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THE VALORIZATION OF INDIGENOUS CULTURE THROUGH UPCYCLING

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ABSTRACT

The current model of consumption is one of the main reasons for the social and environmental problems that our society has been passing through. Currently, according to Manzini (2008) and Abreu (2016) the best answers for these issues are local actions, made by people who are directly affected by them. The designer, as a holistic professional, can become the facilitating agent who helps (through good projects, products or services) propagates these local answers. The present project is based on that. It aims to valorise and revitalize braiding knowledge of Kaingang Indigenous culture, through experimentations and development of fashion products using and resignifying textile waste (Upcycling) through native braid used in their basketry. The concept of Co-design (AGUAS, 2012) was widely used in the work with the artisans occurred. The result from this work showed that with the practice of co-creation it is motivating in the sense of including the indigenous community in the work with the university and they are being part of the results.

Key Words: Cultural Sustainability; Co-design; Social Innovation

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's consumer society, the search for products focused on sustainable, as well as the quest for trade and fair production goes against the global market and its need for ephemerality and exaggerated consumption. Within the fashion industry, due to high market demand, plus the large-scale ephemeral production, generate, just in Brazil, 175 tons of textile waste each year. The idealized type of lifestyle sold to all as "perfect" provokes cultural homogenization, which leads to marginalization and devaluation of traditional cultures and their modes of production.

Authors from several knowledge areas (Cavalcante 2014; D'ambrosio 2013; Engler, Freitas, Montenegro, Krucken 2010; Manzini 2008; LOPES, Schulte 2008) already point to a change in thinking and consumption, including the product and fashion production that spread and serve as an example for others locals answers. The designer is the professional who seeks to develop a holistic view over any and every project, having an ability to adapt to the sustainability guidelines and social responsibility. It can give profound value and concept to the product or service. The designer can be a very important part of this change (Manzini, 2008).

In the South of Brazil, one of the most present autochthonous cultures is the Kaingang Indigenous People. They have a millenarian knowledge and, therefore, a very rich culture and artefacts full of meanings and values (Cavalcante, 2014; Ribeiro, 1989). According to Manzini (2008) and his concept of Social Innovation and Local Solutions (Abrue, 2016), these communities can have the main answers to the actual problems. "Saving" and maintaining cultural communities is also considered "sustainability" by the ONU. Thus, this research sought to give a positive response to the problem of textile waste and environmental wastage through co-design and valorisation of local knowledge.

Through this article, we intend to show the possibilities that were open to work in favour of the local market and cultural valuation of the Kaingang from Mococa and its community. Showing the possibilities and results of the joint work realized under the concept of co-design and positive environmental response for textile waste in the city of Londrina. When we disseminate an idea or concept through some product or service, the more it become known, the more people recognize it and give it right value (Nogueira, 2007).

2.METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

Concepts as cultural sustainability, co-design, co-creation, social design and etnodesign were used to support this work for this theoretical background research. As a qualitative research, according to Flick (2004, pg.20) the following steps were performed: appropriability of methods and theories; recognition and analysis from multiple perspectives; the researcher and reflexivity research; and the variety of approaches and methods. During the research, 8 female artisans from Mococa participated in the study. The field research of the different braided baskets techniques and "Grafismos" had everything documented. 8 meetings occurred from April to July 2018. The Co-design method (AGUAS, 2012) was applied during all the processes. One of the limitations that happened was the transportation to reach the community, which caused fewer visits than original planned in the schedule. At each visit, activities were developed to test the possibilities of using textile waste; to answer the questions that the artisans brought; to check out the strengths and weakness of the process; to prepare content for the next meeting. Photos and written notes were used to document the work to be used latter in the development of some possible products.

The Project was under the "Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido (TCLE)", "Ethics Comitee Model in Research Involving Humans" from the State University of Londrina. The TCLE was presented and authorized by the head of the Indigenous Community of Mococa.

3.DEVELOPMENT

At the first visit, on April 27th, was developed a conversation with the artisans for the presentation of the Project. For that, and for better understanding by them, it was taken to them 6 strips of reassemble fabric along a book from Berta Ribeiro (1989) that had illustrations of different braiding techniques of indigenous from the Communities of Northern Brazil. Upon seeing the material, one of the two artisans who first talk to the researcher started braiding with the fabric.



