

## Interview with Celso Longo, Daniel Trench and Elaine Ramos

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by **Francesco Perrotta-Bosch**

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Why did you choose the city as the subject matter of a design exhibition?

**Celso Longo:** After about three decades of total lack of interest, the city became an issue again, but was still little discussed in the realm of graphic design.

(2)

Were there times in Brazil when the urban space received wider attention from designers?

**Elaine Ramos:** Just before we started curating *Graphic City*, we had been working on the book *Design Total*, by Celso Longo. It is about an odd time in Sao Paulo between the 1960s and 1970s, when Cauduro Martino's firm developed significant urban-scale designs, like those of Metrô [subway system], the Municipal Transportation System and Avenida Paulista.

**Celso Longo:** History of Design professor Ethel Leon and designer and architect Marcello Montore wrote the chapter on Brazil in the book *História do Design na América Latina* (2009), which shows how those decades abound with designs that look into the city and not only in terms of graphic design. After that, it was dry as a bone.

**Elaine Ramos:** The approach to the city caught our interest because of the heterogeneity that it can hold. It is a sufficiently broad subject, although it eventually put aside the design solutions adopted for commissioned works - which would be more expected in an exhibition of design.

**Daniel Trench:** We came to think of other likely approaches, such as design and culture, for example. However, the city reaches a lot of people as a subject and that power did seem to be a good starting point to us.

**Elaine Ramos:** The city as the subject has a huge communicative power even if this is not fully embedded in all the works.

(3)

Are there other examples to reiterate this potential?

**CL:** A good example was *Noite Branca no Parque* (2012), which happened in 2012, in Belo Horizonte – the event was attended by over 100 thousand people in 24 hours. Another totally different example regarding the modus operandi was *Bandeiras*, made in 2006 by the Frente 3 de Fevereiro collective. The group performed actions in televised soccer stadiums to a huge number of people. It was a work that used a medium ingeniously.

**ER:** With the city as a subject, we were strongly pushed towards projects that raised questions – intervention projects – rather than works that could effectively solve a given problem in the city at any scale.

(4)

Is it possible to categorize the types of work selected for this exhibition?

**ER:** The exhibition presents three approaches: documentations that evidence a look at the city, interventions in the city and fictions based on the city – works of a more poetic nature.

(5)

Careful attention to these three types of approach revealed that all the works are inspired by an existing Brazilian city. An exception to this is the work by Bruna Canepa and Ciro Miguel, which was created based on an imaginary city with references to a series of artistic movements. Can you also see how unique the matrix of this work is in the exhibition?

**ER:** This work by Bruna and Ciro is the utmost of the fictional vector of the exhibition for not being inspired by an existing city. Together with it, we see *Cidade Planejada (Sao Paulo)* (2014), by Marina Camargo, which springs from an actual space but displaces the blocks to make up a fictional town. Next to them is *Pluracidades Series*(2014), by Guilherme Maranhão, which stems from an existing city to build a visual fiction. This one and *Estéreo Brasília*(2010), by Thyago Nogueira, are works that make comments on the city using the language they choose to capture it. The results are more like comments than a reproduction of the real world and they are graded in relation to one to another.

**CL:** *Coletivo* (2002), by Cao Guimarães, is also along those lines and is even more radical in depicting how rapidly the city emerges. Going back to Bruna Canepa and Ciro Miguel, the triad of their work portrays the city forcefully invading the idea of home. On the other hand, *Apartamento de 1 Km* (2014) ironically brings the logic idea of putting together all services within a housing complex. The work by Bruna and Ciro has a fictional component, although it is guided by the logic of our metropolises.

**ER:** Also nearby, *Empenas* (2014), by Andrés Sandoval, emerges from a methodical documentation of the existing city, but its translation into the graphic language and into the book as a medium is so skillfully done that the outcome is an autonomous piece, and this is why it opens, to some extent, a dialog with this grouping.

(6)

Can these zones mingle?

**DT:** Yes, of course. An example of this is the work *São Paulo, Cidade Limpa* (2007), by Gustavo Piqueira, which is fictional with regard to the texts and documental in relation to the images.

