

Introduction to the exhibition

“Caboclos da Amazônia – Arquitetura, design e música”

(Amazonian Locals—Architecture, Design, and Music)

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The Amazon is known worldwide for its rich natural resources. Few know, however, the richness created by the women and men that inhabit it. This exhibition unveils the universe of Amazonian-made design and architecture, in order to show that local creations fulfill their intended functions with outstanding smartness and are fully adapted to the territory where they are located. Instead of harming nature, they coexist in harmony with it.

Nevertheless, they go well beyond that. Besides the fact that the houses are built upon stilts in order to weather the river tides and the objects use wisely the territory's resources, an amazing formal vocabulary can be seen in all of these creations. Everything is exuberant and superlative. There is no monotony. In opposition to an ever more homogeneous, “flat”, and bland world, here a diversity of colors and graphisms can be seen, expressing the yearning for beauty and the self-expression of each Amazon dweller. The fences that separate the public and the private realms have hollow frames, so they allow for the required ventilation in high humidity environments, being therefore a collective solution adapted to the environment.

However, each one has its own identity, in graphisms that never look alike. The interiors of the houses could be in architecture and interior

design magazines, if these publications were open to popular expression, such is the personality of rooms that match boldly different prints and materials, from plastic to crochet doilies, and always with many, many, many colors.

The organizer of the exhibition possesses ideal traits for the task he undertook. Carlos Alcantarino was born in Pará, therefore he sees from “inside” the reality he observes. At the same time, he also looks “from the outside”, since he moved to Rio de Janeiro 40 years ago, where he built a career that has successfully achieved national and international recognition. His repertory is therefore more than sufficient to navigate these waters. Alcantarino surrounded himself with other people that also cultivate a loving, experienced perspective on the region, as the designer Fernanda Martins, who selected the boat letterboards, expanding access to her research on the “*abridores de letras*” (“letter openers” - as the boat painters are known), and bringing three of them into the spotlight, granting them a role as protagonists.

Vernacular objects such as the slushy vending cart and therapeutical bottled tinctures, photographs showing the diversity of artisanal boats and votive offerings full of spiritual meaning for the Círio de Nazaré religious festival, among others, compose an exhilarating ensemble, to the soundtrack of the music of the region, diverse and vibrant as well.

By casting light on these multiple inventories, this exhibition will champion respect and appreciation for these rich assets by everyone that hopes for

a better future, when human activity not only will not clash with nature,
but will also celebrate with shapes and colors our joy of being alive.

Text written in April 2022