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MOVE TO THE



BRAZILIAN BEAT

Driven wild by the Campana Brothers, and with a new-found love for veteran architect Oscar Niemeyer, design aficionados are hot-footing it to Brazil where they are discovering a wealth of talent just waiting to burst onto the world stage. Emma O'Kelly gets the lowdown on the latest design sensation

Unless you've been hiding under a stone for the past year, you will have noticed that Brazil is more

in vogue than Scarlett Johansson dressed head to toe in Marni. As holiday hotspot, fashion Mecca and architectural heavyweight, this South American giant is flexing its creative muscle in a way not seen since the 60s, when a military coup followed by a 20-year dictatorship extinguished the country's spirit. Today, even Havaianas, the lowly flip-flops worn by Brazilians rich and poor, have become iconic.

The move to happening status began seven years ago when furniture designers Fernando and Humberto Campana appeared on the scene and shook up the world of European modernism with their unorthodox Latin eye. Then came a new generation of fashion designers, from Carlos Miele to Fause Haten, who translated the Brazilian love of colour and casual cuts for the catwalks of Paris and Milan. Brazil's reputation as a design hotspot was further cemented with the success of artists such as Vik Muniz and Beatriz Milhazes, films like *Carandiru* and *City of God*, and, of course, the ever-cool music scene. All this, combined with the fact that Brazil has, in President Lula, its first working-class left-wing leader for 40 years, and that the culture minister, Gilberto Gil, is also the nation's greatest pop star, has brought new-found optimism to the country.

City of God director Fernando Meirelles sums up this feeling: 'We are very positive at the moment. Inflation is down, employment is up; we have a good president and great expectations. We are ready for a new era.' The Campana brothers agree: 'We have more self-esteem now. The dictatorship banned everything, but with our young democracy, things are blooming.' And Brazil's huge blend of cultures, crafts and resources means it is well placed to profit from the desire for something new and different. >

THIS PAGE. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Fernando and Humberto Campana's typically quirky 'Anemone' chair for Edra; the iconic Christ the Redeemer statue, Rio de Janeiro's most famous landmark; a still from *City of God*, one of the new wave of cool Brazilian movies; Havaianas, the country's famous cheap and stylish flip-flops; the soon-to-open River Universe Hotel on Ipanema Beach, designed by Philippe Starck. **OPPOSITE:** Sergio Cabral's cardboard furniture, which is eco-friendly and epitomises the Brazilian spirit for making beautiful, fun designs from basic materials.





FROM FAR LEFT: Oscar Niemeyer's Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2003; fashion by Reinaldo Lourenço; 'The White Rose' from the Monades series by artist Vik Muniz; the 'Anel' chair designed in 1970 by Ricardo Fasanello. **BELOW:** Hotel Fasano by hot contemporary architect Isay Weinfeld.

BRAZIL'S CREATIVE FORCE ARCHITECTS

OSCAR NIEMEYER – the undisputed god of Tropical Modernism.
ISAY WEINFELD – leader of the next generation. Projects such as Hotel Fasano and Clube Chocolate store in São Paulo make him the man of the moment (see Home Brazil, page 88).
PAULO MENDES DA ROCHA – a Niemeyer contemporary, best known these days for galleries and museums.
ARTHUR DE MATTOS CASAS – rising star with offices in São Paulo and New York, whose recent Emiliano Hotel in São Paulo put him under the spotlight.
MARCIO KOGAN – occasional partner of Weinfeld, who has some splendid houses under his belt.

ARTISTS

VIK MUNIZ – self-confessed 'low-tech illusionist' who blurs the boundary between art and photography. Works include portraits made from sugar, dirt, dust and chocolate sauce.
ERNESTO NETO – most famous for making organic landscapes from Lycra and polyamide.
BEATRIZ MILHAZES – psychedelic, colourful canvases popular with the likes of Mario Testino.
ESTEVAO – self-taught artist, who from the age of 15 started transforming his illegal shack in a São Paulo favela into a spectacular home covered in mosaics, seashells and bric-a-brac.
ALDEMIR MARTINS – neither hip nor cool, but this octogenarian's landscapes of the Sertão – Brazil's desert area – and his pictures of animals adorn vases, walls and objets everywhere. His imagery is a staple of Brazilian iconography.

