Coleção Festejo Maior: possible links between design and visual anthropology in the production of photographic books

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Abstract
The Photographic Book is an important support as an item that covers the photographic creation of a project in different ways (FERNÁNDEZ, 2011). The justification and problem of this work is to show that Photography, here, is not just a piece of data to be analyzed. It is part of the results obtained throughout the development of a project. To address this topic, the article deals with the making of photograpic books when developed based on the Ethnographic Method and the possible links between Design Methodology and Visual Anthropology. To this end, the objective here is to analyze the production of digital books from the Feast of Brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary of the Blacks Collection (Coleção Festejo Maior), which portrays six different Guardas de Congado – Brotherhoods of Our Lady of the Rosary of the Blacks – from the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte – MG - Brazil. The books were developed from research and extension projects in 2015 at the School of Design – Escola de Design (ED) / Universidade do Estado de Minas Gerais (UEMG) – and were presented at P&D Design – Brazilian Congress of Research and Development in Design. The methodology used was qualitative (GIL, 2017), focusing on Ethnography and Visual Anthropology (COLLIER JR., 1973; SAMAIN, 2012) and the development of Design products (BONSIEPE, 2012). In this way, it can be observed that photography books or photobooks

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are a support that allows the development of a photographic project based on consistent methodologies, which allows us to conclude that the use of photography goes beyond field research data, becoming a protagonist in projects research and extension.


**Resumo**

longo do desenvolvimento de um projeto. Para abordar esse tema, o artigo trata da produção de livros de fotografia quando esse é desenvolvido a partir do Método Etnográfico e dos nexos possíveis entre a metodologia do Design e os métodos da Antropologia Visual. Para tanto, objetiva-se, aqui, analisar a produção dos livros digitais da Coleção Festejo Maior, que retrata seis Guardas de Congado diferentes da região metropolitana de Belo Horizonte – MG - Brasil. Os livros foram criados a partir de projetos de pesquisa e extensão em 2015 na Escola de Design (ED) / Universidade do Estado de Minas Gerais (UEMG) – e foram apresentados no P&D Design – Congresso Brasileiro de Pesquisa e Desenvolvimento em Design. A Metodologia utilizada foi do tipo qualitativo (GIL, 2017), com foco na Etnografia e Antropologia Visual (COLLIER JR., 1973; SAMAIN, 2012) e no desenvolvimento de produtos de Design (BONSIEPE, 2012). Desse modo observa-se que livros de fotografia ou fotolivros são um suporte que permite desenvolver um projeto fotográfico com base em metodologias consistentes o que permite concluir que o uso da fotografia vai para além de dados de pesquisa de campo, tornando-se protagonista em projetos de pesquisa e extensão.


**Resumen**

El Libro de Fotografía es un soporte importante como producto que abarca de diferentes maneras la producción fotográfica de un proyecto (FERNÁNDEZ, 2011). La justificación y problema de este trabajo es mostrar que la Fotografía, aquí, no es sólo un dato a analizar. Forma parte de los resultados obtenidos a lo largo del desarrollo de un proyecto. Para abordar este tema, el artículo aborda la producción de libros de fotografía cuando se desarrollan a partir del Método Etnográfico y los posibles vínculos entre la Metodología del Diseño y la Antropología Visual. Para ello, el objetivo es analizar la producción de libros digitales de la Colección Festejo Maior, que retrata seis diferentes Guardas de Congado de la región...
Introduction

This article focuses on the development of cultural products, specifically photographic books aimed at intangible cultural heritage, through a reflection on the possible connections between Design, Ethnography, and Visual Anthropology. The creation process of the digital books from the Coleção Festejo Maior will be presented.

