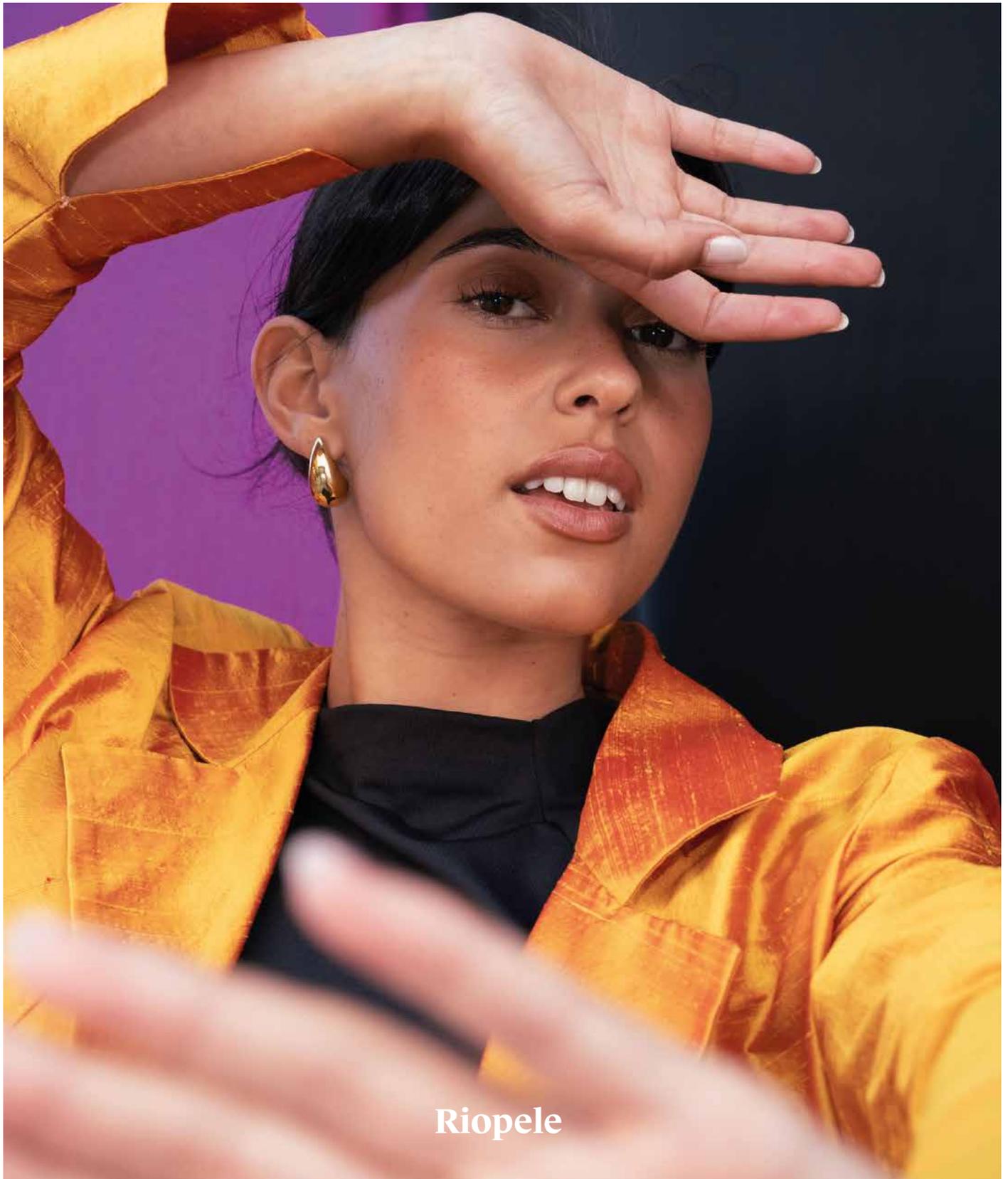


THE LOOM



Riopele

THE FUTURE OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Comprising approximately 200,000 companies, the textile industry is responsible for 1.3 million jobs in Europe.

Despite its weight and importance in the community, the textile sector currently faces several challenges, such as a fierce global competition, high energy prices, an ageing workforce, and a significant increase in legislative burden.

Taking stock of the situation and recognising its historical legacy, it's important to understand what paths textile industry companies should take to remain at the forefront.

Riopele invites you to browse through the pages of the new edition of 'The Loom' magazine, exploring the future of the textile industry in the face of modern challenges.

It seems unequivocal that companies must invest in innovation and sustainability to adapt to a rapidly changing landscape.

Furthermore, considering that most European companies are SMEs, major policymakers should not shirk their responsibilities. On the contrary, they should advocate for equal opportunities for all, legislate for fair and balanced free trade, and strive for a fair transition for the industry and its workers.

José Alexandre Oliveira,
Riopele's President

RIOPELE'S NEW YORK OFFICE



PHOTOGRAPHY NY OFFICE BUILDING LOOPNET.COM

From New York... With love

Riopele is a company with strong interests in the international market, exporting over 95% of its production. With a strong tradition in the european market, the portuguese company entered the american market in 2019. It's here to stay.

'We want to stay close to our customers', emphasised Tina Guimarães. For the Riopele's american market manager, 'with a regular presence in New York, we can ensure personalised service'. Likewise, 'given the ongoing investments the company is making, our north american customers can experience the latest developments first-hand'.

Sander Lak, creative director and fashion designer, recently visited Riopele's showroom in New York. 'Having a showroom in New York to explore the latest developments and garments is truly fantastic! The Riopele office has inspired me to visit Portugal and experience the mill firsthand', Lak highlighted.

Danielle Samuels also visited Riopele's space recently. 'It's especially useful that they are close by and available to help us at any moment', she mentioned. For Veronica Beard, 'these are the kinds of partners we value and want to grow with. Riopele's understanding of fabrics and our brand is unmatched'.

Adding on, Iris Setlakwe states that 'there are many reasons why we have continued working with this amazing company since 2001'. According to the head of Iris Collection, 'the professionals are kind, personable, and provide excellent customer service'.

Karl Aberg, vice president of John Varvatos, states, 'I feel inspired every time I visit the Riopele office in New York.' He describes it as 'a true hub of creativity. There's a huge library filled with samples, garments, colours, and textures. I often go to the office looking for a specific item and end up discovering many other ideas I didn't know I was looking for'. He adds, 'it's always a great help and a revelation. I know I can find ideas and inspiration, while also conducting business and making decisions'.

The Club Monaco team appreciates the warm hospitality shown by Riopele's team. Carolyn Carter, fabric R&D, mentions that she often visits the office 'for everything, from seeking seasonal inspiration and choosing fabrics to requesting reference pieces. We're truly fortunate to have such an outstanding team from Riopele to support us!'

Historically, the american market is the largest importer of clothing globally. It is also the most competitive market where all companies aim to establish themselves. 'In the case of Riopele, we've come to stay', concludes Tina Guimarães.

JOHN VARVATOS



PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN VARVATOS, WSJ.COM

John, is a reference in men's fashion and has conquered the industry with his innovative and sophisticated designs. He's career is marked by timeless collections, and it's through his bold inspirations and looks that he has won over countless celebrities, leaving his mark firmly in the world of fashion.

He was born in a city where music is the calling card. The urban culture of Detroit and Rock 'n' Roll are his main influences and inspirations while creating new pieces. He began his career at the famous brand Polo Ralph Lauren in 1983. After a period of great success, he left Ralph Lauren to join Calvin Klein, where he completely transformed the brand's business by creating a new product in the men's underwear market.

From a young age, John Varvatos had an entrepreneurial vision. After his stint at Calvin Klein, he returned briefly to Ralph Lauren but soon wanted to create a brand with his own identity. In 1999, John Varvatos founded his eponymous company, which expanded to create belts, bags, footwear, eyewear, watches, and fragrances.

In addition to his iconic menswear collections, Varvatos is known for visionary collaborations that transcend the boundaries of the fashion industry. Partnerships with renowned artists and innovative interior design projects showcase his versatility and ability to tell stories through style and creativity.

What professional challenges most marked your career?

I have been pretty lucky with most of my career. The most significant challenge in my career has been finding and nurturing new talent. Identifying emerging designers who bring fresh perspectives while ensuring they align with the brand's vision.

How do you evaluate the evolution of the textile industry internationally and how will it evolve in the coming years?

The textile industry has changed significantly in the last 5-10 years. Innovation, comfort, style and sustainability will be the key drivers.

What advice do you give to young designers starting their career?

