

# Lavarroz. Ordinary kitchen utility as a design object

## Abstract

In this article, we will look closer at the kitchen 'backend', which contains the tools necessary for practical food preparation. These objects are usually invisible to guests—but also, as we will prove, to the design discourse. An object that illustrates the function of cookware is a tool for washing rice before cooking: Lavarroz (Washrice) by Brazilian dentist Therezinha Beatriz Alves de Andrade Zorowich. This tool has been part of the standard equipment of a Brazilian (and not only) kitchen since 1959.

We will look at the importance of Lavarroz and similar tools in a social context, including culture and history. We will show the differences in social communication using tableware and kitchenware by comparing the features of objects and the media communication accompanying them. We will consider how deep the roots of disregard for kitchen tools are in culture. There were also periods and places in history where tools from the back of the kitchen were displayed in the limelight. What conditions must be met for the kitchen utensils to appear in the museum? We will also try to answer why, in the public discourse, Lavarroz is called an 'invention' and not a 'project'.

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## Lavarroz. Un utensilio de cocina común y corriente como objeto de diseño

### Resumen

En este artículo, analizaremos más de cerca el objeto 'trastienda' de la cocina, que contiene las herramientas necesarias para una preparación eficaz de los alimentos. Se trata de objetos que normalmente son invisibles para los invitados, pero también, como demostraremos, para el discurso del diseño. Un objeto que ilustra la función de los utensilios de cocina es una herramienta para lavar el arroz antes de cocinarlo: Lavarroz de la dentista brasileña Therezinha Beatriz Alves de Andrade Zorowich. Esta herramienta forma parte del equipamiento estándar de las cocinas brasileñas (y no sólo) desde 1959.

Analizaremos la importancia de Lavarroz y herramientas similares en un contexto social, incluso en el contexto de la cultura y la historia. Mostraremos las diferencias en la comunicación social utilizando vajillas y utensilios de cocina comparando las características de los objetos y la comunicación mediática que los acompaña. Consideraremos cuán profundas están en la cultura las raíces del desprecio por los platos y los utensilios de cocina. También hubo períodos y lugares en la historia donde las herramientas de la parte trasera de la cocina fueron el centro de atención. ¿Qué condiciones debían cumplirse para que los utensilios de cocina aparecieran en el museo? También intentaremos responder a la pregunta de por qué en el discurso público se llama a Lavarroz un 'invento' y no un 'proyecto'.

Palabras clave:  
Herramientas, cocina, lavarroz,  
Brasil, plástico

## Introduction

Food preparation tools have accompanied us since the dawn of humankind, but only a few of them can be found in the biggest design museums and important publications.

The book *Tools* accompanies an exhibition at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (2014) under the motto 'Tools bring about change. Tools demonstrate how design shapes experience.' The book has a clothes peg on its cover and includes 175 objects. The only tool dedicated to preparing food (and also one of the oldest kitchen tools) is the stone pestle (Cooper, 2014, pp. 26–27). Some other design books show even less kitchenware, like *Designer Maker User* (Newson et al., 2016), a publication from the Design Muzeum in London.

The group, which is deeply devoted to kitchen tools, are kitchenalia collectors. However, it looks like this research is too poor for them as well: "There are a few publications dedicated to this area of collecting, many of which are American. The United States has a much broader appreciation of culinary history and it is legitimised there as more of an important theme of social history" (Kay, 2017). Indeed, we have the best kitchen tools biographies and the deepest kitchen work analyses from the USA, like Ellen Lupton's *Power Tool for Dining Room: The Electric Carving Knife* (1996) or *Mechanical Brides* (1993). Ellen Lupton's texts brilliantly explain social issues in the context of the USA's history. Still, we must remember that the 1950s and 1960s could have had very special issues depending on where we live on the Globe, and therefore, it is necessary to open discussions about different contexts of kitchenware.