(7)

There is a video made for *Graphic City* in which Elaine states that the show is "an exhibition of design without having a design work itself." In what way can we find such openness to issues not related to the conventional *modus operandi* of design reflected in the works?

**CL:** When we chose this approach to the city, we knew this would be a breeding ground for contamination with other fields. The three of us found it weird to have that rigid delimitation of boundaries, this attitude of labeling whether this is design or not.

**ER:** Today we see that we should reconsider this statement that was on the curatorial text in the exhibition claiming that the focus was not on the "aesthetic excellence," for indeed it is seen in many works. Our purpose was much more geared towards opening up the viewers' eye to something that goes beyond design as a problem-solver rather than repudiating the "aesthetic excellence."

**DT:** Mainly because we see that several of the projects exhibited cope cleverly with the design syntax. In this sense, the idea of "aesthetic excellence" is closer to the idea of "good design."

**ER:** *Campanha Não-Eleitoral* (2012), by Piseagrama, is "good design." The same thing to Bruna, Andrés, Piqueira. Ultimately, "good design" reigns in the exhibition. All works make good use of design expressive capabilities and those that failed to do it were left out. This was, indeed, a criterion. In their particular approaches, everyone uses the graphic lexicon well to communicate. Actually, we are trying to leave the emphasis on the last trends of design language out of the exhibition for that is usually strong in design shows across the globe. The "good-design" concept that we adopted has nothing to do with *trendy* design, with the super tuned-in design, which mirrors the visuality of its time. We seek works that operate beyond this surface and focuses more on the issue to be communicated and on the appropriate use of the medium to accomplish this goal. [They are] More conceptual works, in which the typography or chromatic palette chosen, for example, are not the driving force.

(8)

Can we say that what is on display is timeless?

**DT:** Yes, as far as possible, timeless from the graphic language standpoint.

**ER:** With respect to the issues of the city, the exhibition is completely updated. Not regarding the graphic fad, though.

**DT:** But there are works that use recurring operations today, like those dealing with the cartographies.

**ER:** *Domesticidades: Guia de Bolso* (2010) and *Atlas Ambulante* (2011), both by Renata Marquez and Wellington Cançado, and *Campanha Não-Eleitoral* (2012), by Piseagrama, are aligned with process and philosophy trends of contemporary art.

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You make comments about the construction methodology of the works. How can visitors have access to this procedure-driven mindset?

**CL:** For example, *Noite Branca no Parque* (2012), by Ricardo Portilho, is on display next to the section of the signage design for the Parque Municipal, in Belo Horizonte.

**ER:** In addition to the ingenuity and cleverness, Ricardo Portilho's design takes advantage of minimal resources. A fundamental reason for the inclusion of this work in the show is that Ricardo is one of the organizers of the event and he built it in a collaborative process during a workshop. After all, the exhibition is always addressing new ways used in the designers' practice.

**CL:** In this case, this work was made on the designer's own initiative. On the other hand, *Domesticidades: Guia de Bolso* (2010) does not expose the process. We only see the final result, instead. We added a feature that the artists had never used and the images were also screened in monitors. This is what we did. It is a small example of the process behind the project, but which is the narrative of the exhibition itself. Another example is *Projeto Estúdio Valongo* (2011), by Augusto Sampaio. The panel depicts colored dots against a black background - almost like a trail of materialization of the intervention in the city - and on the side corner we placed a monitor with pictures and entries of that work's "making of".

**ER:** The exhibition makes no sense if the visitor does not read the entries. The texts are key.

(10)

How did you come up with the decision of showcasing non-commissioned projects, that is, those which do not stand out for the capability to solve the city issues?

**DT:** Bearing in mind that the city is the main approach, we did not find commissioned projects that would fit in the exhibition area. This is very significant.

**ER:** Of course there are other variations, but typically a city project would be commissioned by the government. And such commission virtually does not exist. This is one of the conclusions that one can draw from the research.

**CL:** There was one exception to this rule and for a long time we considered including it in the exhibition, but we just could not squeeze it in the curatorial narrative. It is a piece by Joana Lira that creates a signage system for the Carnival in Recife as per the government's commission.