Be a sponge and absorb every area in product development. Learn as much as you can every day.

How did Riopelle appear in your professional life?

Riopelle has been part of my professional life for over 25 years. As far as innovation and quality goes it's always at the top of my go to's.

What are you looking for when you approach Riopelle?

I'm always looking to Riopelle for innovation, quality, and value.

How do you follow the evolution of Riopelle?

I have been working with Riopelle since Niki Bosch partnered with them. Niki really had a huge impact on the Riopelle's growth and future. He was an extremely creative visionary and the present Riopelle team has continued to evolve the legacy.

JUDY SANDERSON

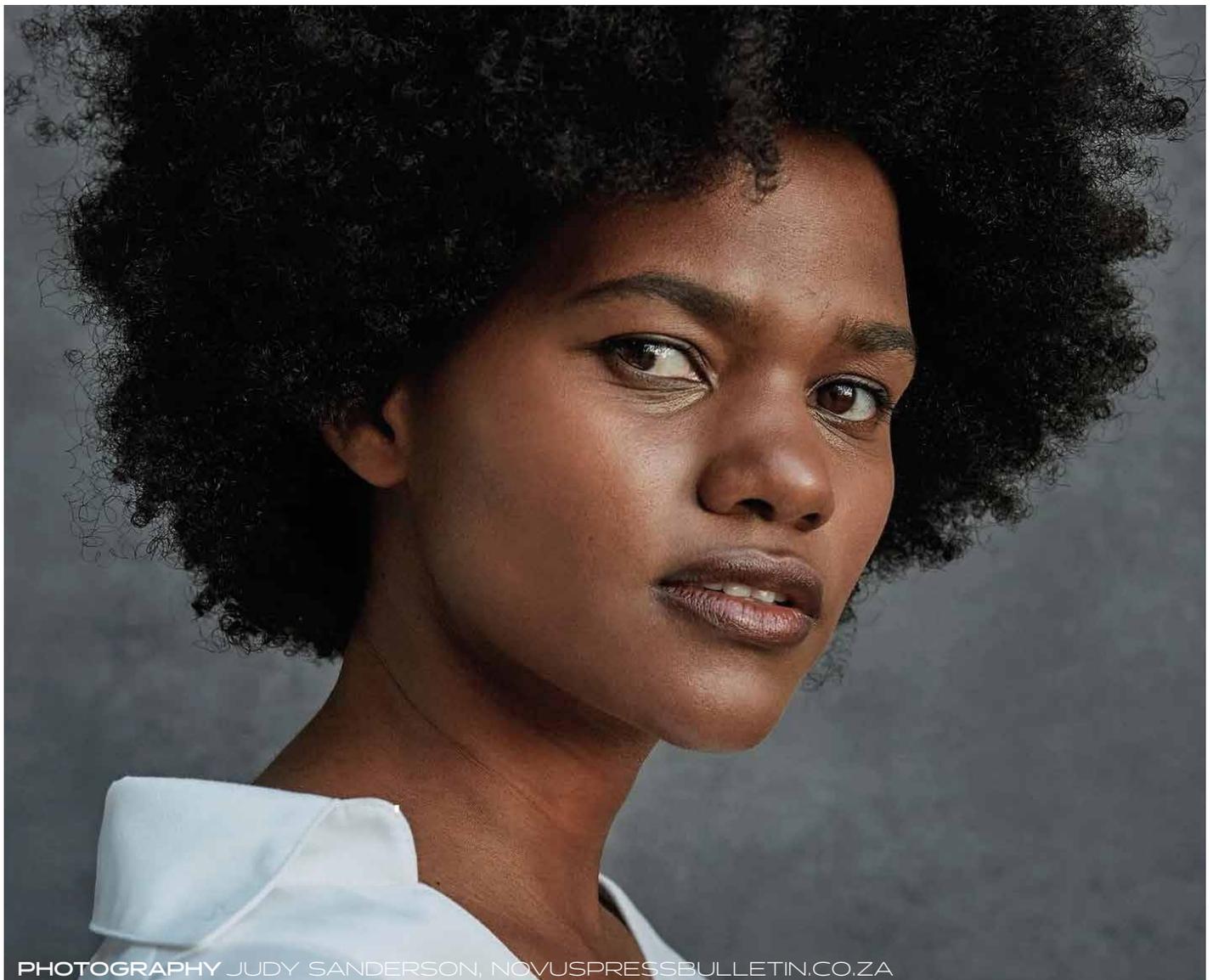
From the Factory to the Runway



PHOTOGRAPHY RUBEN BRACHES FOR VOGUE ITALIA



PHOTOGRAPHY RUBEN BRACHES FOR VOGUE ITALIA



PHOTOGRAPHY JUDY SANDERSON, NOVUSPRESSBULLETIN.CO.ZA

Born in Limpopo, South Africa, and now embraced by the city of Porto in the north of Portugal, Judy Sanderson is one of the rising stars in international fashion and a strategic partner of Riopele.

Sponsored by Riopele with fabrics, Judy Sanderson was recently awarded the Young Fashion Designers prize by the LVMH group, which owns brands such as Bvlgari, Celine, Dior, and Loewe, under the Fonds de Dotation Maison Mode Méditerranée (MMM) ‘thanks to her work in developing her collections in collaboration with artisans from Portugal and Zimbabwe, aimed at preserving traditional craftsmanship’.

With a bachelor’s degree in finance but a strong passion for the world of art and design, Judy studied fashion design in Hong Kong. In 2020, she launched her eponymous brand, Judy Sanderson, celebrating ‘her african roots’.

Revealing herself as a true storyteller, Judy developed her life journey through Asia and Europe, creating a ‘rich blend of cultures that promote an appreciation for diversity and a desire to travel’. Judy positions herself as a creator of ‘contemporary pieces for women that are not only fiercely elegant but also embody the power of femininity’.

According to Vogue Italy, Judy ‘bears witness to the skills of artisans and their endless dedication to beauty’, not only creating ‘extraordinary fashion’ but also ‘promoting an active and decisive dialogue about responsibility in the fashion industry’.

