

# **FITEIRO CULTURAL (CULTURE KIOSK)**

**BY FABIANA DE BARROS**

## **HISTORICAL**

The FITEIRO CULTURAL is a public and contextual work of art. In north of Brazil, "Fiteiro" means kiosk or street stall. The owner of the Fiteiro sells specific goods for the community that frequents it. This public relationship inspired me to build my own Fiteiro devoted to all forms of cultures and art. As it is dismountable and light, it is a "nomadic" structure for artists.

FITEIRO CULTURAL is so a "non-place" which, to be able to exist, depends on the community where it is established and of the collaboration between the different artists.

The discovery of other one is the point of inking between the artist and the community in which the Fiteiro is settled and belongs to the art process.

This is what I mean as a " social sculpture ". According to desires or needs of the community, the FITEIRO CULTURAL can be transformed into a workshop, into a place for shows or exhibitions, a stage of theatre, a place of public or intimate debates, or simply a space for rest and reflexion.

It is a work in constant mutation: without beginning nor end, without evolution not ideal form. Consequently, its name evaluated and was translated into several languages according to the cities where she was established: João Pessoa, Athens, Sion, New York, Havana, Erevan, São Paulo, Dunquerque, Larissa, Milan, Geneva, Bienne and on Second Life.



## **FITEIRO CULTURAL SL @ CASA MILLAGROSA**

On Second Life, I created the Casa Millagrosa Island. Especially conceived to host the FITEIRO CULTURAL SL and to receive artists' various pieces, the island was rapidly transformed into a place of creation, uniting a community of artists and other users of the interactive game. All artworks are displayed on the island, which is kind of a beach, so that the visitor can interact with each of them.

The island of FITEIRO CULTURAL SL soon became a laboratory of new multimedia experiments. In order to create the artworks, it was necessary to develop special programming scripts and original designs. Among the present artists are: Miltos Manetas, Gianni Motti, Angelo Plessas, DJ Digital Francis, Jérôme Leuba and Maria Papadimitriou. The community of the artists works jointly and in a constant correlation. For example, a Drive In was conceived to introduce a selection of films and of videos. At present, it is possible to watch an original film, directed in Second Life by Michel Favre and myself: *ÇA VA?* (Remake of the film of J.-L. Godard *One + One*, 19min).

The FITEIRO CULTURAL SL ISLAND is also a space dedicated to create artistic events. It is possible to organise happenings, parties and shows with live DJ's, debates or performances. Guided tours leaving from the FITEIRO CULTURAL SL Island are also provided so the visitors can explore the islands of other artists and designers that are part of my community; as for example that of Chris Marker and his work " The Ouvroir ". Finally we experimented synchronous events blending Real Life and Second Life.

FITEIRO CULTURAL SL has already participated in international events such as *Multiplicidades* at Oi Futuro in Rio, Mapping Festival in Geneva, UTOPICS in Bienne and the 7<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Bienal.

Two films have been entirely directed and produced on the FITEIRO CULTURAL SL Island: *ÇA VA ?*, directed by Michel Favre & Fabiana de Barros (19 minutes, 2009) and *TREE DANCE IN SL* directed by Fabiana de Barros, with the collaboration of Michel Favre and Rogerio Mainardi (10 minutes, loop, 2009).



# CRITICAL

## A POPULAR DIAGRAM

**Carlos Basualdo**

**fi.tei.ro** *adj*

( *fita*<sup>1</sup> + *eiro*) 1 One who makes ribbons, exaggerates or deceives. 2 one who fakes feelings one doesn't have; a liar, a philanderer.

– Translated from *Michaelis, Moderno Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa*

### 1. Fiteiro

A soccer player falls suddenly to the ground in the stadium and begins to roll from side to side, as though in excruciating pain. The savvy referee walks right past the player without so much as a glance at him. When another player calls the referee's attention to the matter, he just shrugs and responds: "Nothing happened, he's a *fiteiro*." In English one would say, "He's faking it."

In everyday use the word *fiteiro* is an adjective for a person who, though not actually lying, is constantly up to some subterfuge. The Michaelis dictionary tells us that such a person's intentions are always suspect, what motivates him is the desire to lie or seduce. In the first case there is some value to be gained by shady means, in the second case, maybe only the desire to steal a kiss, to make a conquest so as not to be totally conquered. In either case, the term may carry some pejorative connotations. The morality of the *fiteiro* is questionable because of his paradoxical, apparently spontaneous niceness. One may almost guess the secret delight of whoever becomes the object of attention – always a little exaggerated – of the *fiteiro*. The evaluation is less a judgment than a disapproval.