Meanwhile, in the kitchenware stores of various countries, we have original tools for preparing national dishes. Like the Hawaiian utensils used to prepare

‘poi’, their form has sometimes stayed the same over the centuries. Interestingly—we will not usually find them at local exhibitions or in publications on national design. They are not even on souvenir shop magnets, although the typical dishes of the local cuisine and objects to serve them are already there.



Figure 1. Magnets with local dishes are popular gifts from travel—own compilation

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What is the reason for the lack of interest in kitchen accessories from both businesses and local authorities? We can divide the causes into three main categories, which are interlinked: culture, power and money. Edgerton’s book *The Shock of the Old* (2019) sheds light on these three factors. He argued that we used to value only novelty and innovations connected to the rich countries’ new technologies—“We believe that spin-off from rockets is more likely and more significant than from button-holing machines” (Edgerton, 2019, p.190). Often, it could also apply to design. Edgerton does not recognise designers’ involvement in innovations; he mentions ‘design’ only with a connection to branding (2019, p.71). As design is not only about decoration and advertising, we should apply his analyses to engineers and designers.

The design discourse is mostly about aesthetics; therefore, it refers to taste, which, according to Pierre Bourdieu’s (1984) theory, is strictly connected with social class structure and aspirations. Using the example of the rice-washing

vessel—Lavarroz, designed in 1959 by Therezinha Beatriz Alves de Andrade Zorowich from São Paulo, we will examine the above.

**Object: LAVARROZ**  
(also: Lava Arroz or Lava-arroz)



Figure 2. *Lavarroz*, photo: Josenildo do Nascimento Araujo, (CC BY-SA 4.0).

- Purpose: A tool for washing rice before cooking
- Category: kitchenware, home goods, homewares, household items, utensils, tools
- Variety: colour; size (according to the amount of rice); contemporary also different producers solutions of the strainers
- Author: Therezinha Beatriz Alves de Andrade Zorowich
- Year: 1959

- Country of origin: Brazil
- First producer: Trol Company
- Material/s: plastic
- Price: low

## Function

Lavarroz could be considered an anonymous design—no designer logo exists on this tool. Deyan Sudjic writes about similar items: “These are objects unencumbered by obtrusive signatures and by the arbitrary shape-making and the egotism that comes with them. When design is modest enough to allow itself to be anonymous, it is not being cynical or manipulative” (2015, p. 464). Maybe only this unnamed stuff fulfils the Bauhaus maxim ‘form follows function’.

The author of this object, Therezinha Zorowich, wants to combine the functions of the bowl and the stainer in one object. She designed an item from two connected parts. The wider part allows easy rice stirring—thanks to the larger size, the grains can be rinsed freely. It is the equivalent of a bowl. The minor part is the equivalent of a strainer—it is narrow, so it is easy to pour water through it without splashing it to the side. The two parts are connected at a 90-degree angle, ensuring the water pours and moves the rice smoothly (De Batatais Para O Mundo, n.d.). The object lacks ornamentation; the only possible decoration is the colour. Because of this simplicity is easy to clean. Looking at the main design ideas in Europe and the USA and comparing them with Zorowich’s design, it can be said that she applied modernist principles as if they were her natural habits—she avoided decoration and did not stylise the object to pretend to be something else.

The object in question is now unknown in Europe (apart from Portugal), partly due to a different culinary culture. Preparing rice in Brazil is very special and unusual for rice-eaters from other countries—the crucial difference is Brazilian seasoning (Morelli Abrahão, 2022, p. 4), but washing the rice is also unnecessary in many national cuisines. The popularity of rice is also very high in Brazilian cuisine—it can be eaten even with other carbohydrates. In Europe, rice competes against potatoes and pasta; it is hard to say if it is eaten more often than once a week (depending on the region). However, Italian risotto and Spanish paella are also from rice, which has different features from favourite Brazilian kinds of rice (Mesquita Cuisine, 2014).

