

Brazilian Fair: a Window to Brazil's and the World's Craft

Contributed by Marina Sarruf
Tuesday, 15 August 2006

Art Mundi, the international handicraft fair, who is going on in Brazil, sells from bows and arrows to Egyptian products. There are products for all pockets, from necklace ornaments costing US\$ 2.31 to marquetry tables for US\$ 925. The fair began on Friday, August 11, and goes up to Sunday, August 20, at the Anhembi exhibition hall, in São Paulo.

In total there are 200 exhibitors, representing 1,000 artisans from 16 states in Brazil and 22 countries. This is the first time that the company responsible, Diretriz, organizes the fair in São Paulo.

"The handicraft fair has already been in existence for 15 years in Curitiba and for the last two in Porto Alegre", stated the manager of the international department at Diretriz, Elaine Cardoso Augusto. In Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul, of which Porto Alegre is the capital, however, it is called Feiarte.

According to Elaine, the idea is to introduce Art Mundi in the annual fair calendar in São Paulo. "Every large city has a handicraft fair. That is what we hope takes place in São Paulo," she added.

According to Elaine, the international exhibitors at Art Mundi already participate in Feiarte. "Arab products are sought at the fair, mainly perfume essences from Tunisia and wooden boxes with mosaics from Syria," she said. According to her, the idea is to bring more Arab exhibitors to the next editions.

Among the visitors to the fair was the minister of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade, Luiz Fernando Furlan.

From Brazil

It is not possible to walk by and not notice a Brazilian Indian hut surrounded by seven Indians at the heart of Art Mundi. This is the stand of Indian group Fulni-ô, from Águas Belas, in the northeastern Brazilian state of Pernambuco. The Indians brought to the fair around 2,000 items including necklaces, earrings, bracelets, handbags, bows and arrows, mats, necklaces and spears.

The main raw materials are seeds, vines, coconuts and hay. The items vary from 3 reais (US\$ 1.39) in the case of purses to 200 reais (about US\$ 90) in the case of necklaces, like those made out of snail shells and shellfish. "They take around 15 days to be made," stated Towé, the chief of the group.

Another novelty is flip-flops with straps covered in silk and chintz (a kind of cotton), which may be tied to the legs. The creation is by Hilton Leite Jr., from the state of Pernambuco, who also covers polystyrene balls with the same materials and makes necklaces that match the sandals.

At the same stand, artist and artisan João Lopes, from the same state, is also exhibiting. He brought to the fair various decoration articles. "I produce products covered in natural fibers," he said. Lopes transforms everything, making clay products look like wooden ones and transforming coconut fronds into fibre.

Art Mundi counts on four stands that sell Arab products: one belonging to the Egyptian Bahaa Hasouna, from trading company Mundo Egípcio; another belonging to trading company Império Árabe, belonging to the Lebanese Radwan Raad; the third belonging to the Egyptian Hassan Mohamed, from company Pirâmide; and the fourth set up by Tunisians, by trading company Aimex.

"Arab products greatly please many Brazilians," stated Raad, who imports from handkerchiefs, towels and fabrics, to musical instruments from Lebanon and Syria. Born in Lebanon, Raad has been living in Curitiba, capital of the southern Brazilian state of Paraná, for 8 years and it is he who chooses products in the Arab countries. "I travel to the region twice a year and import around US\$ 20,000 each time," he said.

Raad has been participating in various handicraft fairs in Brazil for the last five years. "What I sell most are cushion covers and hookahs," he said, referring to the water pipes that are also called narghiles or shishas. Yesterday, at his stand, Arab music was playing in the background and curious women asked about the prices of the embroidered tablecloths and of little boxes with mother of pearl mosaics. In one corner of the stand there were about six marquetry tables, each of a different size and all well worked.

Trading company Império Árabe distributes its products all around Brazil and has a shop in Curitiba, where he sells copper objects, bracelets, clothes, wall carpets, chairs and tables and wooden products with marquetry and mother-of-pearl.

According to the Egyptian Hasouna, from trading company Mundo Egípcio, narghiles are in fashion in Brazil, and they are therefore among the products that sell best. In the case of Moroccan products, which he also imports, plates and decoration objects are the most sold. Hasouna lives in Camboriú, Santa Catarina, and has had the trading company for two years. Apart from Egypt and Morocco, he also imports from India, China and Iran.

At the Hasouna stand, visitors may buy from papyrus to partitions made in Egypt. However, most of the products sold by the trading company come from India. "Indian products, like overalls, for example, are also in fashion in Brazil and are well accepted," she said. The Egyptian also has shops in São Paulo and Curitiba. "At the shops we also sell furniture from Egypt," he finished off.

Another Egyptian stand belongs to Hassan Mohamed, who was not at the fair until yesterday, but his products, like cushion covers, handkerchiefs and wall carpets, were exhibited. Visitors who are after novelties should go to the Tunisian stand, where they sell sandals and purses made out of camel leather. The products sold vary from black and brown to orange and blue. Apart from that, the stand also includes perfumes and decorative products made out of crystal.

Service

Art Mundi

From August 11 to 20

Monday to Saturday from 02:00 pm to 10:00 pm

Sunday (13) from 02:00 pm to 09:00 pm

Sunday (20) from 02:00 pm to 06:00 pm

Where:

West pavilion at the Anhembi

Av. Olavo Fontoura, 1,209, Santana, São Paulo - SP

Admittance:

Individual - R\$ 10 (US\$ 4,60)

For caravans of over 10 people - R\$ 7 per head

Anba