

# Collaborative creation methodologies between design and craftsmanship

## Summary

The aim is to briefly describe the methodologies of Adélia Borges, Lia Krucken, as well as Dialogic Design by Márcia Ganem, which encompass designers' actions to revitalize handicrafts and value local products, in addition to their application in slow fashion contexts.

**Keywords:** Conscious consumption, design methodologies, craftsmanship

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## Introduction

In general, since the emergence of Design, the intention was to generate solutions, in the first case, in relation to the appearance and functionality of objects, for large-scale production, to tracing new directions and opportunities for innovation from different perspectives and angles. Challenging thought and behavior patterns makes designers produce solutions that generate new meanings, so that the experience becomes an integral part of the objects' knowledge and, even more, of the users' understanding.

In central countries, today heavily industrialized, the process of implanting Design was natural, arising as a consequence of the craft tradition. On the other hand, the institution of Design in Brazil is forced. Brazil experienced the establishment of its Design always with an expectation of transferring models and solutions from abroad, developing not as a direct and spontaneous consequence of its craft traditions and cultural manifestations. "Broadly opting for the rationalist model, Brazilian design inhibited local references in its constitution, which should, otherwise, support the creation of its own language."<sup>1</sup> Thus, the Higher School of Industrial Design (ESDI) in Rio de Janeiro is influenced by the Higher School of Design in Ulm and also by the Bauhaus.

## Design and co-creation

Lina Bo Bardi was one of the names that rose up against the standards of the Ulm School, because of its appreciation of popular crafts and their integration with industrial processes, since the 50s. Lina says that there is no handicraft in Brazil, but a pre-craft. In addition, she was a pioneer in the investigation of artisanal traditions in Brazil, a regional mapping, especially in the Northeast.

*In the mid-1980s, a movement of designers timidly began towards the interior of the country in the search for the revitalization of handicrafts, which would take place through the sum of the preservation of productive techniques that had been passed down through generations and the incorporation of new ones. Elements, formal and/or technical, to the objects.*<sup>2</sup>

Thus, conceptually, craftsmanship is a productive activity of objects and artifacts through the transformation of raw materials, through which one can understand a certain people, culture and identity. In this context, in the relationship between manual work and design, it is possible to think of the designer as an activating agent of collaborative innovations, which promote sustainable solutions. "(...) one of the main capabilities of design is the development of listening

and observation".<sup>3</sup> For the author, this leads directly to the three attributes of Design, in the perception of multichains: catalyst, modeler and orchestrator. Listening and observing generate information that is transformed into ideas and proposals for innovation, thus being a "catalyst" by stimulating changes or accelerating processes. Precisely for this reason, he is a "modeler" of ideas: giving form,

According to Ganem,<sup>3</sup> there is a taboo in the relationship between traditions and innovations, since the idea that innovating is synonymous with technology, far from the reach of craft groups, has contributed. But, on the contrary, innovating is related to the process of conceiving a new idea and putting it to use in the widest possible way. Innovation is present from the communication of products, services, to the application of creative processes and products.

*"Innovation is a valuable instrument for expanding the possibilities of new forms, functions and uses, in search of renewal of traditional knowledge and practices, being capable of anchoring living products in contemporary space, which speak about their stories and culture."*<sup>3</sup>

In this context, the author explains through "Dialogical Design" the importance of shedding light on traditional groups, recognizing their values, identity, history, innovative capacity and communicating these contents, in the various possible means, so that, from a new perception valuing handicraft traditions, establishing strategies to maintain these values.

Ganem<sup>3</sup> argues that the "Dialogical Design" methodology involves six steps, such as: the recognition of identities, their renewal, materialization, fruition of results, commercialization of these and appreciation of the dialogic process. The first step concerns the initiation of the dialogue process; while the second step refers to the deepening of the dialogue through the renewal of identities and the importance of innovation, for later materialization of artifacts. In the fourth step, through the expansion of the dialogue, it is about the fruition of the materialities, for the commercialization strategies and appreciation of the results. The industrial product is driven by advertising, consumption and globalization, while the craftsman, even with the influence of these processes, remains connected to local development and culture, a production that refers to the past, orality and memory. "In dialogic design there is no relationship between subject and object, but between subjects in knowledge exchange processes".<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, Dialogical Design is a strategic design action whose purpose is to insert the culture of creativity and innovation, as it seeks

the recognition of identities, based on the generation of products, processes, services and connections, which seek as a result to contribute to the sustainable development of territories.