Even though rice is widely consumed in European domestic settings, it is often cooked in pouches, and sometimes, rice can even be purchased in containers that only need to be placed in the microwave.



Figure 3. Rice in plastic bags—the alternative to Lavarroz in Middle and Eastern Europe—own photo.

Although cooking food in a plastic bag does not look appetising, it is a convenient way to do it. This process reduces food preparation time, which is crucial in the choices made by women in patriarchal societies, which was proven when analysing the many cases cited by Caroline Criado-Perez (2020). For example, introducing high-yielding cereals was not accepted precisely because their subsequent processing took longer than the grains previously used. (Criado-Perez, 2020, pp. 194-195).

Stone pestle, mentioned in the introduction, is a Hawaiian tool to mash taro roots, one of the most important sources of carbohydrates in their diet (Draper, 2020). Grinding has a long story; in every culture, there is a similar tool to do it with varied foodstuffs (Wilson, 2013, pp. 201-212). Many cultures have their tools designed especially for local kitchen peculiarities. Despite being 'designed', those objects are barely visible in design discourse—the same as in the Cooper Hewitt (2014) book.

Figure 4 shows examples of traditional kitchen utensils from different European cuisines—all dedicated to preparing carbohydrates.



Figure 4. Tools for preparing popular carbohydrate dishes from local cuisines: Italian pasta tongs, Polish potato masher and Slovak 'haluszka' strainer, own photo.



## Form

Initial difficulties in finding a producer for Lavarroz were overcome, and the Brazilian company Trol launched the product. The drainer proved to be a huge success. Not only did it win awards at trade fairs (Fartura, 2022), but it was also bought in large numbers. The author recalls that it was also manufactured outside Brazil and did not always have the required licences (De Batatais Para O Mundo, n.d.).

The copies produced by the Trol company were variously coloured, including a shade of slightly faded blue or orange (Caldatto, 2015). After years of bakelite's monotonous, dark colours, manufacturers were keen to use bright, pastel colours that their customers were eager to buy. According to Lupton, in the 1950s, even wash machines looked so colourful, and in the late 1960s, the palette changed to 'organic' (1993). Today, washing machines come in neutral colours (Lupton, 1993, p. 23), but rice dishes sometimes remain themselves. Among the wide range of tools dedicated to rice washing, we can find today modified versions of Lavarroz in muted greys, whites, and blacks (Micromax), light (Plasvale) and crazy colours from the 1960s (Erca Plast). Many companies now produce the tool due to patent expiration. Sometimes, the shape is constantly the same. However, many products are also designed more aesthetically with shapes similar to simple spherical or oval forms, but because of this, they are less functional. Some look more modern but contain two elements (Tradlux), making them more challenging to clean. We can also find shiny Inox versions (Gourmet mix), but mostly, they are still made from plastic.

The career of plastic has been turbulent. Initially, this material was like a miracle, promising a new, modern, and brave world. Indeed, fifty years after the invention of brittle bakelite, it looked like plastic had endless possibilities (Adamson, 2018, pp. 197-198). When Trol Company introduced Zorovich

Lavarroz, they offered various other colourful plastic objects (including toys). Today, we know that the obsession with synthetic plastic has poorly ended for our planet. However, among the many Trol Company gadgets, we can still find egalitarian (because of low prices) and useful products. For example, plastic potties (Caldatto, 2015) were a huge change. The earlier tin ones were cold to the touch, so it was much easier for the child to get used to sitting on plastic. The cheerful colours of the potties made it even easier to convince the youngest users. However, the price we pay for being excited with the possibilities of the new material and its egalitarian applications is very high for humanity's natural environment. The first experimental ideas of recycling in the 1970s were unsuccessful because of synthetic plastics' many variants (Cockayne, 2021, pp. 19-20). Now, designers and engineers are working on further solutions that still cannot keep up with mass use, maybe also because there is a false hope that we can still buy and sell more products without harming our environment.

