

Information on the road: towards a methodology for the study of truck art

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INTRODUCTION

Many cultural manifestations are so common in our daily lives that end up going unnoticed. Hand-painted lettering in commercial establishments, popular crafts products, paintings on street vendors wooden carts, among many others artefacts, are some examples. Some of those artefacts show graphic solutions created by professionals who were not formally trained in design education institutions. The study of Brazilian vernacular design allows us to rescue such traditions, to question our conception of what “good” design is, to reflect about what would be an authentic Brazilian design, and even about what would be the Brazilian society itself, since “the conditions surrounding the emergence of a designed object or a particular kind of designing involve complex social relations” (Margolin, 2009, p. 96). A better understanding of a particular artifact allows us, in a second moment, to understand the society behind its production, creation and consumption.

Regarding definitions of vernacular design, this article relies in the conception proposed by Finizola, Coutinho and Cavalcanti (2012):

[vernacular design is] spontaneous design produced on the edge of mainstream design. In this category it is also possible to include inventions of popular origin, such as utilitarian objects, packaging, signs for itinerant market and homes, as well as artifacts for popular communication (Finizola et al. 2012, p. 552)

Vernacular design responds to spontaneous needs to advertise or increase the value of a particular product or service. The motivations of vernacular design are not so different from the motivations of design in general. The main difference between mainstream and vernacular design can be observed in their forms and language. While in mainstream design, a professional designer is in charge of creation, vernacular design, is made by the individual who has the need to communicate something or by specialized professionals who do not consider themself-

ves and are not considered as designers —this is the case of popular lettering painters, for example. The language of mainstream or formal design is regulated and protected by the design field itself, with the endorsement of established intuitions such as design schools and large design studios, who dictate the rules of what is “good” and “bad” design. The language of vernacular design also has its own rules, but does not have the institutional formality of mainstream or “official” design norms (Cardoso, 2010, p. 12-13).

Within the universe of Brazilian vernacular design are the visual patterns, generally abstract, that adorn wooden truck bodies, popularly known as filetes. Those visual elements are very common, but at the same time hardly ever studied or used as visual reference by Brazilian designers. Finizola and Santana (2014), in their study on Pernambuco’s truck art, also mention the lack of research on the subject:

although the culture of truck ornamentation is widespread in the country, there is still no record of academic research, from a design perspective, that investigates this topic in depth. (Finizola and Santana, 2014, p. 855)

It is important to study Brazilian truck art while there is still time, since there is the risk that it will disappear in a near future:

[Truck art undergo] a process of devaluation due to the replacement of wooden by metal bodies, and the lack of skilled workforce, among other factors. Faced with the imminent risk of extinction, this element of our visual culture still lacks systematized records in the area of graphic design and information design. (Finizola and Santana, 2014, p. 855)

In addition to this, Brazilian Governmental agencies are under pressure, from large truck body manufacturers, who would like to ban the production of wooden bodies. Regulation #552, published by Contran (Brazilian National Traffic Council) in September 2015, aiming to regulate cargo binding in the country, prohibited the fixing any binding device on wooden frames, thus rendering wooden bodies useless. In response to this regulation, Brazilian Wooden Bodies Manufacturers Association was created, and, with an organized claim, succeeded to convince Contran to change this regulation. However, specialists believe that, while “the risk of extinction of wooden bodies no longer exists [,] the cost of a new body should increase due to new requirements” (Duarte, 2016, p. 1).

According to Rapoport (1999), there are four recurring attitudes towards vernacular design artifact, such as truck art:

1. It can be ignored —which is still the most common attitude.
 2. One can admit its existence but deny that it has any useful or worthwhile lessons.
 3. It can be copied —its shapes, details, massing and so on (as it is romanticized)
 4. One can derive more or less general lessons and principles from it, through the use of environment-behavior studies, concepts, models and so on. It is these lessons that are then applied in design.
- (Rapoport, 1999, p. 57)

The fourth attitude would be the most appropriate reaction, but extracting lessons and general principles from vernacular design is not so simple.

If we consider that it is produced within a social field apart from the dominant field, we must expect that the rules of formal design will not necessarily apply to vernacular design. According to Cardoso (2010, p. 20-49), individuals who have similar economic, cultural and social capital would also have similar judgments, values and behaviors; consequently, individuals from very different social fields would have difficulty to understanding each other. Therefore, since truck art is produced and consumed within a social field apart from the academic universe, understanding this kind of artifact through formal design research methods and procedures is problematic.

Aiming at extracting lessons from Brazilian truck art, a vernacular design phenomena that lacks systematic studies and is under the risk of the disappearance, a research model based on an in-depth case study of the work of a specific truck painter (Biriba, Figure 1), for a specific truck body company (Carrocerias Garcia), is proposed. Data gathered and presented with this case study should exemplify the establishment of research methods and procedures, including ways for organizing and presenting results that, following an information design approach, allow for the discovery of general principles of Brazilian truck art. Those methods and procedures should be applied again in future research, serving as comparative basis for the study of other truck body painters and companies, not only in Brazil but also in other parts of the world. This approach to research combined with information design is expected to arouse the interest of other researchers and also to serve as a model to be adapted for the study of other vernacular design artifacts.



Figure 1: The truck body painter Biriba, in his workplace at Carrocerias Garcia, in January 2017 (photo by Jonas Queiroga).

