

Sustainable Latin American Aesthetics



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Abstract Aesthetic is a key factor in the construction of sustainability, especially when related to the fashion field. People used to interact with fashion mainly in a sensuous way, not only regarding how a garment looks and feels but also in the way that fashion becomes an identity-building tool. For sustainable fashion to be successful, it has to, besides the obvious ethic aspect, display an aesthetic content capable of thrilling the user by the integration of its own contextual factors that enable its identification. In the case of Latin America, adoption of a sustainable fashion characterized by minimalism, which has been a recognizable aesthetic representation of this fashion movement, has not been easily accepted due to the lack of particularly self-aesthetic referents within this construction. Hence, it is necessary to understand the Latin American context, including its endogenous aesthetics and its relation to sustainability. In order to achieve an intertwining between the sustainable design principles, certain design strategies are proposed that promote the adoption of sustainability from an autochthonous minimalism. This article is based on a wide literature review and it is organized as follows: first, the description of local contexts followed by the definition of key concepts such as aesthetic, fashion and minimalism; then, the depiction of the Latin American aesthetics characteristic features aiming to establish a relationship with the aforementioned concepts to conclude proposing the conceptualization of Latin minimalism as a strategic route to design sustainable aesthetics within the continent.

Keywords Latin American aesthetics · Sustainable fashion · Minimalism · Latin minimalism · Sustainable aesthetics

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1 Contextual Framework

Within the continent, the tensions around the territory are a transversal factor that determines its configuration. Notwithstanding, Latin America can be defined by Canclini's proposal as "a geographical, political and ideological space that also has a deep symbolic burden" [1]. A space that derives between economic and social realities allows us to understand the structures from which the region was and is built in order to identify the identities that have been gestated within, which have been largely determined by a colonial past and continuous miscegenation, and that ultimately gives Latin America an eclectic view of itself.

The discovery of America and its subsequent conquests is a turning point that tags the locals first as natives and later as colonized peoples. During the pre-Hispanic era, native people organized themselves autonomously into complex socio-political and cultural structures that were erected and evolved for years, giving character to the representations of both the material aspects (from works such as textiles, basketry or gold-smithing) and the spiritual side (from their common world-views) of their culture. It is pertinent to understand the pre-Hispanic materialities and world-views in relation to the construction of the local sustainable identity, where the former points to the tangible and the latter to the narrative. This cosmogonic narrative derives from an animistic conception of the world; therefore, these world-views were based on the worship and respect of nature as an agent of creation and as a sensitive and guiding being who deserves to be cared for and heard as the only way to ensure existence due to nature being able to influence the destiny of peoples. "Making the man-nature relationship therefore almost indissoluble" [2].

Later, the conquest periods were marked first, by domination and, subsequently, by the miscegenation of both individuals and knowledge, which led us as a continent to a configuration where the divine and the profane, the ancestral with the modern, and the black and the indigenous with the white were mixed; thus, erecting a hybrid territory, hybrid but colonized.

Latin America is a melting pot of dilutions – not always peaceful, built upon exterminations and enslavement –but its imaginaries and images, necessary in the manufactures of a collective identity, always refer to the hybridization of three components: all that range of mixture that favours asymmetrical and enchanted encounters between Spaniards, indigenous and African [3].

It is important to highlight the long-term effect of colonization on the construction of the Latin American gaze and by extension, its identity and its connection with the surroundings. Since the colonization, the history of the indigenous people was erased in order to be told from the gaze of the settler, eliminating the voice of the native inhabitants. In colonial fiction, the indigenous needs to be undermined for the colonialist to establish its own narratives, which implies the appropriation and annulment of the other. Ultimately, their conquest comes from an act of "despising the other" [2]. Consequently, a moment is created in which we begin to be alienated from our identity as owners of our cultural legacy and condemn it to inferiority for not belonging to the cultural and moral constructions of the conqueror, placing the native

legacy in a vacuum. Therefore, the place where we constantly have to be educated, modernized and civilized is under the instruction of the white, which leads us to constantly disown what is ours with the intention of overcoming a type of man “who is part of what is called the West and at the same time excluded”, [2] evidencing the “tropicalist discourse” [4] that does not end up recognizing us as Western neither modern.

Regarding the territory, what the tropicalist discourse evokes is the inexorable relationship created between Latin America and the imaginary of the tropics, framing it in a space that does not acknowledge the other geographies that, by their diversity, have been decisive in their physical and idiosyncratic construction. Conversely, the highly rugged geography allowed the constituent of peoples to develop independently and plurally from what their territory offered and permitted them. Therefore, not a single identity was formed, but multiple identities in the said geography are worth differentiating in order to explain the aesthetic constructions that represent the literal or the iconographic.

Besides historical, it is also important to understand the contemporary Latin American social construction that, due to the different socio-political events derived from ideological clashes that perpetuate the different acts of violence exerted in the territory, make it a broadly unequal society. These acts of violence, in addition to deepening ideological and class ruptures, also shape urban structures as arrival centres for a human diaspora displaced from their territories towards the peripheries of the cities. The result is a continent that quickly became eminently urban, where 80% of its population is concentrated in cities, which in turn depend on the extensive and unpopulated rural area.

“The cities of Latin America and the Caribbean went through an unprecedented development process: a rapid and run-down urbanization in a scenario characterized by high levels of poverty and misery. Immigrants from the countryside came to live on the periphery, in often environmentally vulnerable places... Latin America’s cities have largely been shaped by poverty, inequity and segregation” [5].

As a consequence, the socio-economic scope reveals that Latin America has 30.2% of its total population living in poverty and 10.2% in extreme poverty (CODS América latina y el caribe; universidad de los andes n.d.). In contrast, Latin America also has a traditional, rich and minoritarian class that persistently accumulates the majority of land and economic resources.¹ While in the midst of these extremes, we find the growing middle class that strives to not back down and projected itself towards wealth through, among other things, constant and cumulative consumption. A society where, as Bauman says, “status is measured not by the ability to buy but by the speed of throwing and replacing” [6] sheds light on the fragile relationship between this voracious consumption and the resources it feeds on. “The rising global middle class will increase the rate at which resources are being consumed, affecting the (fashion) industry as a whole” [7].

¹ According to the world bank in countries such as Brazil 58% of the income belongs to 20% of the population.

Therefore, class configuration is an element that requires special attention because of its deep rooting within the collective imaginaries and how decisive its results are for the construction of contemporary. In this class configuration we can even talk about a class interbreeding, as Canclini mentions, “Despite attempts to give elite culture a modern profile, secluding the indigenous and colonial in popular sectors, an interbreeding interclassity has generated hybrid formations in all social strata” [2]. From that hybridization of classes, features are recombined to generate their own aesthetic constructions. In Latin America, although not exclusive, in terms of class, the majority represent the popular and economically marginalized crowd [8], so its expressions dominate and energize the panorama through the appropriation of what belongs to the privileged minority so that this appropriation that merged with the historical component could be the place from which Latin American fashion builds sustainable language and, as Barbero argues, it becomes not only a tool to “cover up class differences” [9] but to overcome them.

In short, Latin America is modelled within a hybrid construction arising from a meeting of cultures that find a way to adapt in order to survive. Cultures which in turn have been crossed by multiple violence acts and which are found in dense urban configurations that are representative of modern longings: security, opportunities, consumption, from which the class gaps are evident and where in turn ways to blur them are found. It is a space with defining geographies and natural relationships, but that expands beyond these, to build upon the symbolic, by redirecting both symbolic and real representations that Latin America begins to be recognized and re-established by its inhabitants through postcolonial narratives, while pursuing a quest to belong/overcome the traditional Western project. Thus, the understanding of these characteristics is fundamental for the construction of a profuse aesthetic discourse, which recognizes and integrates sustainability in fashion and in the different contemporary spheres from which it feeds.

