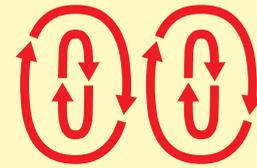




MAKE IT 
CIRCULAR
BRAZIL

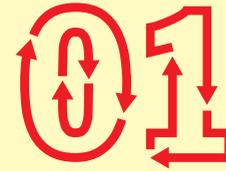
MAKE IT CIRCULAR CHALLENGE



WHAT DESIGN CAN DO MAKE IT CIRCULAR CHALLENGE

WHAT DESIGN CAN DO IS LAUNCHING THE MAKE IT CIRCULAR CHALLENGE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH IKEA FOUNDATION. THIS GLOBAL DESIGN COMPETITION FOCUSES ON BUILDING A CIRCULAR SOCIETY IN ORDER TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND TACKLE THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF WASTE AND POLLUTION.

WE INVITE DESIGNERS, CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS AND STARTUPS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO SUBMIT IDEAS AND INNOVATIONS THAT RADICALLY RETHINK OUR WAY OF LIFE: FROM WHAT WE EAT AND WEAR, TO WHY WE BUY AND HOW WE BUILD. USING THE POWER OF DESIGN, WE CAN MAKE A CIRCULAR FUTURE MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL.



EXTRACTIVISM STILL RULES IN BRAZIL

While Brazil is blessed with some of the world's richest natural environments, these places are also heavily exploited for natural resources, and are also regularly deforested to clear space for pollutive large-scale livestock farming.

Most of these resources are extracted, used, and thrown away – often leading to further environmental pollution.

Brazil needs to move to a circular economy, in which the resources that are extracted are re-used and recycled, leading to an overall reduction in resource usage.

Unfortunately, the concept of a 'circular economy' hasn't really penetrated in Brazil, where the leading political party has embraced the 'extractivist' model, and there is a lack of accountability for companies that are exploiting natural resources. Much more needs to be done.



ANCESTRAL FUTURES

Countries in the Global North has heavily influenced Brazil for centuries. Lately, a series of social movements have attempted to bring more consciousness to how we think, build and exchange things.

A decolonialisation movement that wants to learn and think from our own global south perspective has emerged and become strong in the last few years.

Indigenous leader and philosopher Ailton Krenak argues that 'Nature is not a resource' and questions the current system: 'How can you produce something sustainable if the extractive system is sovereign and changes the cycles of life on Earth?'



BUSINESS IS BEING REIMAGINED IN WAKE OF PANDEMIC

Brazil is facing an economic crisis and a recession. The country is facing rising inflation, increasing inequality, among other economic problems.

That means that while sustainability is an important agenda, at the moment it has to be linked to the survival of people and businesses.

According to McKinsey, companies are being challenged to reimagine their business models — rebuilding operations, rethinking the organization, and accelerating the adoption of digital solutions.

New organizations betting on social entrepreneurship has been taking the lead in market movements, growing 219% in 5 years. The success of these businesses is not measured by the total profit generated, but by the impact created for people or the environment.

