

Criss-crossed dialogues

Adélia Borges

“We are together, Paulino, in the back and forth movement of the barges, even Atlantic.”¹

At the beginning of 2016, I received an invitation from Bárbara Coutinho, the director of the Museu de Design e Moda de Lisboa, MUDE, to join her in the curatorship of an exhibition aiming to show “how the designers from Portugal and Brazil have been discussing the issue of identity, collective memory and the global citizenship through several expressions (product, fashion, graphic)”. I complied eagerly, but I thought this was a matter of relatively limited scope.

The exchanges between our countries in the field of design seemed circumscribed to a few names and one-off projects. In my mind came a short list that began with Joaquim Tenreiro, the great carpenter who migrated from Serra da Estrela in Portugal, to become the father of the modern Brazilian furniture in the 1940s. It happened that one of the major icons of Brazilian design, the cobblestone patterns of Copacabana, in Rio de Janeiro, actually came initially from Lisbon. Furthermore, one of the best-known personalities in Brazil abroad, Carmen Miranda, was born and died Portuguese. More than a voice, she is remembered for the image she evokes — a design construction.

In the two years between the initial invitation and the opening of the exhibition, however, I discovered a fascinating subject. It was as if I was pulling the thread of a ball whose end I could not see, so rich and multiple the exchanges were, and are. Each pulled thread revealed an unsuspected size and new connections.

We decided that our gaze should extend historically beyond what some authors consider design – restricted to the post-Industrial Revolution period – to include material culture from the time of colonisation. On the research radar, themes such as the use of blue and white tile panels – feature of the urban landscape of cities such as São Luís do Maranhão and Belém do Pará – or even the Portuguese influence in the diffusion of trades such as carpentry, typography, jewellery, weaving and embroidery and lace textiles, among others. It should be noted that this was an enriched influence from the late nineteenth century onwards with the arrival in Brazil of immigrants from other countries. In parallel, we wanted to take a closer look at the exchanges among professionals from the two countries, growing in the twentieth-first century.

The work of research, selection of the pieces and the structuring of the exhibition nuclei was long. I had already held another bi-national exhibition², but in it, each curator had focused on his or her own country, made their own choices and drafted their own texts. Here, it was an interweaving that rendered the process more laborious but also much more productive and rich. Given the breadth of the contents surveyed, we both decided that it would be more

¹ CARVALHO, Ruy Duarte de, *Desmedida: Luanda, São Paulo, São Francisco e volta*. Rio de Janeiro: Língua Geral, 2010, p. 252.

² ÍCONES DO DESIGN FRANÇA-BRASIL, Curatorship: BORGES, Adélia e MORRISSET, Cédric. Exhibition held at the Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, and the Museu da Casa Brasileira, São Paulo, 2009.

appropriate to broaden the range, mapping situations, facts and issues than to delve into each of them. The exhibition assumed thus a kaleidoscopic character.

This introductory text will not repeat what will be found further down, near each nucleus in which the exhibition was organised. What I want to address here is a bit of the route seen from my side of the Atlantic, Brazil. I, thus, will refer to reflections that have been made over time, in many readings and conversations and that influenced or marked my curatorial performance.

On the edges of the hegemonic centres

First of all, we must ask: what interest would have an exhibition on design of Portugal and Brazil? We must acknowledge, in advance, that both are on the periphery of what concerns the international scene of design. Books such as *O Design do Século*, by Michael Tambini³; *História do Design Gráfico*, by Philip B. Meggs and Alston W. Purvis⁴; *Design Since 1945*, by Peter Dormer⁵; or *20th Century Design and Designers*, by Guy Julier⁶ do not name even one designer of both nations.

We share many things beyond international disinterest. In Portugal, the development of design “has been made almost always, with scarce means and resources”, states Bárbara Coutinho in the curatorial text of *HOW TO PRONOUNCE DESIGN IN PORTUGUESE?* (Mude, 2015). She refers as obstacles, among others, “the lack of strategic development policy” and the “insufficient industrialisation of the country”⁷. The very same situations also happen in Brazil!

The institutionalisation of design was late in both countries. The first grade course of design in Brazil occurs in 1963, with the creation of the Escola Superior de Desenho Industrial, in Rio de Janeiro. In Portugal, it happened in 1975 – therefore after the April Revolution – at the Faculdade de Belas Artes de Lisboa (and in 1969 at the Instituto de Arte e Decoração – IADE, focused on interior design).