TEXTILES AS A FORM OF ART

PHOTOGRAPHY LUÍS CARVALHO

STYLING FRANCISCA OLIVEIRA HAIR SARA ANTUNES MAKE UP MARIA MIGUEL SEARA

MODEL CARLOTA MOGADOURO

PRODUCTION RIOPELE'S BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TEAM







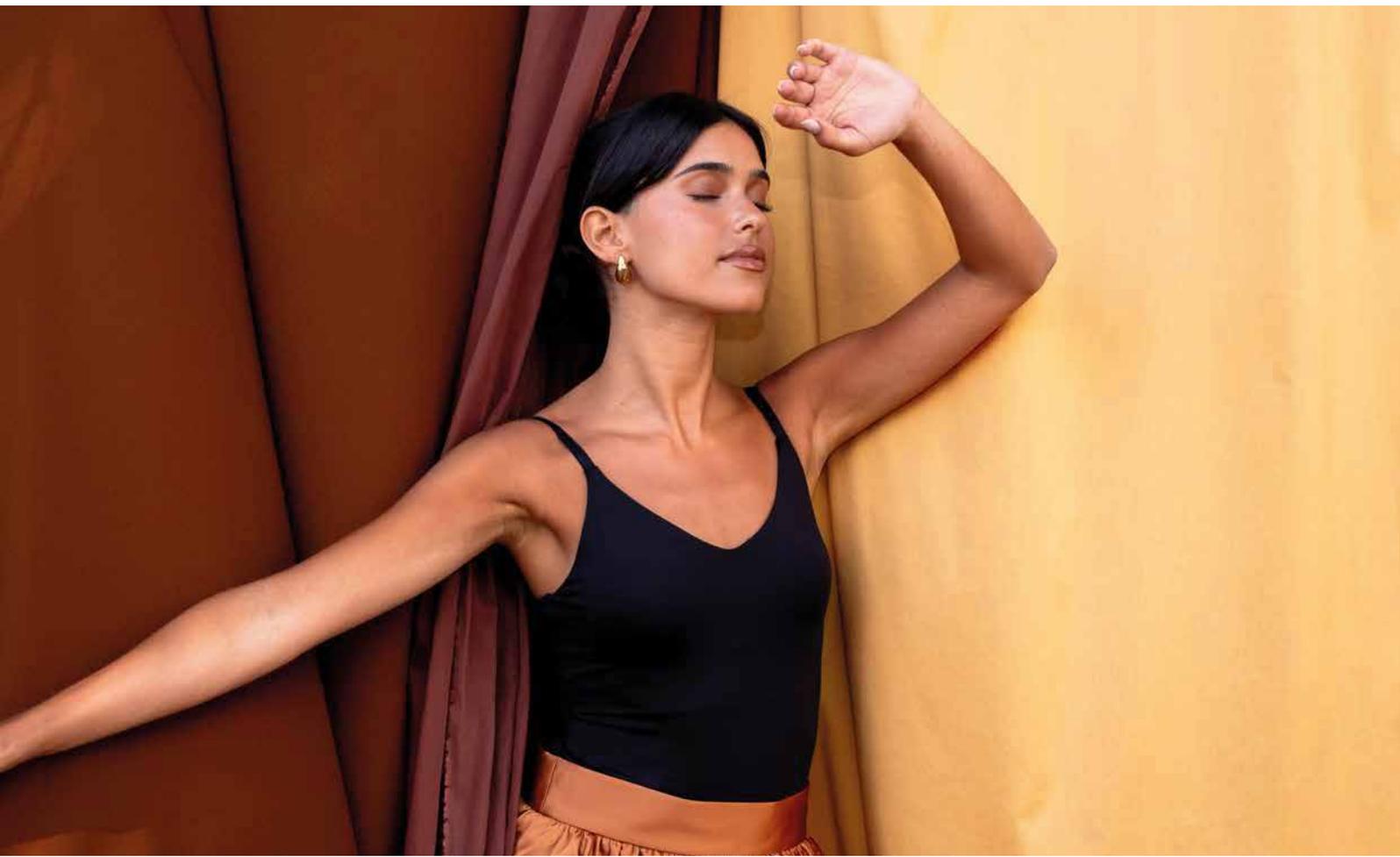


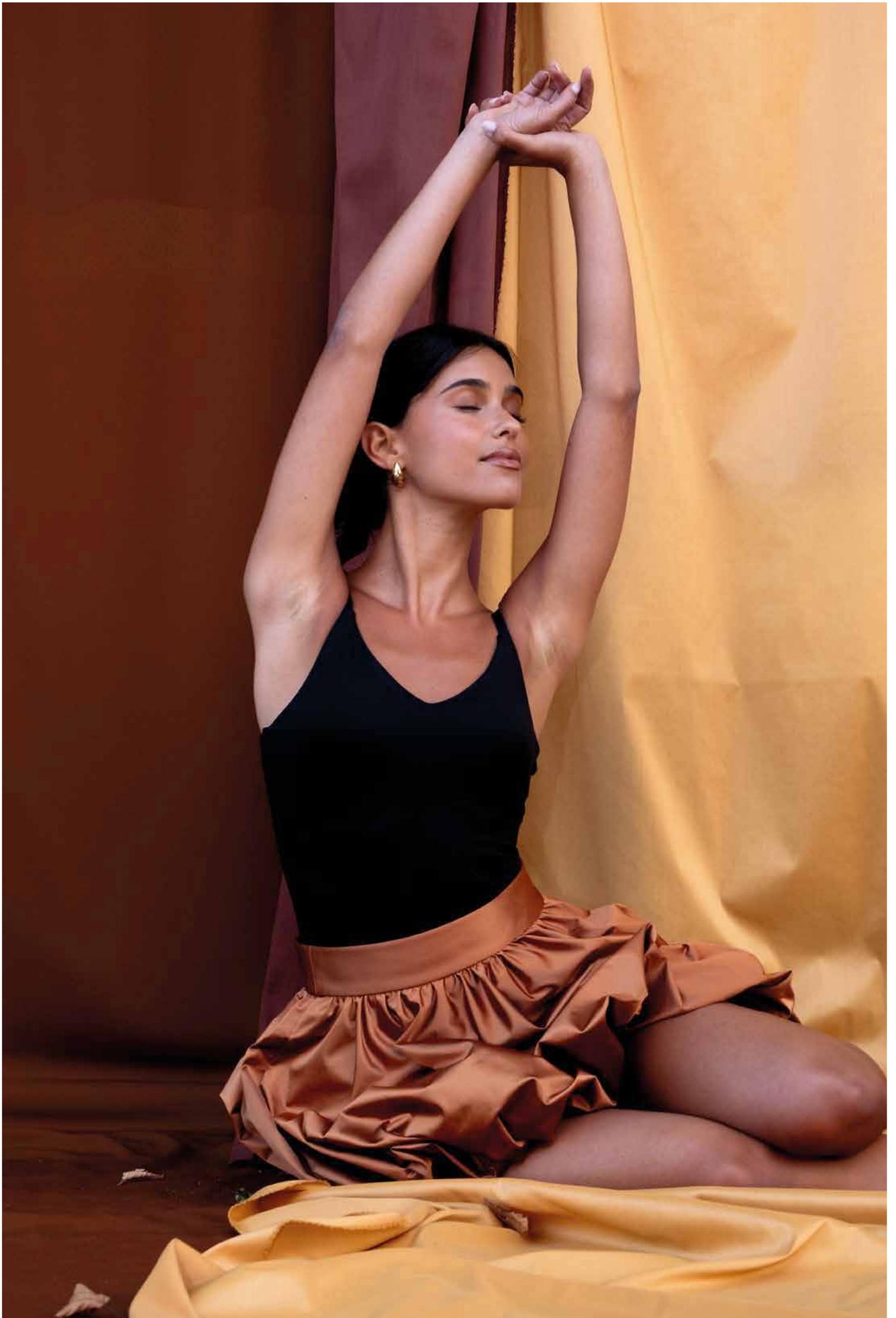


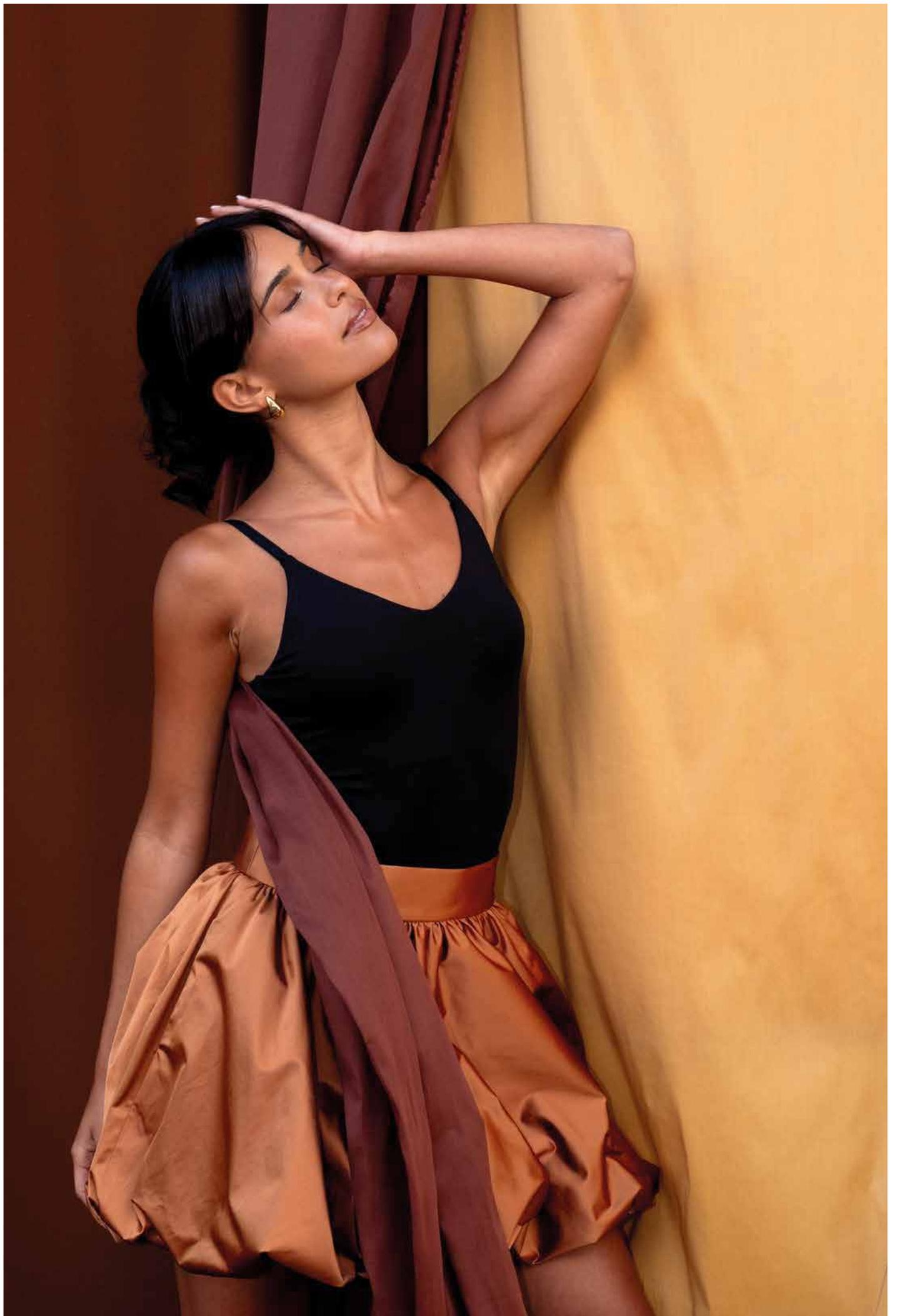
































DEBUXO, "Textile Design"



PHOTOGRAPHY RIOPELE

The Industry as an Artistic Expression

Can industry express itself as art? 'Debuxo', in etymological terms, means 'draft' or 'sketch', a concept widely used in visual arts and architecture. In the textile industry, 'debuxo' is an elaborate form of artistic expression... within reach of very few.