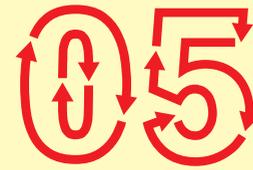
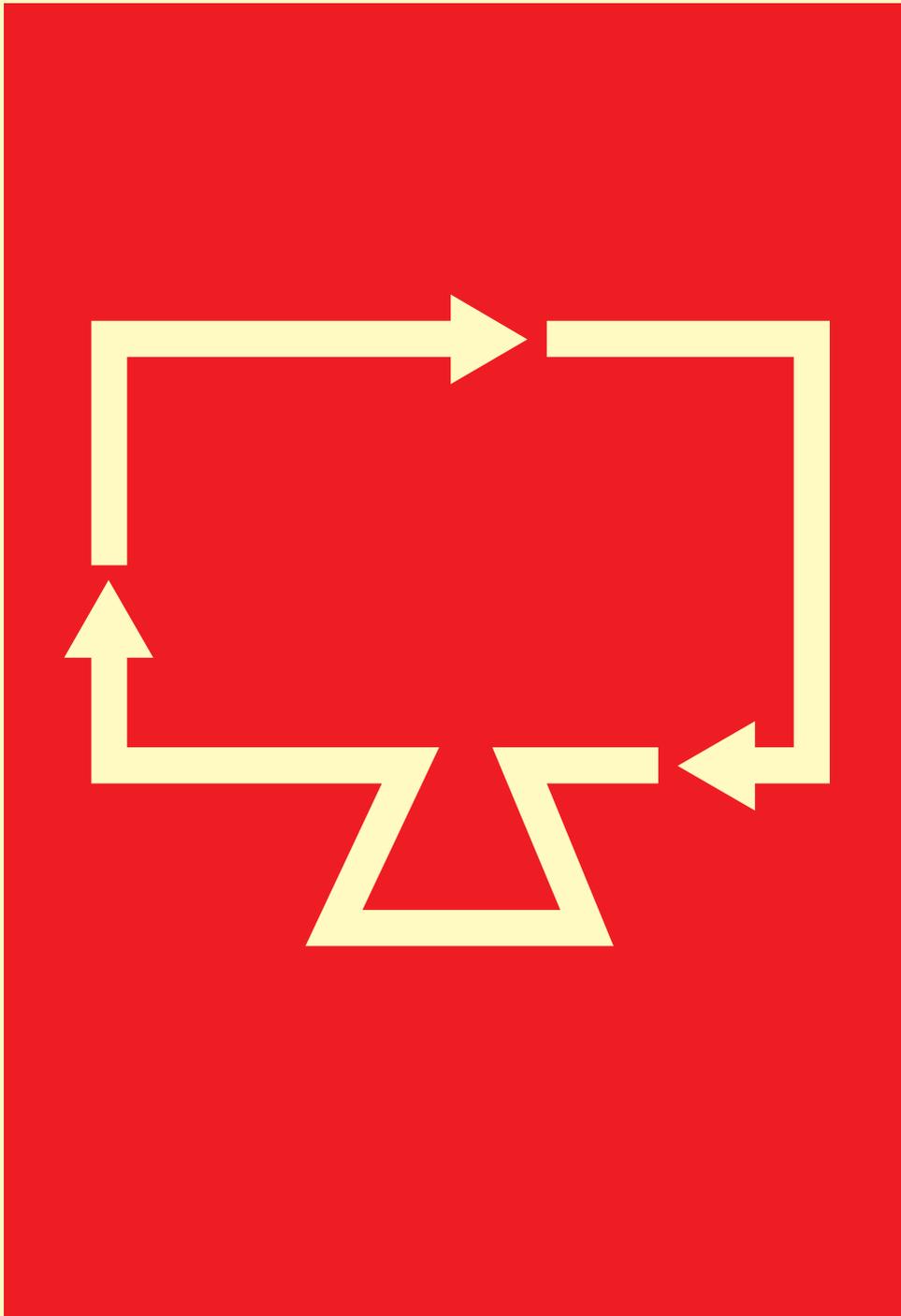


COMPANIES TRANSFER THE RESPONSIBILITY TO CONSUMERS

Circular initiatives within companies are mostly partial and siloed. Circularity is seen as part of companies' Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) agendas, as a tool to continue growing business, instead of actually embracing sustainability. As a result, products and services offerings addressing circularity for sustainability can be seen as expensive, unaffordable and insufficient, putting the pressure on end-consumers to pay more and get less.

In Brazil, neither citizens nor organisations are educated on sustainability and the circular economy. This is aggravated by companies misleading consumers with "greenwashing" and "social washing": focusing on marketing instead of actually changing their business model.

Both big and small companies in Brazil need more design and sustainability know-how, but there is a lack of access to information to help better-decision making, including around circularity.