The research and extension project Coleção Festejo Maior was developed in 2015 at the School of Design – ED/UEMG, coordinated by then professor Cristiane Nery. Two students participated as scholarship holders. The first was a Product Design student responsible for organizing the material produced. The other Graphic Design student, Lucas Magalhães, had already participated in previous projects and was responsible for the photographs, for the design of all project material, for the design of the photobooks and due to his participation he signed as co-author of the books. As a result, six digital photographic books of six Guardas de Congado (SOUZA, 2002) – Brotherhoods of Our Lady of the Rosary (KIDDY, 2000) – from the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil, were produced and made available to the entire community, via CD-ROM (2015) and the Internet. These include: 1 – Guarda de Moçambique de São Benedito de Prudente de Morais/MG; 2 – Guarda de Congo Estrela do Oriente do bairro Tupi de Belo Horizonte; 3
– Guarda de Congo São Bartolomeu do bairro Concórdia de Belo Horizonte; 4 – Irmandade de Moçambique da Nova Gameleira de Belo Horizonte; 5 – Irmandade de Ibirité/MG; 6 – Banda de Congado Nossa Senhora do Rosário e Nossa Senhora da Guia de Conselheiro Lafaiete/MG. They are available on different platforms such as: https://ed.uemg.br/publicacoes/ and https://uemg.academia.edu/crisnery. Congado, also known as Reinado, is a religion of African and Catholic origin, with the books in question portraying its celebrations for Our Lady of the Rosary.

The team consisted of a teacher who coordinated the project and two student scholarship holders under her guidance. Despite the small team, many devotees and guards were involved in the project. One of the scholarship holders, at the time a senior student in graphic design, had previously participated in other projects. Thus, due to his experience and previous contact with the guards, he was responsible for the photographs and graphic design. He is also co-author of the books. The other scholarship holder was a first-year Product Design student and was responsible for organizing the material, CDs, DVDs, and social media. In 2015, the CD was still a widely used format. Now it is possible to have the book only available on the Internet. This also reduces the cost of the project since printing is a very expensive stage in the production of a book, making its development unfeasible.

The research objective was primarily to use the Photographic Books as a means to preserve and disseminate memory, and consequently, the tangible and intangible heritage of traditional cultures. Different methods from various fields of knowledge were adopted for the development of the books (pre-production, production, and post-production): Documentary Photography, Ethnography, Visual Anthropology, Editorial Design, and Photobook.

**Theoretical Framework**

### 2.1 About Photographic Books

Photographs can be appreciated in various formats and situations, from family albums to advertising pieces, newspapers, magazines, websites, blogs, exhibitions in major galleries, and museums. However, there is a special situation that somehow brings the viewer closer to the portrayed image, touches them, moves them, involves them: the photographic book – this name refers to a broader category that can cover other formats such as photobooks and exhibition catalogues for example. When the photograph is transformed into a page, it
acquires latent qualities and emits them with maximum power. In a book, photography exceeds the limit of image capture by engaging in a process of creation that primarily embraces image editing and editorial design. In this journey, there are two imperative moments that must be executed with excellence so that the finished work can express with full force what may be called a concept, aspiration, or narrative. Going further, why not dub what manifests itself in the turning of these pages of lyricism and poetry? Junior (2013) state that in the book, photographs

...articulate with each other and with other languages to compose a more elaborate thought. There is evidence of a creation process that extends far beyond the capture of the image. As a result, photographs claim another time, another depth of view, and offer themselves to the world as an instrument of critique. Technically, the book is a mere support for its content; but it is also form, design, object. It is one of the first artifacts to announce the era of technical reproducibility. But, like a photograph, it is individualized in our collections as material laden with memory, affection, and desire. As photography rethinks itself, it has helped to rethink the status of the book (JUNIOR, 2013. Translated by the authors).

According to Lefèvre (2003) and Grigolin (2013), there are different publications that incorporate photographs in their core. Five types interest us here. The first, books that present the work of a photographer, his portfolio, which can condense a moment, a period or his life, also remembering the author's own photographic language and expression. The second, exhibition catalogues, which are books that accompany photographic exhibitions and use them as a reference for their editorial concept. The third, books that include textual elements, in which photography is not presented just as an illustration, but a process is observed in which both text and image are protagonists and complement each other; The fourth, Photobook, whose premise is to create a narrative where the work is collective and normally carried out by the photographer and the designer, who work together throughout the creation of the book. The fifth, the Artist's Book, is one in which a visual artist is responsible, so that the book reflects his concerns and sensitivity, making the book not just the support, but the work itself, the instrument for his individual artistic expression.

