

Mexico accuses cultural appropriation of Zara, Anthropologie and Patowl brands

The Ministry of Culture asked for explanations for the copying of different textile designs from indigenous communities.

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The Mexican **Ministry of Culture** requested an explanation from the brands **Zara, Anthropologie and Patowl** for “improper cultural appropriation” of textile designs of the clothing of indigenous communities in Mexico.

In a statement, the agency said that Zara, owned by the Inditex conglomerate, specifically imitated the embroidery of the Mixtec huipiles from Oaxaca on one of its dresses from its new collection. The Ministry of Culture compared an image of the dress “Midi dress with a V-neckline and short sleeves. Contrast combined embroidery detail. Belt tied in the same fabric. Low with side openings ”(as advertised on the Zara page) with a garment made by hand in the **community of San Juan Colorado** .

Image: Secretariat of Culture of Mexico

In the letter of estrangement, the agency pointed out that “the traditional huipil is part of the identity of the women,

who make each canvas from raw materials; it is woven on a backstrap loom and reflects ancestral symbols related to the environment, history and worldview of the community. Each huipil takes at least a month of work to be prepared. “

Mexico asked the Inditex brand to explain “on what grounds a collective property is privatized, making use of cultural elements whose origin is identified in various Oaxacan communities” and how the company plans to reward artisans.

Also against Patowl and Anthropologie

Zara is not the only brand that was invited to give explanations to the Secretary of Culture. The agency also questioned **Patowl** and **Anthropologie** with similar letters for using designs from other communities in Oaxaca.

Patowl’s collection shows patterned t-shirts that refer to the traditional clothing of the indigenous Zapotecs of the **community of San Antonio Castillo Velasco** .

“The pieces are made by hand with the technique called” make me if you can “, this name reflects the complexity of the manufacturing process, which consists of several steps; these pieces are part of the identity of their bearers, techniques and symbols that have passed from generation to generation, as the only cultural heritage of this community; it shows the intangible part of its worldview. They are not only images taken from nature and the environment, but each detail reflects the feeling and historical memory of the Zapotec people ” , the Secretariat remarked.

This was the comparison of Culture of the garment:

Regarding Anthropologie, the Ministry of Culture remarked that the brand offers the piece “Marka embroidered shorts, from Daily Practice by Anthropologie”, belonging to the “Daily Practice by Anthropologie” collection, where distinctive and characteristic elements of culture and identity are identified from the Mixe town of Santa María Tlahuitoltepec, Oaxaca.

“The designs are a manifestation of their identity, history and relationship with the environment, for example, they symbolize mountains, water, paths and magueys, which are reflected in the traditional clothing of men and women. They are the product of their creativity. people, who transmit them from generation to generation; their bearers wear them with pride, as the deepest expression of their culture. “

This was the comparison of Culture of the garment:

What do you think of the use of international trademarks in the designs of the indigenous communities of Mexico? Is it cultural appropriation?

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/373263>