In the meantime, plastic again sparked designers' attention due to easy access to 3D printers. In principle, the story is the same as the synthetic plastic revelation. Again, promises of endless possibilities of not-so-ethical material (Adamson, 198-199). In the context of our topic, the Fab Labs (Fabrication Laboratories) project from Brazil is particularly interesting. Fab Labs' website shows 140 active spots in the whole country. Andrea Bandoni (2019) writes that they are located at the peripheries, and their aim is to democratise technology. But looks like Edgerton is right (2019, p. xxiii), and 'alternatives exist for nearly all technologies', and 3D printing could be another spin-off. At São Paulo favelas, instead of emerging technology, they often chose 'Gambiarra' (7Graus. (n.d.). In DICO. Dicionário Online de Português), which is closer to the 'culture of reusing, hacking, repairing and re-purposing objects' (Bandoni, 2019, p. 226).

## 1959

At this point, it is worth noting that Zorowich created Lavarroz in 1959. In 1958, the first plastic workshop was launched at the HfG Ulm, the school which set new paths for design and design education in post-war design. Soon, it became 'a top priority in the canon of design material' (Von Seckendorff, 2003, p. 104). Of course, the designers employed at Ulm also worked earlier with this material, but students had to prepare models in plaster—even television sets (Von Seckendorff, 2003, pp. 100-102). Zorowich made his prototype from reinforced aluminium foil, which allowed her to conduct functional tests (De Batatais Para O Mundo, n.d.).

Zorowich's invention happened in a dynamic time because of other events in Brazil and the world. The new capital in Brazil, Brasília, was established in 1959 and inaugurated in 1960. It was a part of Juscelino Kubitschek's many big plans. The Cold War was in progress, and during this time, there was a special event relevant to Zorowich's Lavarroz: The Great Kitchen Debate. During immense tension between world powers, an exhibition of US achievements in kitchen improvement was held in Moscow. Nixon and Khrushchev's conversations on the occasion also show us the differences and similarities in the attitudes taken towards kitchen tools. When Nixon spoke about making life easier for women, Khrushchev countered, 'Your capitalistic attitude toward women does not occur under Communism' (The Kitchen Debate, 1959.

Face the Nation, 2017). Indeed, these two official ways of looking at women's work are also visible in the 1950s and 1960s advertising and propaganda. In the 1950s in the US, bringing new stuff to the kitchen was part of a successful marriage and women's happiness (Lupton, 1993); in the soviet block posters, women drove tractors—officially equally with men. But as we could see in the other part of the Kitchen Debate transcription—it wasn't the truth. Speaking

about the nonsense of using special lemon squeezer, Khrushchev underlined: 'I think it would take a housewife longer to use this gadget than it would for her to do what our housewives do...' (Larner, 1986). At this very moment, we realise that soviet women went home after going off from the tractor and still had to do all the unpaid homework. Still, the situation of 28-year-old Therezinha Beatriz Zorowich was closer to Warsaw than to the Washington housewife standards because of her work in the dental clinic. For women at this time (as today), having a job, five children and remaining creative looks impressive, even if they belong to a privileged class.

### Social and political context

As can be seen from the previous examples, crucial differences in official state politics didn't influence much when doing real women's work. However, we also have an example of state politics, which changed how designers think about cookware. And it happened in Scandinavia. Swedish functionalism was linked to the political idea of the 'Folkhemmet' (people's home), which, as researchers today point out, did not apply to all people and their homes (Ilstedt Hjelm, 2002, pp. 6-7) but which, in the field of design, gave birth to designs that still have a significant impact on how we live and cook today. The key role in this process was the HFI–Home Research Institute founded in 1944 by women (Göransdotter, M., & Redström, J., 2018). They carefully study housework and kitchen utensils using methods from social sciences, engineering and the natural sciences. Today, we have a name for this: 'user-centred design'.

