

## Design Icon



**A**pproaching Rua Doutor Miranda de Azevedo, in the bucolic São Paulo neighbourhood of Vila Anglo Brasileira, it is already possible to perceive from afar that there is something fresh and unusual. Here is the new studio of Humberto Campana, who, alongside his younger brother Fernando, saw poetry in cloth dolls and other humble materials from Brazil's interior, elevating them into collectible design. Working together for four decades, the Campanas became the leading lights of Brazil's design scene and gained widespread international recognition. Thus, Humberto's solo career, following the death of his brother last November, has been the subject of great speculation and anticipation.

Above, Humberto pictured with a 'Fata Morgana' mirror for Galerie Kreo

Opposite, on the studio's upper floor – which features a 'Vermelha' chair for Edra, 'Zoide' sofa for Paola Lenti, 'Merengue' pouf for Louis Vuitton, and 'Abbraccio' armchair for Giustini Stagetti – a glass floor has been installed to allow more light into the floor below

Despite their eight-year age difference, Humberto and Fernando looked like twins, and could well have been a single person. The two were often inspired by the same object, even if they encountered it at different times, and they shared the same thoughts and often arrived at the studio wearing identical clothes. They left their old studio when the owner decided to sell, and moved to the new studio last November, shortly before Fernando passed away.

While Humberto came to terms with his loss, he began to contemplate how the new space could offer a blank canvas for his solo career. Its interior is defined by high ceilings and large volumes. On the ground floor is the workshop, with sewing machines and cutting tables amid the plants and prototypes. Upstairs, the office features a winter garden that floods the entire floor with natural light. In addition to more space for production, Humberto now has a generous area in which to exhibit pieces and prototypes. A library houses books on the likes of Irving Penn, Max Ernst, Kaws, Takashi Murakami, Sebastião Salgado, Jaume Plensa, Wolfgang Tillmans, Pierre Keller and James Turrell, while a large conference table, crafted from a single tree trunk, is surrounded by eight different seats designed by the brothers.

The façade is already showing signs of change: a perforated metal sheet allows natural light to enter the main room of the warehouse, which was once a car workshop. Humberto opened a skylight, made a glass floor to let more light into the ground floor, and created outdoor areas for his employees. But he wouldn't be a Campana if he stopped there: he covered the library and reception area with golden metallic Ferrero Rocher chocolate wrappers to illuminate the environment even further, while referencing the duo's 2012 Barocco Rococó collection, where playfulness met excess.

The previous studio, a rented space that the brothers had occupied since 1992, had been very dark. When he started looking for a new space, Humberto had only one certainty in mind – he wanted something brighter and lighter. 'I'm going to be 70 years old. As we get older, we want more lightness in life,' he says. And while this move is linked to changes in his personal and professional life, it is also a reaction to the political tumult Brazil has experienced. 'The four years of Bolsonaro's government were very hard,' he says. 'I felt hurt in my soul. So I went to plant trees, to purge all the despair that I felt. And this space became my temple, a place of healing.'

At the back of the studio is a large bell. Campana means 'bell' in Italian, but the idea was also to mark this as a sacred space. 'I think there's a very spiritual atmosphere here,' he says. 'And I see my profession as something sacred, because, in a way, I enter people's homes. Their temples. I'm very shy, and this is how I communicate and tell so many beautiful stories about Brazil.' »

