

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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CONTAINING AND COUNTING: AUTONOMÍA AND AUTOPOIESIS AMONG WOMEN, MATERIALS AND NARRATIVES BY MEANS OF DESIGN ANTHROPOLOGY

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 20th October, 2020
Received in revised form
27th November, 2020
Accepted 11th December, 2020
Published online 30th January, 2021

Key Words:

Design anthropology, design methodology, epistemology, reflective practice.

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ABSTRACT

This study contributes theoretically, from empirical experiences, to the construction of correspondence practices between designers and artisans from a maroon community, Itamatatua, in Alcântara, (Maranhão-Brazil). We propose the establishment of a 'common plan' to design by means of anthropology, thus we present parameters that help constitute this proposal. We accessed Design Anthropology knowledge to reach levels of *autonomias* as a way of constructing non-hierarchical relationships, recognizing the varied skills of the different social actors that act in a collaborative process, as well as to become aware of the epistemological barriers of these relations. The outcome is a theoretical framework, seeking the state of autopoiesis through the regulation of design process – containing and counting in correspondences with people, materials and environment.

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Citation: Raquel Gomes Noronha, 2021. "Containing and counting: autonomía and autopoiesis among women, materials and narratives by means of design anthropology", *International Journal of Development Research* 11, (01), 44080-44086.

INTRODUCTION

Concerning to autonomous ways of doing and thinking about design with artisanal communities is what we propose in this article. Based¹ on reflections on design proposed by Arturo Escobar (2016; 2018) and Tim Ingold (2011; 2012; 2016; 2018) – anthropologists, and Elizabeth Tunstall (2013) – designer anthropologist – who have been acting in the field of design as a possible way of bringing anthropology beyond a descriptive practice – we bring empirical experiences about collaborative processes in a quilombola community in the municipality of Alcântara, in state of Maranhão, Brazil. The objective is to present conceptual paths and practical principles to contribute to contemporary discussions on Design Anthropology (DA) approach, in which both fields – design and anthropology – are related around a proposal to imagine and build possible futures, from the intersubjective construction between living beings and the environment, through traits woven throughout the lives of the beings themselves and the 'things', which are alluded to by Ingold (2012) from their overflow beyond its materiality, which cannot contain the flow of materials. By means of correspondence, which the author defines (2018) as a way of being in the world in an engaged and

attentive way, in a "response - ability" process, which is the ability to respond to the other, being mutually affected by each step taken towards the other, be it through words, feelings or the possibility of doing things together. We seek to blur the boundaries established by a specific way of designing, supported by a modern paradigm, whose characteristic we identify as the greatest obstacle to the constitution of autonomy, is the separation of knowledge in specific niches and the hierarchy between tacit and academic knowledge, between indigenous and organic ways of doing 'things' and methodological, defuturing and unsustainable rigors, supported by the idea of development². Our purpose is to strengthen and extrapolate reflections on a possible way to think about design by means of anthropology - our response to Caroline Gatt and Tim Ingold's (2013) proposal to do 'anthropology by means of design'. DA constitutes, in our view, as a common plan (omitted for blind review, 2018a), in which those involved in the practices of making - going beyond the modern design concept - share

² On this debate, we base Buchanan's (2001) reflections on the constitution of the field of design as a science of 'doing' and not 'thinking'; those of Souza Leite (2007) on the constitution of design teaching 'with its back to Brazil', based on dogmas that are alien to local aspirations and to the very nature of modernity that was constituted here; those of Anastassakis (2014) in her view on the biographies of Aloisio Magalhães and Lina Bo Bardi, who worked to constitute a modernity different from the one mentioned above; and finally in the reflections of Patrocínio (2015) on development, based on the views of Gui Bonsiepe and Victor Papanek, in which the author establishes a framework to think about the degree of *autonomia* and dependence in the practice of design in countries then called third world, today called developing countries, in addition to the decolonial authors already mentioned in our text.

¹ Following the decolonial reflections that aim at *autonomía*, we opted for the plural feminine in our writing in Portuguese, since most of us, in the field, were women. The concept of *autonomia* was maintained in Spanish, as well as Design Anthropology in English, to emphasize the situational aspect of the discussions that underlie them.

their knowledge and practices, following some principles constructed collaboratively between the anthropology and design fields. This common plan is not necessarily an instance of consensus, but where differences are established and constitute the community, from the diversity of cosmologies from sharing and opening of the creative process in design, promoting alliances between different, as we observe in the reflections on the diverse collaborative practices in Gatt and Ingold (2013), in Joachim Halse (2013), in Wendy Gunn, Tom Otto and Rachel Charlotte Smith (2013), in Pelle Ehn (2017), and other authors. Such discussions lead us to the idea of *autonomía*, brought by Escobar, which helps us to think about practicing a certain way of doing things, aiming at the communal. Based on the field research carried out in Itamatatiua, between the years 2010 and 2018, we will discuss DA principles that I mention here from two verbs: contain and recount, which mean the very process of *autonomía* described by Escobar, which is characterized by the reflections of Maturana and Varela on autopoiesis.