Figure 5 shows a pepper mill and a salt shaker manufactured by the Nilsjohan company, which specialises in household appliances. However familiar the desire to create a single object for two activities may seem in the context of the subject of this article, it should be noted that Zorowich's project belongs to a different sphere of the house—unlike the grinder, it is unlikely to be seen by guests.



Figure 5. The pepper grinder combined with the salt shaker, Nilsjohan, about 1960, own photo.

It takes real ill will or a desperate need to maintain the patriarchal status quo to see only living room and dining room objects in Scandinavian design, as Guidot did (1998). He noted the 'true originality' of Scandinavian design can be seen, among other things, in designs 'related to the culinary arts, goldsmithing, jewellery and textiles' (Guidot, 1998, p.88). The crucial difference is between 'cooking' and 'culinary art', but all words Guidot uses look quite expensive, don't they? Maybe because of the prices. As we can observe, for many authors and curators, ergonomic and colourful dishwashing brushes cannot be recognised as designed, and the same happens to Lavarroz. Charlotte and Peter Fiell have chosen for the book *Scandinavian Design*, not only those brushes (2002, p. 78) but also other useful and—in Edgerton distinction—indeed in-use (2019, p.5) objects. From the 1950s, it is worth noting Sigvard Bernadotte and

Acton Bjørn's designs, like plastic bowls with a spout for pouring (Fiell & Fiell, p.24, 134) or the kitchen scale (Fiell & Fiell, p. 122).

## Invisible kitchen

The difficulties in thinking about objects according to their location in the domestic space are brilliantly evident in a dialogue between Reyner Banham, Mark Haworth Booth and Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) director Sir John Pope-Hennessy in 1972. Banham wanted to organise an exhibition of useful contemporary objects, including kitchen appliances, at the V&A. 'Sir John listened to the proposal and then told us of a visit he had recently made to the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. There he had seen, he said, a marvellous exhibition about kitchen design. This would surely be a far more interesting subject. There was an appalled silence, into which I (Haworth) inserted the question, 'Yes, but how do you define what belongs in a kitchen?' The Pope's reply was unhesitating: 'I don't know, I never go into my kitchen'' (Newson et al., 2016, p. 75). It is weird, however, that we do not have any kitchen tools in the publication that quote this dialogue. Only the kitchen design by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky is included, but there are 'front-end' kitchen appliances (tableware) like cutlery, jugs, or wine openers. Although the mentioned redactor's choices would be understandable in 1900, when guests and even men-householders probably couldn't see the kitchen activities, they are rather strange in 2016, when so many flats have open kitchens combined with living rooms. In this architectural solution, there is no chance of never being in the kitchen. Hence, the conclusion is that the lack of representation of kitchen tools in this book is due to motives other than ignorance.

This thread of visible and invisible parts of dwellings is worth of highlighting. The kitchen appliances in the huts of European peasants were housed in the 'black rooms'; this is where the life of the house took place during the cold

months. For special occasions, like guest visits and holidays, they had ‘white rooms’—Smoke-free, but therefore also unheated (Czerwiński, 2009, pp. 16-21). In these houses, kitchen equipment was handmade (e.g. wooden spoons) or purchased from travelling traders. Spending time in the kitchen ceased to be so tiresome when smoke disappeared from them with the spread of ‘English kitchens’ with a chimney that carried the smoke outside the house (Czerwiński, 2009, p. 51). Meanwhile, families who could afford servants had separated the kitchen area from their rooms. In the 19th century, opulent kitchens remained a separate world, the servants’ domain. Kitchen tools generally remind the same (Wilson, 2013, pp. 216-217). As the number of servants was reduced and the flats became smaller, the space for servants was limited to an alcove with a bed or a separate bathroom.

Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, in 1926, was the first to analyse the usability of space to reduce the need to move around and make the kitchen work more efficient (Archer, 2019). Her solution is also still in use. As an architect, woman and communist, she believed that: ‘women’s struggle for economic independence and personal development meant that the rationalisation of housework was an absolute necessity’ (Semedo et al., 2023). Her concern was convenience and hygiene in the kitchen; we still use the solutions she developed today. This kind of kitchen is separate. Hence, guests cannot see the preparation process and its tools. The next step was taken three years later by the Polish architect Barbara Brukalska<sup>1</sup> with her husband when she proposed a well-organised kitchen alcove open to the living room for the Warsaw estate she was designing (Brukalska, 1929); a solution that became very popular today. As in medieval times, we again spent time in the space containing a kitchen. Now, the guests are usually allowed to see some of our kitchen utensils as well. By exposing the back of the kitchen to the public, it was no longer just the tableware but also the kitchenware that focused the designers’ attention.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the first women allowed to study in the field of architecture and the first female architecture professor in Poland (Frejlich, 2019).

Bee Wilson (2013) notices a close connection between social changes and kitchen tools. In societies with a massive number of servants and enslaved people, there was no improvement in this area. They used the same tools in the king's kitchen as in the dwelling (Wilson, 2013, pp. 201–239). In the XIX century, the idea of 'labour-saving' became important, which is connected with a flare for innovations and a reduction in the number of home stuff (Wilson, 2013, p. 217-221). At the same time, women's domestic work became more demanding due to increased hygienic standards and the sophistication of dishes (Wilson, 2013, p. 56. Lupton & Miller, 1996, p.15. Lupton, 1993, p. 11).

In the cookbook 1910, Maria Monatowa writes: 'The only solution is for the ladies to become familiar with cooking and teach their servants how to cook tasty dishes' (Monatowa, 1910). In this context, Zorowich went far further by designing the tool initially intended for her maid (Professora Pardal).

## Price

When an army of servants was no longer a symbol of social status, some kitchen tools could take the role. Ellen Lupton shows the object that became a star in the 1960s—the cordless electric knife (Lupton, 1996, p.127). During its commercial introduction, this tool was dedicated to both front- and back-end kitchen use. Finally, with the high price and luxury packaging, it became a ritual object from the dining room, a 'masculine addition to a world of gadgets associated largely with female consumers', but despite being rare in use, still noticed by design critique (Lupton, 1996, p.127-130).

Lavarozz started as a huge commercial success, with the queues before supermarkets in São Paulo, but it has never become a social status symbol. Thus, as with other popular kitchen tools, the design world is not interested in this topic. With an average price of 4-9 Brazilian Reals (which is in August 2023–



0,80-1,84 USD), Lavarroz could be shown at one of the unusual exhibitions performed annually by MoMA from 1938 till 1947, with the summary—The Value of Good Design in 2019. The first exhibition was ‘... under \$5.00’ (MoMA, 1938). In the following years, the subsequent editions of this democratic design event were held at MoMA. In 1940, the price was a maximum of 10 dollars, and eventually, they raised the limits for objects on display to 100 dollars in 1947 (The Value of Good Design | MoMA, n.d.). Notably, these exhibitions were created in close connection with the market, shops and manufacturers, and the main criterion remained the object’s usefulness. Thus, designers who were representatives of marginalised groups were sometimes allowed to present their work in a museum (Kimmelman, 2019). This initiative also allowed the first African-American to show his work at MoMA. The press information reads: “A. Joel Robinson contributes a fascinating essay in graded proportions, printed in charcoal and black on white, which he calls ‘Ovals’” (MoMA, 1951). The decision to show useful objects accessible to most people is undoubtedly egalitarian (although presumably, marketing objectives were also achieved). MoMA’s curators made a choice that staked a claim to democracy and, in a way, began to break the stereotype—no longer could only a white male be a valued designer! It is noticeable that not everyone takes such changes well in the media. Michael Kimmelman, the critic from The New York Times, writing about the 2019 exhibition, despite its generally favourable tone, nevertheless uses the word ‘populism’, although in the catalogue for the 1939 exhibition. However, even looking at the titles of subsequent MoMA exhibitions, we see that they inevitably drift towards exclusive objects for the elite. The transition from the \$5 to \$100 limit took many years, during which World War II also happened, bringing ‘nationality’ into the hitherto international discourse—curators added a point to object verification: ‘Each article must meet four requirements: it must be useful, well-designed, American and under ten dollars’ (MoMA, 1940). 19 years later, Lavarroz would have fulfilled all those criteria if curators had

properly used the term ‘American’. Unfortunately, when writing ‘America,’ they had ‘US’ in mind.