According to Armando Gonçalves, 'the sketch is the initial design for a work or product, born from human creativity. It is the first concrete step of a project, that is, the first materialisation of an author's idea. This concept of project is also present and closely linked to the work of a 'debuxador' (textile designer). Now, defining it very simply, 'textile design is the graphic representation of a fabric'.

Still, its definition is much more complex, 'because it encompasses a series of very distinct, yet elegantly interconnected elements, that enrich the design of a new fabric', says the 'debuxador' from Riopelle. Armando recalls that 'fabric is formed by various factors, which interact in different ways', as the physical and aesthetic components of the yarn in its composition, the textile structure, and the weaving techniques used are key factors.

Although present in the yarn and structure, 'the aesthetic of the fabric gains special prominence with the inclusion of textile design and the colors used. These are differentiating elements that result in various styles and forms', emphasises Armando.

International Language

Luigi Dal Lago goes even further: 'Debuxo' is not just a technique; it is an international language. It's understood anywhere in the world without the need for translation. It's the language through which humans communicate with machines, in this specific case with the loom. It's like the binary language of computers or the notes of a song'.

According to the Italian 'debuxador' who has been collaborating with Riopelle for 19 years, 'it's not a very difficult technique to learn; in fact, it's very simple and accessible to everyone'.

Luigi emphasises, 'the industry needs people who can communicate with machines, especially because the product is constantly evolving. Artificial intelligence has come to help, but it will hardly be able to replace the human component, at least in the short term. Because it's not a mathematical job, it's very artistic, even though sometimes it may seem otherwise'.

Such a Special Technique?

According to the aesthetic concepts of fashion, design and colour are elements closely linked to human history and its forms of social interaction. Finishing is also an important component, as it unequivocally enriches the fabrics. Through various finishing stages, the fabric gains the desired performance and touch envisioned in its initial design, when the fabric was still a project.

‘Debuxo’ is the element that integrates all these factors. It encompasses all the thoughts, studies, and techniques necessary for designing and manufacturing a specific fabric. In the design of innovative fabric, harmony among the various elements is even more relevant’, emphasises Armando.

Issues related to sustainability and digital transformation are also crucial for the industry and for the creation of differentiated fabrics.

Luigi laments that the designation ‘debuxador’ has fallen into disuse, with everyone now preferring to hire ‘textile designers’. For all intents and purposes, ‘schools should provide the foundation’ and even combat prejudice ‘because a good ‘debuxador’ naturally becomes a textile designer’. ‘This is always the best path, because the people who typically attend these schools are the ones who have the greatest sensitivity to the product’.

The Emotional Impact of Textiles

The clothing we wear and how we wear it have the power to transform our mood. ‘The world of fashion effectively explores this relationship’, states Armando. ‘When we feel good about what we wear, we tend to be more confident’. Consequently, ‘fabric itself is also a transmitter of emotions, and we should have the ability to feel it passionately’.

One of the main characteristics that a modern ‘debuxador’ must have is the ability to see and feel fabric emotionally, in order to understand if the fabric has the potential to have a positive impact on the client and consequently on the end consumer’, concludes Armando. ‘the fact that the profession has not only a technical component but above all a design-related aspect, the idealisation of a project, is the most important part to make the profession more attractive’.

Creators of Ideas

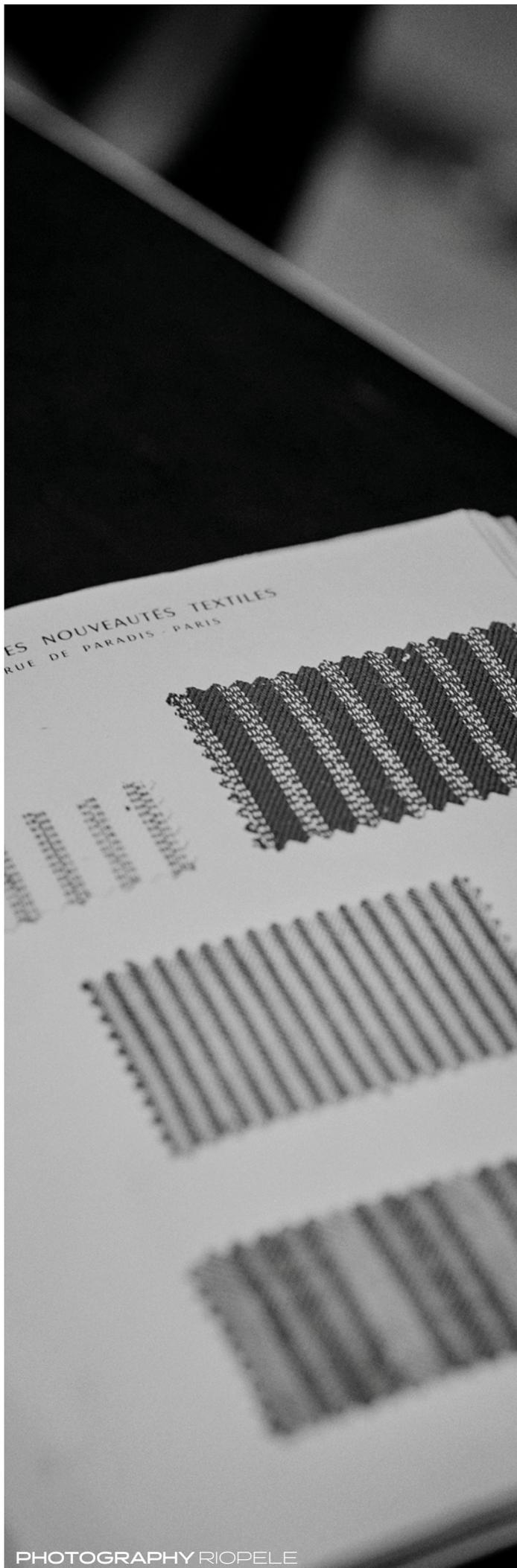
According to Luigi, ‘a textile designer is a creator of ideas’. To achieve this, ‘they need to be an artist, stylist, technician, and engineer’.

The artistic aspect is crucial for absorbing all the information. The stylist part is responsible for creating the idea with market information. The technical component

is where everything gains its form. ‘Now, textile designers bridge the entire textile chain, from raw materials to the finished product’, reminds Luigi.

According to Luigi, ‘great designers are always skilled in tailoring and fabrics, with a keen sensitivity to understanding costume changes, but they also know exactly how to execute each task’. It’s important, therefore, ‘to learn that fabric is not just made of threads, but of products, weaves, finishes, and much more. Moreover, it’s necessary to dare, to do what has never been done before, and to observe what others do in order to understand and learn from them, always! Curiosity is essential, fearlessness is key, and looking towards the future is crucial’.

Luigi emphasises that ‘the engineering aspect used to industrialise the product is the most tedious, yet essential part’. ‘Often, ideas and their implementations lead to production issues; it’s crucial to know how to find solutions, otherwise, all the previous work may be in vain’. The accumulated knowledge of the ‘debuxadores’ thus serves as necessary technical support and an additional guarantee of creativity.



PHOTOGRAPHY RIOPELE





SOURCE ORANGE AND YELLOW BY MARK ROTHKO

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLOR

‘If everyone liked blue, what would happen to yellow?’ Colours are a key component of everyday life. They are perceived and used in different ways and carry with them meanings and emotions. There is no concrete data on the number of colours that exist. The human eye can see ten million shades, while a computer can display 16.8 million colours to create high-resolution images. There may be billions of colours, as everything can simply be light shaping our perception without any actual colour. There are in-depth studies on the subject. Colour psychology, for example, seeks to understand human behaviour in response to colours. This area of psychology analyses and defines the effects that each colour generates in humans, such as changes in emotions, feelings, the creation of desires, and much more. But we can go even further and enter the field of semiotics, which seeks to understand the signs and signals of communication.