As the main characteristic of preparing the content of an editorial project, the photobook brings images in sequence with orders drawn up based on the narrative that the photographer intends to present. All the elements – the color palette, the formal coherence, the format, the paper, the printing – are chosen to support it as an art object. So far, one might think that the editorial project of a work of this type can be developed like any other, for
example, in situations where photographs pass through galleries or exhibitions before reaching the book object. In this case, the photobook is created at the same time as the editorial project is developed, being the art object itself (NERY, 2020).

The photobook is a set of photographic images designed, since its conception, for the book format, a project in which the photographer, the designer and the editor work together with roles of equal weight in the composition of the photographic discourse and in making editorial decisions. Above all, in order to recognize a legitimate photobook, the internal relationship of the images must be guaranteed, preventing the parts from having more importance than the whole (FERNÁNDEZ, 2011).

This premise of designer, editor and photographer working together from the beginning, during the organization of editorial content, ensures that an appropriate form is found for the sequence of images – opposing the model currently adopted, in which the editorial project only becomes developed after the content of the book is fully defined, that is, during and after the development of the editorial project (PARR, M; BADGER, G., 2004).

2.2 Possible Connections Between Design, Ethnography and Visual Anthropology

Currently, the need to shape a product is, mainly, a much more semantic, communicative and ergonomic issue than just a technological one. In increasingly ephemeral and complex scenarios, the designer must see the world and design culture from a broader perspective, not only focused on the issues of the product itself, but equally on the dynamics that exist in its surroundings. This skill requires the professional to have a transdisciplinary experience, focused on human behavior and esteem values. (MORAES, 2011). These new perspectives require the designer to take different positions when faced with the problem or project, since, in “contemporary times, one of the designer’s greatest challenges is to communicate and value the identity of products in a global context.” (KRUCKEN; SAIKALY, 2010, p. 46).

In this process, the rescue and appreciation of local culture for a globalized context were widely used, as were methods from Anthropology. This was possible because Anthropology is “a set of theories (not always in agreement) and different research methods and techniques that seek to explain, understand or interpret the most diverse practices of men and women in society” and “many of these theories are based in field research, in which anthropologists seek to live with local populations and learn their habits, values, ways of life,
beliefs, kinship relationships and other dimensions of social life” (SANTOS, 2005, p. 19).

Bichard and Gheerawo (2011) point out that ethnography has been the main modus operandi of Anthropology (social and cultural as opposed to biological) since the "birth" of the practice with Malinowski (1961) in the Trobriand Islands.

Thus, the answer to the question “What is Ethnography” lies in participating in people’s daily lives for a prolonged period of time; observing, listening, asking and collecting everything that can later be constituted as given. Baskerville and Myers (2015) state that the ethnographer observes and participates, but does not actively seek to change the situation. They explain, however, that in recent years, a new type of ethnographic research has emerged – what can be called design ethnography.

In this new type of ethnographic research, the researcher goes beyond observation and actively engages with people in the field with the aim of innovating or modifying that reality, using design tools. Furthermore, the researcher can, based on that reality, perceive opportunities for different products, services and businesses. In this approach, Blomberg and Darrah (2015) argue that the anthropological perspective can be useful precisely because it combines attention to details of everyday life, taking into account the environment in which such details make sense.

