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## For This One-Woman Fashion Powerhouse, Outlook for Luxury Is Gloomy in Brazil

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Sunday, 24 August 2008

When it comes to style, fashion and etiquette, Glória Kalil is a reference in Brazil. A journalist, consultant and businesswoman, she wrote four books on the subjects ("Chic," "Chic Homem," "Chiquérrimo" and "Alô Chics," from 2007).

In the late 1970s, she was responsible for the coming to the country of Italian brand Fiorucci, which revolutionized the jeans market and placed the product in the fashion world for good, influencing all of the "jeansers" in the country.

Currently, as a journalist and consultant, Glória helps large companies to better market their brands in the luxury segment. She also maintains "Chic," a Website for news about fashion in Brazil and abroad, and presents a segment in a TV show. She is a multimedia professional.

Glória is not of Arab descent. The last name Kalil is her ex-husband's, but it was as a result of that marriage that she entered the fashion market. She used to work at the fashion division of publishing house Editora Abril and got invited by her brother-in-law, Jorge Kalil, to take over the marketing and products area at Scala d'Oro, the textile mill owned by the Kalils.

"I accepted it and really enjoyed myself. I worked with trends in prints, yarns and fabrics," she recollects. Working at the textile mill was the gateway to her next challenge: to bring into Brazil the highly desirable Fiorucci, the one with the little angel.

"Back then, the Brazilian market was closed off, we were not allowed to import, so we got a concession for using the brand, everything was manufactured here," she explains. Glória would travel to Italy, select everything that could be worn by Brazilians and then brought it to the production line.

The Italian brand operated in Brazil until 1992, always under the direction of Glória Kalil. "The most important thing was that Fiorucci paved the way for the emergence of national brands in the jeans market, such as Fórum and Zoomp," says Glória.

After 17 years of partnership, the brand was present across the entire country, with a total of 17 stores and 13 franchises. The agreement only ended because of the company's financial problems in Italy - Fiorucci went bankrupt in 1992 - and also due to the turbulent moment that the Brazilian economy went through in the early 1990s.

"The time of Fiorucci was a very creative time. Now things are different, the industry is very competitive and profit margins are low. There are other rules, it is a tough scene for the Brazilian fashion industry," explains Glória.

According to the consultant, one of the problems of fashion made in Brazil is that "it shines a lot, but will not sell. It generates huge media repercussion, proportionally even more than other countries, such as France, but the visibility does not correspond to the revenues of companies in the sector," she says.

Another problem is the foreign market. "We still do not have Brazilian brands, except for Havaianas and H.Stern, which are known outside the country," she claims. Finally, Glória calls attention to the fact that the domestic market is small for the brands regarded as luxury brands, and that the popular ones are faced with Chinese and Indian competition. "The outlook is bad, and I have been warning the sector and the government about that."

In 2006, Glória brought together businessmen, designers and politics to discuss the subject in a seminar held in the city of São Paulo. One of the guests was the French Didier Grumbach, president at the French Federation of Couture.

One of the solutions pointed out, for the companies, was "learning to work in networks." As an example, Glória names the recent case of the giant Coteminas, which joined the United States-based Springs Global and, in that way, managed to enter markets protected by tariff barriers.

The way of thinking about fashion also deserves the attention of fashion designers and thinkers. According to Glória, until the 1960s fashion followed a single flow, a pyramid. At the top was haute couture, followed by prêt-à-porter and then, in the foundation, were the streets. One needs look no further than Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis: whatever she wore was fashionable.

"Nowadays, the situation got inverted, and it is the streets that influence the other two. All of the leading names, the leading brands are watching the streets. And the result is a multiple type of fashion, with many faces. Thus, when I am asked: what is fashionable today? I answer: to what tribe?," claims Glória.

To her, fashion has also become synonym with individuality. "People no longer wear something to express that they belong in a given category, but rather to express their individuality," she says.

According to Glória, that explains the high rate of fashion consumption in countries such as China, Russia and even the Arab countries. "Consuming fashion in certain regions represents an opportunity for those people to no longer belong in a category, and to have their own individuality instead," she asserts.

Chic, elegant and anti-flash, Glória also states that there are new etiquette rules, or rather that we are facing a modern type of etiquette. "Now it is a matter of civility, of identity. We need to create certain codes so our daily lives will not turn into a war," she says.

According to the consultant, in the 1960s and 1970s, some values got lost because of the moment that the world was going through. And lots of people were raised that way, without observing certain codes, and "now they are finding out that these values count, that they are important in order to get a job, for example."

What has changed since the books by the 'pope' of etiquette in Brazil, Marcelino Carvalho, who wrote the "Guide to Good Manners" (Guia de Boas Maneiras), published in the 1960s, is that now etiquette has to mean something."

"In a selection process, now you might be eliminated on the basis of appearance and the way you eat, especially when there are lots of qualified people, with experience and a college background," she asserts.

The TV segment is turned to these aspects, and Glória has taught from table manners (cutting or not cutting the salad), to how to dress up for a job interview, to doubts on adequate garments for weddings and 15-year old parties. Always with lots of style.

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