We observed, in the field, that regarding relations with those who come from outside, who are constantly referred to by the women of Itamatatiua as 'the others', they, the pottery makers, unfold in a double closing and opening movement, in their relationships with the materials they deal with in their artisanal practice and with those outside of their handicraft production chain, such as the 'others' themselves - the tourists -, the designers who work there, researchers from other knowledge fields, and also with the cycles of nature, such as the seasons; the periods of greatest attention to the crops, etc. In the next item, we make a brief history of correspondence principles, and discuss how they relate to philosophical approaches to design with the different, based on the collaborative design concept. Then, we approach the concepts of *autonomía* and autopoiesis and, in the third item, we will present principles that we consider fundamental to dialogue with DA and how we observe them in the field, not as a way of confirming a theory or framing the empirical context in a given theory or methodology, but in a responsive way, in which one knowledge feeds the other, the tacit and the academic, within the scope of what we understand by correspondences practices. Finally, we bring the discussion about contain and recount as the empirical bases for an autonomous activity, with which designers and anthropologists can relearn ways of engaging in life, much time has been lost between power structures that mark knowledge areas.

1. CORRESPONDENCE PRACTICES: Design by means of anthropology

Design Anthropology works with interdisciplinary groups and co-analytical activities for the intervention with engagement in social contexts through the imagination of futures. Doing anthropology by means of design presupposes that 'making things' and producing materiality, happen in the intersubjective process that unfolds in practical action and no longer as a final objective or result. In line with Gatt and Ingold, when proposing a design by mean of anthropology "[...] our goal is to locate design in the transforming effects of participant observation, in prospective correspondences in real time with people between which we work" (Gatt; Ingold, 2013: p148). For Otto and Smith (2013: p 11), DA consists of several forms of interdisciplinary collaboration that can occur inside and outside the design studio, with the aim of producing concepts and prototypes, structuring collaboration between the actors involved and an intentional focus on facilitating and contributing to change. Tunstall (2013: p 238) goes further and affirms that DA has great potential to reformulate both anthropology and design as decolonizing practices of engagement in social issues, because it presents a system of methods, rules and principles that the author understands as free from the last centuries of colonization and imperialism. Gatt and Ingold (2013: p 139-158) add that the theoretical and practical challenge is to do anthropology by means of design and no longer through ethnography. They further argue that this process should not happen through anthropology for design or design, but 'by-means-of-design'. For the authors, anthropology by means of design must be understood as a correspondence practice, and they understand that the observant

participation has a central role in this process. Through this approach, DA corresponds with lives involved in the projects, circumstances and the entanglements of people, things and environments in constant change, instead of just describing them. The authors further suggest that design is not about innovation, but about improvisation.

Therefore, a precise alignment or semblance of what is found in the events around it is not understood. It has nothing to do with representation or description. On the contrary, it is a matter of responding to these events through the interventions, questions and answers themselves - in other words, living **attentively** with others. Participant observation is a correspondence practice in this sense (Ingold, 2016: p 408).

Participant observation is by no means isolated. In it, the designer/researcher is co-participant and, together with other social actors, actively contributes to the processes. In the book *Rehearsing the future* (Halse et al, 2010: p182-189), this approach is proposed by means of games and scenic techniques developed by researchers to allow participants to revisit the past, reflect on their present to then extrapolate futures. Halse and Boffi refer to these techniques as design interventions and believe that these interventions "can be seen as a form of relevant research to investigate phenomena that are not very coherent, unlikely, almost unthinkable, and consistently under-specified, because they are still in the process of being conceptually and physically articulated." (Halse; Boffi, 2016: p 89). In this way, establishing correspondence practices means a process of engagement in the flow of people's lives, involvement with past and future possibilities, especially having, in the materials that surround us, the means by which knowledge is empirically built with the artisan communities that we are researching, beyond description, but through making, constituting the common plan that we consider as an instance of divergences and coexistence of different worlds, in a state of dynamic balance. So, our proposition is to design by means of anthropology³, as our response to Gatt and Ingold's (2013) proposal of an anthropology by means of design.

