
The Works of Art and Philanthropy of a French-Brazilian Living in Paris

Contributed by Isaura Daniel
Tuesday, 13 March 2007

Embroiderers in Brazil and Tunisia are being guided from France by by a French designer. Annie Cicatelli draws designs for cross-stitch embroidery that are used by a group of around twenty embroiderers in the cities of São Paulo and Curitiba, in the Brazilian Southeast and South, respectively.

In Tunisia, a workshop of the Union of Mentally Impaired in the city of Sfax, which is in the interior of the country, also provides work embroidered using fabrics and threads she donates. Annie is a cross point designer and also helps, with the income obtained from the drawings she sells all around the world, to develop her work at community organizations in Burkina Faso and Colombia.

The French woman, who is also a journalist, creates drawings inspired on the places she has already visited. The daily life of the Brazilians, where she lived for 25 years, is included in the list as is that of African Arab countries like Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria.

"I am a journalist and I use my embroidery to 'write' what I see during my trips," explained the French woman. In her trips, many due to her work as a journalist for a French radio station, Annie tries to observe how people live, where they live and she also visits museums. "The colors and forms of each country inspire me to do my drawings," she said.

She also researches particularities of the country in France. Annie also does research on European countries like Portugal and the Czech Republic, and also in Guatemala, although Annie has never been to the Central American country. She has seen, however, an exhibition about Guatemala in Paris and spent a week researching the matter, which granted her subsidies to develop her work.

"I have projects for Palestine. I have not been there, but I have done a lot of research and can prepare an interesting series," she explained. Annie's intention is now to dedicate herself to Asia.

Annie has had contact with Brazilian embroiderers since she lived in the country. She had in the country, in the late 1980s, a shop called Feito à Mão (Handmade). At the time, Annie traded handicraft products made by women from low-income households.

"I promoted what people now call fair trade," she explained. This kind of work is developed by the designer to date. Annie sends her drawings to Brazilian women who do cross-stitch embroidery and she then buys the work off them. The material is used to show her pictures at fairs and exhibitions.

The drawings made by Annie are sold at this kind of space and also on the Internet, at her workshop, in Paris, and also at shops in France and England. With part of the income, Annie makes donations to permit that the work of embroiderers and handicraft is developed abroad. That is the case in Tunisia and also in Colombia.

In Colombia, Annie makes donations to Casa Comunitária del Lienzo, an organization in the city of Charalá that works on preservation of ancestral spinning techniques. With the funds, though, Annie also collaborates in other areas of handicraft. This is the case in NGO SOS Enfants, which works on keeping poor boys and girls at school.

Annie, who is 51 years old, was born in France but moved to Brazil when she was a little girl, in the early 1960s. First of all the designer lived in São Paulo, and then in Vitória, the capital of the southeastern Brazilian state of Espírito Santo, where she graduated in Journalism.

In Vitória, Annie also got married and had a daughter, Mariana, who now lives in Rio de Janeiro. In 1987 Annie returned to France. In Brazil, Annie worked for various newspapers and radio stations, mainly in the area of culture, and won awards like the Esso Journalism Award, the most famous journalism award in Brazil, for a series of articles about pollution.

Annie learnt how to do handicraft alone, when she was still a child. As an adult, she did a course in the History of Art at Louvre Museum.

Contact

Annie Cikatelli

E-mail: cikatelli.annie@wanadoo.fr

Site: www.anniecikatelli.com

Anba - www.anba.com.br