




La Ursa Aranha Makes the Cover

La Ursa Aranha Ganha Capa

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The Graphic Memory Dossier comprises ten richly illustrated articles, an essential feature, given that printed images are intrinsic to the subject matter and tell us stories. More specifically, printed images, or representations of printed materials — in a broad sense — constitute the central object of study in this field, where graphic design intersects with memory and material culture. At the same time, the diverse themes depicted in the images presented across the ten articles suggest multiple potential directions for the development of a cover for this collection.

Ephemera are a recurring topic in graphic memory studies and have become a tradition within the field, encompassing various categories. These are printed materials characterized by their transitory nature and limited lifespan. In this dossier, ephemera appear in the images accompanying articles that specifically address posters, magazines, and newspapers, consistently providing compelling opportunities for illustrating aspects of graphic memory. Cover design, however, demands an image that is striking, appealing, and thought-provoking. To achieve impact, the image must be simple and high in contrast. To be visually engaging, it should resonate with the viewer by drawing upon familiar visual references. To stimulate curiosity, it must invite inquiry into the topic. Ideally, the chosen image should allow for an engaging interpretation and offer multiple layers of potential narrative.

The image selected to illustrate the cover is the woodcut *La Ursa Aranha*, from the *Artes do Imaginário Brasileiro* collection by Pernambuco-based graphic artist Lourenço Gouveia. This work exhibits the ideal characteristics for a cover illustration. It presents a simple composition, consisting of only two elements: figure and background, and employs a contrasting color triad of red, black, and white. The image draws upon the repertoire of global popular culture through its reference to the character Spider-Man, while simultaneously generating curiosity by merging this reference with the Northeastern Brazilian folk tradition — *La Ursa* —, adapting the figure to reflect the contours of such animal. Furthermore, the piece conveys the crafty and regional visual language of woodcut printmaking, contributing to its authenticity. Gouveia describes this visual repertoire as “popular geek art” — which, in his words, seeks “to direct these perspectives from pop culture, from geek culture, to something popular, something regional, something that is

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present in our day and in other moments as well. Trying to bring what we watch and read to the street as a form of inspiration so that new things can also happen and represent this universe, this multicultural place in which we live.”

This image succeeds in mobilizing several attributes, or layers of meaning, relevant to the field of graphic memory. Although contemporary, it reflects the tradition of graphic production processes. It integrates both universal and regional visual languages. Moreover, it forms part of the body of work of a Brazilian artist from the Northeast, whose production has the potential to constitute a significant collection within the domain of graphic memory.

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