**ER:** This was the only actual project of urban-scale design commissioned by a government that we found. But unfortunately it was pretty isolated in the general narrative of the exhibition. Curiously, what was originally meant to be our first target ended up not finding its place in *Graphic City*.

(11)

An exhibition that is not composed of art objects and is held in a cultural institution can lead to other developments. A work of art can be defined as an object that magnificently demonstrates a solution to a

technical or aesthetic problem etc. The pieces in the exhibition, in turn, appear to raise issues, distinguishing themselves from works of art because they do not claim to provide solutions.

**DT:** The vast majority of the works were not designed to be displayed in an exhibition space. They were created to occupy other places.

**ER:** One of our concerns was how to show a work that was thought for a soccer stadium, a bus stop, a wall in the city and how to translate it to the exhibition space without giving it an aura that would push it away from the issues that brought it into being. This is why we had the explanatory entries and images showing the works on the street; it was imperative that they were seen in their original context.

**DT:** Going back to the case of Piseagrama, what mattered the most was the intervention they made in Belo Horizonte. And if in fact that is all that matters, we would have to present the evidences of this action in the city, without turning the wheatpaste poster into an exhibition piece displaced from its context. In the case of the exhibition, which is about design, moving the graphic pieces to the Itaú Cultural premises does not mean that we are ascribing them the status of an artwork. The wheatpaste poster has, in this case, a narrative function.

**ER:** In our opinion, the exhibition would be too arid if we left the wheatpaste posters out of it and if we narrowed the works down to a photographic documentation.

(12)

Do you believe in a certain social function of design? Do you believe that design should assume the role of a troubleshooter, the peacemaker of the situation?

**DT:** By principle, design should solve problems. But what can Marcelo Zocchio and Mariana Bernd do besides putting a poster indicating the problem in *Qual Ônibus passa aqui?* (2000-2013)? They are confirming how powerless designers are for they cannot solve the issue.

(13)

Is it as if the designers reported the problem?

**ER:** Yes, and this is effective in a way, it helps raising people's awareness to this problem. It is a project that fuels the conflict rather than seeking pacification, it is a solution that operates within the given constraints.

**DT:** But I see a great deal of frustration about it.

**CL:** After all, the task of the designer is not only to point out problems. It is also to solve them.

(14)

In the exhibition, the nature of the works that are in the threshold between design and other artistic fields was discussed as well. For example, *Impressão de Objetos* (2007 to 2014), by Mirella Marino, touches

design like a tangent. Are there works that were included in the exhibition much more because of the relation they establish with the city rather than design itself?

**ER:** All projects use graphical syntax for a solution that is aesthetically interesting. The connection between Mirella Marino's project and design falls within this syntax, in the use of the graphic lexicon and the city as a raw material. We kept saying all along that the exhibition is composed of projects that do not propose solutions. The term, though, is employed in the practical sense because there is a great wealth of solutions as far as language is concerned.

**DT:** On the other hand, *Eu <3 Camêlô* (2009), by Opavivará!, is a postcard. They appropriated the printed medium and understand that as a piece of work. After all, they are an art collective. The cards circulated on a small scale on the beach and then went to an art gallery, thus entering the art community. To Opavivará!, it is a work of art.

**CL:** The collective, however, uses graphic design procedures either in choosing the medium or the language.

(15)

With the research and the selection made, do you see any transformation in the conception of the designer's trade?

**ER:** Out of Brazil, it is very common that the design firms set aside part of their revenue to fund personal projects. This is unusual around here, though.

**DT:** The case of Gustavo Piqueira is emblematic, because he is fully proactive. He has his own publishing company and ends up being responsible for the whole process of the books he publishes.

**CL:** Piqueira keeps an office that is large compared to the current standards and devotes a major part of his work to design consumer products. And this subsidizes an activity resulting, for example, in the book *São Paulo, Cidade Limpa* (2007), which is in the exhibition.

**ER:** The exhibition addresses prospect opportunities to work without having to count on commissions. Discussions about the trade recurrently end in a wailing wall for the lack of thought-provoking designs, money and dialog. The exhibition shows that an alternative is to make up our own projects, although we know that few projects there would pay the bills.

