



Field Trip to
Brazil

Rio de Janeiro

São Paulo

THE INFORMAL

August 24th to
September 2nd, 2015

For more than decades, a hardly noticed, but particular design form originating from existential needs, limited economic resources, as well as from the local and cultural context of individuals living in precarious conditions in urban centres, has been an integral part of developing or industrially less developed countries. This kind of design has, at the same time, been the result of an individual survival strategy and the expression of a collective improvisational spirit, and has by these means filled a niche in the local non-official economic system. Illegal constructions as well as countless products or types of services from the black market economy, which have had a lasting and symbolic effect on the image of these countries, are evidence of this.

WHAT:
DESIGN LAB BRAZIL proposes an interdisciplinary field trip to Brazil, with the objective of investigating alternative design forms and practices in an urban (in)formal context. The fieldwork intends to explore this genre of creative practice, and raise questions about its origin – what precisely characterises it – its social and cultural dimensions, as well as its aesthetic value today. The cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are both designated to be the laboratory to examine and reflect these unique types of design products, services, and activities.

The field trip will last 10 consecutive days. Based on sociologist Lucius Burckhardt's concept of «invisible design», the expedition will be composed of urban walks through the centre and periphery of both cities, visits to specific (in)formal projects and places, talks with residents, discussions about informal design in the group as well as with local experts, and an individual documentation of the explored. The programme offers an experimental platform to experience Brazilian urban diversity as well as (sub)culture, and to think about design from a particular but individual perspective, by observing and challenging the specific and ordinary, instead of the generic and spectacular.

WHO:
Participation is open to students and academic staff interested in exploring, discussing, and documenting the given topic. Standard language: English.

COSTS:
Participants pay their own travel expenses of ca. CHF 2'200. A contribution from an institutional fund is being verified.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
Wednesday, July 15th, 2015.
Application should include a motivation letter to karin.zindel@zhdk.ch.

CONCEPT AND REALIZATION:
Karin Zindel, Research Associate
Master of Arts in Design.

A project from Zurich University of the Arts.