TOO MUCH FOCUS ON RECYCLING

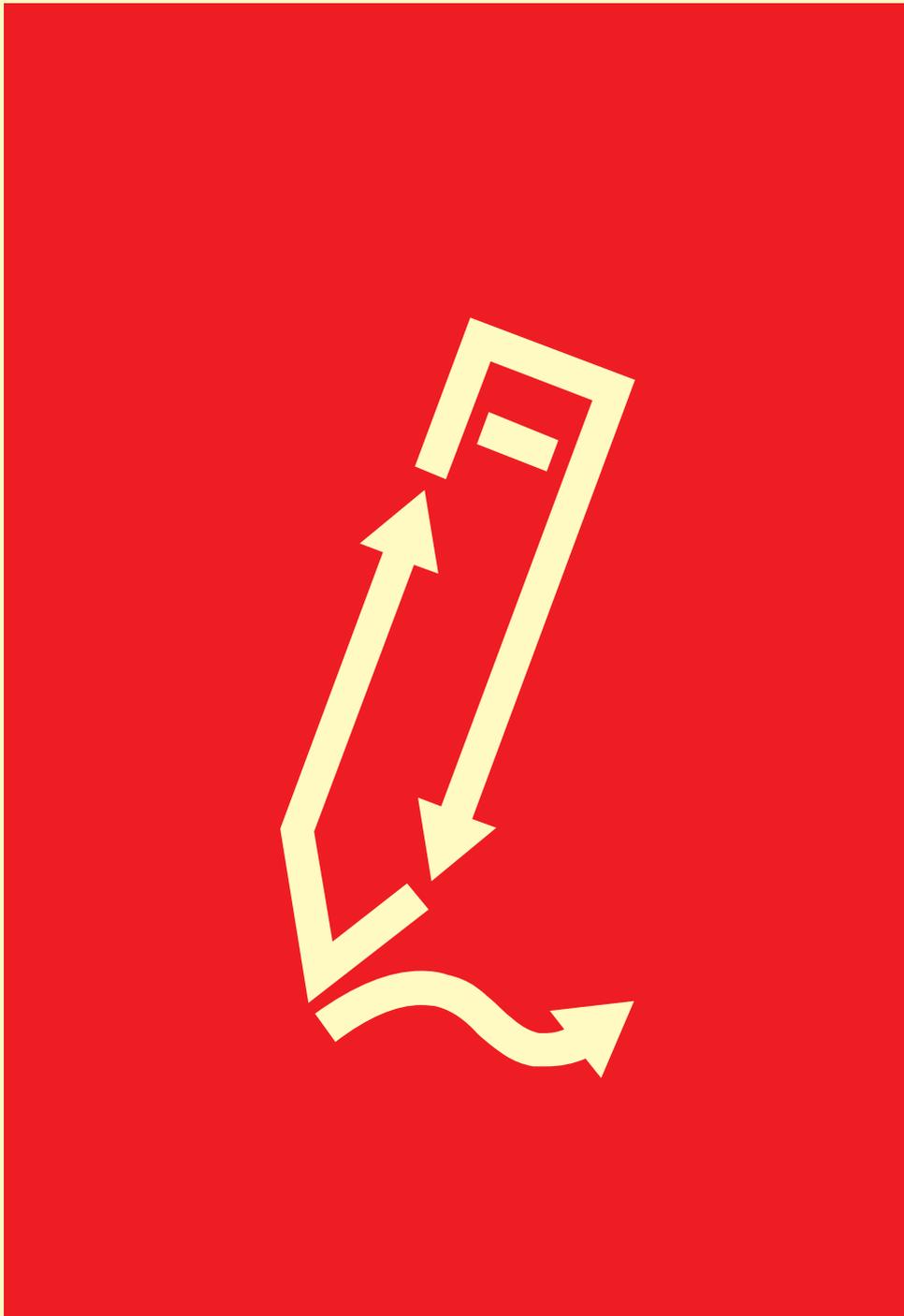
Recycling is probably the most common circular strategy in Brazil, but it is less effective than reducing or re-using.

There is a national law (National Policy of Solid Waste - 12305/10) about recycling rates, but it's not respected across the country. Recycling is managed by cities, instead of nationally, so there is a gap.

Recycling is also seen as an opportunity for work and income for socially vulnerable people. It is handled both formally and informally and often by cooperatives. These are not respected or seen as key agents on the recycling chain. Although there are some recycling initiatives from private and public programs, incorrect disposal and a lack of transparency creates inefficiency.



WHERE
DESIGN IS
NEEDED /
WHAT
DESIGN
CAN DO



HOW TO APPROACH

RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO APPROACH CIRCULARITY

Start from what is already known to people and then expand knowledge and offerings progressively

Involve leaders of indigenous and historically representative communities as stakeholders in circular and sustainable initiatives

Embrace a non-eurocentric paradigm in design, aligning with the decolonization movement in Brazil

Partner with experts and organisations from disciplines such as biology, engineering, chemistry, psychology, etc to embrace systemic changes

OPPORTUNITIES: GENERAL

- Regenerate environmentally degraded areas
- Rethink conservation plans for natural areas

- Redesign the use of natural resources and work with traditional communities in a more sustainable way
- Revive indigenous ancestral knowledge and help people incorporate it into their lives
- Educate citizens on how to behave and consume in a more sustainable way
- Combat misleading corporate greenwashing around circularity and sustainability
- Redesign production systems to be small, local, and distributed
- Create narratives and stories to make circularity more attractive
- Encourage sharing of products and tools instead of ownership
- Facilitate the re-use of industrial waste between companies from different sectors
- Change the way the public perceive value in products: from sleek but wasteful to sustainable
- Change the way the public perceive repair and reuse initiatives



HOW WE PACKAGE

EVERYTHING COMES PACKED

In Brazil, the large consumption of industrialized products implies in excessive packaging. Aesthetics or marketing factors has increased the volume of materials used in a single product, which increases the amount of solid waste related to packaging.