But in the fashion industry, colours play an even more relevant role. They determine trends, seasons, and more. They are associated with brands... Tiffany blue, Hermès orange, Supreme red, or more recently, Valentino pink. These are colours that inhabit our imagination and that we immediately associate with a brand or a product. But major international brands have already realised that this could be a future strategy. Therefore, they are positioning themselves distinctly, and now, instead of being solely defined by their logo, the secret lies in creating a unique and exclusive colour.

At least, those are the hints emerging from the latest fashion weeks. Valentino’s Fall 2022 show in Paris was an explosion of pink, from the runway to the walls, from the eyeshadow shade to the pillars of the historic Le Carreau du Temple... even to the brand’s own proposals. Everything was bathed in or decorated with a warm fuchsia tone. The colour, dubbed ‘Valentino Pink PP’, was developed by designer Piccioli in partnership with Pantone, an American company that develops coded systems for colour identification and organisation. Now, the new colour is present on Valentino’s digital platforms, website, clothing, and all its stores.

‘Colours, when claimed by fashion companies, can function as a form of visual shorthand that can be easily identified from a distance. Colours can complement or even replace logos and have already proven to be useful tools as fashion moves towards an increasingly digital universe’, explains Emily Safian-Demers, editor of Wunderman Thompson Intelligence (the trend forecasting unit of the marketing agency Wunderman Thompson) in statements to the Wall Street Journal. ‘Colour can be used in many more ways than a logo. It is much more easily translatable across all these digital environments that are, in themselves, visually oriented’. Safian-Demers also argues that ‘this new virtual reality includes the metaverse, a digital environment where creatives will no longer be inhibited by the constraints of reality when it comes to colour. They could, in theory, paint the sky, the trees, and even avatars with the characteristic shades of their brands’.

Currently, more and more fashion brands are claiming specific colours to communicate who they are and what they represent. We started with the vibrant red of Supreme, which is available on various brand products. Bottega Veneta has launched a new augmented reality app with a logo that is simply a green square. A brand spokesperson highlighted that the colour has been used by the house for decades. Some archive polaroids show the green painted on store windows in the 1990s. It's the resurgence of 'Bottega Green'.

Some colours are already cemented in the minds of customers. Hermès orange, for example, was born out of need and quickly became an iconic image. In the 1940s, Paris was occupied by the Nazis, and due to the scarcity of materials, the only boxes available were orange. Over the years, these boxes became collector's items, and the colour started to decorate the products inside them.

At Tiffany, on the other hand, the iconic blue appeared on the cover of the jewellery's first sales catalogue in 1845. But the famous Tiffany Blue was only trademarked in 1998 and, in 2001, it was standardised by Pantone ('1837 Blue') as a custom colour exclusively for the brand's use.

'But newer companies don't wait as long to develop and implement new colours', says Laurie Pressman, Vice-President of the Pantone Color Institute, a division of Pantone that predicts colour trends and advises companies on brand identity issues. 'Marketers are leveraging colours to stand out in an increasingly crowded market', Pressman said. 'At the same time, the digital universe allows companies to put colours directly in contact with consumers, allowing them to build a psychological bridge to the brand much more quickly and effectively. But this process no longer takes years, as it did before... we see that every day.'

Green since 1927

The roots of Riopelle date back to 1927, when the young entrepreneur José Dias de Oliveira founded the company, installing two looms for manufacturing fabrics (plain and striped) in a water mill located on the left bank of the river 'Pele' in Pousada de Saramagos, Vila Nova de Famalicão.

'At a time when so much is being said about the environment and sustainability, at Riopelle we like to say that we've been green since 1927. In fact, being born on the banks of the river 'Pele', it seemed appropriate to us', recalls José Alexandre Oliveira, the third generation of Riopelle. 'Over the years, we have resisted making structural changes to our logo because we value the historical heritage that has allowed us to come this far.'



SOURCE MAGENTA, BLACK, GREEN ON ORANGE (1940) BY MARK ROTHKO

THE FACTORY OF THE FUTURE

PHOTOGRAPHY LUÍS CARVALHO

STYLING FRANCISCA OLIVEIRA **HAIR** SARA ANTUNES **MAKE UP** MARIANA RIBEIRO

MODEL MARIA MIGUEL SILVA

PRODUCTION RIOPELE'S BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TEAM











































EMERGING PROFESSIONS SHAPING THE INDUSTRY

The European fashion industry has undergone profound changes in recent years.

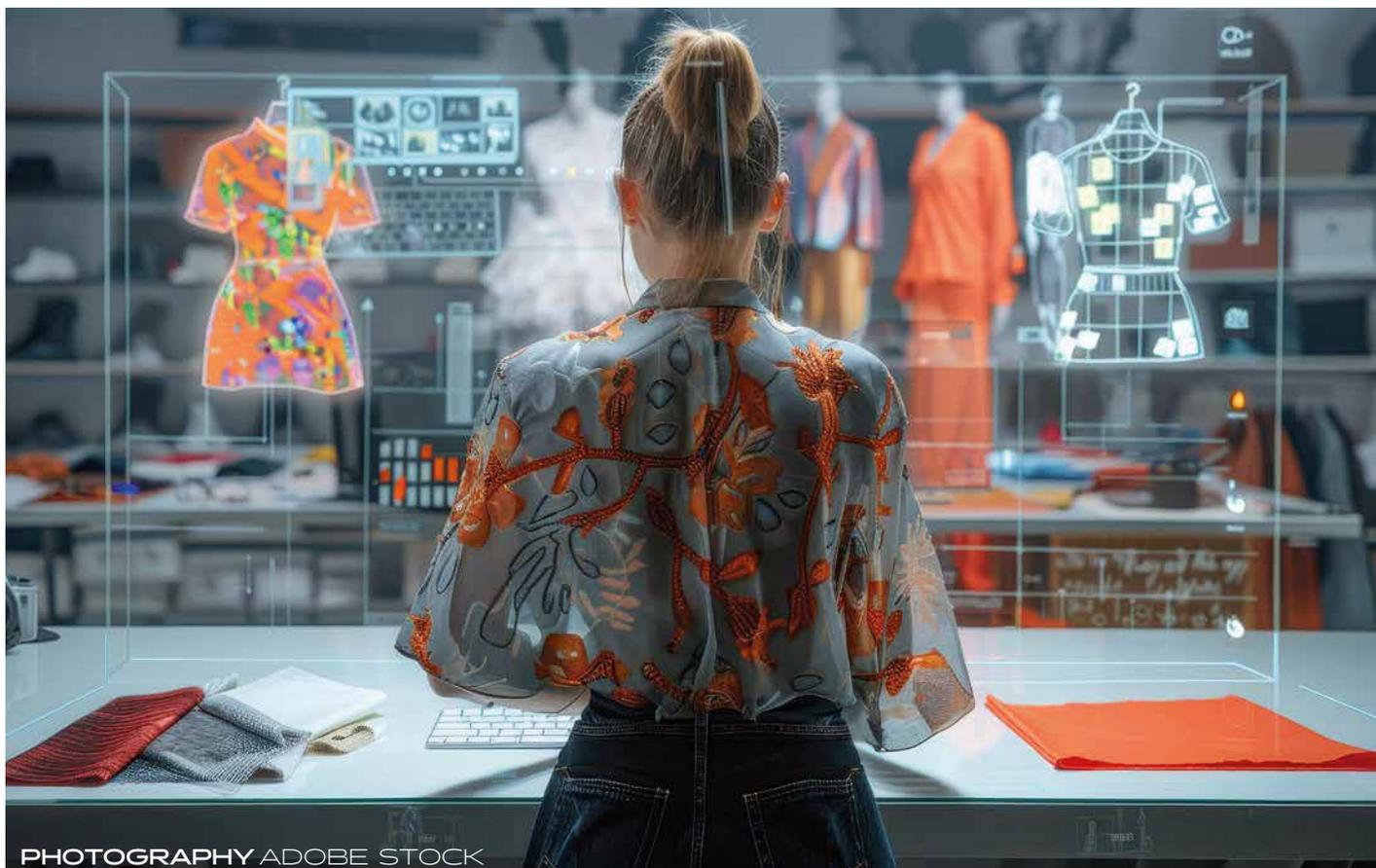
European Commission data indicates that by 2030, the European fashion industry will accommodate 500,000 new employees. Furthermore, with companies increasingly focused on areas like automation, digitalisation, and sustainability, new professions will emerge in the future. According to Sennait Ghebreab, 'the future of the fashion industry will require a combination of traditional craftsmanship and cutting-edge technological skills'.

