

REPORT DESIGN AND HANDICRAFT

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I write this account in an especially dubious condition, on one hand as a mediator of the round table Design and Handicraft, which took place in August 2017, and on the other as a participant and observer of the transformations that have occurred in the field of design since then. The distance in time allows another perspective, expanded, which allows to see and describe the construction of a trajectory that began in 2015, when the Simpósio Brasileiro de Design Sustentável + International Symposium on Sustainable Design (SBDS + ISSD) welcomed for the first time the theme of Design and Handicraft under the tripod of sustainability.

It must be said that SBDS + ISSD had its first edition in 2007, in Curitiba (PR), organized by the Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR) and encouraged other partner universities to host the event in the following years. In 2009, it was the turn of Universidade Anhembi Morumbi in São Paulo and, in 2013, the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Universidade Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Unisinos) and Centro Universitário Ritter dos Reis (UniRitter) in Porto Alegre.

It was only in 2015, however, motivated by the need to understand the relationship between design [4] and handicrafts [5], observing the market pros-

pects, cultural issues and sustainability, that the theme, in roundtable format, was incorporated into the discussions held at the SBDS + ISSD. The event, on an intimate scale organized by the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio) incorporated the relationship between design and handicrafts into the sustainability debate.

The structure of the meeting was organized in order to make SBDS a place of idea exchange defined under the tripod of sustainability, triple bottom line — people, planet, profit: 1. social pillar (people) — design, territory and culture, social innovation and collaborative models; 2. environmental pillar (planet) — ecomaterials, environmental labelling; 3. economic pillar (profit) — design and handicraft, circular economy.

On the occasion, I received the invitation from SBDS, in person of Prof. Alfredo Jefferson, to lead the first-round table Design and Handicraft, and I immediately felt the immense responsibility I had ahead of me, especially when considering the important actors who have pioneered this path in Brazil. In trying to bring together the various perspectives and experiences that guided the relationship between design and craftsmanship, the priority was to reconstruct, in part, the paths travelled for the composition of this Brazilian history, especially for the sustainability agenda.

He understood that, in order to master the theme, it was necessary to assume its singularities, outlined, above all, in the duality of a relationship that was theoretically structured at the same time as it was exercised in practice and field action. Immense was the challenge of designers and managers who were faced with the craft environment, with a social, cultural and economic environment far from that for which they were prepared academically and professionally. I needed to understand that without much training and far from the industrial environment, the design professional found new ways to produce, conceive, relate. In its majority, the methodological approaches of design that considered the perspectives of the industrial production and, although renewed with more comprehensive concepts, systemic and strategic, did not realize when of the artisanal environment.

To this was added, dealing with sustainability issues not only environmental, but essentially social and economic ones, which made the challenge even greater. It was through the experiences in the field, therefore, that much of the history involving designers and craftsmen was being built in Brazilian territory. And it was in the face of the challenge that pioneering actors, designers and artisans were forged, opening the way to new possibilities of interaction between

knowledge and doing. In this scenario, liberal professionals, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, universities and entities of the most diverse types experimenting with models and forms of action emerged. Boundaries were tested, models built along the process and forged references.

With the intention of rescuing this trajectory, the framework for the composition of the round table Design and Handicraft was defined, modelled for reflection from reports and experiences of actors who contributed to the construction of the history of the relationship between design and handicraft in Brazil. The guests brought the paths taken, stories that tell visions and experiences, diverse, rich, singular in their narratives and that made possible the interlocution of different perspectives, professional backgrounds and instances of performance.

Figure 1 – Round table Design and Handicraft SBDS 2015 (from right to left) Lia Mônica Rossi (*in memoriam*), Raquel Noronha, Helena Sampaio, Ana Maria Andrade, Virginia Cavalcanti and Rita Engler



Source: Author's collection.

