

## Discussing the pillars of the Brazilian Tropicália Movement: The graphic design of Rogério Duarte

Juliana F. Duque<sup>1</sup>; Luciana Inhan<sup>2</sup>

Recibido: 17 de octubre de 2019 / Aceptado: 16 de mayo de 2020

**Abstract.** This article addresses the Tropicalist movement, the iconic Brazilian countercultural phenomenon from the late 1960s. The discussion focuses on its main visual manifestation: graphic design. We aim to demonstrate that the work of graphic designer Rogério Duarte is one of the structural pillars of this anti-establishment movement. Tropicália is often associated with music, while other contributions such as graphic design are less known or taken as a later visual response. We propose and present an analysis of the role of Duarte at the creation of the movement and its development during the late 1960s and early 1970s. His critical vision and knowledge of the Brazilian cultural mosaic led to the construction of one of the widest countercultural movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a range of manifestations that included not only graphic design and music, but also theatre, cinema, and the visual arts. Tropicália was indeed more political than the American and British psychedelic manifestations, in which it was visually inspired. It was also more than a cultural movement or an anti-academic manifestation: it was a means to criticize and work around the Brazilian government and its oppression. **Keywords:** Tropicália; graphic design; Rogério Duarte; counterculture.

## [es] Discutiendo los pilares del movimiento brasileño de la Tropicália: El diseño gráfico de Rogério Duarte

**Resumen.** Este artículo aborda el movimiento Tropicalista, el icónico fenómeno contracultural brasileño de finales de los años 1960. La discusión se centra en su principal manifestación visual: el diseño gráfico. Nuestro objetivo es demostrar que el trabajo del diseñador gráfico Rogério Duarte es uno de los pilares estructurales de este movimiento contra el sistema. La Tropicália es frecuentemente asociada a la música, mientras que otras contribuciones, como el diseño gráfico, son menos conocidas o se toman como una respuesta visual posterior. Proponemos y presentamos un análisis del papel de Duarte en la creación del movimiento y su desarrollo a finales de los años 1960 y principio de los 1970. Su visión crítica y el conocimiento del mosaico cultural brasileño llevaron a la construcción de uno de los movimientos contraculturales más amplios del siglo XX, con manifestaciones que incluían no solo el diseño gráfico y la música, sino también el teatro, el cine y las artes visuales. Tropicália fue, en efecto, más política que las manifestaciones psicodélicas estadounidenses y británicas, donde se inspiró visualmente. También representó más que un movimiento cultural o una manifestación anticadémica: fue un medio para criticar y trabajar en torno al gobierno brasileño y su opresión. **Palabras clave:** Tropicália; diseño gráfico; Rogério Duarte; contracultura.

<sup>1</sup> Universidade de Lisboa (Portugal)  
E-mail: [jduque@campus.ul.pt](mailto:jduque@campus.ul.pt)  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5768-9377>

<sup>2</sup> Universidade de Lisboa (Portugal)  
E-mail: [lucianainhan@gmail.com](mailto:lucianainhan@gmail.com)  
<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2972-3627>

**Sumario:** 1. Introduction. 2. Tropicália: more than Brazilian counterculture. 3. Hints of Antropophagy and of Concretist Poetry. 4. The importance of the Psychedelic Input. 5. Discussion. References.

**Cómo citar:** Duque, J.F.; Inhan, L. (2020) Discussing the pillars of the Brazilian Tropicália Movement: The graphic design of Rogério Duarte. *Arte, Individuo y Sociedad* 32(4), 951-968.

## 1. Introduction

Tropicalismo wanted to project itself as the triumph over... the horrifying humiliation represented by capitulation to the narrow interests of dominant groups, whether at home or internationally. It was also an attempt to face up to the apparent coincidence, in this tropical country, of a countercultural wave emerging at the same as the vogue in authoritarian regimes. (Caetano Veloso)<sup>3</sup>

The 1960s and the 1970s were a period of intense experimentation and development of new visual, musical and social narratives. Many of these social, cultural, and artistic manifestations, from the Civil Rights Movement to Psychedelia, were countercultural, i.e., they were arising against the establishment. Tropicália, one of these manifestations, emerged in Brazil during the late 1960s as a countercultural movement with an intense artistic nature. Its uniqueness relied on the way it melted the popular with the avant-garde, in a fusion of foreigner and Brazilian influences (Goffman & Joy, 2005).

