

Contributions to graphic memory and Brazilian culture: the case of the Cover of *Ritmo* magazine Issue 1 (1935) in the context of Anthropophagy

Contribuições para a memória gráfica e cultura brasileira: o caso da Capa do Número 1 da revista Ritmo (1935) no contexto da Antropofagia

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RESUMO

This article presents a graphic analysis of the cover of *Ritmo* magazine, issue number 1, published in 1935. To the best of current knowledge, this was the only issue ever circulated — and it bears a strong modernist character. However, we are concerned with demonstrating in this study how this specific cover reflects the graphic conveyance of elements praised by the cultural identity project of Anthropophagy, which was taking place at the time, as well as contributing to the study of graphic memory and design as part of national culture, rather than merely its graphic representative. It is important to highlight that the Oswaldian Anthropophagy is understood as a process of ingestion, carried out through cultural filters, resulting in a new product with local characteristics, derived from the assimilation of a foreign or imposed idea. From a methodological standpoint, the graphic analysis is structured around the compositional elements of the image, the typographic configurations within it, as well as the conceptual, contextual, and linguistic interactions with the illustrations on the analyzed cover. In addition, other theoretical references support the analysis in terms of culture, graphic memory, and graphic design. In this sense, it could be observed that the issue reflected elements of Brazilian identity as debated within Oswaldian Anthropophagy, through the representation and assimilation of ideological identity signs in the constructed image. Furthermore, it was also possible to draw parallels with other cultural manifestations, indicating relationships with other national periodicals and social circuits, evidencing the consolidation of signs of *brasilidade* ("Brazilianness") emphasized in the Anthropophagic framework.

Keywords: *Ritmo* magazine. History of Brazilian graphic design. Brazilian graphic memory. Anthropophagy. Brazilian cultural identity.

ABSTRACT

O presente artigo apresenta uma análise gráfica da capa do número 1 da revista *Ritmo*, publicada em 1935. Até onde se sabe, esta edição foi a única que chegou a circular — tendo forte caráter modernista. Contudo, estamos preocupados em demonstrar neste estudo como esta capa em específico reflete a veiculação gráfica de elementos enaltecidos pelo projeto de identidade cultural da Antropofagia, que ocorria na época, assim como contribuir para os estudos de memória gráfica e do design como parte da cultura nacional, não apenas um representante gráfico da mesma. É importante pontuar que a Antropofagia oswaldiana é compreendida como um processo de deglutição, operada por meio de filtros, gerando um novo produto com características locais, derivado da assimilação de uma ideia estrangeira ou imposta. Em termos metodológicos, a análise gráfica é estruturada seguindo os elementos compositivos da imagem, as configurações tipográficas na mesma, bem como as interações conceituais, contextuais e linguísticas para com as ilus-

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Received on: 02/25/2025. Accepted on: 05/06/2025

trações na capa analisada. Além disso, outros referenciais teóricos sustentam a análise nos termos da cultura, da memória gráfica e do design gráfico. Nesse sentido, pôde-se medir que o número espelhou elementos de identidade brasileira debatidos pela Antropofagia oswaldiana — na representação e assimilação de signos de identidade da ideologia na imagem construída. Além disso, também foi possível traçar paralelo com outras manifestações culturais, indicando relações com outros periódicos nacionais e circuitos sociais, evidenciando consolidações de signos de brasilidade destacados na Antropofagia.

Palavras-chave: Revista Ritmo. História do design gráfico brasileiro. Memória gráfica brasileira. Antropofagia. Identidade cultural brasileira.

INTRODUCTION

Ritmo magazine can be understood as a cultural magazine that stands out for its modernist character in its time. Homem de Melo and Ramos (2011) highlight this affiliation, as well as the syntax of *Art Deco*, evidenced in the cover of the issue in question. Issue 1, investigated by the authors, was not located in the visited collections and, therefore, we contacted, via digital means, the researcher Homem de Melo, who informed us it was an issue of difficult access, likely to be a single edition. Being rare and with enormous potential to represent elements of Brazilian culture at the time it circulated, it was one of the publications considered in a master's thesis already defended (Siqueira, 2023), and for these same reasons it is the object of study of the present article.

According to the thought of Farias and Braga (2018), it is understood that the ephemeral documents were responsible for inaugurating discussions on graphic memory in Latin America. Therefore, the cover of *Ritmo* magazine is configured as a relevant object to be resumed and documented, as its memory has been undergoing the process of erasure. This statement is based on the fact that, up to date, the only known record of the journal is found in the work *Linha do tempo do design gráfico no Brasil* [Timeline of graphic design in Brazil], by Chico Homem de Melo and Elaine Ramos (2011). In this sense, we seek to document the memory of this cover, articulating it with a discussion pertinent to the Brazilian culture.

Understanding the importance of the cover in question for graphic memory, we present this article, in which we sought to analyze the cover of issue 1 of *Ritmo* magazine, proposing a reflection on the possible contributions of Brazilian graphic design to the construction of an idea of *brasilidade* (Brazilianness) — based on the identity project proposed and disseminated by the Oswaldian Anthropophagy. To this end, our starting point is exploratory qualitative research with a strong character of historical study, through a case study, with a perspective on the microhistory approach. However, it is worth highlighting that we do not intend to discuss the anthropophagic idea proposed by Oswald de Andrade, but rather to demonstrate possible mirroring of elements of cultural identity of Anthropophagy in the studied cover.