2 Conceptual Framework

In this section, we will define the concepts of aesthetics, fashion and their relationship with sustainability as follows, starting with defining aesthetics from the traditional and etymological view and then complementing it from a contemporary concept of everyday life aesthetics. The following definition will allow us to approach the concept of fashion as a system of symbols that builds identities as proposed by semiology; then aesthetics and fashion will combine within sustainability and Latin America. And later, the aforementioned will be framed in the concept of minimalism as a determinant feature in Saito’s proposal and as formulation baseline of aesthetic strategies.

2.1 *Aesthetics*

Traditionally, our aesthetic notion is entrenched in the dichotomous and Western gaze adopted mainly in art, where our possibilities oscillate between the beautiful and the sublime as the only ways of understanding the phenomena that occur to us. This approximation promotes an approach to experience objectively without cognitive biases and therefore rests entirely on the perception of the senses as the only way to assume reality, being completely phenomenological. The said construction is based on its etymological definition where:

The term ‘aesthetics’ comes from the Greek *aisthetikos*, meaning to perceive, or ‘relating to perception by the senses’ (‘perception’ from the Latin *percipere*, to ‘seize, understand’), aesthetics is understanding that arises through the senses (from the Latin verb *sentire*, to ‘feel’) when bodies come into contact with another. And so, aesthetic judgment is located in the world of things, not concepts, and aesthetic meaning is the result of physical experience rather than the ‘reading’ or ‘decoding’ of the abstract, symbolic or metaphorical. In short, aesthetics does not produce meaning in the manner language does [10].

However, while it is important to understand aesthetics from the sensory, this approach does not allow break through the material barrier and avoids the personal relativism of the observer. This notion of aesthetics is insufficient in fashion since in fashion one is no longer a spectator but becomes a user and gives the garments the meanings that communicate identity. This makes it necessary to perceive and formulate beyond the physical and objective and include the symbolic as “we could say that fashion becomes a language whose basic element is the sign, is therefore a non-verbal system of communication” [11]. Therefore, we propose to complement the traditional aesthetic concept with a view from the everyday life aesthetics [12], which together with a sensory factor recognizes a subjective load that complements phenomenological reading with semiotics, surpassing the object by extending to the experience of use that surrounds it.

The everyday life aesthetics allow a symbolic reading by extending its scope. Firstly, to a multiplicity of aesthetics, removing the uniqueness of the term and encompassing scenarios that have traditionally been underestimated. Secondly, towards inclusion “in its study (of) interactions with other people, everyday activities and the objects that we use everyday life as clothing” [12]. And finally, by abandoning the binary of the beautiful and the sublime giving way to more familiar interpretations of aesthetic experiences cross-cutting to all:

such as pretty, cute, messy, gaudy, tasteful, dirty, lively, monotonous, to name only a few. These items and qualities are characterized by their ubiquitous presence in the daily life of people, regardless of their identity, occupation, lifestyle, economic status, social class, cultural background, and familiarity with art [12].

In addition, the everyday life aesthetics also raises theoretical issues as an indeterminate identity of the object of aesthetic experience; changes and modifications everyday objects go through; absence of any clear authorship behind everyday objects; bodily engagements with objects and activities and their pragmatic outcome [13]. Some of those issues are extremely pertinent around the fashion understanding

and its construction within Latin America and sustainability. As a final idea on this concept, we propose to address the everyday life aesthetics as a way to transgress the design summarized by Forsey as “functional, immanent, mass-produced, and mute [14]”. A proposal that the fashion industry has been able to profit from and which represents everything we should overcome if we intend to face new scenarios around fashion within sustainability extends aesthetic values beyond the superficial.

2.2 *Fashion*

Regarding fashion, we will establish the differentiation between functional dress and fashion from a semiotic approach to develop the ideas of how it is managed in Latin America. Firstly, when we talk about dressing it responds to the need for shelter. What Maslow would place at the base of its pyramid as it is a primary necessity that appeals to the protection and survival of our bodies is a necessity that, although it is not totally stripped of a particular aesthetic or codes mediated by the climate, gender or religion, mainly responds to a utilitarian need.

However, from very early on, the protective function of dressing migrated to an emotional need derived from the awareness of our appearance [15], making evident the idea of fashion as we know it. Fashion satisfies axiological and identitarian needs; therefore, it is configured as a system of symbols and contents that allows us to load with different readings objects that are perceived through the senses with a semiotic content. As Eco explains, “Semiotics has to do with anything that can be conceived as a sign. Sign is all that can be understood as a significant substitute for something” [15]. Thanks to that interpretive content, a garment becomes fashion. Therefore, it becomes a construction that allows us to communicate beyond words since “the symbolic value of the dress [...] in a harmonious interaction with the other modalities of non-verbal communication, forms a visual language well-articulated by the multiple psycho sociological and cultural implications” [16]. Then, through fashion, multiplicity of expressions are modulated that allow each individual to build his identity and its own particular language; it should be noted that “The union of the signs of dress ends up generating a language, but there is not a single language of clothing but many, just as there are many different languages, dialects and accents and that each individual has its own repertoire of words” [17].

But like any language it has to be validated within the collective. As Iglesias mentions “This nonverbal syntax will be a cover letter of ourselves, provided that between the sender and the receiver there is the same code of understanding and, therefore, the same cultural basis” [15]. This gives importance to the fashion context for the correct decoding of its signs, which, if appropriate, would lead to acceptance, both of representation and the individual, and the potential replication by the recipients. In addition, it will influence its ability to be sustainable to the extent that it may or may not be read properly as “If a product is removed from the context and the time in which it is considered fashionable, it ceases to make all sense, even if this does not affect the quality of the product itself” [15] so that the context will be the one

that provides that language with the necessary qualities for a correct interpretation of its meaning:

Objects have no meaning in themselves, rather they are prompts for a field of possible meanings that are dependent on context. Meaning often implies something fixed, but in this instance, let's understand meaning as that which arises as the result of an object's exposure to a specific circumstance. That is, objects provided certain outcomes rather than contain certain meanings, and each interaction presents the possibility for a range of outcomes to arise that are not wholly predictable. These interactions accumulate over time; thus, the meaning of an object is ever evolving [10].

In relation to fashion as a symbol, Latin America has been able to understand these dynamics of representation and construction of meanings through clothing from the peripheral. On the one hand, this has endowed it with an added value that ends up shaping its own identities and therefore a strong contextual language. On the other hand, in Latin America we struggle with the idea of belonging to "hegemonic fashion" [9], which relates to the dynamics of fashion that poses it as a differentiating and integrative at the same time. The key in this relationship is to assume marginality as its own language that becomes striking for the centres and thus re-signify the periphery.

2.3 Fashion and Aesthetics

It is important to combine the concepts of fashion and aesthetics to understand the dynamics between them, their relationship with consumption and sustainability. When we talk about fashion nowadays, we cannot detach it from consumption which is its main engine of growth. "With projections through 2023 that show annual growth of approximately 5%. By 2030, the global apparel and footwear industry is expected to grow to 102 million tons in volume and USD 3.3 trillion in value" [18]. This overproduction and hyper-consumerism have led fashion to be disposable, both in monetary terms,² as in social and environmental ones.

