



■ GABRIELA: Clothing: Long blouse by A New Cross / Hoodie Undergold / Skirt by A New Cross. MILÍCIADES: Clothing: Long shirt by A New Cross / Jeans by Alejandro Crocker.

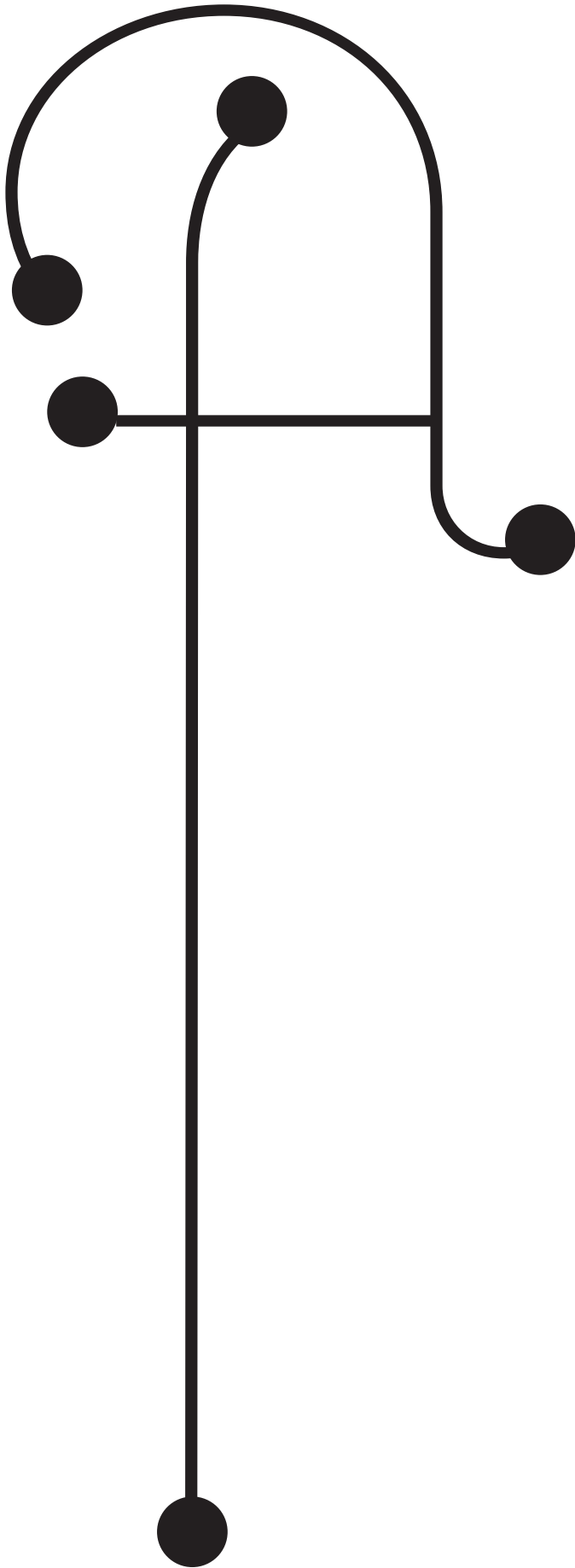
STREETS DANGEROUSLY CREATIVE

By *Edward Salazar*

Photographs by *Julián Carvajal*

Styling by *Ana Beliza Mercado*

The relationship between fashion and the streets is as close as it is thorny. The countless inequalities in Latin America, the textile monopolies baring their fangs, and labor precarization intertwine with the street's aesthetic possibilities, which cluster and overlap in a baroque manner. The following is a reflection on the never-ending canvas of concrete and brick in our continent and the cultural tensions woven into the clothes we wear.



tarot reading brings to the table the Eight of Coins, depicting a man in his workshop, hammer in hand, crafting one of the discs in the image. The tarot reader tells me it is the card of the artisans and that artisans have a vocation for public service: their act of creation belongs to the outside world, where they exhibit their craft and earn their livelihood and recognition, while engaging in a collective conversation based on their work. Craftsmanship, expertise, necessarily resides in the streets. As a creative act, fashion has an overwhelmingly public nature, because when it is created, worn, or interpreted, it becomes part of the collective circulation of ideas and images. In the realm of fashion, the street is the stage for the reproduction of the industry and the legitimization of its order, that is, the promotion of a theater of homogeneity and assimilation. However, the streets are also the space where fashion rebels against itself, where bodies contest the order and create new ways of inhabiting space. It is the place for collective organization to reject the conventions of fashion and the ills it perpetuates.