The movement tends to be immediately related to its well-known musical axis and main interpreters – Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil. Also agreed to be important Tropicália members are Gal Costa, Maria Bethânia, Tom Zé, and the experimental rock group “Os Mutantes” – with Rita Lee, Arnaldo Baptista and Sérgio Dias – along with composer and maestro Rogério Duprat, responsible for their musical arrangements.

The reason for this association seems to be quite clear: the movement was indeed boosted and widely spread by its music, just as what happened with other countercultural movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Phenomena such as the 1960s American and British countercultures had music as one of their major manifestations. One can immediately think about the impact and influence that musicians such as the Beatles, Patti Smith, or Bob Dylan had not only at the time but also afterwards. The same has happened with Punk and Ecstasy countercultures during the 1980s and 1990s, respectively. After all, what is Punk without the Sex Pistols or the Ramones? Could the Ecstasy underground have survived without the rave parties?

Albeit the great importance of Tropicalist musicians, it seems that the movement treasures another figure. Like a hidden-gem, there is a participant of the movement that despite recent studies is still little mentioned: the Bahian graphic artist Rogério Duarte.

Rogério Duarte (1939-2016) was part of the circle of the Tropicalist musicians, as he was often present in early conversations and debates. Actually, his creative

<sup>3</sup> Caetano Veloso (2002). In Goffman, K., & Joy, D. (2005). *Counter Culture through the ages: From Abraham to Acid House*. New York: Villard Books, p. 337.

and activist works seem to have had a great impact on the formation of the overall phenomenon (Deball & Raeder, 2013; Veloso, C., 1997; Teixeira, N. M., 2012). The legacy of Duarte – or his contribution to the movement – is closely related to two skills of his: a critical attitude as well as an acute artistic vision and understanding. The articulation of such abilities, that he transposes to his graphic design, may have turned him into one of the mentors of the Tropicalist movement. Starting in the late 1960s, he disseminated his Tropicalist perspective throughout artworks for several album covers, posters, and other printed media.

Perhaps one of the earliest graphic materials conveying the Tropical ethos was the layout of the magazine *Movimento* – an editorial project started in March 1962. With the work for the magazine, Duarte wanted to both achieve a greater design effectiveness and to grant accessibility to the public (Fuchs, Almeida, Fialho, 2017). His intentions are revealed in every detail of his graphic approach. The project was free from excesses, being simply driven by a grid divided into three columns. Contents were also basically separated into three main blocks: image, body text (with a serif font), and the title along with the name of the author (with a sans-serif font). There was room for “breathing” in the composition, that is, there were blank areas providing lightness and balance to the layout.

The cover design of the first issue (Fig.1) featured a picture of students entering and leaving the University of Brazil (Universidade do Brasil). The photograph, manipulated so as to show only shades of blue and white in high contrast, can be understood as a recall of Warhol’s Pop experiments. The layout was composed entirely with sans-serif fonts, with the text divided into two left-aligned blocks. The title of the magazine was displayed at the top of the cover while the edition number was displayed in the footer, in the same size as the first letter of the title. The description, as well as the month and year of publication were placed immediately below, although in a smaller size. This structure was maintained throughout the subsequent editions, with slight variations. Similarly, the practice of visual planning from a regular/geometric structure can be seen in his later Tropical work and will thus be discussed in this paper. Such a practice stems from the Bauhausian universal language “based on the values of clarity, rational organization, and functional efficiency” Drucker & McVarish (2011, p. 259). As one of the first publications about modern graphic design published in Brazil, the magazine *Movimento*, designed by Duarte, determined a starting point for Tropicália and to the way it would be later understood as a countercultural movement (Raeder, 2018).

