

FASHION INDUSTRY



Ceará Global
by **nupex**

May Edition - 2024



CÂMARA DE
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Federação das Indústrias do Estado do Ceará
PELO FUTURO DA INDÚSTRIA



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EDITORIAL

**PRISCILA MEDEIROS**

| Fashion course coordinator at the University of Fortaleza

Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure that we sign this edition of Ceará Global magazine, dedicated to exploring and celebrating the universe of the fashion industry in Ceará, which has become increasingly prominent not only on the national scene, but also on the international market.

The fashion industry in Ceará has seen significant growth in recent years, boosting the local economy and generating jobs. Production in the clothing industry - which includes the textile and clothing sectors - grew by 27.5% in 2024 in Ceará. This was the biggest increase among local industrial activities up to March, compared to the same period in 2023. The data is contained in a survey by the Industry Observatory, released in May 2024 by Fiec. In addition, the Fashion Sector Study in the State of Ceará was carried out by the Fecomércio Ceará System Intelligence Center and the Ceará Research and Development Institute (IPDC), revealing that Ceará is the state in the North and Northeast that generates the most jobs in the fashion sector. The survey also includes other relevant data, pointing out that the fashion sector in the state generates around 149,000 direct jobs; it has 74,700 active companies and is expected to export US\$ 268 million in 2023. These are some of the figures that make Ceará the fifth most-employed state in Brazil in the fashion sector and the largest in the North and Northeast regions.

Ceará fashion has also gained a presence on the international market, being recognized for the quality and creativity of its pieces. According to Apex Brasil's Exporta Mais Brasil program (2024), fashion from Ceará is expected to generate more than R\$ 4 million in international business.



With a vast product mix, Ceará's underwear stands out for its innovation and internationalization, with local brands conquering space in demanding markets such as Europe and the United States. Ceará's distinctive beachwear has also caught the world's attention, with its vibrant prints, high quality fabrics and unique designs.

In the face of so much promising data, professionalization in the fashion sector has been a priority for companies in Ceará, which invest in training and qualified manpower. According to the Fashion Sector Study in the State of Ceará, carried out by the Fecomercio Ceará System Intelligence Center and the Ceará Research and Development Institute (IPDC), the state has 50 higher education courses and 13 technical/professional courses related to fashion.

The tradition and creativity of Ceará fashion has been highlighted at national and international events, showcasing big names in local fashion, such as Ivanildo Nunes, Rendá, David Lee, Catarina Mina, among others, who have stood out with their handmade pieces inspired by local culture. And speaking of events, since 1999 Ceará has proudly hosted Dragão Fashion, the largest authorial fashion event in Latin America, which can be considered a notorious selector of local fashion, highlighting and revealing the work of designers from Ceará and Brazil to the world every year.

However, even against this backdrop of opportunities, we can't forget that the fashion sector also creates problems of pollution and waste that need to be tackled in the name of sustainability, which has been a recurring theme in Ceará fashion. As a result, several local brands have been adopting eco-friendly practices and investing in sustainable materials, which makes us even prouder and more zealous for good fashion.

In this month's magazine, we invite you to dive into the universe of Ceará fashion, full of talent, creativity and innovation. May we together value and celebrate the brilliance and diversity of fashion made in Ceará.

Best Regards,
Priscila Medeiros.



FASHION FROM CEARÁ TO THE WORLD

In recent years, Ceará's fashion industry has stood out on the national and international scene, not only for the quality and creativity of its productions, but also for its commitment to sustainability and authorial fashion. This movement represents a significant evolution, reflecting the cultural richness and diversity of Ceará, while at the same time meeting the growing demands for more ethical and environmentally responsible practices in fashion.

Ceará fashion is a reflection of its land: vibrant, rich in traditions and constantly changing. Ceará has a long textile tradition, with a strong artisanal heritage that includes the famous embroidery and bobbin lace, both symbols of the state's cultural identity. In recent years, this tradition has been renewed and reinvented by local designers, who are taking craftsmanship to new heights, creating unique pieces that combine ancient techniques with contemporary design.



