw”; the Cuíca model, “for the days in Santos”, was made of canvas and tricoline; the Cascavel model, “for rain”, was made up of “two pieces in waterproof raincoat and snake leather” ...³⁸

Another aspect to highlight is that, since it is an industrial design, the models would have to be creations intended for serial production, but that is not what happened. The textile industries Ribeiro Industrial S.A., Industil S.A., Lutfalla S.A. and Santa Constância³⁹ appear as partners in the event, in addition to the Mappin magazine — the largest in the country at that time, dedicated to the sale of ready-to-eat clothing for upper-middle classes. There is no mention of any garment industries, at a time when the segment was growing in the country — although with a greater focus on more standardized menswear.⁴⁰ This means that the pieces in the collection were unique⁴¹ and were solded in a magazine at medium prices, even because ready-to-wear had not yet reached the catwalks. According to Bardi, “they were soon bought.”⁴² Ambiguous in defining the audience it was intended for, the show took place in the Museum’s ateliers from 5 pm, preserving characteristics of high fashion events (like unique handcrafted feminine pieces), but stripped of pomp, with free invitations that could be removed in the Mappin Store.⁴³ The disclosure was considerable, of course, due to the support of Diários Associados, with reports in newspapers, the magazine *O Cruzeiro* — at the time, the main one in the country — even counting with broadcast on the recently created TV Tupi, always emphasizing the beginning of a “new era of Brazilian fashion.”⁴⁴ But that’s not what happened ... As Bardi recognized years later, the initiative was “... like a stone thrown into water: it caused some ripples on the surface and then died.”⁴⁵ On another occasion, he commented that the event was seen as “a joke and some thought ‘an Italian comes here and launches Brazilian fashion’”⁴⁶

36. “O problema remoto da moda,” *Habitat: revista das Artes do Brasil*, nº 9, Oct.–Dez.; Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP). São Paulo: 1952, 65.

37. Lançamentos da Moda Brasileira. *Folha da Manhã, Caderno Vida Social e Doméstica*, São Paulo: 9 Nov. 1952, 7.

38. Prado and Braga. São Paulo: 2011, 221.

39. Bonadio. São Paulo: 2014.

40. For example, men’s clothing industries and chain stores Garbo, Ducal, Vila Romana, among others. Prado. São Paulo: 2019, 259–268.

41. A single piece from the Brazilian Fashion Collection is in the Costumes Section of MASP, as indicated in the exhibition catalog *Traje. An object of art?* MASP, 1987. It would correspond to the Fronteira costume, nº 50 of the collection, coming from the private collection of Lina Bo Bardi. Maria Claudia Bonadio. “Traje: um objeto de arte?: Pietro Maria Bardi, o Wearable Art e o museu fora dos limites,” *Visualidades*, vol. 15, nº 2, Jul./Dez. Goiânia: 2017, 163–190.

42. “A união faz a indústria da moda,” *Veja*. São Paulo: 29 Mar. 1972, 53–57.

43. Invitation for presentation of Brazilian Fashion; Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), fac-simile. São Paulo: 06 nov. 1952.

44. The fashion show of Brazilian-inspired models set new directions for feminine elegance. *Diário da Noite*, Diários Associados. São Paulo: Nov. 1952, 11.

45. “A união faz a indústria da moda,” *Veja*, São Paulo: 29 mar. 1972, 53–57.

46. Pietro Maria Bardi/interview, *Jeans e Sportwear*, year 1, n. 2. São Paulo: 1982, 24–25.



Figure 6: Glória, the only black woman among ten models that presented the *Brazilian Fashion Collection*, wears the Balaio costume, in vegetal fiber. November 1952, MASP Collection.



Figure 7: Group of ten models trained by IAC/MASP poses wearing costumes from the *Brazilian Fashion Collection*; November 1952, MASP Collection.



Figure 8: *Habitat* magazine report parade of *Brazilian Fashion Collection*; Nov. 6, 1952, MASP Collection.

Fashion and National Identity

The analysis of the facts reveals that the Brazilian Fashion Collection by Bardi and Sambonet was a circumstantial initiative in the development of professional fashion creation in Brazil, too related to the ideology that guided the Italian art dealer in his period of militancy affiliated with “fascist policies for fashion and the arts”:

The search for “authenticity”, mentioned in the text *Fashion’s remote problem*, recalls the tone of a letter sent by Bardi to Mussolini, on June 30, VIII [1930], when he worked at the Gallery of Art in Rome. ...⁴⁷

This tone was linked to the search, precisely, for a “national aesthetic identity” that would highlight Italy in the international fashion scene, a strategic concept implemented by the fascist state between 1922 and 1943, through the autarchies, as shown in the *Commentario dizionario italiano della moda*,⁴⁸ published by Ente nazionale della moda, one year after its creation, in 1935.