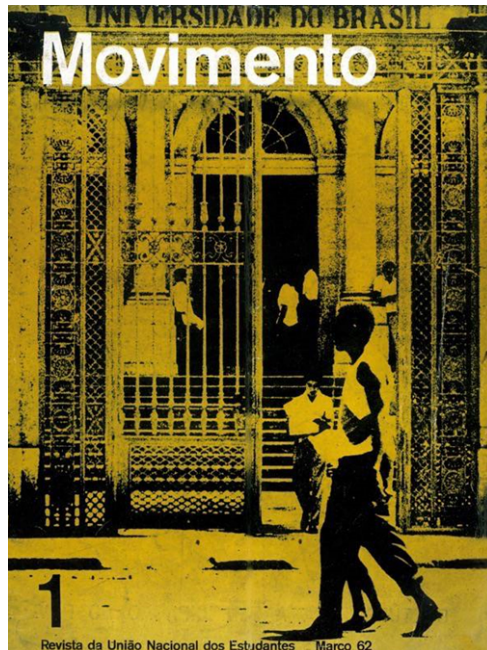


Figure 1. Cover by Rogério Duarte for the magazine *Movimento*, issue 1, March 1962. (Source: Arte!Brasileiros).

The 1960s were also the period in which Rogério Duarte moved to Rio de Janeiro from the northeastern state of Bahia. He attended the School of Fine Arts, where he was a student of important design masters such as Alexandre Wollner and Max Bense, being also an intern of Aloísio Magalhães. He soon started to be involved with political issues during this period. His activism derives from his role as art director of the *Agitação e Propaganda* department<sup>4</sup> of *Centro Popular de Cultura – CPC*<sup>5</sup> from *União Nacional dos Estudantes – UNE*<sup>6</sup>. While in this position, he designed posters and other print materials for their events. Narlan Matos Teixeira (2012, p. 41) believes that the creative freedom provided by the CPC, helped Duarte developing a visual language that would culminate in the aesthetics of *Tropicália*.<sup>7</sup> After leaving the students' movement, the designer would also work as creative director at *Editora Vozes* in the late 1960s, one of the country's largest literary publishers of that period.

The underestimation or unfamiliarity with the work and role of Rogério Duarte within *Tropicália* appears to be stronger outside Brazil, where the movement itself is still little known to authors and academics. For instance, there are publications from non-Brazilian authors, such as *Counterculture Through the Ages: From Abraham to the Acid House* (2005), that discuss the importance of *Tropicália* and how it is “unfairly ignored” (Goffman & Joy, 2005, p. 337). However, neither Rogério Duarte

<sup>4</sup> Agitation and Propaganda.

<sup>5</sup> Popular Center of Culture.

<sup>6</sup> National Union of Students.

<sup>7</sup> Much of Duarte's work developed for CPC was lost in the criminal fire by extreme right-wing groups in the UNE headquarters on April 1, 1964 – the day of the military coup.

nor the Tropicalist graphic design, are ever mentioned. Something similar happens with *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the Emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture* (2001) where Duarte is barely cited, appearing here and there as an “instigator” of the Bahian group – as most members were from the State of Bahia. There are even some Brazilian books such as *Tropicália, Alegoria, Alegria* (1979) that do not mention Rogério Duarte at all.

One can agree that “instigation” was an important part of Duarte’s contribution to the phenomenon. He did incite both Veloso and Gil towards what later became the Tropicalist movement. However, the very term “instigating” may be misleading or reductive, placing Duarte as an outsider who had little influence on the movement. On the contrary, the graphic designer was part of the group – let us not forget about the meetings between the young men, which consisted of “brainstormings”, or discussions, of artistic and political nature. It is known that “they organized gatherings of like-minded artists and activists, seizing on a spirit of collaborative creation” (Calirman, 2012, p. 37). Caetano Veloso himself confirmed that he talked a lot with Rogério Duarte about Brazilian popular music between 1965-66, along with other topics such as philosophy, mass media and pop art (Veloso, n.d.). Those talks were focused on what he called “the lack of adventure capacity from the creator of popular music in Brazil”, that at the time was still following a pattern of politically correctness and an official “good taste” (Veloso, n.d.).