FASHION

CARLOS MIELE – blending Lycra and linen is his trademark, but chain-mail dresses and leather cat-suits are popular with celebs.
ROSA CHÁ – super sexy swimwear.
REINALDO LOURENÇO – draped jersey tops and tapered trousers.
ALEXANDRE HERCHCOVITCH – dubbed the Brazilian Alexander McQueen when he hit the scene as a young upstart about six years ago.
ISSA LONDON – UK-based Brazilian label that does jersey empire-line dresses and mix-and-match bikinis in great prints.



No surprise, then, that UK designers are tuning into the nation's talent. Tord Boontje is making a chandelier with Coopa-Roca, a co-operative in a Rio slum. Made up of 150 women, it specialises in embroidery, crochet and *fuxico* – a technique using little knots, which fashion designers like Carlos Miele and Marcelo Sommer have already incorporated into their collections. Coopa-Roca is also in talks with Paul Smith and Agent Provocateur about their first fashion collaboration in Europe. Says Boontje: 'The time is right for artisans who can make high-quality, individual products. We're ready for a luxury that doesn't mean Gucci and Prada.' Tom Dixon, on a recent trip to Brazil, sourced ecologically friendly Amazonian latex, which he is using to make a light with the Campanas, while Lady Weinberg, aka hotelier Anouska Hempel, is building a hotel in the classy coastal resort of Itacaré. When it opens in 2006, the Warapura will boast a multitude of treatments, sulphur pools, follies in which to picnic and private beaches. Philippe Stark, too, is catering for the ever-increasing number of tourists heading to the country. Following the format of his Faena Hotel & Universe in Buenos Aires, the River Universe Hotel opens on Ipanema Beach in 2006. Like a mini village, it will have 100 apartments, restaurants and exhibition areas.

For those of us who aren't able to bask in Brazilian first-hand, the good news is that this summer a slice of the country is coming to London. The Design Museum is showing the Campana brothers' work from 19 June to 19 September, while Selfridges is running a promotion during May, Brasil 40°, which is being orchestrated by many of the country's creative hard-hitters. During the event, the Queen of Time statue above the main entrance of Selfridges Oxford Street will give way to a far more devout figure – Christ the Redeemer, based on the holy landmark that embraces Rio from an imposing hillside. At 13 metres high, it is half the size of the 30s original, and is made from canvas, fibreglass and metal instead of concrete. Abel Gomes, one of Brazil's leading scenographers and art directors, has created it, as well as backdrops depicting landmarks such as Sugar Loaf mountain and Guanabara Bay, which will run across Selfridges' windows, along with portraits created by artist Vik Muniz from carnival debris. The car park

THIS LATIN AMERICAN GIANT IS FLEXING ITS CREATIVE MUSCLE IN A WAY NOT SEEN SINCE THE 60S



ABOVE: Espasso, the furniture store in New York that sells hot Brazilian design. **LEFT:** the 'Huevos' coat rack by Luciana Martins and Garson de Oliveira. **RIGHT:** a steel wire citrus basket from the 'Blow Up' series by the Campana brothers for Alessi. **FAR RIGHT:** the Campana brothers' 'ideal house' installation at this year's International Furniture Fair in Cologne.



COURTESY OF RICHARD BIRWANT; SERPENTINE GALLERY PAVILION; FERNANDA GALARAY; REINALDO LOURENÇO; COUTURE; GABRIELE ZIPPER; PARIS (THE WHITE ROSE) BY VIK MUNIZ; FERNANDO LASCO (ESPASSO)

will be turned into a makeshift cinema, the food hall will become a *feira* (marketplace) and the likes of Otto and Bebel Gilberto will give musical performances on the shop floor. Meanwhile, Tambo, London's first gallery devoted to Latin American art, has a show in May of work by hip Brazilian photographer Odres Miaszho. Its founder, João Gruber, is an art dealer from São Paulo, who felt 'the time was right to show that art from South America is as sophisticated as anything European'.

