

campana brothers: antibodies at the milan triennale

erica db 10.21.10



'antibodies' by fernando and humberto campana at the triennale museum , at the entrance the 'cabanass' installation, containers produced by edra image © designboom

showing at the triennale museum in milan, italy, 'antibodies' is an exhibition highlighting the extensive work of fernando and humberto campana over the past 20 years. with their visually rich language firmly anchored in their native land of brazil, the brothers draw from a rich palette of colours, forms and materials to communicate the many facets and contradictions of their environment. through a kind of immunological process, they understand the notion of design as a cultural appropriation of influences, navigating and transcending the boundaries of art and design in the form of on-off pieces and limited editions.

____. "Campana Brothers; Antibodies at the Milan Triennale." Designboom, October 21,2010.

visitors are encouraged to explore the projects freely in an undetermined sequence, which have been loosely arranged in groups to trace the artistic strategies, motifs and sources of inspiration of the designers. themes include, 'hybrids', 'organics', 'fragments', 'clusters' and 'sticks', all of which chronicle and illustrate the full spectrum of the brothers' works



(left) 'prived ocra' chandelier, 2003
raffia, swarovski crystals, LED, cabelling

'jenette' chair, 2005
polyurethane, PVC

'cabana' cupboard, 2010
aluminum, raffia
see more images of 'cabana' and the entire 'barbarian' series [here](#)

(right) 'taquaral' chair, 2000
bamboo, powder-coated steel
images © designboom



objets trouvés

reinterpreting everyday objects and materials from non-design contexts and utilizing them to create new works is a practice that italian designer achille castiglioni employed back in the 1950s. however, while castiglioni was most interested in the resulting functional effects, the campanas foreground the artistic concept in a way similar to both surrealism and the cult objects of indigenous societies: the histories already contained in the objects and materials imbue the new piece with additional meanings.

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'transcloud' ceiling lamp, 2007
steel, rattan, polypropylene, light bulb, cabling

'diamantina III' seating landscape, 2008
steel, rattan, amethysts

'gallon lamp 6' floor lamp, 2007
plastic canisters, rattan, light bulbs, cabling
image © designboom

hybrids

in their 'mixed series', begun in 1997, the campanas juxtaposed organic and inorganic, natural and industrial, 'warm' and 'cold' materials. with their 'transplastics' series, initiated in 2007, they have once again taken up this approach by inter-weaving wicker with unexpected materials. already in his early artisan objects, humberto had made use of the three-dimensional malleability of wickerwork; today, the material is employed in lighting and seating units to produce large-scale figurative sculptures.

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details of 'gallon lamp 6'
images © designboom



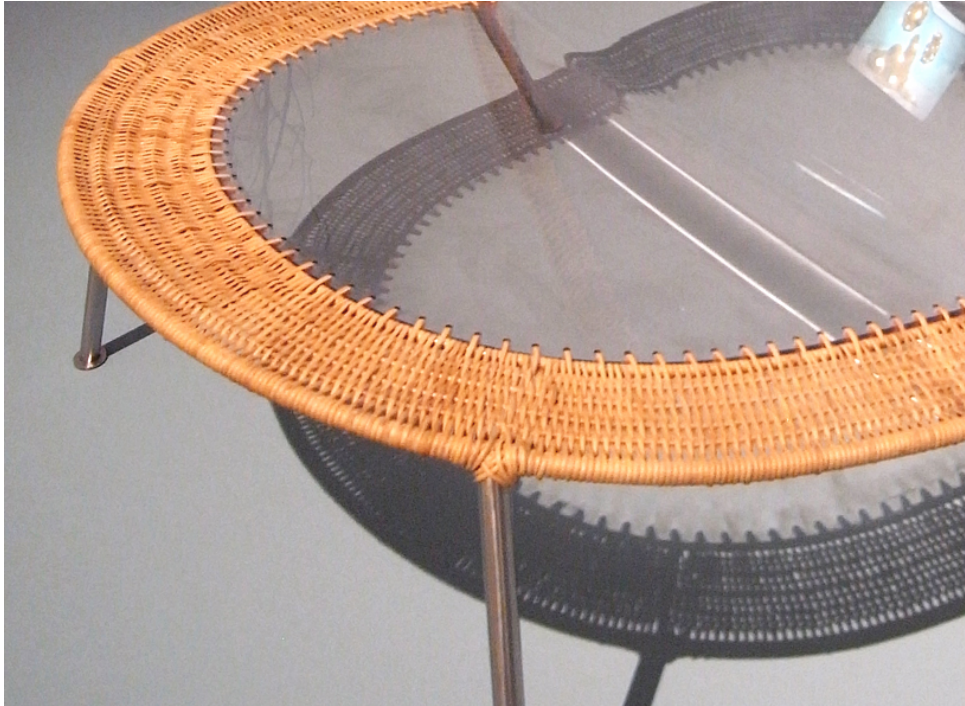
(left) in the foreground: 'una famiglia' suite, 2006
polypropylene chairs, iron structure, rattan