Alice M. Carson, acting director of the Department of Industrial Design in MoMA, wrote in 1942: ‘All change is not progress’ (MoMA, 1943, pp.7–8). This year’s exhibition was in visible war influence—in the bulletin, we can find warnings against buying homewares produced from materials that were at this time more critical for the army—but in Carson’s text, we could find thoughts much more essential for us today. He made a comparison of two toasters: one from the 1934 year exhibition ‘Machine Art’ and the second—new one (from 1942), and her interpretation is still valid when looking at contemporary kitchenware (including tools for washing rice): “Toaster of 1940 which is streamlined as if it were intended to hurtle through the air at 200 miles an hour (an unhappy use for a breakfast-table utensil) and ornamented with trivial loops, bandings and flutings” (MoMA, 1943, p.9). As mentioned before, we can choose now between many products dedicated to washing rice or vegetables, and the form is often inadequate for the process, sometimes making work harder, especially when maintaining this tool clean. In the worst situation, saving rice grains during washing is impossible. Furthermore, of course, prices increase considerably with the styling of the form, the brand recognition of the manufacturer, or the use of more prestigious materials than plastic. It shows us that when kitchen tools changed place from the kitchen back-end to the front-end of the flat, designers’ and producers’ priorities also changed. Usefulness is no longer the first; this place is taken by prestige.

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### Invention or design

Moreover—every popular internet source names the author ‘inventor’ instead of ‘designer’ (Mendonça, F., 2015). Why do the Brazilian articles on the web highlight that Zorowich collects royalties (e.g. Fartura, 2022)? Why do they write

what she bought with the money she earned from Lavarroz (e.g. *De Batatais Para O Mundo*, n.d.)? These questions may seem strange until we realise we have no idea how much Starck earned from his Juice Salif or whether Rahms collected royalties from Braun. Not only do we not know what they bought for themselves with the money they earned, but it did not even occur to us to ask. The fact that these two gentlemen are called 'designers' and Zorowich is called an 'inventor' has a lot to do with it and is unlikely to be just about holding a patent for several years. The media differentiates how they communicate about the designers mentioned above by considering what social position they have achieved, which is linked to taste in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu (1984). The difference in the tone of communication is also not due to the specificity of writing in the Brazilian media about local creators, as the media coverage of the Campana brothers is no different from that of Starck. The differences in communication about Zorowich' and the Campana brothers' projects are due to social conditioning, in which the owner of a 'Favela Armchair' stands higher in the social hierarchy than the resident of a favela, and the aforementioned armchair helps people from higher classes to maintain their status. Interestingly, no one also calls Victor Papanek's famous radio an invention. Despite the absence of any taste-related elements, it is still recognised as a piece of the design. Moreover, he did not even agree with the Ulm designers' suggestion to paint it grey (Papanek, 1985, p. 227). His radio was radically egalitarian, and there are no features of symbolic violence throughout his work, yet he is widely recognised as a designer. Could it be that, in this case, the author's intention and self-definition matter? If so, one would have to assume that Zorowich, who had no intention of becoming a designer, must be left with the name 'Inventor'. However, this does not necessarily mean that we have to call Lavarroz an invention because, regardless of the author's intention, it was designed.

