



Pasado de moda: **Re-assessing Latin American Fashion**

During the bicentennial year of independence from Spanish colonialism for seven Latin American nations, fashion weeks throughout the region re-assessed the symbols of cultural heritage with excitement and new seriousness. In Argentina, the press heralded retrospectives of national styles, pinpointing their evolution artificially to 1810; for “Pasado de moda, 1810-2010” (a playful reference to “past styles” and “out of fashion”), the city government of Buenos Aires produced materials explaining that the objective was to “take back” fashion as “historical testimony” and demonstrate its critical influence on the formation of Argentine identity. At the transnational fashion congress Ixel Moda one year earlier in Cartagena, Colombia, one co-created collection advocated a “sustainable bicentennial” with upcycled materials in the shape of Phrygian liberty caps and sheath dresses featuring colorful screenprints of Simón Bolívar, the nineteenth-century leader whose dreams of a unified revolutionary effort led to South American liberation from Spanish colonial oppression. While such collections seemed comprised of dissonant fragments, European in their tailoring and homegrown in outlook, this talk highlights how select collections have also re-imagined independence in light of contemporary human rights abuses and injustices, economic disparity, the loss of cultural identity, and the ecological crisis at hand.

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