Taking this into consideration, and bearing in mind the specific object of this article, the microhistory approach was adopted. The approach favors the observation of specific aspects of an object of historical study, that is, it reduces the scale of observation by the perspective of a historian to perceive aspects of an object that would go unnoticed in macro approaches, but without losing relations with its immediate surroundings, with broader social and cultural conjunctures of the society in which it is inserted. For this reason, microhistory helps us understand conceptual, contextual, and linguistic relationships between Anthropophagy and the image created on the cover of issue 1 of *Ritmo* magazine.

The methods of microhistory make intensive use of primary sources, employing artifices of historical narrative, in order to perceive, at the same time, particularities of the object of study and “a broader social issue or a significant historical or cultural problem” (Barros, 2007, p. 175, free translation). Here, we are limited to what the source allows us, as we could not find the original copy of the journal — which impacts, for example, the impossibility of analyzing its core, but does not diminish the representative and discursive potential of the cover as to graphic memory. This corroborates the reflection by Braga and Ferreira (2023, p. 127), according to whom the microhistory approach helps in the observation of Brazilian design that “in many cases and in several areas arises and develops in specific socioeconomic and cultural contexts and conjunctures and in various temporalities” (free translation).

Conversely, we believe that microhistory is an important tool to explore gaps in graphic memory that still persist in the historiography of design, being the term *Memória Gráfica Brasileira (MGB)* [Brazilian Graphical Memory (BGM)] consolidated by highlighting “cultural artifacts and material traces of history” (Cardoso, 2018, p. 10, free translation). However, it should be noted that this term carries with it a longer development of knowledge in the field of design, supported by studies on material culture in the field of design as of mid-20th century until today (Fonseca, 2021). This reflection makes us ponder that the Brazilian graphic design not only represents elements of culture, but is part of its construction.

It is noteworthy that resuming and interpreting history are necessary actions to understand social history, thus enabling the identification of life experiences, culture, cultivated symbols, social imaginary, beliefs and values which form a collective memory, according to Halbwachs (1990 *apud* Fonseca, 2021). This symbolic set corroborates the Brazilian culture thought of Ortiz (2012), enabling an important parallel between graphic memory and Brazilian national memory. Farias and Braga (2018) reflect that the studies on graphic memory

not only contribute to insert graphic artifacts in the sphere of material culture and in the collective memory of a people — and, therefore, among the elements that express a sense of local identity —, but also contribute to the debate on the postulates of the professional identity of the local graphic designer (Farias; Braga, 2018, p. 21, free translation).

Conversely, Ortiz (2012) understands national memory as a set of abstract national elements that represent an identity that may or may not belong to a collective

memory. We can assume, therefore, that graphic memory is also an instrument that can help to understand a social configuration — which is directly related to the idea of a national memory and a Brazilian identity.

Regarding the 1930s, decade in which the cover we intend to analyze was created, there is a cultural and economic effervescence throughout the country, especially due to the modernization and urbanization since the end of the 19th century (Ferreira; Delgado, 2018). This scenario is added to a process of searching for an idea of nation, of Brazilianness, consisting of several cultural movements. In Siqueira (2023), we can notice that there were several projects of national cultural identity, proposed by many intellectuals from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. These projects are political and, according to Bresciani (1998), they were forged by the interests of intellectuals of the time, who sought the fortification of a specific idea of homeland and Brazilianness — today often understood as stereotyped. However, in this study, we do not seek to bring to debate the stereotyping issue behind national identity projects, but rather to understand whether the Brazilian graphic design contributed or not to the formation of this symbolic universe. That is, if there was a function of symbolic intellectual mediator in this process. For Ortiz (2012, p. 139), intellectuals take on the role of symbolic mediators because “they are actually historical agents who operate a symbolic transformation of reality, synthesizing it as unique and understandable” (free translation). Hence, the designer could be understood as a symbolic intellectual mediator of the Brazilian identity, precisely by operating an idea and designing information in a way that is understandable by the mediator’s interpretation of a reality.

But what Brazilian identity project are we talking about? The project conceived by the Brazilian writer Oswald de Andrade, in 1928, called *Antropofagia* [Anthropophagy] — inspired by the work of great international recognition *Abaporu*, by Tarsila do Amaral (Oswald’s wife at the time). Anthropophagy advocated a resumption of national native culture, seeking a reconnection with the roots originating in the country, without ignoring the historical processes already taking place in the national territory. Reflecting on the text by Candido and Silvestre (2016), we can understand that Anthropophagy operates with ingestion, a process that mixes national culture with an imposed culture and produces a result through the filter of the operator (which could be understood as a symbolic intellectual mediator). Anthropophagy, then, aims to be timeless, philosophical, and focused on the construction of a national memory that favors the national signs — which are already part of a process of interculturality (Candido; Silvestre, 2016). But is this argument enough to observe this cultural identity project of Anthropophagy? Not only for this reason, but Anthropophagy gains international prominence and manages to establish a look at the Brazilian artistic and literary production that, according to some authors, was delegated to a mere copy of Portuguese aesthetics (Zanini, 1983; Fabris, 1994; Candido; Silvestre, 2016). In the field of Arts, not so far from graphic design, considering the 1920s and 1930s, when the professional field of graphic

design was not yet delimited as such and somehow belonged to the idea of graphic arts in Brazil, Anthropophagy behaved in an avant-garde logic (Fabris, 1994). So why not ponder about its emergence in graphic design?

