

FUTURE CODES:

RUPTURE AND PIONEERING AT BRAZILIAN FASHION WEEK

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PHOTO FROM ANGELA BRITO BRAND

ABSTRACT:

This article presents, from the perspective of the codes of the future, the trajectory of fashion designer and creative director Angela Brito, the first Black woman in the São Paulo Fashion Week line-up in 2019. The article explores how her work in the field of fashion represents practices of rupture and pioneering, challenging historically elitist aesthetic and institutional norms. Angela Brito's trajectory is positioned as a relevant contribution to the strengthening of African aesthetics in fashion and the contemporary scene. Her work values cultural references and proposes an aesthetic that dialogues between tradition and contemporaneity, expanding the visibility of these narratives in the fashion industry. Her work contributes to the deconstruction of stereotypes and proposes a more plural and contemporary vision of African aesthetics. Angela Brito's presence in the São Paulo Fashion Week line-up in 2019, as the first Black woman to participate in the event, is a historical milestone that reinforces the importance of her trajectory for representativeness and female empowerment in the field of fashion. In this sense, her work helps to challenge historically exclusionary structures and strengthens the presence of Black women in the sector. Through the analysis of

fashion shows, collections, and media positioning, it is evident how Angela Brito created new visual and social forms, projected possible futures, and transformed the field of fashion in Brazil. The article dialogues with Afrofuturism and highlights the dimension of aesthetic practice, showing how fashion can constitute a space for change and movements that expand possibilities for Black women. This study integrates results from ethnographic research developed through the participant observation methodology.

Keywords: Angela Brito, fashion, rupture, pioneering, future, codes.

INTRODUCTION:

Fashion is a realm of symbolic and cultural power, historically structured by hierarchies of class, gender, and Eurocentric aesthetics. In this scenario, Angela Brito's trajectory marks a point of reconfiguration by consolidating herself as the first black woman in the line-up of Brazilian Fashion Week. Her career not only represents an individual milestone, but is an example of rupture and pioneering, opening paths to new possibilities in fashion in Brazil. Fashion as a language, cultural and social field operates as a phenomenon by negotiating identities and belongings. Not

just clothes, but the products of fashion. It contributes in an innovative way to the compression of the dynamics of life (Stocco, 2012). Fashion functions as a symbolic and social field where aesthetic values and power structures are reproduced and contested and they reflect and transform society through their practices. The history of fashion is intrinsically linked to the development of humanity, reflecting social, cultural, and economic transformations over time. As society evolves, habits, customs, and forms of expression also change, and fashion emerges as a mirror of these changes, revealing values, identities, and aesthetic ideals of each era. In this way, to study fashion is to understand not only aesthetic trends, but also the trajectory of humanity and of its constant adaptations (Fegahli and Dwyer, 2020). Although following the process of Brazilian fashion is to observe small advances of rupture and aesthetic innovation, especially when headed by historically marginalized actors, transform the field and expand possibilities for future generations. Therefore, there is still a big setback in relation to the fashion industry and diversity. Historical and cultural context São Paulo Fashion Week The SPFW Brazilian Fashion Week is the main institutional space for fashion in the country, historically marked by Eurocentric and elitist stan-

dards. According to Braga and Pereira (2024), São Paulo Fashion Week is the most important fashion event in Latin America and the largest in Brazil, bringing together in its line-up some of the main national brands and brands throughout its history. São Paulo Fashion Week, completed 30 years in 2025, is the main fashion event in Brazil and a national creative thermometer. Since its first edition in 1996, the event has been visible to Brazilian designers and showcases the country's fashion to the world. According to Braga and Pereira (2024), the first edition of Morumbi Fashion Brasil (MFB) took place in 1996, sponsored by Morumbi Shopping, and in 2001, in the 10th edition, the event was renamed São Paulo Fashion Week. Over the decades, SPFW has consolidated itself as a creative stage, innovation and cultural debates. It incorporated discussions on diversity, gender representation, inclusion of different ethnicities, and sustainability. Even facing criticism about restrictive beauty standards and elitism, the fashion week remains a strategic space, connecting designers, brands, media and the public, and reflects modest advances in terms of the challenges of the Brazilian fashion industry. According to Barreto (2025), in 2009 a Conduct Adjustment Agreement (TAC) was signed between São Paulo Fashion Week and the Pub-

lic Prosecutor's Office of the State of São Paulo, suggesting that brands include at least 10% of black models in their fashion shows, as a way to promote greater representation in Brazilian fashion. For decades, the presence of black women in central positions in the line-up was non-existent. Only in 2019, after approximately more than 20 years, Ângela Brito entered the São Paulo fashion week scene as a pioneer. Its inclusion in the line-up represented an institutional rupture, challenging aesthetic and social norms that limited representation in the Brazilian fashion space. This historical milestone should be read not only as an individual achievement, but as a transformative action capable of reconfiguring visual and social codes. According to Barreto (2025), artistic and cultural creation plays a fundamental role in the deconstruction of images and narratives that historically define who holds power and influence in decisions. By producing new representations, established hierarchies are questioned and more inclusive perspectives are promoted, opening space for different voices and identities to be recognized in society. Ângela Brito and the codes of the future.