What, then, would a "Fiteiro Cultural" be? One's first impression of this phrase is that it is an oxymoron. How can one fake or exaggerate culture? Or could it be that this *fiteiro*, equipped with culture, is aimed at seducing us? One thing is clear: however this term is used, we are certainly faced with an object, situation or person in which seduction, entrapment and culture are inextricably linked, we could even say inscribed one within the other. The possibilities for combinations remain open: whether it is the culture which does the seducing and the deceiving, or whether it is the deception that seduces the culture, it is an indissoluble relation between three interdependent terms. This relation speaks to us about the secret unity of artifice and the production of subjects and knowledge (another dictionary will remind us that culture is precisely "the stock of knowledge that one possesses, and which contributes to the formation of one's personality.")<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Dizionario Italiano I Garzantini, Garzanti Linguistica, 2000.

## 2. Structure and survival

At least since 1961 – the year in which he finished the scale model for *Cães de Caça* [Hunting Dogs], and more obviously from end of the 1960s onward – Hélio Oiticica saw his artistic project as inextricably linked to the creation of public spaces, open to participation by people at large, whether artists or nonartists. The paradigm in this case is one of a constructive art aimed at the production of what the artist himself at that time called experimental communities.”<sup>2</sup> For Oiticica, a project driven by a constructive wish should necessarily tend toward the constitution of ever richer and more complex instances of socialization. In his work, the urgency to expand outward from the institutional spaces arose as a consequence of the desire to explore forms of social interaction that the spaces, almost by definition, appear to limit. Evidently, this impulse was motivated not so much by a critical desire in relation to these institutions as by a desire to explore, in its positivity, a set of possibilities that became increasingly rich and decreasingly predictable. For Oiticica, “environmental art” is that which acquires a positive and constitutive function in relation to its context. This function only becomes feasible by means of a bet on randomness and spontaneity, springing from an attitude open to experimentation.

*Cães de Caça* is a constructive labyrinth, composed of five interrelated units that Oiticica calls *Penetráveis* [Penetrables]. But it is also a platform which would stage poet Reynaldo Jardim’s *Teatro Integral* [Whole Theater], and whose center would house Ferreira Gullar *Poema Enterrado*. *Tropicália*, the installation that Oiticica was to present in 1967 at the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro as part of the exhibition *Nova Objetividade Brasileira* [New Brazilian Objectivity], would also include two *penetráveis*, (in this case, *PN2* and *PN3*) and be structured as a kind of ambiguous tropical labyrinth, with its corresponding parrots and exotic plants – just like, as Oiticica noted in his sketchbooks, the landscape of a painting by Tarsila do Amaral.<sup>3</sup> But Oiticica also wanted *Tropicália* – a caustic and constructive commentary on the possibility of conceiving something as a “Brazilianness” in the context of the nation’s artistic production in those years – to be something of a platform for other works and activities of other artists and nonartists. This artwork was presented at the Museu de Arte Moderna, accompanied by Roberta Oiticica’s poem-objects. In the week following the show’s inauguration it was a stage for various informal activities – “manifestations,” to use the term that Oiticica preferred – which enjoyed the participation of residents of the Rio de Janeiro favela Mangueira, to which Oiticica was a frequent visitor.

Years afterwards, when the artist was already living in New York, he developed yet another project that would remain as a scale model, in which a labyrinthine structure of a constructive nature was proposed as a support for the realization of various activities which, in this case, involved the participating public as well as a group of actors – who did not so much act as produce “open images,” i.e., images open to interpretation by the participating audience. This was the first embodiment of his *Tropicália Subterranean Projects* [Underground Tropicália

---

<sup>2</sup> Archivo HO.

<sup>3</sup> Archivo HO.

