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From the outset.

A return to the roots, to the beginnings of each creator, an ode to craftsmanship in the most unpredictable and, in some cases, inhospitable way. We chat with different creators and focus on their beginnings and their motives, in order to understand the future of the industry.



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MADE IN SITU



INTERVIEW BY PAZ REVILLA
IMAGES COURTESY OF O-APARTAMENTO

"I am inspired by everything that is harmonious without exception. My passion is linked to the sea, the importance of the oceans, because as rich, dense and gigantic this mass of water is, it has a horizon which lets each and every one of us imagine what follows on". Says by Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance, help to know the place of nature in his creative process and life, but, above all, to understand Made in Situ in all its dimensions.

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The French designer, who has working across a wide range of disciplines and materials with a narrative deeply rooted in nature, is the creator of Made in Situ, a project so rich and, at the same time, so pure. A work that connects the elements of nature with its artisans, the people, the context and the environment in order to give life to beautiful pieces that conform the collections.

"This is a project of perception", says Duchaufour-Lawrance when it refers, in its Manifesto, to the fundamental pillars of Made in Situ. Although, what he really considers one of the foundational pillar for the project is the exchange of knowledge and techniques with local artisans. And, when you look at each collection, each piece, you realize that behind this lies the soul of Made in Situ.

We talked to Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance, the architect of this impressive project, about how Made in Situ was born, what inspires him when he creates, the role of artisans and his connection with them, the value of Portugal and, of course, about Barro Negro and Burnt Cork, that for the first time will be presented outside of Portugal, in New York at 'Demisch Danant'.

Nature and Made in Situ

Made in Situ is a platform with strong roots in nature and tradition that reflects, through a great respect for heritage, knowledge and craftsmanship, the current change in the relationship with the Earth.

His Lisbon studio is an example of this, one that exists "to support these adventures and delve into these stories, a platform that fosters a series of cross-disciplinary exchanges instigated by the designs and their process".

How was Made in Situ born and why Portugal?

"I have worked a lot in my life, loving specifically my time with craftspeople; I also find production fascinating, the whole process that involves the human hand. I wanted to find a place where the designing was part of the production. Portugal has that on offer. I wanted to discover this country through my work.

I was also looking for a place to breath and look at the horizon; a place to reconnect after many years of working



and living in Paris.

In Portugal, there is always the reminder of earth and Sea. The Sea, a link between the diversity that creates unity in this country, allows me to think, to project, to dream and to settle into the vastness of horizon and space. The Earth, on the other hand in all of its forms, invites me to do, to make and to realize".

What was the original idea behind the creation of Made in Situ?

"The designed pieces are the fruits of my adventures, explorations of geological and biological textures, patterns, materials and their related techniques. Above all, my stimulation comes from human knowledge and sensitivity, linking to and embedded in each specific place.

Furthermore, I wanted Made in Situ to reconnects us to the processes and methods of localised production which are rooted in their respective regions and their know-how; a will to contextualize the pieces with the artisans behind each collection as well as their story, giving them more soul, being more legitimate.

The aim is to create more interaction between the pieces, the story behind each pieces and finally their future owners, to create a more durable usage.

The Made in Situ Gallery exist to tell these stories: the exhibitions we showcase in the gallery including the film, the sounds, the scenography which encompass all the elements of the exhibition in one place".

The respect for the process and traditions

Your approach to design celebrates the coming together of heritage, materials, industrial design, natural forms

and craftsmanship. Where does this integral vision of design come from?

"It is a matter of passion and exchange. In time I learned that I needed to forget my assurances and that I should approach each project with the same desire to discover, to in turn, better transmit them.

With each project I need to take the time to observe, feel, draw, and conceive.

I spend a lot of time in the workshops of craftspeople to better comprehend and learn. My projects grow from this process".

The narrative of your projects are deeply rooted in nature. What role does nature play in your life and work?

"Nature is composed of thousands of forms of matter and life which are sometimes at extremities of each other, but this said it emanates an incredible harmony, never equalled to manmade things. One can only be inspired and respectful of such force (of nature)".

How is your creative process and what importance do you give to instinct and intuition?

"I don't have one set process. I contemplate emotions, I visit workshops, I meet artisans, I encounter good skill set and new materials. I question myself on problematics. I question myself and question other around me on what I see. And I draw a lot. Sometimes I make with my hands, I also confront myself directly to material.

Instinct and intuition are my guides throughout the process; this process would not lead to anything without these intuitions".

