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# Fashion showcases design: perceptions of the showcase in the brazilian popular market

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**Abstract.** The present work aims to present the showcase, its relation with the building, with fashion and with the observer. The importance of this exhibition space extends from the aesthetic and communication functions to be part of a wide textile and clothing chain. This role integrates the whole cycle of creation, textiles, clothing and fashion accessories. For this article we used bibliographical references of design and fashion, as well as methodologies of photographic and ethnographic documentation, with application of focus groups. From the focus groups were identified descriptors related to emotional design. Such descriptors point to the emotions arising from memories, tastes and attitudes. These factors can lead to decisions and assist the wider knowledge of the target audience.

## 1. Introduction

The textile and fashion chain has an extension that allows the study of several areas and the contribution of a wide knowledge. After the creation and production, the commercial destination of these products needs the support of the communication and visual merchandising areas, which the showcases take part of. In the current configuration of the fashion chain, the presence of this space is largely established by photographic records. Despite being part of a broad field, it lacks studies that support it, especially about conceptual and theoretical aspect. We can combine visual knowledge with theory to get better results and align brands, products and consumers. From these assumptions, one starts from the segmentation of the market. This study of the showcases is related to the popular market layers in Brazil, specifically in a city where fashion and apparel activity stands out: Fortaleza, mayor city of Ceará, situated in the northeast of the country.

## 2. The showcase and trade

Fashion surpasses and recreates the frontiers of clothing, in addition to using the most diverse means to communicate and expose its innovations. Although innovations are factors that increase fashion and the field of communication, the display cabinets, understood here as a space to expose fashion, are still a strong appeal of commerce to the customer or user. The presence of commercial spaces destined to the exhibition has antique records. There are no significant differences between the trade and the exhibition of products for almost fifteen centuries. The stores of Trajan's Market in Rome and the commercial spaces of the seventeenth century had not changed so much. In the nineteenth century, with the use of iron and steel,



the exhibition spaces began to approach what today is understood by showcase. And then large magazines, galleries and, later, the shopping centers were established. From that century, with the industrial development the practice of commerce advances in techniques of sale and space occupation. Ornamented showcases in order to enhance the product, mannequins well dressed to value clothes and accessories, as well as events informing the evolution of fashion and stimulating its consumption [1].

### **3. Showcase, elements of design and fashion: composition, message and identity**

The showcase contributes to the aesthetics of commerce, its architecture and even to the marketing and culture of a place. It also provides a view from outside that can show the store. This view can show the brand through products or services. The space we call the showcase is composed of several elements related to the interior design: floor, ceiling, background, lighting, colors and composition of displays and products. The elements of the facade are added to the elements of the showcase and can be related to the principles of design: rhythm, harmony, balance, symmetry and asymmetry [1]. One of the most important elements for the showcase is the lighting, because from this derives the perception of everything that is exposed. The effects of lighting influence colors, volumes, textures, scale and can change the whole idea of an environment [2].

Just like in interior design, the display case should have a balance between interior and exterior lighting to provide a specific effect. The lighting should be supported by points that offer flexibility about location and height. It can improve changes and make the space more interesting to the audience. Lamps that provide good color definition are ideal for being artificial light sources and valorize the products in showcases showing the right colors, just as they were designed.

The outside of the store sends messages to consumers that make them feel attracted or not. Thus, the shop façade, signage and showcases offer a vision that defines the retail. The designer creates environments with the ideal of stimulating desires and creating impulses. The goal is to trigger a range of different moods - impulsive, contemplative, sinuous, positive - that will affect consumer behavior [3].

The retail identity must convey to the essence of the brand or store with the personality of its customers. Besides the physical characteristics and composition, there is an entire experience with sensations transmitted by these spaces and materials. The strongest and most common stimulus to a shop window observer is vision. Through vision the basic principles of design are perceived and decoded by the other senses, which provides the experience of multisensoriality. This adds value to the design and identity you want to communicate. Materials can be used to generate holistic and multisensory experiences or to provoke a sense or group of meanings [4]. The traditional perception is already broadened by the phenomenology of space, which includes different responses to the senses and acts together with the specificities of each human being, according to memories activated in relation to varied stimuli.