2. AUTONOMÍA AND AUTOPOIESIS: OPENING AND CLOSURE PROCESSES

Having established the scope of the DA approach and correspondence practices, so that we mold the relationship with the women from Itamatatiua. Here, we address concepts of *autonomía* and autopoiesis to think about such practices and the process of hierarchical ruptures between knowledge shared in field. For Escobar, *autonomía* is established by creating practices that allow self-regulation of a certain organism. A society's state of *autonomía* refers to the possibility of reinventing itself and recreating the norms by which it is structured - "changing tradition traditionally" (Escobar, 2016: p197) - making sure articulated relationships to external ones achieve balance, even from movement and change. This possibility of creating "from inside" is present in the discussion presented earlier on following material flows in a correspondence practice, in the sense that intersubjective relationships are established based on mutual responses, and attentional processes, as Ingold (2018) indicates. Living beings, materials and the environment follow expansion and retraction flows of mutual incorporations and symbiosis, which we propose here to associate with the process of autopoiesis. In the studies by Maturana and Varela on cognitive biology that treats living organisms as

³ In Brazil, DA was constituted by the engagement of some researchers in the research networks organized around this subfield, involving the authors already mentioned here, including Zoy Anastassakis and Barbara Szaniecki, who, through a cooperation project (2015) between the CODE - Codesign research center of the Royal Danish School of Arts and ESDI-UERJ (Superior School of Industrial Design / University of State of Rio de Janeiro), through LaDa - Design and Anthropology Laboratory, which they coordinated, started their first DA experiments - oriented projects in Brazil with libraries in the city of Rio de Janeiro, in which the author of this paper took part as a panelist and co-researcher. As part of this effort to systematize the experiences in DA in Brazil, especially within the scope of the research emanating from LaDa (ESDI-UERJ) and NIDA (UFMA), among other institutions, a thematic dossier was organized for ARCOS Design journal, published by PPDESDI, entitled 'Correspondences between design and anthropology', organized by Anastassakis and Noronha (2018), the first publication on DA in Portuguese.

systems that remain in balance from the relationships of openness and closure, maintaining a specific time for these movements to happen, they lead to a process of autonomy of the organisms, in the biological, also social and cultural scopes, but this process is called “operative closure” (Maturana; Varela, 1980 apud Escobar, 2016). This concept interests us in the sense that Escobar articulates such reflections to the establishment of autonomous design in communities (quilombolas (maroons), indigenous or even urban) that enables self-regulation and self-management, based on internal principles, but articulated with its exterior. The situation found in the field, during research for the thesis of one of this article’s authors (omitted for blind review, 2020) exemplifies and at the same time constitutes an inspiration for the parameters that we will present below in the next item, on correspondence practices between designers and artisans.

In order to think about design form through anthropology, we propose that these processes of opening and closure are established between living beings, materials and the environment. On one hand, for the production of pottery, it is necessary that material flows are monitored from within, by material quality, the way it’s collected from the field or a forest, in the case of clay, for modeling or wood for burning. This is a closure process, which we characterize here as containing the force of the natural flows of the materials, which must always be contained, if not, tend to be chaos, in Ingold’s (2011) view. On the other hand, in their relationship with “others”, they need to communicate their history, their know-how, relationships with ancestry, emphasizing their diacritical traits that differentiate them from the outside - from the so-called ‘others’ - systematizing their narratives as a way of promote their own recognition, leaving themselves permeable and open to the outside. In this process of closure and opening - in contain and recount - limits and scope are established for relations around the production of pottery, as we will see later on. The principles that we identified as guiding the DA approach and the concept of autopoiesis, which establishes autonomy, will be articulated with our observations, notes in field diaries and images produced for the document we produced between 2013 and 2014, called *‘By hand and fire’*. In the following item, we will articulate theory and practice to think about design by means of anthropology, in correspondence practices that (1) meets the temporality and rhythm of nature’s cycles; (2) it follows the material flows, operating by the principle of anticipation and (3) it is established from storied knowledge, towards autonomy and autopoiesis.