According to the author of the book 'Responsible Fashion Business in Practice: Sustainable Concepts and Cases across the Fashion Industry' and professor at Istituto Marangoni London, proficiency in digital design and production tools such as 3D modelling and virtual prototyping will be crucial. Additionally, there are other essential skills, such as data analysis to understand consumer trends and preferences. According to Sennait, knowledge of sustainable practices and materials will also be essential as companies prioritise environmental responsibility. Moreover, an understanding of automation technologies and their

application in manufacturing processes to increase efficiency and productivity will be necessary.

Sennait argues that the education system should evolve, providing 'a more interdisciplinary approach that integrates technology, sustainability, and business into traditional fashion design curricula'. The professor says that academic institutions 'should closely collaborate with industry partners to ensure their programmes remain relevant and up-to-date with the latest trends and technologies'. It is crucial, therefore, to 'offer practical experience with digital tools, sustainable practices, and automation technologies'. Similarly, it is important to 'promote a mindset of continuous learning', as 'adaptability will prepare students to navigate the dynamic scenarios of the fashion industry'.

On the business side, 'companies should prioritise a combination of technical and interpersonal skills when recruiting new talent'. According to Sennait Ghebreab, 'technical skills such as proficiency in digital design software, data analysis, and knowledge of sustainable materials and practices are essential'. However,



PHOTOGRAPHY ADOBE STOCK

‘social skills such as creativity, problem-solving, adaptability, and effective communication are equally important’. Moreover, the ability to ‘collaborate effectively in diverse teams and think critically about integrating technology and sustainability in fashion will be highly valued’. Lastly, ‘an entrepreneurial mindset and a willingness to continuously learn and innovate will set candidates apart’.

The importance of AI

At another level, artificial intelligence ‘has the potential to revolutionise fashion education by providing personalised learning experiences and enhancing design processes’. Indeed, ‘AI can offer customised feedback and support to students, helping them improve their skills more efficiently’, emphasises Sennait Ghebreab.

In design specifically, ‘AI can assist in trend forecasting, fabric selection, and even in automated pattern creation, enabling designers to focus more on creativity and innovation’. Additionally, ‘AI-driven analysis can provide valuable insights into consumer behaviour, helping educators tailor their programmes to better meet industry

demands’. Overall, Sennait Ghebreab believes that ‘AI will be a powerful tool in creating a more dynamic, agile, and effective educational system for the fashion industry’.

FRANCISCA OLIVEIRA, THE 4th GENERATION OF RIOPELE



PHOTOGRAPHY RIOPELE

In the countdown to its 100th anniversary, Riopete continues to prepare for the future. Francisca Oliveira, the company's 4th generation, is taking her first steps in the textile industry after an exceptional international journey with stints at the best colleges in London and Paris followed by an experience at Inditex group in Spain.

'I feel that I've embarked on this journey of working at Riopete at the right time,' says Francisca Oliveira. 'My youth allows me to grow professionally alongside individuals who have worked here for years and who pass on to me the technical knowledge of the textile industry.'

Francisca, you represent the 4th generation of the Oliveira family at the helm of Riopete and have been working there for over a year now. Can you already gauge the company's pulse?

Yes, I've been immersed in Riopete's reality from a young age. I remember being a child and asking my dad to bring home fabric leftovers so that I could make clothes for my dolls, and this early interest sparked my passion for working with fabrics and for the fashion industry. I always had a clear vision that my path would eventually lead me to join Riopete in a well-prepared manner. Now, after more than one year has passed, I feel that I've embarked on this journey of working at Riopete at the right time, since I believe that the skills and experience, I bring from my past are contributing to the continuous growth of the company. Additionally, my youth allows me to grow professionally alongside individuals who have worked here for years and who pass on to me the technical knowledge of the textile industry.

Is Riopete all you expected? How is the adaptation going?

Even before officially working at Riopete, I was heavily involved with the company in recent years, which gave me a glimpse of what it would be like to work here. However, this year has exceeded my expectations. Riopete is a company steeped in history and expertise, which provides invaluable enrichment for young professionals starting their careers, as they can further develop their skills.

My first year at Riopete has gone by really fast, however I feel like I have been here since along time, as a fast-paced industry I was already able to be part of several projects and acknowledge important dynamics in the company. Riopete provides young individuals a 360° view of a company and the interdepartmental projects allow people from different departments to work together and discuss solutions for the future.

You studied in London and Paris, two of the major European fashion capitals. How was the experience of studying abroad?

My years in London and Paris were a whirlwind of emotions. It was a period that moulded me as a person, transforming me into a problem solver and critical thinker. Moving to London at the age of 18, I had the opportunity to meet many people from all corners of the globe who still play a role in my life today. London is a city where there's always something happening, and as a fashion student, it was the ideal place to learn about the technological, innovative, and sustainable aspects of the fashion industry. At Istituto Marangoni, we were challenged by renowned fashion brands to develop projects for them, expanding our network within the industry. After completing my three years in London, I decided to pursue a master's programme in Paris, at Institut Français de la Mode. Here, I experienced the more luxurious side of fashion and learned about the French savoir-faire through hands-on workshops. I'm very grateful for both experiences as they were the perfect combination for my academic journey.

You took your first steps in the fashion universe precisely within one of the largest groups worldwide, Inditex. What lessons did you learn?

Inditex is a universe in itself, offering insights into how fashion brands operate and adapt to the rapidly changing landscape of the industry. My experience there pushed me out of my comfort zone once again, allowing me to interact with people who spoke and worked in a different language, Spanish. I quickly learned the importance of asking questions and actively participating in discussions to make the most of my time there.

You're still relatively young and taking your first steps in the company. What's your vision for Riopelle's future?

It's hard to make predictions for such a complex industry, since things are constantly changing around us. However, my vision for Riopelle's future is grounded on two key pillars. Firstly, our workforce and how we adapt to the needs and expectations of new generations in the workplace. With a motivated team, I'm confident that Riopelle will sustain its success. Secondly, our clients' consumption patterns. By implementing sustainable policies, we can anticipate shifts in demand and adapt Riopelle's offerings to meet new requirements in terms of quality and certifications, mitigating potential impacts on our business activities.



MADE IN EUROPE, WHAT ELSE?



PHOTOGRAPHY RIOPELE

The textile and fashion industry is facing new challenges on an international scale. Automation, digitalisation, and sustainability are both opportunities and challenges.

Euratex, the European Apparel and Textile Confederation, acknowledges that these are ‘turbulent times’. The organisation, led by Alberto Paccanelli, notes that ‘geographic turmoil, the energy crisis, and the decline in consumer confidence are creating a challenging economic climate for textile entrepreneurs to thrive.’ However, it is important to highlight that ‘the European Union is moving forward with the implementation of its dedicated textile strategy’. In total, 16 pieces of legislation are on the table, which will reshape the regulatory framework of the textile and fashion industry. The future of the textile industry will undeniably hinge on the Made in Europe principle.

Complex Web

The European textile industry is a very broad and diverse ecosystem. ‘Most of our industry is small, family-owned, often with decades of tradition and craftsmanship’, states Euratex. In fact, 99.7% of the companies (about 200,000) are SMEs. Employment, roughly 1.3 million people, is dominated by Italy, which accounts for 24% of the jobs, followed by Portugal and Poland, both with 10% of total employment. Next are Germany and Romania, responsible for 9% and 8% of the workers, respectively.

‘More and more, we are seeing the emergence of new companies developing innovative, sustainable products and introducing new

technologies. Some of them will be the new face of the textile industry’, notes Euratex. ‘We will ensure a competitive European textile industry’, they said.

The Passport to Change

The advocacy for free, fair, and balanced trade has long been a demand of European companies. The adoption of a digital product passport, which ensures that consumers have all the necessary information about the item they intend to purchase, is one of the measures included in the new regulatory package under discussion in the European Union concerning sustainable production and consumption.

The aim is to provide access to a set of data that helps consumers make more transparent and informed decisions by making relevant information available about product characteristics, performance and durability, traceability, environmental impact, ease of repair and recycling. This data should also facilitate product comparability through an online platform. ‘Change is coming’, says Alberto Paccanelli, President of Euratex.