To get to this point of growth and waste, fashion has been continuously supported by an obsolescent aesthetic where its improvement lies in the cosmetic, rather than the functional [20]. In this way we are caught up in a constant replacement frenzy for the new and improved, of perishable satisfaction, ephemeral beauties and identities that are dismantled at convenience because they are in themselves made also for consumption [6] and therefore will never be satisfactory and lasting. Because of these continuous replacement dynamics, it is necessary to establish a counterweight from the same place that has been used to promote it; that is, from aesthetics, but making an effort to propel them from more holistic constructions, which lead to a connection

² According to the Ellen Mchurart foundation, "Globally, customers missed on USD 460 billion of each value year by throwing away clothes that they could continue to wear" [19].

with the subject beyond the material and give rise to positive, pleasurable and consequently more lasting relationships, and thus leading to long experiences and identities. Hence, as Saito mentions “The aesthetics of sustainable consumerism, therefore, is not simply a matter of promoting specific sensory features of the object regarding beauty. It is more importantly a paradigm change about our relationship with the material world” [20].

This paradigm shift needs, in order to be effective, to include an additional conceptual load that contemplates the moral and political ramifications [20] in which the experiential object ceases to have aesthetic immunity to its underlying processes and its entire cycle is visible to be considered either aesthetically positive or negative. The new paradigm also requires assuming a sentimental content as a fundamental element for an aesthetic extension, as Saito proposes:

“I believe that what may be dismissed as sheer sentimental attachment to an object in the objectivity-driven-discourse does have an important role to play in the sustainability-driven consumer aesthetics”. Saito continues saying “for the purpose of cultivating longevity of an object in the hands of consumers, I would include associational and historical value as a part of sustainability aesthetics” [20].

2.4 Sustainable Design and Fashion

Just as we can't deny consumption in fashion, we can't deny its origin either. Fashionable objects, and by extension their experiences, are not natural but, on the contrary, they are designed with the aim of serving human functions. Hence, as designers³ we have the capacity and responsibility to direct these processes from the aesthetics that we have previously raised since they are the ones that have as “the main objective to put in the mainstream ecological, social and environmental values.” [21] and therefore, serve as a tool to understand the characterization of sustainability within Latin America in order to design it. Punctually, within green aesthetics, Yuriko Saito proposes within what she narrows as the everyday aesthetics, principles for contemporary design, that “offers the possibility to combine environmental values with aesthetic experiences” [22]. “These principles that cover the aesthetics, the functional and the contextual are minimalism, durability and longevity, fittingness, appropriateness and site specificity, past present contrast, preservability of natural processes, health and fostering and caring and sensitive attitude” [12].

As the intention is to look for an aesthetic configuration, we will focus on minimalism as a starting point because, on the one hand, it has been the archetype that finds the least correspondence within the Latin; and, on the other hand, it is the most aesthetically recognizable principle within Saito's proposal. In addition, minimalism finds a rather strong objective representation within what sustainability proposes in fashion; and since the 90s it saw a boom in what Fletcher points out as aesthetics of

³ “Anyone who shapes matter, processes and energy to need perceived needs can be understood as a designer” (St. Pierre 2019).

sustainability [23] which has been implanted almost dogmatically among those who seek to approach a sustainable way of characterizing their products.

The approach through minimalism can have a double reading within the realm of contemporary fashion. On one side, we find fast fashion that aims to be universal and operational in any context (cultural or social), so it needs to operate without the need to make further readings and thus achieve ubiquity, massification. On the flip side, we find sustainable fashion that uses neutrality to transform objects/garments into simple and easy-to-adopt because they do not require special knowledge to understand them and therefore to use them for a long time avoiding an early disposal. For both cases we could use the following example: a black turtle neck, which is validated within fast fashion or within sustainable fashion, it will depend on how we approach minimalism, whether from the aesthetized or the conceptual side.

Hence the fact that the configuration of minimalism today has more to do with aestheticization than with a real aesthetic, so it is necessary to emphasize this difference to avoid confusion when it comes to raising strategies. The first does not promote sustainability values; instead, it only seeks to make products on its surface attractive to speed up or perpetuate the consumption of objects designed to be obsolete from mutism and eternalize the oppression. “Aestheticization of everyday life is often used to cultivate consumers for the market, audience for political spectacles, and accomplices in perpetuating oppression and injustice” [13]. On the contrary, formulating design proposals from true aesthetics that respond to sustainability aims to create a nutritious experience that generates in the interlocutor an attachment that will make viable many of the other principles mentioned by Saito, which are necessary for a holistic design strategy.

Once this differentiation has been established, we can address the minimalism itself without the fear of entering into a contradiction between the objective of promoting a contextual and multidimensional aesthetic language and the apparent emptiness of the archetypal minimalism.

2.5 *Minimalism*

Minimalism largely represents the aesthetic and conceptual ideal of sustainability but seems excluded within the Latin, which makes it relevant to break down what minimalism refers to and how this serves as a basis for articulating sustainability in the Latin American context.

Minimalism corresponds to the familiar, to the beautiful “that complies with the aesthetic ground principles concerning to symmetry, comfort, order, predictability, demarcation, shape and balance” [24]. Therefore, as a principle it is relevant within sustainability because it tends to be easily decodable, as Harper mentions in a first approximation:

from the aesthetic analysis of sustainability so that there is a durable expression objects have to be easily decoded, therefore they have to be neutral and minimalist so that they can encompass a wider range and seek a universality, meaning they are based on basic and simple characteristics so that there is a flexibility of adoption to the context [24].

On a first basis, to achieve universality minimalism uses reduction. Either from the modernist design that dictates to avoid the ornament in pursuit of supreme functionality that silences the noise of excessive forms and contexts in order to become adaptable and therefore lasting. Or from the artistic approach, where this minimalism in addition to a formal simplicity also calls for a simplification of the content; where the pieces do not carry any abstract message that needs a cultural baggage, and where it is only necessary to be in the same space of the work that only exists in the presence of the observer [25]. In this manner, minimalism becomes enunciative of sustainability by creating “time and placeless expressions” [24], reducing in addition the ornament and content, materiality. Here we might ask ourselves, why if what we try to do is to make an aesthetic reading of the contents of the objects from new perspectives, we propose minimalism being that this appeals to the silence of those same contents?

The answer is found through three steps. Firstly, expanding the scope of what is understood as minimalism, leaving behind the stereotypes that have shaped through the years depicted as “a kind of enlightened simplicity, a moral message with particularly austere visual style”, erected in monochromatic solid colours, organic textures, clean, modernist reduction, emptiness and silence [25]. Secondly, going beyond traditional moralist modesty, the efficient functionalism of modernist productive systems, aestheticization governed by postmodernist means [26] and contemporary elitized precarization, where little is a sign of detachment (disposable) and freedom (vacuum). Thirdly, detaching minimalism from being sustainable per se, because a simple appearance does not mean that its underlying processes are simple as well [25].

Understanding that minimalism is narrative and not empty, let us approach it as a paradigm shift from the formal and symbolic based on our need to live the world from the appreciation of details that can be ephemeral in form but durable as an experience. In this way, minimalism is not about a “perfect cleanliness or a specific style. It’s about seeking unmediated experiences, giving up control instead of imposing it, paying attention to what’s around you and accepting ambiguity, understanding that opposites can be part of the same whole” [25], where instead of a universal story there is a blank space to build a narrative of its own. Finally, since it is from Saito’s design proposal that we extract minimalism, we must understand it from his vision, which refers to a reduction of materiality through processes “such as reduce, reuse and recycle from the discipline of sustainable design” [12].

With this expanded vision of minimalism, we can investigate the construction of Latin American aesthetics and how this minimalism is welcomed or rejected within that context in order to configure a sustainable language, and then propose design strategies that integrate those components effectively.

3 Latin American Aesthetics

So far the Latin construct is settled in a symbolic and real space, and now we have to establish the aesthetic identities that represent it. As we mentioned, minimalism tends to be easily decodable and therefore it is beautiful. From there, if minimalism is beautiful and Latin American at first glance is not minimalist, we would have to go into understanding the Latin aesthetic experiences, how do they look and search for the answer to where they belong?

