

**EXPERIMENTA DESIGN 2001**  
**MONASTERY OF ARRÁBIDA**  
**WORKSHOP**  
**THOUGHT AS DESIGN**  
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## **Thought is a hybrid garden**

In a moment like this, it is important to listen to the river's voice.

But why is it important to listen to the river's voice.

**Everything flows and nothing stops, said Heraclit at some point.**

**For those that enter the same rivers other and other waters flow.**

Thought flows.

I seat at the river's margins.

In a moment like this it is important to verify memory.

Too many thoughts may appear, too many may be lost in oblivion.

Thought is not continuous.

It gets dark, the border between day and night.

I wait.

In a moment like this, fireflies could appear.

In a moment like this, hybrid thoughts may come up.

But what is a hybrid thought?

What is a hybrid garden?

What does hybrid mean?

In the lexicon we may read the following: Is said of the animal or vegetable which is born out of cross-breeding of different species or genders, which is fruit of distinct elements. Bastard, mestizo, from parents of different races or genetic codes. Hermaphrodite.

**Ich bin eins und doppelt, said Goethe.**

Hybrid gardens are fruit of distinct elements, of different origins; they are mixtures, hermaphrodites, composed of disposable bottles and light diodes, both fireflies and enchanted flowers.

They are plastic, supermarket, garbage, consumption, and they are also magic, poetry, art.

They are artificial and natural, organic and synthetic. They are bastards, mestizos, hermaphrodites. They are hybrid gardens.

Also in music, in literature, in social and cultural theory there are people to which the hybrid is no longer monstrous or decadent.

Neither do they enjoy the hybrid by way of the pleasure of grotesque, by way of a neurotic voyeurism or by self-complacency towards the exotic.

The artists and theoreticians which create hybrid art and thought recognise themselves as hybrids, as bastards.

The writer Salman Rushdie, British of Hindu origin, made of the hybrid the declared principle of his work.

On his novel *The Satanic Verses* he writes:

*!The Satanic Verses celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure.*

*MÉlange, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world. It is the great possibility that mass migration gives the world, and I have tried to embrace it.*

*The Satanic Verses is for change-by-fusion, change-by-conjoining. It is a love-song to our mongred selves.!*

The thematisation of the hybrid in art and in the social sciences indicates that there are more and more individual and collective identities that are recognised as such.

As soon as 1988, Vilém Flusser postulates, in his essay "The crisis of linearity", that the alphanumerical codes which characterise the discursive mode of western cultures is being substituted for differently structured codes, which will provoke profound transformations in our culture.

Paul D. Miller, DJ under the pseudonym of DJ Spooky, says in *Flow My Blood the DJ Said* from 1996:

*To me, assembly is the invisible language of our time, and Djíing is the forefront art form of the late 20th century.*

*Each and every source sample is fragmented and bereft of prior meaning - kind of like a future without past. The samples are given meaning only when represented in the assemblage of the mix.*

*I consider the mixes created by the DJ to be mood sculptures operating in a recombinant fashion. Based on the notion that all sonic materials can be manipulated with the same ease that computers now generate composite images, the DJ combines the musical expression of the other musicians with their own and in the process generates a seamless flow of music.*

*The mix speaks to you of the bricolage of a place where the 'self' exists as a deployed network of personae. The mix allows the invocation of different languages, texts, and sounds to converge, meld, and create a medium that transcends its original components.*

**We are seating at the river's margins.  
Everything flows and nothing stops.**

The flow of the water, which from a certain perspective seems like a linear movement, from another angle looks discontinuous, fragments, suggests visions and symbols which transcend the water's own matter.

**You will not enter twice the same river.  
Other and other waters flow.**

Thought fragments and this may create a conflict, the man that does not find his place in society rebels, the symbol that finds no place within a context loses meaning, the thought that finds no place within a reflection may seem useless.

Emanuel Dimas de Melo Pimenta writes, in his essay *Teleantropos*:  
*The editing individual lives entangled in the creative turbulence of windows, zappings, mouses and organic operations. These are some of the basic elements of the new trans-sensorial code. This is the logic of cyber-spatial navigation. A logic devoid of specialised time, and therefore sacred. The magician's logic, the logic of fire or the logic of the enchanted contemplation before discovery.*  
*A logic that promotes the substitution of the old principles of architectural thought ñ oriented towards flexibility and mobility - for the principle of dis-programmability.*

But how can we interpret this substitution of architectural thought for a principle of dis-programmability without being tramped in accidental facilitism.

Nestor García Canclini, an Argentinean researcher based in Mexico, author of the essay "Hybrid Cultures, strategies to enter and leave Modernity", emphasizes that "*the hybrid is almost never undetermined, because the phenomenon of hybridisation are subject to historical phenomenon or are predetermined by a logic or grammar of social organisation*".

