

Identificar Raul Cunca no tempo, no espaço e na ação To identify Raul Cunca in time, space and action

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It distinguishes the individual and the collective. It discerns what is proper and what is alien, the equal and the different.

What is unique about Raul José Ribeiro de Matos Cunca? What is his identity? How to write about a singular person and, at the same time, so many?

When he speaks about identity, Cunca likes to quote the sentence by Adonis (Ali Ahmad Said Esber), *For me, identity is a creation. Man creates his identity through the work he produces. It is not fixed. It is not inherited.* By creation, we understand not only something that is new. It is rather something that is in the eternal process of the invention. Adonis's statement is like the one by the sociologist Stuart Hall. Identity is a continual transformation. It represents and challenges the cultural systems around us.

Identity consists of memories, ambiances, institutions, and historical, geographic, and biological facts. It is everything that makes new articulations, new identities. Yes, we must talk about identities, in the plural.

What are Raul Cunca's identities? We know that they are open and the result from his experiences, his territory, and his actions. The Cunca of today brings features of its childhood and of the ships trips during his summer vacations. In eternal change, he is provisional and not fixed.

In his lectures, Professor Cunca questions the design and the local identity. In Designart, organized by the Polytechnic Institute of Caselo Branco, he fosters the practices that start from the observation of the context of a certain region. The *Magic Boxes* (2018) and the *Mirror my ... Your frame ...* (2016) materialize and value each locality. Both have a common characteristic to instigate our seeing. Cunca uses local materials to show something more. Space is an instrument to reaffirm our identities. We are beings and places, territory-me, territory-mine.

Our territory is the space where we find ourselves. It is where we came from, where we demarcate our borders, and where we experience everyday life. Our place is the space in which we hesitate, binds us to the being-in-the-world of Heidegger. When identities refer to the feeling of being part

tidiano. Os lugares são os espaços nos quais nos demoramos, liga-nos ao ser-no-mundo de Heidegger. Se as identidades nos referenciam, como resgate, o sentir parte ou ser espacialmente é um dos seus fatores fundamentais. *Diga-me onde habitas e dir-te-ei quem és*, já escreveu Serres.

Raul Cunca nasceu e mora em Lisboa, mas trabalha em diversos países da Europa. Seu *modus operandi* apresenta Portugal, mas também percebemos traços da cultura italiana e holandesa, locais nos quais desenvolveu sua investigação de doutoramento. Entretanto, o que significa ser europeu? Ou mesmo português? Como é que o local de nascença interfere nas nossas características? Devemos considerar o fato de estarmos a viver (e já termos vivido) tempos de importantes fluxos populacionais. O processo de deslocações, integração e exclusões amplia as nossas sempre novas e complexas identidades e o contato com a multiplicidade de povos, línguas e modos de vida nos faz plural. Cunca é um nómade extraterritorial.

Os processos de reterritorialização promovem a construção de novos significados e propiciam ainda mais o aparecimento de outras identidades. Como afirmado por Rogério Haesbaert, *ao mesmo tempo prisão e liberdade, lugar e rede, fronteira e coração, o território de identidade pode ser uma prisão que esconde e oprime, ou uma rede que se abre e conecta, e um coração que emana poesia e novos significados.* O surgimento da expansão e destes territórios e a simultaneidade das práticas culturais e económicas contribuem para o aparecimento das identidades múltiplas.

Cunca compreende o lugar vivido, a produção típica local e interpreta-as em um objeto idealizado. Ele tem ciência, questiona onde e como se vive, avalia os materiais ao seu redor. Como um camaleão, suas criações consideram o ser-lugar, ele trata o usuário como um experimentador que vive, que se desloca e que busca significados.

No seu trabalho, a relação com o território propriamente dito, ou seja, o espaço geográfico da produção, atua como determinante na escolha dos instrumentos de trabalho. Ele explora o local como um índice e seus artefactos como tempo, como matéria condensada no espaço.

of, the territory is one of its fundaments. *Tell me where you live and I'll tell you* Serres wrote.

Raul Cunca was born and lives in Lisbon, works in several countries in Europe. His *modus operandi* presents Portugal. But we also perceive traces of Italian and Dutch culture. The places in which he developed his PhD. Yet, what does it mean to be European Portuguese? How does the birthplace with our characteristics? We must look at the fact that we are living (and have lived) in important population flows. The displacement, integration, and exclusion of our complex identities. The multiplicity of people, language and life makes us plural. Cunca is a nomad.