I did not realize that I was also contributing, in some way, to model a history of the designer's commitment as a persuaded supporting social agent for the preservation and enhancement of the craft. The memory of the words spoken by Lia Mônica Rossi today seems to me more limpid and valuable, "the creative verbs and sustainability" that showed in no less than ten cases her process of intervention in 14 communities in the Northeast of the country.

So bold in her trajectory of more than twenty years of performance, that it is worth repeating here.

ADAPT a good “original design”; ADAPT traditional components to new products; FRAGMENT elements and COMBINE with traditional product; ELIMINATE waste; ELIMINATE lethal stamping process, ADAPT a good original and ELIMINATE a painful finishing process; REPLACE perishable raw material; REDUCE to optimize; ELIMINATE finishing process; DIVERSIFY to stand out; PRESERVE, PROMOTE, VALUE, REVITALIZE [...] (OLIVEIRA et al. 2017)¹

Active and thriving, Lia Rossi spoke with energy and brilliance, generously sharing wisdom and experiences gained in the most different corners of the Brazilian Northeast. Soon after, Lia Rossi passed away and left us missing her immensely. Here are my sincere thanks to her participation, but especially to her pioneering and enthusiastic spirit, her fiber and altruism in dealing with the Brazilian craftsman. Our respect and appreciation.

The table also brought other valuable contributions. How can we not mention here the contribution of Helena Sampaio, who added to the debate the important role of ArteSol as a national public policy to stimulate Brazilian craftsmanship. Helena Sampaio, who served as national coordinator of solidarity craftsmanship from 1995 to 2002, incorporated into the discussion a vision of public policy management within the framework of the Solidarity Community Council, already emphasizing the importance of partnerships between civil society and the state.

By establishing the advantage of networking relationships with the negotiated production of knowledge between academic and traditional knowledge, we have incorporated the anthropological vision, under the gaze of Raquel Noronha. With a conceptual approach on the “organic designer”, it reinforced the inevitability of building collaborative design methodologies with the inclusion of all those involved in the project process.

As the lectures followed, it became more evident the evolution and the path already taken by designers and artisans. The signs of the maturation of this relationship became explicit with the *Laboratório O Imaginário* (Universidade Federal de Pernambuco – UFPE) experience report, by partner and friend Ana Maria Andrade. I explain: since 2001, we have shared the management of the laboratory, the challenges and pitfalls of adopting a transdisciplinary methodological approach developed and experienced by a group of teachers, technicians and students from various areas of knowledge. The collective, once again reinforced, brought in this narrative a baggage of performance in artisan communities of the State of Pernambuco and the approach of the university with the local reality.

¹ OLIVEIRA, A. F; FRANZATO, C; DEL GAUDIO, C. *Ecovisões projetuais: pesquisas em design e sustentabilidade no Brasil* [e-book]. São Paulo: Blucher, 2017.

The closing of that emblematic table also anticipated a perspective of social innovation on the relationship between design and craftsmanship. The understanding of handicrafts as a creative enterprise was brought by Rita Engler and it brought important reflections to the discussion of studies for local solutions and paths to sustainability.

Despite the reflections resulting from that debate, some provocations brought conceptual convergence:

- Respect for local social interaction networks and appreciation of the communities aesthetic heritage;
- The importance of understanding social policies through emancipatory principles, which must be contributed to combat situations of poverty and not to feed the condition of dependency;
- The construction of collaborative design methodologies associated with the need to admit that all those involved in the design process can be “organic designers”;
- The challenge of bringing university and society closer together and confronting academic knowledge with practice, sensitizing and committing students and professors to the need for social transformation.

The compilation of this conference can be better understood in the title *Projective Ecovisions*, published in 2017, the same year in which the 6th edition of SBDS + ISSD was held, celebrating its 10 years of existence. The event would take place in Belo Horizonte, organized by the postgraduate program in Built Environment and Sustainable Heritage of the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG). Again, I was invited to coordinate the Design and Handicraft table, this time by Professor Andrea Franco. Armed with another look, living new experiences by the *Laboratório O Imaginário*, I accepted the invitation right away.