Projects], the project formed by the integration of the *Penetráveis* 10, 11, 12 and 13, conceived in 1971. That same year, a photomontage conceived as part of the same project featured four photographs, arranged in a square, which appear to visually synthesize the artist's sources and intentions: a view of his *Babylonests* environment set up within the loft-style apartment he occupied on Second Avenue – an artwork he had presented earlier at the exhibition *Information* held in 1970 at the New York Museum of modern Art; the poem *Subsisto* by Augusto de Campos; a photo of the cadaver of Brazilian revolutionary leader Carlos Lamarca, signed by the dictatorship; and the image of an obviously destitute family, a young mother on the threshold of a doorless house surrounded by three barefoot children. The group appears framed within a pathetically simple house precariously built of wood and mud, identified in the photo as being located in Brazil's Northeast region.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Fiteiro Cultural

In Brazil's Northeast, the word *fiteiro* has another specific meaning, different from that given by dictionaries. It denotes a specific type of precarious construction, a stand built of sheet metal and wood, with a similarly built roof which extends outward to shelter potential customers. The function of this structure is, properly speaking, that of not having it, since – as Fabiana de Barros describes in a text on her work – once the Fiteiro is built and placed strategically at some key point in the city (in this case she refers to the city of João Pessoa, in the Brazilian state of Paraíba), its owner adapts the stand and its functioning to the needs of the potential users.<sup>5</sup> Fabiana de Barros tells how she once encountered a *fiteiro* which sold ice, another that fixed electronic devices and yet another that sold not only bus passes but also coffee and candy to enjoy on the ride. The typology of the *fiteiros* is at the same time monotonous and infinitely variable, since each function implies subtle structural modifications to suit each specific use. In its impeccable logic, the *fiteiro* is a perfect machine that functions in the interface between a potential demand and its corresponding offer, integrated within a drives-oriented constructive economic system in which impersonal desires are transformed into personalized alternatives of survival. The functioning of the *fiteiro* is not based on preset tactics or idealized plans to be carried out, by which any ambiguous appeal to the horizon of utopian planning is immediately excluded. The Fiteiro is where it is, right at the center of expectations that detect, capture and materialize.

On a constructive level, Fabiana de Barros's Fiteiro Cultural is a synthesis of the variables possible for the *fiteiros*, as the artist found them on the streets of João Pessoa. Its structure is the product of a constructive operation which is at the same time opposite and parallel to that which characterizes the above-mentioned works by Oiticica. If installations such as *Tropicália* and *Tropicália Subterranean Projects* represent a personal interpretation of the architecture of

---

<sup>4</sup> Hélio Oiticica, catalog of the retrospective show, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, 1992, p. 148.

<sup>5</sup> Fabiana de Barros, "Fiteiro Cultural-Kiosque à Culture-Culture Kiosk."

the Rio de Janeiro favelas filtered through a constructive logic informed by Mondrian and Malevich, the Fiteiro Cultural, in turn, isolates and empowers the constructive moment which has always been present in the typology of the popular stands. The Fiteiro Cultural's accentuated constructive character springs essentially from the popular use of the *fiteiros*.

Fabiana's Fiteiro is a cube of wood with a sloping roof, a small side door and four rectangular windows – one on each side – which, supported by strategically positioned props, are raised perpendicularly to the rest of the structure to reveal the cube's interior. Two horizontal wooden boards divide the Fiteiro's internal space. Once the windows are open, these boards can be moved to outside the cube, functioning as benches. The structure follows an absolutely crystalline logic, almost a model constructive exercise. The cube's structure is infinitely adaptable: it can be an office, a bar counter, a workbench, a lookout, and/or shelter. Its constructive logic is ridiculously simple, and even while structurally excluding the ornamental aspect it is, nevertheless, necessarily linked to the ornament in its communicative function. The Fiteiro Cultural – and the same could be said about any *fiteiro* in general terms – is a space that is at the same time public and publicitary, and, for this very reason, makes evident the necessary interdependence of both spheres of day-to-day life. Meaningful without meaning, there's no doubt that every *fiteiro* is a modern device, at one and the same time a public forum and theater, seduction and substance.