The first thing to say is that Latin American aesthetic experiences belong to plurality. Taking into account the typologies proposed by Rodríguez-Plaza, there are three large groups evident: the magical-religious that responds to the ritual, the political-revolutionary that refers to the challenge of power and the erotic-love, all crossed by the ludic that appeals to joy [27]. Such categories are not mutually exclusive, rather they are intertwined through the expressions of their peoples. To elucidate this aesthetics, we have to refer again to the context emphasizing the synergies that their constituent elements—social, economic, cultural, racial and geographical—produce when they recombine. Because these are the conditions that allow what Juan Acha calls “aesthetic objectivity” [8] or the ability to perceive and appreciate the beauty and, ultimately, reproduce it from design, arts, crafts and, by extension, fashion.

3.1 *The Corporeal*

Talking about fashion, aesthetics happens inescapably through the body, because it is through the senses that aesthetic perceptions are experienced, and it is the body that determines on which fashion it is built. Being that fashion is habitable we have to literally be inside it and personify it; it is a 1:1 scale and therefore the body is the module of creation. Whether or not the body responds to the aesthetic postulates of fashion marks a line between the bodies that belong and those that do not, thus building the bodily imaginaries of physical beauty where identity is widely constituted from one’s own and collective appearance and where, as Saito mentions, oppressions are also exerted against the excluded:

Aesthetics is also implicated as a primary instrument of justifying the societal oppression of disabled, sexed, gendered, or racialized bodies. Those individuals whose bodies do not meet the aesthetic standard suffer from an unfounded perception that their physical appearance correlates with their competence, intelligence, and moral character, and are subjected to many forms of injustice and discrimination [13].

Likewise, to talk about the aesthetic in Latin America is to speak of the body, one that was unknown, appropriate and subdued and that is often still turned into exotic. However, the body also converts itself into a vehicle that crosses the limits of words and mediates the Latin expressions from the corporeal. A body inherited from the races has been mixed here and that finds, for example, in the dance a way of existing in

the world, of naming something that has not been said elsewhere [27]. The corporeal also refers to a culture where experience revolves around the sensitive—what is felt—and where “language, sound, movement, singing is linked to things and both produce not a definition, but an action, a presence” [27]. Therefore, the corporeal in Latin America results in existing within spaces that have been expropriated and where bodies have constantly been targeted, disappeared and denied; in Latin America the body is a constantly moving existence.

In this constant development, the idea of the corporeal in Latin America arises from three visions. Firstly, what it should be, which corresponds to the imaginary body hegemonic, young, thin and white and on which longings and frustrations are built. Secondly, the being, which refers to the diverse and invisible but lived—and clothed—reality. And thirdly, the opinion, which responds to the constructions that others have made around the Latin body, where the body turns out to be co-produced to fulfil those fictions. The conjunction of these three visions entails the ideal that is distributed and should correspond with any vision that comes from these latitudes, perpetuating the idea of the exotic, curvilinear, provocative and willing that oozes Latin exuberance and it is on that body that aesthetic constructions and own desires are projected.

3.2 *The Urban*

This being a continent whose population concentrations are crowded in cities, the aforementioned corporeal figures are located within the urban, where they respond to recurrent informal dynamics. The urban is established as the common area in which cultural and social intersections develop and determine the majority aesthetic experiences. Therefore, it is a relevant place to address the Latin American, as mentioned by Rodríguez-Plaza:

A Latin American critical-aesthetic theorization means, in my opinion, to assume the widespread cultural expressions and experiences deployed and arranged in the open, anonymous and public realm of the city as an environment culture. Scope built from the theatricalities, iconoclasts, sonorities and narratives of daily life. Which from the formalization of sensitivities, produce total aesthetic facts; that is, structuring networks of significant perceptions and operations. Resemantizations about materialities, signs and signatures and where the popular and the massive are often intertwined. This because there is where the large human groups rejoice and suffer an extended and extensive substrate of Latin American urban culture... A city where modernity and tradition invigorate time, simultaneously, conflicting and creative [8].

When we talk about the urban, it is key to understand that Latin American cities have been erected as a reflection of that aforementioned desire to belong to the West but that it continues being built from the periphery of this longed-for centre. However, this has provided a place for each periphery to gravitate over new centres, which allow it to deconstruct and appropriate closer narratives through heterogeneous and fragmentary expressions, but above all popular. Narratives that have shaped the

local imaginary by translating the everyday life effectively into culture through “the telenovela, the dance, the street painting, the joke or the plastic that adorns the patron” [8]. Being “the other” [2] or the popular which is not validated, what dominates and sustains the self-construction of the city and identity and the path to overcoming hegemonic Westernism from the juxtaposition of times and stories. Within these urban constructions, the popular is postmodern, aestheticized, massive, consumable and cumulative and it seeks a kind of life “poured into the order/disorder plot of cities and their multiple construction.” [8], a construction that is “crossed by the race, the class and the genre where its differentiation is marked but also belonging, therefore the interaction” [27].

The Latin American city that has been steadily imagined as a place of deficiencies, marginalities and subtraction is, however, a space of handmade cultural profusion. And, with the body, work and leisure and therefore is the propitious environment for—popular—fashion to develop. As fashion is a tangible object to represent and materialize the mass and daily urban experiences, the city serves as a stage for its display and commodification.

3.3 *The Popular*

It is therefore clear that the urban is built largely from and by the popular, taking care to distinguish it from “the folkloric, the past or the rural and thus avoid seeing it as the opposite pole of mass processes” [9] and instead equate it with the widespread. Therefore, giving agency to the popular is to be configured as opposed to the hegemony of aesthetic constructions from “relatively own cultural resources” [9]. Being the popular is consumption of masses that takes, reinterprets and problematizes the material culture of clothing produced by hegemonic fashion, while at the same time producing its own references that must be considered as fashion for the fundamental premises of the concept: expiration, aesthetic reference, mass consumption, production chains, circulation, appropriation and disposal [28].

These reinterpretations, by not belonging to the hegemonic, have readings that must also be given outside the beautiful or good taste. As Saito proposes, Salazar relates the popular with “the pretty” which “does not belong to the world of art, but either to the vernacular creation” [28], thus remarking its everyday character and the possibilities that this gives it to self-construct. Nevertheless, where, in addition, when we distance ourselves from good taste, we find a way to overcome class bias by recognizing other nominations of aesthetic constructions that have bidirectional mobility within the society and where the popular appropriates what belongs to the upper class while including a popular repertoire in its speech.

“Thanks to the wide circulation of objects/clothes on the market... The gradations that objects suffer when they move from one social group to another are demonstrable. These gradations, which can be reproductions, adaptations and creations give account of the life of objects in popular sectors as aesthetics of similarities and distances from hegemony” [28].

Lastly, among the popular, novelty is essential; we seek to build the instant of the present that begins again and again after it is consumed, but that is rebuilt from the recycling of its own and appropriated symbols.

3.4 *The Copied*

This might seem like an exclusively popular phenomenon; however, it also traverses traditional fashion systems. Within the popular, as mentioned earlier, the aesthetic values of hegemonic fashion are emulated and reinterpreted, to compose the values within their own visual language, which results in almost reliable imitations of the appearance and even the inspirational brand, which in popular jargon would correspond to the “triple x copy”, or the reproduction of those aesthetic values but contextualized within the massive, for example the use of “fusible plastic glassware” in reference to Swarovsky.