In 1929, on a street in Antioquia, Colombian spinner Betsabé Espinal stirred up and led nearly 400 female workers in a protest against the *Fábrica de Tejidos de Bello*, in response to the labor exploitation and sexual abuse textile workers were subjected to. It was in the public arena where Chilean corset maker Esther Valdés became a labor leader for seamstresses and founded “*La Palanca*,” the communications medium of the Association of Seamstresses, where she strongly denounced precarious labor in this industry. Despite the victories achieved in the streets over a century, a significant part of the oppressive history of fashion continues its course. The *Monument to the Seamstress*, sculpted by artist Patricia Mejía, was erected in Mexico City to commemorate the deaths of around 1,600 textile workers in the 1985 earthquake. The dire structural and operational conditions of clandestine clothing workshops revealed the precarious nature of the profession and led to the tragedy that this public monument bears witness to.

This year, one of the largest fashion companies in Colombia, with stores in nearly every city and town in the country, implemented the reduction of the legally mandated workday. In a petty and precarious move and without consulting the employees as required by law, the company decided to reduce ten minutes per day instead of the full hour. Ten minutes, as one of their workers tells me, is the time it takes them to go down the stairs from the production floor. These ten minutes do not improve quality of life and are perceived as a decision that favors the company’s interests over the well-being of its employees. The fashion industry and capitalism continue to reaffirm their nefarious association.

■ Clothing: Total look (pants and vest) by Manuela Alvarez / Accessories: Earrings by Aysha Bilgrami / Sunglasses Métiers d'Art 23 Collection, Chanel.



— **MILICIADES:** Clothing: Total Look (Jacket, vest and pants) by Atelier Crump / Shoes: sandals made by Oaxacans (Mexico). Curatorship by El Dorado Art.
GABRIELA: Clothing: Total Look (Jacket, vest and pants) by Atelier Crump / Accessories: Earrings by Aysha Bilgrami / Shoes: sandals made by Oaxacans (Mexico). Curatorship by El Dorado Art.





— GABRIELA: Clothing: Total Look (Jacket, vest and pants) by Manuela Alvarez / Accessories: Earrings by Aysha Bilgrami / Sunglasses Métiers d'Art 23 Collection, Chanel. / Shoes: Adidas Samba. MILICIADES: Clothing: Jacket by Alejandro Crocker / Long shirt by A New Cross / Pants by Manuela Alvarez / Shoes: Adidas Samba.



— Clothing:
Jacket and skirt by Andrea Landa /
T-shirt by Undergold /
Necklace by Aysha Bilgrami

In general, narratives and stories about fashion have often portrayed it as an essentially positive phenomenon, as a personal or collective celebration and festivity. Its glamorous events are often privileged in these accounts, and its achievements and successes are narrated optimistically. The public face of fashion is that of a highly creative, emancipating, liberating, and forward-looking industry, with the street as the stage for its brilliance and display. However, the relationship between fashion and the street has also been marked by protest and discontent, which challenge the positive and romanticized narrative of fashion.

The street has also been the space for the homogenization of retail. The arrival of large global brands in Latin American countries in recent decades has put an end to small local shops and design collectives. While these global brands were a response to aesthetic needs that the local market did not often satisfy, diversity was displaced by uniformity. The dozens of storefronts that once occupied commercial spaces with their numerous showcases – the boundary between the private and public – have been absorbed by a single major owner. Take, for example, the Zona Rosa in Bogotá around the Andino shopping center: one company, the Inditex Group, owns seven stores that occupy a vast area in two blocks of the area. It is not purely a commercial matter. It is also an issue that permeates individuality: the homogenization of space is closely related to the homogenization of bodies.

Perhaps this is why designers who seek to push the boundaries of fashion based on what happens in the streets do not view these types of spaces as creative scenarios. Unlike the streets of the middle and upper classes, in working-class streets, fashion – its practices and its bodies – thrives in its heterogeneity. Polysemy inhabits these streets, speaking of the past, present, and future of fashion in objects that overlap like palimpsests of styles, challenging the cyclical idea of fashion. Time doesn't have a specific direction, let alone a linear one. Due to its multiplicity, the working-class street is one of the best stages when it comes to understanding global trends in their interactions with local cultures.

