



## **LIBERTEES**

### **MFW21-22**

*Liberteetes Brasil debuts on the international catwalk in one of the most important fashion events in the world, bringing a piece of Minas Gerais to the Milan Fashion Week. The brand is part of a group made of eight Brazilian brands focused on sustainability that aim to create social reintegration opportunities for women deprived of their freedom.*

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, Liberteetes, the socially responsible brand that creates opportunities to give new meaning to the lives of women in prison through fashion, arrives in Milan to represent Brazil at Milan Fashion Week 2021, during an exclusive edition of Brazil Eco Fashion Week in collaboration with Fashion Vibes. The brand will present its new collection "O Café e Suas Flores", designed by Ana Paula Sudano and Juliano Sá. At the Orto Botanico di Brera, 15 models will walk the runway presenting a collection of about 30 items that will be exhibited in the Orto showroom after the event.

At the inauguration of the most important fashion event in the world, the stylist and educator Ana Paula Sudano explains that the "O Café e Suas Flores" collection is inspired by the coffee flower, which, with its gracefulness and power, bursts into the fields, and evoke the subtlety of femininity, the resilience of life and, above all, the liberation through work. *"The energy of coffee will appear in versatile and comfortable clothes, which will accompany women in their work and in their daily life"*, says the designer. Strong colors and hard lines attribute authenticity to the unique prints, a registered trademark of Liberteetes, on which fragments of the extraction of coffee and a strong identity character are mixed to represent the *leitmotif* of the collection.

The entire production of the pieces comes to life in the hands of women deprived of their freedom. The manufacturing site is installed within the walls of the Association for the Protection and Assistance of Condemned (APAC) for women in Belo Horizonte. All the visibility and sales of the brand have already generated and will continue to generate income, stimulating professionalization, remission of sentences and the opportunity for social reintegration for the women who take part in the project. Since the founding of Liberteetes in 2013, over 100 women have been involved in the initiative. For Liberteetes, fashion is a tool of communication and social transformation. *"Bringing our work on an international catwalk is an opportunity to show the world that social reintegration is possible, as well as recognizing all the work done by the women involved in the project,"* says Marcella Mafra, co-founder of Liberteetes Brasil.

The project represents Brazilian innovation in sustainability, creative economy, fair trade and cooperation that helps to achieve the sustainable development goals promoted by the UN, in particular the n° 5, that of gender equity, and the n° 8, which deals with decent conditions for work and economic growth. Since 2013, Liberteetes has been working in collaboration with the Minas Gerais prison system, offering more than 134,000 hours of professional training; the remuneration paid to inmates has already exceeded the threshold of 700,000 R\$ (more than 130,000 \$) and, since for every three days of work the law guarantees 1 day of remission, the decent work opportunities offered by Liberteetes have already generated more than 5,554 days of redemption.

*"Making the brand famous around the world automatically helps to change the popular opinion that detained people are not useful to society. Libertees is there to prove that this idea is wrong. Libertees wants to prove that we are useful and that we are able to make a fresh start, seizing this opportunity" – MS, former prisoner, student, artist and seamstress from Libertees Brasil.*

*"One of the most important things for women who are deprived of their freedom is being able to restore their image and enhance their skills and talents, especially in front of their family, mothers, children and in society", concludes Daniela Queiroga, co-founder of Libertees Brazil.*

The project still needs additional resources for a deeper development. However, all those who have already taken part in this social enterprise need to be acknowledged, as they contributed to the APAC renovation and the construction of the Libertees store in the Novo Mercado of Belo Horizonte, both milestones in the reconstruction of the company after the impact of the pandemic. Libertees thanks its partners and supporters: Textilfio Malhas, ABRIMOS, Templuz, Ludus - Comunicação para Impacto, AVSI, Imagem Uniformes, Fernanda Matos, Janaína Pacheco, Rolê Maravilha, Estúdio Mina, Lu Motosinhos, Dunya Azevedo, Lef Pisos e Revestimentos, Laloba Filmes, Marcos Matos Vídeo.

### **Penitentiary system conditions for women**

Brazil currently ranks 4th in the ranking of countries with the highest number of women in prison in the world. From 2000 to 2016 the number increased by 455%, reaching 42,000 women today. Almost half of this population is under the age of 29 and over 60% have not completed high school. The levels of female recidivism in the country are 8%, compared to 22% for male recidivism.

However, Minas Gerais is the only region of Brazil where female recidivism is higher than male: it reaches 41% against 29% for men. Furthermore, the state of Minas Gerais has the largest number of female prison population in the whole country, second only to São Paulo.

Among the female prison population, 31% are involved in work activities, because offering professional training to inmates is essential for reintegration into society after serving their sentence. By offering opportunities for professional training, human development and inclusion through fashion, Libertees directly contributes to the reduction of recidivism rates and helps restore the self-esteem in these women.

### **The history of the brand**

Launched in September 2017, Libertees is the clothing brand that stands out for its social support concept. The idea was born from the encounter between the sensitive and accurate gaze of the entrepreneurs of the clothing sector Marcella Mafra and Daniela Queiroga with the paintings made by the women of the Estevão Pinto women's penitentiary complex during the art classes. Impressed by the expressiveness of the drawings and the intensity of the colors in the paintings, Marcella, who had been in charge of Libertees since 2013, had the idea of transforming these works onto clothing prints. Libertees' aim is to change the lives of these women, giving them the opportunity to learn a profession, the recognition of their talents and the chance to remit their sentences.

Libertees' mission is to offer the conditions for the reconstruction of one's freedom through fashion: for those who produce it, for the women in prison who make it, but also for those who wear it.

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