

7 creatives redefining Brazilian art and design: 'The future has just begun'

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Architect Isay Weinfeld's highly distinctive "360° Building" overlooking São Paulo

(CNN)—Few countries would be so bold as to commit to hosting a football World Cup and Olympic Games within the space of two years. But then few countries can claim the same head-on, no-holds-barred passion for life as Brazil.

The former Portuguese province's story is complex. Often violent, unequal and plagued by a sluggish economy, up to a few years ago, any international headlines relating to Brazil tended to focus on the Carnival or out-of-control drug-related violence within the country's notorious

favelas. The enormous South American country -- the "sleeping giant" as it was monikered -- was underachieving.

But the world is now witnessing a seismic awakening. Brazil's thriving creative class is writing a different story -- and the global cultural stage is all the richer for it.

From [Isay Weinfeld's](#) much-lauded architecture to the internationally acclaimed work of the [Campana Brothers](#) (whose presence can be felt at every major design fair around the world), Brazil is rapidly moving beyond the old stereotypes.

As Brazilian writer Alcino Leite Neto puts it, in his introductory essay for [Phaidon's encyclopaedic new hardback](#) -- excerpts from which feature below -- celebrating the country's cultural scene, "in Brazil, the future has just begun."

The architect: Isay Weinfeld



Fazenda Boa Vista-Fasano Hotel by Isay Weinfeld



Isay Weinfeld

[Isay Weinfeld](#) is one of Brazil's most exciting contemporary architects, responsible for the elegantly minimalistic designs of numerous buildings throughout São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, including a number of sites for the luxury hotel chain [Fasano](#).

Weinfeld's architectural achievements have been recognized numerous times by the [Institute of](#)

[Architects of Brazil](#). His bookstore [Livraria Da Vila](#) won the Yellow Pencil Prize at the [D&AD Awards](#)

in London in 2008 and the [Spark Award](#) in San Francisco the same year.

Weinfeld works predominantly in his home country -- his career as an architect, teacher and film-maker is closely related to the city of São Paulo. Most of his projects are realized there and he has held many exhibitions and lectures focusing on the city's architectural and urban-planning problems. Recent projects include the award-winning [360° Building](#), the Fasano Porto Feliz, winner of Interior Design's award for best resort hotel, numerous retail spaces along the Rua Oscar Freire and stunning residential projects that showcase contemporary art.

The varied nature of his work is something he encourages, saying, 'I am curious about things - I like to design things I haven't done before... I would love to design a brothel or a gas station'. -- *Ana Vaz Milheiro*

The photographer: João Castilho



Land is Sky by João Castilho, 2007



[João Castilho](#) is one of the most acclaimed Brazilian photographers to emerge over the last decade. With a degree in Literature and a Masters in Visual Arts, he often uses works of literature as inspiration for his photography.

Such is the case with the *Whirlwind* series (2006), in which he searches for photographic metaphors

to represent the manifestation of the devil in nature, according to Guimarães Rosa's 1956 novel *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (*The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*), one of the most important pieces of Brazilian literature.

Another important feature of Castilho's work is his particular use of color. *Vacant Plot* is a series of photographs depicting unemployed men in an abandoned space on the outskirts of Bamako, Mali. The subjects are photographed as silhouettes in front of brightly painted walls and are deliberately anonymous: they are portrayed without identity and, therefore, without a story.

More recently, Castilho has borrowed concepts from the land art tradition. His *Spice* series features various compositions of vividly colored spices (paprika and saffron) arranged on Bolivia's stark white Uyuni Salt Flats.

Castilho's work is present in several public collections including the [MAM São Paulo](#) and the [São Paulo Museum of Art](#) as well as the [Musée d'Art Modern et d'Art Contemporain de Liège](#) in Belgium and the [Noorderlicht Gallery](#) in the Netherlands. -- *Eder Chiodetto*

The fashion designer: Pedro Lourenço



FRANÇOIS GUILLOT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Pedro Lourenço Spring-Summer 2013 collection

[Pedro Lourenço](#), the youngest and arguably the most respected of Brazil's international fashion designers, is the only child of fashion duo Gloria Coelho and Reinaldo Lourenço, who reigned the São Paulo design scene in the 1990s. He has clearly inherited his parents' taste for couture, eye for tailoring and their sharp, architectural style, whilst adding his own passion for working with cutting-edge technology and leather.



Pedro Lourenço

Lourenço started young: his formative years were spent learning design and pattern techniques at his parents' studios. He showed his first collection at just seven years old and took over Carlota Joakina, his mother's second label, at twelve. In 2005, he presented his own collection at [São Paulo Fashion Week](#), and five years later saw the debut of his first ready-to-wear collection at [Paris Fashion Week](#), sealing his reputation as one of fashion's most talented young creatives.