Concluding the incitements of this article, it is worth mentioning the thought of Velloso (2018), who points out intellectual mediators of Brazilian identity on behalf of designers (such as Kalixto, J. Carlos and Raul Pederneiras) — who, from the author's histographic perspective, would become crucial figures to understand the languages and representations of the period. The understanding that Brazilian design has its manifestations linked to the context in which it is inserted leads to the reflection that Anthropophagy can be a point in history that influenced the evolution of the field of design in the country. Décio Pignatari (1964, p. 79) mentions the importance of the Modern Art Week and its consequent artistic and cultural movements for the "visual revolution" of the time; according to him, the visual world has undergone important changes, both for the design field and for the Brazilian identity. Previously, Pignatari (1964, p. 20) pondered that the designer's thinking must be "critical, anthropophagic, for the sake of the depth of their performance" (free translation). The author also pinpoints Anthropophagy as a direction to think of design as moving away from the copy, being Oswald de Andrade's thought internationalized, but still committed to national "values." From the author's perspective, Anthropophagy can be understood as "the cultural anthropology best suited to Brazilian civilization" (Pignatari, 1964, p. 20, free translation).

Conversely, it is worth underlining a historical and philosophical difference between the Modern Art Week and Anthropophagy. The Modern Art Week, although being an important historical landmark for the first phase of Brazilian Modernism, consolidates a cultural process that had been happening since the end of the 19th century (Fabris, 1994; Ferreira; Delgado, 2018; Siqueira, 2023). In addition, the Modern Art Week of 1922 presents itself as a specific and particular historical moment, which had great importance for the consolidation of movements, manifests, and ideologies that followed it — such as *Pau Brasil*, *Verde Amarelo* and *Antropofagia*. Anthropophagy, in turn, is an ideology (Candido; Silvestre, 2016; Nunes, 1970) that is timeless and specifically seeks to resume the Brazilian native culture. It should be noted that Anthropophagy had a group of intellectuals distinct from the Modern Art Week, even led by important names that organized the Week — such as Oswald de Andrade, Tarsila do Amaral, and Menotti Del Picchia.

In this line of reasoning, assuming that the Brazilian graphic design assimilated and mirrored, to some extent, elements of cultural identity of Anthropophagy, in this research we seek to answer the following question: What can be measured about a possible assimilation of the cultural identity elements of the Oswaldian Anthropophagy through a graphical analysis of issue 1 of *Ritmo* magazine (1935)? The objective is to identify a possible representation of the idea of anthropophagic Braziliananness that circulated at the time by the Brazilian graphic design — more specifically on the cover of issue 1 of *Ritmo* magazine. It is also noteworthy that we do not intend to prove links between illustrators, literary and editorial professionals of

the magazine and Anthropophagy; here, we seek to understand if anthropophagic ideas are reflected in the cover of the analyzed magazine and to what extent this occurs (without the need for affiliation between the parties and Anthropophagy).

METHODS

For the graphical analysis of this article, authors who follow the semiotic thought of Charles Morris (1976) (semiotic classification in three dimensions: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic) were considered. The syntactic dimension is of the formal nature of signs and their relations; the semantic, the formation of meanings derived from signs and their interactions; and the pragmatic, the impacts of these meanings on observers, agents, and other users involved in the communication system in question.

First, reading the elements of the composition is indicated. André Villas-Boas (2009) states that the elements for graphical analysis can be divided into two groups: technical-formal and aesthetic-formal. The first is the design principles (unity, harmony, synthesis, balance, movement, and hierarchy) and the composition devices (graphic mass, structure, center alignment, and axis). The second group is formed by textual (text), non-textual (pictorial), and mixed (graphs, tables, infographics, etc.) components. Having established the recognition of the elements according to Villas-Boas (2009), the authors propose to draw parallels with the Anthropophagy elements identified in the *Revista de Antropofagia* [Anthropophagy Magazine]. Siqueira (2023) considered four categories of analysis that would represent the elements of cultural identity disseminated by Anthropophagy:

1. Race and ethnicity;
2. Tropicality, fauna and flora;
3. Festivities and local customs;
4. Regionalisms, national legends and folklore.

These categories arise from a long process of indexing 5,705 terms that could be represented in Anthropophagy. The most relevant terms were filtered by recurrence and contextual and linguistic conceptual attributes and grouped into the aforementioned four categories (the complete survey, as well as its step-by-step, can be found in Siqueira, 2023).

Considering the graphic elements identified by Villas-Boas (2009), we sought to understand if there is a representation of aspects that constitute the idea of cultural identity of the Anthropophagy used in typography, that is, meanings that could have been assimilated by typography in the composition that could be related to the circulation of ideas of Brazilianness proposed by the Oswaldian ideology. Priscila Farias (2016) therefore proposes to look at typography based on five categories: letter, word, text, page, and volume (see Figure 1). These factors help to understand typography as a representation of a context/meaning beyond its form, design. For the typographic classification in the graphical analysis, the model of Maximilien Vox (Silva; Farias, 2005; Figure 2) was considered.