### **4. Fashion production and showcases: creativity and exhibition**

The fashion production of a showcase harmonizes different pieces. These combined pieces can show a style created to present the store or brand image. It is applied in exhibitions and communicate to the people what the store has to offer, fashionable launches, new products, promotions and even show how it is possible to combine them together [5]. The mannequins are used as support for clothing, accessories, hair aesthetics and makeup. They can even transmit the *zeitgeist* of a time. It is clearly perceived in pictures through a period of time. In the twentieth century there were many advances in aesthetics, technology and materials. Then, styles had been replaced every decade.

The role of the fashion producer has developed focused on fashion events and magazine editorials. Recently, part of these professionals work in shops and shopping mall. It happens most because of the showcases and visual merchandising, which demands specialized knowledge. They can add points to the presentation and bring a more scenographic touch to the showcases.

### **5. From exposure to emotion in showcases: Brazilian popular fashion**

Based on elements of visual communication and the principles that rules them, the necessary framework

for the decoding of non-verbal messages is formed, and the display case is placed here as a representative of this type of communication. Demetresco [6] defends the showcase, which is part of the facade, as a discourse of the architecture of a store and as a possibility to break the usual monotony of the form.

Lipovetsky [7] expands the concept of consumption linked to the sensory from memory element. It defends a return to the past as the advent of consumption and that the consumer seeks more permanent stimuli, instant emotions and recreational activities. The author defends that “this reinvigorated consumption of the past is one of the cosmos facets from experiential hyperconsumption: it is no more than just access to material comfort, but rather to sell and buy reminiscences, emotions that evoke the past, memories of times considered more splendid”.

Emotional connections have brought specific knowledge to designing. In this sense, beyond use, objects are linked to the user by stories, memories and feelings, which can increase the value of functional and aesthetic issues. At first called design and emotion, now also known as emotional design, it is a knowledge that presents itself as a possibility to explain complex connections between the user, the product and the environment. Norman [8] establishes three levels of understanding the object-related pleasure: visceral (which presents immediate and instinctive response to appearance), behavioral (response to experimentation and performance of objects, involves a bit more processing of information received) and reflexive (more rational, refers to meaning, interpretation and individual understanding). Jordan [9] developed methods of identifying with the user from what he calls descriptors, which are feelings or emotions described by words, arranged in antagonistic pairs. The author also established the term pleasantness to describe the interaction of users with products. Desmet [10] proposes that emotions can be established between positive and negative, which would help design processes and interaction with the user by focusing on positive emotions. He affirms that the positive emotions is the one which people identify themselves immediately. The emotions that the authors discuss in their works would be ways of connecting the user and the product. Besides that there is a possible combination of these emotions, identified through the user's discourse. It also configures a way to trace the characteristics to be included in the project.

### *5.1. Brazil and classes C, D and E*

Brazil has, in its socioeconomic classification, the class division from A to E, where class A represents the top and class E the base of the pyramid. These standards are established by government and agencies data [11]. The classes considered most popular are from C to E, where class C represents the Brazilian middle class. The size of the Brazilian fashion market, its complexity and market segmentation have led professionals to perceive the need to differentiate the attention given to their goods and services. With a large production of fashion articles, focused mainly on the domestic market, Brazil has achieved in recent years a significant increase in access to information and purchasing power of the popular classes. These classes represent considerable numbers of the Brazilian population and the market targeted at them can be a market of prosperity, not by prices, but by volume of sales. Therefore, we need to give attention to this audience. Major retailers and shopping malls have realized a promising niche market for the country as well as fashion producers and stylists. They started working for these brands in advertising and fashion marketing with catalogs, lookbooks, catwalks, editorials and shop windows. The idea is to improve communication with this emerging niche. Formerly marginalized times, today the most popular classes reflect data that in 2010 the Brazilian clothing production was nine billion pieces. The three largest companies aimed at the popular classes (C & A, Renner and Riachuelo) sold around 100 to 120 million pieces.

### *5.2. The Popular Fashion in the city of Fortaleza.*

The Haute Couture luxury market continues to produce and launch creations set in calendars organized by its major brands. Prêt-à-porter, nowadays linked to the conglomerates, also produce systematically. Between the fashion created for the most exquisite market, the standardized fashion and the popular fashion, there is the differential of elements coming from the counterculture and the street movements, already in the middle of century XX. Those movements contributed to what is now a mass fashion and

even what can be called popular fashion. It is marked by the ephemerality of trends, mass dissemination, rapid substitution and immediate consumption. And the novelty of popular fashion in the contemporary world is mass produced by countries that supply large distribution chains like China, India and other Eastern countries. Brazil stands out for creating a popular fashion that comes largely from the television production of soap operas and TV shows. It is the launch of an aesthetic trends existing or created by television costumes that are absorbed quickly by the market, copied by confections and quickly take the shop, its showcases and the streets.