3. CONTAIN AND RECOUNT: LEARNING HOW TO CORRESPOND WITH THE WORLD

Contain and recount are actions that we identify from participant observation in the production of Itamatatua pottery, and that embody the three aspects outlined above, as a proposal for establishing correspondences in the field, establishing bases that seek autonomy in the relationship between designers and artisans. In this item, we will discuss aspects of the history of this quilombo, which for almost three hundred years has been producing pottery in much the same way and which, after the Brazilian Federal Constitution of 1988, assumes, like so many other communities in the country, the political identity of a ‘remnant community of quilombo’⁴. This discussion and the process of systematizing ethnic identity into tangible traits is the result of several discussions that go beyond the limits of this article, but can be found in Almeida (2002), Paula Andrade and Souza Filho (2009) and Omitted for blind review (2020) specifically on the case of Alcântara and Itamatatua. In this sense, we present our view on how artisans of the village considered ‘common land’—a rural territorial category that

establishes rules for its use, whose ownership system is hereditary and the land cannot be commercialized, exceeding family boundaries – deal with their know-how and show how this empirical experience, in a correspondence process, helped us to constitute a methodological scope for thinking about design by means of anthropology and identifying autonomous practices that inspire us to think beyond design methodologies.

3.1 Temporality

To talk about making pottery and working with clay is to refer to the productive process that involves knowledge, making and material in the process of being elaborated: the qualities of the clay, humidity of the environment, the packaging of the pieces in the water tank to prevent evaporation and save time for finishing the piece to continue as normal, according to availability and the women’s work rhythm. It also refers to the raw material extraction, respecting the places that produce the best clay and the periods of the year when the climate is favorable to the activity. It is also related to the daily lives of families, whose time is divided between working in the fields, extractivism and the pottery production - cosmological issues that link women, their know-how and the territory. The region in which the village is located is governed by the Amazonian climate, with two well-defined seasons: the dry season and the rainy season. Locally, they are summer and winter. The wide variation in humidity has an impact on the daily life of the village and is decisive for ceramic production. During the summer, it is possible to make the pieces faster, as they dry quickly and, thus, it is possible to start the finishing process in one or two days. In winter, larger pieces need up to ten days to dry to be in the right spot to receive the finish.

The first stage of pottery production consists of removing clay from the field. Material extraction is currently carried out only during the summer, when the rains stop and the field dries up, making it possible for artisans to access the field. In December, as the artisan Eloísa describes, clay is removed for the whole year and placed in the clay pit they have in the approximately 6m³ shed. In the rainy season, which runs from January to July, the field becomes flooded and the clay becomes useless—very dirty – to be worked. Temporality and the relationship with the flows of nature are crucial elements of artisanal production that makes those pieces acquire the coloring characteristics after firing that is caused by the amount of salt in the clay, since it is removed from the meeting area. with the waters of the sea. In several situations, we observe relationships being established between dishwasher and companies. These, requesting orders within deadlines that contradicted such temporalities, triggering what Escobar (2016) and Canclini (1983) describe as an adaptation of popular cultures to the rhythm of the market. Thus, when artisans negotiate such deadlines or simply deny production in order not to conform to these standards, we observe a step towards autonomy, in the sense that the time factor of nature is prioritized in relation to the time of the market. Other forms of negotiation between time and production can be collaboratively constructed. An example of this is the construction of the internal clay at the Ceramic Production Center, which makes it possible to store the clay during the rainy season and thus extend the production season for pottery. Another way is to negotiate directly with potential customers who demand orders for pottery and, by presenting the specific characteristics of the nature of the materials and the know-how of the pottery, one can arrive at delivery times compatible with the peculiarities the correspondence relationship between know-how, materials and the environment.

Just as correspondence practices are based on attentiveness relations and mutual responses, the relationship between pottery and clay also obeys these correspondences, within what Ingold (2018) triggers as the doing-undergoing process. This characteristic of correspondences practices can be thought of in relation to nature cycles and artisanal production, as well as in the negotiation with external actors in the value chain, establishing autopoietic practices of opening and closing the production process.

⁴ Article 68 of the Acts of the Transitional Constitutional Provisions (68-ADCT) states that "The remainder of maroon communities that are occupying their land is recognized as having definitive property, and the State must issue the respective titles". (Brasil, 1988). Its reading and interpretation in the legal sphere have been extremely contoured by the presence of land occupation and the need to continue occupation, from slavery times until 1988, when the constitution was promulgated.