*This innovative, disseminated, germinative, autonomous, collaborative culture becomes a mechanism for boosting scenarios and generating new sustainable business models for designers, artisans, localities and society as a whole.*<sup>3</sup>

Adélia Borges<sup>2</sup> also lists actions by designers to revitalize handicrafts, such as improving the technical conditions of products, packaging, transportation and the like; potentiality of local materials; identity and diversity, building brands; craftsmen with suppliers and combined actions, that is, an adequacy of the product in view of the possibilities of the market. The author also mentions actions to reduce raw materials, optimize processes, mediate between consumers and the market, contribute to communication management and strategy of actions, among others. “The gestation of objects with a clear identity of the places where they are made involves not only the maintenance and development of local techniques and materials, but also their language”.<sup>2</sup>

For Krucken,<sup>4</sup> the contribution of designers to the appreciation of local products is made by promoting the quality of products, manufacturing processes and services; support for communication, bringing consumers and producers together; and support the development of productive arrangements and sustainable value chains, as a way of creating conditions that will benefit the communities in a real and lasting way. Thus, it is necessary to promote innovative and sustainable solutions that bring producers and consumers closer together, providing transparency and strengthening the values that permeate production and consumption. “The quality of a product has to be considered broadly, involving the territory, the resources used and the community that produced it”.<sup>4</sup> Thus, according to the author, the product can be seen as a collective construction that connects producers and consumers. Today, many consumers look for “the story behind the products”, in order to identify their origins, their territories and their soul. For the consumer, the value of the product is directly associated with the perceived quality, through the functional, emotional, environmental, symbolic, social and economic. Thus, the main elements that support the perception of quality of a product are listed:

- a) Geographical indications
- b) Technical quality
- c) Socio-environmental quality. Through functional, emotional, environmental, symbolic, social and economic values.

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The value chain is organized around the product, connecting activities necessary to conceive and distribute a product or service to the final consumer, involving stages of production, distribution and disposal. Important to guarantee the quality and quantity of the final product, it is formed by several actors that integrate a network, the consumer receives the final product from this network. For Krucken,<sup>4</sup> the main actions to promote the development of networks are:

- a) Consolidate and maintain the quality and authenticity of local products;
- b) Strengthen the managerial capacity of producers, collaboration and networks;
- c) Bring producers closer to consumers;
- d) Infrastructure for distribution and commercialization of products;
- e) Recognize markers of local identity.

One of the designer’s responsibilities is to promote new well-being criteria, based on quality and not quantity. “The designer, therefore, assumes the role of facilitator, or activating agent, of collaborative innovations, promoting interactions with society”.<sup>4</sup> In this sense, actions to value local products can: recognize the qualities of products and territories; activate the skills of the territory; communicate products and territories; protect local identity and tangible and intangible heritage; support local production; to develop new products and services that respect the vocation and value the territory; and consolidate networks in the territory. These actions create elements that allow the consumer to appreciate values related to the product, the origin of the raw material, manufacturing and distribution processes,

### **Fashion, language and new ways of thinking**

Slow movements have recently emerged, such as slow fashion and slow design, which seek changes in lifestyle and production models, aiming at sustainability and quality of life, through respect for biodiversity and the reduction in the use of environmental resources. The slow movement is important for resource management, man’s relationship with the environment in which he lives, human limitations and the sustainability of the planet.

In this sense, the contemporary consumer has access to more information, critical sense, thinks about their consumption patterns and lifestyle that demand production. Therefore, it is this questioning about consumption that makes collaborative Design methodologies understandable in the context of the slow fashion movement, encouraging small producers, seeking to sustain cultural traditions, still linked to questions of purpose, of “why do?”, in addition to “how” and “who” does it.

*This slow approach intervenes as a revolutionary process in the contemporary world, which encourages taking more time to ensure more quality, creativity, ethics, and to give value to the product and contemplate the connection with the environment. This “slow” is not necessarily thought of as a lack of speed, but as a different worldview.*<sup>5</sup>

Even if timidly, the model of supply and demand is moving towards a model of production on demand, more sustainable, which saves time, money and raw materials, and is in favor of real individualization. “On-demand production aligned with slow fashion is perhaps one of the most revolutionary alternatives, in favor of the future of fashion and the planet.”<sup>5</sup> In addition, handicrafts have proven to be an important ally of the environment, since several handicrafts are developed based on the reuse of materials. Therefore, encouraging small producers, stories, cultural and local memory, knowledge exchange, can be a key action for conscious creation and production.

The author Dougherty<sup>6</sup> uses the example of the avocado to explain that Design is material, message and change. For him, the interior of the avocado represents the central challenge around which all the messages and materials in the design revolve: effecting change. “True excellence goes beyond the aesthetics of the artifact created and encompasses its manufacture and the message it conveys and its impact on society.”<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it is important to know the useful life cycle of the product, its durability and no longer think of it in a linear way, through the flow of production, sale and disposal, but in a cyclical way, to provide reuse and post-use strategies.

Given this, in the context of the aforementioned methodologies, actions can be aligned according to the needs of each business model in fashion, especially under the bias of current production, distribution and consumption demands.

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## Conflicts of interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest exists.

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