**CL:** Roughly speaking, funding for Piseagrama and Andrés Sandoval, for example, comes from calls for propositions.

**DT:** It is interesting because we spoke about the absence of the government in the exhibition. On the other hand, the calls for propositions are examples evidencing the presence of the governmental authorities subsidizing projects from the perspective of culture.

**CL:** One thing, however, is when the government hires a specific service, and another totally different is a call for proposition that funds a project.

**ER:** But it is a way to be funded by the government and address issues of general interest.

**CL:** Of course you can reverse the hiring logic when submitting your proposal for a project, but it has its limits. You are not going to do it to resolve the bus signage problem in Sao Paulo. To be able to propose a solution that is prone to materialize, you have to be actively engaged in conversations with the players of this system. The call for propositions ends up restricting the process of creating the work, detecting the problem, reporting it, taking a stand in view of a situation. And this is not the traditional role of the designer.

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The *Lei Cidade Limpa* [Clean City Act] appears very plainly in a couple of works: *Av. Celso Garcia 2004/2014*, by Lucia Mindlin Loeb; *São Paulo, Cidade Limpa (2007)*, by Gustavo Piqueira; *Cidade Limpa (2001-2007)*, by Hélivio Romero, and *Ainda Paisagem (Perto Demais series) (2008)*, by Daniel Escobar. How do the three of you assess the transformation of the city since this law was passed in 2007? How do the works displayed in the exhibition mirror the changes that took place in Sao Paulo as a result?

**CL:** Lucia Mindlin Loeb's work originally dates back to 2004; she made a photographic survey to support a redevelopment project of Avenida Celso Garcia, which later also featured in the *Sexta-Feira* magazine. We proposed her to conduct a new survey in 2014 – ten years after the first. She accepted it. The work was exhibited on four panels: with both sides of the avenue in each of the decades. The result is curious, because one day I caught myself guessing which one was the 2004 image and which was the 2014.

**ER:** The *Lei Cidade Limpa* has a principle that is absolutely indisputable: the look of the individual over the city cannot be sold to advertising agencies of private companies. However, to me, the city has not become more beautiful after the law. The first reason, evident in the images of Hélivio Romero, is that the clash of scales was visually interesting – the contrast between the powerful hyper-reality of the advertising image and the precarious and dull reality of the city. Another reason is that the city had an enormous diversity of signs using channel letter, plastic, acrylic, wood, handmade etc. Since the law has been effective, all went to vinyl plotting, hence standardizing the city graphic communication. A bunch of charming signs went to the trash can. And as signs and billboards were weeded out, most often this laid bare residual spaces or nearly ruins.

**CL:** I understand the vision of the commodification of landscape, but there are counterexamples, like Times Square. It is a piece of New York where advertising takes place. The mistake in the law, in my view, is how particularities are ignored.

**DT:** Zones and delimited portions of the city where advertising is allowed could be created, like Times Square or Piccadilly Circus, in London.

**CL:** The idea that advertising is harmful at all is a bit odd.

**DT:** It is very weird, because advertising is part of the urban landscape.

**CL:** It makes part of everyone's life.

**ER:** The aggressiveness of a town covered up with ads was a problem especially for architects. But when we take away the billboards, the constructed city surfaces and, when it comes to Sao Paulo, it is generally very bad. The great virtue of the law would be the awareness of the importance of the architecture quality, but we know it is not that simple. Lucia Mindlin Loeb's work also shows how fast the city changes, the property speculation – the Temple of Solomon, for example. Eventually we decided not

to identify which panel is from 2004 and which is 2014. This work forces the audience to sharpen their eye, because not always the differences are glaring and do not point to a single direction. Her work is about the vitality of Sao Paulo, driven by contradictory forces that are absolutely out of any control. It clearly shows that the *Lei Cidade Limpa* was obviously not good. It is not that simple when the subject is the urban space.

**CL:** The pictures by Helvio Romero, in turn, establish a direct relationship with the work by Daniel Escobar, who uses as raw material objects related to the world of desire and consumption.

