



“BASKETS OF THE WORLD”

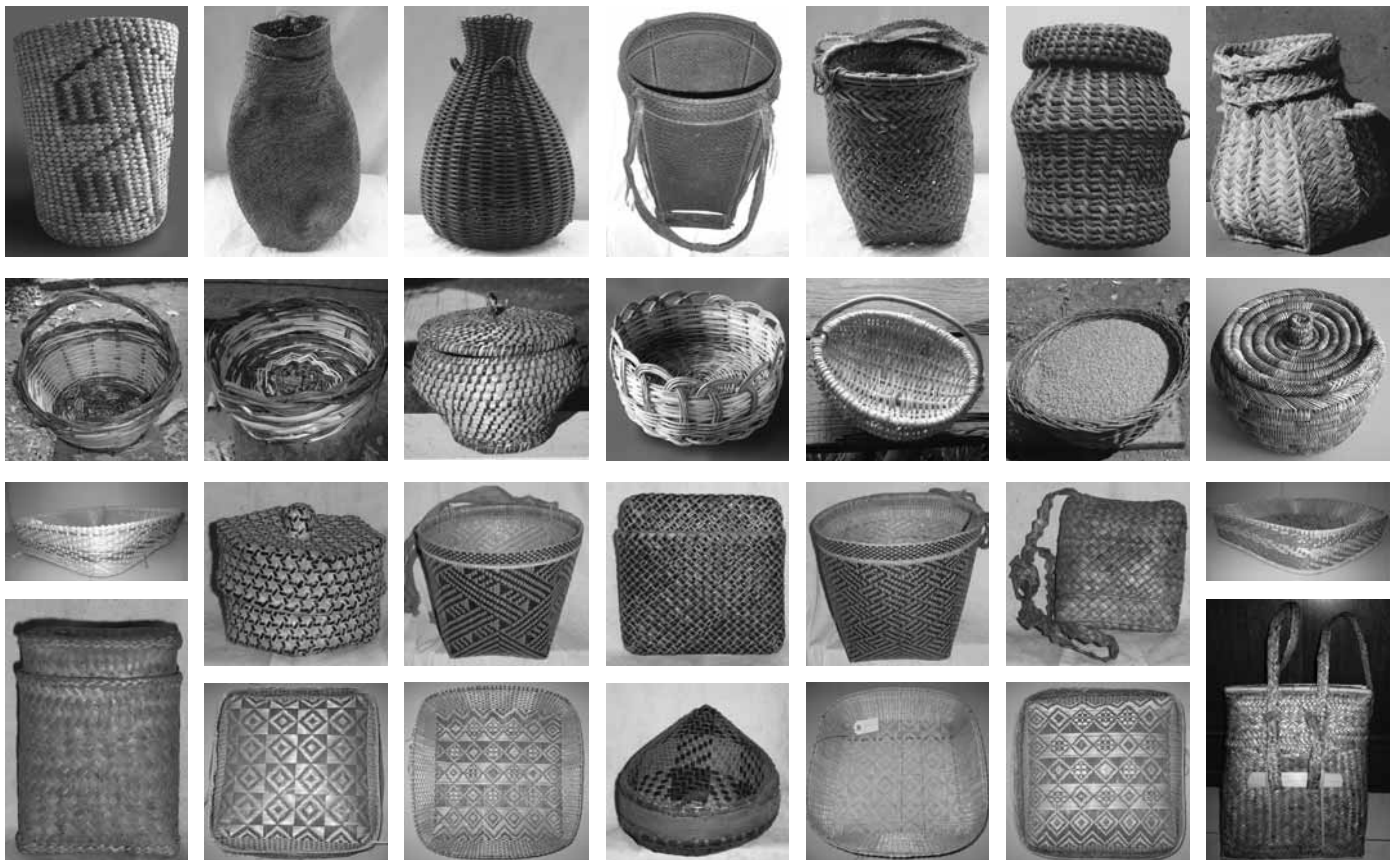
THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PLAITED CRAFTS

Organizers:

Dario Novellino – Füsün Ertuğ

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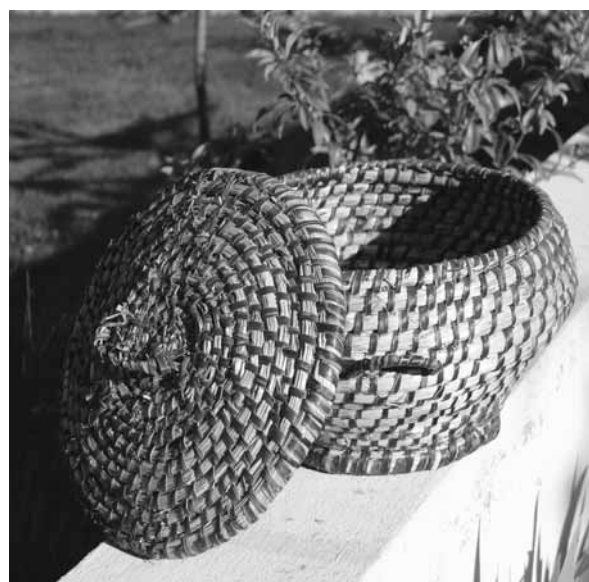
Northeastern Portugal (Trás-os-Montes)

For decades, the mountainous Portuguese north-eastern region of Trás-os-Montes featured amongst the main rye and wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L.) producing areas in the country. During the last decades, the region has experienced agriculture abandonment, population ageing and increasing migration to urban centres. The local population still engages in farming integrated with other subsistence strategies, including the gathering of forest products and livestock raising. Agricultural production is diversified, with cereals, potatoes, chestnuts, fruits and vegetables representing the most important crops. The latter are mainly used for domestic consumption, but are also exchanged and sold.

The *cesta* basket is very common, and may have different sizes (never exceeding the 40 cm.

diameter), various motifs and shapes (circular or oval bases) and it is made of willow (*Salix atrocinerea* Brot or *S. salviifolia* Brot.) branches. Twigs are harvested in middle spring, prepared during summer (sometimes decorticated) and stored until they are weaved. *Cesta* baskets are employed in daily farming work, and can be used as containers for potatoes, vegetables, fruits, legumes, flowers and eggs.

Another type of local basket is called *escrinho* and its made of rye, wheat (*Triticum aestivum* L.) stems, and sometimes of barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.). *Escrinhos* are employed to preserve cereals, baked bread or bread dough. Shapes and sizes may vary according to their specific functions. Today, the necessary skill to make *escrinho* is only possessed by a few local experts.



Escrinho: Basket for storing cereals or bread

Material:

Body, base and cover: Rye straw, *Secale cereale* L. (Poaceae), plaited with strips from the epidermis of *Rubus ulmifolius* Shott. (Rosaceae) shoots.

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Escrelho expert, 87 years old,
Bragança, Trás-os-Montes,
September 2004.



Cesta: These baskets can be used as containers for potatoes, vegetables, fruits, legumes, flowers and eggs.

Material:

Body, base and external frame: *vergas*, *Salix atrocinerea* Brot. (Salicaceae)

Handle: *asa*, *Salix atrocinerea* Brot. (Salicaceae).