Receiving instant critical acclaim for his contemporary design aesthetic and strong creative identity, Lourenço's collection proved a hit with industry insiders and drew early comparisons to [Nicolas Ghesquière](#) for his clean, minimalist style. He has collaborated with [Brazilian shoe designer Melissa](#) on a capsule shoe collection in 2012, and an accessories range for [Swarovski](#), and cites his main inspirations as Diana the huntress and architect Oscar Niemeyer. -- *Simone Esmanhotto*

The street artist: Ananda Nahu



Mural in Recreio neighbourhood, Rio de Janeiro 2013-2014

Originally hailing from Juazeiro on the border between Bahia and Pernambuco states, [Ananda's](#) vibrant pieces are carefully crafted designs that reflect the colors and rhythm of life in northeast Brazil.

Nahu moved to Salvador to study graphic design and visual arts, and her research into



Ananda Nahu

placard and poster design history, coupled with her experiments in lithography, engraving and screen printing, inspired her to make a practical application of her studies on the streets of Salvador.

She started out with simple posters pasted on to empty walls, but soon turned her attention to the wall itself. As she became familiar with the language of street painting she began to paint ever more elaborate murals and developed her distinctive stencil technique.

Her inspiration comes from a wide range of sources, including psychedelic album cover art and traditional fabrics: "My paintings are the result of the mixture of my influences... everything from album covers, posters and banners to religious manifestations in painting and African and Asian textiles," she explains.

Her vibrant murals often look like huge swathes of brightly patterned cloth wrapped around the walls and buildings of the city. -- *Marcelo Rezende*

The designers: Campana Brothers



A room designed by Fernando and Humberto Campana at the luxury hotel 'Lutetia' in Paris, 2012.

Humberto, a lawyer by training, and his architect brother Fernando, produce pieces that are defined by textures and forms obtained through artisan methods, often using natural or



Fernando (right) and Humberto Campana

industrialized materials removed from their usual context. Strands of wire, twine, strips of rubber, broken mirror, bricks and tiles, synthetic leather, pieces of wood, rattan, rag dolls and stuffed animals have all become raw materials transformed by [the Campanas](#) into chairs, lamps, sofas, benches, utensils and tables. In the 1990s, their work gained international attention with a show at [the MoMA](#) in New York.

More recently, the Campanas have also worked with sculpture, ceramics, installations and interiors. They were behind the design of cafés at both the [Municipal Theatre of São Paulo](#) and the [Musée d'Orsay](#) in Paris, and have work in the permanent collections of MoMA in New York, the [Centre Pompidou](#) in Paris and the [Vitra Design Museum](#) in Weil am Rhein.

Despite their extensive international agenda, they still work out of their workshop in downtown São Paulo, located amongst the cheap stores and repair shops — it is here that they research materials and techniques and build prototypes of the objects that have changed the image of Brazilian design over the last 15 years. -- *Mara Gama*

The artist: Paulo Nazareth



Todos Os Santos da Minha Mae (My Mother's Saints) by Paulo Nazareth, 2013

[Paulo Nazareth's](#) works reclaim the experimental conceptualism of the 1970s in order to investigate the cultural, economic and social conditions behind the marginalization of black