CARROCERIAS GARCIA

In 1930, João Urizzi founded, at Mogi das Cruzes (São Paulo state, Brazil) a wagon workshop named *Oficina de Carroças João Urizzi*.

it was a large workshop, which manufactured series of carriage wheels and also repaired and reformed wagons [...] - says Francisco José Urizzi Garcia, who today share the direction of Carrocerias Garcia with his brother Danilo.” (Michelazzo 2015, p. 38)

Economically, the world was suffering from the effects of the Stock Market Crash of 1929, which in Brazil resulted in the bankruptcy of many farmers and coffee grain producers. As a counterpart, Brazilian government increased the tax on imported products, “forcing the development of national substitutes, favoring small workshops, such as João Urizzi workshop” (Michelazzo, 2015, p. 37).

Eight years later, in 1938, João Garcia dos Santos began to work in the company and gradually rose in position, eventually becoming a manager. In that period, he met Elize Stabile Urizzi, sister of the company’s founder and married her. In 1949, João Urizzi decided to change business, opening a junkyard in São José dos Campos (São Paulo State, Brazil), and selling his company and machinery to his brother-in-law, who changed and renamed it *Oficina São João*.

The first truck body by *Oficina São João* was manufactured in 1952, at the request of the municipality of Mogi das Cruzes. This milestone followed the emergence of Brazil’s first truck factories: the National Motors Factory in 1949 (Duque de Caxias, Rio de Janeiro state, Brazil), followed by Mercedes-Benz

in 1956 (São Bernardo do Campo, São Paulo state, Brazil), Ford in 1957 (São Paulo, São Paulo state, Brazil), as well as other smaller factories (Kapron, 2012).

Due to increased demand and the need to expand its facilities, the Oficina São João changed its address twice, first in 1958 and then in 2013 (Michelazzo, 2015). In January 2017, Carrocerias Garcia was installed in a plant of 6,000 m² (4,500 m² of built area), had 30 employees and produced an average 20 truck bodies per month. Aside from manufacturing and reforming wooden bodies, in three models (super luxury, chrome and flat), in January 2017 the company also presented metal bodies (iron or aluminum) in its catalog, along with specific bodies for a range of uses such as live transport, vans, trailers, truck winch, access planks and hydraulic ladders.

BIRIBA

Best known as Biriba, Vladimir Bertaco Salata was born in 1957 in the city of Colorado, northwest of Paraná state (Brazil). It was the second year of Juscelino Kubitschek's government (1956-1961) and the conditions were extremely optimistic for the truck industry, thanks to the government's 30-goals plan to create new highways, expand asphalt paving and increase from 18,800 to 80,000 the annual production of trucks (BRAZIL, 1958).

At age 12, Biriba moved to Goioerê (Paraná state, Brazil) and began working at Boio Car, a truck body factory. "I started working there to purge sawdust and clean it, but since I liked to paint and stuff, I used to go there and help the painter" (testimony from Vladimir Bertaco Salata (Biriba), recorded on December 12, 2017 at Carrocerias Garcia). At that time, according to Biriba, the body's base was painted with ink spray gun, and the smaller parts such as ironwork, handrail and slat (Figure 7) were painted by brush. The filetes (ornaments) were also painted by brush. When the painter at Boio Car left his job, Biriba had not yet painted a single filete by himself. Even so, his boss asked if he could work as a painter. Biriba said yes, and so his career began. Biriba has always learned to paint in a self-taught way. During his career as a truck body painter, Biriba taught two other painters, Brochinha and Pir, who did not kept in touch with their master (Biriba doesn't know where his former apprentices are and what are their real names).

When he was around 20 years old, Biriba moved from Paraná to São Paulo state to work as a truck body painter at Apaví Carrocerias (in Jacareí). In the following year, following the death of the factory's owner, Biriba moved to Caçapava (São Paulo, Brazil), where he worked at La Pereira Carrocerias, remaining there until 1984. He then returned to Jacareí to work at Carrocerias Jacareí (former Apaví Carrocerias, after the new owner changed the company name). In

2000, Biriba was hired by Carrocerias Garcia.

Before hiring Biriba, Carrocerias Garcia, had an old painter, known as Seu Cláudio, who learned the occupation with his father when he was child. Seu Cláudio's father was the first painter at Carrocerias Garcia (testimony from Francisco Garcia (one of the company owners), recorded on December 8, 2017 at Carrocerias Garcia). According to Biriba's testimony, Seu Cláudio used to work following a certain system of truck body painting (Figure 2), based on the use of brush and backgrounds with flat colors. As soon as Biriba began to work at Carrocerias Garcias, the transition from what Biriba calls "the old system" to a new system (Figure 3) began. The new system included the presence of visual elements known described Biriba as *frisos* (beads), painted bas-relief elements that follow parallel to the body structure (in Figure 3 those elements are painted in navy blue, white and blue) and "wide board with shading", which is a dark gradient surrounding the filete (painted in purple in Figure 3). Regarding the production of the ornaments, the main difference between the two systems was the introduction of a new tool to paint filetes: the striper (Figure 5).



Figure 2: Filete made by Seu Cláudio using "the old system" (photo from Carrocerias Garcia collection, used with permission).



Figure 3: Filete made by Biriba and Seu Cláudio already using “the new system” (photo from Carrocerias Garcia collection, used with permission).