On the contrary, copy in the field of traditional fashion enters a less objective plane, where what is sought to imitate are at the same time aesthetic values, industrial systems and universal languages. In Latin America, this copy acquires great relevance since the 80’s where there is an Americanization preceded or parallel to a Europeanization, thanks to the different approximations to these markets that bring with it the phenomenon of fashion, surpassing the local constructions that lay mainly in textile production but not of styles [29]. This openness transformed the idea of dressing by moving it to the scene of the trend and therefore to the commercial context. A change that also transformed the industrial landscape by turning much of Latin America into sweatshops of these foreign fashions, blurring for a long time the local creation. “Gestating fashion more from imitation rather than from reflection” [30] as Rosales mentions for the same commercial character that it entailed, thus producing elements of consumption but not own recognizable aesthetics.

However, over the last few years this dynamic has begun to reverse and Latin American fashion has gone from copying to being recognized and imitated. Latin American fashion has taken a first step towards translating its context and culture, away from folklore, to the material means that are its own—the garments and the accessories. It has also begun to shape an aesthetic idea that, although still under construction, already shows its zeitgeist and manages to connect beyond the trend by referring to narratives that surpass objects just as proposed by Saito within its aesthetic discourse.

3.5 *The Cumulative*

Within the Latin context, perhaps the most visible and recurring expression in all representations is the cumulative approach. The historical approach is the most apt

way to meet this fact to understand the latter practices around the construction of own visual languages.

From this approach, we have the colonization that does not know our cultural and social agency as individuals and that is the architect of miscegenation, being one of the most decisive factors of the sociocultural formation of Latin America. Thanks to this racial mixture, we have a hybrid cultural composition where “ethnic, regional and national identities are reconstituted” but also added to extra-American identities [31] and that through abundance they find a way to encompass all the representations that constitute them. Making Latin American an additive and cumulative composition, which although is well influenced by foreign impositions, finds a way to capture its identity in these alien ways and thus appropriate them within the symbolic. It is therefore an “identity system by membership; to grow and create with each other, not against each other or the other” [31] as the colony did. In this way, it composes a baroque aesthetic recharged with signs and representations where the endogenous and imported are mixed and accumulative in its signs and in its “renationalizations” “resemantizations” [8].

Equating the cumulative with the Baroque, then Latin America is also read from the extravagance of its forms and its contents fed by an equally abundant environment “of rich chromatic and botanical profuse vivacity” [3] which seeks representation. Hence, the baroque architecture, Creole portraits of the eighteenth century, is not only the colonial altars but also the contemporary everyday, like the cities built by layers and the fashion that recycles itself and recombines with the outside and the inside, the new and the old at the same time, where the edition is not subtractive but additive, striking.

It is only worth noting that the cumulative is fragmentary [31], indicating that in this accumulation their plural origins are recognized by claiming differences rather than amassing them homogeneously within the universal. Thus, giving a space for the coexistence of these origins not without first recognizing a hierarchy that is still problematic today and has to be reassessed.

3.6 The Caribbean

When we talk about the Caribbean as well as when we talk about Latin America, both concepts extend beyond a geographical location, covering mostly their symbols. Therefore, appealing to the tropicalist discourse, Latin America is circumscribed within the Caribbean narratives; of hot and exotic lands and bodies and of Macondian stories that have shaped the Latin imaginary and which have translated into fashion through what Rosales has described as “caribbean chic” [32]. A concept that she establishes as the possibility of an aesthetic identity is born from the readings of the Caribbean, and that this being a wonderful chaos mixes the magical of the references that compose it. The Caribbean, raises Rosales, is syncretic and eclectic, giving field to the beliefs, rituals and to the cumulative visual compositions that fit within this symbolic place.

This Caribbean imaginary poses practical challenges that determine its language, where the heat, the humidity and even the light reaches these territories, no longer symbolic but real, frame negotiations on functionality or colour, where novelty is ephemeral and salt and sun “prevent materiality from being lasting” [33, 34], but which finds in decay an own and unexpected beauty. From the Caribbean, both the syncretic and the practical are evident in dressing, as Rosales describes “White for freshness, pearls to evoke the maritime, fan to melt beauty and function in the green and floral humidity of the afternoon.... The inclement heat makes the dress not provoking in its excessive expression; therefore, triumphs white and linen and jewellery is sometimes impractical annoyance” [35]. Therefore, it shows more concretely by embossing the Caribbean chic in “fluidity, shoulders in the air, vibrant floral slogans, colorful ensembles, handcrafted accessories, colorful ornaments on the ears and on the head” [3]. And where the body it dresses is, as well, representative of that tropicalist dream.

Within Latin aesthetics, it is perhaps the Caribbean story that has had the most echoes within the continent, within the fashion and within foreign imaginaries. That is why it is relevant as it is a path that has opened the door to the conversation of local fashion and that can be followed by the rest of the aesthetics described here.

3.7 Identity Under Construction

Finally, it must be recognized that Latin American aesthetic identities are constantly under construction around a constant question Who are we? [27] and, which within materiality it is also questioned, what are we? An immutable question seeks the answer in the historical narrative and in the construction of the present, where we have gradually realized that this is a polyphonic continent and that it is from there from where we must continue to narrate those identities that are still being discovered. As Rodríguez-Plaza mentions “Any poetic effort that tries to deny contexts, I say not historical or social (which is already dangerous), but the imaginaries, is condemned to the deepest of failures” [27].

Regarding the construction of these identities in fashion, Valerie Steele mentions the importance of creating icons that help consolidate a collective imagination from what they represent [34]. When she talks about icons, she doesn’t just refer to individuals but extends to ideals that represent the feeling and complexity of the people for later translation into the language of fashion. Along with this, other considerations for the construction of these identities are embracing the periphery with the urgency of overcoming central discourses, abandoning the neutrality that might be apparent, making statements of our narrative from critical places and feeling as legitimate all the productions that are built in order to empower them.

In conclusion, Latin America, precisely, is a space where a myriad of contents that are combined into a hybrid. But if the syncretic is cultural and religious, then the aesthetic is eclectic and baroque; therefore, if we add up all the characteristics of Latin American aesthetics, besides the plural, they belong and are experienced from

the “pleasure of the unfamiliar, of the sublime, that which is: asymmetrical, chaotic, unpredictable, without limits, without form, unbalanced, distorted and uncomfortable” [24]. Although going further, Latin America belongs to every day that is named from the pretty, the cute, the cheesy that confront us to the conventions of what (hegemonic) fashion should be, but that still provides us with satisfying experiences. Then, it is necessary to learn to navigate these aesthetic experiences since Latin America has always been a challenging territory that has to be explored from within, from “the utopia, the memory and the instant” [36] around the places, the bodies and their experiences.

4 Minimalism and Latin American Aesthetics

When confronting minimalism with Latin American aesthetics, the marked formal disagreements that exist between them are evident, but we could see the disagreements are not decisive, instead they open the conversation to a relationship between them horizontally. These stresses could be summarized as shown in the following table and its further explanation:

The everyday life		
Minimalism	Latin America	Latin American aesthetics ID
Moderation function	Excess appearance	The cumulative and the corporeal
Anonymity silence	Brand noise	The copy and the urban
Aesthetic universal	Taste singular	The caribbean and the popular
Repetition value	Novelty price	The copy and the cumulative

MEASURE VERSUS EXCESS: Minimalism is often conceived from the scarce, from the necessary and functional; putting in relevance the rationality in everything that it encompasses, from the conception of the objects, their materiality, their use and even in their consumption. These conceptions originate from abundant societies that have been overwhelmed by an excess of ornaments, objects, and seek a depuration of their aesthetic, conceptual ideals and their ways of life. Minimalism is a path of liberation from material dependence. In Latin America, the opposite happens. This has been a continent that, although exuberant, has largely been shaped by the consecutive violence it has suffered, imposing prohibition and perpetuating scarcity, which helped build a language where abundance, its accumulation and its demonstration are important in building the aspirated life [37]. Being able to access this exuberance is the local path to liberation because it raises possibilities, belonging and possession of everything that has historically been denied. It is the ability of

being seen through possessions. As Saito sums it up in terms of production and thus consumption: “Production of goods is accordingly geared towards satisfying consumers’ aesthetic appetite or desire, whether for personal fulfilment or, perhaps more commonly, projection of a particular person through possessions [20].