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(top right) 'shark' easy chair, 2000
stainless steel, polycarbonate, cane

(bottom right) 'cafe chair' child's armchair, 2006
polypropylene chair, rattan
images © designboom



detail of 'shark' easy chair
image © designboom



exhibition view of 'paper pieces'
image © designboom

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paper pieces

inspired by the stacks of cardboard that are reused and recycled by the junk collectors and homeless of sao paulo's streets, the campanas came up with the idea of taking advantage of the transparency revealed when looking directly at the narrow cut edges of the material and using it to create light pieces and partition screens. following these initial experiments, they soon began to utilize cardboard in tables and seating furniture as well.



in the foreground (from left to right):
'papel' side table, 1993
corrugated cardboard, aluminium, glue, acrylic paint

'papel' sofa, 1993
corrugated cardboard, stainless steel, glue

'untitled' chair, 1995
cardboard, glue, wrapping paper
image © designboom

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exhibition view of 'fragments'
image © designboom

fragments

the fragmentation and reassembly of an object is an established artistic technique. for impressionists it served to infuse a momentary sensation with life, while in cubism it expressed the simultaneity of varying perspectives. humberto utilized this approach in his early terracotta sculptures in order to depict inner and outer disjointedness. with the 'favela' armchair of 1991, the motif became a tribute to improvisation and ephemera.



são paulo' carpet, 2010
wool, hand-knotted
image © designboom

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(left) 'untitled' barstool, 2006
wood, leather, foam

(right) 'untitled' fruit bowl, 2008
leather, glue, polyamide thread
image © designboom



'untitled' screen, 2006
polystyrene, wrapping paper
image © designboom

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in the foreground: 'peter and the wolf; wolf' stage prop, 2008
wood, glue
the figure was created for the campanas' set of a production of sergei prokofiev's musical fable 'peter and the wolf'
performed at new york's guggenheim museum during the 2008 christmas season

in the background: 'untitled' fruit bowl, 2006
merged parts of plastic dolls, lacquer
image © designboom



exhibition view of 'clusters'
image © designboom

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clusters

extracting manufactured or found materials and objects from their original context and clustering them together in order to create a newly formed mass is a recurring technique of the campanas. even with cheap, readily available materials, the method renders an illusion of luxury. the baroque roots of brazilian culture, the excessive growth of the tropical flora, and the population explosion of brazil's metropolitan centers offer striking models for this motif.



'tokyo garden' table centrepiece, 2005
glass, ethylene vinyl acetate, rubber, carpet, fabric
image © designboom