Neither country has public design collections worthy of the name. The history of design in both only began to be told in the twentieth-first century; before that, there was ignorance and even disinterest for a supposed lack of importance concerning Design with a capital “D” practised in the hegemonic centres, which was worthy of note and recognition.

Also, we did not have a direct dialogue. It is revealing that Bárbara and I first met in an event in London – Design Connections, an annual programme of the British Council for curators and directors of design museums and festivals. That is, this intermediation was necessary for us to encounter.

A Past Filled with Conflicts

³ TAMBINI, Michael, *O Design do Século*, São Paulo: Ática, 1999.

⁴ MEGGS, Philip B.; PURVINS, Alston W., *História do Design Gráfico*, São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2009.

⁵ DORMER, Peter, *Design Since 1945*, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993

⁶ JULIER, Guy, *20th Century Design and Designers*, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993.

⁷ COUTINHO, Bárbara, *Como se Pronuncia Design em Português?*, Lisbon: CML/MUDE, 2015, p.3.

To place this lack of dialogue in the specific field of design requires looking beyond. The relationship between Brazil and Portugal has been, throughout history, marked by many conflicts, as it could not be otherwise when dealing with the colonizer x colonized duality, which is intrinsically a relationship of usurpation. During three centuries, Portugal made the intensive exploration of redwood [*pau-brasil*] – to the point of almost extinguishing the vegetal species that gave name to the new country –, sugarcane, gold, etc., bringing nearly six million Africans to work as slaves (by comparison, that amount is more than half the current population of Portugal). The spoliation was not restricted to the economic and social dimensions, rather it was unfolded in the field of culture, for it is part of the colonising spirit to impose its own values and beliefs as if they were the only acceptable ones. This is a fact that cannot be ignored or forgotten.

The independence of Brazil happened in 1822, one century and a half before the other Portuguese colonies. The relation with the former mainland, however, remained strong. Depending on the economic crisis, the migratory waves were many and at least until the mid-twentieth century, unidirectional: from Portugal to Brazil. As Ruy Castro states in Carmen Miranda's biography, Rio de Janeiro where the artist lived was “as Portuguese as the land she had come from – maybe more. In a population of about one million, Rio had near 200 thousand Portuguese – much more than Oporto, whose population was 150 thousand”⁸. Carmen Miranda arrived in 1909, ten months old; shortly after Joaquim Tenreiro's first visit to Brazil; born in Melo in 1906 and from the age of three alternating with his family periods in both countries, until he finally settled at Rio de Janeiro in 1928.

The integration of the Portuguese in Brazil was not easy. Several authors, from both nationalities, refer to a strong rejection of the Portuguese by the Brazilians. A witty observer of the triangle Portugal, Brazil, Africa, the Angolan writer, filmmaker and anthropologist Ruy Duarte de Carvalho, refers to a “generalised and patriotic feeling of anger and contempt against the Portuguese” he found in his travels to Brazil in the late twentieth and early twentieth-first centuries⁹.

In fact, we Brazilians, for a long time blamed Portugal for our pains. Had we been colonised by English, Dutch or French, ah, our history would have been much better... As teenagers, we blamed our father for our own problems and wanted to get as far away from him as possible, ashamed of what we considered his gaffes and his lack of refinement.

This feeling did not subside when, to the small traders who had come in search of survival, Portuguese intellectuals were summoned, expelled, directly or indirectly by the Salazar dictatorship. The writers Adolfo Casais Monteiro, Fidelino Figueiredo, Jaime Cortesão, Jorge de Sena, Sidónio Muralha, the architect Ricardo Severo, the ecologist Judith Cortesão, the painter Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, the historian Joaquim Barradas de Carvalho, the journalists Miguel Urbano Rodrigues and Vitor Ramos, the illustrators Arcindo

⁸ CASTRO, Ruy, *Uma Biografia de Carmen Miranda*, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2005 p. 13.

⁹ CARVALHO, Ruy Duarte de *op. Cit.*, p. 248.

Madeira and Jayme Cortez and the artist and designer Fernando Lemos – one of the key names of TANTO MAR – were some of them¹⁰. In the view of the Brazilian thinker and intellectual Antonio Candido, they were “an unplanned Portuguese mission, which brought positive and renewing cultural contributions due to people of thought and sensibility who represented our historical roots. They came individually, without a project to gather them. However, the fact is that they came, adjusted to the environment and enriched it within the same language and the same tradition.”¹¹ The absence of an organised movement has hindered, until now, the perception of the extent of their contributions to the Brazilian culture.