THE ANONYMITY VESUS THE BRAND: Within the everyday life aesthetics, Saito shows an important difference between arts, where the work’s author is relevant, and the everyday life, where the creator is predominantly anonymous. This differentiation is possibly analogous, within the Latin American, in the discourse mediated by the brand, where fashion would amount to art, putting in a relevant place the authorship of the pieces that circulate, that is, the brand itself. Hence, the appearance of phenomena such as the copying or emulation of brands and their aesthetics, [28] because of what they represent and their declaratory capabilities, where the possibility of branding is linked to the purchasing power, often matching the brand with wealth. In the opposite place, which would correspond to the everyday life, we find minimalism. Here an emulation is meaningless as it is an aesthetic prone to uniformity, where repetition and reproduction are intrinsic and where the apparent anonymity of its authorship is appealed because the characteristics that differentiate each brand, in the event that it exists, are not recognizable. Which results in an equalization between minimalism and the ordinary, crowded and anonymous; therefore, a place where there is no recognition or distinction that entails the discourse of the brand, but those minimalist characteristics find their echo in the popular where that anonymity becomes enunciative and the crowded is identity.

THE AESTHETICS VERSUS THE TASTE: We have previously stated that minimalism belongs to the familiar, to the easily decodable, and therefore, to the beautiful experienced from the proportional, symmetrical and demarcated, thus responding to universal aesthetic principles that derive from the common need of humans to, for example, understand and order their environment [24]. When we talk about minimalism, we propose to rationalize the environment, but not to particularize it, thus cancelling any possibility of the local or personal. This leads to a reduction of decoding errors as it is aesthetically neutral and adaptive by extension, although it overrides any cultural load. On the contrary, taste is a subjective construction that depends on the culture and lifestyles; therefore tastes are personal narratives that within the continent need to be claimed. Taste, as Salazar proposes, does not have to be built from the class encasing definition of Bourdieu. Rather it is possible to find other representations from “the pretty” as the possibility of communicating outside the universal construction from the historization of the objects, which gives the possibility of reinterpreting, of not being determined by the class, but above all of “connecting a personal biography with a biography of the objects” [9]. Making tastes a closer choice within the idea of the Latin context. But isn’t minimalism also everyday life?

REPETITION VERSUS NOVELTY: Within what encompasses minimalism, repetition and constant rhythm operate in part as response to the inherent need for order of the human being; while they are silhouettes, palettes and materials that are constant

and therefore recognizable, but mimetic to become part of the familiar [24]. Minimalism also appeals to be durable and stable, transcendent thanks to the adaptability of its intrinsic silence while maintaining its formal characteristics, avoiding the need to be replaced, highlighting its ability to be part of everyday life. When we establish this feature in Latin America, local readings about repetition are made by confronting: on the one hand its acceptance from the cumulative as a search for stability, of a pace that establishes its own order; but on the other, and more urgently, its rejection from the need to embrace novelty and assume the opportunities offered by the new social configurations where there is a possibility of differentiation, consumption and economic opportunities. As Salazar mentions: “As novelty has value for producers, sellers and consumers, the market is saturated with trends, of things that fulfil the mathematical function of being the best sellers”. In addition, the novelty allows delight and generates continuous emotion when discovering what is not usual [28].

Having navigated the differences, both minimalism and Latin American are fed back from ambiguity and opposites that are created in everyday life. Speaking then of minimalism where “nothing combines, but everything goes together” [25]. As life itself, where humanity is allowed and whose main objective is to deconstruct the narratives and question how to live in the current world rather than uniform surfaces and silence the spaces, this being precisely the core of Latin American aesthetics, miscegenated, hybrid, additive and inhabited. Hence, it begins to be consistent to talk about building Latin minimalism.

4.1 Latin America and the Sustainable in Fashion

Regarding sustainable fashion, The State Of Fashion [38] sets that the new generations and the market in general is adopting more conscious practices and one of the most important purchasing drivers in recent months is sustainability. Punctually, according to WGSN “the propensity to buy from socially responsible brands is strongest in what has become fashion’s manufacturing hot-bed of Asia-Pacific (64%), closely followed by Latin America (63%)” [7], showing the local interest in questioning traditional dynamics. However, despite the growing interest and the emergence of new voices throughout the fashion system that advocates for effective transformations, context is once again a determining factor for the adoption of these dynamics.

The pulse of fashion 2019 [39] notes that 75% of consumers placed sustainability as an extremely important issue, but only 7% make their purchases motivated by this factor as a determining criterion. Following through, when characterizing the type of consumer, only 16% of the total belongs to the group that fully adopts sustainability and it refers to people with, among other things, professional education and stable income. Therefore, when we contextualize these numbers within Latin America we face a reality, where there is a growing generation that opens up to conversations around social and environmental responsibility but falls within emerging economies

where incomes are not stable and much less sufficient in most cases. Then, the sustainability proposed from the global north is reduced to a little-executable intent where niches that are “ready” to take it on are extremely scarce, which makes sustainability unique and exclusive.

In addition, Latin America experiences phenomena that are hardly flourishing here, such as overcoming poverty and violence, expanding its middle class, access to global content, and brands and objects commonly reserved for elites. It is important to recognize how this affects the adoption of sustainability within the imaginaries of a consumer who does not want to feel judged or limited but wants to enjoy those possibilities that often come with fast fashion.

However, sustainability in Latin America is not a strange issue; on the contrary, it has deep roots within what have been traditional practices. Sustainability accounts for the fundamentals of the man–nature relationship, thus showing that there is vernacular sustainability, which has been claimed from the traditional and the popular as reparation, the overlap, the no throwing away, the leveraging of the object and material resource, transformation and adaptation. Although assigned under other names such as the precarious or the recursive, it responds to the same concerns from the context that have been reached from the experience, not from the conceptualization. That is, they have been experienced rather than planned but are still systematic, so it must be our starting point when it comes to raising it within the local fashion system. In this way, Latin America will be able to enter into the conversation of sustainability in fashion from the endogenous, resulting in a construction that takes advantage of the traditional and the contemporary to respond to the needs that Latin American poses [40].

5 Design Strategies for the Latin American Sustainable Aesthetics

Given that the objective of sustainability aesthetics is to achieve a durable, adaptable and nourishing aesthetic expression that can be constantly rediscovered by the user, these must be settled from a perspective that is not punitive or prejudiced, since all approaches that have been taken, from what Kate Soper calls “anti consumerist aesthetic”,⁴ have turned out not to be effective due to its guilt-inducing approach. Instead, we are going to play with another approach proposed by Soper as “*the alternative hedonism*”⁵ [20] in order to achieve a positive interaction looking for creating narratives that promote satisfying interactions beyond superficial normative beauty.