Brought by Biriba from Carroceria Jacareí to Carrocerias Garcia, the stripper is a tool that produces filetes composed of thin lines with uniform strokes. The filetes obtained with this tool are different from the ones made with brush or stencil, as we can see in Figure 4. Biriba bought his first stripper from a manufacturer and seller of this specific tool, based in São Paulo city, Mr. Willson. However, over time the demand for this product declined, possibly because it was a highly durable tool, with a limited number of consumers. According to Biriba, Mr. Wilson’ son managed the business for a short time after his father passed, until the company closed (testimony from Vladimir Bertaco Salata (Biriba), recorded on December 12, 2017 at Carrocerias Garcia).



Figure 4: Examples of filetes made with different techniques (brush and stripper photos from Carrocerias Garcia collection, stencil photo by Damião Santana, all used with permission).

The stripper is a tool, patented by Samuel Beno Beugler in 1933 (figure 5), created for quickly and accurately painting linear ornaments on automobiles and motorcycles (Beugler Pinstriping Tool, 2017). Despite the apparent complexity, the stripper makes use of a mechanical system similar to a ballpoint pen: the pulley rotation transfers the ink from the inside of the pen to the surface to be painted.

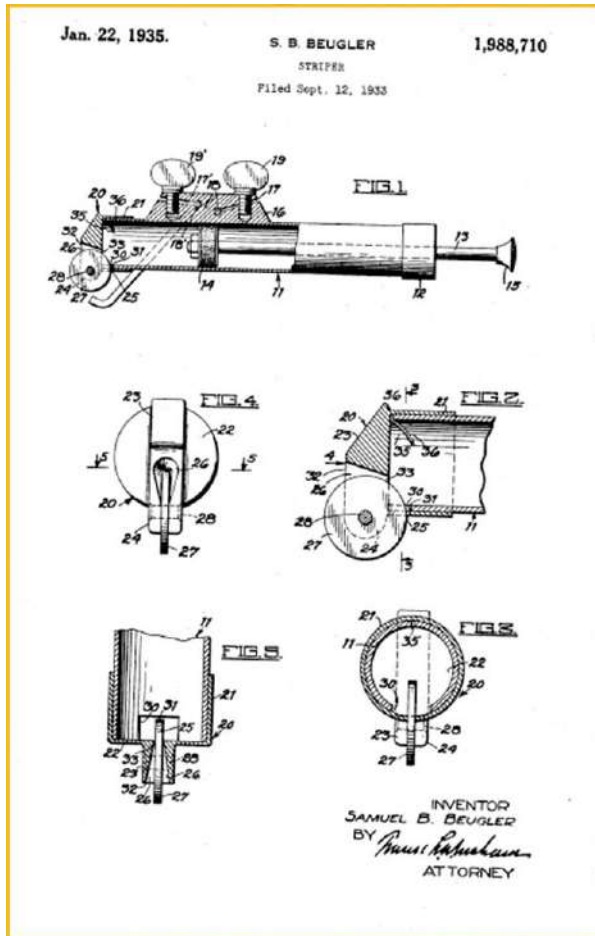


Figure 5: Samuel B. Beugler's original patent (U.S. Patent No. 1,988,710)

The term *carretilha* is the one chosen by Biriba to refer to this tool, and is also used by Finizola and Santana, who mention that this is the main instrument used by Rio de Janeiro truck body painters (Finizola and Santana, 2014, p. 854). The expressions “*caneta de filetar*” and “*filetadeira*” were found in advertisements for strippers in the Brazilian version of the e-commerce website Mercado-Livre (Figure 6). Because the stripper has been used only by a quite specific group

of people, there is no official translation for the term to Portuguese (the expressions “carretilha”, “caneta de filetar” and “filetadeira” are not recorded in major dictionaries), and other expressions to refer to the same or similar tools may still be in use.

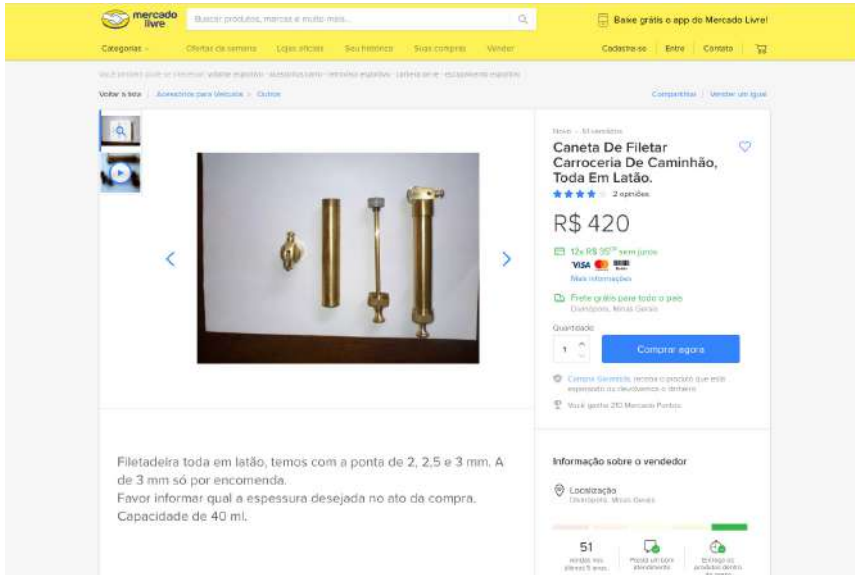


Figure 6: Ad for a caneta de filetar in a page of the Brazilian version of e-commerce website MercadoLivre.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES FOR A CASE STUDY ON BRAZILIAN TRUCK ART

In order to identify general principles in the truck art pieces produced by Biriba, a methodological procedure that would fit the research needs and also allow for replication in future research, including other truck bodies manufacturers, was devised. Organized in three stages, the procedures are explained below.