To do so, it is necessary to reflect on the textual tradition of Anthropology. Typically, the final product of an anthropologist's work is presented in text format, that is, in the form of scientific publications. His work, his notes, his field notebooks and even the image and sound records are the data from which the anthropologist will develop his thoughts, his ideas, his concepts and his theories, so that everything will be presented textually. Visual Anthropology, a branch of Anthropology, maintains its relationship with the text, but adds the possibility of presenting its results in other ways, proposing that text and image have equal weight in the record of human knowledge (COLLIER JR., 1973; SAMAIN, 2012).

In this way, the proposition that it is necessary to think about the possible heuristic complementarities between text and image is observed. Visual anthropologists begin their work with the awareness that their results can be converted into the form of texts, photographic essays, music, sound recordings, documentaries, websites, digital and physical collections, photographic books, drawings and a series of other products that will have to contain the cultural aspects from which they originated. The creation processes and methodology of Visual Anthropology contemplate how to transpose data collected in the field into cultural products, which can be a differentiating factor in a design project.
Thus, it is worth highlighting Dennison (2015) approach in explaining that, although much has been written about the potential of cinema, photography and visual art and, to a lesser extent, hypermedia to communicate ethnographic information, there has been little discussion about the potential for graphic design. Taking inspiration from the work of graphic designer Buffalo Nickel, who was hired to accompany an ethnographic text:

Images, like texts, are cultural artifacts. It is in this sense that the production and analysis of photographic, filmic and videographic records can allow the reconstruction of the cultural history of social groups, as well as a better understanding of processes of social change, the impact of economic fronts and the dynamics of interethnic relations. Image archives and contemporary images collected in field research can and should be used as sources that connect data to oral tradition and the memory of the groups studied. Thus, the use of images adds new dimensions to the interpretation of cultural history, allowing a deeper understanding of the symbolic universe, which is expressed in systems of attitudes through which social groups define themselves, construct identities and grasp mentalities (CAIUBY NOVAES, 2005, p. 110. Translated by the authors).

This statement allows us to recognize one of the links between Visual Anthropology and design: going into the field with the aim of transforming data into specific products. The questions about the use of images in Anthropology are far from being exhausted and, as a result, Samain (2012a, p.17) sends the invitation to “let new ideas germinate around the image, all images”.

Design approaches Anthropology in several ways. This can be observed both in the use of fieldwork and ethnography in the development of a project, and in the process of adding value to products, environments and graphic pieces by taking regional cultural aspects into account. This reasoning refers to certain areas that are currently essential, such as social design, design and crafts, creative economy, design and territory. In such areas there are already significant studies on this approach.

Based on this context, it is worth reflecting on the development of cultural products, more specifically, photography books. To this end, the process of creating the books in the Coleção Festejo Maior will be presented.
Methodology

3.1 The Process of Creating the Photographic Books Coleção Festejo Maior

The desire to create a book for each Guardas de Congado arose after the publication in 2012 of the book Um Olhar sobre o Congado das Minas Gerais, also developed as a research and extension project at the ED/UEMG. At the time, a significant number of bibliography on Congado was collected. Furthermore, a strong and significant approach was made with some Guardas de Congado, which made it possible to continue photographic records in 2013 and 2014. During this period, not only photographs were produced, but also video records of the parties. All this material was delivered to the guards involved in CD and DVD formats, which were common formats at the time. Now, there is the internet and files that can be saved on pen drives. This return is extremely important in projects of this nature. And it is very important to revisit this project with a commemorative perspective almost 10 years later. Many things can be learned and applied to new projects.

As contact between the Guardas de Congado and researchers was constant, it was possible to notice the great interest that devotees expressed in the photographic and audiovisual records. Consequently, new invitations appeared, made by devotees, to register other festivals, which generated a vast database composed of this material. As these records were being organized in DVD and CD formats, the material was constantly revisited. In this way, the parties that had the greatest number of photographs were selected, with the purpose of producing a book for each of them. As the cost of printing would make the project unfeasible, it was decided to publish the books in digital PDF format.