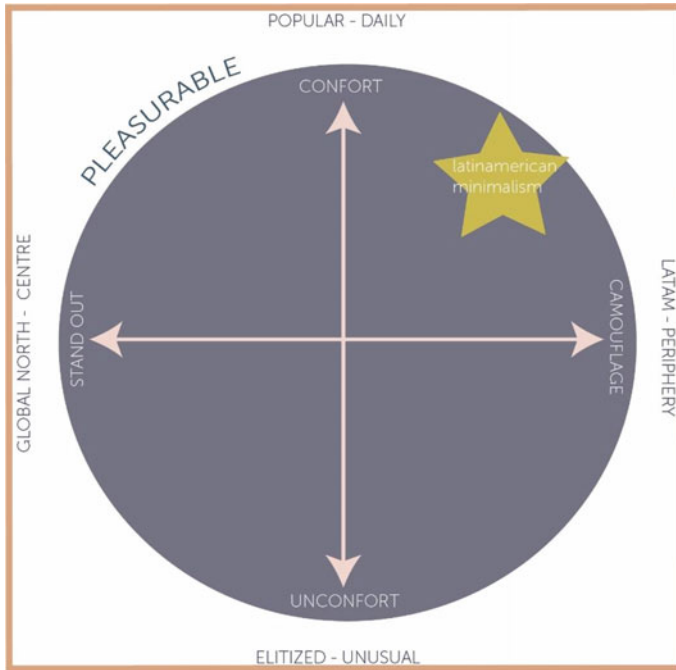
⁴ The kind of aesthetic in which “the commodities once perceived as enticingly glamorous come gradually instead to be seen as cumbersome and ugly in virtue of their association with unsustainable resource use, noise, toxicity or their legacy of unrecyclable waste” (Soper 2008 in Saito 2018).

⁵ “This involves identifying aesthetic qualities that can render sustainable good attractive or appealing, and in short fashionable” (Soper 2008 in Saito 2018).

It should be noted that the purpose of these strategies is not to be a checklist of formal features of how the things inscribed under a Latin American sustainable aesthetic should look like, but rather an approach to a translation of the Latin American at an aesthetic level that could be executable within sustainable systems. Therefore, it is a conceptual formulation route that can be appreciated and read universally but that should be developed, at a design level, from the particular needs of the context and the productive system that supports it, in order to find the narrative approaches that allow the construction of local icons from the concepts that constitute the identities—the corporal, the popular, the accumulative, the Caribbean—that help to build relevant, durable and pleasant experiences which are constantly rediscovered. In this way, it is possible to promote less consumption and extended use as the most appropriate way to achieve a sustainable future, avoiding the typical “kind of sustainable scenario for clothes, where they are old, torn and patched up, dirty and wrinkled, that in practice would correspond to environmental values but most certainly would not fulfil our need for beauty or social norms in appropriateness” [22].

Understanding the uniqueness of what is conceived as Latin American, we know that it responds to an extended and complex decoding aesthetic, often from the coincidence with popular. Therefore, it is necessary to make this decoding experience intentionally built, its complexity has to be predetermined and prevent it from being just a poor design experience [24]. Although I am not unaware of the development of adaptation and appropriation processes within the popular, it is necessary to establish design strategies that make them premeditated and, consequently a reproducible path, as Salazar says, what design does is synthesize and abstract to subtract the literality of the popular [41].

The formulation will be proposed within the axes of comfort and camouflage according to the semiotic decoding strategies proposed by Harper in order that the phenomenological (material) construction will be adaptable to particular situations and comes from the user himself. Both concepts arise within a spectrum where when we talk about comfort its opposite is discomfort and when we talk about camouflage its opposite is standing out [24]. In order to make the proposal easier to understand, we will start from the following graph to explain its configuration:



The features that determine these concepts come from Harper's strategy and have been confronted with Latin American aesthetics and context, hence, when reading the proposal, we must situate ourselves both inside and outside to understand how they are arranged.

5.1 An Outside Reading

Comfort: It is equivalent to the short decoding that has its foundation in *the familiar*, in what we recognize and provides us with security since they are all experiences where what is expected meets expectations, therefore there is no room for surprises [24]. In comfort, there is also the security of being able to satisfy our needs from the complicity generated by *the familiar*, mediated by narratives in our own codes that tell us an unambiguous story. In this case, this comfortable and safe place refers to the status quo of fashion since it has been the place from where discourses have been traditionally built and, therefore, we know its foreign language and its stylized and elitized codes.

Uncomfort: At the opposite extreme we find the *everyday* and *popular*, aesthetic constructions typical of Latin America that are uncomfortable for anyone who is outside the context. Latin discomfort do not have to be understood from a negative connotation but as a long decoding experience provided by their fragmented and

accumulative history. From discomfort, the aim is to question basic assumptions, experience chaos and the unexpected. It is the place to always be ready for “something happens” [24] and where each event serves as a catharsis. Within the Latin uncomfot we also find taboos, like those related to the body and the enunciative, where *the beauty* and *the tacky* are signs which need time to be assimilated.

5.2 *An Inside Reading*

Stand out: At this end, we place the western world—therefore the centre—and all the features that have been produced in it shaping the fashion language. Those features are remarkable within the Latin American context but by default not by excess, where a refined and silent aesthetic tends to stand out within the boiling semantic of the Latin. In Harper’s terms, the characteristics of this concept are being exaggerated, wild, challenging, intriguing and unusual, which comes from the disapproval of the standard, those features also correspond to the Latin if the reading is conducted from the outside, hence, the positions of Latin in the spectrum can be interchangeable if the viewer stands in or out.

Camouflage: The intention of the camouflage is to blend in, in spatial and temporal terms, with the surroundings; therefore, it is located within the contemporary and is shaped by the tastes and habits of a given society. However, in order to avoid obsolescence, conjugations between durability and volatility have to be done and, in this way, be able to provide durable aesthetic nourishment promoting the belonging and cohesion of identities under construction. In this way, sustainability in Latin America has to find the correct camouflage within *the popular* and exuberant echoing its sociocultural needs; besides that, fashion will have to be built with the language of the periphery in order to create the appropriate clothing. As Goffman mentions, “the concept of ‘appropriate clothing’ depends entirely on the situation. Wearing clothing that is considered appropriate for a situation acts as a sign of involvement in it, and the person whose clothing does not meet these criteria may be more or less subtly excluded” [15].

All these experiences are combined within the pleasurable, which makes them relevant and, therefore, aesthetically nourishing, resulting in an extended experience. As a first conceptualization of this process, and in order to synthesize the contextual and aesthetic aforementioned, a Latin American minimalism emerges, an experience of long decoding but of rapid assimilation allowing, from a conceptual point of view, an expanded phenomenological approach.

5.3 *Latin American Minimalism*

Latin American minimalism refers to a multidimensional construction with an extended decoding, emerged from the discomfort of belonging to the popular and daily which is camouflaged in the context from the accumulative of the Latin periphery, setting as an alternative to hegemonic fashion. It uses the polyphony of their aesthetic identities to build a language “where nothing combines but everything goes together” [25] and, in this way, it changes the way we relate to the material world. To change this relationship, it is necessary to propose approaches from the Latin, translatable into materiality mediated by sustainable processes and resulting in actions or objects that can be read as “fashion acts”.

Uotila [42] argues that a consumer creates a “fashion act” when modifying fashion styles and rules to create an individual look according to their own inner values, emotions and identity. Hence highly unique and visually beautiful, interesting and even odd personal deviations from fashion styles can be considered “fashion acts”, which may also be defined as aesthetic creativity [22].

With the semiotic approaches established and space where to build the materialities is settled, we will pose the sensuous of the Latin from questions of how the phenomenological characteristics of aesthetic concepts could be represented in fashion.

How to represent *memory*? As we mentioned throughout the text, one of the fundamental tasks in the construction of a Latin identity is to be able to narrate, from this shore, the history and to claim the autochthonous, not from the folkloric but from the intrinsic. Memory serves as a counterweight to oblivion, silence and denial of which we have been heirs and architects. This approach makes aesthetics narrative and testimonial; therefore, they need to be exhibited and monumentalized, hence the idea of the altar as memory, pilgrimage as a process and catharsis as a result. Thus, the objects that make up these altars will be cherished for and their life will be prolonged.