3.2 Material flow and contention process

The specific place in the field where there is 'good clay' to be worked on is now called 'barreiro' or 'clay pit'. When on site, the artisans discard the clay from the surface and prefer the deeper one, claiming that this one, in addition to being more humid, is free of animal excrements, sticks and stones that can cause cracks when the pieces go through the burning process. The artisans report that a successful production, in which the pieces leave the oven without cracking, is the result of a good job of cleaning, kneading and mixing sand with clay, in order to reach the optimum consistency for modeling and to prevent ceramic cracks in the firing process. The amount of sand is measured 'by looking', as the artisans say, without using a precision instrument. The work of kneading the clay with your feet requires a lot of strength. Today, artisans do not work like that anymore, because they managed to buy a clay extruder to carry out this work. It was acquired at the suggestion of SEBRAE, about ten years ago, with the help of a financing project from Banco do Nordeste (Northeast Bank), through the BNB Culture Program.

A characteristic that we noticed during the research is that the artisans are very open to information and techniques that come through researchers and managers. They easily accept suggestions and innovations in their production, and this can be identified as the process of opening up self-creation, as reflected by Escobar (2016), characterized as a moment in which they dialogue with new technologies to keep their production viable, even that this alters the 'tradition'⁵. Eloisa, village artisan, said that at the time the clay extruder was purchased, SEBRAE had a 'production qualification' project in Itamatatua and, in the conversations and diagnoses carried out, asked about the difficulties to maintain production and they mentioned tiredness and exhausting work that was 'stepping on clay'. They then suggested the introduction of the machine, which was accepted. The artisans in activity incorporated the technology in a very pragmatic way, recognizing that they are already old and that the help of the machine is essential for production maintenance. Artisans are already used to handling the machine. They always work in pairs: one to place the pieces of clay, already kneaded manually and mixed with sand; and another to pillar the clay added inside the machine. The impurities, as Eloisa narrates, all come out, and the clay is clean and fine. Kneaded well, the dough resulting from the work of the clay extruder is quite homogeneous, with the parts of clay and sand not visible in the mixture.

In order to deepen the discussion about what they consider traditional in their production and also notice the difference and the rooting and dispersion processes of participant discourses in the production chain, we took advantage of a situation in the field to discuss the impacts of using the machine. We were in the shed and some artisans modeled bowls; others put the clay on the maromba. I asked if they considered the introduction of the maromba as something that would change know-how, and I spoke of tradition, if they thought that craftsmanship was no longer traditional due to the incorporation of marombas. Very calmly, Neide, the president of the association that organizes the production of pottery, told me that the pottery there is traditional because it is slave heritage. That they learned to work with clay from their mothers, with their ancestors, and that is why people 'outside' were interested in Itamatatua ceramics. "This thing about using the machine and not being more traditional is nonsense, what they want to know is that the pottery is from the quilombo!" said Neide, ending the discussion.

⁵ After publication of the book *Identidade é valor* or *Identity is value* (Noronha, 2011), we had the opportunity to participate in some events and roundtables on artisanal production and on several occasions the extrusion machine presence caused heated discussions in the academic world about modification of the production chain which is traditional, which "distorts" what is traditional. How can this type of interference from an outside compromise the traditional character of local ceramic production? We heard from people who have known Itamatatua ceramics for a long time - researchers and consultants - that the pottery from the clay kneaded in the clay extruder was finer, different from traditional pottery. Several discussions about this were noticed with the researchers' presence, while we were there.

The insertion of the machine, in fact, changes the texture of the clay, which becomes thinner when treated by it. There is an aesthetic issue, the appearance of the piece changes by altering the way of kneading the clay. However, with the finest clay, without stones and sticks, the possibility of cracking during firing decreases, as the artisans note, and the consequence is better use of the batch and the optimization of production. Another phase in which the relationship between know-how and materials stands out is the so-called burning. This stage, since ancient times, is male labor: parents, husbands and brothers took care of the burning process. Now the artisans hire João, 64 years old, known as Joti, one of the few men who has the know-how to burn pottery, which was learned from an uncle. The work then begins with tidying the oven. The raw pieces are placed in descending order: first the larger pieces, upturned, and then the smaller pieces, on top, arranged so as not to leave empty spaces. In parallel with the work of hanging, carried out by the women, Joti starts his own, arranging the wood that will feed the fire by types: a thin and green wood sauce, a thicker and still green wood sauce and a third group of wood thick and dry. The line is positioned in the oven, and will only be burned after the women have placed the pieces inside, closed them with metal plates (pieces of flue) and finally secured with the pieces of ceramic that will counterbalance the plates. This storage care with represents the need to control material instability in the transformation processes. Joti narrates the burning process, and it is possible to perceive the knowledge that controls the oven temperature for an adequate cooking time. Experience again is the basis of learning. The fire causes the change from raw material - dark as the artisans' skin - to the cooked, red piece. It must be contained to ensure the correct cooking point for the pieces. The oven temperature is gradually increased and, depending on the number of pieces hung, it can last up to four days, between heating, burning, and cooling the oven, for later opening and removal of the pieces. It is common, although careful with the heating and cooling process, that many parts come out cracked. In general, artisans attribute the fact to the early removal of pieces from the oven and the possibility of having added little sand to the clay. The care the artisans take with baking, the fear of Joti entering the oven, not to break the pieces, the gradual process of putting the wood in the oven and the waiting time to open the oven reveal what we are calling material containment. Breaking, not cooking, and cracking are material proof of this contact between matter and the forces that modify it. Ingold (2012) associates the making of the cook, alchemist, painter and also ceramist as activities that are most defined by gathering, combining and redirecting flows trying to anticipate what will emerge, in an exercise to control such flows, or be a beholder of know-how that follows the raw material.

