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Technical report: Fashion design (garments)*

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by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization,
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1. INTRODUCTION

This report covers my activities and evaluations obtained during my visit to Senai Cetigt, Rio-de-Janeiro in November - December 1986.

The purpose of this visit was to provide high level advisory services to the Centr in the area of Fashion Design.

In close collaboration with Professor Alexandre Figueira Rodrigues General Director, Professor Alberta de Souza Cruz Subdirgetor, Professor Almir Texeira de Souza, Assistant to the Technical Director and Professor of Apparel Management, a Design Programme was evaluated to provide a Teaching Programme for three groups of approximately 20 students per group to be known as groups A, B and C to cover a three week mini-course.

The experience within the student groups A, B and C was evaluated as follows:-

1. Group A. Final level length of study at Senai approximately 18 months.
2. Group B. Intermediate level length of study at Senai approximately 10 months.
3. Group C. Preliminary level length of study at Senai approximately 2 months.

Due to the short duration of the course two Design Projects known as "Briefs" were prepared. (See Annex 1 and 2).

The purpose of each Brief was as follows:-

1. To give each student a particular design market to aim for.
2. Considerations of the price factors involved in fabric choice and manufacture.

3. To develop an understanding of the design limitations attached to a particular age range.
4. A thorough understanding of the pattern cutting and manufacturing procedure of the designs chosen.
5. An understanding of the Brazilian home market as opposed to the Export Market with a view to colour, fabric and design differences.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Design teaching to be included in the curriculum of the course from the beginning.
2. Structure of course to be extended to form a 3 year course, possibly to degree level.
3. The best students on completion of the course to be sent to overseas colleges for further training on a scholarship basis, on the understanding that they return to Senai as teachers on contract.
4. Outside manufacturers to set design projects for students within Senai - to give students an understanding of the needs of industry and to assist manufacturers in selecting designers of the future.
5. N.A.C staff to inter-relate with head of design in providing up to date information on colour, style and design forecasts.
6. End of course Fashion Show to be altered on financial basis to relieve the students of part of financial burden. With regard to the organization, each student should work independently to produce their own collection of 6-8 garments, to bring the course into line with European colleges where this procedure has been working very successfully.
7. Purchase of more dress stands on the European sizing system to assist the students on accurate sizing, cut and fit.
8. The new Head of Design Professor should inter-relate with the Brazilian fabric manufacturers, trying to obtain fabric donations to Senai, to enable the students to work with more up to date, interesting fabrics.

The afore-mentioned recommendations are considered with respect to the fashion course at Senai having been established for the past 18 months. It must be stated at this stage that the progress on the course has been quite remarkable in such a short space of time. I have no doubt that the above recommendations will be considered and implemented where possible, very effectively within the department.

3. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUT

1. Group A and B

The Design Brief (see Annex 1) was given to Groups A and B. It was evident that they had not been given a project of this type before and Group A found it extremely difficult to understand what was required. On looking through the work they had done on the course to date it was evident that the main priority was for fashion illustration type drawing and painting. They had on the whole very little understanding of the structure of the garment and the technical drawings required for pattern cutting. Group A's progress through the project was much slower with one or two notable exceptions.

Group B were far more enthusiastic and were eager to develop their skills in an area to which previously they had little experience. These students were extremely interested in the design information in the form of colour and fashion forecasts, and fashion magazines which I introduced them to. They showed particular interest in the range of fabrics which I had brought with me. In particular a large range of 100% silks and linens which are uncommon in Brazil and which they had not seen before. The students in this group showed an interest in studying abroad to widen their horizons and I left them prospectus's of British colleges which I felt would be of interest to them in deciding which area of design would be most useful to them in future.

2. Group C

The Design Brief (see Annex 2) was given to the students in this group. These students showed overwhelming enthusiasm for further knowledge. And although they had only been studying at Senai for 2 months, I felt they

showed real promise with regard to their chosen careers. Although due to the time factor involved (3 weeks), these students had little time to spend on the project, they worked extremely hard and joined other classes so that they might have time to complete the project. They were particularly interested in the requirements of the designer in industry, and with examples of my own work I attempted to show them how to answer a particular Design Brief accurately, how to develop design ideas and how to collate design information select forecast shapes and colours to develop these into unique design ideas to suit the design market.

Particular emphasis was placed on the technical drawings of the design ideas chosen to give a fuller understanding of technical details such as buttons, linings, top stitch details, pocket, cuff, waistband design details and colour and fabric co-ordination.

3. It was necessary to give the students a more professional approach, and to try to give them an appreciation of the skills required of a designer in industry. In particular the following areas were given strong emphasis:-

- a. Presentation

All work involved in the project, fabric samples, rough sketches, finished drawings, technical drawings were all presented into a neat compact format giving clear identification markings and garment descriptions.