Talking about craftsmanship, do you think is given the value it deserves or is there still a long way to go?

"It all depends on the region and the country. In France, craftsmanship is recognised since 'Colbert'. The state invests to preserve certain skill sets. But other less prestigious ones disappear. However, the recently renewed appetite for materials, the truth of objects manufacturing, means we see certain expertise renewed. Saying this it is also a trend movement; it will need to keep some truth.

In Portugal conservatism has meant that certain prestigious skills have prevailed, for classical pieces. Next to this the rural craftsman, linked to day-to-day trades and objects is disappearing. But don't understand this as sermonizing, there is also an other reality, in the world a lot of artisans don't have an other choice than to do what they were transmitted (by their peers), even though they aspired to another kinds of life".

The collections

Barro Negro and Burnt Cork are two collections that speak for themselves. Each of its pieces shows the strength of nature, the power of ceremonies, the stories that Portugal offers with its corners and traditions and the richness of learn and working together with artisans to create projects.

What have you learned, both from the creative process and the development of Barro Negro and Burnt Cork?

"That each answer to a question brings another question. The creative process, the movement, the production, which ever it is, has an incidence on the environment, there are no good answers but there are good questions".

The fire is key in both collections. Did it happen organically or was it thought?

"Fire is one of the elements that destructs as much as it produces. This dichotomy is fascinating to me. We had to transform the act of destruction into creation. The next collection will be totally different but linked to another element; water".

How could you describe what these two collections mean to you?

"Barro Negro is a project linked to a traditional process of cooking called 'Soenga'. A process off cooking directly in a pit in the ground which takes over 12 hours and on a night of full moon. Very ceremonial. Xana and Carlos, the two artisans with who we worked, gave us the possibility of

living this very special moment next to their village, their secret garden. The perfect place for this ceremony which involves the artisans but also the local people from the village.

We were able to invite friends, artists, chefs and my whole team to share this moment. It was so strong. I think that every piece created and cooked that night is a testimony to this singular moment.

Burnt Cork, however, was born from the will to transform a traumatic experience. The one of my arrival in Portugal when I cross the devastating fires of 2017".

What surprised you the most about working with Barro Negro?

"The material has a depth to it, the way it absorbs the light and registers the process of its creation, it looks like charcoal but with a density that gives it a curious strength. Digging deeper I found out about the Soenga, an ancient pit firing technique still practiced today in Molelos village. During this annual event, the artisans and village population come together to keep the tradition alive.

These distinguishing characteristics in material, process and community are what made me decide to learn more about this craft. The 'Soenga' ceremony was very special for me. Something I had never done before or experienced".

Was it a completely new approach to you working with burnt cork?

"Yes, cork is a very rich material, beyond the fact that it is recycable, it has a multitude of implementations.

But transmitting through a project the reality of trauma was totally new for me. Well, what I mean is in such a direct way. I believe that the act of creating for this collection was a permanent rebirth".

How did Barro Negro and Burnt Cork evolve from the original idea to the final result?

"For Burnt Cork we started off by exploring materials. We, first of all, created the blocks with a mold and using burnt



Photos by Nuno Sousa Dias



cork from forest fires.

I then started drawing the objects based on the dimensions of these blocks, imagining how to associate them, to keep the structural evidence and to best evoke the idea of a new life, a rebirth.

For Barro Negro, I did lots of visits to the artisans. No drawings had been done before meeting them. I tried to understand them, their realities, their skills. All my drawings have been reimagined by my hand work, working with the 'barro', the clay. I also remodeled some shapes like Tondela".

How are the monthly exhibitions developed in the Lisbon studio? .

"There are no predetermined agendas. The projects are presented when they are ready. We need to leave time for each project to evolve.

We have two projects which have been presented so far but five are underway. The format is different every time, it depends where the collection takes us, what story needs to be told. We like using sound and visuals to tell these stories but there are no set rules".

How will it take place and what do you expect from the first presentation of the collections outside of Portugal?

"I must say that Portugal is the place a restitution of the projects, but we are delighted to present both collections for the first time outside of Portugal, in New York at 'Demisch Danant'".

What has been the greatest learning and the greatest challenge of Made in Situ?

Keeping independence on a project and meaning these projects are in keeping with the reality of artisans we work with. That these projects can sustain the vocations of artists and artisans and help to transmission of these skills.

What have you discovered in these two years of Made in Situ?