The paradox is in certified organic foods for example, which according to the Brazilian norms, if sold in bulk (open), both the producer and seller are responsible for the irregularity.

Also, in the food sector, a McKinsey study highlights that the demand for convenient and portable foods (including delivery and pre-processed) is a growing trend in Brazil, reinforcing the use of packaging for individual consumption.

PLASTIC IS POPULAR, BUT MOSTLY NOT CIRCULAR

According to the Brazilian Packaging Association (ABRE, 2021), different materials are used in the manufacture of packaging, including plastics, metals, glass and cellulose. Plastics represent the largest share of production value (37.1% of the total), followed by the paper, cardboard and paperboard and corrugated packaging sector (31.7% of total).

In Brazil, laws addressing the use of plastics vary by municipality – while a national law is not approved – and generally address a single category of plastic products, such as cups and utensils. The few companies that opt for sustainable packaging generally turn to the use of recycled materials, often as a marketing strategy.



WHAT WE WEAR

PRODUCTION WASTE

In Brazil, about 2% of waste and inputs generated in the textile industry are recycled, while the rest is thrown into sanitary landfills or burned – despite this practice being against the National Waste law.

Also, according to data from the Fios da Moda report, made by the Modifica Institute and FGV, in Brazil almost 9 billion new parts are produced per year. This gives an average of 42 new pieces of clothing per person in 12 months.

