

Textile design: print of life in the history of art

Summary

This article is based on research on the evolution of textile printing and its relationship with cultural and artistic memory in the 20th century in Brazil and specifically at Companhia Têxtil Ferreira Guimarães. Through the memories and objects of individual and/or collective memory, represented through images in the narratives of cultural, social and political history and those related to research in terms of textile heritage, we can rethink Ferreira Guimarães' relationship with the artistic scene and cultural history of the city of Juiz de Fora. The result of this research is the growing perception that textile design is one of the many forms of representation of personal and social history and constantly seeks its references and inspirations in works and artists enshrined in the history of art.

Keywords: art, design, stamping, history, memory, textile heritage

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Claudia Carvalho Gaspar Cimino

Master in History, UFJF, Brazil

Correspondence: Claudia Carvalho Gaspar Cimino, Master in History, UFJF, Brazil. Graduated in Bachelor and Licenciante in Artistic Education with specialization in Visual Arts, UFJF, Brazil. Specialization in Marketing, Faculdade Machado Sobrinho JF and Specialization in Teaching Visual Arts, EAD/EBA/UFMG, Brazil, Tel 5532999996188, Email cgcimin@gmail.com

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Introduction

The article seeks to develop research on the evolution of textile printing and its relationship with cultural and artistic memory in the twentieth century in Brazil and specifically at Companhia Têxtil Ferreira Guimarães, a textile factory located in the city of Juiz de Fora, in Minas Gerais. For this, it is necessary to carry out a historical survey of the company, focusing mainly on its performance in the field of stamping and seeking to contribute to the historical and cultural heritage of humanity. Ferreira Guimarães, in a way, effectively participated in the development of a cultural identity and memory of the city of Juiz de Fora and the art of weaving, stamping design and its evolution in terms of creation and fashion.

This study is directly related to the professional practice carried out by the author, who, having worked as a designer for years at Cia Têxtil Ferreira Guimarães, has always been interested in practicing and observing the entire textile development process. Realizing the historical and social importance, both in situations related to artistic research, creation of designs and product development, and in the relationship between company employees, customers and suppliers, culminated in the desire to carry out this work.

According to Maurice Halbwachs

We would voluntarily say that each individual memory is a point of view on collective memory, that this point of view changes according to the place I occupy there, and that this place itself changes according to the relationships I maintain with other media.¹

Thus, there is also the proposal to investigate the main prints developed by the company, their relationship with art and what remains in terms of souvenirs, memory and history, and also to raise existing reflections on knowing and conserving a portion of the Brazilian cultural heritage that exists in textile collections.

The sources used depart from documentary research in archives and libraries, seeking records about the beginning of textile industrialization in Brazil and in Juiz de Fora and the survey of how Ferreira Guimarães fits into this context. Data research also in the company's own collection and interviews with people related to its history, making use of oral history. The methodology follows the elaboration of bibliographical analysis, data collection, prints, works of art and documentary research that conceptualize the time, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, to understand the historical and temporal scenario. Confronted with present data, find out what was

marked in individual and collective memories about the construction of this textile history, or the stories that are interspersed in this construction, referenced by texts by authors and historians such as Halbwachs, Chartier and Ginzburg, among others.

Through memories and objects of individual and/or collective memory, represented through images in narratives of cultural, social and political history and those related to research in terms of textile heritage, we can rethink the Ferreira Guimarães' relationship with the artistic and cultural scene of the history of the city of Juiz de Fora.

The story

Although society resembles these wefts of threads obtained by passing one over the other, so that they stagger regularly, in a series of animal or vegetable fibers, or preferably, in the fabric, which results from the interweaving of all these threads. It is true that cotton or silk fabric divides and that the dividing lines correspond to the purpose of a model or a design. Does this even happen in the succession of generations?¹

The textile industry in Brazil began in the middle of the first half of the 19th century. Juiz de Fora was also the stage for the initiation of the textile industrialization process, achieving a great tradition in the sector and becoming known as "Manchester Mineira". In the year 1883, the Zona da Mata region of Minas Gerais started manufacturing production through the Fábrica Industrial Mineira, which initially belonged to Morrit & Companhia. In March 1889, the English factory was renamed Companhia de Fiação e Tecelagem Industrial Mineira. Later, in the same place, it became Companhia Têxtil Ferreira Guimarães.

Ferreira Guimarães was founded on January 18, 1906 in the city of Valença, Rio de Janeiro, as Companhia Industrial Valença, by Colonel Benjamim Ferreira Guimarães. On July 30, 1924, it became Ferreira Guimarães & Cia. It was constituted as a joint-stock company on September 24, 1937 under the name of S/A Ferreira Guimarães. In 1940, it changed its name to Companhia Têxtil Ferreira Guimarães.

Historically speaking, the construction of this factory unit contributed a lot to the aesthetic and architectural formation of Juiz de Fora, as well as the other factories that were also installed in the city at the same time. Portraying here the same style of the English factories existing in Europe, they brought innovation and also the industrial growth that guaranteed the importance of this social and cultural repercussion in the urban formation of the city.

In 1987, the Brazilian textile industry already had a level of quality recognized throughout the world. Through an extensive program of investments in cultural activities carried out by the company, the launch of the book *80 Anos de Moda no Brasil* marked the celebrations of the 80th anniversary of Cia Têxtil Ferreira Guimarães, whose trajectory and development are intertwined with the history of the textile industry and Brazilian fashion.² The book presents an evolution of fashion in Brazil, showing decade by decade, how Brazilian society dressed from the beginning of the 20th century until the 1980s and serving as one of the first sources of reference in terms of fashion for the period. With text by Silvana Gontijo and research by Jussara Câmara, the launch of the book *80 Years of Fashion in Brazil* was an important milestone in the construction of the company's memory, and today is a reference for historiographical research on fashion in Brazil.