"With Made In Situ I discovered that I still had everything

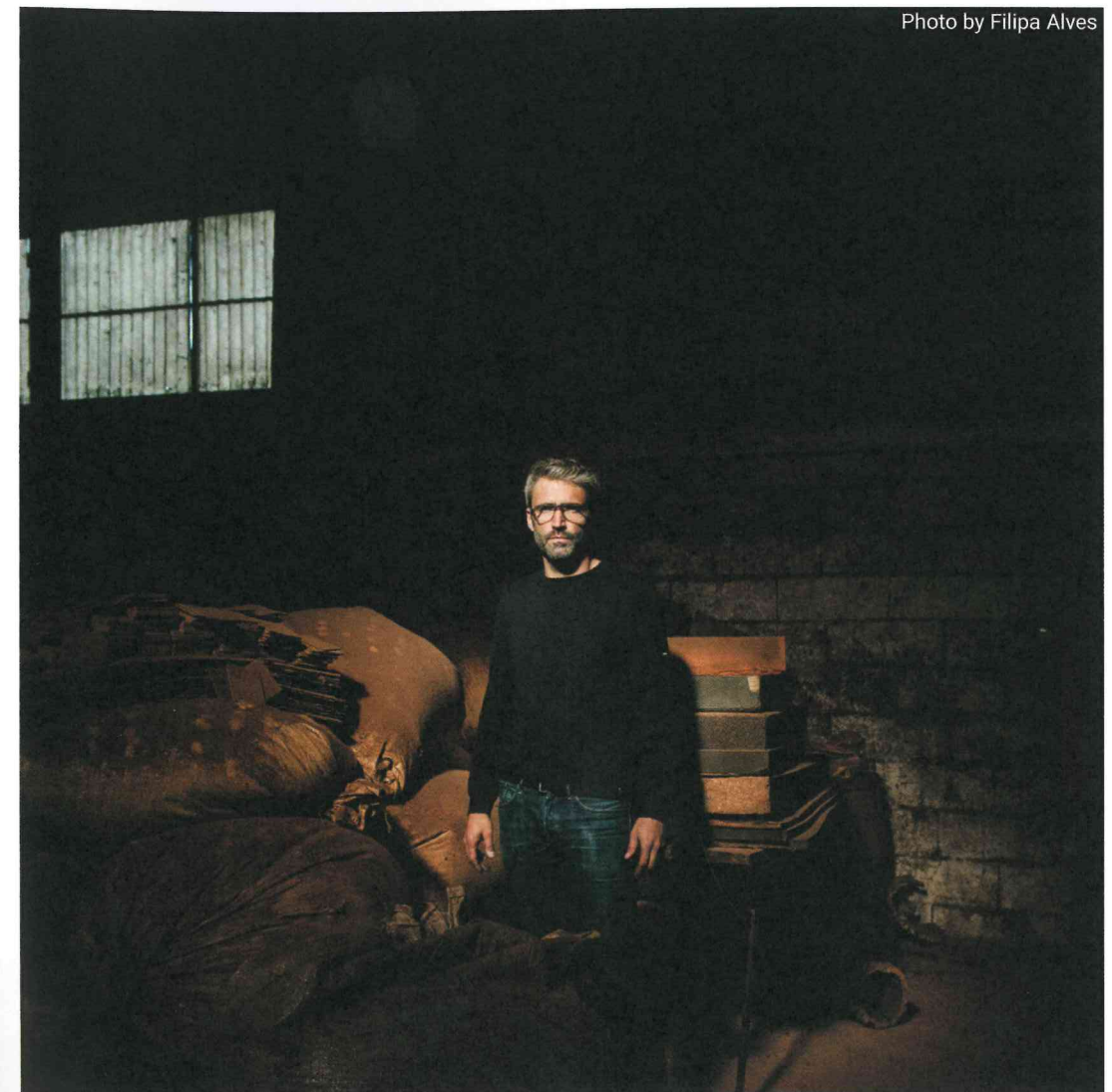


Photo by Filipa Alves

to learn. And that by always wanting to achieve more, in a quest to achieving perfection, I missed many gems along the way, without even realizing it".

The value of craftsmanship and the connection with traditions and heritage is undoubtedly fundamental to the development of this project. Respecting times and processes, exchanging knowledge and discovering a way of working and living that is completely connected are some of the great teachings that Made in Situ offers. A deeply inspiring project that reminds us of the importance of going back to the origins.