The challenge of composing a new table capable of promoting the production of knowledge and contributions to the field, motivated me to look for the names of the speakers. We intended to move forward in the reflections produced in 2015, guided by the reconstruction of processes and actors in the history of the relationship between design and craftsmanship in Brazil, and bring new experiences, contemporary, of interlocution of this relationship, focusing mainly on sustainability. The access to the market, still a very controversial issue, was also a focus especially recommended by the organization of the event.

To guide the framework of the Design and Handicraft table 2017, we pondered about:

- The advancement of the interlocution of design with the immense complexity of the reality of Brazilian handicraft and the self-questioning of designers about their own models and design practices;
- The diversity of interventionist approaches identified in the vast Brazilian territory and experienced by NGOs, universities, liberal professionals, government agencies;
- The limits of the relationship between design and handicraft, still apparently very imprecise and sensitive for most of the actors involved, as a result of the profound contradictions derived from technological, economic, social, cultural and environmental contexts;
- The urgency of the search for alternatives that preserve the artisanal activity while expanding the income generation of artisanal communities, in favor of more socially inclusive and sustainable development models;
- The transversal intersections that directly affect the artisanal production, such as market, management, public policies, especially regarding social and economic issues.
- This understanding came from the conviction that:
 - It is essential to value cultural goods and their territories by establishing a dialogue between consumption and production, tradition and innovation, and the creation of conditions capable of boosting local resources in favor of benefits for the communities;
 - The designer can and must move from the role of creator to that of mediator in the processes of intervention;
 - This shift is supported by the recognition of the creative and technical potential of craftsmen and artisans, essentially in the value of the unequivocal and inherently invisible human dimension behind materiality.

Yet, under the economic pillar, the table Design and Handicraft was composed by Christian Ullmann (founder of iT projects) with provocations about the role of the designer and his social and environmental responsibility in design, innovation and management for the creation and development of products, projects, systems and services; Paula Dib (founder of Transforma Design) who presented experiences in training, rescue of techniques and adaptation of craft production in urban and rural communities in Brazil and abroad; Mary Figueiredo (proprietary partner of the brand Mary Design, from Belo Horizonte)

describing the workshops and lectures given throughout the country by Serviço Brasileiro de Apoio às Micro e Pequenas Empresas (Sebrae), Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial (Senai), Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial (Senac); Tibério Tabosa (researcher, consultant and process facilitator in the fields of creative economy and market access/*Laboratório O Imaginário* (UFPE) in an approach about the expanded product and the production chain of handicrafts.

Figure 2 – Round table Design and Handicraft SBDS + ISSD 2017 (from right to left) Virginia Cavalcanti, Christian Ullmann, Tibério Tabosa, Mary Figueiredo, Paula Dib



Source: Author's collection.

Christian Ullmann began his lecture by instigating a discussion about the controversy involved with market access and the role of design as a mediator of this approach. With more than twenty years of professional experience between Brazil and South America, he brought provocations that questioned the formats of the intervention processes experienced in Brazil. With detachment, he shared the challenges he faced over the years, exemplifying his own successes and mistakes.

With a degree in Industrial Design from the Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Urbanismo, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina, Christian Ullmann chose Brazil to reside since 1996. Having worked as a consultant in design, innovation and management for the creation and development of products, projects, systems and services, he coordinated projects for companies,

governments and institutions in Brazil and Latin America, with awards in Italy, Spain, Brazil and Argentina. Professor and lecturer of Design for Sustainability in different national and international educational institutions, he is the creator, along with Tania de Paula, of iT Projetos — an office for product development and projects with social and environmental responsibility.

Nomad was the name chosen for the workshop project, with the objective of valuing the environmental, cultural and characteristic issues specific to each location, but especially resulting from its concern in dealing with the “ready market variables”. Christian Ullmann mentions the difficulty to reach, with the intervention, the layers of problems and complexity inherent to the diverse realities, in the social, economic, cultural and political sphere of each group. Christian Ullmann’s report, described in this volume, truly traces a timeline that parallels the history of the relationship between design and craftsmanship in Brazil and his professional trajectory. This narrative, Christian Ullmann himself will do.