When analysing an Australian design icon—the Hills Hoist<sup>2</sup>, Simon Jackson (2002) considered a similar problem with classification. He argues that naming the Hills Hoist as an ‘invention’, not a ‘design’, is a consequence of the popularity of the ‘myth of the pioneer’—the person who has to survive in harsh surroundings and, therefore, have to call ‘inventor’ (Jackson, 2002, pp. 18-20). Jackson also denies that the term ‘Australian design’ has a right to exist, as he believes that all the icons of Australian design are modifications of inventions from overseas (Jackson, 2002, p. 23). Lavarroz, in this aspect, belongs to true national tradition and is strictly connected to local cuisine, so it should be named Brazilian ‘design’.

Some problems may be caused by designers’ ‘discursive weakness’ (Bonsiepe, 2011, p. 2), inappropriate design research methods, and, obviously, ways of popularisation, like in the books mentioned earlier.

Robin Kinross recalls that in 1977, when British design historians separated from art historians in Brighton, had high hopes of abandoning the methods and principles of studying art history. At this time, they knew that design is a ‘part of ordinary life and to be used (not put in museums)’ (De Bondt, 2014, p.17). We do not know if they could recognise kitchen utensils as a part of ordinary life, but in Lavarroz’s case, these hopes weren’t fulfilled.

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Perhaps Boris Groys’ essay *On Art. Activism* can shed some light on this narrative by analogy. According to Groys, the French revolutionaries’ way of finally defeating the privileged strata was to lock their art in museums. He also writes, ‘Before the French Revolution, there was no art—only design. After the French Revolution, art emerged—as the death of design’ (Groys, 2014). In Brazil in the 1930s, we had a similarly revolutionary cultural happening—the ‘Anthropophagic Movement’ (Anthropophagic Movement -, 2020). Artists and

<sup>2</sup> An umbrella-shaped laundry dryer that is a permanent feature of the Australian suburban landscape.

designers began in 1929 the first step of modernism in Brazil with the manifesto (de Andrade & Bary, 1991); they wanted to ‘assimilate other cultures, but not to copy’. Isn’t the Zorowich project just that? A project created by a young dentist; a project that does not ‘star’, as European creatives are in the habit of doing, but simply works?

## Conclusion

Kitchen appliances such as Lavarroz escape design discourse for several reasons. Chief among these is the patriarchal vision of a world where women cook and men design. This sexist design vision is deeply embedded in our culture and design theory. As far as domestic responsibilities were concerned, it did not matter much on which side of the Iron Curtain a woman functioned, although, in the US, her image was extremely objectified (Lupton, 1993).

The next important factor is taste and our distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). Lavarroz is not an object that we will put in front of our guests so that they understand that they are dealing with knowledgeable and refined people. If we want to emphasise our belonging to the privileged strata, we will use Starck’s lemon squeezer instead (Treska-Siwoń, 2022, pp. 52-54). Alternatively, if we are indeed wealthy, perhaps even a Campana Brothers armchair with the perverse name ‘favela’ and the price €5,883 (Estudio Campana for Edra, Favela Wooden Chair, Brazillian Design, n.d.). Hence, Lavarroz is not a symbolic violence tool (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 358) like those objects above. Since it is so egalitarian, no group, including designers and design theorists, is interested in promoting it.

It should also be noted that despite the proclamation since the Bauhaus that form follows function, design critics and designers themselves have been unable to swap this order. This is brilliantly evident in the design publications cited in this article. Lavarroz not only lacks sophistication in form but also has a colour

scheme that could be considered infantile by some serious designers. Instead, its form is entirely subordinate to function. Its unconditional unpretentiousness is evident even in the name. Lavarroz's name combines 'lava' and 'arroz', meaning 'wash' and 'rice'. The name perfectly captures the concept of the object, which combines 2 functions: a bowl and a sieve.

Here, however, we can only reiterate the question of why so little attention is paid to local kitchen tools when thinking about national design. Perhaps economic and regional promotion factors will help us overcome cultural prejudices and appreciate the role of kitchen utensils in culture—not just culinary culture. If an icon of national design can be women's lace panties (Martínez, 2016, pp.162-163), why not a rice-washing vessel?

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