Picture by Espedito Seleiro



One of the pillars of this revolution in Ceará fashion is the authorial fashion movement. Ceará designers are increasingly moving away from mass trends and creating collections that reflect their personal visions and the cultural authenticity of Ceará. This movement not only values originality and creativity, but also strengthens local identity, differentiating Ceará products on the global market. Names like Iury Costa and David Lee have stood out by taking Ceará fashion to national and international catwalks, gaining recognition and respect.

At the same time, sustainability has become a watchword in Ceará fashion. Designers and companies are adopting sustainable practices, from the choice of ecological materials to ethical production. The use of natural, recycled fibers and dyeing techniques with low environmental impact are some of the practices that are gaining ground. In addition, circular fashion, which promotes the reuse and repurposing of clothes, is being embraced by several Ceará brands, reducing waste and promoting more conscious consumption.



Foto: BABA (Reprodução/Instagram)

These efforts demonstrate the potential of Ceará's fashion industry in foreign markets. The challenges and opportunities faced by local designers, the innovations being implemented to make fashion more sustainable and the inspiring stories of brands that are making a difference are all aspects that deserve to be highlighted.



Foto: Olé Rendeiras (Reprodução/Instagram)

Ceará fashion is positioning itself as a center of creativity and innovation, where the commitment to authorial and sustainable fashion is not just a passing trend, but a path to a more responsible and authentic future in fashion. By highlighting Ceará fashion, we hope to foster global recognition and encourage other regions to follow this example of creativity and responsibility. Ceará fashion is not just a product; it is an expression of culture, identity and commitment to a better future.

FASHION INDUSTRY POSTS

Ceará has a strong fashion industry, ranking second in the Northeast. In 2023, it exported \$268 million worth of fashion goods, with a surplus of \$235.8 million. Footwear is a key export, second only to cast iron. Nationally, Ceará ranks third in fashion exports, reflecting a growing economy.



Ceará stands out in Brazil's fashion industry, consolidating its presence in international trade. The recent visit of ApexBrasil's Exporta Mais Brasil program to Fortaleza resulted in an expectation of more than R\$ 4 million in business over the next 12 months, highlighting the role of women with brands led by women.

The town of Frecheirinhas in Ceará has 40 companies in the sector and currently sends most of its production to states in the Northeast. At the beginning of April, international businessmen visited the state's underwear factories and took part in business rounds with a view to distributing Ceará's products worldwide.



FASHION INDUSTRY POSTS

Ceará's beachwear industry is standing out on the global stage, boosted by significant innovations and a growing focus on sustainability. With the use of high-quality fabrics and ecological practices, Ceará's brands are not only conquering the domestic market, but also expanding their borders into international markets.



The tradition and creativity of Ceará fashion make the state a benchmark for handicrafts and fashion in Brazil. Every year, Fortaleza, the state capital, hosts major events in the creative fashion sector, which help to spread the concepts of the creative economy, such as FEBRATEX, Ceará Moda Acessível and Dragão Fashion Brasil.

The professionalization of the fashion segment in Ceará has been highlighted in recent years, contributing to the state's creative economy. In Fortaleza, the fashion segment is driven by educational initiatives, talent promotion events and business tourism. The state stands out in the development of the textile and clothing industry, and to meet demand it already has 13 professional technical courses, divided into 5 areas, as well as the fashion design course at the University of Fortaleza.



FASHION INDUSTRY POSTS

Catarina Mina stands out at SPFW with "Guardians of Memory," a collection celebrating Ceará's artisanal techniques. With sophisticated and sustainable pieces, designer Celina Hissa merges tradition and modernity, inspiring new designers to value their roots.



“Ceará Está na Moda” (CEM), organized by the Fecomércio and Fiec systems, brought together more than 6,000 people over three days. With workshops, lectures and fashion shows, the event connected local entrepreneurs with buyers, generating more than R\$ 4 million and jobs with its business rounds, thus strengthening the Ceará market.

Ceará leads footwear exports in the Northeast, with sales of US\$ 200.9 million between January and April 2023. Despite a decrease in the number of pairs exported, the value per pair increased, reflecting the ability to add value. The state is the second-largest exporter in Brazil, behind only Rio Grande do Sul.