The books were developed in 2015 in three phases: pre-production, production and post-production. The search for possible links between the methods of design, ethnography and Visual Anthropology was fundamental in all of six books. Figure 1 shows the cover of two different books that are part of the collection (The faces in all Figures were covered to comply with publication standards: “Images taken of people must also have stripes on their faces, considering the protection of identity with respect for dignity and individual freedom”).
Coleção Festejo Maior: possible links between design and visual anthropology in the production of photographic books

Figure 1
Covers of books 01 and 02 of the Festejo Maior Collection. Guarda de Moçambique São Benedito do Reino de Nossa Senhora do Rosário de Prudente de Morais e Guarda de Congo Estrela do Oriente.

During pre-production, the following steps were carried out: analysis of the existing photography collection; scheduling interviews and new party records; organizational chart of book content, mirror of books.

In the production phase, the following steps were followed: interviews; new photographic records of Congado parties; organization and selection of images; transcription of interviews, preparation of texts, processing and editing of all book content. A Metodologia utilizada foi do tipo qualitativo (GIL, 2017) e Etnográfico partindo dos métodos da Antropologia Visual (COLLIER JR., 1973; SAMAIN, 2012). Creation of visual identity for the project; conceptualization and definition of graphic pieces to be developed (CD’s, DVD’s, editorials, stationery, brand, patterns, book release posters, promotional material, etc.); generation of alternatives; formal decision. To this end, the design project methodology steps were used (BONSIEPE, 2012). Development of editorial design and layout. Meeting with the guards to monitor and approve the layout and layout of the books. Image processing, final art. Registration and ISBN of books; preparation of the catalog sheet and technical sheet; final text review. Production of a thousand copies of CD-ROM containing the six books to be distributed free of charge to everyone involved in the project. As the PDF files were recorded in high resolution, printing from the CD-ROM was possible. Figure 2 shows the CD-ROM. Organization of the book release.
The post-production phase included the following steps: definitive publication of the six digital photography books in PDF format on the Escola de Design/UEMG website (https://ed.uemg.br/publicacoes/) and other platforms as already described; propagation and dissemination of books; book release. The book release of the books was held on September 12, 2015 at FUNARTE, as Figure 3 shows, as an event that was part of the UEMG Week and the city's festival Virada Cultural. It featured the presentation of two Congado Guards and the presence of Reinado masters and captains. The CD-ROM was distributed free of charge to those present and made available to libraries, researchers, teachers and students.

Figure 3

*Poster for the book release of the Festejo Maior Collection and presentation by the Guarda de Congo Estrela do Oriente during the book release.*

Figure 4 shows one of the platforms on which the book is available.
**Figure 4**

*One of the platforms on which the book is available.*

Source: https://ed.uemg.br/publicacoes.

**Final Considerations**

When analyzing the development process of the books in the *Coleção Festejo Maior*, it is clear that methods originating from Design, Ethnography and Visual Anthropology can be applied from the beginning of the development of cultural products, more specifically, photographic books that raise the possibility of safeguarding intangible memories and cultures. In this article, the idea was defended that both printed and digital formats are important, so that one does not replace the other, as they complement each other. In this way, a book that has both versions increases the propagation power of its content. In the case of digital photography books, their availability via the internet for remote access makes knowledge of objects, photographs and documents accessible to all interested parties, which would only be possible to discover through a face-to-face visit to the *Reinos / Guardas*. Devotees themselves share the books on their private social networks and also on the *Guardas de Congado*’s pages.

Morais (2010, p.35) cites the work *Heranças do Tempo*, Afro-Brazilian traditions in Belo Horizonte to highlight that the greatest merit of an inventory,

[...] in addition to documentary research, it is to recover the self-esteem of groups that hold traditional knowledge who live in Belo Horizonte, rescue their knowledge and practices, promote their historical and cultural heritage, through their collective memory (MORAIS, 2010, p.35).
In this way, this reflection on the possible links between Design, Ethnography and Visual Anthropology raises interesting discussions regarding the possibilities of promoting the development of photography books from a transdisciplinary perspective, thus causing an impact through transformative social action.

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