For example, Gustavo Prado has developed the trend research and cultural anthropology platform, Trendo mx [www.trendo.mx], on the basis of a detailed study of mass consumer culture, in which global fashion narratives come into tension with popular space. There is no better cultural thermometer than the popular street, because it displays the global trends for each season, alongside infinite blends and creations that overflow the fashion center. The San Felipe de Jesús *tianguis* in Mexico City, the largest popular market with pre-Hispanic origins in the region, or the commercial streets of the Once neighborhood in Buenos Aires, which concentrate the sale of *lo trucho*, or counterfeit goods in the city, are scenarios where fashion appears as plural, unrestrained, and even overflowing.

THE STREET AS A CREATIVE SPACE

As French sociologist Guillaume Erner points out in his book *Victims of Fashion*, designer Christian Lacroix once said that “streets are dangerously creative”. The phrase suggests that the observation of one's environment precedes the act of creation. Those who create and reflect on fashion are, above all, observers of the street and its everyday life. The premise that there is no laboratory creation by a solitary (male) genius, but rather a collective effort that challenges the notion of individuality so highly praised in Western fashion, attests to the power of public space recognized by design. There is no material culture that is not preceded by the social space that contains it. This premise does not eliminate the figure of original design *d'auteur*, but it does question the ontology of their work. Beyond the exact sense in which Christian Lacroix used the phrase, ““streets are dangerously creative” is a polysemic slogan that plays with the relationships among fashion, creativity, and peril. Whose interests are threatened by the commotion of the street? Whose sensibilities are bothered by fashion's street vocation? Is there a true owner of creativity and an origin of fashion? These are important questions that challenge conventional ideas about the fashion industry and its creative processes.

Although fashion has a dimension of comfort and conformity, it is also a place of confrontation and creation, two profoundly related productive energies closely linked to the street. With the simple and parodic slogan “New York / Paris / Bosa” printed on T-shirts, caps, or socks, Bogotá-based designer Christian Colorado has embedded his personal history in his designs. “The Bosa York Dream” is a creative project that asserts his identity as a designer born in a working-class neighborhood where he worked as a street vendor during his adolescence and later received his education—specifically in a public vocational training institution. Christian speaks of Bosa, an impoverished district in the south of Bogotá, as the creative and biographical horizon of his career in fashion. The streets of Bosa are a place in the world that can be read as the otherness of mainstream fashion. In Christian's dreams as a traveler or cosmopolitan, two seemingly disconnected places belong to each other. Bosa's narrow streets become the dreamlike streets of New York or the glamorous streets of Paris. With his slogan, Christian Colorado makes Bosa an epicenter of fashion, and with his comment that decenters the so-called “capitals of fashion,” the glamorous cities of the global North, he questions the order of an industry that perpetuates segregation from the perspective of the working-class South.

The street involves an affective relationship for those who use it as a reference for their creations. Colombian

"UNLIKE THE STREETS OF THE MIDDLE AND UPPER CLASSES, IN WORKING-CLASS STREETS, FASHION - ITS PRACTICES AND ITS BODIES - THRIVES IN ITS HETEROGENEITY. POLYSEMY INHABITS THESE STREETS, SPEAKING OF THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF FASHION IN OBJECTS THAT OVERLAP LIKE PALIMPSESTS OF STYLE"

designer Esteban Cortázar also drew inspiration from the streets of his childhood in South Beach, Miami for his 2021 collection called "Cada día es para siempre" (Every day is forever). Miami, a global place, a tourist capital for upper-middle-class Latin America, an art deco paradise or a monstrous building with blue and green windows, the epitome of sun and beach, is a coastal city that defies the gray image of a metropolis. In South Beach, Cortázar was influenced by his father's pop art and the tribute to the young, toned bodies of Miami, which coexist with an aging population. Miami is the U.S. city with the highest number of retirees: approximately 24% of its population is over 60 years old. But while Cortázar's advertising campaign is filled with young and muscular bodies, reminiscent of the artificiality of a city built for tourism and a citizenry focused on consumption, the textile prints of the collection focus on the aging body, thanks to the wonderful work of American photographer Andy Sweet.