	LETTER	WORD	TEXT	PAGE	VOLUME
SYNTACTIC DIMENSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> production mode size proportions structure (box) form color 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> direction alignment continuity / segmentation variation (form or structure) space between letters associated elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> column wide space between words alignment interlineation tonality of the text spot column format space between paragraphs indentations marking of lines, paragraphs, or text block 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> grid space between columns space between text blocks alignment of the text blocks hierarchy relation text blocks x images demarcator elements of text blocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> material aspects dynamic aspects number of pages height of the book spine recording or reproduction system bookbinding relation between parts of the volume
SEMANTIC DIMENSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relation with the alphabet phonetic value speed rhythm expressivity assertiveness producer status history of form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relation with the verbal language sound value speed rhythm expressivity assertiveness producer status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relation letter/ content sound value speed rhythm expressivity assertiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relation letter/ image sound value speed rhythm expressivity relative importance of the different parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relation letter/ format values attributed to the materials level of ephemerality or permanence posture required from the reader
PRAGMATIC DIMENSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> visibility legibility expressivity glyph area effects generated by the meaning of the letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> visibility legibility expressivity word area readability effects generated by the meaning of the word 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> visibility legibility expressivity text area readability performance effects generated by the meaning of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> visual impact text MANCHA readability performance type of support paper use type of paper effects generated by the meaning of the page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> visual impact text volume type of support paper use type of paper finishing obsolescence effects generated by the meaning of the volume

Source: adapted from Farias (2016, p.49).

Figure 1. Systematization of the Farias' analysis model.

By observing the analysis model of Farias (2016) and the study object of this article (cover of issue 1 of *Ritmo* magazine), it is noted that the *volume* category has no point in being analyzed, as a cover without its core could only be evaluated to the *page* category. It is also worth noting that there are aspects mentioned by the author that will not make sense for this specific analysis, as well as others that cannot be evaluated (such as several aspects of the pragmatic dimension, due to the lack of records and living agents).



Source: adapted from Silva and Farias (2005, p. 70).
Figure 2. Maximilien Vox's model classifications.

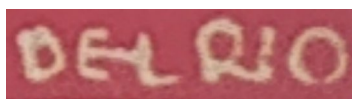
Subsequently, the authors aim to observe the composition following the pictorial graphic language of Evelyn Goldsmith (1980). The author, like Farias (2016), corroborates Morris, dividing her analysis proposal into the semiotic dimensions of syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics. However, Goldsmith (1980) categorizes it into visual factors: unity, location, emphasis, and text parallels. These factors enable the understanding of the composition of the image, obtained from the interaction between illustration and text, seeking to understand the representation of a context through dialogue between shapes and meanings. In Figure 3, the synthesis of the pictorial graphic language of Goldsmith (1980) is presented. It should be noted that the *text parallels* factor will not be evaluated according to Goldsmith (1980), because we understand that the method of Farias (2016) already accounts for the relations between text and illustrations in the image.

Factor	Syntactic Level	Semantic Level	Pragmatic Level
Unity	The recognition of an image is determined by the pictorial marks themselves, that is, by the chosen treatment of the image.	The recognition of an image is determined by the clarity of its main characteristics.	Cultural context is essential for the recognition of an image.
Location	At the syntactic level, the observer perceives the location of the object regardless of object recognition.	Understanding of size, position, and depth can be determined by object recognition.	Understanding of cultural context can determine the comprehension of size, position, and depth of an object.
Emphasis	Emphasis through factors such as shape, color, size, etc.	Emphasis through universally attractive elements, such as eyes, gaze direction, humans, etc.	Emphasis that depends on cultural habits, such as reading direction, meaning of certain colors, etc.

Source: adapted from Moreira, Fonseca and Gonçalves (2019, p. 2178).
Figure 3. Systematization of Goldsmith's thought.

DEVELOPMENT AND RESULTS

Considering the proposed analysis method, we should contextualize the publication before starting the analysis. Once again, the journal is unknown and its only record is found in the work of Homem de Melo and Ramos (2011). On the one hand, we can infer that the magazine was published in São Paulo, because it is an information printed on the cover image of issue 1 of the magazine. Another information that can be verified is that the illustration on the cover is signed by Del Rio (Figure 4). However, we did not find new sources to allow us establishing social circuits in which Del Rio was inserted — the same applies to the publication itself. On the other hand, there are records of other journals that bear the same name, which can cause false approximations between them.



Source: adapted from Homem de Melo and Ramos (2011, p. 193).
Figure 4. Del Rio's signature present in issue 1 of the *Ritmo* magazine.

On the cover of the first and only issue found in the *Ritmo* magazine (Figure 5), Del Rio demonstrates mature style with strong influence of elements typical of graphic *Art Deco*, as well as of European modernism, on the composition (Homem de Melo; Ramos, 2011). The image created for the cover of *Ritmo* resembles these styles, in which it is complemented by nuances and gradients, as well developed in



Source: Homem de Melo and Ramos (2011, p. 193).
Figure 5. Issue 1 of *Ritmo* magazine, 1935.

the posters of Adolphe Mouron Cassandre (Figure 6), an important Franco-Ukrainian designer, author of hundreds of posters, and a great exponent of this graphic style.



Source: available from: <https://www.grapheine.com/>. Access on: Feb. 23, 2025.

Figure 6. Example of Adolphe Mouron Cassandre's Deco aesthetics.

Convergences can be seen in the use of visual language in the compositions of Figures 5 and 6. The cover of issue 1 of *Ritmo* has the elements of the Deco syntax, but still with elements that refer to the Brazilian culture. This is an indication to investigate a possible influence of Anthropophagy on this manifestation — regardless of a clear relationship between the illustrator (Del Rio) and the ideology (Anthropophagy). To better interpret this manifestation, we developed Figure 7, which presents the technical and aesthetic-formal configuration of the composition.