Seeking to keep up with modernizations and innovations in equipment and techniques, Cia. Têxtil Ferreira Guimarães remained in the industrial market, completing one hundred years in 2006. In November 2007, after a period in which the company had been experiencing major financial and commercial difficulties, including the inadequacy of machinery for the production of small commercial batches and competition with imported fabrics, Ferreira Guimarães practically ended its activities, entering into judicial recovery and subsequent bankruptcy, with total deactivation and sale of its manufacturing units in 2014.

The textile design

The result of this research is the growing perception that textile design is one of the many forms of representation of personal and social history and constantly seeks its references and inspirations in works and artists enshrined in the history of art.

There is always a relationship between the thread that weaves life and individual and collective memories and its representation in the line of stamped drawings that are specific to an artist and an era. The memory of time and its mark in history through the perspective of a company.

In the reflections of Carlo Ginzburg

*The mixture of reality and fiction, of truth and possibility, is at the core of the artistic elaborations of this century. (...) Terms such as 'fiction' or 'possibility' must not be misleading. The question of proof remains more than ever at the heart of historical research, but its status is inevitably modified when different themes are tackled in relation to the past, with the help of documentation that is also different.*³

Assuming that the fabric and the image it supports portray a life and a time, marked by choices and sensations, is what forms the basis of the idea of this work. Art and its forms of representation accompany human beings throughout their lives. Textile design has a role of great significance in this sense, not only because of the artist who conceives it in his creation, but also and mainly because of its acceptance and circulation in the market and its construction as a personal and social accessory.

For Gilda Chataignier

No one doubts that fabric has an extremely strong presence in contemporary society. Incidentally, in bygone and lived times, woven and dressed fiber has always been a symbol of power, security, competition, greed, taste, elegance and other variables of greater or lesser extent, including their opposites. Within the skeins that weave

*History, the uses and abuses, it becomes clear and unequivocal that the cloth is a catalyst of sensations that pass through the senses of humans and celebrate in their fashion, what is good to use or what deserves to be forgotten.*⁴

The artist, at the moment of creation, is involved by personal issues, his personality, his traits and his will, but also by cultural and historical influences of the time. It is marked by contemporary history, works of art both old and avant-garde, established artists and trends in style and colors that stand out in a collective universe. All this he will use in the stroke and expression of the lines that culminate in the result of his work. Drawing is the greatest expression of your feelings and creativity.

The perception of this set of elements is what leads us to think that everything is built on a certain common desire and feeling. Deep down, nothing is random and the creations intersperse in time and space and constitute themselves as constructions of lives and stories.

Fabrics and prints also constitute a history and are reconstructed by society, by the people who wear them, transforming and complementing them with their choices, combinations and ways of use.

In the words of Jenny Udale

*Throughout the history of fabrics, some types are repeated. These fabrics become classics and some of them remain popular in one form or another; for example polka dots, stripes and florals. Others go in and out of fashion, such as the paisley design (intricate motif in conical shapes). It is interesting to examine what makes a classic textile design so timeless and then try to reinvent it.*⁵

Classic patterns and prints are designs that have always been present throughout time and history. Due to cultural traditions, symbologies and common meanings, they have become timeless and eternal. Perhaps the condition of being classics results from a cultural and universal consensus.

Through their meanings, they remain in individual and collective choices, even if they are reinvented. All designs and images, even patterns and prints that are not classic, carry a symbology. They create meaning for uses, generate identities. The human being chooses what to wear and gives meaning to his choices, related to the style of the pieces, colors and prints. Because clothing, for example, has a much broader meaning than just covering the body. Each accessory determines a way of seeing yourself or wanting to be seen by your contemporaries.

In this sense, use is what makes it possible not to forget, to maintain a history. This is how the preservation of heritage, material or immaterial, is done. There is no way to keep a story alive without telling it or reliving it through memories. Therefore, individual and collective choices begin to tell the story through the traces of textile design.⁶⁻⁹

Final considerations

The circulation of printed fabric, both in terms of the number of people who use it and the variety of styles and shapes of pieces made, is what demonstrates the difference in the relationships established with the images.

The clothes and prints represent images from the story. They are portraits of life, artistic images used by people of a certain time and that tell us the lived story. History that is marked by lines, shapes and colors. They are references that show us the links between different

cultures and the history of art. In this respect, Chataignier's reflection is valid:

There are those who consider stamping as an art, not least because fashion trends often appropriate styles, motifs and designs from plastic arts. Even at the beginning of the 20th century, the arts and historical facts served as an illustration for cloths of various types, thus recording times, customs and artistic currents.⁴

The fabric and textile design, and in this case specifically those developed at Ferreira Guimarães, are a reference for the knowledge of the city of Juiz de Fora and the relationship between people who know, knew and used the company's printed fabrics. These fabrics record and tell the company's history through time. They translate in the memory and life of these people the influence that these traits left in the history of each one of them. It is the memory of time and its mark on history through the bias of a print.

Prints that keep a factory history alive, that intertwine with other individual stories and constitute fabrics of history. Art canvases of social and individual life.

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Conflicts of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest exists.

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