Stage 1 – Technical visit

In the first stage a company that produced ornamented truck bodies (Carrocerias Garcia) was identified, contacted and visited. A presentation of the research project was prepared and offered to the company staff. During this stage, basic information on the production of truck bodies was gathered, including details about the history of Carrocerias Garcia and the role of Biriba as a truck body

painter. During the technical visit, differences in the nomenclature for truck body parts and structure adopted by Carrocerias Garcia staff and that shown in the scheme presented by Finizola and Santana (2014, p. 857) were noticed. Some of those differences may be just due to variations in regional terms, but, besides that, filetes in Carrocerias Garcia were painted on parts of the truck body that were missing in Finizola and Santana's scheme. A new scheme was created, in collaboration with Francisco Garcia, who is one of the company owners, containing all parts that use to receive any kind of decoration or special treatment such as the addition of filetes, or just special custom colors. Figure 7 shows the new truck body scheme, including, in red, the names given by Finizola and Santana, and in black, the names used by Francisco Garcia. It also includes names for parts not mentioned by Finizola and Santana, such as toolbox, little and back skirt, top and lower handrail, wide board, inside slat and tie slat (in Portuguese, caixa de ferramentas, sainha and saia traseira, corrimão superior and inferior, tábua larga or faixa, sarrafo interno and sarrafo de amarrar corda), and translations to English for all terms (in blue).

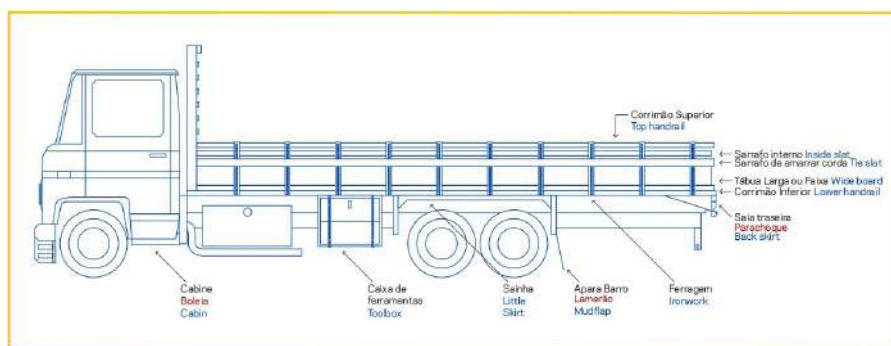


Figure 7: Truck body scheme, designed from photos of truck bodies produced by Carrocerias Garcia in collaboration with Francisco Garcia.

Stage 2 – Thematic interview

In the second stage, a thematic interview with Biriba was recorded. Questions asked included information about technical and practical aspects of the truck art field, aiming at a better understand of how truck art is planned and executed. Questions on his professional background were also made with the purpose of recovering the memory of Biriba's work and to better understand his trajectory. Alberti's methodology for thematic interviews, as explained in her oral history handbook (Alberti 2004), was adopted for this interview. According to Alberti,

The ideal, in an interview situation, is to move towards an informal and sincere dialogue that allows the complicity between interviewee and interviewer

as they engage in the reconstruction, reflection and interpretation of the past. (ALBERTI, 2004, p.102)

A general script was devised for the interview, containing the main topics and questions that were expected to be answered. Thanks to the overt interview and the interest of the interviewee to participate, most of these questions were answered spontaneously as Biriba narrated his life history.

Stage 3 – Graphic analysis of truck bodies

Carrocerias Garcia, like many manufacturers, keeps a constant photographic record of the truck bodies they produce. Those photos are used as a portfolio of their products and are also delivered to the truck owner, who commissioned the truck body, as a souvenir when the work is completed. Carrocerias Garcia photographic collection holded, in January 2017, 60 photos of different truck bodies produced by Biriba, between 2000 to 2016, covering the work of the painter since the first year he started working in the company. The data collected was organized in cards (Figure 8), where all colors used in the painting were listed, along with all truck body's decoration, and the identification of different ornament designs (filetes) and their location. Data on the use of letters and numbers was also collected, for future studies.

Simultaneously with the data gathering, vector illustrations of each filete found was produced, and those ornaments were identified according to the patterns and repetitions. During the vectorization process, the ornaments were digitally reconstructed following the painting procedures explained by Biriba during the thematic interview. The combination of the author's testimony with the process of decomposition and reconstruction of ornaments allowed for a greater understanding of how they were structured and produced.



Figure 8: Example of data gathering card.

RESULTS

Data gathering and analysis has shown that Biriba uses a limited amount of filetes —18 different patterns— to create his truck art. Figure 9 shows all the filete patterns found, separated by the truck body part where they usually appear. Below each patten is the code created for its identification (in black), followed by the number of times it was found in the truck bodies analyzed (in red). The location of the ornament has a direct influence in its design. More complex designs were found in the wide board, which is also the truck body part with largest surface area.

It has also shown that the variety of pattern design is smaller for the more complex filetes and bigger for the simpler ones. Only 3 different patterns for wide board filetes were found (A1, A2 and A3 in Figure 9). Pattern A1, however, according to Biriba, has not been made since 2010. Even though there is a greater variety in the less complex filetes, a more frequent occurrence of specific designs —such as B2, C1, C7, and C11— has been noticed.

