

Fernando Mendes: From Sketch to Varnish

Fernando Mendes is a contemporary creator who uses wood as his primary medium. His intricate work in wooden furniture shows an acute sensitivity for the rich Brazilian craft tradition. It is this comprehension combined with the nobility of the material, that creates space to further refine this craft that has been developed in Brazil for centuries, and shape repertoires of uses and solutions in interior spaces.

Mendes' material choice demonstrates ingenious solutions for cuts, joints, surface treatments, machining, and hand finishing — these elements combined produce treasured furniture items, with simple solutions that ensure a healthy balance between custom hand-crafted objects and those produced in series.

His authorial personality was shaped by a close experience with one of the greatest Brazilian designers, Sergio Rodrigues, with whom he lived and worked for over thirty years. The practice of re-editing various designs of the furniture master, recovering original designs, and streamlining their manufacturing processes, provided Mendes with a sensibility for interior design and a deep knowledge of structural architecture, one of Sergio Rodrigues' great lessons for Brazilian material culture. It is precisely this intelligence that we notice in his designs.

The spaces created by the composition of these pieces are enriched with countless possibilities of configuration and sophistication, not to mention all their contemporary Brazilian flair.

— Afonso Luz

Luiza Sun Lounger, 2023



The Luiza Sun Lounger is comfortable and versatile. With a minimalist appearance, the details are in the connections and fine handcraft that shape the frame, sling and cushion. The contours and handcrafted wheels evoke airplanes from the 1940s.

Manufactured in freijó or catuaba wood, the piece pays homage to Luiza Jacobsen, a close friend of the studio, and designer responsible for the branding of Fernando Mendes' brand.

The sun lounger features three reclining angles, canvas upholstery, and a futon cushion that can be covered in leather or fabric. This trifecta of elements ensures ultimate comfort. It is excellent for covered outdoor spaces.

W 67 x D 110 x H 85 cm | W 64 x D 50 x H 37 (ottoman)

Structure: Natural or stained freijó wood and catuaba wood for outdoor use

Upholstery: Natural leather or fabric

Arbatax Armchair With Arm, 2023



The design for the Arbatax came to fruition during a vacation on the coast of Sardinia, Italy.

Mirroring the environment of its conception, this piece is very suitable for covered balconies or comfortable interior spaces.

The concept behind the piece is for lounging, having long conversations – sitting low to the ground in a casual and comfortable atmosphere. To further adapt to its user's form, the backrest is pivotable, the futon is soft, and the low, armless seat invites relaxation.

W 79 x D 73 x H 75 cm

Structure: Natural or stained freijó wood

Upholstery: Cushion: Natural leather or fabric

Arbatax Armchair, 2016



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W 74 x D 72 x H 70 cm

Structure: Natural or stained freijó wood

Upholstery: Cushion: Natural leather or fabric

Duda Armchair, 2023



The Duda Armchair stands out for its ergonomics and comfort, and also reflects Fernando Mendes' passion for automotive design. Fernando drew inspiration from the cockpits of vintage cars. The backrest cushion is attached to the structure, ensuring comfort. The elegance and “retro” touch are visually evident in the intricate stitching and elaborate cutouts. The robust shell, fully upholstered, hovers above rounded solid freijó wood legs, adding a special touch to the piece.

Duda, whose name was bestowed to this design, is Fernando Mendes' beloved Shih-Tzu, who always accompanies him in Vale das Videiras, where his workshop is located.

W 84 x D 88 x H 77 cm

Structure: Natural or stained freijó wood

Upholstery: Natural leather or fabric

Santos Dumont Armchair, 2006



The Santos Dumont armchair is one of Fernando Mendes' classics, designed in homage to his reverence for a great inventor in Brazilian history: Alberto Santos Dumont.

The Santos Dumont armchair dates back to 2006 and was created to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the flight of the 14 Bis, the first powered flight in history.

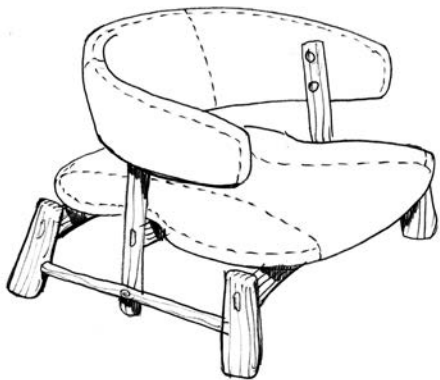
The inclination and seating position of this piece feels ready for take-off. Its freijó wood structure recalls the forms of the Demoiselle, the world's first serially produced airplane. The natural cane seat adds charm to this creation and is also a nod to the baskets Dumont installed in the piloting position of his aircraft.

W 72 x D 65 x H 64 cm

Structure: Natural or stained freijó wood

Upholstery: Natural leather or fabric

Sapao Armchair, 2013



Created by Fernando in 2013, the Sapão armchair brings grandeur and comfort to any space.