The result anticipation characteristic is very valuable for thinking and discussing the creative process and directing ceramic production to the tourist's taste. This movement of thinking ahead is what characterizes the project activity. When designers arrive in Itamatatua, they already find a way to produce based on this anticipation of the result, of what is expected by the other. Material containment is a major factor in all stages. Clay humidity is controlled throughout pottery making: in the choice of the place from which the clay is removed; in wetting the clay, when arriving at the shed's clay pit, in adding sand, passing through the extrusion machine; and the five-day rest. After modeling, until they are finished, depending on the climate, they are packed in the water tank to contain evaporation; and, finally, in the firing process, in which the temperature is controlled to reach the most radical phase of transformation of matter. Moisture, the force of gravity, fire, the impact of transport and the handling of parts are part of the production process. In this, it is possible to perceive the exercise of control over the material and, consequently, learning know-how is also an exercise of control, over the bodies themselves and over the material. Moisture, the force of gravity, fire, the impact of transport and the handling of parts are part of the production process. "Left untouched, the materials run out of control. Pots break, bodies disintegrate. Effort and vigilance are needed to keep things intact, be they pots or people." (Ingold, 2012: p36). There is a contemporary expectation of environment control and containment of chaos, by the creation of discrete and well-ordered objects and human frustration at not being able to solve this situation

effectively. In the production of Itamatatua pottery, clay is cleaned and mixed with sand, the piece is roughened during the finishing phase, it can harden to the point that it cannot be scraped, it can shatter during firing, break during transport. All parts, remains, fragments are reintegrated into production intuitively by the artisans. What I have called here, material containment measures, are the reflection of this anticipation process, being ahead of the materials, searching about the materials' behaviors and in the lived experience, the ways of corresponding to them.

3.3 Telling one's own history through know-how

Among the different ways of self-recognition and their trade, 'artisan' and 'handicrafts' are the least perceived forms in Itamatatua daily life. We hear much more from the words of the guides and the researchers than from local narratives. What does it mean locally, among women who work with clay, to be called artisans? In what discursive position are they placed, with this denomination? Who cares that they are artisans? Between the denominations of 'artisanal work' and 'work with clay' there is know-how that needs to be considered as a method, including the skill and life experience of these women, and called upon in the product communication process when it arrives on the store shelf, to be sold, in dialogue with the process of legitimizing the ethnic identity undertaken by Itamatatua, as in other remaining quilombo communities, to arrive at the definitive title of the territory.

In this process, bringing up the discourse on the territorial origin expressions of local culture is a visibility strategy that was possible to analyze and conceptualize as construction of the 'maroon image', in the thesis of the author of this paper (omitted for blind review, 2020). We realize that systematizing the narrative about the making-of-the-earthenware is linked with the myth of the maroon's origin, and we observe how the construction process of this narrative takes place. Pottery materializes the handprints of the women who produced it, proof of know-how passed from generation to generation. In addition, a way of working with clay and a knowledge that is constituted about the body are also contained in these artifacts, as we discussed in another text (Omitted for blind review, 2020), which even being apprehended in the family routine, contain strategies for maintaining power over the quilombo communities. Know-how, a common name in contemporary public policy to refer to handicrafts, emphasizes two concepts represented by the verbs that make up the term: knowledge, accumulated over time, materialized in what is referred to as tradition in artisanal production; and doing, a manual skill acquired during the artisan's life, which is considered to be the main characteristic of handicrafts and what distinguishes it from other types of work, due to academic and political definitions. The pottery molded with clay that mixes with the women's body, cooked with wood and fire, is converted into handicrafts. The temporal experience of production is not apprehended by those who acquire a 'craft object'. The life experience and the relationship with the materials that compose it, are lived in an ephemeral way when buying contemporary handicrafts.