In the *Dizionario*, the overtly nationalistic and patriotic aspects are related ... to something “more subtle and poetic, invoking memory and imagination as a means of emphasizing national associations through heightened descriptions of color, texture and form.”⁴⁹

The purposes and discourses of the Bardi and Sambonets about Brazilian fashion are also similar to the ideas that guided artists to the Brazilian modernist movement, since the Week of Modern Art in 1922, engaged in the amalgamation of a cultural identity to a multifaceted nation. Bonadio associates the

47. Bonadio. São Paulo: 2014, 58.

48. Cesare Meano, *Commentario dizionario italiano della moda* (Torino: Ente Nazionale della Moda, 1936).

49. Alessandra Vaccari, “Moda na autarquia: políticas de moda na Itália fascista nos anos 1930” (“Fashion in Autarchy: politics of fashion in 1930s fascist Italy”). *História: Questões & Debates*, vol. 65, nº 2. Curitiba: jul./dez. 2017, 17–38.

LANÇAMENTO DA MODA BRASILEIRA

A ELEGANTE TARDE DE QUINTA-FEIRA COROOU-SE DE EXITO - DESFILARAM
"ABACATE", "CUNHAMBEBE", "JANGADA", "MACUMBA" E OUTROS MODELOS



Artes Jacete Ribeiro de Lima, Helo Cavatini Alves e Hilda Assumpção operam os modelos.

É o maior estilo social o desfile de moda brasileira, levado a efeito na tarde de quinta-feira, numa das grandes salões do Municipal de São Paulo. Já falamos aqui nos desfiles que vinham sendo feitos por um grupo de artistas, sob o patrocínio da União Anglo-Brasileira, com o intuito de criar uma escultura permanente de moda, com base em pesquisas feitas em resultados genéticos, genômica e etnia.

Indagamos de algumas pessoas presentes no desfile, o que achavam do desfile em relação à moda brasileira. E eis o que se falou:

FRADO

"Quando moda, com todos os requisitos fundamentais, está feita a vencer e a perdurar. Por que a moda brasileira não pôde rivalizar com a francesa? Porque, incapaz de desenvolver uma linha própria que arquitetasse a mulher num esquema de sólida base estética, o americano sobrecarrega-a de enfeites. Acredito que as pesquisas de nossos artistas tenham conseguido ler: funcionalismo — tomando em conta clima, modo de vida, etc., e simplicidade e clareza de linhas."

DANA MENDONÇA

"Balançava, que é considerado por muitos 'o maior costureiro francês', é a prova de que faz, realidades geográficas e históricas, podem incorporar-se à moda. A retrospectiva, os boleros, as rendas que lembram manilhas de Espanha na moda de Paris. A moda brasileira, uma vez que está sendo ideada por verdadeiros artistas, pode, inclusive ser exportada, como o foram o samba e o baião."



"MÁ DE COCO" — Vestido "deu pepê" quando veio de "chambré" e copete de palmeira e noze. Foi o um dos modelos que melhor recebeu aplausos no desfile.



"FAISCA" — Vestido de estampado de cores alegres e contrastantes, com franzido de espartilho está forte.

Temos que cumprimentar a Casa Anglo-Brasileira — e os artistas guiados por Bardi, Burle Marx, Clara Harstock, Catibé, Robert Sanbonet, pela realização esplêndida de que nos parecia uma aventura impossível. E em determinados drapados de saias, encontramos o barroco do Alajalinho, encontramos, sobretudo nas cores, a retórica da "terra papagalorum" que, como já se emancipou em muitos setores, não pode no da vestimenta viver eternamente sujeita.

As suas figuras europeas.

A verdade é que estamos convencidos de que, se nossos artistas continuarem a colaborar para a criação de nossa moda, daqui a algum tempo, como já afirmamos, a brasileira que perdura em vestes Christian Dior, Faith, Balmain e outros será olhada como já se começa a olhar os escritores brasileiros ligados, inexoravelmente, pelo cordão umbilical a uma pedante realidade europeia.