In his street images of South Beach and its residents, Andy Sweet captures the pastel colors of the buildings, the blue skies, and the daily life of the elderly people who spent their leisure time there. Interested in his own family background, Sweet photographed mainly Jewish men and women who were survivors of the Holocaust, in a city that experienced the peak of its gentrification and the influx of illegal drug sales on its streets, between the late 1970s and early 1980s. South Beach is now very different from what it was for those retirees who probably couldn't afford to live there today due to the high cost of living. However, Sweet's photographs attest to the style and fabulousness of the elderly people whose sense of fashion and color are as exuberant as the Miami buildings and who also made the street their own amidst the social conflict generated by drug trafficking. Tragically, Sweet himself met a violent death in South Beach, murdered by two addicts who assaulted his apartment.

Cortázar's collection draws on Sweet's photography, showcasing its fun and everyday side. While it does reveal some traces of the elderly that fascinated the photographer, the collection primarily focuses on celebration and youth, on bodies that will later resemble those in Sweet's images. Above all, the collection allows you to wear the work of a photographer of the city, which is also a memory and a wearable item on the boundary between art and merchandise. If fashion has any power today, it is precisely that of being able to tell stories through its materiality. Exploring the textures and motifs of a garment allows you to transcend the transience of fashion and appropriate an object as a site of knowledge.

Beyond the designer, the connection between fashion and the street also links those who express public subjectivities through style. While the street has a dimension that domesticates and disciplines the body, it has also been a place to assert individuality and collectivity through the material world of adornment. One of the best ways to observe the relationship between style and the street is through music. In Latin America, the most significant and visible musical genres have been produced and reproduced in racialized, neighborhood, and popular contexts. Just think of genres like corridos, salsa, reggaeton, vallenato, cumbia, or tango as places for the production of sonic and sartorial aesthetics. Consider the figure of the "pachuco" and "pachuca" with their zoot suits, those dramatically oversized suits, or more recently, the *paisa glam* with its reinterpretation of the *norteño* masculine aesthetics of the cowboy/rancher in the Mexican American context. Think about the origins of long and decorated nails that emerged in the context of reggaeton and its Black-Caribbean and Brown culture, now a popular ornament; or the large gold hoops as an aesthetic statement of Latinx women throughout the hemisphere. In all these cases, style has been a site of collective enunciation that has produced fashion and trends in connection with the street, culture, and public space.

While these aesthetics are essential creative work for the reproduction of social bonds, these objects and their creators have also been racialized and criminalized. This was the case, for example, of Mexican American women who wore zoot suits in the 1940s in working-class and migrant neighborhoods in Los Angeles, who were subjected to police surveillance and repression due to their appearance, as studied by Catherine Ramírez in her book *The Woman in the Zoot Suit*. However, the creative energy of the streets is persistent and difficult to dismantle, which is why those who live in towns, neighborhoods, hamlets, and cities continue to produce vibrant and dynamic fashion.

Historically, the fashion industry has often looked to these aesthetics and, in many cases, has appropriated



— Clothing: Dress by Maygel Coronel
/ Accessories: Earrings and earcuffs
by Aysha Bilgrami / Shoes: Sandals by
Laura Caballero.

■ MILICIADES: Clothing: Coat by Somos Mhuyscas / Harness by Somos Mhuyscas
GABRIELA: Clothing: Coat by Somos Mhuyscas / Harness by Somos Mhuyscas.



them, while excluding their creators. However, audiences in this century are much more critical of fashion cultures, and it is also true that many design processes of both established and emerging brands are starting to reconfigure new relationships with fashion production. How can we envision a creative fashion industry that draws on the richness of styles without replacing or erasing their creators? If fashion, like the street, necessarily implies an encounter, a collective scenario (no one creates or sews entirely on their own, isolated from the world), how can we challenge the verticality of fashion and its alleged center, which is the figure of the designer? Is it possible to achieve such things?

As a political space, as a baroque place, as a heterogeneous stage, as an overlapping of temporalities and spaces, as a site of resistance and accommodation, the street—especially the Latin one, which I enjoy evoking—continues to be a repository for creation and emancipation. It is the richness of the streets that compels fashion to seek them and fear them simultaneously. The street has the energy to nurture, embrace, or challenge fashion expressions. However, streets do not exist on their own; they do so through those who walk and dispute them. In this sense, it would be interesting to think, from the perspective of fashion, about how and who inhabits them more. Producers of beauty and wealth, fears, and revolutions, streets continue to be the living stage of fashion. The runway is merely its screen. ●



■ GABRIELA: Accessories: clutch made by Spora Studio using mushrooms.

