

## **Objects of the Forest: An Experimental Design Expedition in the Amazon Region.**

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The strong focus on nature that we experience today in the design field relates to the search for new and more sustainable references which could indicate alternatives for designers to deal and possibly change the current manufacturing system.

Inside this international design movement towards considering nature's models and materials as objects worth of investigation, the Amazon Rainforest emerges as an immense territory to be explored by designers. It is known that the diversity of forms and species that exist there is not found anywhere else. Its geographical isolation also ensures its own local culture, which is not known in many aspects.

The idea of getting design references in the Amazon makes us question: how is the relationship between man and nature in a place where the last is so dominant? How can one live together with this nature and / or use natural elements in daily life?

"Objects of the Forest" is an ongoing project ([www.objetosdafloresta.com](http://www.objetosdafloresta.com)) awarded in the end of 2011 with subsidies from the Ministry of Culture of Brazil. The richness of the Amazon Forest was never before explored solely under the design point of view. This project intends to achieve the following goals:

- register and spread design objects that are representative of the material culture associated to the reality of the Brazilian Amazon Forest, in sustainable ways.
- point on these daily sustainable objects their conceptual, cultural and aesthetical values.
- enable local designers and artists to observe objects under a conceptual point of view and to approach the Forest with a new mindset.

The project has three interrelated fronts of execution:

1. exploratory trip: the journey of a specialist designer to the Amazon for one month (April 2012) in order to identify and register contemporary objects that have a unique relationship with nature. Visits to strategic locations were planned.
2. Local workshops: two free workshops in the main cities, Manaus and Belém. Workshop participants will help defining and selecting the "objects of the forest." To find these objects and stimulate analysis on them, the observation of everyday life and the understanding the contexts will be promoted in a creative way, as well as reflections on aspects such as identity and sustainability. It is very special that these designers live and are from the Amazon, and they will be pushed to foresee how they can have a transforming role in nowadays design scene.
3. Publication: The selection of objects will result in a bilingual e-book that will be widely distributed, being available for free download on the internet.

This project, to be finished by July 2012, aims to lay foundations to enable the creation of ambitious design solutions for the future, which in fact reinvent the world we live in. It's experimental and innovative methodology can not only inspire designers to make research aiming to envisage new alternatives for sustainable design, but it can also serve as an attempt of a model of interaction with territories where, although there is potential, design is less explored