'circus' carpet, 2010
hemp and rag dolls
image © designboom

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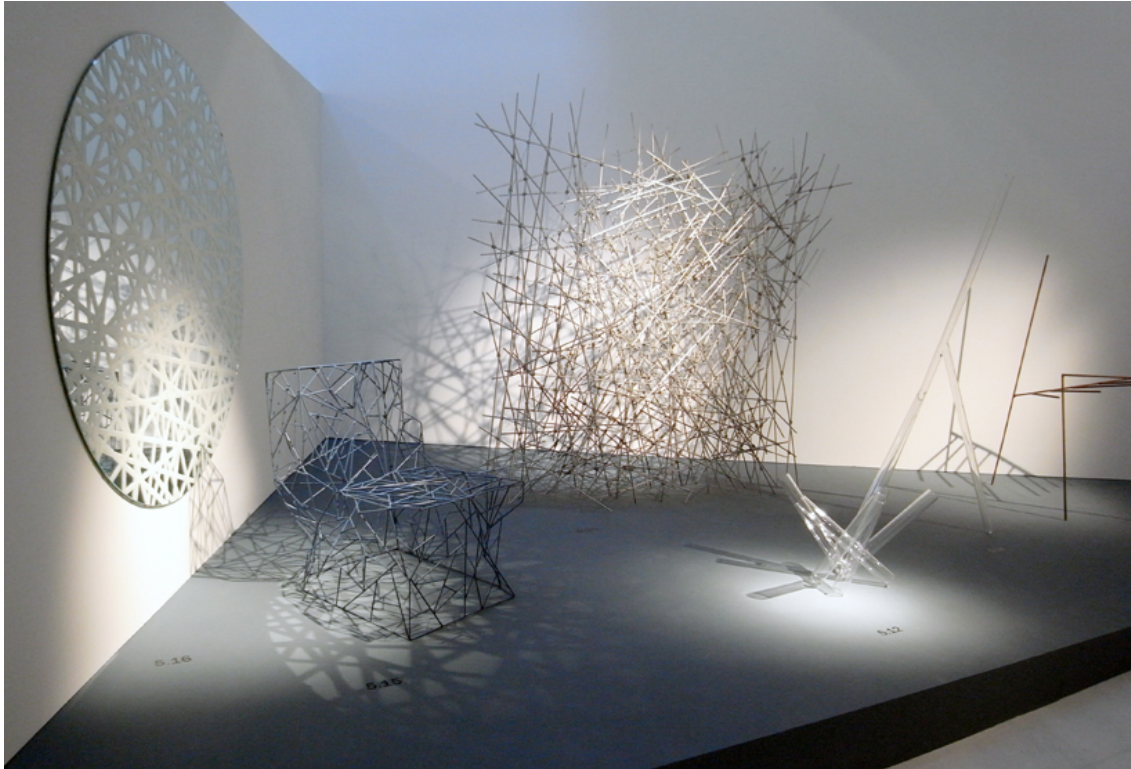
hanging installation
glass, rope
image © designboom



detail
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exhibition view of 'sticks'
 (from left to right) 'untitled' mirror, 2008
 mirror glass, scotch tape

'pedra azul' chair, 2004
 lacquered steel wire

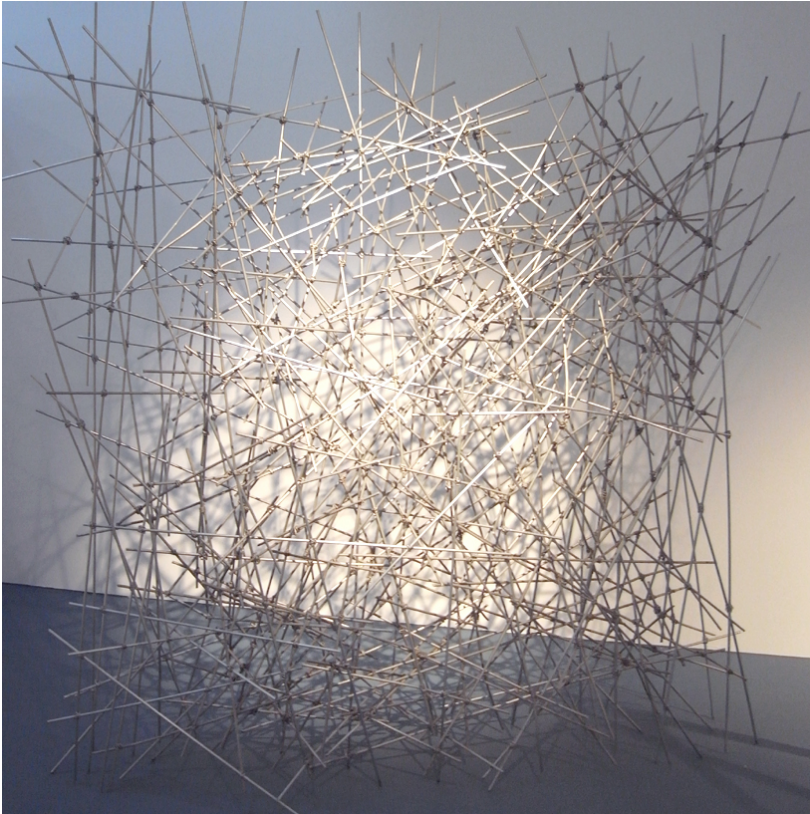
'batuque' vase, 2000
 glass
 image © designboom