But maybe it is precisely the kind of appropriation that Fabiana de Barros has made of the Fiteiro, in its strategic lack of specificity, which allows us to describe it in these terms. Her Fiteiro Cultural, apparently without any economic aim, sheds light on what we can call the "fiteiro device" in general. The Fiteiro Cultural consists of the re-creation of a *fiteiro* structure and its strategic placement within the urban/institutional context, in a way which attends to the cultural needs of a hypothetical public. When this artwork was presented in São Paulo, in 2004, during the World's Cultural Forum, one of the seven *fiteiros* built was used as an Internet radio; another was occupied by a group of local artists; yet another was transformed into a printmaking workshop. The publicitary dimension of the *fiteiro* device was evident at the Fiteiro Cultural presented at the exhibition *Noviembre Público*, at the Martinez Gallery in Brooklyn, New York, which functioned as a support for the activities of a group of graffiti artists. Finally, in Sion, in Switzerland, the artist transformed a Fiteiro into a camera obscura. In all these cases, the Fiteiros responded to the immaterial needs of the artists or the communities, through the production of spaces and activities aimed at both satisfying and stimulating them. The economy in which they functioned was not based on the necessity of subsistence, but on the integration of a circuit of art exhibitions and manifestations. Hence, the choice of the adjective "cultural" applied to this artist's *fiteiro*, which marks the gesture of Fabiana de Barros's appropriation, while underscoring the intention to utilize its constructive logic for the production of immaterial knowledge.

Fabiana de Barros's Fiteiro Cultural does not result in a mere individuation of a possible subspecies of *fiteiro*, in the singularization of a process of collective, necessarily anonymous

operation. Rather, it is aimed at highlighting – by means of the donation of a name and its insertion within the institutional context of art – the characteristic lack of specificity of every *fiteiro* in terms of its productive character. It seems that Fabiana is suggesting to us that every *fiteiro* is from the outset always “cultural,” since it is involved in a process of production that transforms desires into tools of survival, knowledge into materials and vice versa. Every *fiteiro* is a translation device that operates between the collective and the individual dimension, involved in the production of a communicational economy. A small, autonomous and experimental company, every *fiteiro* is an intersection of pathways opened by those who constructed it and by the community that arises around it.

But the Fiteiro Cultural in particular – as is also the case of any *fiteiro* in general – would cease to function if it did not have the power to seduce us. To be activated and to produce effects, it should be able to attract this collective substrate, destined to support the *fiteiro*’s activity. Seducing to singularize and be singularized. Deceive, maybe, with the aim of producing the space of publicity necessary for its functioning. Would it be that ultimately the *fiteiro* teaches us that seduction and the production of knowledge and subjects are not opposing things at all, but rather things that are necessarily complementary in the composition of a collective space? A space in which each one is able to find “the knowledge that contributes toward the formation of one’s personality,” invested with desire and, above all, the will for existence. The *fiteiro* as the effective diagram of any community.

## **DOCUMENTATION:**

<http://www.fiteirocultural.org/inicio.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UqV-uyEFE4&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grgcS8KI7-w&fmt=22>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYVFyMz7ac&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYVFyMz7ac&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4guy2pxdA24&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4guy2pxdA24&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kDtUZ90xdo&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kDtUZ90xdo&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgHnD52IDbM&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgHnD52IDbM&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRbJeVzWevM&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRbJeVzWevM&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJSwe3mKMVU&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJSwe3mKMVU&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8wfKnWi\\_Q4&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8wfKnWi_Q4&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WYfn2UpqRE&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WYfn2UpqRE&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gek7mLHCpPs&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gek7mLHCpPs&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNq4KDmsd3E&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNq4KDmsd3E&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15MTepn\\_4WQ&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15MTepn_4WQ&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYME8titts&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYME8titts&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6vTyAw08qc&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6vTyAw08qc&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZNVtOtFOy8&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZNVtOtFOy8&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEAgqjUNsog&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEAgqjUNsog&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Edi4TjeqVQg&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Edi4TjeqVQg&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egWLVfn1-UI&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egWLVfn1-UI&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1ilKosrGa8&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1ilKosrGa8&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLpqEe4AJqQ&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLpqEe4AJqQ&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpNKTR304j4&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpNKTR304j4&feature=player_embedded)

[http://multiplicidade.oi.com.br/videos\\_fotos\\_ver.php?id=146](http://multiplicidade.oi.com.br/videos_fotos_ver.php?id=146)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPw9cdBfmSo&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPw9cdBfmSo&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCgLnvf9-gw&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NCgLnvf9-gw&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzqshuPjseM&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzqshuPjseM&feature=player_embedded)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=279vxnMHwOw&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=279vxnMHwOw&feature=player_embedded)