With the analysis of Figure 7, we can perceive some formal issues of the composition of the aforementioned cover. Based on Villas-Boas (2009), we notice:

- Technical-formal elements
 - Design principles: The composition presents a symmetrical graphic mass between its elements, conferring an immediate harmony upon the visual



Source: adapted from Homem de Melo and Ramos (2011, p. 193).

Figure 7. Technical and aesthetic-formal configuration of the *Ritmo* magazine.

ensemble. The components are organized in a fixed grid, which indicates a possible intention of identity construction for the magazine — an aspect that could configure a graphic unit if it were replicated in subsequent editions. The choice for a palette restricted to two hues (red and black), combined with the presence of the illustration, results in a visual synthesis that highlights the banana tree centered on the composition. In addition, the hierarchy and balance between the elements demonstrate formal harmony, evidencing an effective integration between illustration and typography, with the visual weights evenly distributed and reinforcing the symmetry of the image;

- Composition devices: The modular grid suggests a fixed structure of page organization, in which elements are precisely arranged. The graphic mass is widely distributed, occupying almost the entire surface of the cover and creating, by contrast, a frame in the white areas of the paper. Its configuration refers to a quadrangular geometric shape, which

establishes a parallel with the orthogonal grids of European modernism — a characteristic that can be interpreted as an anthropophagic assimilation in the graphic making itself. The optical and geometric centers of the composition reinforce points of visual attention, highlighting both elements of the illustration and the number “1,” which indicates the release of the journal. This emphasis is further intensified by the reading curve suggested by the layout of the elements: the visual route begins with the “Ritmo” lettering (logo), followed by the illustration of the banana trees, going to the number “1,” and culminating in the information on date and location at the bottom of the cover — “São Paulo – novembro de 35” [São Paulo – November 1935]. It should be noted, however, that design decisions cannot be fully evaluated in this analysis; nevertheless, the composition indicates an intention, whether rationalized or intuitive, to hierarchize certain elements at the expense of others.

- Aesthetic-formal elements
 - Textual components: It is possible to identify three textual elements in the composition: “Ritmo,” the name of the magazine — possibly a lettering that can be interpreted as the logo of the journal; “1,” which indicates the edition’s issue — in this case, the first; and “São Paulo – novembro de 35,” which informs the place of publication (circulation/edition) and the date (month and year) of the print circulation;
 - Non-textual components: On the cover page of the magazine, it is possible to identify only one non-textual component: the illustration. We observe the representation of banana trees, composed of two main visual elements — the leaves and the bunches. The illustration uses a different color from the textual elements (red for banana trees and black for texts, as can be seen), which creates a chromatic contrast that reinforces the separation and highlight between image and typography;
 - Mixed components: We identified no components that merge textual and non-textual elements in the composition.

Thinking specifically of the textual elements identified in the composition of the image represented on the cover, starting from the categories expressed in the semiotic analysis model for typography by Farias (2016), based on the typographic classification proposed by Maximilien Vox (as adapted by Silva; Farias, 2005), we can observe:

- Syntactic Dimension
 - Letter: Although the absence of the original makes it difficult to understand the mode of production of the letters used on the cover of the magazine, we notice some noise and ink stains (Figure 8), which refer to manual processes. This would rule out, for example, the use of offset printing and increase the chances that movable-type printing was used.



Source: adapted from Homem de Melo and Ramos (2011, p. 193).

Figure 8. Details of the printing type on the cover.

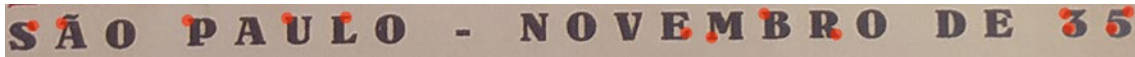
In “Ritmo,” the spacing between “M” and “O,” which coincides with the width of the illustration, suggests that there was a change in the spacing between the letters after the word was composed. The size of the letters (apparently above 72 points) is compatible with the hypothesis of the use of wood-made movable types, and the typesetter might have sawn the type to adjust the spacing. Another possibility would be the use of a matrix of a design of letters with spacing problems, or a single piece carved in wood and sawn to adjust the width. Finally, “São Paulo - novembro de 1935” (estimating the size at low points), seems to have been composed of metal-made movable types. When analyzing the size of the letters in the composition, we notice that there is a difference between the textual elements of “Ritmo” and “1” and those of “São Paulo - novembro de 35.” In addition to the size differences, there is also a variation of style, which determines the shape of the letters. However, there is similarity in the structure of the letters, all presented in uppercase letters. In “Ritmo” and “1,” we observe the appropriation of the *Art Deco* styles, with linear typography, without serif, and geometric shapes (Figure 9). The letters have angular and pointed terminals. In turn, in “São Paulo - novembro de 35,” a *didone* typography is used, not supported. This is demonstrated by the letter “O,” corresponding to the 12 and 6 o’clock



Source: adapted from Homem de Melo and Ramos (2011, p. 193).

Figure 9. Details of the typography used in “Ritmo” and “1.”

positions, with serif, and by the refinement in the numbers “3” and “5” (Figure 10). The humanistic characteristic in the typography used counterbalances the seriousness and reliability in the design of the letters. However, when we observe the composition of the image as a whole, this difference is still subtle enough not to interfere with the geometric shapes of the linear typography used in “Ritmo.” Textual elements are presented in black color, possibly faded by the action of time;



Source: adapted from Homem de Melo and Ramos (2011, p. 193).

Figure 10. Details of the typography used in “São Paulo – novembro de 35.”

