

TELEVISION REVIEW

Brazilian graphic design on TV

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Brazilian graphic design, Brazil (2015); 1st Season: 8 episodes; Duration: 52' each episode; Production company: Aiuê; Directors: André Saad Jafet and Jorge Saad Jafet

The documentary television series *Brazilian Graphic Design (Design Gráfico Brasileiro)* was launched by the Brazilian channel, 'Arte 1', in 2016. The series was divided into eight episodes, with the following subjects covered in its first season: 'Poster', 'Editorial', 'Music Industry (album covers)', 'Typography', 'Spatial', 'Brands', 'Motion', and 'Textiles'. Well-known Brazilian experts and designers presented their opinion on creative processes, repertoires, work methods, and the relationship between art and design, among other topics. In Brazil, there are few initiatives of this kind, which spread the relevance of graphic design in shaping the country's visual culture amongst an audience reaching beyond that of professional designers, academics, researchers, and students. Channel 'Arte 1' has over 13 million subscribers,¹ even though is geared to a specific audience interested in visual arts, literature, cinema, dance, and so forth.

The episodes were filmed mainly at the designers' own work place, namely, their studios, agencies, publishing and production companies, which are usually attractive spaces. There are also scenes and interviews recorded at design schools, as well as images captured on the streets depicting contemporary Brazilian graphic design in the real world. The pace of the narrative, surrounded by a pleasant soundtrack, resembles that of Gary Hustwit's film *Helvetica* (2007). The professionals interviewed for this documentary explain the main concepts of the trade and give examples of work drawn from their own portfolios. The public will certainly recognize their work but may never have stopped to consider how it was done. The designers use an open and didactic approach geared to lay viewers, thus revealing their literacy and communication skills.

The themes of the episodes follow the traditional division of graphic design specialties, as regards support and products. The episode entitled 'Poster' opens the series explaining the meaning of communication through images. There are examples of posters created for cultural events, amongst which the posters by Kiko Farkas created for the São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra and the ones known as 'lambe-lambes' (Figure 1), created by the Bijari studio, stand out. The second episode is called 'Editorial' and it includes an interview with Elaine Ramos, art director responsible for the innovation as well as the visual and graphic quality of the books published by Cosac Naify. This publishing house was a benchmark in the Brazilian editorial market during the last decade, but closed down at the end of 2015. The third episode, 'Music Industry', presents covers for Brazilian popular music records of the 1970's, created by Elifas Andreato, and of pop and rock music records created by Gringo Cardia in the years 1980 and 1990. The fourth episode, 'Typography', discusses the criteria for the design and use of the types, some parameters which are both intangible and surprising for anyone outside this trade. The topic is explored by Edna



Figure 1. 'Lambe-lambe' posters in São Paulo, created by the Bijari studio. *Image courtesy of Bijari Studio.*

Cunha Lima and Priscila Farias, acknowledged Brazilian researchers, among others. Curiously, this episode is the one with greater female participation.

In the fifth episode, named 'Spatial', there is a discussion about the synesthetic experience generated by visual design in interaction with architecture. The highlights in this episode are the exhibition design projects by Celso Longo, the commercial settings by Marko Brajovic and Guto Requena's interactive architecture. The sixth episode is called 'Brands', and it compares the viewpoint of Fred Gelli, Tátil Design creative director and coordinator of the brand strategy for the 2016 Olympic games in Rio de Janeiro, with that of Alexandre Wollner, a pioneer of Brazilian modernist design. It also presents the ads for the 'Havaianas' brand flip-flops (Figure 2), created



Figure 2. Advertisement for the Havaianas brand, created by Almap BBDO. *Image courtesy of Almap BBDO and Marcello Serpa.*

by Marcello Serpa at the Almap BBDO advertising agency. This is an emblematic case of brand repositioning through the communication of a new image, for one of Brazil's most popular products. The seventh episode in the series is called 'Textiles', and it covers the interaction between graphic design and the fashion industry. This is well summarized through the prints and photographic images of Jum Nakao's creations. The eighth episode is 'Motion', and it introduces Alceu Baptista, Mateus de Paula and Jarbas Agnelli with their internationally renowned portfolios of video clips, animations and advertisements.

The script of the series highlights and celebrates the work of the designers, a characteristic guiding other programs at 'Arte 1' channel that describe the profiles of professionals in other creative areas, such as architects, artists and photographers. Although the series is entitled Brazilian Graphic Design, only professionals from the two largest capital cities – São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro – are featured in this first season, which could indicate a follow-up including designers from other Brazilian regions. 'Arte 1' channel and the series are not available overseas. This is unfortunate, since they bring part of the present context of Brazilian graphic design to the attention of experts and lay people, in a very pleasant manner and seen through the eyes of its authors. This viewpoint is not only inspiring but also often unknown. This is a series to watch.

Note

1. Channel Arte 1 <<http://arte1.band.uol.com.br/>>access on July 20, 2016.

Notes on contributor

Sara Goldchmit is Professor of Visual Design at the School of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo (FAU-USP). She holds a PhD and a Master's degree in Design and Architecture from the same university, and her main research topics are visual communication, image and creative process.

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