

**Master of Arts in Design, International Design Workshop 2019****In collaboration with Futuro Sustentável, ESAD.CR, School of Arts and Design Caldas da Rainha, and Turismo Centro Portugal**

The International Design Workshop (IDW) of the Master of Arts in Design at Zurich University of the Arts is part of the Master's Minor studies; it provides students the opportunity to explore a current topic in an interdisciplinary and intercultural environment and be confronted with new questions and approaches. The Master programme encourages students to transfer the gained knowledge into their own practice, unfold novel perspectives and develop an understanding of other methods and conditions. The workshop takes place every year and happens in collaboration with international practitioners and/or institutions.

## Responsible Tourism? — in times of transformation

Tourism is a practice of considerable cultural and economic importance, often described as one of the major phenomena of the modern age. Having witnessed exponential growth since the mid-nineteenth century, when Thomas Cook took advantage of newly-available mass transportation to design the first packaged tours, tourism became one of the main agents of development and an accelerator for economic and social progress in most tourist destinations, particularly with respect to its economic contribution. The democratization of tourism, through easy access to mobility for a large part of society and low-cost offers, is seen by some experts as a sign of social success and improvement. In many countries and regions worldwide, tourism has become the leading source of cash flow, employment and a flourishing market. However, in times of mass mountaineering on Mount Everest with inexperienced climbers pushing to take selfies, and lucrative short-term rentals offered by platforms such as Airbnb leading to the removal of locals from the city centre of Lisbon or Barcelona, (over)tourism becomes a field of conflict that shows how thin the line between economic interests and responsible tourism is. Its impact on the environment, local culture and economy is large, and is becoming increasingly evident in different dimensions of our daily lives. As stated by Jonathan Croall already in 1995:

*A spectre is haunting our planet: the spectre of tourism. It's said that travel broadens the mind. Today, in its modern guise of tourism, it can also ruin landscapes, destroy communities, pollute the air and water, trivialise cultures, bring about uniformity and generally contribute to the continuing degradation of life on our planet.<sup>1</sup>*

This may have an apocalyptic overtone. The fact is that the present tourism model is far beyond its peak. This inconsistency must be taken into consideration and shows why we need to focus on creating alternatives. Tourism should be a *sustainable economic development option, its development should be compatible with the principles of sustainable development.*<sup>2</sup> How can the conservation and responsible use of natural, social and cultural resources be guaranteed to promote sustainable attractiveness? How can local communities and manufacturers participate in the development and

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1 Croall, J. (1995), *Preserve or Destroy: Tourism and the Environment*, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation  
2 Cronin, L. (1990), *A Strategy for Tourism and Sustainable Developments*. World Leisure and Recreation

control of tourism with the support of government and industry, and benefit from the economic progress it brings?

No other group has such a consistently bad reputation as tourists. Animal imagery seem to be their favourite representation form: herds, swarms or flocks. Mindless pleasure seekers, in contrast to real travellers looking for genuine experience, artefacts and partaking in the spirit of the places they go to. In their quest, tourists engage in a practice that leads to a great deal of contempt: they purchase specific mementos; sightseeing, souvenirs, or the representation of the real thing. Tourists are blamed for their satisfaction with the inauthentic: *tourists seldom like the authentic product of a foreign culture*.<sup>3</sup> But aren't tourists in their most particular behaviour, the agents of signs and symbols, and their use or interpretation? All over the world, they are engaged in reading cities, landscapes and cultures as sign systems, looking for typical behaviours, exemplary scenes or traditions. However, most of the time they are in search of the spectacular. The ordinary and unpretentious practices of everyday life are not attractive enough, and the essential understanding of the unknown remains on the surface.

When thinking of tourists, we must increasingly think of Chinese tourists, the world's largest national cohort since 2012. In 2016, outbound Chinese tourists spent over 250 billion US dollars, double the amount of by North-American counterparts. This figure will rise sharply by 2020, as the number of Chinese passport-holders is set to double from a 2018 estimate of 120 million, or 10% of the population. In their staggering numbers, voracious appetite for sights and sales, but also their oft-reported bewilderment, even disregard for local customs, the Chinese pose a tourism challenge no continent can afford to ignore. As already reported, this May 12'000 Chinese undertook a mega-trip to Lucerne.

The Chinese have also, in ever greater numbers, been taking a new *Grand Tour* of Europe where excitement and acquisition are prized over pleasant, relaxing experiences.<sup>4</sup> The Chinese travel in Europe mainly in groups, by coach, with Mandarin or Cantonese-speaking guides. Staying at suburban hotels and eating mostly Chinese food, they have been drawing a map of the Old Continent from seemingly unrelated points such as Romeo and Juliet's balcony in Verona, the wineries of Bordeaux, the casinos of Monaco, a glacier in Switzerland and factory outlets in Metzingen, Germany. Peripheral countries such as Britain or Portugal are eschewed in favour of central, small European places such as Luxembourg: easier to reach, see, shop, move on and later boast about visiting. From sites to cities, regions to countries, how is Europe preparing to be «discovered» on such an unprecedented scale?