■ EDWARD SALAZAR (BOGOTÁ, 1988). Researcher, writer, and cultural critic. he has written for publications such as *I Arcadia*, *Cartel Urbano*, and *Cero Setenta*. He is the author of *Nostalgias y aspiraciones. Vestir, estéticas y tránsitos de las clases medias bogotanas en la segunda mitad del siglo xx*. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Latin American Studies at the University of California.

■ GABRIELA: Clothing: Total Look (Jacket, vest and pants) by Atelier Crump / Accessories: Earrings by Aysha Bilgrami / Curatorship by El Dorado Art.

MILICIADES: Clothing: Total Look (Jacket, vest and pants) by Atelier Crump / Curatorship by El Dorado Art.







— MILICIADES: Clothing:
Sweater by Manuela Alvarez /
Jeans Undergold
GABRIELA: Clothing: Total look
(Skirt, green felt y orange
felt) by Laura Aparicio /
Accessories: Orange hat by Laura
Aparicio





GABRIELA MONTOYA



MILCÍADES CASTRO

Profiles by *Luisa Cortés*, BA Fashion Communication student at University of Arts London

Surrounded by the colors, textures and diversity of the countryside but far away from it, in a shop located in the northern part of Bogotá, Gabriela Montoya says: “I was born amidst flowers”. Although she graduated as a lawyer from the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Gabriela unexpectedly found herself deeply involved in the family business, handling various aspects of Flores Colón, from hiring to customer service at the flower shop. Now, once again immersed in her childhood, which was spent half in the country and half in the city, she brings those experiences to her work and shares them with city dwellers who want a touch of the countryside in their homes. She brings the flowers directly from the country to La Florería, which offers export-quality flowers in the domestic market, unlike luxury flower shops.

Eucalyptus, hydrangeas, roses, and other plants hang from the ceiling of the shop, but for Gabriela, carnations always stand out. This resistant and diverse flower, in both color and shape, always inspires her because of its beauty and symbolism.

One of Gabriela’s missions at La Florería is to change the negative perception that many Colombians have of carnations. Therefore, she encourages them to see their country with new eyes, with those of visitors who see the possibility of having an imported carnation in their vases.

Milcíades Estiven Castro, a craftsman with a degree in Industrial Design from the National University of Colombia, works like an archaeologist, unearthing traces of the past and reviving what some believed time had erased. He proudly reclaims his Muisca identity in the complex world of contemporary fashion.

His threads retrace his roots, which, when interwoven on his loom, create a dialogue between present and past. Thus, his textile work tells stories and portrays his identity. Symbols once used by his ancestors, such as the Andean condor and the frog, are reappropriated in his collections, reinterpreting their meaning, connecting their beliefs in the heavenly spirit with the worldly, while also providing a space for the young designer and his community to understand their origins, who they are, and where they come from.

His venture, *Somos Mbyuscas*, has brought together the talents of 14 artisans with indigenous roots, and this group has continued to expand over time. “I am always out on the streets”, he says, grinning from ear to ear. The group has expanded throughout Colombia, where he has created a community of craftsmen between the ages of 20 and 65. They all highlight the traces of their ancestors, ensuring that neither their practices nor their stories are forgotten. He says farewell with a powerful statement: “I am indigenous, I am gay, I exist in the contemporary world, I am in fashion [...] and I have a voice.”



Photographs
Julián Carvajal

Fashion photographer, who takes inspiration from timeless visual references and discreet elegance. He has worked with brands such as Baobab, Carolina Herrera, and Francesca Miranda.



Styling
Ana Beliza Mercado

Graduated in Fashion Design and specialized in fashion communication. She creates digital contents, which bear the stamp of her personality. In 2023, she debuted as styling director for this magazine, as well as with a capsule wardrobe for the Seven Seven brand.

Makeup
Juan Camilo Piñeros
Content Creator
MAC Cosmetics

General Production
Valeria Palacios

Field Production
Cesar Palacios
Steven Palacios
Manuela Mercado

Beverages
San Pellegrino

Location
Compañía Casa de Rey
Carrera 7 # 22-09

MAC
LOCKED KISS™
LIPSTICK



CODA

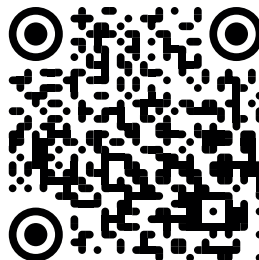
To truly understand how creative the street is, one must observe how pedestrians appropriate the cobblestones and corners, plazas, and traffic lights. It's about seeing how photographers, both men and women, who collect the world, to paraphrase Susan Sontag, capture the risks and wonders.