Its backrest that becomes arms are open and inviting, and the legs were inspired by the Adho Mukha, one of the most traditional yoga poses where the practitioner supports their hands and feet on the ground, forming an inverted V shape. Yoga has had a significant impact on Fernando's life, influencing even his designs.

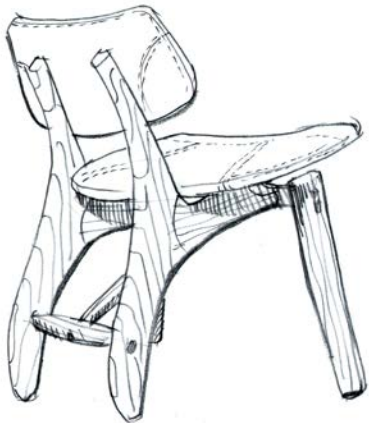
The Sapão armchair can be upholstered in leather or fabric, and its stitching is precise and clear, ensuring an extra charm to the piece.

W 75 x D 72 x H 60 cm

Structure: Natural or stained freijó wood

Upholstery: Natural leather or fabric

Rê Chair, 2013



W 50 x D 55 x H 78 cm

Structure: natural or stained freijó wood

Upholstery: leather or fabric

Designed in 2013, the Rê chair is named after Renata Aragão, Fernando Mendes' wife and partner. For this piece, Fernando had a comfortable structure in mind, with curved lines and a delicate beauty.

When Mendes sketched out the initial concept for this piece, the seat and backrest were flipped. After a few tests, he realized that the layout needed this switch to have the most comfort and flair.

The structure for this chair can come in natural or stained freijó wood, while the upholstery can be in leather or fabric, with the stitching line matching the color of the upholstery.

Pedro Chair, 2023



With geometric shapes and an informal feel, the Pedro chair originated from the idea of adding a backrest to the existing Angela bench. The piece was created in 2010 and is named after Pedro, the son of Fernando.

Pieces crafted from smaller components allow for better use of wood, avoiding waste.

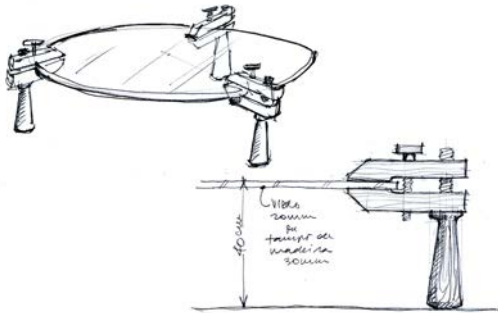
The Pedro chair comes in two different sizes: the regular, with dimensions of L 45 x W 50 x H 73 cm, and the taller one, with dimensions of L 45 x W 50 x H 60 – 80 cm.

W 45 x D 50 x H 73 cm

Structure: natural or stained freijó wood

Upholstery: leather or fabric

Grampo Table, 2013



Grampo (3 pieces): 110 - 150 cm x 15 mm

Grampo (4 pieces): 1,70 m² x 15 mm

Muiracatiara wood

Style + Creativity = Grampo Coffee Table, a unique piece created in 2013 by Fernando Mendes.

It is part of a collection of furniture inspired by woodworking tools. Crafted from muiracatiara wood in a meticulous woodworking process, clamps, or “sargentos” in Portuguese, are clipped onto a glass top and used as the table’s legs.

The added convenience of this table design is that it can be easily re-assembled and transported.

For round or triangular tabletops, three clamps are used, and for square or rectangular tops, four clamps are used.

Gilda Bench, 2023



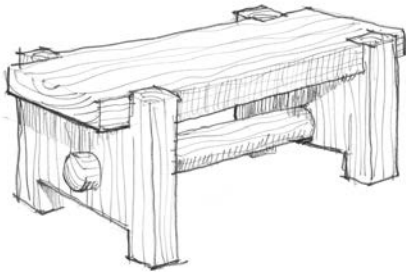
A creation named after the stylist and friend of Fernando, Gilda Midani. A sturdy bench with fluid lines that offer comfort and ergonomics – the key point of the project.

The seat, with organic curves, is hand-modeled from a block of freijó wood. For the lower crossbar, Fernando added a footrest, providing more stability when sitting.

The piece can have variable heights, ranging from 60cm to 75cm. It is ideal for supporting kitchen and bar counters.

W 45 x D 40 x H 58 H 70 cm
Natural or stained freijó wood

Jake Bench, 2004



W 48 x D 25 x H 25 cm / W 65 x D 33 x H 35 cm
Structure: Natural or stained freijó wood

Created in 2004 by Fernando, and celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, the Jake bench is versatile and can also serve as a step-stool and a decorative piece.

The piece started as a request from a young boy's parents. Jake, a kid from New York City, who was 4 years old at the time, needed a step-stool that would help him reach the shelves of his bookcase. 20 years later, the bench is a consolidated creation and represents an important mark in Fernando's career – his first step.