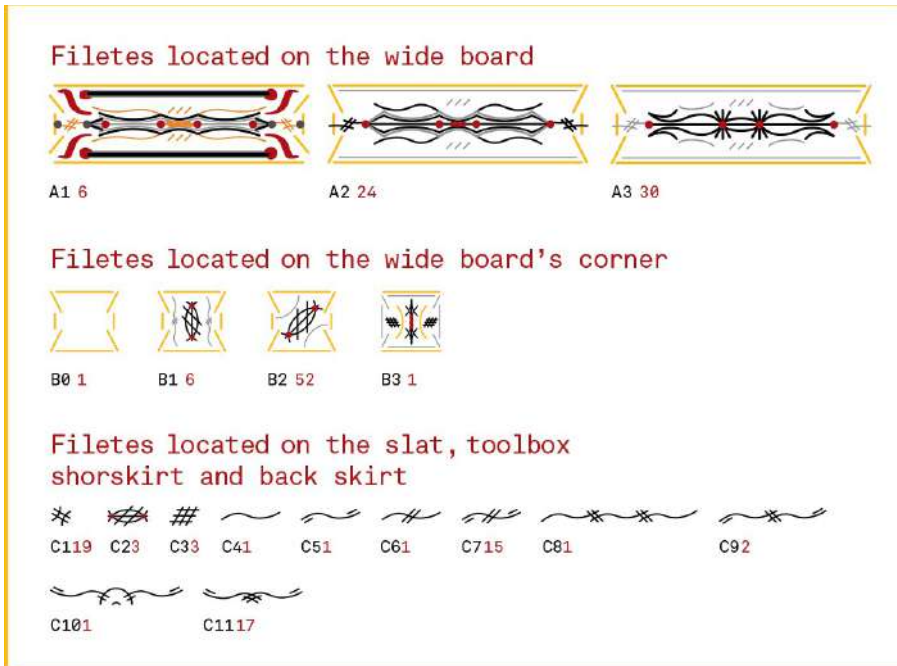


Figure 9: Identified filete patterns.

An infographic created from data gathering cards (Figure 10) allowed for the identification of the colors and color combinations more frequently used by Biriba. In Figure 10, each line represents a truck, and each column a part of the truck

body and the colors used to paint it. In the top line of the infographic the number of times a color appears in a certain part of the truck body is given. It is important to mention that the colors used in this infographic are not the exact colors used by Biriba, but rather approximations in CMYK scale. The infographic aims at the quick identification of color combinations, so for example, instead of the word “yellow” a yellow square was included.



Figure 10: Infographic showing the colors used in the 60 truck bodies examined.

It is possible to verify that some colors appear much more often than others. Black, for example, appears in all 60 bodies examined, while orange just in 2. The color palette is relatively concise, with 17 colors, including 4 shades of blue, 2 shades of green, 2 shades of gray, plus one shade of other colors (yellow, white, black, red, brown, lilac, purple and orange). The color combinations are quite varied, so that few truck bodies are alike. According to his testimony, Biriba seeks harmonic color combinations to create his pieces of truck art, giving preference to the use of colors close to each other in the chromatic scale, and avoiding strong contrasts.

I try to make it look alike. If I use white, then I also use blue, and a second shade of blue—a stronger and a weaker one. I use just a little red. You cannot use much of some colors, otherwise they stand out a lot (testimony from Vladimir Bertaco Salata (Biriba), recorded on December 12, 2017 at Carrocerias Garcia)

However, according to Biriba, when it comes to color choice, the customer's will is what really matters. Some clients ask Biriba to do what he believes is best. In this case, he prefers the use of harmonic colors. On the other hand, there are clients that choose in advance the color combinations that they want, which may differ or not from Biriba's preferences. There are also customers who wish their truck bodys look like another one they saw on Carrocerias Garcia website or at the company plant.

It was possible to reconstruct Biriba's painting procedures from start to end thanks to the information obtained in the thematic interview. Before starting a painting, Biriba looks for specifications regarding the truck body, which has already been assembled and sanded. The first stage of painting consists in a first layer of flat colors. At this moment, only three colors are used: one for the wide board, another for the tie slat, and a third for the handrails, inside slat and all other small parts of the truck body. This last color, by being in a larger proportion, is considered "the truck body's color." Very often this color, or the color of the wide board, is the same color used in the truck cabin. When there is more than one color in the truck cabin, it is also very common that these same colors are used for other truck body parts (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Truck painted by Biriba (photo from Carrocerias Garcia collection, used with permission).

After the first layer of painting is done, Biriba creates the shades in the wide board, using a technique that he learned at Jacareí Carrocerias. He uses a spray gun to create a gradient from the border to the center of the part, as it is possible to see in Figure 3. These shades are characteristic of Carrocerias Garcia's "new system" of painting. Since shadows are dark, the color most often used by Biriba to create the shades is black. However, they can also be painted with a darker shade of the color used for the wide board base, as we can see in the color infographic (Figure 10).

To make the filetes, Biriba wields the stripper in different ways, according to line direction and line position in the wide board. To draw lines parallel to the truck body structure, Biriba slides two fingers on the wood, following the movement of the trace, while holding the stripper with the other fingers.

