

for all people regardless of ability, age, gender, culture or language. It is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Although it may not hold the same cache as other movements in architecture today, the lessons learned at the CNIB now allow us to knit these principles seamlessly into all our other buildings, without the “institutional” appearance. In many ways, the CNIB Centre has shifted traditional notions of design by employing Universal Design to invent new and creative ways of thinking about space. The end result is a building that is functional, democratic in its accessibility, and economically sound.

The Mountain Women: Design as social- environmental integrating tool through sustainable handling of wool

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Abstract

This Project aims a social and productive integration of the women living in the traditional community of Monteiro District based on the retrieval and revitalization of sheep wool traditional techniques handling.

Brazil colonization commencement place, historical Serra da Mantiqueira range was explored in multiple ways, and its consequence was native forests degradation and impoverishment of folk traditional knowledge.

Shepherd husbandry reintroduction in this region associated to teaching shared with the School of Design from PUC-Rio allows to recognize, valorize and stimulate wool spinnery and dyeing artisan techniques for textile production.

Here we'll show how the partnership between the community and PUC-Rio Design School is strengthening the local social-environmental retrieval boarded on sustainable development instruments.

Keywords

Wool, social insertion, design, traditional folk knowledge, sustainability

Foreword

At present, 80% of Brazilian population is concentrated within urban areas, situation extremely different from 50 years ago as stated by Santos M. [5]. Production devices

continuously attract waves of workers which arrive to cities and their suburban areas aiming to satisfy the consumer needs of its own social group. This huge migration of people towards cities is also perceived in Itamonte-MG region, whose people yearn to belong to the world known at TV.

This work aims to promote the valorization and resumption of sheep wool handling in Monteiro District. Its researches were developed in the PUC-Rio LILD laboratories, and it is mainly based on shared interaction participative proposal of skills from a women's group traditional activities, all of them living in this rural community.

This mountain region on the Mantiqueira range has been occupied for the last three centuries by people who took their sustenance from the land. On the XVII century, its paths were tracked by the Bandeirantes (expeditionary explorers) who settled some villages. Gold rush influenced it twice, one for the very mining activities, and afterwards as an exporting route. During this period, innovative shepherd activities were made part of the local culture supplying families with meat, milk and wool. Many years afterwards, when the prosperous coffee period finished, dairy production boomed specially from cow husbandry, and was widespread to small properties, replacing sheep husbandry.

From the reminiscent Bandeirantes communities, sheep wool usage is still reflected in some districts as Campo Redondo, Berta, Serra Negra, and Monteiro. Formerly this wool was mainly used to weave cloaks, saddle blankets, carpets and clothes. Manufacturing these domestic items, artisans earned their own resources to buy essential needs as clothing.

The long distance to large urban centers promoted more than the establishment of communities in those places, it seeded the roots of skills and techniques used to assure those families' survival. Distance is the issue why today it is still possible to find out tradition in habits and artisan technical handling, both sharing space with new technologies, manufacturing improvements, and consumption of industrialized goods.

Recently arrived at the region but of quick sojourn, new land owners are a local novel fashion, and they use their properties for leisure. The counterweight of this new "modern rural" community activities and interests is also mirrored on the productive activities, where labor ties of the required workforce needed to satisfy the tourists' conditions begin to overlap the former local subsistence and autonomy culture.



Figures 1, 2, 3. Monteiro District Landscape, wool handling learning activities, and wool ball of yarn.

From this point of view we can clearly see the progressive loss of traditional knowledge. As Japiassu H. comments – skills that once were naturally passed through generations – in daily practices and tasks. Women's role so important for maintaining these communal skills keeps diminishing till nothing but banal urban life affairs now incorporated to the country land. Beyond the replacement of autonomous productive methods and processes which formerly were fundamental for survival on the land, the evident cultural transformation also results on the direct migration of the rural workforce to urban zone where it is hired for services and spends its payment acquiring industrialized goods at the city shops. As a regional economic alternative for Itamonte-MG Mountains, shepherd husbandry return represent also an environmental gain in respect to soil recuperation.

Reintroduction and valorization of sheep husbandry are recent facts on the mentioned districts. This work's contents approaches a stage which initially targets the development and strengthening of natural wool spinning and dyeing activities, and then it incorporates textile products development. Our proposal is to broadcast these associated techniques, as observed by Papanek V. [4], and share them in order to provide organization of some kind of cooperative with women groups from local districts. As Manzini E. says, it's a strategy aiming the consolidation of learning process and technical renewal of this knowledge, as well as the generation of trading opportunities for produced goods.