The place of the pot ceases to be the kitchen or the sink and becomes the garden or the living room. The bowl stops packing the sweets and becomes a plant pot. The solid, useful and unique product is nonetheless. However, detached from its narrative - the know-how and the life experience - it's closed in its objectivity and materiality, the form, the artisanal object. In Itamatatua, pottery is no longer used by village inhabitants, who report a process of discontinuing artifact use since the 1980s. Ceramic use was a practice in the community itself and in the nearest villages. Itamatatua used to supply pots to Alcântara and other municipalities of Baixada Maranhense. As the water was not piped, there was a need to store water taken from wells in the large ceramic pots that were produced there, for centuries. The replacement of pots by plastic buckets can be observed at the Ceramic Production Center itself, where women gather to produce, in which the industrialized utensil is used to store the crushed clay. The option for industrialized products is not only functional nature. There is an important process of attributing value and building identity, which

cannot be left aside in the reflection on the discontinuity in the use of pottery in Itamatatua. Local ceramic use is an image of 'another time', in the very village where it is produced. When talking about the use of handmade products, the artisans refer to a past time. Pottery is re-signified as quilombo handicrafts, artisans idealize the taste of tourists and also learn their preferences when buying. They strategically adjust the shape of what they produce to please the taste of the outsiders. They are symbolically positioned on a level below theirs, since they also conceive pottery making as an extension of the body itself. We constantly talked about devaluation of the use of ceramic plates and cups in the village, as they did not consider the pottery beautiful or clean. When they disqualify ceramic production - ugly and dirty - they do the same to themselves, submitting themselves to the speeches of the managers from "training and handcraft culture recovery" projects, remembering that there is a symbolic link between clay and the bodies of artisans.

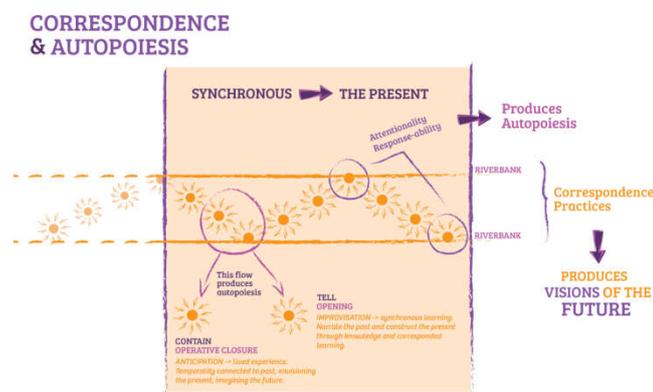
According to the myth regarding foundation of the Itamatatua, nine slave families received the lands of Saint Tereza D'Ávila. As protégés, they all became one symbolic family. Everyone in Itamatatua has the surname "de Jesus", revealing this relatedness. Another version of this myth deals with the collapse of fugitive maroon that brought their know-how with them and found the natural conditions to produce ceramics due to the availability of the necessary raw material. The two versions of the settlement's foundation are mixed and this is also reflected in the narratives about the origin of ceramics, generating different narratives about the beginning and the learning of working with pottery. We realize, however, that the versions are not exclusive, and that one version does not prevail over the other. There is nothing to prevent a continuity between them: the quilombo gradually builds up in that unexplored space in Alcântara and realizing this, the Carmelite Order settles down, through Fazenda Tamatua, to control the process, bringing the fugitive maroons to its yoke, as reports Almeida (2002). Ceramic know-how was transmitted as a submission strategy through work. Acquiring knowledge, through corporal submission, removed them from the heavier field work. This image of less sacrificed treatment of slaves belonging to religious orders, helps to build the religiosity expressed by Itamatatua residents. When Pirixi, the local dishwasher, says that they all have "de Jesus" surname, a discursive strategy is revealed in his narrative: it is the religious discourse and the symbolic contract with Saint Tereza that subject the uncontrolled, piling bodies to the disciplinary order of religion. The work and teaching of the trade to insubordinate slaves puts them in a new position. Know-how gives slaves a superior status to those who do not have it. Rooted in history and memory, the hierarchal image through the acquisition of know-how is present in the practices.