Repeat versus invent

The thought of one of these intellectuals, the philosopher and essayist Agostinho da Silva, played a decisive role in the curatorial reflection during the preparation of TANTO MAR. Born in Portugal in 1906, he lived in Brazil between 1944 and 1969, becoming a major figure in the creation of cultural bridges between Europe, Africa and America.

In *Vida Conversável*, Agostinho states: “What happened to me on the way to Brazil was that life in Portugal had been conditioned by the Portuguese environment, the powerful environment that exists in my home in Oporto, where I grew up and was educated. Even in institutions that seemed freer, such as the Faculdade de Letras do Porto, and others, that Portuguese society formed by those who stayed in Portugal had a great weight. So, arriving in Brazil soon several things happened. The first, perhaps, was that I found myself. (...) It opened something closed. (...) I entrusted myself to the stream, and it seems that the river circled the world on itself, returned to the source and then I had nothing more to do than let myself be carried away by the waters, completely abandon myself to what was happening around the world. (...) It was me who wanted to come because I could no longer breathe the air of Portugal. (...) Probably, because nobody is completely transformed, I was the same of Portugal, except that here I was in that armour of the medieval warriors (...) In Brazil, all this disappeared completely, I gave myself to the Brazilian life, much wider, much freer.”¹²

Although he refers to the impact of Brazil on his personal life and thinking, this reference of Agostinho da Silva to the issue of freedom seems to be key to understand certain differences in the material culture of the two countries.

The dissemination of crafts in Brazil fell far short from the European countries. If the crafts are based on the repetition of institutionalised procedures, in the

¹⁰ Before this period, other Portuguese had made a significant contribution to the graphic arts, illustration and caricature in Brazil, among them Bordalo Pinheiro, operating from 1875 to 1879; Fernando Correia Dias, from 1914 to the early 1930s, Manuel Mora, from 1917 to the 1940s and Arcindo Madeira, from the 1940s to the 1950s, besides Julião Machado, born in Luanda, who stayed in Portugal, before and after living in Brazil (from 1894 to 1920).

¹¹ CANDIDO, Antonio, “Intelectuais Portugueses e a Cultura Brasileira”, in GOBBI, M. V. Z.; FERNANDES, M. L. O.; JUNQUEIRA, R. S. (org.), *Intelectuais Portugueses e a Cultura Brasileira*. São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2002 pp. 30-32.

¹² SILVA, Agostinho da, *Vida conversável*, 2ª edição, Lisbon,: Assírio & Alvim, 1998, pp. 99-100.

technical improvement that presumes the use of adequate tools and techniques, etc., the precariousness of the means in Brazil valued the invention over repetition. Still in Agostinho's words: "It was from there, from Brazil, that I came up with this idea that many things cannot be said to be done tomorrow, because they should have been done yesterday and therefore we have to start anyway, if there are no conditions, we invent them."¹³

In the field of design, the figure that most exemplifies this counterpoint of freedom given by Brazil was Joaquim Tenreiro. Son and grandson of woodworkers from Serra da Estrela, he learned the technique in Portugal, but only in Brazil could he give vent to his creative vein, that, as he stated on several occasions, had been pruned by his father, more concerned with perfecting the craft in repeated forms. Tenreiro brought the technical dedication to a country that had in the inventiveness a "strategy of survival", in the words of the Brazilian designer Aloisio Magalhães.

It should be remembered that the lack of technical development in craft is also due to Portugal's desire to maintain the dependence of the colony on the finished products of the mainland and/or England by the commercial treaties to which it was submitted. As examples, the manufacture of fabrics in the colony suffered a significant setback in 1785, when Queen Maria I decreed the burning of all looms— the decree was revoked in 1809, by King João VI. Moreover, only in 1805, the Portuguese crown authorised the operation of the first ceramic manufacture on Brazilian soil – at Chácara Saramenha, located near Ouro Preto, in Minas Gerais. It did not establish any contact with the rich ceramic tradition of Minas, adopting techniques of manufacture and vitrification directly based on Portuguese similar.