The new regulatory framework clearly focuses on circularity principles and includes rules to discourage short-term durability and premature product obsolescence. It shifts towards providing manufacturers with guarantees for supplying system updates, consumables, spare parts, and accessories, ensuring easy repair, as well as providing installation and repair manuals.

Also on the table is the prohibition of destroying unsold products, particularly textiles and footwear, by creating incentives for more sustainable and environmentally friendly production.

The Largest Cluster in Europe

‘The digital product passport is clearly an opportunity for the Portuguese industry’, states José Alexandre Oliveira.

The President of Riopelle recalls that ‘more than 10,000 companies, responsible for 150,000 jobs, located in Northern Portugal within a 50 km radius of Porto, make the Portuguese fashion cluster a major reference in Europe’.

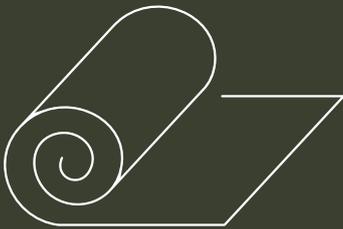
Every year, Portugal exports over 7 billion euros worth of textiles, apparel, footwear and jewellery worldwide. ‘Portugal has the largest textile cluster in Europe’, says José Alexandre Oliveira, who has served as president of both ATP (Portuguese Textile and Clothing Association) and Euratex. ‘The Portuguese textile industry has accumulated knowledge across generations, invested in cutting-edge technology, and is a major reference in sustainable product development’, emphasised José Alexandre Oliveira. ‘With a fairer and more balanced legislative framework, the future of the industry will undoubtedly pass through Europe, and Portugal will be a key player’, he concluded.



RIOPELE IN NUMBERS

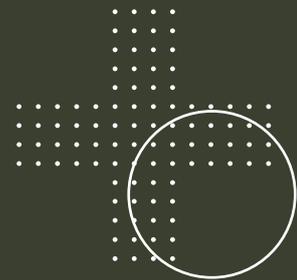
1927

The year a young entrepreneur named José Dias de Oliveira founded Riopelle, setting up two looms for fabric production in a watermill located on the left bank of the river 'Pele' in Pousada de Saramagos, municipality of Vila Nova de Famalicão.



1193 employees

Number of Riopelle employees at the end of 2023. With a stable workforce of 1,193 active employees, Riopelle has successfully attracted a new generation of talent. As a result, the average age of employees is 42, one of the lowest in the entire fashion sector in Portugal. Notably, 27% of the employees are under 30 years old. Additionally, the number of graduates currently exceeds 10% of the company's total employees.



98 millions

Riopelle's turnover at the end of 2023 in all business areas. Specialising in the production of fashion fabrics, Riopelle vertically integrates the areas of R&D, Spinning, Dyeing, Twisting, Weaving, Finishing, and Private Label, offering a vertically integrated textile production service capable of keeping pace with the current fast-paced industry.

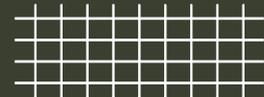
60%

Riopele continues to pursue its investment plan in the field of sustainability. As a result of this ongoing effort, 60% of the company's energy consumption is now obtained from renewable sources. Overall, Riopele's carbon footprint decreased by 12% in 2022 compared to the previous year, dropping from 114,965 tCO₂e to 101,360 tCO₂e. For this year, a further reduction is estimated, between 12% and 15%. Contributing to this achievement was the installation of a new biomass plant.



52%

In 2023, Riopele recovered 52% of water from wet production processes. Consequently, from 2000 to 2023, approximately 8.8 million cubic meters of water were recovered. On average, over the past six years, Riopele has recovered 450 million litres of water per year, equivalent to 180 Olympic swimming pools.



0%

Riopele has announced its ambitious commitment to become operationally carbon-neutral (scope 1 & scope 2) by 2027. This will be achieved through the implementation of a set of measures and projects that will enable all company operations to have zero environmental impact.

Approaching its 100th anniversary, our company has invested 35 million euros in the last decade in the areas of digital transformation and sustainability.





William Tapley's Visit

The year 1967 was notable for Riopel due to a visit of the illustrious William Tapley Bennett Jr., the then U.S. Ambassador to Portugal. The Ambassador's presence at the company's headquarters was a recognition of the significant role played by Riopel in Portugal's industrial and economic sectors.



The ambassador had the opportunity to visit the company's facilities, located in Vila Nova de Famalicão, and interact with the employees, gaining a close understanding of the reasons behind Riopel's success at that time.

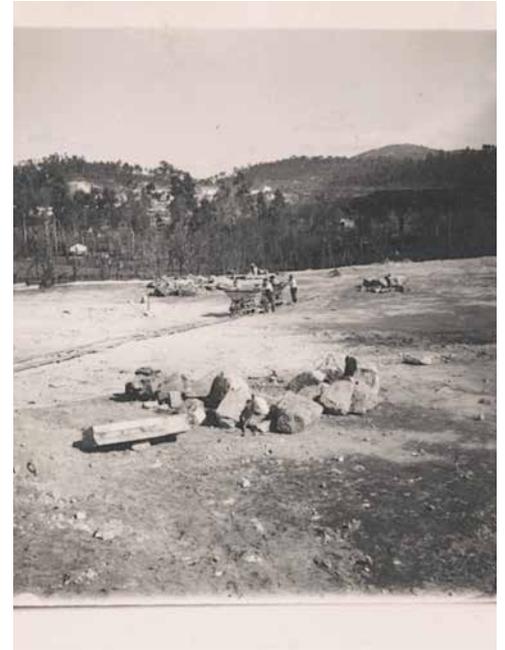
William Tapley Bennett Jr.'s visit strengthened the ties between Portugal and the United States.

Construction of Riopelle's New Factory Building

In 1949, José Dias de Oliveira seized the opportunity created by the government's industrial reorganisation decree of 1946, investing in the creation of a new manufacturing building on adjoining land near the existing factory.

Therefore, Riopelle embarked on an ambitious construction project, marking a significant advancement for the company. The new facilities featured modern architectural lines and increased space, capable of housing 10 thousand spindles and 200 automatic looms, in accordance with the standards set by the aforementioned decree of 1946 for consideration as 'profitable units'.

This industrial building aimed to integrate the Spinning and Weaving areas. In 2020, after extensive renovations focused on energy efficiency, technology, and sustainability principles, the facility was transformed into a sophisticated logistics hub.





Riopele in Mozambique

In the 1970s, Riopelle inaugurated a new factory in Mozambique, whose mission was to manufacture fabrics made from artificial and synthetic fibers, with sections for Dyeing, Spinning, Weaving, and Finishing.

With the goal of expanding beyond local borders, Riopelle overcame commercial obstacles and established itself as one of the major exporting companies in African markets. This strategic vision and determination were the foundation for overcoming challenges and seizing new opportunities for Riopelle's business.

This pioneering effort was not only a milestone in the company's history but also a testament to Riopelle's commitment to economic growth, redefining the standards of the textile industry in Mozambique.



Çeramica

Riopele focuses its activities on the development and production of fabrics for fashion collections and apparel. The company is committed to the values of innovation, quality, and sustainability, ensuring traceability, transparency in its processes, and reliability in its service. To fulfill this commitment, Riopele has invested in various brands, such as Çeramica.

Indeed, in 1996, Riopele launched the Çeramica brand, one of the most innovative and respected brands of the company, reinforcing its commitment to developing products with high breathability and comfort, adhering to the easy-care concept.

Çeramica reflects Riopele's commitment to quality and innovative design. Each piece produced by Riopele undergoes a meticulous craftsmanship process where tradition intertwines with modernity.



MADEIRA



PHOTOGRAPHY PONTA DO PARGO - DRONE (MADEIRA) ©DigitalTravelCouple

How Many Colours Paint This Mystery?

Islands often hold a sense of mystery for those of us on the mainland, connected to other countries. Unlike our familiar landscapes, islands are isolated and surrounded by vast expanses of water, presenting a horizon that seems to stretch endlessly.



PHOTOGRAPHY ADOBE STOCK IMAGES

Those who live there breathe in harmony with the heart of the island, with a deep respect for its nature. All this is to welcome you to the pearl of the Atlantic, the island of Madeira. With a rugged and volcanic landscape situated in the Atlantic Ocean, Madeira has a mediterranean climate. It is located about 685 km from the african coast, 973 km from Lisbon, 520 km from Gran Canaria, and 891 km from the island of Santa Maria, in the Azores archipelago.