Historically, Brazil has always had incredible bursts of creative energy, and the result is a rich architectural and design legacy. Le Corbusier visited Rio in the 30s and worked on the design for the Ministry of Education and Health with Oscar Niemeyer and Lúcio Costa, who for the next 30 years shaped Brazilian cities with their avant-garde architecture. Other architects, such as Paulo Mendes da Rocha, Lina Bo Bardi, Alfonso Eduardo Reidy and landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx, also spearheaded the movement that became known as Tropical Modernism and wound up with the building of Brasília in 1960. Such is the quality and timelessness of the architecture from this period that Massimo Morozzi, creative director of Italian design company Edra, refers to Brazil as 'a Deutschland in the tropics', and Julia Peyton-Jones, director of London's Serpentine Gallery, defies anyone not to return from Brazil full of enthusiasm. 'Rio's Ministry of Education and Health is astounding. It still contains the original furniture, carpets and decorations, and is a tour de force in terms of design', she says.

Working alongside Niemeyer were furniture designers Joaquim Tenreiro (whose pieces are still selling like hot cakes in São Paulo), José Zanine Caldas and Sérgio Rodrigues, who is widely recognised as the father of Brazilian furniture design. Throughout his 50-year career, Rodrigues has designed more than 400 interiors, including that of the National Congress Building and Vice President's residence in Brasília. Still going strong in Rio, he admits to 'a passion for wood' and has created an amazing 1,500 pieces during his lifetime.

Rodrigues takes advantage of the multitude of exotic hardwoods in his country to make luxurious pieces in generous proportions. Many have followed in his footsteps, among them Etel Carmona and Carlos Motta. Carmona pioneers a wood production method whereby managed forest is grown and cut by local people at her school/studio in São Paulo state. In this way her pieces can be sold with an 'ecologically correct' tag. Already an international player, Carmona is planning to launch in the UK at this year's 100% Design in London. Motta also uses sustainable wood, focusing on beautifully crafted, >



THE LEADERS

THE CAMPANA BROTHERS

WHO? Need you ask? With their ebullient, colourful and offbeat creations, Fernando and Humberto Campana are largely responsible for putting Brazilian design back on the map. Not only have pieces such as their 'Anemone', 'Favela' and series of rope chairs taken on iconic status, but the brothers' ability to transform cheap, throwaway materials into stunning design brings with it a refreshing new ethos – that of 'survival through inventing' and 'spontaneous architecture'.

NEW WORK: their quirky 'ideal house', which was shown at the International Furniture Fair in Cologne in January, consisted of a house made from discarded wooden splints, with a volcano at its centre and a table with its very own vegetable patch in the middle, while last year's 'Privé Oca' chandelier – a delicate crystal flute topped with a pile of straw – is en route to becoming a classic. Recent works include the 'Blow Up' range of containers made from offcuts of steel wire for Alessi. **IN THEIR OWN WORDS:** 'Most Brazilians don't have even the simplest of tools to help them, so they build with their hands. Hardly anyone can rely on having industrially produced materials – they have to use whatever happens to be lying around.'



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: two examples of architecture and decoration by Marcelo Rosenbaum at Casa Pizza, São Paulo; 'Circular' shelves by Luciana Martins and Gerson de Oliveira; São Paulo's hip Hotel Unique; artist Ernesto Neto's 'The Garden', 2003, in collaboration with The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia; the Nomesa restaurant in São Paulo, by Marcelo Rosenbaum.



luxurious pieces. Carlos Junqueira, founder of Brazilian furniture store Espasso in New York, says the demand for ecologically sound wood is growing, and that the future for Brazilian design lies in organisations like Aver Amazonia, a workshop that specialises in controlled harvesting from sustainable forests. Another designer in Espasso's stable, planned for launch in the UK, is Ricardo Fasanello. He died in 1993, but his modern-retro furniture, with its sexy curves, is today being promoted by his family. 'My father was concerned with the social character of his furniture,' says daughter Andrea. 'Brazilians are very social people, and almost every one of his chairs turns, so people can mix.'

