

Brazilians Welcome Foreign Fashion Buyers in Rio

Contributed by Marina Sarruf
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Fashion Business Week, the Brazilian event that begins this Tuesday, January 13, at Marina da Glória, in the city of Rio de Janeiro, is expecting importers from 15 countries. The event, which happens on the sidelines of the Fashion Rio shows and will continue until Friday, January 16, is going to count on 200 companies, of which nine are brands with strong presence in the international market.

The aim of the 14th edition of the Fashion Business is to be an international display of the Brazilian fashion market. For this edition, 30 buyers from Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas have been invited.

"This is the first time that we receive only one Middle Eastern buyer. We used to have more of them in past editions," said João Paulo Alcântara Gomes, manager at the International Business Centre of the Federation of Industries of the State of Rio de Janeiro (CIN/Firjan). He was referring to a distributor from Dubai.

According to the organizers, approximately 50 international buyers are expected at the Fashion Business. In the 2008 autumn/winter edition, the event recorded sales of 370 million Brazilian reais (US\$ 161.8 million) to the domestic market, representing growth of almost 12% compared with the 2007 autumn/winter edition.

In turn, exports reached US\$ 15.5 million, growth of 10% over the previous edition, according to a survey held by the CIN. "It was an excellent result," said Gomes, who expects to maintain the result in this edition. "We do not know how the market is going to react in the first event of the year after the crisis," he added.

The exhibition space for companies in this edition is going to cover an area of 15,000 square meters, 5,000 square meters more than in the previous edition. The number of exhibitors is also higher than last year, with 50 new companies. In addition to brands based in Rio, such as Alessa, Totem, Redley, Lenny, and Salinas, the event also brings fashion brands and hubs from other states of Brazil.

Brazilian exports of clothing and accessories to the Arab market grew 10.5% from January to November 2008 in comparison with the same period of last year. Brazilian companies sold US\$ 6.72 million in dresses, skirts, blouses, among other items to the Arab countries.

Of the more than 30 brands that will feature in the fashion shows at Fashion Rio, which started January 11, approximately one third already exports to the Arab market. The brands include Lilica Ripilica, Walter Rodrigues, Apoena, Cantão, Coven, Mara Mac, Alessa, among others.

The theme of this autumn/winter edition is Rio, Brazilian Cultural Kaleidoscope , and was inspired by the traditional neighborhood of Lapa. According to the Fashion Rio website, the area is an example of cultural and artistic renewal; democratic coexistence of several languages; point of convergence for different generations and multiple attractions. The Arches of Lapa, featured in many of the city's postcards, have also been emulated in order to create the settings for the event.

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