**ER:** Helvio Romero records the expansive, seductive and immediate character of advertising. On the other hand, in the work by Daniel Escobar, this externality of the advertising image is endangered when he creates layers inside the billboard. The image that, par excellence, is supposed to pop out of the plane now has an internal dimension, it becomes complex and denies its nature.

**CL:** Just to expand this discussion to speak about the exhibition as a whole, at no time we wanted to close the issues. There is no conclusion about these topics, like the *Lei Cidade Limpa*. Each visitor makes his own value judgment. And these theme-based groupings, these neighboring areas, determined what was in or out of the exhibition. One work enhances the other.

(17)

Were these theme-based groupings decisive to formulate the curatorial narrative?

**ER:** Many works were included in the exhibition because of the dialog they establish with the others. The relationship among them preserves the complexity of the issues, like in the example of the *Lei Cidade Limpa* mentioned earlier. Another example are the works by Guilherme Maranhao and Thyago Nogueira, about which we talked before. We have always seen them relate to each other - although they are very different productions. In the authors' view, the works do not relate to each other. However, in the context of the show and in the spatial position they occupy, they do build a relationship. And it is this association that interests us in the curatorial narrative. Guilherme Maranhao's work is to Sao Paulo as Thyago Nogueira's work is to Brasılia. In this case, because it is a design exhibition, it is not only the fruition of the work regarded from its aesthetic autonomy that is at stake.

**DT:** Nevertheless, nothing stops the visitor from understanding the works as autonomous pieces and, of course, we did not have the least control of what kind of interpretation visitors would have of this exhibition.

**ER:** It is great that they are also interpreted as an autonomous work, but our rationale is pretty connected to the construction of a narrative in which the works establish a relationship. According to this idea of stitching things together, the floors eventually resulted very different from each other. Of course we built them that way, but we could only realize how big the difference was when the exhibition was finally set.

(18)

**FPB:** My impression on the day I visited the exhibition (for a more global perspective and without inserting other considerations later on) was that the upper floor housed the more scholarly works, while the basement housed the most popular ones – sometimes, much more in the pop sense, some other times, more vernacular.



**ER:** This is interesting because, at some point, we realized that the exhibition is itself an event that needs to communicate. There is a discourse at stake and we – at the same time curators and designers – had to ensure this communication.

**CL:** In the beginning of the process, Metro – an architecture firm responsible for the exhibition design – presented two proposals: the one we have adopted in the exhibition and the other that followed the non-design line. In this case, we would buy ready-to-use office furniture and stationery and would give up the idea of designing all the props. This was when we looked at the variety of works and their non-exhibition nature and we understood that it was impossible to follow that line of thought. Therefore, the idea of project is in the exhibition itself, in the exhibition design and also in its narrative, in the selection of the works, in their positioning and in the entirety etc.

(19)

About this exhibition design, what features were key in the project and how do they relate to the content?

**CL:** The exhibition design performed two very interesting roles: detaching the exhibition from Itaú Cultural's architecture and sewing together works of totally disparate nature.

**ER:** The modular structure unfolds to house each one of the works. Monitors, projectors, wheatpaste posters, books, large or small works, vertical or horizontal formats. It helps sewing the works together and uses the specificities of the works to create spatial variations.

**DT:** The exhibition design helped us interpret the works: we understand much of the exhibition for the way the exhibition space was designed. We could say, in a way, that the major design project in *Graphic City* - strictly speaking - is the exhibition design.

**ER:** The so-called "good design" is evidently present in the exhibition design because it is all detailed, modulated, rational. It has a number of attributes commonly recognized as a virtue in the design field. Many works on display are questioning or stressing these attributes, but the exhibition design embodies the "good design."

(20)

How do you define the different character of the two floors?

**ER:** The upper floor hosts a large part of the fictional group, most poetic works. In the basement, the political mood became stronger.

**CL:** The works that are on the top floor are more open and, on the lower floor, they are more straightforward, with more explicit intentions.

(21)

Can we say that there is a more popular character in the basement?