In the sequence, we were presented with the sensibility and delicacy of Paula Dib’s lecture that, when invited to compose the table, brought an excerpt by Octávio Paz as inspiration:

The craftsman is not defined in terms of nationality or religion. He is not faithful to an idea, not even an image, but to a practical discipline: his work. His workshop is a social microcosm governed by his own special laws. His work day is not dictated rigidly by a clock, but by a rhythm that has more to do with the body and its sensitivity than with abstract production needs. While he works, he can talk to other people and even start singing...

By raising the idea of reflecting on the relationship that we (designers) “establish with artisans and various social organizations”, he pointed out:

- “The look at the context,
- For the rhythm.
- The look at me: from where I look, what do I see?
- Intervention × interaction.
- And the subtle and concrete aspects that involve this practice that I like to call ‘delicate activism’”.

It is not for nothing that Paula touched everyone with a light and intense talk, describing her “practice as creative, social and reflective”, revealing the involvement and paths travelled in her trajectory. Founder of Trans.forma Design, Paula graduated in Industrial Design by Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado (2000) and works, since 2003, in the qualification, rescue of techniques and adequacy

of the artisan production in urban and rural communities in the Brazilian territory and abroad. Her career attests to her performance, winner in London of the International Award Young Entrepreneur Designer 2006 promoted by the British Council and Market Design Award TOP XXI, and first place by the popular jury in the category New Talents promoted by Federação das Indústrias do Estado de São Paulo (FIESP) in 2007. Participated in the exhibitions Design Possível, in Milan; Bienal Brasileira de Design in São Paulo; New World in London and 100% Design in London.

His sensitive and humanistic look brought invaluable contributions to the debate. Identifying potentialities, provoking the rethinking of the designer's social role, his performance is always turned to people. Always questioning about consumerism, the environmental impact of industrial production and social inequality, Paula has adopted Brazilian handicraft as a cause. With a trajectory of more than 30 projects with urban and rural communities in several regions of the country, she is today a reference in the humanist approach of this relationship.

In the sequence, each speaker would become more evident the indissociability between individual life stories and the format of each designer's professional performance. The speaker Mary Figueiredo reinforced this understanding by mentioning having been forged in Vale do Jequitinhonha. With few resources, she attributed her inventiveness to the ambience, characters, culture of the place where she was born. A tireless defender of the craftwork and of the potentialities of Brazilian artisans, Mary proposes to "elevate the concept of national handicraft, adding design to already known and explored techniques and others almost in extinction".

Mary Figueiredo was partner and owner of the brand Mary Design, from Belo Horizonte, for 34 years, closed in 2017, the same year that this round table took place. The writer, born in Minas Gerais, teaches in workshops and lectures throughout the country, through Sebrae, Senai, Senac and was part of the Projeto Talentos do Brasil, coordinated by the Ministério do Desenvolvimento Agrário. She was the curator of the Minas Trend Preview event and director of the Sindicato das Bijuterias de Minas Gerais. Among the awards received are the commendation Industrial Merit by Federação das Indústrias do Estado de Minas Gerais (FIEMG), José Costa Award / Fundação Dom Cabral and Diário do Comércio, for a company that makes the difference in the market and Maria Elvira Salles Ferreira trophy as a remarkable woman by the Associação Comercial de Belo Horizonte.

With a fluency and intimacy of her own, she has given us an account of years of experience with fashion creation, the various interactions with artisans and their premises. She assumes that “made the necessity the mother of her inventiveness”, as well as thousands of Brazilians who, not having the resources to buy materials, recycle, reuse, reinvent. Her professional career, initiated in adolescence, personifies the creative power of Brazil and the capacity to transform objects and apparently disposable materials into artifacts with a certain materialized poetry, linked to theoretical basis and biographical texts.