*Rogério Duarte, Marginalia I*, a monograph by Mariana Castillo Deball and Manuel Raeder (2013), followed by an exhibition in with the same name, seems to be the work that better acknowledges the role of Duarte inside the Brazilian counterculture. It functions as a survey of his work as graphic designer, attempting to understand the role he had within Tropicália. This research points out the mass-produced nature of Duarte’s work as a possible reason why he has remained in the background. On the other hand, it does not focus on the overall influence he had in the advent of the movement.

The artistic career and political views of Duarte were both important to the creation of the Tropicalist movement and would quickly become a problem for the Brazilian dictatorship. His affiliation with the Communist Party (1962) allowed him to fade the boundaries between graphic design and the political sphere. His passage through the UNE, the Popular Center for Culture, and the Modern Art Museum in Rio de Janeiro were also important to increase his professional experience and to shape both his political and artistic visions. It was indeed at the Modern Art Museum that he met visual artist Helio Oiticica, in what configured a subtle key-moment for the rise of Tropicália. Together with Oiticica, Duarte developed two important events in 1968: *Amostragem da Cultura e Loucura Brasileira* – a meeting with the purpose of debating the boundaries between art and the counterculture – and *Apocalipopôtese*, an apotheosis/hypothesis/apocalypse collective exhibition held in Rio de Janeiro.

The events were attended by artists, sociologists, cinema directors, critics, and other public figures such as singer Caetano Veloso and the dancers of Mangueira samba school. The intention was to create a debate about the aesthetics of the Brazilian culture and its relationship with the international vanguards. They discussed about high and low culture, the popular and the erudite, as well as the concepts of beauty and ugliness. Both events stimulated and promoted a high degree of experimentation and improvisation – subjects that were revisited in order to build the Tropicalist Movement in all its strands (Teixeira, 2012).

Both Duarte and Oiticica were among the authors of *Marginália: Arte e cultura na idade da pedrada* (It reads: *Marginália: art and culture in the stone-throwing age*), an article featured on *O Cruzeiro* magazine. It was published the day after the promulgation of the infamous AI-5 decree (Dunn, 2001). This was a turning point to Brazil's political and social scenarios, as AI-5 consisted on an ordinance that established the loss of civil rights on one hand and gave limitless powers to those who ruled, on the other.

Duarte's connections to the Brazilian left wing cost his freedom, being one of the first Tropicalists arrested by the dictatorship. After being also tortured, the graphic artist got a psychotic outbreak, getting in and out from the psychiatric wing of the *Engenho de Dentro Hospital* for the two following years (Rodrigues, 2008). Despite the trauma, he continued his work, maintaining a conceptual and singular language in graphic design.

## 2. Tropicália: more than Brazilian counterculture

The term Tropicália was born from the homonymous art installation of Hélio Oiticica. The installation was part of the exhibition *Nova Objetividade Brasileira*<sup>8</sup>, held at the Modern Art Museum of Rio de Janeiro in 1967. Oiticica (1937-1980) was already considered a challenging and inventive artist at that time. With his innovative – sometimes radical – work, he was able to develop the Brazilian contemporary art (Gallagher, n.d.). From 1967 onwards, his work “started incorporating and questioning tropical stereotypes” (Suárez, 2014, p. 295).

The Tropicália installation consisted on an improvised labyrinthine environment on the gardens of the museum. The result was similar to a “favela” (slum) surrounded by plants, parrots, poem-objects, and parangolés – capes made with colored fabrics, banners, and flags ready to wear or be carried by the participant. For Oiticica, the work only existed if the public participated (Freitas, 2004). The visitor of Tropicália could walk barefoot over gravel, sand, and even water, having a sensorial experience. A TV was plugged at the very end of the path, symbolizing a confrontation between modernity and the tropical scenario.