**ER:** The body of works with a vernacular approach built up a strength that we would have never expected seven months ago. Also because none of us is particularly attracted by this design that has strong ties with the region where it was produced, the vernacular design. But we found some good research on that line. Depicting crafts on the verge of extinction, we have *Letras que Flutuam – Vídeo de Mapeamento dos Abridores de Letras da Amazônia* (2014), by Fernanda Martins, and *Abridores de Letras de Pernambuco* (2013), by Damião Santana, Fátima Finizola and Solange Coutinho. There is *Pixação: São Paulo Signature* (2004), by François Chastanet, which is less regionalist or nostalgic. Marcelo Drummond, from Belo Horizonte, made an extensive research titled *Tipos Malditos* (1998-2014), which is presented in an abridged format due to the variety of images that he gathered. The interesting thing there to note is that even a person who can barely spell the name of the things they are selling to survive is somehow aware of the seduction tricks in the printed communication. The person has very little information of the official culture, but has a great deal of contact with advertising. In a closer look, one can see the design they screen out from the surrounding world. Sometimes, the tricks they make up can even turn the interpretation difficult, but there is an intuitive concern with form, the consciousness of their power of seduction, which is recognized as useful for selling iced coconut along the road.

**DT:** It is interesting to see how this vernacular grouping articulates as a whole. Marcelo Drummond's research is connected to subsistence, to the anonymous person that seeks to find the best way to publicize what he sells. The sign painters, in turn, those from Pernambuco and the North, do this as their trade, they live on painting letters. Finally, there is the "pixo" [tagging], which is a signature.

(22)

Could we call the *pichador* [tagger] a sort of sign painter?

**DT:** No, because the idea of a trade is ascribed to this term "sign painter."

**ER:** There is a key difference: the sign painter lives on this, while the *pichador* [tagger] doesn't. Nevertheless, if we take into consideration the way the "know how" is informally conveyed, they approach each other.

**DT:** The research of François Chastanet has a particularity that drew our attention. The researches on the subject tend to focus on social aspects, the understanding of the "pixo" [tagging] as the voice from the marginalized people, as a visual demonstration of people who claim presence in the city. Chastanet, in turn, immersed himself in the formal issues, approaching the "pixo" to typography. He evidences the relationship of letters with architecture, which serves as a guideline to the *pichadores* [taggers]. For him, the *pichação* [tagging] is built intricately, with careful spacing between letters, condensation of the characters, all this reveals cleverness in the use of space. And, until then, this formal understanding of "pixo" was something totally new to us.

(23)

Could you explain how the open call process occurred? How were the works chosen included in the general selection of the exhibition?

**ER:** Since mid-2013, there had been a conversation with Itaú Cultural to host and support the Congress of AGI (Alliance Graphique Internationale), which was held in August 2014. The Brazilian AGI Members who planned the event in Brazil were Kiko Farkas, Rico Lins, Guto Lacaz, Fabio Prata, Flavia Nalon and

the three of us. In the wake of AGI, Itaú Cultural proposed putting up an exhibition on Brazilian contemporary graphic design. At that very early stage, when the exhibition was still tied to AGI, the idea of the open call emerged. Later, the three of us embraced the curatorship of what came to be *Graphic City*.

**DT:** The statement of the open call was the approach to the exhibition at that time.

**CL:** The wording was, basically, "works that have the city as their subject matter or medium." That is, it was pretty broad. We received 456 submissions.

(24)

Which were the criteria adopted to select the works?

**ER:** We received works of all types. More than selecting the projects, the open call was very important to understand what we would envision for the exhibition, to define what we wanted.

**DT:** Through it, we could map how people regarded this subject. Until then, we were groping around. That is, the so-called open call helped us mature the concept of the exhibition and also showed how urgent this discussion was.

**ER:** We received many projects whose relationship with the city proved too fragile. Others did establish a direct relationship with it, but the scope and impact of the projects were very small. There were also works that dealt with the subject matter, but they were not resourceful in design matters. Our expectation was to receive propositions that were looser, more utopian, less applicable, more ambitious, dreamy and it was frustrated, though. In the statement of the open call, we said that it was not necessary to be feasible.

**CL:** It is important to point out that the three of us worked on the selection alongside Jader Rosa, coordinator of the Itaú Cultural's design team, and Agnaldo Farias, professor at the Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo, Universidade de São Paulo (FAU-USP).