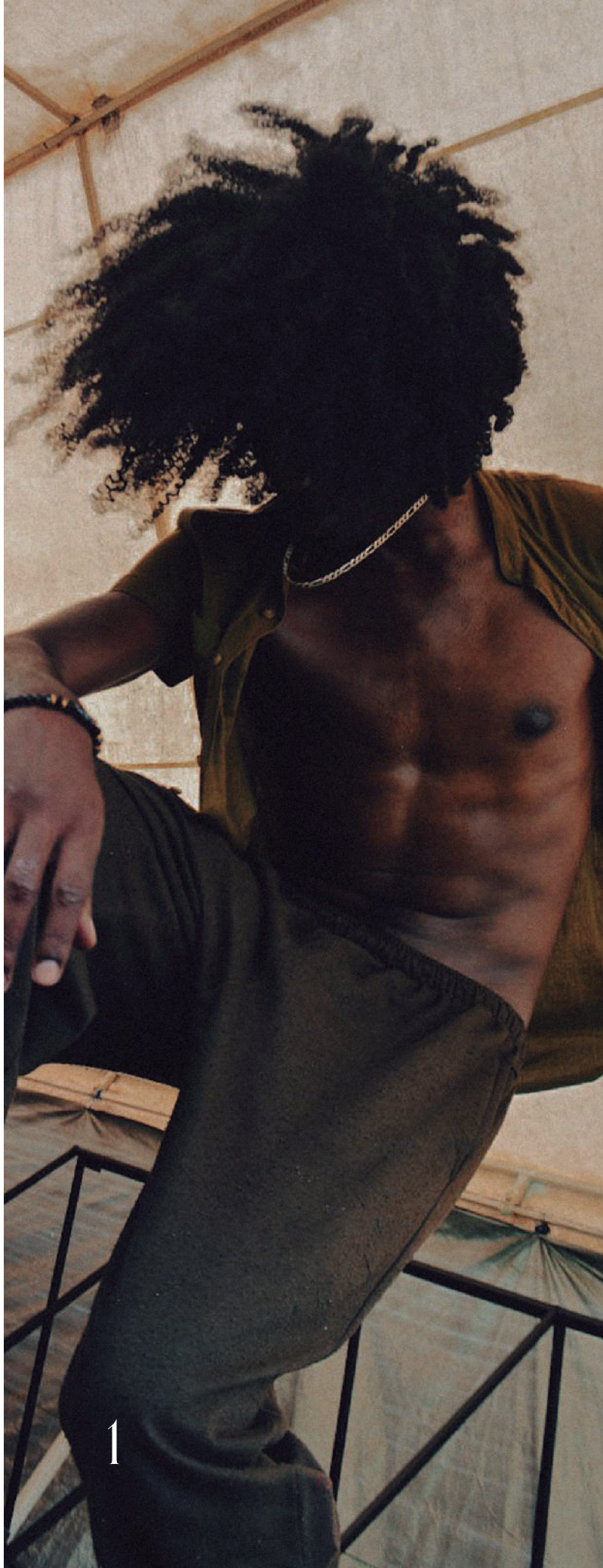
In collaboration with *Captura tu mundo*, a digital community for photography enthusiasts, *La Malpensante Moda* called for submissions inviting Colombians to capture fashion in different cities across the country. Over thirty photographers from various national territories participated. The photo selection process included three phases: an initial screening of the material received by the *Captura tu mundo* team, an initial deliberation in which the jury, composed of Rocio Arias Hoffman, editor of *La Malpensante Moda*, Santiago Avella from *Captura tu mundo*, and Santiago Erazo, editor of *El Malpensante*, selected their three favorite photographs. A final evaluation was conducted through a form in which the judges rated each photograph from 1 to 10 based on five different criteria. This process led us to the six best photographs, six inspired and vibrant snapshots, which are presented below with their respective credits.

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1. First place
Valentina Arce
"Mi afro es arte"



2. Fifth place
Jhonatan Valencia Garzón
"El encanto de la Observadora"



3. Third place
Lyna Marcela Hernández
"Suspendida"





4. Fourth place
Carlos Chanchi
"Gris Neutro. Moda neutra"



5. Sixth place
Jorge Zea
"Remembranzas"



6. Second place
Wilber Lareus
"Guayuco style"

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