- b. Design Collating

Gathering design information in the form of magazine cut-outs, design and colour forecasts. In order to

keep up to the minute with design ideas it is necessary to gather as much visual information as possible and to keep this in record form.

c. Fabric Notebook

Collecting and describing fabrics and keeping them in a notebook, to make the students aware of all the properties attached to the chosen fabrics. Their suitability with regard to weight, drops etc to the design idea.

d. Design Notebook

All design ideas should be recorded in notebook form as a reference for future designs. Students were encouraged to practice in this book, different accessory ideas in order to develop a drawing technique which would assist them in visualizing the finished drawings.

4. UTILIZATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE ACTIVITY

In order to evaluate the extent of the activities to which the students had been involved it was decided to exhibit all the students work. As two projects had been set I felt it important for them to view the work of their fellow students to see how they had answered the Design Brief and how each students work differed. It was also necessary to give the students a sense of conclusion to the project and a deadline to work within.

a. Content

The work exhibited proved to be of a very high standard, and it was obvious that once the students had been given some sense of direction they were quite capable of completing very good professional standards in their design ideas and methods of presentation.

b. Evaluation

Together with Professor Almir Texeira-de-Souza I gave a brief written description of each students work with regard to their potential, their ability to solve a design problem and the individual personal effect applied by each student to the project. It was also necessary to give a grade between A - E for pass and F for fail. Of all the students who participated and presented work for the course only two failed, mainly due to lack of effort and non attendance at classes.

c. Continuation

After completion of evaluation of the students work and discussions with Professor Almir de Texeira de Souza it is hoped that a part-time teacher of design with practical experience in the teaching of design be appointed to continue the work I have started within the Department.

It is very important to supplement this "In House" Teaching Programme with visiting European and American Freelance Designers to give further insight into the design knowledge of working designers. This input of visiting designers is very important to the development of the students knowledge, particularly in the export market, which is apparently growing in the Brazilian fashion area.

In the meantime I have tried to instruct the students in setting their own projects in the manner which I had set their Design Brief to continue working on their presentation and developing a drawing style which is fast and effective. I feel the present students are enthusiastic and keen enough to develop these skills on their own now they have had some guidance.

5. CONCLUSIONS

I feel it has been a very valuable experience spending three weeks teaching the students at Senai. I was very impressed by the fact that the majority of students worked very hard on the two projects, I enjoyed their hardworking attitude and their eagerness to gain further knowledge. After completion of the course and discussions with Professor Alexandre de Figueira Rodrigues it was suggested that Senai and the students would benefit from a further visit. We discussed this possibility and I feel that the students would definitely benefit from outside experience in this area. If it could be arranged a joint visit between myself and Desmond Curran (expert in pattern making) could prove to be successful in order to develop the design ideas through into finished garments. Senai showed interest in this as a way of giving the students an entire Design and Pattern making project.

I am also attempting to gather information for Senai with regard to college courses which may be suitable for the students, books and visual information on fashion and design that is available in Europe and difficult to obtain in Brazil.

In conclusion I feel that my contact with Senai has been a very valuable experience with regard to the giving and receiving of ideas which I feel has been extremely useful to me in experiencing the Brazilian culture at first hand. This makes any further visits easier in the sense that I now know the requirements of the design course within Senai. The giving of design information to such receptive and lively people, who have produced such excellent results with the knowledge, has been a very enjoyable experience.

6. ANNEX

DESIGN BRIEF AS SET FOR GROUPS A AND B

DESIGN PROJECT: Womens Wear

DATE: November 1986

BRIEF: Design a leather suit comprising
of jacket. trousers and or skirt,
combined with either silk shirt/
blouse or knitted sweater. To
be designed with a view to export
to an upmarket/expensive store or
small boutique.

AGE: 20 - 30 years

PREPARE: (a) Rough sketches with fabric samples
Finished drawings mounted on card
or enclosed in plastic wallets.

 (b) Working drawings with front and
back views and all appropriate
instructions and measurements
for pattern cutter.

PLEASE APPROACH THIS PROJECT WITH A VIEW TO THE PROFESSIONAL
PRESENTATION REQUIRED OF A DESIGNER IN INDUSTRY.

ANNEX cont'd

DESIGN BRIEF AS SET FOR GROUP C

DESIGN PROJECT: Womens Wear

DATE: November 1986

BRIEF: Design a range of summer co-ordinates comprising of inter-related garments including dresses, skirts, jackets, shorts, trousers, combined with fine cotton knits to be sold through an inexpensive chain store for mass production, example Mesbla.

AGE: 15 - 25 years

PREPARE: (a) Rough sketches with fabric samples, finished drawings, mounted on card or enclosed in plastic wallets.

 (b) Working drawings with front and back views and all appropriate instructions and measurements for pattern cutter.

PLEASE APPROACH THIS PROJECT WITH A VIEW TO THE PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION REQUIRED OF A DESIGNER IN INDUSTRY.