The ceramic know-how then passed from generation to generation, and girls, aged eight to ten, were already participating in the production. In 2005, with the construction of the Ceramic Production Center with the oven, the result of female political organization involving the Itamatatua Women's Association, in 1999, production became collective again. Until the 1980s, men participated in the burning, sale and transport of ready-made pots. Contact with outsiders was a male attribution. The women's place was the backyard. Men played a mediating role. Even if they were not parents or husbands, contact with the outside world was made by neighbors, relatives or compadres. Over the years, and discontinued use of the pots, sales fell dramatically and the men, little by little, stopped participating in pottery work. While the work was profitable, men remained in control of the commercialization. Due to lower sales, they went on to other businesses and women continued to do what they knew, even with the very low financial return. Currently, male participation takes place in two moments: clay extraction and ceramic burning. Artisans consider these two activities to be very heavy, especially the older ones, and that is why they usually rent men to do these services. As women take on the role of mediators, their symbolic position in the community changes, and the economic and political power they acquire with the organization of the Itamatatua Mothers Association puts them in a position that was once considered male. However, this does not mean that there was in fact female emancipation.

Today, women occupy two complementary spaces: the central, linked to the material they work with clay, which in turn materializes the forces of nature, representing pottery know-how; and the other space, that of mediation with "others", with "outsiders", researchers, managers and tourists. This contact, in turn, positions them in the present time, that of producing quilombo crafts. The way in which these narratives are organized or dispersed by the different discourses that articulate around legitimation of the quilombo and women's political in this space and not in another. In this way, the act of narrating, or as we prefer -telling - brings experience as a privileged instance of building knowledge and at its core we have the broadest discussion on how such ways of knowing and doing imply a different way of constructing knowledge, based on the relationship between all participants involved in the research, what Ingold calls storied knowledge- that knowledge that is this way because it underlies life stories that make it so, this way and not another (Ingold, 2011: p168). This way of thinking about the construction of knowledge has practical implications in the context of DA: authors in the field and authors from the field - researchers and research subjects, in a traditional way, have the opportunity to share narratives and forms of writing different, and even unusual in the field of design.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

By experiencing correspondence practices established between the Itamatatua pottery makers, and us was possible, by resuming the introduction of the article, to contribute with conceptual paths and practical principles for making design by means of anthropology. In situations narrated in the previous item, through the articulation between theory and practice, parameters are established to follow material flows walking side-by-side with artisans' storied knowledge, towards the state of autonomia. In contemporary times, designing dialogues with such experiences in the field, which show us other ways of making things, considering places of speech of each of those affected, dialogues with the times of nature, curiosity and observation of composing - treatment of materials, anticipating and containing its overflow beyond what was intended to be built as an artifact. It was only possible to establish this learning because we propose to enter a state of improvisation, another characteristic of correspondence, which is opposed to the idea of methodology, in its etymological origin - goal, objective/guests, path. As designers, at that moment, we were at the disposal of that learning about the know-how of pottery, but, during the participant observation, we had a documentary, a thesis and three monographs to be made. Very concrete objectives with well-defined deadlines. It took time and distance so that we could find this correspondence process strange and understand how we were affected and at the same time affected that reality.



Source: By the authors.

Figure 1: Correspondence and autopoiesis

Since then, we have seen the Itamatatua community being awarded with public policy regarding access to health at the federal level and winning a recognition award from Neide de Jesus, the oldest artisan still working, as Master of Popular Culture in the State of Maranhão, in the crafts category, with dissemination of this know-how in the

form of images, which we collectively build and in correspondence. When we set out to make the documentary 'By hand and fire', we didn't know it would happen, nor did we have the script for what the film would be like. This situation refers to Ingold's reflections on improvisation as a way of being in the world attentively. The documentary only arrived in the format and the narrative in which it is presented because we were willing to build it through intersubjectivity - us, the artisans, materials, climate and so on. In Figure 1, we present a summary of the autopoiesis process through the correspondence practices that we established during these research paths.

The design part of a Tim Ingold illustration, done to explain the correspondence process, during our 2018 stay at the University of Aberdeen (UK) for research. The establishes the image of a river to explain the process of *response-ability*, a play on words used to talk about the attention and responsibility of responding – corresponding – to the other. As such, we think the process of closure and opening associated with empirical events in Itamatatua, to reflect on the relation with material flow in contention, and opening up to outsiders in addition to the process of telling village history. Questions regarding temporality that fluctuate between experience acquired in the past, help imagine possible futures. Far from being a recipe to correspondence practices, the diagram above is like a conceptual map, bringing design making to the scope of knowledge decolonization processes, recognizing Tunstall (2013) approach, the dynamism of ours and our "others" value systems, inequalities which need to be exterminated in the projection – and we'll go out on a limb to say, even give up their basic principles, thinking about other forms of making and thinking design.

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