Still in the tuning of a shedding of rigidity, it is observed that the figurative tradition of the Portuguese tiles is broken in the modern Brazilian movement. A striking performance is that of Athos Bulcão, who conceives tiles with simple geometric patterns, designed as modules for serial production and frees the workers from the combination rules. By allowing workers to join modules as they please, in the various possible combinations, he makes them co-authors of the panels. Once, explaining the way he conceives the tiles, Athos wrote: "The beautiful handmade arabesques of the past can not be turned into 'stamps'. This, I think, would be equivalent to a typewriter emulating Luiz XIV calligraphy."¹⁴

Along with the greater freedom found in Brazil, another recurring phenomenon is the expansion scale that Portuguese things suffered when they arrived here. This magnification may be literal, when we speak, for example, of the size of the floral pattern of the chintz in both countries. Or, the "re-design" that the landscaper, artist and designer Roberto Burle Marx did, in 1971, in the boardwalk of Copacabana, in Rio de Janeiro, when he places the waves parallel to the sea and increases its size in relation to the original one made in 1904, that replicated the measures of the pavement at Rossio square, in Lisbon.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 119.

¹⁴ BULCÃO, Athos., *Intégracion Architecturale*, Genève: Rousseau, s.d., Apud. MORAIS, Frederico, *Azulejaria Contemporânea no Brasil*, São Paulo: Editoração Publicações & Comunicações, 1998, p. 143.

Or it may be metaphorical when one considers that Portuguese inheritances have become very strong signs of the material culture “of Brazil” abroad – the wave is an example. This has to do with the size of the country itself. In area, Brazil is 92 times larger than Portugal – 8,514,876 km² and 92,212 km². In population, it is 21 times bigger – 207 million and 10 million, respectively.

African Heritage

Another difference is the assimilation of the African culture in Brazil. The Portuguese Carmen Miranda only became whom she was when approaching this heritage. She ostensibly used and heralded the *balangandãs*, the most representative jewel of Afro-Brazilian culture.

The decision to incorporate Africa into the exhibition came from the perception that the flows between Brazil and Portugal often involved other former Portuguese colonies. It also was reinforced by the desire to take into account the collection stored in the building where the exhibition was held – the Palácio dos Condes da Calheta, at Belém, Lisbon, where was hosted part of the programme MUDE Outside, which takes place while the Museum’s headquarters, on Rua Augusta, undergoes requalification work. The Renaissance palace had been the headquarters of the Colonial Agricultural Museum, later called Overseas Agricultural Museum, that is, a place where themes close to the relationship between coloniser and colonised were approached.

Thus, we were able to use baskets and ceramics collected in the 1940s and the 1950s by ethnographic expeditions to Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Senegal and East Timor, stored in the technical reserves of the palace. That is, we wanted not only to “use” the building, neutralising its previous life but also dialogue with both. From this side of the Atlantic, the existence of a xylotheque with a profusion of African woods (that could not be moved from its location) was a pretext for the proposition of a political discourse opposing the geopolitical vision assigning to some countries the role of suppliers of raw materials and, to others, of intelligence in the transformation of the finished product.

A research line that was not included in the exhibition was the Portuguese influence, re-read by Brazil, reaching Africa with the return of the slaves. Significant examples are the so-called “agudás”, that took to Benin and Togo the architecture and language learnt in Bahian captivity, and the funerary art of Mbali taken to the south of Angola, in the region today known as Namibe, by Portuguese and slaves who left Pernambuco.

New Winds

Due to the unidirectionality of the migratory flows between Portugal and Brazil, TANTO MAR shows more examples of Portuguese culture absorbed in Brazil than the opposite. The departure to Portugal of Brazilian left-wing intellectuals after the Carnation Revolution was not as significant as the previous one, from the Portuguese dissatisfied with Salazarism that settled in Brazilian territory. Although restricted, it has a significant moment in the use of the columns of the

Palácio da Alvorada (residence of the President of the Republic of Brazil, designed by Oscar Niemeyer in 1958) in a school in Moimenta da Beira, in the interior of Portugal, and censored by the dictatorship of Salazar. Moreover, in Brazil, the design of the columns was replicated in various ways across the country, in erudite or popular readings, incorporated into walls of houses, trucks, protection or as a decorative motif in a wide variety of objects. An excellent opportunity to reflect on the often neglected fact that forms are not neutral and it is their nature to have social, political and cultural implications.

In recent years, Portugal has been attracting the attention of the world. It became a cool tourist destination, celebrated by the international media. Brazil could not be immune to this phenomenon. Brazilians were, in 2017, the largest foreign community in Portugal, with 20,4% of the whole. A survey by the Association of Professionals and Companies of Real Estate Agents of Portugal says that, in 2017, one in four properties in Portugal was bought by Brazilians, who stand out for the highest average value of the houses. Therefore, they are Brazilians with higher purchasing power and, in general, more educated. There are designers and architects among them.