FASHION INDUSTRY POSTS

To guarantee the sustainability in fashion industry companies in Ceará are betting on activities such as upcycling, encouraging the reuse and donation of clothes, partnerships with socially vulnerable seamstresses, the constant search for sustainability guarantee certificates and the use of innovative technologies, such as fabric recycling and the use of organic fibers.



The Fashion course at the University of Fortaleza (UNIFOR) is celebrating its 10th anniversary, marking a significant milestone in the training of professionals in a sector where Ceará boasts enormous potential in both creativity and authorial fashion. This decade-long achievement underscores the university's commitment to fostering innovation and sustainable development within the local fashion industry.





CLAUDIO SILVEIRA

Event Producer. Founder and creator of the Dragão Fashion Brasil event.

For the May issue of the e-magazine Ceará Global, with the theme “Fashion industry in Ceará”. The CG team had the opportunity and honor of interviewing Claudio Silveira, event producer and creator of Dragão Fashion Brasil, which will take place from July 24 to 27 at the Centro de Eventos do Ceará, marking 25 years of authorial fashion history in Fortaleza.

We would like to know a little about who Claudio Silveira is. Can you tell us a bit about your story?

Claudio is passionate, although he has been many things. He is passionate about the fashion industry, but his perspective is somewhat limited in understanding the entire market. I like what's new, I like what's different. I've always been concerned about that, ever since I was a kid. I never liked doing anything normal. I always wanted to do something different. I had a brand called S27 that I started when I was 19. By the age of 23, I already had three stores. By the age of 27, I had eight stores and a factory with 400 employees. That's why I took off in the country because I was very ahead of my time. I started traveling to London in the 90s, and at that time, there were no cell phones as we know them today, so I'm passionate about what I do and at the same time a great dreamer. I can say that, a dreamer who makes all dreams come true. Because I go out and fight for it, and I make it happen.

I was at an event in Rio de Janeiro, and there were many people there with a culture of African origin. An elderly lady, who must have been about 80 years old, took my arm, looked at me, and said, “You're a hunter, you are Oxóssi.” I replied, “Sorry? I don't understand, ma'am.” She added, “You are Oxóssi, you hunt for your community.” That's who Claudio Silveira really is. I couldn't believe it when I heard it, and it stayed in my mind for a long time. When I came back, I thought: Who helps all these designers? Who opens up all the spaces for the creative market? Who fights for new talents to have a place in the market? Who promotes fashion designers and models not only in the country but also abroad? I do all of those things.



When I say that I do these things, I'm not just talking about Claudio, but the project, the purpose. I have a purpose to make this happen. I have the purpose of supporting both authorial and artisanal fashion, not just the copy-based fashion industry, but also focusing on natural-based and handmade fashion. I appreciate that very much because I see it as an opportunity to help communities.

How did your relationship with the fashion industry in Ceará begin?

My relationship with fashion began at a very early age; I've always liked it. I always chose my clothes, and by the age of ten, I was already picking out my outfits. I wanted to understand fashion better. I studied administration, but I always liked to dress well. I always dated models and enjoyed this environment, so choosing this path was easy. When I was 16, I went to work in a store in Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro. To this day, I can't believe I had the courage to do that because my mother wouldn't let me work, but I went in secret. After about six months, I was already the assistant manager. After a year, I became the manager, and after two years, I owned a share of the store. I was 18 years old. I was a bit of a risk-taker.

I've always been very fond of authorship. It was something I liked to see. When I was a kid, I used to visit Ceará a lot with my mother, and I'd see handmade pieces. I thought it was amazing because there was no handmade work in Rio like there was here. When I saw crochet, I fell in love with it too. I thought it was super modern, and today I fight for authorship like no one else. So that's basically it.

My aim is to give relevance to both authorial and handmade fashion, moving away from the industry that is all about copying and towards something natural and handmade. I really like this because I think we can help communities. I'm 62 years old, and I think I've done everything I can. Now it's time for my son and daughter. If I have to leave a legacy, I have to show what handmade fashion can offer.

Claudio Silveira is a well-known name in Brazil and abroad, related to "Dragão Fashion Brasil." How did this project come about, and what is the importance of this event for the fashion industry in Ceará, for the state, and internationally?