The habitat of thought as hybrid garden is somehow defined by historical, technological, social, economical, ethical factors. The design of this hybrid thought, however, is not

programmed; it is generated in a process of autopoiesis closer to bricolage than to engineering.

The hybrid thought limitations happen only in the external factors that surround it. The thoughts that constitute a hybrid garden do not succeed in a logical way, they can jump in a discontinuous and un-programmed form, from one thought to another or as a simultaneous whole. They are simultaneously wholesome and part of the whole.

### **We are insiders and outsiders.**

We move in imaginary worlds, in fictions, in Hybrid gardens.

In 1996 I did a light and sound installation in the park of the Museum of Fine Arts of Caracas which was titled "Canto Cuántico".

For this work I used disposable plastic bottles in which I introduced light diodes and small sound chips used in alarm systems. The piece, which is today a part of the museum collection and is still working in the park, is fed by solar energy.

The text that inspired me to do this work and accompanies the installation says:

For luck, writes the Cuban anthropologist Lydia Cabrera, one catches fireflies and introduces them in a bottle that is immersed in the river inside a keepnet.

The one who does this will catch many fish during five days.

In the fifth or sixth day a voice will say:

**"You will finish all the fish in this river",**

to which one should answer: "Sir, what I desired was to be able to speak to you", and tell him straightly what one wishes.

When one moves away, one shouldn't look back in any circumstance, even if one hears the most striking sound.

But, anyway, we look back; since we have invented time we look back. But why do we look back even if we know that we cannot re-appropriate what we have left behind?

When I was 13, during the Summer holidays, I would go to the jungle, in Tingo Maria, where one of my classmate's parents, of Swiss origin, had coffee plantations.

In Peru, Summer starts in the month of December.

For Christmas, my parents had offered me a riffle.

I remember that one day I went out alone into the hills with my riffle.

In the immense greenery surrounding me I discovered a small coloured bird.

I approached as much as I could, I aimed and I shot. I felt like the whole universe trembled in that moment.

The small bird disintegrated in tiny particles of multicoloured feathers.

I made a mistake that day which I repented ever after.



I am not sure if it is since that day and if it is because of that shooting, but what I know is that I have an infinite debt towards beauty and harmony, which at that moment I did not recognise, and that I have also an enormous suspicion over human nature and technologies.

The paradox is that I use technological products on my own art work.

For the Barro de América Bienal, which happened in July 2001 both in Venezuela and Brasil, the curator Marla Elena Ramos invited me to present an art work within her **Arboles** project which she describes as following:

*"The idea of Garden is presented as a possible synthesis of one world. The tree as synthesis of Nature. On the other hand, the relationship man-garden is faced as synthesis of the hand-nature-universe relationship. From there derive important metaphors for an art that is sensitive to these relationships: man wants to take care of the world and its nature to keep his own habitat; but also man wants to protect from the world, take refuge - in the tree, in the garden, in the poetic and visual metaphor - so that humanism may be defended and may subsist.*

*Nature is therefore in the immediate garden, necessary for its closeness and intimacy, but it is also in the idea of the infinite garden, potentially open to all the otherness of the world.*

*And so it happens that, as only in a few cases, the nature fragment has the power to invoke globalities. And to come back, from a general vision, to the arresting and concentrating of the act of seeing. The art that is sensitive to ecology has, by this fact, a vast power of synthesis, inclusively from the most fragmentary forms."*

For this exhibition I did a project that I named:

### **Leaves - Pretexts - of - The - Light**

I took 53 transparent plastic bottles and I exposed them to a heat source.

A contraction of the material was produced, a mutation. The bottle, the industrial design transformed into organic and casual matter.

In each element I introduced a LED.

The 53 luminous elements thus elaborated correspond to:

43 words; 6 comas; 2 paragraphs apart; 2 question marks of the 1987 Ninth Vertical Poem, number 18, from the Argentinean Poet Roberto Juarroz.

**The leaves,  
screens of the Light,  
so that light stands still,  
moves backwards for an instant**

**and recognises itself  
as nothing else than light.**

**the leaves,  
pretexts of the light,  
to its own evidence.**

**Is it not all the same,  
only pretexts of the light?**

The work of art, as the leaves in Roberto Juarroz's poetry, converts into a pretext.  
In pretext of the light, as metaphor of a renewed dialogue in-between Nature and  
Manhood.

The industrial product transforms into organic matter, into aesthetic pretext.

**The leave fallen from the tree is still a part of the tree.  
The part taken from the whole becomes a pretext for the whole.**

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