Sturdy and with petite dimensions, the bench's top extended to the sides to facilitate handling. The first versions of this bench were produced in teak wood panels. Later, Fernando started using wood scraps that had accumulated in the workshop. Today, it comes in natural or stained freijó wood.

Irene Stool, 2015



Three legs, a comfortable seat, and simple lines. The Irene stool is a piece that Fernando designed for low counters, ranging from 80 to 85 cm in height.

The central idea of this project was to create a comfortable seat where the user could rest their feet on the ground. The solution was to shape the edges of the seat in a downward curvature, resembling a mushroom, to avoid pressure on the legs, with the center of the seat in a slight concave dip.

The stool is named after Irene Seigle, a great friend of Fernando.

Ø 38 x H 50 cm

Structure: Natural or stained freijó wood

Antonio Stool, 2009



Small, light, and full of charm. This is the Antonio stool, a versatile piece that can be used as a footrest, for decoration, or to rest a book next to a cozy armchair.

Made of freijó wood, it stands at 43 cm in height and is entirely made of freehand turned pieces: the seat, the three legs, and the two crosspieces. The hole in the center of the seat was designed to be used as a handle, making it easier to transport while adding personality to the stool's aesthetics.

Its name was chosen as a tribute to the skilled Portuguese turner, Antônio Fernandes da Rocha, who for over fifteen years handled all the turning work for Fernando's projects.

Ø 35 x H 43 cm

Structure: Natural or stained freijó wood

Angela Stool, 2013



Ø 40 x H 45 cm

Structure: Natural or stained freijó wood

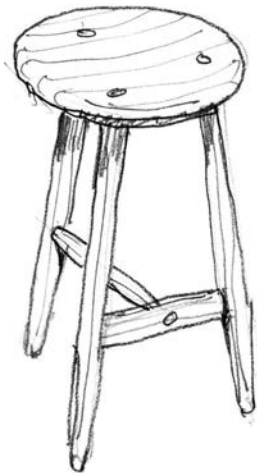
In 2013, the Angela stool was born. It originated from a client's request for an Antonio stool with four legs.

Instead of simply adding a leg to the existing design, Fernando decided to experiment with new processes. The lathe was replaced for the router table. Thus, the legs remained round but became cylindrical, as opposed to bowed. The cross pieces underwent the same process, and only the seat was turned.

Made of natural or stained freijó wood, the Angela stool has slightly larger dimensions than the Antonio stool and can be used in place of a chair for an additional seat at the table.

The stool is named in honor of Angela Aragão, Fernando Mendes' mother-in-law.

TZ Bench, 2007



TZ Bench, a tribute to Fernando's aunt and godmother Maria Thereza, who requested a piece for a kitchen counter. It is a three-legged stool with a circular seat, made entirely of solid turned wood, with mortise and tenon.

It is a bench that can have different sizes and be produced between 54 and 72 cm in height, in addition to the standard height of 60 cm.

Ø 35 x H 60 cm

Structure: natural or stained freijó wood

Kropf Side Table, 2016



Fernando brought this piece to life in 2008. The Kropf side table can be produced in various diameters and heights, creating a beautiful ensemble. All the pieces are solid wood with mortise and tenon joints.

Ø 60 x H 60 cm / Ø 50 x H 55 cm / Ø 45 x H 50 cm / Ø 40 x H 45 cm

Structure: Natural or stained freijó wood

Erlanger Cane, 2009



In 2009, Fernando designed this piece for a cane collector. It's a creation that expresses beauty and elegance through simplicity.

The special touch of this project is in the handle, which is shaped like a grain of rice. Fernando had developed this handle shape to be used in a different design, but it seemed perfectly suitable for this cane, so he applied it there instead.

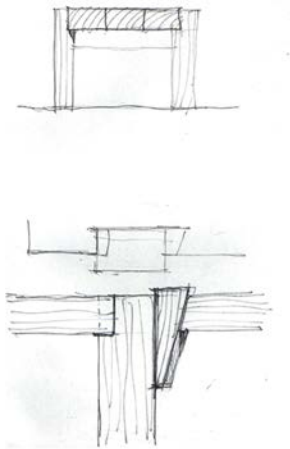
Once ready, the piece captured the admiration of Sergio Rodrigues. Fernando gifted him a cane, and the master liked it so much that he never used another cane again.

The Erlanger cane won two design awards: the iF Design Award in 2009 and the Designpreis Deutschland in 2010.

W 110 x D 75 x H 40 cm

Structure: Natural or stained freijó wood

Valente Bench, 2023



This is one of Fernando's most recent creations. a custom-made bench crafted from peroba do campo, released in 2023.

The joints stand out in this design. the attachment of the legs, for example, requires no gluing or screws. only the “dovetail” joint and a trapezoidal wedge keep the legs attached to the seat.

Wooden butterflies reinforce the connections of the pieces that make up the seat, which can measure up to 3 meters in length.

W 250 x D 45 x H 38 cm

Peroba do campo wood with butterfly joints of various species of wood