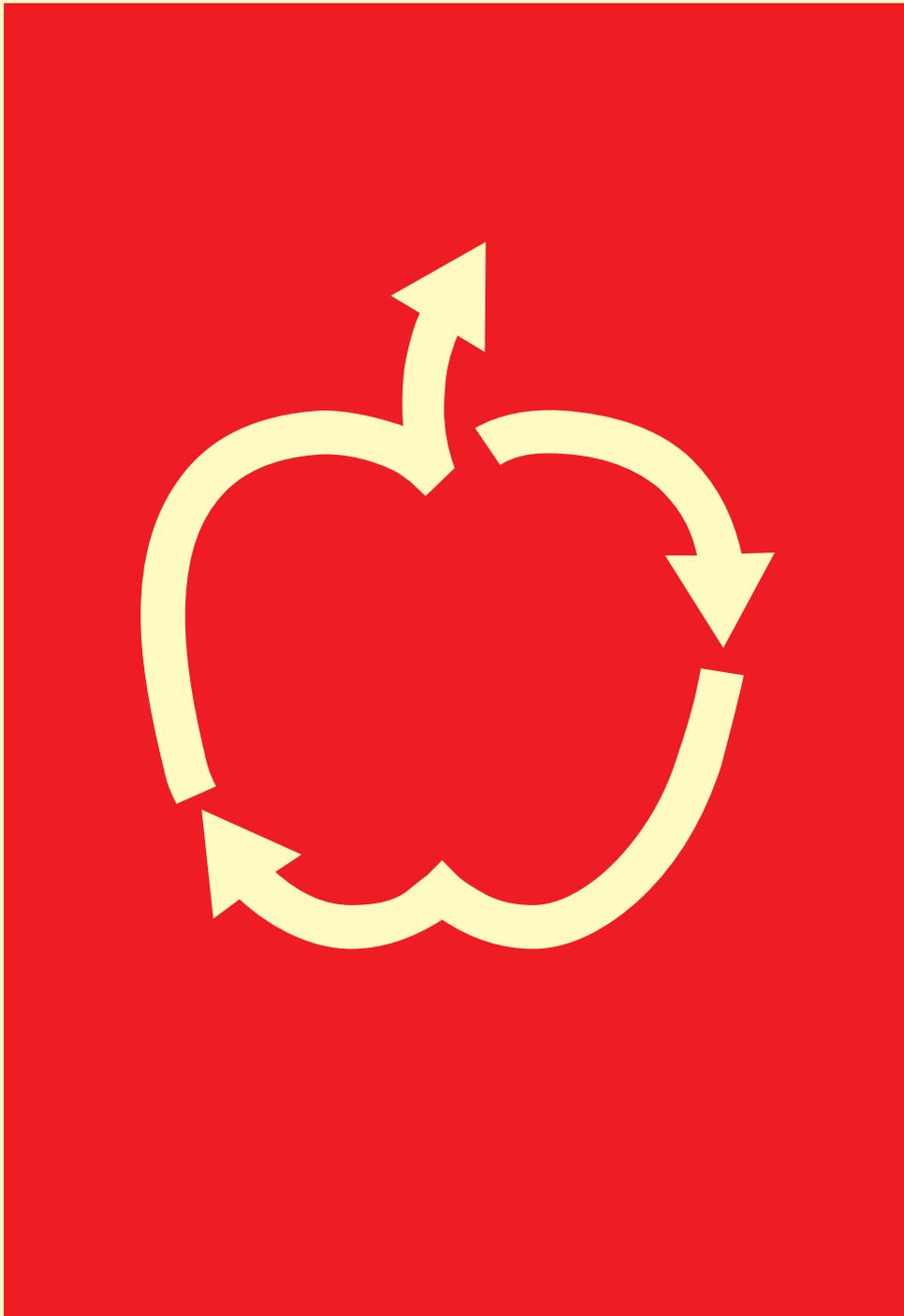
OPPORTUNITIES

HOW MIGHT WE OPTIMIZE TEXTILE LIFECYCLE TO PREVENT WASTE?

Avoid waste in the product design and development, adopting modeling techniques aimed at reducing or even eliminating fabric waste resulting from fitting and cutting.

Consider the urban planning and city waste flows in order to bring actors together, allowing greater densification of services and greater efficiencies of activities associated with waste management

- Redesign product processes for optimal fitting and cutting
- Reduce production and consumption
- Redesign for greater industrial symbiosis
- Redesign shorter supply and distribution chains
- Improve the perceived value of clothes repairing and upcycle services



WHAT WE EAT

BRAZILIAN BIOMES AND SOCIO BIODIVERSITY

Brazil is home to incredibly diverse biomes, from the Amazon to the Atlantic Forest, the Cerrado, the Caatinga, the Pampa and the Pantanal. Unfortunately, these are threatened by deforestation, timber production, fires, mining, large-scale agriculture, and excessive use of natural resources.

The natural biomes have a social connection with local cooperatives, family farming, and traditional communities representing the broad cultural diversity and ethnic plurality of Brazil. These communities make use of natural resources, not only for income and sustenance, but also for cultural, social and religious reproduction.

Family farming is primarily responsible for the production of food that is available for consumption by the Brazilian population. However, the lack of support in production chains added to colonial and patriarchal paradigms expose these communities to vulnerable situations.

URBAN SOLID WASTE IN BRAZIL

Waste management has become increasingly urgent in Brazil – a central challenge for sustainability in cities – mainly due to economic and population growth, acceleration of consumption and shortages of landfill facilities.

Between 2010 and 2019, the volume of waste in Brazil rose from 67 million to 79 million tons per year, according to the Brazilian Association of Public Cleaning and Special Waste Companies (ABRELPE, 2020).

In Brazil, less than 4% of waste is recycled across the country, in spite of ten years of the National Solid Waste Policy. Despite the efforts to close dumps, landfills and improve recycling, a greater integration of several waste management stages is essential.

In Brazil, most of the waste collected in cities goes to sanitary landfills, but the volume of waste going to informal dumps is growing. Dumps are still present in more than 3000 Brazilian cities, and selective collection services are available in only 20% of Brazilian cities.