Madeira is renowned for its natural beauty, with its stunning green contrasting with almost crystalline waters. In the depths of the island, far from the city's noise, the encounter with Nature is immediate. The connection between Man and the land is unshakeable. But there's more. Like any region of Portugal, Madeira has an incomparable cuisine of delicacies. And it's not just the food that delights: the drinks are unmatched.

This is a journey that can only be made with a backpack on your shoulders and sneakers on your feet. The only way to get to know this island, which hides countless surprises, is by diving into it and embracing all the opportunities, adventures, and discoveries.

Welcome to Madeira.



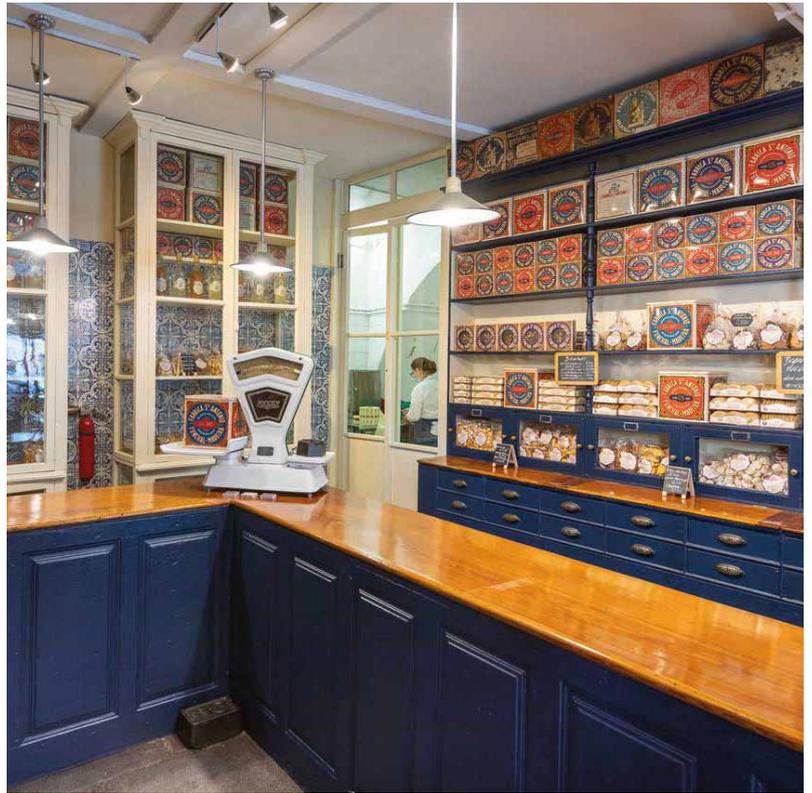
PHOTOGRAPHY ADOBE STOCK IMAGES

Where to go?

We start our route in the centre of Funchal. Our advice is to dedicate a day to exploring the historic centre and getting lost in its narrow streets. But there are must-see places that you just can't miss.

Santo António Factory

Imagine a place where you can step back decades in time? Specifically, to 1893, the year the Santo António Factory was founded, the first biscuit and cookie factory on the island of Madeira. Well, now you can go there. The shop is located at 27 Travessa do Forno. And what can you find? Madeira cane honey cake, handmade sweets, quince marmalade, jams made from regional fruits, covered and traditional soft Easter almonds, 'broas', and Madeiran biscuits. Feeling hungry yet? Great.



Farmers Market



Fruits, aromas, freshness, colours. All of Madeira in one place? Yes, you can find it at the Farmers Market, right in the heart of Funchal.

There you can find excellent regional products, as this island is well known for the extraordinary fertility of its soil combined with its subtropical climate. The market is literally a living museum where the spotlight is on freshness, liveliness, and the tropical flavours of the archipelago.

Doca do Cavacas



You can simply go for a swim in these natural volcanic pools, with natural beauty and an unforgettable view. We can't describe it any other way: it's being in the sea and feeling part of it.

But if you want to elevate your experience to another level, it's worth going to the local bar and enjoy the typical limpets.

Santana



We can confidently say that this is one of Madeira's icons and probably one of the most visited municipalities.

In Santana, we find the typical houses of Madeira, with thatched roofs, a triangular shape, and painted white with blue windows. The Santana Typical Houses Museum allows you to get to know this Madeiran icon better.

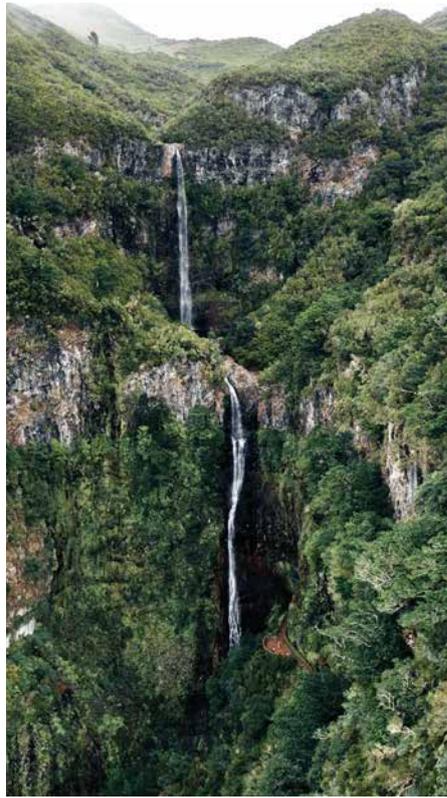
Cabo Girão



It's the highest promontory in Europe and a must-visit site. Standing at 580 meters high, Cape Girão is a viewpoint with a famous glass-bottomed platform (called the skywalk). If you have a fear of heights, you probably won't be able to venture onto the platform, but the visit is always worthwhile, if only because the view is breathtaking.

If you have an adventurous spirit, this cliff is a privileged site for paragliding and BASE jumping. Additionally, in the surrounding area, you can find one of the main pilgrimage sites on the island: the chapel of Our Lady of Fatima, built in 1951.

Levadas



The 'levadas' are irrigation channels or aqueducts typical of the island of Madeira. In total, they are more than 3,000 kilometers long, winding through the mountain's twists and turns; the equivalent of a straight-line distance between Madeira and Italy.

These structures were created by the 'cabouqueiros', and they drastically changed the lives of the island's inhabitants, as they allowed for water to reach various regions of the island as, despite being abundant, was irregularly distributed. The first structures were built between the 15th and 16th centuries, and were still quite rudimentary. Construction techniques evolved over time, and in the 19th century, these endeavours began to be supported by the State.

The 'levadas' have been included in Portugal's Tentative List for UNESCO World Heritage since 2017. The first version of the Madeira Levadas Application to become a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage was submitted in February 2022.

Where to eat?

There's something you should know about Madeiran cuisine: you're in for a treat. You'll likely experience unique fusions and blends that you won't find anywhere else in the world.

Besides that, you'll drink the best 'poncha' in the world. There are only reasons to come back, but for now, we're revealing all the island's gastronomic secrets.

Abrigo do Pastor



In our opinion, this is the island's best-kept secret. It's called Abrigo do Pastor, and here you'll find an array of hearty, delicious dishes. Located in Camacha, right at the top of the mountain, it's not simply a cabin - it was once a refuge for shepherds and hunters.

Today, it's a culinary haven, offering the flavours and aromas of traditional Portuguese food, with a distinctive Madeiran twist.

Where?

Abrigo do Pastor,
Estrada das Carreiras, 9125-080 Camacha

Casa de Abrigo do Rabaçal



If you're yearning to immerse yourself in the enchanting 'levadas', we have a hidden gem for you. Rabaçal Nature Spot Café is nestled within the heart of the Laurissilva Forest, along Levada das 25 Fontes, where green comes in various shades, and the surrounding beauty is indescribable.

Where?

PR6 | Levada das 25 Fontes

Chalé do Vicente



From a centuries-old estate to a gastronomic hotspot. At Chalé do Vicente, a building that stands out for its uniqueness in an urban setting, you can taste authentic Portuguese cuisine. The experience and friendliness of the team, combined with the comfort and good taste of the venue, turn any meal into a unique experience during a visit to the Irish pub Hole in One.

Where?

Estrada Monumental n.º 238
9000-100, Madeira Funchal

Peixaria no Mercado



A true ode to fish and the freshness of the sea. In the Farmers Market building you'll find Peixaria do Mercado, a small eatery where you can indulge in seafood delicacies.

Fresh fish is guaranteed, and the aromas and flavours of Madeira work the rest of the magic.

Where?

Rua Brigadeiro Oudinot 24,
9060-209 Funchal

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THE LOOM

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