With the growth of the popular market, the so-called *modinha* (like “small fashion”), the places of sale also began to expand and specialize. From fairs to markets, from markets to shops. And so there were small shopping centers in the center of the city. These centers started to operate with shops and services destined to the public that already frequented the center of the city and consumed *modinha*. One of them, the Central Shopping Mall (Figure 1), has stores destined to the feminine, masculine and children's public, with garments, accessories and various services. It seeks an aesthetics next to shopping centers with stores that maintains the popular aesthetics of *modinha*, with exhibitions marked by quantity, excess of colors and a visual identity without sophistication.



**Figure 1:** showcases of popular shops of a mall in Fortaleza.

## 6. Indicators for a suitable showcase from the point of view of interior design, fashion focus groups and previous results

### 6.1. Focus groups

The article is part of an ongoing PhD research on emotional design and showcases. This research focuses on the female audience of Brazilian classes C, D and E. It is intended to study the relationship between behavior, tastes and aesthetics of this group through their perception of fashion windows. A script was prepared to be applied in two focus groups with questions about memory, product choices and details that captured attention in a showcase, leading to buying decisions. In addition to these issues were presented three showcases pictures (Figure 2) of different brands to stimulate an analysis and get opinions from the group. All content was recorded in video, transcribed in text and later classified in tables established according to physical and / or action characteristics of the showcases (product, lighting, look, promotion, brand and design elements) and emotional inputs (visceral, behavioral, reflexive, negative and positive). These inputs were established according to Jordan's emotional descriptors [9], based on methodology that established tables which format contained content, synthesis and codification of each discourse presented by the two groups [12].



**Figure 2:** pictures of showcases presented to the focus groups.

### 6.2. Previous results

The content derived from the groups presents the perception of those women. Concepts, elements and perceptions related to window displays, design and fashion were communicated and verified through their speeches. They could express their perception and way of establishing connection with is presented and their purchase decision. In addition to the consequences of purchasing, the perception shown by these women may also reflect the cultural matter through colors, scenery, choice of pieces and their daily relations. Influences such as the hot climate of the city, made one of them, for example, clearly repel one of the multinational brand showcases: "I do not see myself in the product they put in the shop window. They put on a style that is not from Brazil. They wear a lot of cold clothes. The colors, very black and the fabrics, I do not enter that store because of the window."

Other participants also stated their relationship with the communication of promotional actions. One of them established her purchases are mostly through promotional activities from stores and that the word "promotion" is a stimulus to stop in front of the showcase. Then, another participant told that she could not buy a piece of value X, although when she saw the store on sale with pieces of value X/3, bought 3 pieces. Which means in the end she bought 3 products for the previous unit value that, theoretically, she could not buy. The fact of buying 3 pieces for the value of one, possibly makes this customer think she has the purchase power that previously believed not to have. The type of payment (by credit card) maybe provides this temporary (or virtual?) purchase power.

### 7. Final considerations

Having this content and crossing the data with established concepts, it is possible to come to some considerations. Although the public buying the *modinha* has expanded its access and its purchasing power of improvised and temporary spaces like fairs and markets, the organization and a certain degree of sophistication also reached that public. In the form of organized malls and shops that try to follow an aesthetics of big brands, the public demonstrates their identification with their own tastes and has the ability to define what aligns or not with their culture. The search for the lowest price or promotion does not invalidate the requirement for a good presentation and a good fit on the garment,. Other testimonials also state that even if the store shows a sophistication or price more expensive than is usually paid and people identify with what was exposed, they are willing to pay for that product. Although some focus group participants expressed a fear of overcoming a limit for entering a store or buying a product, others demonstrated a resourcefulness in saying that although the store looked expensive, they would have no trouble in entering to see other products or even admire the space and other products besides those presented in the showcase.

From the data collected and future cross-reference, we can build a basis for a better understanding of the public's aspirations, which can help to align products, presentation and consumption. This

understanding should take into account beyond the already used public, values and identity, as well as the emotional aspects of this public, its culture and the current access to information. It is then possible to make the identity of a brand and can link objective concepts to the subjectivity of an audience.

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