The biography and life history were also determinant for Tibério Tabosa’s immersion in the world of handicraft. Passionate and a collector of popular art and crafts, he has always dedicated time and effort to get to know Brazilian artisans and their crafts. Moved by this passion, he accumulated a lot of knowledge about the handicraft practices in the Brazilian territory and in the countries where he worked for 25 years as a multinational producer of mass products executive.

Tabosa, who holds a Master’s degree in Production Engineering from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, defines himself as a researcher, consultant and process facilitator in the fields of Creative Economy and Market Access at the UFPE research and design laboratory *O Imaginário*. Besides being a cultural producer with focus on research and studies on productive chains. Specialist in areas such as marketing, trade marketing and brand experience, he presented important contributions in an approach on the concepts of extended product and productive chain of handicraft.

With a professional profile different from the other speakers, his contribution was fundamental to instrumentalize the debate on issues related to the market perspective. Sources of financing, public policies, price formation and the various layers of the expanded product were addressed during his explanation. Mediated by both technical knowledge and enthusiasm in doing craftsmanship, he clearly and didactically traced the application of marketing concepts to the crafts universe.

The debate that followed, valuable, allowed the interlocution between different but complementary visions, experiences, training and approaches. I must humbly add my own contribution here. Acting in the coordination of the laboratory *O Imaginário* of UFPE, I have been militating, living and researching the relationship between design and craftsmanship in Brazil since 2001. I have collaborated in the formatting and implementation of the design intervention model for artisan environments and have shared the challenges faced by the Laboratory with the most diverse artisan groups in the Northeast of Brazil.

I am a designer by training, in fact, graduated in Industrial Design with qualification in product design, nomenclature in 1990. Master and Ph.D. in environmental and urban structures from Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo (FAU/USP), professor at the design department of UFPE and currently coordinator of Postgraduate Program in Design of UFPE (PPGDesign). Researcher and advisor of the intersection between design and material culture, I have always been adept at project practice. Here too, just like the speakers, my life story made the difference, I was born inside the industry, more specifically the furniture industry founded by my father. My familiarity with the manual craft comes from there. Chisels and planers were part of my repertoire from a very early age. From there to design education, the study of material culture and the relationship between design and handicraft, it was a matter of time.

At the Design and Handicraft table in 2017, I had the privilege of associating the findings of the previous table, SBDS 2015, and consolidating networks of collaboration aimed at recognizing the value of craftsmanship and its relationship with design. Armed with theoretical arguments, field experiences and reflections on the role of the designer, we moved forward in the debate and hope to have contributed to it:

- Awareness and mobilization of the scientific community for the value of handicraft and its research potential with the potentiation of the discussion of the relationship between design and handicraft;
- Awareness and mobilization of the public opinion about the value of handicraft and its potentialities for the socioeconomic development of its creators;
- Discussions and reflections that will allow deepening on the definition of the limits of action of design interventions in handicrafts;
- Search for alternatives that add value to handicrafts, fundamental to preserve the activity and, at the same time, expand the income generation of craft communities, especially in places where there are few or no opportunities for income generation;
- Reflection of the designer who intends to act in the artisan environment, fundamental to position himself in a responsible way and be prepared to deal with the complexity and contradictions inherent to the artisan craft and its artisans.

In the end, a feeling of duty fulfilled and an immense gratitude to Professors Alfredo Jefferson and Andrea Franco for the invitation and confidence.

In 2019, the third-round table on Design and Crafts was held at the 7th edition of the symposium, now named Simpósio de Design Sustentável / Sustainable

Design Symposium (SDS), held in Recife (PE). This table continued the reflections made in the 2015 and 2017 editions, discussing the valorization of cultural goods and their territories; the dialogue between consumption and production, tradition and innovation; the potentiation of local resources in favor of benefits for the communities; the displacement of the designer's role as mediator and, above all, the recognition of the creative and technical potential of artisans, essentially in the value of the unequivocal and inherently invisible human dimension behind materiality; but this is another story...

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