I was invited, along with a team of designers, to New York at the end of the 1990s to visit FIT (Fashion Institute of Technology), where a Chanel exhibition was happening. It was a time when it wasn't as common to travel as it is today; there were no mobile phones, and the main source of entertainment on the plane was newspapers.



Returning from there with all these ideas in my mind, I arrived in Rio de Janeiro, where I had a stopover, and new newspapers came in, one of them from Ceará, as we were headed there. In the newspaper, I read about the launch of the Dragão do Mar Cultural Center for Art and Culture, which is the same age as Dragão Fashion, 25 years old. At that moment, Josenias Júnior, who became my partner, was standing next to me, and I said, "Júnior, Dragão Fashion. As soon as I set foot in Fortaleza, my wife will register it. It's Dragão Fashion, it's mine." I arrived, I registered it. Courage, you need a lot of courage. I registered it, believed in it, and fought to make it happen. In the first year of Dragão Fashion at the Dragão do Mar Cultural Center for Art and Culture, I had five thousand Reais in sponsorship; I'll never forget it. In the second year, I already had thirty thousand Reais, in the third year, fifty thousand, and in the fourth year, one hundred thousand. We kept growing until today, when we put on an event that costs an absurd amount, and I have all the support I need to make it happen because I wouldn't have the money to do it on my own.

So, on top of all that, I had to know how to share. Share, believe in new people, and understand how it would work. How I could add to it. The word 'help' isn't good; I have to add to it for it to work. This business of helping is very complicated. Even more so when you help once, the person thinks it's great. If you help less the second time, the person thinks it's bad. If you don't help the third time, you're no good. So it's complicated. I had to make it happen differently. I had to make people understand that they had to come together to make it happen. That's when I created Dragão. And it really surprised everyone, including me.

During those 25 years, I learned a lot. I've managed to get a lot of people into the market, a lot of new designers, and opened up fashion schools—there were only two at the time. Today, it's a great honor for me to know that all the fashion schools in the country have Dragão as a reference for the new designers' competition that we hold every year. It really is fantastic. For a federal university in Cariri to win a project like this one last year, it's a sight for sore eyes. I'm in a breeding ground for creators. That's it. If you stop to pay attention, there are brands and people who are going to buy to resell. I'm not just talking about Centro Fashion; it's a lot of people. They have the right phrase, 'you have to make do,' but by making do, they've found a way of making money that has people getting rich and people going broke doing it. Many wonder why they're going broke? Because they don't wake up early like others, they don't know how to sell, they don't know how to talk, they don't know how to address people, so it's a very confusing environment, but it has a history. If you're good, you succeed; if you're not that good, you suffer but may succeed. If you don't know how to sell, if you don't know how to talk, you'd better give up because you're going broke, as many people have.



Ceará fashion is known for its tradition and creativity. What is your perception of this characteristic?

Creativity comes first. Secondly, the courage to do a job like they do, because even with limited resources, they end up showcasing themselves in a remarkable way. I think people from Ceará are very organized when it comes to working in the fashion industry. It is noticeable how the colleges have grown, how many brands have expanded, and now it's a fact. It's a chain of fashion survivors: it starts with your grandmother who embroidered, your mother who sewed, your sister who set up a store, and you who ended up taking over the store and turning it into a digital one.

What is the main challenge for the expansion of the fashion industry in the state?

Vision, public policies, industrial policies, and respect for the consumer. It's a long list of needs, and I won't be able to go into it deeply because it makes me very indignant.

To answer you, if you don't have visibility, if you don't have space to show yourself, if you don't have space to sell, it's better to stay at home. It doesn't matter. If you don't show your face, if you don't come up with a story that gives new entrepreneurs and new fashion talents a chance, nothing will change. There's no point in having a bunch of people graduate without a place to work. How could I just come along and say something nice? He's graduating and needs to work. He's invested his money to get an education. He's not going to work just anywhere. Either you're good, or you're not.