- Word: The words in the composition are represented according to the Western reading, from left to right and from top to bottom. The alignment of the textual elements is centered on the page. There are no variations of shape or structure in words with the same style. The spacing between letters seems to be regular in “São Paulo – novembro de 35,” whereas in “Ritmo,” we can notice differences between the letters that make up the word;
- Text: The composition presents textual elements arranged along the single visible column, centered on the page. There are no blocks of text with more than one line, which makes it impossible to analyze the lead. Moreover, no indent, pilcrow, or organization in text blocks are observed;
- Page: The grid of the page is quite fixed, as we have already seen in the other parameters, dividing it into three blocks of text, according to the graphic mass represented in Figure 7. This grid also organizes the textual elements “Ritmo,” “1,” and “São Paulo - novembro de 35,” creating uniform spaces between them. It can be seen that the style used in textual elements is the same as used in the illustration at the center of the page. When observing the page in its entirety, a black square stands out, which demarcates the textual element “1.”
- Semantic Dimension
 - Letter: In “Ritmo,” we observe that the letter “T” presents a different configuration from the usual one, with a shorter bar, which confers more rhythm upon the word. The typographic choice seems to be assertive for the context in which it is employed, especially due to the expressiveness provided by the size of the letters in “Ritmo” and “1,” which occupy the largest graphic mass of textual elements;
 - Word: We perceive that the letter “O” in “Ritmo” forms four equal quadrants, creating a perfect circumference, which establishes harmony with the counters present in the top of the letter “R.” The letters “I” and “T” contrast with the letters “R” and “M” due to the strokes and

counters that make up the word, which highlights the rhythm of the word "Ritmo" [which means "rhythm" in English], reflecting the meaning of the term (signifier);

- Text: The typography used is aligned with the content, reflecting the logic of the musical rhythm and the context of the *Art Deco* style. Textual elements are in harmony with each other;
- Page: We observe the visual importance of the elements "Ritmo" and "1," which highlight the name of the magazine and its emergence, conferring visual emphasis on the elements of the image.
- Pragmatic Dimension
 - Letter: In "Ritmo" and "1," we can perceive a greater graphic mass, resulting in greater visibility in the composition. This is not the case with "São Paulo - novembro de 35," because, proportionally, the text block is much smaller, having little visibility when compared to the rest of the composition. We identified no legibility and readability issues. The *Deco* style used in the typography, reinforced by the visual language of illustration, refers to European modernism, which adds contextual information about the typography;
 - Word: Aspects of the letter are repeated in words;
 - Text: The textual element "1," highlighted in the geometric center of the page, stresses the semantics of being the first issue of the magazine, emphasizing this information and privileging it in relation to others. The graphic delimitation contributes to the construction of this idea;
 - Page: The page, in its entirety, shows a clear influence of European modernism on Del Rio's choices. We can observe a visual impact on the contrast between the colors of the typography and the illustration, which have different weights. However, the black typography occupies the foreground, which reinforces the modernist ideal present in the shapes of the letters.

Considering the typography analysis on the cover of *Ritmo* magazine, we will analyze the image considering the pictorial graphic language of Goldsmith (1980).

- Syntactic Dimension
 - Unity: We notice pictorial marks of the *Deco* style in the image created, both in the illustration and in textual elements. This confers a graphic unit on the composition, highlighting the choice of visual language in the image;
 - Location: The graphic mass is clearly divided into two elements: illustration and text. The illustration, positioned at the center of the page, contrasts with the textual elements, which occupy less space, but still stand out in relation to the text blocks;
 - Emphasis: The size of the letters, along with the black color applied to them, somewhat emphasizes their presence on the cover. However, the

use of red highlights the element illustrated at the center of the composition. The optical and geometric centers highlight both an illustrated banana bunch and the textual element “1,” both centered on the image.

- Semantic Dimension
 - Unity: The graphic unit proposed in the image (considering its possible replicability) is systematic and fixed, reinforced by the modular idea in which the elements are distributed and interact with each other;
 - Location: The scale, proportion, and position of the elements of the page indicate that the image seeks to highlight the components that identify the magazine, the illustrated elements, and also the *Art Deco* style used in all elements of the page (except the textual element “São Paulo - novembro de 35”);
 - Emphasis: The visual course of the image, as well as the sense of reading, highlights the “Ritmo” and “1” letterings, as well as the illustration of the banana trees on the analyzed cover.
- Pragmatic Dimension
 - Unity: To understand the intentions behind the cover image of issue 1 of the *Ritmo* magazine, it is essential to recognize the *Deco* aesthetics. Del Rio imports the gradients, the typographic style, the high contrasts, and the grid modularity of the construction of modern European styles. It is worth resuming that *Art Deco* is a style linked to modernity in the early 20th century (especially in the 1920s and 1930s; Baines; Haslam, 2005). The context in which the magazine is positioned in the editorial field marks the peak of the international *Deco* aesthetic (Meggs; Purvis, 2009) and the effervescence of the nationalist agendas in Brazil (Fabris, 1994; Ferreira; Delgado, 2018);
 - Location: The location of the elements of the page seems to benefit the characteristics of the *Deco* style in the image. The dynamics between the textual and pictorial elements privilege the qualities of the *Deco* style, but does not leave aside the representative Brazilian element: the banana trees. This is because there is a very clear delimitation of the spaces that the elements occupy on the page, once again reinforced by a grid with strong European modernism influences;
 - Emphasis: The emphasis on the constructed image is divided between the textual element “1” and the illustration on the page. The textual element “1,” located at the center of the page, with its pointed terminals, is undoubtedly the first to be observed. Nonetheless, when reading the image of the analyzed cover again, the element that stands out is the illustration. This is represented in red, contrasting with the page voids (paper) and the typography’s black. This contrast helps to highlight the banana trees represented, especially because they are in a hue distinct from black and white (positive-negative/light-dark logic). In addition, the use of color is an assimilation of European modernist

aesthetics, which often uses primary colors in contrast to black and white in graphic manifestations.