Due to the time taken for emptying, cleaning and charging the stripper with a new ink color, Biriba prefers to paint all wide board modules simultaneously, drawing all traces of a certain color first, then all those of the next color, and so on until he finishes to paint the entire truck body. The whole process of painting a truck body usually takes a day's work. Due to the time needed to dry each ink layer, Biriba paints several truck bodies at the same time.

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Data interpretation and analysis was conducted seeking, on a first approach, to identify similarities in different patterns of Biriba's filetes, and then, in a second moment, to analyze the particularities of each one. The "singular and plural" strategy adopted by Aragão (2011) for a study on early twentieth century Brazilian litographic labels inspired the approach adopted for the analysis of truck art patterns. According to Aragão, the method

was pretty much like reverse engineering: we dismantled the images and then figured out how they were composed. This essay will follow that same path, presenting disassembled elements, and eventually assembling them into standardized, repeated and copied labels. (ARAGÃO, 2011, p. 94)

Filetes' structure

The detailed description of the painting process, combined with the process of creating vector illustrations for each filete pattern found in wide boards —A1, A2 and A3 (Figure 9)—, allowed for their decomposition, revealing the steps of the painting process, as shown in Figure 12. It can be noticed that filetes begin to be drawn from the external border. Next, the center line, used as an axis to define the vertical and horizontal symmetry of the pattern (Figure 13), is drawn. In

step 5, vertical markings that will guide the drawing of curved lines are established (Figure 12). From the next step, the differentiation between the filete patterns occurs, as curved lines are drawn. In the last step of each pattern, another set of elements, which is not made by the stripper, but is common to all Biriba's filetes is added: points. Points are made with the painter's thumb, and add attention spots to the pattern, giving some stability that balances the mobility of the curves traced with the stripper.

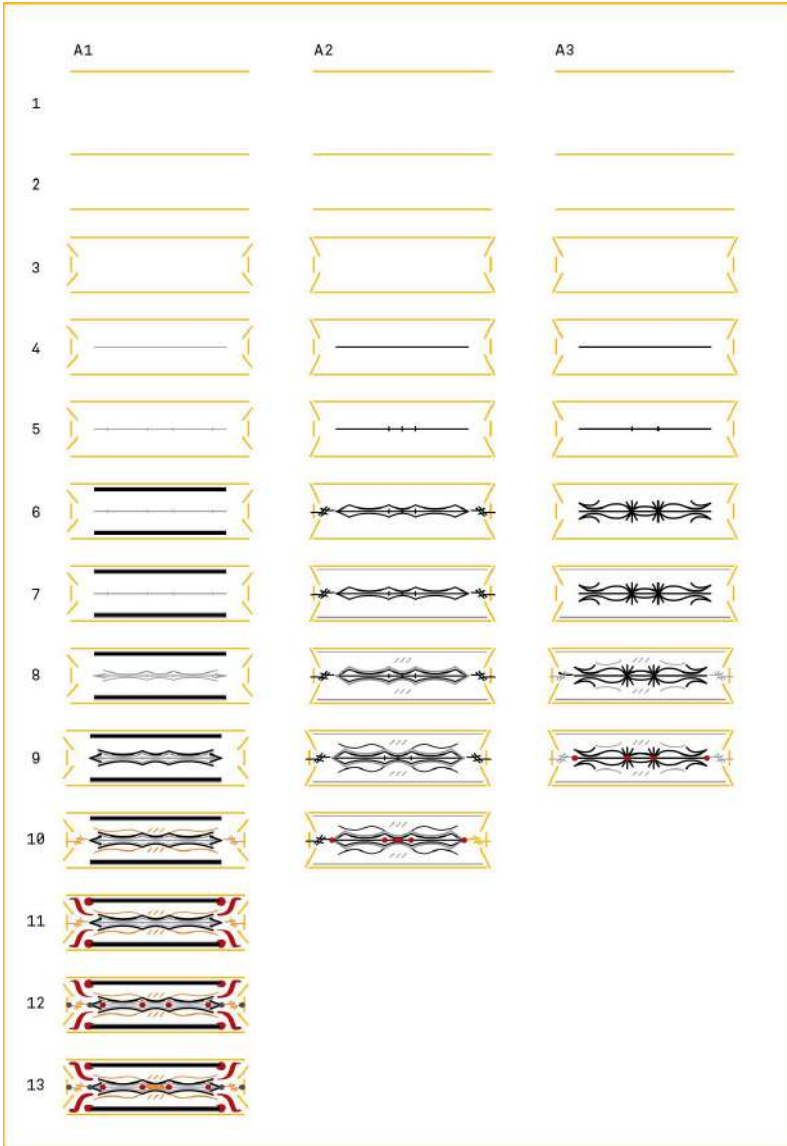


Figure 12: Steps in the painting process of the 3 filete patterns used by Biriba for the wide board.

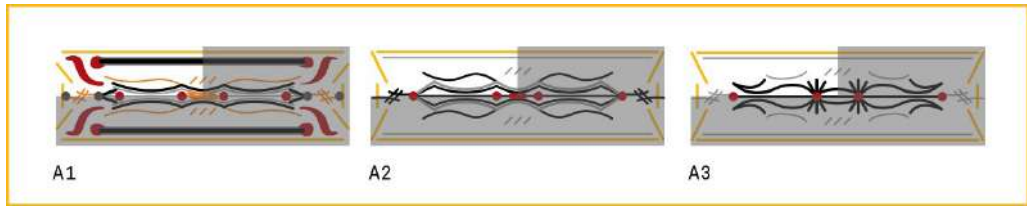


Figure 13: Symmetry in the wide board filete patterns.