Portugal became a destination for young people who used to study design in Italy and England. Alice Floriano lived for five years in Lisbon, where she studied jewellery with the designer Tereza Seabra and manufactured jewellery for the stylist Ricardo Preto. Presently, she has galleries in São Paulo and Porto Alegre, where she also represents Portuguese jewellers. Lúcia Abdenur attended the Lisbon school of jewellery, Arco. Both take part in the Associação Portuguesa de Joalheria Contemporânea (PIN), which has been playing an essential role in the dialogue between the two countries. Besides them, the exhibition also includes associated Sandra Frias, Miriam Korolkovas, Marina Sheetikof and Márcia Cirne Lima.

There are deliberate initiatives to promote greater collaboration between professionals from both countries. From 2013, when the Year of Portugal in Brazil was organised (2012/2013), two-dozen Brazilians were invited to create objects in the program *Bordallianos do Brasil*, which involved first-rate artists and is still active. For the exhibition, and from Brazil, we selected works by Tunga, Vik Muniz, Efrain Almeida, Frida Baranek and Tónico Lemos Auad.

Concerning individual projects, highlight goes to Brunno Jahara, who designed the Transatlântica tableware for Vista Alegre. From a distance, the images look like the traditional ones from that field; from nearby, seahorses and stars and elements that Brunno took from Brazilian every day are visible – from a popsicle to a gun. The same Vista Alegre welcomed the Brazilian Eliezer Nascimento in its International Design Pool Program, a design residence for young creators from all over the world interested in participating in a creative laboratory in ceramics and glass. Eliezer brought to the projects a very Brazilian practice: the re-use of things hitherto seen as worthless. In this case, he used recycled tracing papers from the factory's screen-printing department, the "old sheets".

Recognition and Estrangement

The recent increase in the number of Brazilians moving to Portugal should bear fruit in the near future. If TANTO MAR would have been scheduled for five years from now, certainly the panorama of contemporary works would be another. Portugal became the Pasárgada for Brazilians who are eager to escape the serious economic, political and social crisis happening nowadays in Brazil ¹⁵.

In the conformation of this “lifebuoy” also counts the fact of the recent change of the Brazilian syndrome of “shame of the father blamed by all our problems”. In 2000, the cultural commemorations of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Cabral to Brasil led to self-analysis and the beginning of reconciliation. Feelings of relief have emerged, not to be a South Africa with its apartheid. In “Black or White / Americanos”, Brazilian songwriter Caetano Veloso points out an essential difference between the United States and Brazil, which can be largely attributed to the results of English colonisation and Portuguese, respectively: “For Americans, white is white, black is black / And the mulatto is not the one/ Fagot is fagot, male is male / woman is woman, Money is money (...) While down here the lack of definition is the regime / And we dance with a grace whose secret / I do not even know / Between delight and disgrace / Between the monstrous and the sublime.” ¹⁶

In sixteen North-American states, until 1967, the prohibition of inter-ethnic marriages was the law. As the economist Eduardo Gianetti points out, “(...) in Brazil, European culture got in touch with the indigenous – and, after that, with the African – in a different way from what happened in English America. In the tropics, it was softened by the warm and sensual atmosphere of the Mediterranean solar culture, tanned by eight centuries of cultural and interracial conviviality with the Arabs and dark-skinned Moors from North Africa who, until the end of the fifteenth century, dominated the Iberian Peninsula”¹⁷. Gianetti recalls that in Brazil about 60% of the white population “belongs to African or Amerindian lineages concerning maternal parentage”¹⁸.

We inherited from the Portuguese the characteristic we boast ourselves the most: miscegenation. Beyond tolerating difference, we celebrate it. Multiculturalism is a value in our society. Without wishing to erase the gigantic social gap, and the major differences of opportunity for black and white population in Brazil, that is worthy to highlight.

I would like to point out that the sea that unites us is also what separates us. In the process of preparing the exhibition, I was able to recognize how keen the vision of the Portuguese curator Marta Mestre, with a broad presence in Brazil, when speaking that the affinity between Brazilians and Portuguese is forged as a “mixture of recognition and estrangement”¹⁹.

¹⁵ Reference to the poem by Manuel Bandeira, 1930, “Vou-me embora pra Pasárgada” [I’m leaving to Pasárgada].,

¹⁶ VELOSO, Caetano, “Black or White / Americanos” in *Circuladô Vivo*. Rio de Janeiro:, Philips Records, 1992, faixa 2.

¹⁷ GIANETTI, Eduardo, *Trópicos Utópicos: uma perspectiva brasileira da crise civilizatória*, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2016, p. 149.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 161.

