

EDITORIAL

Outstanding Achievement



you can't judge a book ...

WHILE SOME PEOPLE MAY ASK whether printed books are dead, design firm Casa Rex expanded that query to explore the question, “What is a book?” The result is a 34-part written fictional narrative, unbound by fixed structures and spread across a narrative dining set.

Lululux consists of 20 napkins, six place mats and eight coasters, each screen printed with one of the 34 fragments, creating a multiplicity of reading possibilities. You can read it sequentially, one format at a time, or if books aren't your thing, set the dinner table with it.

“I've been playing with some boundaries of both graphic design and written narratives over the past years in my book projects, so I see this ‘narrative dining set’ idea as part of this process,” says Gustavo Piqueira, author and designer of *Lululux* and the founder and head designer at Casa Rex. “Here, I've tried to question how much of a written narrative is perceived as a ‘book’ if we print it over something people identify as a completely different thing (in terms of its functionality). It seemed an interesting and provocative topic to access because the definition we have for ‘book’ sometimes means different things: It can either refer to a written/printed narrative or it can mean the format, the codex—folded pages that you read in sequence. They're not necessarily the same thing.”

Judge Mona Patel calls *Lululux* “a great example of how design can enhance everyday experiences and moments,” but others who saw the project had mixed feedback. “It was really fascinating to watch the reactions,” Piqueira says. “I've known about a group that was discussing if *Lululux* was something meant to be read or not (which sounds funny, considering there's nothing there but thousands of words and sentences). It's very interesting how people get confused when something falls out of their established cultural values. On the other hand, this also generates some immediate negative reactions from people who refuse to go beyond their usual standards and consider it just a silly joke or some kind of weird marketing strategy.”

Overall, the piece serves as an amusing and humorous game of resignification that questions our very perceptions—breaking down paradigms and the conventional barriers commonly put up between written and visual narratives—by using design as a true transformative element of the reading experience.

Title *Lululux* | **Design Firm** Casa Rex, São Paulo, Brazil; www.casarex.com | **Creative Team** Gustavo Piqueira, art director/designer; Samia Jacintho, Marianne Meni, assistant designers | **Client** Lote 42