Building on the idea that design thinking and practice can trigger a debate and creatively engage with controversial issues, this year's International Design Workshop focuses on the question of the impact of tourism today addressing its economic, environmental and cultural aspects, as well as its agents and stereotypes. The workshop invites students to embrace ambiguity and explore responsible tourism in times of complex and contradictory transformations. Is responsible tourism feasible at all, or is it a given contradiction? As tourists, we will think about the effect of tourism in a broader sense, we will discuss this challenging issue from various perspectives, we will learn from a different reality, and together present a «designerly» way of thinking and acting.

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3 Boorstin D. (1967) *The Image*, New York: Atheneum

4 A new Grand Tour (2010, December 16). *The Economist*. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/christmas-specials/2010/12/16/a-new-grand-tour>

In collaboration with Portuguese lecturers and students, the workshop proposes a critical and creative approach of the given topic by:

- **analysing** the existing phenomenon
- **identifying** different conditions and needs
- **exploring** other behaviours and practices
- **fostering** critical thinking
- **suggesting** thought-provoking ideas
- **elaborating** unconventional scenarios
- **creating** new formats, interactions and/or services
- **proposing** new perspectives

**Initiative, concept and direction:**

**Karin Zindel**, Research Associate Master Design, ZHdK

**Workshop assistance:**

**Aela Vogel**, Teaching Assistant MA Product Design, ZHdK

**Workshop format:**

- 9 days continuous, September 6 to 14, 2019
- field work, with excursions and visits within the given topic
- 3 parallel workshops exploring different perspectives, with approx. 15 students each
- ZHdK students enrol via click-enrol in August (according to call for registration)
- 6 Sept, kick-off, workshop topic and group introduction
- 6–8 Sept, visits to sites and producers
- 9–13 Sept, team work and group discussions
- 14 Sept, presentation and discussion of the outcome with local partners
- 20 Sept, presentation in Zurich, discussion and reflection about the gained knowledge  
The presentation will focus on the transfer of the experience to the students' own Master project or design practice.

**Timeline:**

- **5–7 Aug, click-enrol, registration to individual workshops**
- 5 Sept, arrival in Caldas da Rainha and check-in guesthouse (afternoon)
- 6–14 Sept, International Design Workshop (IDW) at ESAD.CR
- 14 Sept, check-out guesthouse (morning), presentation outcome and return to Lisbon
- 20 Sept, IDW presentation in Zurich

## A FUTURO workshop with the Master of Arts in Design

### Workshop dimensions:

Students will choose one of the three workshops organised by the Portuguese lecturers, according to one of three dimensions: building, unbuilding, preserving. These three dimensions suggest specific paths, methodologies and outcomes through which design can foster responsible tourism in four World Heritage Sites, challenging Swiss and Portuguese students to approach, analyse and react to the same territory from a variety of perspectives.

#### **1** *Building (tangible) — Pedrita Studio, Pedro Ferreira & Rita João*

This workshop is dedicated to the creation of culturally significant experiences and artefacts associated with each of the sites. Centred on the idea of the encounter, this dimension explores the ways visitors build and keep ties to each site. These can be more immediate and sensorial but also more conceptual, even intellectual, ranging from concrete associations to more abstract relations to a given place and time. In its process and outcomes, this workshop takes a more straightforward approach to the production of meaning through tangible objects, as well as through the design of services related to visiting/living in and around each of the sites.

#### **2** *Unbuilding (speculative) — Frederico Duarte & Joana + Mariana*

This workshop engages students to observe, analyse and critically react to the often-contentious histories of each site. It also evokes other larger themes and discussions such as: past and present clashes of religions/civilizations, national identity and post-imperial/colonial narratives, inclusion and exclusion of minorities, or the lasting role of fascist state propaganda in local/national visual and material culture. Less preoccupied with the creation of tangible artefacts, this workshop will challenge students to propose new readings, experiences and perspectives to each site by employing speculative, performative and even fictional design models.

#### **3** *Preserving (social) — The Home Project Studio, Álbio Nascimento & Kathi Stertzig*

This workshop focuses on exploring, fostering and maintaining the communities living in the territories of each site. As much as the built environments protected by UNESCO, the knowledge and customs of the region's inhabitants also deserve to be known, recognized, interpreted and eventually practiced by their visitors. Crafts such as pottery, confectionery, stone carving or basket-weaving play a central role in many of the lives and livelihoods of these communities. Through an application of adequate design strategies and initiatives that cater both to the needs of these communities and to the desires of tourists, students can learn how to make the most of the region's natural and human resources.

