

Brazil Marks Glamorous Presence at Dubai's Fashion Fair

Contributed by Isaura Daniel
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The clothes factory from the Brazilian southeastern state of Minas Gerais, Castor, started selling knitted clothes to the Arab countries in 2002. The stylist Amarilis Fernandes, from São Paulo, ships luxury dresses to the region since 2003.

The small Fragole, company from the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in the South, started exporting bikinis and beach garments to the Arabs in 2004. Year after year the number of Brazilian clothes, shoes and accessories companies entering the Arab retail increase, and also the quantity of companies interested in selling to the region.

What attracts them is a consuming market with high purchase power. The per capita income in Qatar is one of the highest in the world: US\$ 40,000. The United Arab Emirates have income of US\$ 20,000, Kuwait of US\$ 19,000 and Bahrain of US\$ 15,000.

"The purchase power in the Arab countries is high," says the superintendent at the Brazilian Textile and Apparel Industry Association (Abit), Fernando Pimentel. The countries in the Middle East are responsible for 5% of the world market of clothes and accessories.

Brazilian clothes exported to the region go from party dresses to beach fashion to sporting and children's garments. Information from a research by the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce (CCAB) show that the countries in Arabic Gulf have the second highest world expenditure with children's products, especially clothes.

The Brazilian company Marisol, for example, has opened many stores Tigor T. Tigre & Lilica Ripilica, their children's clothes brand in the region. Other children's fashion companies, such as Green By Missako, from São Paulo, also sell to the Arabs.

Brazilian beachwear is also very much consumed in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, due to the great flow of European tourists in the region. Brands by Brazilian stylists also don't stop coming into the local boutiques.

"Brazilian stylists are to the taste of the Arab consumer," says the president of the CCAB, Antonio Sarkis Jr. He recalls, however, that there is still a lot of space for national fashion in the countries in the region, even in the signed garments sector. "Sales are increasing, but since our base is small, there is space to grow more," he states.

According to the article published on the news agency Menareport, the clothes and accessories market generates a turnover of US\$ 11.4 billion per year in the Middle East.

Some Arab countries have shoes and clothes factories, as is the case of Egypt, traditional in the textile sector, but a good part of them are fashion importers. "The Arabs, especially the oil producers, are great importers," recalls Pimentel, from Abit.

In the United Arab Emirates, half of the shoes sold last year, which added up to US\$ 570 million, was of foreign origin. The Emirates own only seven factories in the sector.

To win an even larger share of this market, Brazilian companies and stylists will participate as of next Monday, September 12, at the Motexha, trade fair in the fashion and accessories segment which takes place in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates.

The exhibit, which will last for four days, is the greatest of the sort in the Middle East. This year 750 exhibitors from 35 countries will participate at the fair. Some 15,000 visitors are expected.

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