(25)

Which were the seven projects in the exhibition that came via the open call?

**ER:** We have *Cidade Planejada (Sao Paulo)* (2014), by Marina Camargo, about which we have already spoken. The *Movimento Tipográfico* project (2013), by Coletivo Oitentaedois, joined the exhibition because it is very inventive. The boy dances while making the letters of the alphabet: putting dance together with typography is very unusual and well made considering its unpredictability.

**DT:** *Movimento Tipográfico* (2013) is a very well articulated work from the communication standpoint.

**ER:** In several works in the exhibition, what is interesting is the way the artists appropriate media. The Coletivo Oitentaedois take advantage of several communication strategies: typography, dance, light, music, video, wheatpaste poster, photography. One takes you to the other and it closes a circuit. Additionally, the same collective was selected with *Junho Manifesto* (2014), a fanzine of the demonstrations that is very unassuming, an unpretentious record, but with an interesting graphics solution quality. *Projeto Estúdio Valongo* (2011), by Augusto Sampaio, also came from the open call and

it stands out among the various wheatpaste works we received because it involves a process with a matrix that is collective, in which the author does not determine all variables. And it is aesthetically powerful.

**CL:** There is *Livrocidade* (2014), by Gilberto Tomé, which focuses on the Água Preta stream, in the region of Pompeia, in Sao Paulo. The work operates with recollections retrieved from collages of historical photos and present images of the place.

**ER:** There is a short circuit there when stripping a wheatpaste poster off the wall and turning it into a book. It is against the logic of both the book and the wheatpaste poster. This seduced us in that project: putting at risk the very medium he is using.

**DT:** The poster *Arqueologia Afetiva Urbana* (2011), by Eduardo Foresti, also came through the open call.

**ER:** This came in as a counterpoint. In most works, the city is seen from the perspective of the collective, but it is also composed of several individualities: the city of each one and their intersections. There is there a direct dialog with *Atlas Ambulante* (2011), by Renata Marquez and Wellington Cançado, which deals with mappings of trajectories, which result in different designs due to each activity.

**DT:** Finally, there is *Editora Temporária* (2013), by Clara Meliande and Tania Grillo.

**ER:** It results from the collective working process developed at the Centro de Design Carioca. The relationship with the city is very clear there. It is a rich and well-made project that interestingly explores the potentialities of the book object.

(26)

Watching the exhibition ready, do you consider that you have put up there a panorama of the current Brazilian design?

**DT:** We have never had that intention. When we submitted to Itaú Cultural our curatorial proposal, the idea was not to present a panorama of the Brazilian graphic design from the very beginning.

**CL:** The exhibition turned out to show a bit of graphic design's current gaps as a trade. Fortunately, we see there other possibilities between the extremes: the designer who works in a large firm and the lone designer focused on self-expression.

**ER:** I think the exhibition turned into something more interesting than a portrait of the current output. Being optimistic, *Graphic City* indicates new paths to design.

(27)

What are these new paths indicated by *Graphic City*?

**ER:** To start off, I think the exhibition shows a very broad range of possibilities of using language – from the refinement of Andrés Sandoval's designs to bloody types or "pixo"; from the scanner that turns into a camera (like *Pluracidades*, by Guilherme Maranhão) to the lenticular poster to show the "before and after" (*Monumento*, by Coletivo Garapa). However, our main goal is to expand the array of possibilities of interaction between design and the everyday life in the cities. The possibility of acting through questioning (*Qual Ônibus Passa Aqui?*, by Marcelo Zocchio and Mariana Bernd), irony (*Eu <3 Camelô*, by

Opavivará!), fiction (*Apartamento de 1 Km/Casa Cidades/Casa Fluxos*), by Bruna Canepa and Ciro Miguel), negation (*Não-Propaganda*, by GIA – Grupo de Interferência Ambiental), activism (*Bandeiras*, by Frente 3 de Fevereiro) and so forth. There are many possibilities. It encourages the designer to stop performing this passive role based on commissioned works that come to him and take a more purposeful stand. We see there projects unleashed by concerns of various natures, they are the engine.