[Figure 1] From the left to the right: "Trançado Cruzado Fechado" "Hexagonal" and "Umbigo Asterisco Fechado", realized in Oxford tissue using Ribeiro's nomenclature (Bennemann, 2018)

From this very first visit, it was possible to conclude the technique potential from the artisans to develop their craft in a different type of material than they are used to work. This was the first positive sign to the project. Along with this confirmation, it was also very clear that something was needed to keep the strips together for transportation, a fact considered on the second visit. In this second time, different types of fabrics were also presented, some with finishing and some not. Also, to tie the strips, other types of tissue waste, cut into small squares, were used to be on the bottom of the strips. The strips were fixed by a simple sewn hand, presented by the researcher, which was quickly learned. This way, what it is known as “tissue panels” was developed.



[Figure 2] From left to right: “Trançado Sarjado” using contrast with colors in knitted fabric (Font: Bennemann, 2018)

With the photo above it is easy to see that the contrast with the colors shows the “grafismos”, so important expression of this ethnicity. Each of them is full of concepts and meanings, they carry the beliefs and background from the Kaingangs (Cavalcante, 2014). Because of this, it was very important to ask each time which could be shown in the photos, work with, or even ask what color they would prefer to make the next “panels”, since some could contain religious significance.

In this second visit, 8 artisans participated in the activities. The women responded better when they could see and participate in the activity than when only theoretical visits were offered. So, an interesting fact was that during that visit, the tissue offered was over. The concept of using textile waste provided from used clothing were presented to them in the first visit and reminded during this second one. Surprisingly, this concept (upcycling) was understood very fast by them and soon the problem with the tissue happened, one of them came back with 2 pants e 1 t-shirt that was no longer used to cut and make new strips for the activity. This attitude showed one more positive view of the project and the possibility of future developments that responds to the environmental textile waste and local and autochthonous communities.



[Figure 3] Geometrization Process, for the “Cultural Upcycling”. (Font: BENNEMANN, 2018)

During the third visit it was clear that the women responded better when they could also see the results from the activities: possible products. Let it be explained that this work intended to experiment and seek new answers for the textile waste and find new ways to Kaingang culture to be valued and recognized by other people through different possibilities of products, always respecting their culture, wishes and opinions. All the “products” that were developed during this research were given back to them at the end. Only used to answer the main objective and for results boards and comparisons, not with economics purposes.

The following photos are from these “panels” made by the women during the third visit. With sewing hand techniques, a small bag project was made. The other photos show more possibilities also developed in the university, with other panels from the following visits and used to make the final project of graduation.



[Figure 4] Possibilities for the Kaingang Basket Braided technique (BENNEMANN, 2018).

4.RESULTS

In a very clear way, it was possible through this research field and experimentation in group, be sure about what colour they liked more in their “graphics” and preference to use red and black colours. Colours that resemble the natural ones, those used in their baskets. Strip with finalization was better than one without it, flat fabrics are easier to work with than the knitted ones, and other considerations that this research allowed us to have and were synthesized in a comparison board as a result from this work.

The results from the activities also showed very well the technical potential of women in working with different tissues. Following the Social Design and Cultural Revitalization and Valorisation concepts that, according to Cavalcante (2014) and Manzini (2008) consists in the process and methods suitable for the implementation or creation of something new to determined human group, always relying on cultural elements of each distinct group, and also the Etnodesign, based on the cultural studies and their different knowledge to be revitalized, searching to apply techniques and methods with the objective to value one community or ethnic knowledge through dissemination (NOGUEIRA, 2007), which, in this work, occurred through the development of some fashion products and redesignation of textile wastes.

With these results yet was possible to think about the continuation and economic glimpse that it is possible to perform with the community, always respecting their wishes and culture.

5.FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The results lead to a relevant possibility of work and social innovation with the artisans from Mococa. The following studies aim to the capacitation and production of some products to future selling it is written and in course to happen, with the market plan for them already done and new possibilities too.

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