The mountain women and the stolen time

Who does really mind about country people? What is the real importance of these people to the present productive system?

Individual initiative resumed sheep husbandry in Monteiro District about 11 years ago. Initially perceived with suspicious by the local community, it was afterwards incorporated little by little to the regional families' day life. These families have their origins from the Bandeirantes explorers, and are organized in a way that everyone is engaged on services that provide support to everybody at home. Each one has its own task. Men and women work hard on the fields and with herding tasks, and the children follow their parents learning these affairs. Home, children, clothes and feeding care tasks is mainly up to women. Naturally, their tasks fulfill all the hours of the day, but they are reciprocally helped by the elder, children and neighboring fellowship collaboration. Time left for leisure and other activities out of routine is the so called "stolen time". Wool handling activities which initiate with shearing, washing, cleaning, carding out, spinning, and dyeing were always accepted as essential to every day's life, but today after the mass trading of textile products these activities are considered as "stolen time".

Dona Rita's family is one of these families we described. Short in stature, strong and callous hands, four children's mother. She keeps an eye on the work and the other on her grandsons. She takes care of meals and looks after children with such tranquility that she is able to concentrate on chatting with visitors. Since she were a child she stood by her mother, Dona Maria, preparing, spinning, weaving and dyeing wool, and sharing tasks as every girl did. She began to practice these skills watching and helping her mother. Then she abandoned wool handling after the arrival of dairy production and cow husbandry activities, as well as all her community did. Consequently, the learning process of wool techniques were left behind.

Nevertheless, in 2006 the regional situation began to change with the arrival of sheep husbandry, and about the middle of 2007, it generated some work force demand to benefit wool. Among local people, mainly women began to concern about wool and discovered a chance to make use of the "stolen time" in order to earn money from a different resource. That was the beginning of the research for forgotten knowledge retrieval and revitalization.

The proposed production flow surely cannot depend of a conventional and aggressive competition market. Those people also cannot be lead by a productive rhythm based on industrial sophisticated technological models, on the contrary, it is intended to valorize the best there may be within these communities represented here by their women work force. Respect is due to time and time deserves

respect. Time to observe, to create, to plant, time for harvest, time for renewal. What is intended is to construe these women group's identity based on the recognition of its cultural values and let them serve as examples for the sustainable utilization of the available goods and materials. Let their products be their environment's reflexes, and be recognized as ways to incorporate variations from artisan processes. There is a real vivid trade for these products, and they are demanded by the so-called fair market. At this moment, we concern in guiding our sight through the establishment of an economic alternative for these women, an alternative which makes use of a renewed knowledge, i.e., may it guarantee what Maturana H. R. e Varela F.J [3] call "authonomy and interdependency" in a way that the sustainability tripod might be equilibrated: economy, environment and social action.

Once alone, these women wouldn't develop a strong cultural process, nor would succeed if they became dependant of an enterprise system without their effective participation. Therefore the adopted procedure was to approach academic research activities to local productive processes, within a strategy that shared and assisted the traditional skills retrieval.

So the researchers' group has taken the decision to regularly follow the activities originated from purchase orders' production.

Campo Redondo, Monteiro and Bento José Districts were treated as main target having the key-partners Dona Nair, Dona Regina, Dona Helena e Dona Rita working individually at each production stage. The wool cleaning was made by the community women, including the elder and the children. Dona Regina was in charge of carding out, and no time it took her to call many girls interested in learning the old skills. The same teaching and learning procedure was applied by Dona Nair who took care of the spinning. Dona Helena worked with natural dyeing based on pigments extracted from surrounding vegetation. Dona Rita was the most interesting person of the work as she assisted Dona Regina e Dona Nair classes to remind techniques, and simultaneously, all by herself, she took the initiative and made new experimentations, mainly with natural dyeing techniques. She was so engaged on these investigations that we began to pay attention to her work.