As the design scene gathers momentum, there is also a gang of youngsters whose work eradicates any ethnic or craft-y associations you may have had about Brazilian design. São Paulo-based designer Marcelo Rosenbaum, who trained in Germany, creates furniture and interiors that are infused with Latin freshness, pop culture and a factor he calls 'Brasility' – see his funky Casa Pizza in São Paulo, a pizzeria done out like a house. Luciana Martins and Gerson de Oliveira, working under the label Ovit, sit at the point where design meets art. Their shelving, lamps and rugs speak the international design language of stainless steel and Plexiglas. 'We work to classic modernist ideas of rigour and purity of form while trying to add humour, irreverence and freshness,' they say.

Others, like Sergio Cabral and the young collective No Tech Design, show the Campana brothers' instinct for recycling junk by putting plastic buckets, cardboard and fabric to good use to make zany, colourful pieces. According to Alice Rawsthorn, director of London's Design Museum, the trademarks of this new troupe are 'energy and vibrancy, a love of vivid colour and sculptural forms, as well as what the Campanas call "survival through inventing"; in other words the flair and resourcefulness of the Brazilian poor for making the most of scraps.'

Sergio Cabral, part of the Superlímão Studio, uses cardboard to create chairs, tables and stools. 'Not only does it allow us to play around with texture, plasticity, temperature, colour and contrast, it also adds social value to our products. By using recycled paper we can find a good use for the tons of paper discarded every day,' he says.

Nizan Guanaes is Brazil's top media tycoon and the owner of five ad agencies and the first internet portal in Brazil. 'Brazil finally has all the right ingredients to become a world player,' he says. His view is echoed by almost everyone you speak to. With the nation's New World enthusiasm and unexplored territories, both geographical and creative, it looks like eyes will be turning west for a long time to come. 'Brazil is going to be hot in the next 20 years,' says Lady Weinberg. As if it isn't hot enough already. **DICO** Brasil 40° runs at Selfridges London, from 4-31 May. Find Brazilian design at Espasso, New York (www.espasso.com); Etel Carmona, São Paulo (00 55 11 3064 1266; www.etalinteriores.com.br); and Sergio Cabral, São Paulo (00 55 11 3518 8919; www.superlimao.com.br). The Campana brothers' 'Blow Up' range for Alessi is available at the Alessi store, 22 Brook St, W1 (020 7518 9091; www.alessi.com).

NEW TALENT NO TECH DESIGN

WHO? A São Paulo-based group of 11 designers who met in 2000 at a workshop held by the Campana brothers at the Brazilian Museum of Sculpture (MuBE). At the end of the course, they held a group show at MuBE and design store Tok & Stok. Like their mentors, they take ordinary, often ready-made objects and turn them into design pieces. So a windscreen-cleaning brushes become a clipboard, a junked turntable is made into a clock, and synthetic feathers are shaped into a fruit bowl.

NEW WORK: even though they are so young, their work is prolific and varied. Recent pieces include the 'XYZ' lamp, made from plugs and acrylic, and the 'Kraft' screen and chair made from craft paper and vegetable glue. Popular pieces such as the snake-like 'Nebulosa' lamp, the 'Donut' table and the 'Cinética' rug now sell at several stores across São Paulo.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: 'We use materials, especially plastics, that are not about technological innovation. We adopt the "ready-made" philosophy whereby an ordinary object is turned into something else. We like the idea of recycling and eco design, but it is not always our priority.' To see the group's designs, visit www.notechdesign.com.br.