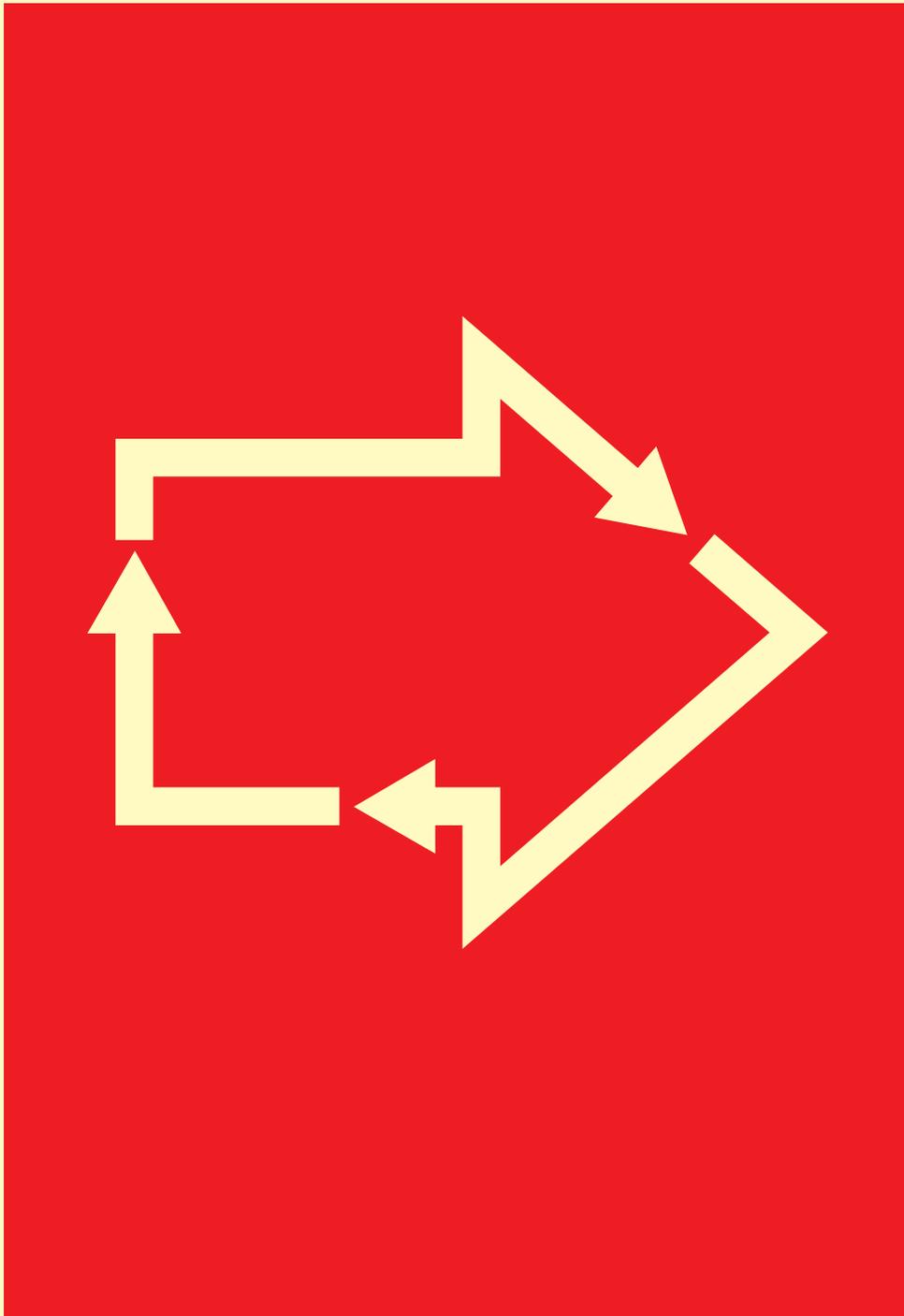
HOW IT COULD BE DONE

DAPODA: DESIGN LIVING LAB

At first glance, São Paulo is more 'concrete' than 'jungle'. But despite having only a small percentage of green space, the sprawling city generates a huge volume of horticultural waste, including 7 thousand tonnes of leaves, branches and logs every year. A group of designers and architects from the University of São Paulo decided not to let the perfectly good wood go to waste and created Dapoda – a 'living lab' for circular design. Their aim is to extend the value of tree clippings through turning them into new products, nurturing deeper interactions between the city and its natural environment.

TYPE OF INITIATIVE	DESIGN LIVING LAB
CREATIVE APPROACH	PROMOTING NEW WAYS TO EMPLOY WOOD FROM TREE PRUNING
RE-ACTION	REPURPOSE, RECYCLE
VALUE CHAIN(S)	BUILD
KEY STAKEHOLDERS	PRIVATE COMPANIES, MUNICIPALITY
SOURCE	dapodadesign.com

Wooden branch chair of the species *Leucaena leucocephala*, designed by Clara Bartholomeu (credit: C. Malaguti, 2021).



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