¹⁹ MESTRE, Marta. Exhibition and Bienal show the panorama of contemporary Portuguese art, Folha de São Paulo, November 18, 2016.

Let's not hide our contradictions. In "Fado Tropical", from 1973, Chico Buarque and Ruy Guerra, Mozambican based in Brazil, there is room for "(...) ferns at the *caatinga* / Rosemary in the cane field / Liquor at the *moringa* / A tropical wine, and for the beautiful mulatto girl / laces from Alentejo as opposed to the harshness of the denunciation at a time when Portugal and Brazil each lived their dictatorship. We all inherited a good dosage of lyricism in our Lusitanian blood (besides syphilis, obviously). Even when my hands are busy torturing, throttling, slaughtering, my heart closes its eyes and sincerely cries. The music ends with the marvellous image of the Amazon flowing into pororoca[∇] in the Tagus, the total mixture, the total fusion: Guitars and hurdy-gurdies / Jasmines, coconut trees, fountains / sardines, manioc/ In a charming tile / And the Amazon River / That flows behind-the hills / And in a pororoca / Opens into the Tagus..."²⁰

Possibilities for the Global South

At the beginning of this text, we said that Brazil and Portugal are on the periphery regarding the international scenario of design. It is worthy stressing what periphery is. According to the Brazilian geographer Milton Santos, "the centre of the world is everywhere; the world is what one sees from where one is"²¹. Presently there is much talk about the valorisation of the South, and it is advised the decolonisation of the thought.

The authors of the concept of Global South include not only the countries below the Equator but also nations that historically have been on the margins of the world power. Several recent events seem to take Portugal out of this condition. As far as design is concerned, the publication in 2016 of the book *The Hard Life*, by the British designer Jasper Morrison, and the prestigious Swiss Publisher Lars Müller Publishers has become a kind of legitimation of the anonymous Portuguese design. The book gathers photographs taken by the author of objects of the Portuguese domestic and agricultural daily life, belonging to the Museu Nacional de Etnologia, Lisbon.

Morrison saw in the objects a representation of what "design should be, practical thinking that results in something exceptionally useful, playing a vital role in making everyday life richer and more beautiful". It is someone from the star system of international design arguing how these solutions of "so much beauty and ingenuity" can contribute to the contemporary design world²².

The immersion in the past and the present, fostered by the research for the exhibition, encouraged me not only to increase my repertoire and inquires significantly but, above all, what this whole story tells us for the future. I believe that we have new opportunities in a multipolar world, where differences are not

[∇] The pororoca is a tidal bore, with waves up to 4 meters high that travel as much as 800 km inland upstream on the Amazon River and adjacent rivers.

²⁰ BUARQUE, Chico, GUERRA, Ruy, "Fado Tropical" *In Calabar, o Elogio da Traição*, Rio de Janeiro, : Civilização brasileira, 1980.

²¹ Cf.: "Encontro com Milton Santos - o Mundo Global visto do lado de cá", documentary, 2006. Directed by Silvio Tendler, Brasil,.

²² Cf.: MORRISON, Jasper, *The Hard Life*, Zurique: Lars Muller Publishers, 2017.

concealed but revealed and valued. For if we have many similarities, we also have our singularities, our differences.

In this sense, I believe that the beginning and the end of this exhibition are emblematic of the curatorial thought. It begins with a usable installation of hammocks, a pre-Cabral artefact, created by the Amerindians. With it, we questioned European modernity as the only model of knowledge and reaffirmed the contemporary relevance of the artefact.

The last piece exhibited, the faience *Sermão aos Peixes*, by the Brazilian Tonico Lemos for the Portuguese group Visabeira-Bordalo. The name of the piece alludes to the preaching of the priest António Vieira at Maranhão, Brazil, on June 13, 1654. With an African grandmother, Vieira was born in Lisbon and came to Brazil as a child. From an early age, he expressed a great interest in “human diversity, their habits and languages”, becoming a missionary and a diplomat. The metaphor of the fish was the way he found to re-affirm the value of diversity, something to be respected and not abolished. The turbulent sea shows the fragility of the tiny boat, which looks more like a raft.

We still have a long way to go, immense potentials to explore, both regarding exchanges between designers and other initiatives coming from these two countries—exhibitions, debates, projects—that inhabit the fragments of the kaleidoscope we were able to glimpse in *TANTO MAR*. For the beauty of navigating these transoceanic crossings is also that which may be.

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