"MACUMBA" — Dado vestido de grande, de gabarito de algodão pimenta e não se impõe ao estilo de momento.

XILZA WEIL

"Pelo que pude observar neste desfile de modas, acredito, agora, que podemos ter uma elegância adaptada aos nossos hábitos e ao nosso clima. Quer em tecidos, aproveitando determinadas fibras, quer na estampa, lançando mão de desenhos inspirados em macumbas, candombás, escolas de samba, urubumalandros (não seja aquele que se chocou com um "Camberl"), e até na nomeação de cores do universo. Acredito que a moda nacional, se apoiar-se sempre na inspiração de artistas conscienciosos, vencerá."



"CARAMBOLA" — Busto vestido de algodão estampado, todo giratório e muito decorado.

MARIA AMALIA RIBEIRO DE LIMA

"Gostei imensamente, de ver estampados reproduzindo "anturium", blocos de papagaio, carambolas. Gostei, sobretudo, de ver desenhos inspirados em macumbas, candombás, escolas de samba, urubumalandros (não seja aquele que se chocou com um "Camberl"), e até na nomeação de cores do universo. Acredito que a moda nacional, se apoiar-se sempre na inspiração de artistas conscienciosos, vencerá."

O DESFILE

Cinquenta "lollies" foram apresentadas pelas alunas da Escola de Modas do Museu. Pelos nomes, os modelos poderão ser que tudo era nacionalismo: "Abacate", "Cunhambebe", "Jangada", "Macumba", "Faveia", "Urubu", "Noronete", "Mãe do Santo"...



"ALAUO" — Vestido de algodão e palmeira, tecido e não. Dado "coco", não está, em bombardeio de versatilidade com o modelo.



"PORACAS" — Vestido de algodão pimenta e não. Impõe-se ao estilo de moda. São precedido e alça de palmeira que dá grande efeito ao modelo.

PREÇOS DOS MODELOS APRESENTADOS NO DESFILE

São os seguintes os preços dos modelos apresentados neste página:

Modelo	Preço (C\$)
"PORACAS"	2.200,00
"FAISCA"	2.800,00
"MACUMBA"	1.800,00
"CARAMBOLA"	2.200,00
"ALAUO"	2.200,00
"MÁ DE COCO"	5.200,00

Estão à venda na Seção de Modas da Casa ANGLO-BRASILEIRA — São Paulo

Figure 9: Diários Associados's newspaper announces the First Brazilian Parade by IAC/MASP. Folha da Manhã, SP, Nov. 5, 1952. Author's Collection

Brazilian Fashion Collection with the modernist ideology by which “... we will only be modern if we are nationals,”⁵⁰ following yet the ideas advocated by the controversial Pernambuco sociologist Gilberto de Mello Freyre (1900–1987),⁵¹ one of the so-called “interpreters” of Brazil that emerged in the first half of the 20th century, with strong repercussions in that period. Freire saw Brazil as a “new world” engendered in the tropics, simultaneously European, Indian and African, therefore, multiracial and multicultural, suggesting the existence in the country of a racial democracy, in contrast to the structural racism in force since the colonial beginnings.

The IAC ended its activities early at the end of 1953, without success in the attempt to train labor to meet the demand of industries and commerce in São Paulo, the country’s industrial pole, more because of the lack of interest of businessmen than of students. In the specific field of fashion, local consumers showed themselves more interested in trends in Paris and, by then, also in Italy. Bardi recognized this attachment of local elites to what “comes from abroad” when he attributed the event’s failure to the “constant importation of copies of foreign models”, one of the “responsible causes for liquidating any attempt to produce a national design.”⁵² It seems to have escaped him, though, that nationality signs coming from popular culture, instead of attracting the consumer of Brazilian fashion, in that time, provoked rejection: creations with afro names like Urubu or Macumba were associated with the subaltern black layers and, therefore, inferiors. Furthermore, it is possible to observe, through the photographic material, that references to popular national culture are more evident in the materials, prints and accessories used in the pieces of the collection than in the design of the clothes, which followed the general trends in women’s fashion of the epoch.