The research to obtain the índigo blue is noticeable in this experiment. To obtain the blue pigment, traditionally applied to wool threads, it is necessary to pick leaves of a country land vegetal, commonly known as indigo plant or aniline (known as anil in Brazil). This plant can only be harvested on summer rain season when it accumulates enough sap for extraction throughout dyeing process. Dona Rita initially commented that her mother, Dona

Maria, used to extract the indigo blue dye using a resting process which would take a whole week, the wool and leaves embedded in water. Afterwards a mordant made out of washed ashes would be added to reach the indigo blue. Differently from processes introduced by foreign technicians, this process consists in boiling the leaves and afterwards join salt as a fixer. The differences between these two procedures turned out to be emblematic in our work as we perceived that much of the care and beliefs revealed by Dona Rita during the traditional process were extremely relevant to obtain the indigo blue dye. To pick leaves from downside up, not wet leaves, not menstruating woman, not sweating or oiled hands, not mixing leaves with branches or pieces of wood, finally, recommendations that might initially seem not relevant, once they were not part of the boiling technique procedure.

We've done our first experience to extract washing blue with Dona Rita, who were curious to test the boiling technique. She soaked and smashed the leaves to accelerate the process, she boiled water together with the wool and the crushed leaves arranging them in layers, and a lilac hue began to tint water, but it didn't get intensified. Then salt and yam shafts were added to fix the color, and the wool was left drying. Dona Rita commented the hue it got was far from the desired blue, and on the next week she remade the procedure adding more leaves but no yam shafts. Again the results were frustrating. We tried the procedure with Miss Selma, daughter of Dona Nair and again it did not succeed. On the third try, Dona Rita retrieved her mother's lessons but also she wasn't satisfied because the obtained hue was greenish.

By the fourth attempt, her son Geovani reminded that his grandma used filtered out water and ashes mix at the end of the procedure. He also told that she stirred the colored water with a cup, the wool out the container. We came to an impressive moment at that time. Within a few minutes, the six days leavening stinky water began to modify under cup hits, passing from dark green to a deep and intense blue, the anile blue Dona Rita was waiting so anxiously for. It tinted the wool and spread all over Dona Rita's arm in such an intensity that the blue hued hand's scars lasted for a week. No one could describe Dona Rita satisfaction and victorious gazing.

Dona Rita's family encountered the remarkable fact of persistently retrieving a forgotten knowledge, and it is also spread to other district families. Thread diameter variations, improved treatment on cleaning, carding and washing out processes, have been undertaken by local resident families. They gradually begin to incorporate the feeling of owning the procedures and products developed from wool activities.

Colored skeins market demands produced by these women have come up to the point that purchase orders require natural artisan merchandise produced conditions, with certified cultural identity and organic material production. This valorization is understood by local resident individuals.



Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 – Dona Rita and the process when water color changed from greenish to indigo blue. Threads colored by Dona Rita.

Final Considerations

The possibility of taking possession of fruitful knowledge and skills produced within community is always a charming role for people who have been excluded for years from productive processes. Their sensation that the world turned out to be at reach stimulates not only people who yearn to simulate the cities agitated rhythm, but also the very present productive standard, showing ways in such examples to assume more healthful practices for everybody's way-of-living. In such a case the researches role, as observers, has been to closely follow traditional technical conditions, and show the path to improvement of tools, which might help productive autonomy and results expansion. The promotion of local community participation awareness on research processes vitalizes retrieval possibilities and knowledge development. With the scope of everyone's well being, we can diminish all those distances sharing Design engagement.

To close our eyes to a demanding world is the same as to omit and agree with resources decaying degradation process and uncontrolled energetic consumption, leading people to consume and discard more and more products.

This work is an approach to traditional knowledge and skill origins and it shares the service of social inclusion and autonomy. Not only the retrieval of dormant techniques, but mainly about the essence of human's life.

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The new school collaborates: teaching and learning design and social responsibility in immersive international field programs

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Abstract

More than ever, universities need to create opportunities for our students to learn about, and practice social responsibility and particularly, to create change for the real world (in which 90% of the population has a critical need.)

This paper focuses on the first two years of an ongoing project between The New School's divisions of Parsons (design), Milano (management and urban development) and General Studies (international affairs), in New York, several external partners, and groups of Mayan artisan women in Guatemala, as an ongoing project in social entrepreneurship and humanitarian design. Of particular interest is how students, through an interdisciplinary spring curriculum and an intensive experience in Guatemala are learning skills that would never be possible in a standard on-campus classroom setting, and how interdisciplinary groups of students can holistically approach development work with artisan groups with the long-term goals of culture preservation and income generation.

Keywords

Social design, social responsibility, interdisciplinarity, cultural diversity

Context

The Design for the Other 90% exhibition website states that