Regarding fashion, and also in relation to the depiction of Latin American, the body is the most relevant communicator vector. From memory, we can turn the body into an altar and the garment into a monument. To achieve this from *the local*, we can refer to the embroideries and textile interventions that Colombian post-conflict victims have used as a narrative and reparative process and, from this example, build up languages of clothing that are capable of becoming coded monuments.

How to use *the sentimental* to construct reality? At this point the materialization of fashion must overcome the construction of reality from the conceptual to highlight the perceptual and the imaginative [27] and in this way give space, on the one hand, to cosmogonic narratives where stories have found a representation through embroidery, weaving, basketry, pottery or jewellery from the traditional and, on the other hand, to personal stories that capture the feelings of its users through personalization. From both perspectives, garments cease to be dispensable objects to become repositories of identities. For this, it is necessary that fashion objects reach the user with only half of the story told so that it is she who finishes configuring it from her experiences

and from her own construction of beauty, prolonging the duration of the aesthetic experience thanks to the emotional bonding.

How do you embrace *decay* as a visual goal? In Saito's research, good ageing [43] is presented as an important factor for the prolongation of the aesthetic experience. From this idea, we could establish *the decay* that is evident in the Caribbean or the cities as a representative visual sign of the Latin to translate it into fashion experiences. It is worth to clarify that the decay that is intended to be achieved does not imply a neglect or abandonment, but rather the preservation from the recognition of the passage of time, evidencing it and noticing the narrative layers that it implies as a witness of experiences that comprise it. As an aesthetic strategy, decay has to be composed by a predetermined and designed part and by a spontaneous one, derived from private use where a convergence can be found between traditional practices and new technologies.

Just to name a few, within *decay* we could find depigmentation due to the sun or laundry washing, the wear and torn of selvedge or most exposed areas to contact, the peeling, the opacity and loss of trimmings, the rubbers elasticity loss, the wrinkles. All the aforementioned tearing could be approached by the user through reparation or even transformation, providing an additional story that strengthens the ties with these garments but that also gives possibilities for design and research. Examples of this research could be found in the use of endemic fibres suitable to vanish or tints that change with use. The evidence and cherish decay makes us not only to recognize the perishable nature of things in order to fully experience them but also to propose design paths where garments are self-consumed, fade away and where their ephemeral materiality leaves no traces.

How to create a *utopia of the moment*? Latin America has been thought of as a western utopia where Europeans find the possibility of projecting themselves into this new lands and as a pantry where to satisfy their wishes; thought as a utopia of its natives from the symbiotic relationship with nature, a space of implausible stories of gold lagoons, mythical animals and heirs of the gods; thought as a utopia by the contemporary Latino as a place of potentialities and opportunities yet to be discovered, a Latino who broaden the vision of its culture from the exile and, as a spectator, has discovered how to build it from the outside to narrate its interior. Conjugated with the dreamy utopia, we need to live the instant and "be able to imagine an aesthetic that finds out how to invent performances that will not diminish our future nor make our past redundant" [36].

When construction is done on the instant, it is not with the intention of fleetingness or Bauman's pointillist time marked with ruptures and discontinuities, "*pulverized in a multitude of eternal instants*" [6] without possibilities beyond themselves. On the contrary, what is intended is to give time to each moment and fully enjoy it as a fragment of a story that has continuity and needs that moment to build itself continuously, not of utopias and fictions that fashion tells us but from the *everyday-life* realities built around it.

More than any other representation, fashion combines the utopia of the aspirational and the moment of novelty, both as consumer tools. Therefore, within this strategy, it is necessary to take them to the field of use from the experiences that compose it:

for example, how to bring home security to a garment?/, how to replicate, with each use (wear), the smell of childhood?/or how can the garments adopt the character of tribal tattoos where each drawing on the body represents a memorable moment?/.

All the previous questions are the departure point of the sustainable as a lasting experience and the narrative as an articulator of the Latin American constructions, in order to rethink the material relationship, where quantity is re-evaluated or reorganized so that all objects are part of the history, evoking again *the accumulative* of the Latino. From this proposal, the need to integrate the subject becomes evident, not only as a receiver of the proposed fashion but as a co-creator and maker, clarifying that it is not expected to return to a production society prior to consumption, as Bauman describes, but to an alternative one that breaks up the ongoing hierarchy, where the consumer only has *transactional* agency and the industries take all the other decisions around fashion.

5.4 *The Prod(User) as a New User*

Within Latin American aesthetic identities, the most important thing that has been evidenced is the need to decentralize discourses. In the same way, within sustainability, one of the main objectives is to decentralize both resources and means of production in order to empower each individual to build their reality on a path guided by design processes, but not hermetic to unique and finite outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary to trace routes of shared learning that is reproducible, adaptive and evolutionary, where fashion creation is not simply a *DIY* but a *Do it together* [44].

The moment the user crosses the consumption barrier and also becomes a producer, it will be the moment when the logic of novelty is broken, since the urge to *replace* will be overcome by the ability to continually *rediscover* aesthetic experiences from, precisely, a decentralized idea of *the creator* and, only this way, sustainability will be naturalized in all fashion dimensions.

6 Conclusions

This chapter aimed to sketch out an approximation to Latin American aesthetic representations, contrast them with global north sustainable aesthetic proposals and set up a dialogue between them, expecting to provide lasting and relevant experiences departing from the personal identification of the individual with its own cultural narratives, conjugate them in the fashion imaginary and, in that way configurate a proper Latin American sustainable aesthetic that merges the semiotic and the phenomenological approaches to aforementioned fashion. Throughout this route, minimalism as an aesthetic representation serves as the main axis to contrast both realities, to later, from its concept widening include the Latin American, understating it as a sublime experience. The outcomes of this search, just as the Latin American, are still

under construction; however, they provide a relevant departing point to understand how Latin American vernacular features can be a robust alternative to the traditional fashion frenzy.

Understand Latin American from its own stories allow us to expose it from the polyphony and the periphery which perform as a reivindicative act from all the discourses that do not belong to the centre and shed light on the necessity to reinterpret and appropriate the hegemonic constructions through the popular, massive and everyday life aesthetics intending to usher different new insights to fashion. To the popular and daily belongs several practices that has been constantly underestimated due to its empiric background but that are remarkably sustainable, for that reason the Latin American experience as a whole, need to pass through design processes that enable the replicability of its extended decodification along a predetermined route and consequently, be able to incorporate within new fashion perspectives. Precisely from those Latin American diverse aesthetic narratives, the design strategies are framed addressing an approach to nourish the user relation with clothes.

Latin American minimalism emerges as an aesthetic synthesis departing from the narrative and the accumulative where the user stands out also as a creator. This construction allows implementation of the remaining concepts of Saito's theory, which was first addressed from minimalism, thanks to camouflage into the popular and autochthonous that are then easily executable. As a consequence, "durability, longevity, fittingness, appropriateness and site specificity, past present contrast, perceivability of natural processes, health and fostering and caring and sensitive attitude" [12] do not represent a sustainability imposition, instead a necessity for the aesthetic experience to be durable establishing and intertwining between those concepts and the memory and the instant as relevant paths to understand sustainable approaches in Latin America. Then it is imperative to highlight the importance of context and the blending with it to address proper transformations.

This is just the first tracking of what pretends to be a wider strategic proposition that, besides the conceptualization also be explored from the practice in the fashion field and that will work as precedent in the production and consumption systems transformation, founding aesthetic approximation as a key factor to embrace new paradigms in the continent.

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