

Dressed to Kill

Vitor Brasil

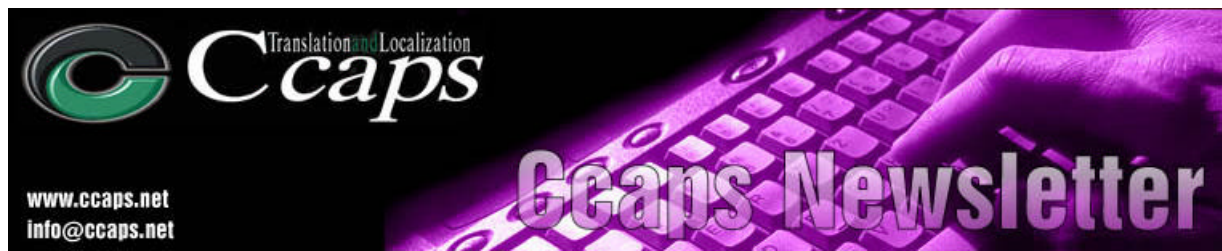
The strings, interweavings and power of the Brazilian fashion industry

Brazilian fashion is currently consumed in different parts of the world for the obvious reasons of globalization and the shrinking of borders, where competition for good prices aligned with quality has become a world crusade. The major newspapers in the country describe the current pattern of Brazilian fashion with enthusiastic headlines like "Group of Brazilian Fashion Designers Double International Sales" and "Fashion Industry Exports Estimated to Reach US\$6 million in 2005."

This scenario has allowed the national fashion barons to increase their production, investing heavily in technology and equipment with a direct focus on international sales, where the talent of Brazilian designers, their style and even the label itself are already recognized. It is no news that the locals and tourists strolling along Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles, the tanned bodies on Ocean Drive, Miami, and the French with their cigarettes and dogs in the Galeries Lafayette, in Paris, hop up and down joyfully when they see a charming little pair of colored Havaianas flip-flops. *Havaianas* is no longer only a Brazilian brand or simply how you say "Hawaiian" in Portuguese, it is synonymous with fashionable sandals!

The difference now is that the fashion export market has become established, increasing the consumption of different Brazilian brand name products. Brazil's style and *panache* dazzle consumers in Tokyo, London and Berlin. The fashion market has no limits. It increasingly gains stamina and does not appear to suffer as much as other markets with fluctuations in the exchange rate or oil prices. From beachwear to *haute couture* "made in Brazil," the sales movement and figures prompted different designer labels to discover more about this target public, structuring themselves to invade the new market with the endurance of a marathon runner.

With the aim of exporting Brazilian fashion as an ongoing trend, two years ago designers Amir Slama, Alexandre Herchcovitch, Walter Rodrigues and Lino Villaventura created ABEST (Associação Brasileira de Estilistas). The Brazilian fashion designers association is the result of a joint effort that obtained government support for exports after demonstrating the importance of conquering new markets. Just to give you an idea, ABEST sells national fashion to 38 different countries.



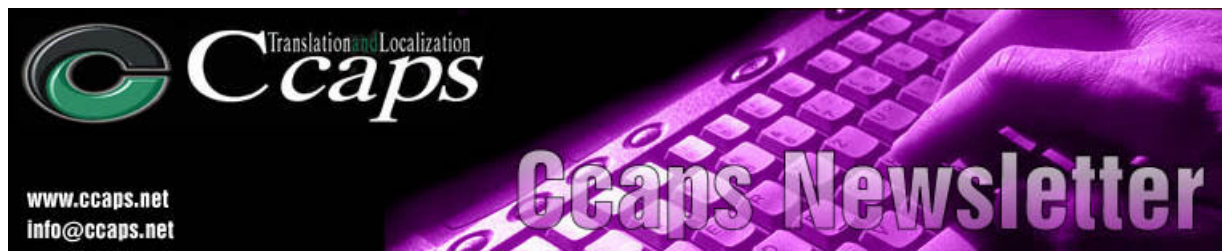
Actions like this are only possible thanks to a partnership with the government through the Brazilian Export and Investment Promotion Agency (APEX), which already promotes Brazil abroad with showrooms and international fashion shows. Combined with a government policy that is interested more than ever in the trade surplus, APEX's assistance has made a range of projects possible. These include an event that takes place at the famous Hotel Crillon in Paris, which gathers a number of fashion designers two times a year. This is an example of the growing popularity of our multi-colored dresses, sexy jeans, high quality bikinis and shoes by the international crowd.



Source: <http://www.3284.net>

Osklen, a Ccaps client since early 2004, started selling surfwear in Rio de Janeiro and today exports quality fashion to East Asian markets.

Brands such as Cavallera, Francesca Giobbi, Gloria Coelho, Iódice, Osklen, Salinas and Patachou have marked a presence for Brazilian fashion in countries like the United Arab Emirates, Australia, England, Lebanon, Mexico and China. Brazilian fashion is catching up to other global designer labels, also because it is structured around the movements and trends emerging from the major centers. Before influenced to the extreme and almost entirely "enslaved" by what came from abroad, today's national fashion is taking the opposite path, as "Brazilianness" becomes the new global fever.



Besides providing great sources for research, trend books set the guidelines for the main players of the fashion world. These include the *Carlin*, *Promostyle* trend books, published in French, and a few others published in English. With each new season, Brazilian designer labels invest heavily in the purchase of these materials and in specialized websites for their collections. With the knowledge of foreign languages and the help of professional translators, they gain access to these instruments and prove that Brazilian products and fashion are part of a worldwide connectivity.

So, if "Brazilianness" is already one of the current trends established in different global capitals, sooner or later Brazil might be publishing its own trend book. And, depending on the quality of such a publication, would it be able to win the attention of fashion industry executives, producers and international publishers? The next step would inevitably be to translate this "Brazilian Trend Book" into English or French... Or who knows? With the current economic trend, perhaps Brazilian fashion will end up going straight from the São Paulo catwalks and Rio de Janeiro sidewalks to the Chinese or Japanese store windows, or even those of any other emerging Asian market – even before the Europeans and North Americans get there!

If our music, culture, models, designers and fashion as a whole have already become an international reference, it now depends on us to document and export this trend in the form of text and image. However, this entire dream will depend on the quality of the professionals involved in the creation and translation processes. Because getting there takes more than talent, desire and government support. It also takes the skill to communicate in other languages and with a high degree of professionalism.

Vitor Brasil, a fashion enthusiast, works as communications consultant for new designers in this market. He recently designed the communication and branding plan for the jewelry designer Amanda Seiler. An avid movie lover and with a background in audiovisual production, Vitor is currently responsible for the publicity and release of international films for the distributor DownTown Filmes.