Ângela Brito, fashion designer and creative director of the Angela Brito Brand brand, is a reference in the field of Brazilian fashion. Cape Verdean-Brazilian and resident in Rio de Janeiro for

more than three decades, she was the first black woman to join the line-up of São Paulo Fashion Week in 2019, consolidating her pioneering role in the sector. Collections and fashion shows: her pieces incorporate elements of the past, present and future, dialogue, design, craftsmanship, craftsmanship, innovation and with technology, futuristic aesthetics and Afrofuturism. The fusion of avant-garde and tradition creates an innovative visual narrative that challenges established standards of beauty and fashion. The brand deconstructs Eurocentric views that tend to define African and Afro-descendant cultural and aesthetic productions only based on stereotypes or exoticisms" (Lucau, 2025, p. 90). The codes of the future represent aesthetic and cultural practices and open up new possibilities, destabilizing hegemonic paradigms. In the case of Ângela Brito, these codes manifest themselves in different ways. Visual narrative: in the modeling of the pieces, textures and shapes are used to communicate the identity, consolidating its own and disruptive aesthetic. In addition to the creation of clothes, Ângela establishes an intimate dialogue between memory, history, culture and identity, which materializes in collections loaded with meanings" (Lucau, 2025, p. 90). Media and cultural positioning: Its presence at São Paulo Fashion Week engages in a

critical discourse, expanding the meaning of pioneering and giving visibility to historically marginalized perspectives in the field of fashion. However, these codes function as instruments of rupture. By creating new aesthetic languages, Ângela Brito redefines what is allowed, building a space and opening paths for futures. Her aesthetic practice demonstrates how it is possible, simultaneously, to be a disruptive and innovative force, establishing new paradigms in a historically elitist field.

Contributions.

Understanding Angela Brito's trajectory, through her aesthetic practices and her presence at SPFW, allows us to recognize how she acts as a transforming agent of Brazilian fashion, redefining visual codes for the sphere.

Afrofuturism is a movement which puts black women at the center of the imagination of the future, recognizing them as artists, thinkers, and leaders whose visions span generations. They transform historical experiences of marginalization into creative force, lead movements in which they expand possibilities and redefine power. By connecting history, culture, technology, and gender justice. Afrofuturism makes visible the importance of female and black leadership in building more inclusive, equitable, and visionary worlds, shows that social and cultural trans-

formation is only complete when black and female voices occupy the protagonism that rightfully belongs to them.

DISCUSSION:

Black women play central roles in the construction of spaces for social and cultural transformation, opening paths that collectively benefit different generations. Their actions and leadership often set precedents that go beyond their own trajectories, creating opportunities and references for other individuals and groups. By occupying positions of protagonism in different areas, whether artistic, political, academic or community, these women not only challenge historical structures of exclusion, but also strengthen practices of equity and collaboration. Thus, their contributions work as paths of legitimacy and inspiration, consolidating models of action that expand possibilities and foster networks of lasting impact. "It is evident that the field of representation remains a place of struggle." (HOOKS, 2019).

Afrofuturism connects past, present, future, technology, and futuristic imagination to create alternatives to colonial and hegemonic narratives. It is both an aesthetic and a practice of projecting possible futures, to challenge power structures and create new codes of existence. When discussing the symbolic

mechanisms of racism, Hooks (2019) states that “images are central to the maintenance of any system of racial domination”, showing that the dispute for representation is not only aesthetic, but political. Disruption refers to actions which destabilize established norms, making room for change and transformation. Pioneering is the action of opening unprecedented paths in the cultural, social or institutional field. Angela Brito incorporates both by occupying the SPFW line-up, instituting new aesthetic and institutional paradigms. Hall (2011, p. 123) states that “what matters are the significant ruptures in which old currents of thought are broken.” Angela Brito’s work demonstrates that rupture and pioneering are not just individual actions, but practices of structural transformation. By occupying the SPFW line-up, she creates new aesthetic and social codes, which dialogue with Afrofuturism, a projection of possible futures for Brazilian fashion and culture. In addition, her practice reveals how fashion can function as an instrument of new contexts of representations and social criticism. “Changes in a problem significantly transform the nature of the questions proposed, the ways in which they are proposed, and the way in which they can be adequately answered” (HALL, 2011, p. 123). Angela Brito’s presence at

SPFW opened space not only for future generations, it shows that traditionally elite spaces can be transformed through the action of actors who break with historical paradigms.

CONCLUSION:

Angela Brito represents a historical and aesthetic milestone in Brazilian fashion. Her pioneering spirit and performance as an agent of rupture not only challenge established standards, but project codes for the future that redefined the field of fashion in Brazil.

The study shows that fashion is not only aesthetic, but also a social and political practice: it allows individuals like Angela Brito to create new possibilities and establish references for future generations. By analyzing her trajectory, the article reinforces the importance of projecting possible futures as a tool for new dialogues and institutional transformation.

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