From the center line, curves are drawn based in a constructive grid of seven to nine columns, which varies according to the dimensions of the wide board (Figure 14). Regardless of the overall design width, the filete pattern core is always located in the five central columns, and occupies approximately one-third of the wide board height. The points are also arranged following this grid. These structural and proportional principles, common to all filete patterns, give them a certain visual identity. It would be interesting to check whether this is an exclusive characteristic of Biriba's work, or if such structures are also present in filetes by other truck art painters.

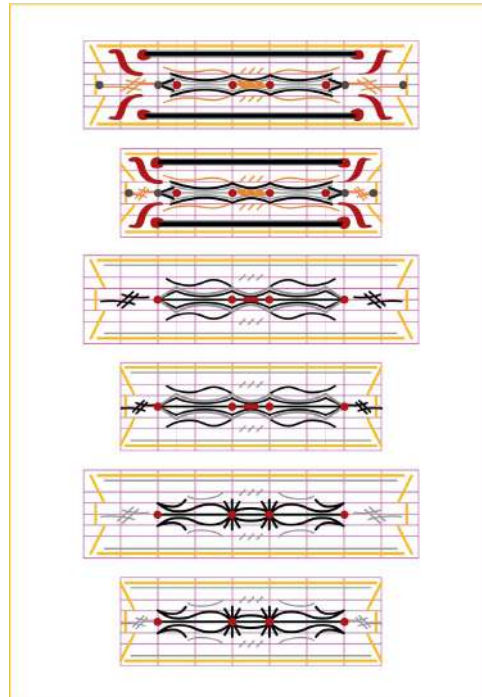


Figure 14: Variations of the three wide board filete patterns, based in constructive grids of 7 or 9 columns.

The findings regarding the filete pattern structure became evident as collected data from interview and photographs was organized in tables and diagrams. Even before facilitating the understanding of research results for a reader, information design can help researchers to better understand their own research results, providing new ways of visualizing the study object, potentially generating new conclusions.

Symmetry and borders

Two characteristics common to all different filete patterns created by Biriba, and easily identified, are the presence of borders and of vertical and horizontal symmetry. According to Gombrich (1979, p. 129), symmetrical ornaments provoke the sensation of an “expanded horizon.” When faced with a symmetrical ornament, Gombrich asserts that the brain quickly understands that one side is the reflection of the other, leading the eye to fix focus on the less redundant point of information, which is the ornament center. Moreover, on examining the peripheral extremities, the eye would go neither to one side nor the other, remaining suspended between two mirrored hemispheres. This path taken by our gaze through the ornament would, according to the author, create the effect of an “expanded horizon.”

Gombrich also compares the “expanded horizon” effect to Gibson’s concept of “panoramic flow” (Gibson, 1950), suggesting that the effect of a symmetrical ornament would be similar to our experience of moving in the real world.

Walking or driving towards an object on level ground and fixing our eyes on the “target,” we not only see it increase in size, we also perceive what Gibson calls the “panoramic flow” of the surround which opens up before us and swings round in a regular pattern. In this situation asymmetry of the flow will either denote that we have swayed from our course and must adjust it, or that the ground is not level. In other words the “balance” of symmetrical patterning of peripheral vision is involved in the basic experience of monitoring our own balance and movement. (Gombrich, 1979, p. 129)

The author also warns about the importance of borders or other types of insulation to ensure the reading of an arranged set of symmetrical drawings.

It fits in well with these considerations that the “balance” of symmetrical design demands as a corollary a firm frame or another means of isolating the configuration. In particular any further repetition will threaten the repose; because it destroys the uniqueness of central axis. The sequence ATA is symmetrical, but if it is repeated as ATAATAATA, rival symmetrical

orders of TAAT and AATAA are created which extend on either side and threaten the restfulness of the single reading [...]. A variety of “templates” fit the case and so the search cannot come to a successful conclusion. (Gombrich, 1979, p. 129-130)

Biriba's truck art patterns include borders and insulation that protect the filetes' symmetry. The truck body physical structure (Figure 7) segments the wide board in several sections isolated from each other by the ironwork. Once in each section only one filete is painted, body shape itself protects its symmetry. Biriba also paints a border around every single filete, following truck body's structure, in order to guarantee even more protection to its symmetrical harmony. The border delimits the field to be ornamented serving as a barrier to the observer's eyes and highlighting the filete's core by bringing all the attention to the center of the ornament. Furthermore, the border also serves as an orientation for the painter by marking the area to be ornamented (Gombrich, 1979, p. 75).

The singularity of Biriba's filetes

Once similarities between the patterns have been verified, it is possible to establish their uniqueness. The filete described in A1 model (Figure 12) is the first pattern used by Biriba at Carrocerias Garcia, being a joint creation with Seu Cláudio (former company painter). The stripper is partially adopted to facilitate execution, but the drawing still has many references to Seu Cláudio's truck art, which was entirely made by brush, as can be noticed in the black and thick lines located at the base and the top of the ornament.

Characteristic of Seu Cláudio's truck art patterns are the brushstrokes at the end of the filete lines (Figure 2). In contrast with that, traces obtained with a stripper are light lines of uniform thickness, but in A1 pattern the set of stripper lines ends up creating a shape with varied thickness, producing an effect analogous to the change in thickness characteristic of filetes made by brush. This effect happens in the filete's core where the lines are really close to each other, leaving almost no blank space. The accumulation of lines ends up creating a drawing with more fill compared to A2 and A3 patterns.