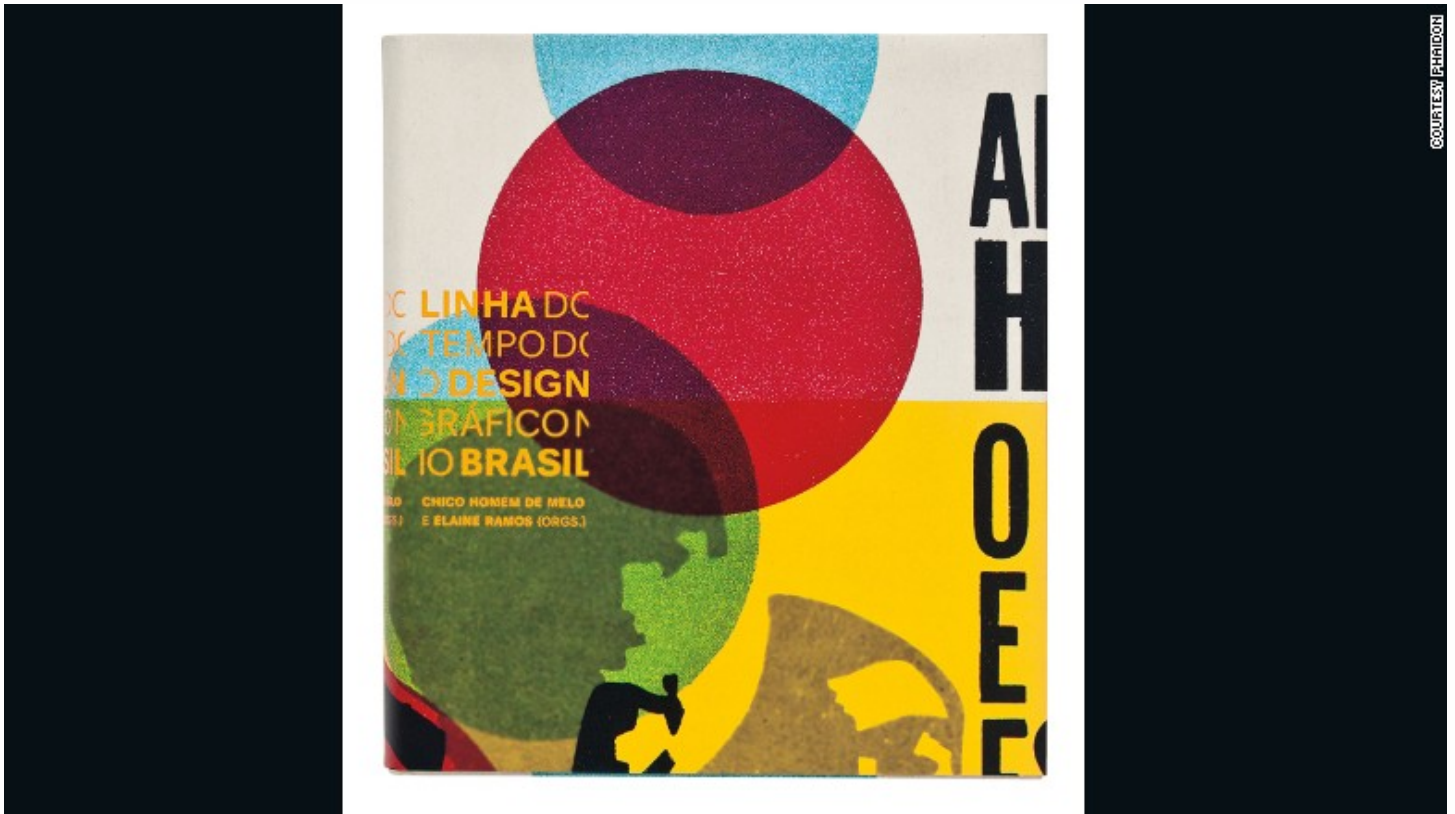
and indigenous people in Latin American countries.

A charismatic figure, the artist draws on his own mixed heritage in his actions, performances, photographs and texts produced during his constant peregrinations across the world. Nazareth rose to prominence in the international scene with the project *Notícia de América* (News from America, 2011–12), where he embarked on a trip, mainly by foot, through more than fifteen countries in Latin America before reaching the United States.

Among the several works produced during this pilgrimage is a series of photographs entitled *Cara de Índio* (*Indigenous Faces*), in which he photographed himself next to people from different indigenous backgrounds, highlighting the vast array of heterogeneous physical characteristics that are encompassed by the term 'indigenous'.

Playing with preconceived notions of identity in a humorous manner, Nazareth is one of the few voices to tackle racial issues in Brazilian contemporary art. -- *Kiki Mazzucchelli*

The graphic designer: Elaine Ramos



"Linha do tempo do design gráfico no Brasil" book design, 2012

Elaine Ramos's story is interlaced with that of the publishing company [Cosac Naify](#), for whom she works as Art Director. She has helped coordinate their influential series of books about graphic design, transforming the publisher into one of the main centres of production and reflection on the subject in Brazil, and her style and vision has made their graphic identity one of the most coherent and refreshing in the Brazilian editorial market.

Belonging to the generation that grew up during the cultural and political renewal following the end of Brazil's dictatorship, she assimilated in her work both *tropicalista* influences and certain

Modernist principles, which had previously been reduced to stale dogmas. The result is a series of projects with a rare mix of sobriety and experimentation.

Her generation is one of the first to work fully in the digital era, but which also dedicated itself to the investigation of materials and forms, as well as obsolete printing techniques.

A member of the Brazilian team at the [Alliance Graphique Internationale](#) (AGI), Ramos has earned numerous international awards, such as AIGA's 50 Books/50 Covers prize, for [O Livro Amarelo do Terminal](#). -- *Paulo Werneck*