Professional fashion creation emerged in Brazil from the 1950s onwards, in a late period and placing itself not in opposition, but in a subordinate position to the French fashion system, then dominant in the West — as explained in *Garment industry and fashion in Brazil from the 19th century to 1960: from copying and adaptation to subordinate autonomization*.⁵³ The system of fashion creation emerged in Paris — according to classic fashion historiography — from the fashion shows held in 1858 by the English fashion designer Charles Worth, precursor in the launch of signed seasonal collections of high-priced, one-of-a-kind pieces for elite ladies. It was, therefore, a fashion for “social distinction”, a system that lasted until the late 1960s, temporality that philosopher Gilles Lipovetsky called “Fashion of the Hundred Years,”⁵⁴ which followed the previous period of “Aristocratic Fashion”, in which variations in dress did not result from professionalized creative action, but from patterns imposed by the aristocratic and monarchic houses, made up by master craftsmen.

The concepts of “emergence” or “autonomization” of professional fields, as configured in modernity, come from concepts proposed by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, for whom: “... each [professional] field produces its form specific to illuio, in the sense of investment in the game that takes agents away from indifference and inclines them and disposes them to operate the pertinent dispositions from the point of view of the logic of the field”⁵⁵; and its consumer market, it should be added. In the scope of fashion, these agents — the creative professionals — therefore began to identify themselves as *couturières* — and no longer as mere artisans dressmakers — with the emergence of French haute couture, identifying the models they created by labels affixed to the pieces — name or brand. During the “Hundred Years Fashion” period, the releases of the trends for women’s fashion remained centered in Paris, where the international media flocked to followed the seasonal fashion shows organized by the *Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture*. They presented high-cost women’s pieces, aimed at the upper classes but which also guided the entire international clothing market, being copied and/or imitated by women from dif-

50. Cf. Renato Ortiz, *A moderna tradição brasileira. Cultura brasileira e indústriacultural* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, [1988] 1999), 35.

51. Cf. Gilberto Freyre, *Casa-Grande & Senzala*. 5^{1st} edition (Rio de Janeiro: Global Editora, [1933] 2006).

52. Bardi, P.M., *O design no Brasil: história e realidade*. Catálogo da exposição. São Paulo: 1982, 13.

53. Prado, São Paulo: 2019.

54. Gilles Lipovetsky, *O império do efêmero* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2009), 28–79–123.

55. Pierre Bourdieu, *As regras da arte, gênese e estrutura do campo literário* (São Paulo: Cia. das Letras, 1996), 258.

ferent social strata — and, of course, by the ready-made clothing industry in Brazil too, as well as by fashion consumers around the world.

The closed *modus operandi* of the French system showed signs of exhaustion after World War II and experienced a period of transition until it was replaced by mass fashion ready-to-wear in the early 1970s. In this transition, its main axes were frayed: 1. The fashion of social distinction, in one-piece hand-crafted and expensive, aimed at elite women, was replaced by industrial prêt-à-porter fashion, aimed at mass consumption. 2. The seasonal collections focused exclusively on the female gender also started to include trends for men's fashion. 3. Paris is no longer the only center of western fashion, which allowed the emergence of national fashion systems with events and launches, fashion schools etc., in several countries, such as Brazil (domestic market) and Italy (foreign market).

The formation of a fashion creation system in Brazil took place, as already indicated, in a timeframe close to the actions of the IAC/MASP; but not as result of planned actions of private or state entities or institutions guided by managers or intellectuals. The first generation of dressmakers signing their own collections emerged linked to marketing events aimed at promoting cotton fabrics, the main textile fiber in Brazil, but still viewed with prejudice by the consumer public for being more used in popular clothing. The first name to be consolidated with own creations in the country was José Ronaldo (José Ronaldo Pereira da Silva, 1933–1987), launched as official *costureiro* for the Miss Elegante Bangu beauty contest, event which emerged in the mid-1950s. Almost simultaneously, two other events also contributed significantly to project new creators to local high fashion: the Matarazzo-Boussac Brazilian Fashion Festival, started in 1955, and the National Textile Industry Fair (Fenit), in 1958 — both in São Paulo.