Following Seu Cláudio's retirement, in 2010, Biriba became the only painter at Carrocerias Garcia. From that moment, Biriba started to produce his pieces of truck art exclusively with a stripper, using, for wide boards, two patterns created by himself: A2 and A3. Created while working in Jacareí, A2 filete pattern (Figure 12, center) has in its core a shape similar to that found in A1 (Figure 12, left), although a little taller and with larger blank spaces inside. In addition, because the edges are light, the core of the pattern is highlighted. A2 pattern composition

is cleaner than A1, requiring fewer steps for production (compare left and center columns in Figure 12). Besides that, the production is fastest because it does not require the use of a brush.

Created in Mogi das Cruzes while working at Carrocerias Garcia, Biriba's A3 pattern (Figure 12, right) has an execution step less than A2. It is cleaner than the previous ones, having no double line and assuming integrally the characteristics of the stripper light lines (Figure 15). On the other hand, its curves are more complex, with more changes in direction than the other patterns. If in A1 the main form was established by areas filled with color, and in A2 by overlapping lines, in A3 the movements of the curves creates a gestalt effect, which fills the wide board without loading it with information. A3 pattern has certain uniqueness in its layout, yet it remains faithful to the constructive grid and symmetry common to all Biriba's designs.



Figure 15: Filete following pattern A3 made by Biriba at Carrocerias Garcia (photo from Carrocerias Garcia collection, used with permission).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The methods and procedures described here made it possible to discover general principles behind the filetes painted by Biriba at Carrocerias Garcia. Common aspects of different filete patterns, which give them a certain visual identity were identified. Simultaneously, it was possible to appreciate their uniqueness through the identification of the morphological and structural variations that make them different from each other.

The study presented here focused on truck art produced by a technique different from that documented by Finizola and Santana (2014), who focused on paintings made by stencil. It offers, therefore, a different record of this type of popular Brazilian manifestation about which there is still so little investigation. It will be necessary to expand the analysis beyond Biriba and Carrocerias Garcia in order to describe what characterizes Brazilian truck art in general, as well as to verify if there are singularities in the work of different painters.

Up to date, 40 truck painters have been identified only within the state of São Paulo (Figure 16). Some of these painters work in structured companies such as Carrocerias Garcia, while others work in small workshops or even as autonomous artists. As a next step of the research exposed in this article, the work of 19 other painters from the state of São Paulo, should be examined, using the methods and procedures presented here.

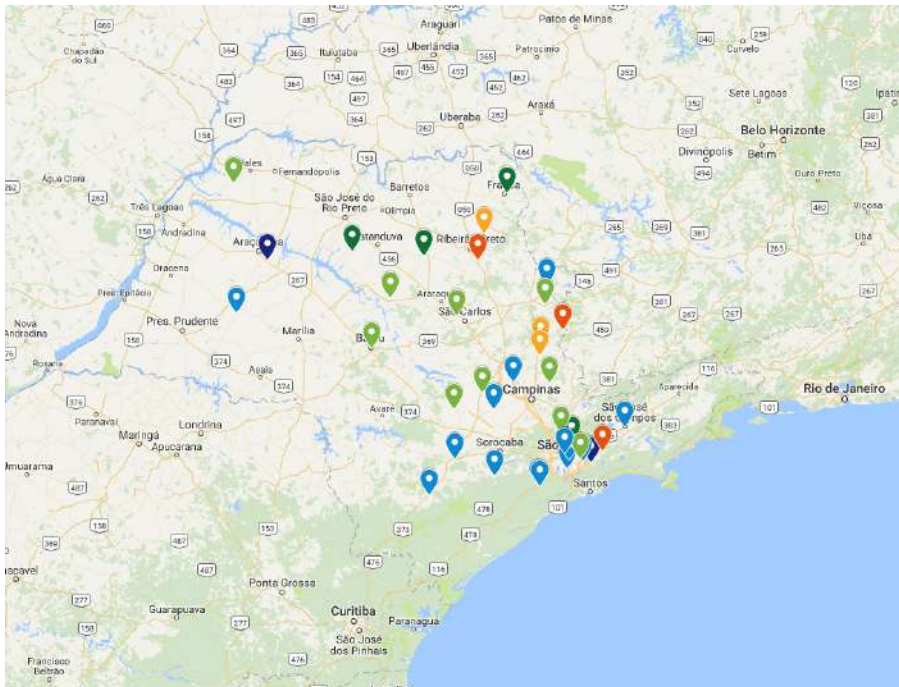


Figure 16: The location of truck body painters identified in São Paulo state.

Researching truck art from an information design perspective lead to the deconstruction and rebuilding of the artifacts under scrutiny several times, something that allowed for a greater comprehension than that would be obtained by simple direct observation. The vectorization process demanded accurate observation of pattern drawings and their simplification, making visible the structures

that permeate the composition of each design. Once vectorized, different parts of a filete can be isolated, allowing for the visualization of its internal structures. It also facilitates the recompositions of its production process —something that must always be compared with the craftsman’s testimony for greater accuracy. The data gathered, besides producing individual cards, generated infographics that facilitate the overall view of the artifacts studied, allowing the reader to more easily follow the research analysis and conclusions and also facilitating the analysis process by enabling the object of study to be considered from new perspectives.

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