However, the choice of the representation of banana trees on the cover evidences an intention to highlight an element so dear to Brazilianness (Homem de Melo; Ramos, 2011; Siqueira, 2023) and demonstrates, in a discursive way, a possible relationship between its editorial and the nationalist guidelines that circulated in Brazil since the end of the 19th century — encompassing the landmarks of the Modern Art Week, the *Pau Brasil* movement, and Anthropophagy. Conversely, although the banana tree became a symbol of Brazilianness in the period, as you can see in Siqueira (2023), the fruit is not originally Brazilian, it is native to Australia and India, and was brought by the Portuguese when invading the Brazilian territory. This process alone already imposes an anthropophagic layer to the sign of banana trees — which stands out among the others when speaking of the cultural identity at the time.

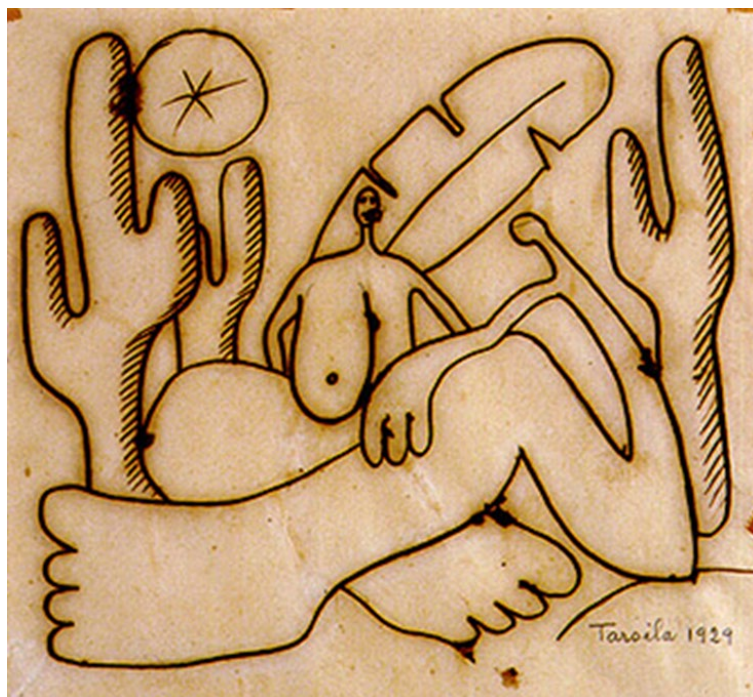
The fusion of the elements of *Art Deco* with the motif of banana trees — the notorious influence of modernism on the composition of the cover image of the magazine — leads to the approximation of anthropophagic discussions. The anthropophagic process can be identified by the assimilation of elements of styles external to our culture (international) and to ingestion, added to the elements of Brazilianness, represented here by the banana tree. The banana tree was identified in the discourse of the *Revista de Antropofagia* as an element representative of the idea of Brazilian cultural identity that had been sought after at the time. Homem de Melo and Ramos (2011, p. 193) state that “the theme of banana trees, so dear to Brazilianness, appears filtered by the characteristic geometrization of the *Deco* syntax” (free translation). The authors’ statement enables a direct association with anthropophagic thought and demonstrates that the thought of the fusion between elements of Brazilianness with motifs of other international styles already circulated among theorists of the field, although it was not mentioned as a specific manifestation. Nevertheless, it was usually associated with a maturation process of national graphic design, which we understand here as a manifestation, somewhat associated with the ideas of anthropophagy, which may have influenced both the design thinking and the aesthetics of the compositions.

In line with the aforementioned considerations, we have the work of Tarsila do Amaral, a great exponent of Visual Anthropophagy (Fabris, 1994) — which influenced Oswald de Andrade’s *Manifesto Antropófago* [Anthropophagus Manifesto]. Tarsila, in *Antropofagia*, 1929, unites the paintings *A Negra* and *Abaporu* in one composition to symbolize the ideas discussed by the group of anthropophagus intellectuals (Figure 11). It is worth noting the sign of the banana tree already represented by the artist in the center of the piece and close to the central figures (*A Negra* and *Abaporu*), highlighted by contrast and illumination in relation to the other elements that would be representing Mandacaru plants (which occupy the background). In this sense, we can point out that Tarsila privileges this sign in relation to others, reinforcing the idea that the banana tree was an important sign



Source: available from: www.encyclopedia.itaucultural.org.br. Access on: Feb. 24, 2025.
Figure 11. *Antropofagia*, 1929. Tarsila do Amaral.

for anthropophagic discourse and, consequently, the idea of Brazilianness that the group of intellectuals affiliated to Anthropophagy have been defending and circulating. Sketches by Tarsila do Amaral also reinforce the idea that the sign of the banana tree was thought to occupy the place it occupies on the canvas (Figure 12), in which the artist, from the first sketches, already evidences her intention to highlight and privilege signs in relation to others.