The reterritorialization process promotes the construction of new meanings. It propiciates the appearance of other identities even stated by Rogério Haesbaert, *at the same time prison and freedom, place and network, a heart that emanates poetry, and a heart that connects, and a heart that expands and the simultaneity of economic practices contribute to the emergence of multiple identities.*

Cunca understands the ambient an local production. He interprets them as a defined object. He has consciousness of where and how he lives, and he evaluates the materials around him. Like a chameleon, his creations consider the being and the user as an experienter who lives and seeks meanings.

In his work, the relationship with the territory is important. The geographic space acts as a determinant in the instrument. It explores the place as an index and as time, as a condensed matter in space.

The *Colomba chair* (2017) and *Lis* (2018) are examples in which Cunca combines building techniques with local materials. The color of the wool color that shows

also comes by touch. The body contact with the chair stimulates the memory. By passing our hand, we feel the texture of the burel. By leaning against the wood we smell the highlands of Portugal.

In Cunca's pieces, we perceive his desire to work with native materials rooted in Portugal. We realize how he understands and uses the technology available in national industries. And, finally, we become aware of how he creates an innovative solution. He respects raw materials. He knows their technical and production aspects. He recognizes them as important representatives of a material and immaterial culture.

The *Dual system* (2014), the *Conquian table and bench* (2012), the *Cha Dao board* (2013), and the *Flox pots* (2013) are some objects that he developed in cork. They are the opposite of the hyper artificiality found in today's world. These pieces refer to an artisanal production made at an industry. The reason is the affable texture that we fell. Or by the robustness of the chosen forms as opposed to the lightness provided by the material used. These pieces contact us with the natural. They value the raw material.

It is worth saying that, beyond the territory, our action also imprints our identities. Usually, we present ourselves with our name and then we say our profession or hobby. Raul Cunca, designer and professor. His curriculum presents him not only as a theorist of Portuguese design. He is also a practitioner, someone who puts in his works what he observes in his country and also in the world. He is an artificer, a creator, a collector, an user.

Darcy Ribeiro is an anthropologist. He discusses *the simple beauty in Indians' production* in the book "Design as a Project Practice". He describes that every Indian is a doer who finds enormous pleasure in doing well all that he does. He is also a user, fully aware of the unique qualities of the objects that he uses. The making and using of an object are examples of the materialization of our identities. The braided basket portrays the Indian who recognizes himself in the object that he has made. The pieces idealized by Raul Cunca are projections of the designer. As exposed by Baudrillard, I can see him without seeing me. That is why objects are invested with everything that could

His objects express his cultural values and his process of producing symbols in the material world. They are the result of his temporal interrelationships.

In the chair and table *Do It* (2010) Cunca poses the design by the other, or in relation with the other. Here he allows us to witness the assembly of our own parts. Through the understanding of culture as a process in construction, we relate to the creator and the identities of the designer and with him.

Viva, dear Raul!

exemplos da materialização de nossas identidades. A cesta trançada retrata o índio que se reconhece no objeto que fez. As peças idealizadas por Raul Cunca são, neste raciocínio, projeções do próprio designer. Como exposto por Baudrillard, posso vê-lo sem que me veja. Eis por que os objetos são investidos de tudo aquilo que não pôde

Seus objetos exprimem seus valores culturais, sua ideologia política, afiliação religiosa, experiências. São a transferência das suas identidades e do seu processo de produção de símbolos para o mundo material. São o resultado das 'estórias-até-à-obra', tradução de suas inter-relações temporais e espaciais.

Na cadeira e mesa *Do It* (2010) Cunca propõe um desenho pelo outro, ou melhor, com o outro. Aqui, ele nos permite experimentar a montagem das nossas próprias peças. Elas simbolizam a vivência, são a compreensão da cultura no processo. Nós fazemos na construção, nos relacionamos ao criador. Nos unimos às identidades do designer e somos o próprio Raul.

Viva, caro Raul!

Raul Cunca. A paciente investigação de um design ético para a valorização das identidades locais

Raul Cunca. The patient investigation of an ethical design for local identities valorization.

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