I have a success story called "Homem do Sapato." The young man sold shoes out of a car, a Fiat Uno. He worked with us at two events and participated in Dragão once. It was this opportunity that launched him as a new talent in fashion. Today, he has many stores. A young guy, he was clever. He trusted a team of youngsters like himself, something that many people wouldn't do. When I visited his store, he said, "Claudio, I sell 300 thousand Reais on WhatsApp alone." It was during the pandemic. There's no secret, it's just the will.



Ceará fashion is already present in many countries. How do you evaluate the potential of this segment in the international market? What is our competitive differential internally compared to imports from countries like China, and how can we ensure our presence abroad?

Bet on what's handmade. Betting on what we have. The DFB authorial fashion show proves this. It's not about eliminating the fashion industry, but making the industry understand that if you have a brand like Zara that spends millions on designers and new talents, you're seeing that multi-brand stores are going broke. Multi-brand stores buy a T-shirt for 80 to sell for around 200, and if they can't sell it at that price, they can't survive. It's complicated. Then Zara comes along with a similar product for 120, with better finishing touches.

I think we need to strengthen the industry, look for new equipment to speed up production, and improve product quality. We need to bring in the best we have, which is our army of seamstresses. In the current model, one seamstress cuts, another sews, another finishes, and the garment often arrives with issues. There's no focus on perfection, quality, or sustainability. They don't care; they're just making clothes, not fashion. It's very complicated.

We need to reinvent the format that the fashion industry imposes. It's not just about machinery or office teams, it's about good management. Without a strong sales team, the company won't succeed. Fast fashion leads many to bankruptcy. Centro Fashion itself has outcompeted many big mall stores because while a T-shirt in the mall costs 200, you can find a similar one at Centro Fashion for 80.

There are few people who speak as frankly as I do. I say it straight. That's why I have high visibility. I'm no better than anyone else. People come up to me and say, "But your event..." When I found out that the DFB was the first in the country three years ago, I said, "Me? I'm nothing." But it was because of the spaces. What I'm best at is creating opportunities. If you focus on producing, you'll be ten times better because I like it. It's a subject I enjoy. So making projects happen this way has given me great credibility in the market.

As for internationalizing Ceará, it requires strong policies from the Tourism Department to strengthen the demonstration of Ceará's products. Often, you see that it doesn't exist. No one goes to fairs anymore, there's no point in selling anything. Competing with the Chinese at these fairs is impossible due to their rapid and massive production. Here, no one keeps up because of a certain complacency.



Let me share a success story about Ponto da Moda. Around 10 years ago, Ponto da Moda approached me to work with them. Initially, I was reluctant because the business seemed disorganized and unattractive. Despite my reservations, the owner decided to hire me. I spent two years there, emphasizing the importance of good taste in business.

I noticed that the sales team needed improvement and told the owner, "Your sales team isn't very effective. How can an elderly salesperson instill confidence in customers looking to buy fashionable items? Consider hiring young, dynamic individuals." We then recruited college students interested in internships at Ponto da Moda. These students gained experience in various areas, from marketing and cashiering to visual merchandising and sales, helping them decide on their career paths.

Today, half of Ponto da Moda's staff comprises former students from Ateneu, Unifor, and UFC. Providing opportunities and space for growth is crucial. This approach is not unique to DFB; it reflects the broader market reality. Investing in young talent and fostering their development is key to success.



Créditos: Roberta Braga e Cláudio Pedroso

How you think we can make Ceará an increasingly global ?

I think we must have more and more events that can truly demonstrate our production capacity, creativity, and ability to deliver. What's the point of having all these skills and not being serious about it, not making things happen? I think it's very difficult to answer that because it's very personal. It's not something you can buy. It's something you have inside you—whether it's the attitude to grow the business properly or to support your professional partner who is working with you.

There is even competition between partners. I'm shocked when I see it. Instead of one focusing on one aspect and the other on another, giving each other space and support, there's a certain level of competition, and often family issues are involved. In my family, the four of us work together, and we're friends. So, there has to be seriousness, friendship, competence, and the courage to impose yourself on the market to make things happen. If not, it's better not to do it. Because the market isn't messing around. Having a purpose is fundamental. If you don't have a purpose, it's better to stay at home. It's better not to do anything.



Foto: Roberta Braga

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