Source: available from: www.encyclopedia.itaucultural.org.br. Access on: Feb. 24, 2025.
Figure 12. Sketch of *Antropofagia*, 1929. Tarsila do Amaral.

However, this sign of Brazilianness (banana tree) was not restricted to the Arts; it also advanced through graphic design and was in force in Anthropophagy discourses. In Figure 13, we present other examples of covers of magazines published in São Paulo that adopted this sign in their issues. First, issue 20 of the *Arlequim* magazine, an important journal openly modernist. Subsequently, issue 379 of *A Cigarra*, which stood out for the influence on the São Paulo territory — having its national and international projection consolidated (Cruz, 1997).

We observe an intention in the images. In *Alerquim* (issue 20), the purpose is to privilege the sign of banana trees in the composition, a sign of prominence in the



Source: (a) Biblioteca Brasileira Guita e José Mindlin; (b) Biblioteca Nacional.

Figure 13. Examples of the use of banana trees in other São Paulo journals: (a) Cover of *Arlequim*, issue 20, 1928, Jean Gabriel Villin; (b) Cover of *A Cigarra*, issue 379, 1930, unidentified author.

work, being explored as an aesthetic and symbolic element, as occurs in the cover of *Ritmo*. In turn, in *A Cigarra* (issue 379), there is the use of the same visual resource that Tarsila uses in her work to highlight the illustrated banana tree, which stands out together with the central figure of the composition. This fact already shows that, not for nothing, this sign was represented on the cover of *Ritmo* magazine, also highlighted by color (red) to emphasize the verbal elements (typographical) arranged in the image. The visual resource used in issue 1 of *Ritmo* magazine also indicates a circulation of the banana tree sign between artists and illustrators of the

time. This fact supports the reflection that there was, to some extent, an absorption of the identity signs idealized by Anthropophagy in graphic design.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Studying a research object without being able to confer depth upon documentary research and its historical background is undoubtedly a challenge. However, we understand that to bring to light manifestations of graphic design and contribute to the construction of Brazilian graphic memory, it is necessary to revisit sources as far as possible, even those unknown by historiography — even more so when we observe the latent difficulty in establishing collections concerning the field of design and its memory. Investigations in the field of graphic design focused on culture are still scarce when we think of a continental country such as Brazil, but we believe that studies like ours can contribute to the construction of a national, collective, and graphic memory of our country.

Issue 1 of *Ritmo* magazine, object of our study, in turn, poses these challenges, but we deemed it very important to understand aspects of graphic language that may have contributed to the establishment of the idea of national culture disseminated by the Oswaldian Anthropophagy and known internationally even today. Indeed, we are considering a specific number that has its particularities, but in Siqueira (2023) we can observe that it is not an isolated fact when it comes to the territory of São Paulo. We observed that signs explored in Anthropophagy also circulated in graphic design, such as the banana tree chosen by Tarsila do Amaral to compose the work that brings with it the name of the Oswaldian ideology. This same sign reverberated by the modernist magazine *Arlequim* with prominence and explored between visual grids and the traditional geometrization of the journal. It was also evidenced in the cover of the magazine *A Cigarra*, as previously shown — having privileged location in relation to the other elements. And, more than five years after these manifestations, the *Ritmo* magazine used, in its release, the sign of banana trees without hesitation — demonstrating its strength in the Brazilian culture of the time.

This corroborates the circulation of ideas of Anthropophagy and assimilation/absorption of its discourses in the social circuits that interfered with the graphic design of the time. But beyond the state of São Paulo, the question remains about graphic manifestations of culture that may have circulated throughout the country. Did the Anthropophagy not influence new cultural movements? And more, did it not support the initiatives already circulating in Brazil? We assume that the response is positive, but we should investigate these manifestations to understand the dynamics in the field and their possible contribution to strengthening an idea of Brazilianness.

Here, we observed that *Ritmo* magazine exhibits the representation of the signs of national identity explored by Anthropophagy within a logic of the Deco synthesis, European heritage that spread throughout Brazil, also as a symbol of modernity. In addition, issue 1 of *Ritmo* magazine also consolidates the banana tree as an element of the Brazilian flora as a symbol of identity, being an example that can represent the graphic manifestation of anthropophagic thought in an iconic way.

Therefore, in this study, we sought to contribute to the perspective of the field of design aimed at Brazil, as there was an erasure of our manifestations prior to the emergence of concrete art in the country. Thus, it is necessary to fill and document these gaps in Brazilian design historiography. Following the starting points of Cardoso (2005), it is sought to understand these manifestations in national territory and to record, in some way, that which was disregarded by the great European and North American narratives, as observed in Meggs and Purvis (2009). In this sense, elucidating narratives with approaches such as microhistory can be a way to strengthen the Brazilian graphic memory and, thus, contribute to continuous counter-hegemonic narratives of erasure and silencing of cultures from the global South.

Finally, we highlight the first issue of the *Ritmo* magazine, an important object of study to understand the circuits of anthropophagic ideas as well as graphic manifestations of culture at the time. It should also be noted that the aforementioned issue demonstrates a manifestation of graphic design as a symbolic intellectual mediator that reinforces information and interpretations about a reality. Therefore, the case studied here is another indication of the importance of observing, reflecting on, and questioning the role of design and designers in the formation of discourses within society.

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Conflict of interests: nothing to declare – **Financial support:** National Council for Scientific and Technological Development and Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel.

Authors' contributions: Siqueira, L. C.: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. Braga, M. C.: Conceptualization, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