Since then, several fashion creators and brands have gained fame, such as Dener Pamplona de Abreu (1937–1978), Matteo Amalfi (1932–2014), Clodovil Hernandez (1937–2009) etc., reproducing in Brazil, in on a smaller scale, the elitist system of high fashion in Paris, namely: the creation and manufacture of unique high-cost items, aimed at elite women; almost all rejected and/or found it difficult to adhere to prêt-à-porter. The success of these creator-artists did not result, however, from the fact that they defended a fashion aesthetic with “Brazilian identity”; on the contrary, José Ronaldo affirmed in 1959, peak of his career:

...in the strictest sense of the word, here is my support [for a Brazilian style]; considering, however, the affirmative that the inspiration could be French without, however, belittling our work as an artist.⁵⁶

Dener Pamplona, among all those who gained the greatest fame in the 1960s, had a similar opinion: “... in fashion, the great creative center is and will always remain Paris.”⁵⁷

Very distinguished was the course taken by Italian fashion, starting with the First Italian Haute Fashion Show in 1951, an event that helped to broke Parisian hegemony in the field and materialized the project of turning the country into an alternative pole for fashion launches aimed at the international market, with strong repercussions in Brazil. In the fashion shows that took place throughout the 1960s in São Paulo, during the National Textile Industry Fair (Fenit) — the country's most important fashion dif-fuser at that time — there was a constant presence of Italian designers, such as the Italian Fashion with Brazilian Fabrics, presented at V Fenit, in 1962, which brought together collections by Emilio Pucci, Valentino, Sorelle Fontana, Biki, Patrick de Barentzen, Brioni and Clara Centinaro. The latter had as a designer the Roman Ugo Castellana, who settled in Brazil where developed a recognized career. To assess the importance of Italian fashion at Fenit, in the 1960s, it is enough to note that, among the 33 foreign designers invited to show collections at the event between 1958 and 1970, fifteen were Italian. In addition, many entrepreneurs in the textile sectors — such as the Crespi, Matarazzo, Pascolato, etc. — and ready-made clothes industries, in addition to merchants and fashion designers who gained expression in the country throughout the 20th century, were Italians or descendants.

56. Jóia, São Paulo: 1959. In: Prado and Braga. São Paulo: 2011, 235.

57. Dener Pamplona de Abreu, *Dener, o luxo*. 3th edition (São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2007), 95.



Figure 10: Announcement of the Italian Fashion Show with Brazilian Fabrics at V Fenit. Newspaper *Estado de S. Paulo*, August 10, 1962, p. 46. Author's Collection

Thus, in the same period in which Italy projected fashion creators at an international level, professionals in the field emerged in Brazil aimed only at the domestic market and subordinated to the French system, difference that also reflects the roles of these two nations in what the North American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein called “world-system”, understanding capitalism as an internationalized economic system guided by internal movements within nations (class interests etc.) and external movements (hegemonic and peripheral nations etc.).⁵⁸ Historically, Brazil operated in this concert as a supplier of raw materials (commodities) and a consumer of European final products. The country’s textile industry only found room to grow, as seen, during World War II, occupying the void left by the destruction of the European textile park, being forced to turn to the restricted internal market at the end of the conflict — being obliged, then, to stimulate a local fashion system capable of generating “symbolic value” to be added to its products.

Understanding the position of nations in the concert of international capitalism is essential to analyse the economic segment focused on the production of clothing. Economy, behavior and culture operate interrelated specially when it comes to fashion, so it is equally important to observe the formative paradoxes of a society marked by the permanent transposition of supposedly “modernizing” European values to a reality of brutal inequality between social strata. Paradoxes that Brazilian sociologist Roberto Schwarz identified as “out of place” values or ideas, unveiling the “false, inauthentic, imitated character of cultural life”⁵⁹ that has developed among the country’s elites, since colonial times. The history of Brazilian fashion confirms this perception, when it is verified that members of the local elites transposed the European costume to the tropical scene — from the colony to the 20th century —, despite the enormous physical inconvenience that such an absurdity could cause. If in European countries, France’s haute couture represented social distinction and identity for the elites, in Brazil it played a similar, albeit more complex role. Attempts to transpose European civilizing values and concepts to the Brazilian scene often collided with the obstacles of the country’s structural economic and cultural archaism. It was what made the Bardi’s project unfeasible in their well-intentioned intention to create a Brazilian fashion. In the field of fine arts and architecture, however, they achieved greater success, leaving important marks, recognized internationally.⁶⁰

58. Immanuel Wallerstein, *Capitalismo histórico e civilização capitalista* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Contraponto, 2001), 144.

59. Roberto Schwarz, *Que horas são?* (São Paulo: Cia. das Letras, 1987), 29.

60. Lina Bo Bardi was awarded a posthumous Golden Lion for her body of work at the Venice Architecture Biennale (La Biennale di Venezia), Italy, an event that included the 17th International Architecture Exhibition, held between May 22 and November 21, 2021.

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