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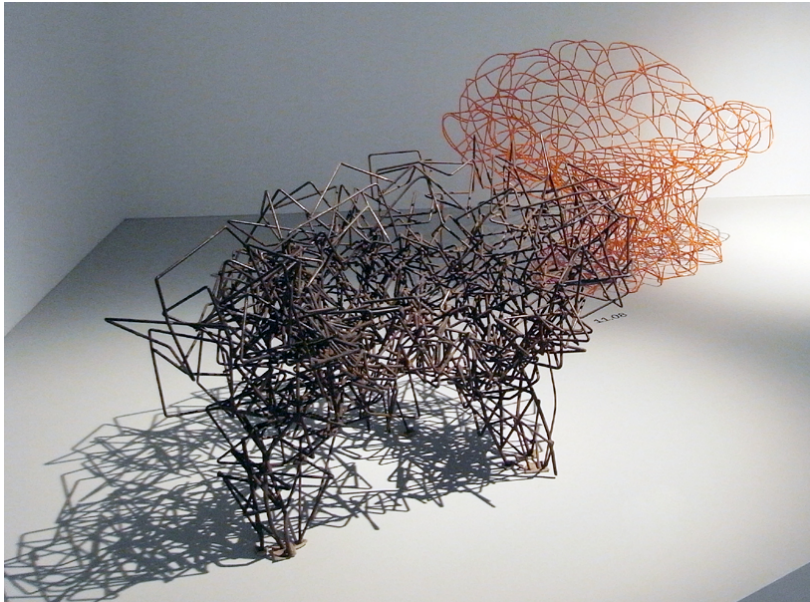
sticks

the series of objects that the campanas constructed as a jumble of sticks seems to reflect artificial, man-made chaos - an impression also evoked by such titles as 'batugue' or 'blow up'. this series was initiated by one of humberto's first works in metal: the 'grelha' sculpture, which resembles the frame of an oversized ('barbecued') chair, thus coming across as a cynical commentary on design.



'escultura' screen, 1993
aluminum
image © designboom

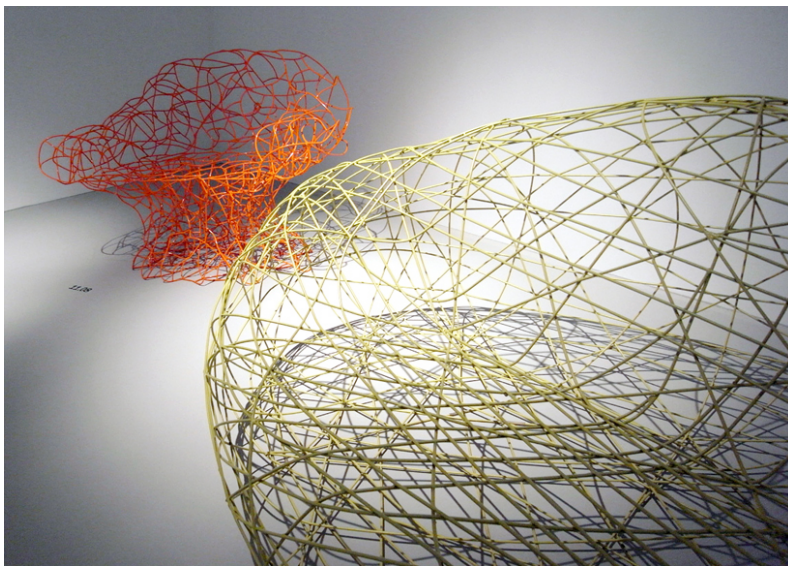
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(left to right) 'bob' armchair, 1990
steel wire

'corallo' armchair, 2004
lacquered steel wire

image © designboom



(in the foreground) 'novelo' sofa, 2003
lacquered steel wire
image © designboom

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exhibition view of 'organics'
image © designboom

organics

overabundant yet threatened by overexploitation, the natural environment of brazil has been a source of regeneration and inspiration that the campanas have sought out again and again ever since their childhood. the diverse extremes of tropical forms and colours are processed into highly imaginative interior objects, which in turn come across like organic beings and thus enliven their surroundings. yet, at the same time, some of their earliest works appear as mutations spawned by the contact with civilization.



(left) detail of 'kaiman jacaré' sofa, 2006
(right) detail of 'boa' sofa, 2002
polyurethane foam
images © designboom

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