### Main objectives:

- Reflect on the impact of tourism on economy, culture and society of a particular site, town, region.
- Explore how the experience of visiting, remembering and evoking monuments and heritage sites have been designed, and the representation of new signs have been created.
- Raise awareness on a local, national and international level of the historical relevance and contemporary importance of cultural sites.
- Promote the adoption of local resources, materials, knowledge and expertise, as well as the improvement of existing industries, processes and products associated with the adjacent territories.

- Add value to the regional economy by redesigning or introducing circular production chains that enhance the resources and strengthen the relationships between existing players and suppliers within the region.
- Provoke both material and immaterial comprehension and appreciation.
- Foster an interdisciplinary design research and practice exchange among ZHdK students and students of Portuguese design schools.
- Understand own practice/skills and raise awareness of own design view/attitude.

### **Territories:**

The workshop is centred on the four UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Centre of Portugal region, listed here according to their inscription dates: Convent of Christ, Tomar (1983); Batalha Monastery, Batalha (1983); Alcobça Monastery, Alcobça (1989); University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia, Coimbra (2013).

The history of these four sites is intertwined with the history of Portugal, a state first recognised as an independent kingdom in 1143 founded by Christian crusaders from successive conquests of territories that had been under Muslim rule since the 8th century. They also embody the power of the Catholic Church in Portugal and the conception of Europe as a Christian continent. The Convent of Christ of Tomar and the Monastery of Alcobça celebrate the territorial conquests of Portugal's first king, Afonso Henriques, while representing the influence of two political and religious entities with a European-wide presence: the knights of the Temple of Jerusalem (or Knights Templar) in the former and the monks of the Cistercian Order in the latter. The Santa Maria da Vitória Monastery, mostly known as the Batalha (Battle) Monastery, celebrates the victory of King João I over the Castilian army in the 1385 battle of Aljubarrota, which took place nearby. This showpiece of the International Gothic style is also a testament to the consolidation of Portugal as an independent kingdom. In Coimbra, the old Cathedral and Santa Cruz Monastery were both founded in the 12th century, with the latter housing the tombs of the first Portuguese royal dynasty; the several colleges in the Sofia nucleus reflect the presence of religious orders, especially the Jesuits, in the founding and life of Portugal's oldest University. The latest of the four sites to be inscribed in UNESCO's list is also its most complex in terms of built structures, architectural styles and, crucially, in its historical and contemporary significance.

Learn more about each site here: [www.centerofportugal.com/unesco-world-heritage-tour/](http://www.centerofportugal.com/unesco-world-heritage-tour/)

### **Portuguese lecturers:**

**Pedrita Studio** is a multidisciplinary design studio based in Lisbon since 2005. Founded by Rita João and Pedro Ferreira after their consultancy collaboration at Fabrica, the studio team and resources are brought together according to each project request relying on a network of established professionals. Every project casts an inquisitive look on process and material culture, gathering unexpected and conscious formal solutions. [www.pedrita.net](http://www.pedrita.net)

**Frederico Duarte** studied communication design at FBAUL and design criticism at the School of Visual Arts in New York. As a critic and design curator he has edited and contributed to national and international publications, given lectures and workshops, organized exhibitions and events about

design, architecture and creativity. Currently he's doing a PhD at Birbeck College, London University, and at the Victoria & Albert Museum, where he's investigating contemporary Brazilian design, and curated the exhibition «Como se Pronuncia Design em Português: Brasil Hoje», organized by MUDE, Lisbon's Design Museum in 2017. [www.05031979.net](http://www.05031979.net)

**Joana & Mariana** are Joana Baptista Costa and Mariana Leão. Since 2002 they maintain a common productive activity made of exchanges and shares in different and various contexts that led to their way of being and doing. They keep an office in Porto since 2008, seeking autonomous and equals ways to subsist as graphic designers. [www.joanaemariana.pt](http://www.joanaemariana.pt)

**The Home Project Design Studio** was founded in 2005 by Álbio Nascimento and Kathi Stertzig in Lisbon. The core competence of the studio lies in socially engaged project development and product design based on low-technology and craft techniques. The work reflects on the connection of crafts, design and cultural identity. They are strategic consultants on crafts and design in the context of regional development for governmental and private institutions, and conduct residencies with artisans for craft-centres and leads workshops for international design universities. [www.the-home-project.com](http://www.the-home-project.com)

#### **Workshop location:**

**ESAD.CR**, School of Arts and Design Caldas da Rainha is located in a city with vast cultural and artistic patrimony. Having started its activity in 1990, it is today a school that is recognized both nationally and internationally. Its students and teachers have received numerous awards. ESAD.CR offers courses in Fine Arts, Industrial Design, Interior and Spatial Design, Ceramic and Glass Design, Graphic and Multimedia Design, Theatre and Sound and Image. The school also has several studios and laboratories. [www.esad.ipleiria.pt](http://www.esad.ipleiria.pt)