The name of the installation would later be given to one of Veloso's new songs. According to Veloso himself, the photographer and director Luiz Carlos Barreto was the one who came up with the name “Tropicália” for the song, having listened to the composition just after visiting Oiticica's exhibition (Veloso, 1997). Since then, journalists started to refer to Veloso and his fellow musicians as Tropicalists. The movement soon spread with repercussions throughout several areas of the Brazilian cultural production, embodying a large and heterogeneous way (Napolitano & Villaça, 1998). Tropicália reached music, cinema, visual arts, design, fashion, theater, and even the television.

Rogério Duarte did not work only with the musical axis of the Tropicalist phenomenon. On the contrary, he also worked closely to Glauber Rocha, Tropicália's major cinema symbol – Rocha was also an influence for the musicians Gil and Veloso, with his movie *Terra em Transe*. The film can be interpreted as a metaphor of the political and social situation of Brazil between 1960-66. The characters –

<sup>8</sup> New Brazilian Objectivity.

military, intellectuals, politicians, and entrepreneurs – are in the middle of power dispute. The exhibition of the film was forbidden all over the country from April 1967, as it was considered too subversive and irreverent towards the church. Veloso considered that the aesthetics of this low budget movie, with its “ugly” and shocking scenes, represented the kind of thought that would lead the movement forward. The film was making Brazil showing and seeing itself as it was already seen by the rest of the world (Goulart, et al, 2013).

Rogério Duarte was the graphic designer who made the poster for *Terra em Transe*, as well as of several other Rocha’s works. The poster still presents some features of constructivist influence, such as the type of black & white photomontage contrasted by a bright shade of red and green. However, Duarte surprises with a fresh and “explosive” layout style and typographic composition, avoiding the rational geometrization of the forms. His typographic choice drifts away from the International Style, once it consists of a handwritten font that strongly “bleeds” towards the margins of the poster. The text snippets, containing the film credits, also flow towards the margins – the credits are placed in the background which is under a red ellipse. The horizontality of the title takes a slight upward diagonal that is repeated by the very characters of the film, who are inserted in the central part of the poster and are presented oppositely, just like figures on a deck of cards. As a result, the layout creates a spiral reading movement – a feature that will be repeated in other works of Duarte.



Figure 2. Movie poster by Rogério Duarte, for Glauber Rocha’s *Terra em Transe*, 1967. (Source: Cinemateca Brasileira).

Despite trying to break away from the Brazilian artistic production of that period, Tropicalists were still highly influenced by Bossa Nova, Roberto Carlos, and Luiz Gonzaga. On the other hand, The Beatles and the British rock of that time, as well as Jimi Hendrix and the American acid rock, were some of the international references that were drawing the attention of Brazilian musicians.

The intention of Tropicalists was that of fusing their many influences: international – such as psychedelic rock, popular and classic music — and Brazilian. The latter is marked by its multiplicity, since there is no single Brazilian identity. Nonetheless, Duarte sought to find the symbolic representations of his country in the imagery of the tropical paradise and in his own northeastern roots, including Brega culture that was considered tasteless, shoddy, and kitsch – related to a cheap production characterized by sentimental lyrics. The influences were complemented with a behavior that was close to the hippie culture: long and blowsy hair, bright colored clothing – artisanal and mixed with Indian characteristics – and bell bottom jeans used by both men and women (Duque & Inhan, 2018). The latter item is an example of the sexual revolution that was going on – there was an overall urge for change. In addition, the artists were carrying Brazilian symbols embroidered on the garments or used as props. Those symbols included banana prints, necklaces made of seashells and beads, or leather hats like those of the *cangaceiros* – a type of bandit of the Northeast – together with the use of bright colors. This colorful paraphernalia was highlighting the nationalist discussion of that moment (Barros, 2016). According to Caetano Veloso, Tropicalists “took in the hippie movement, pop music, the British invasion, student movements in the U.S. and France”. They “had all this material to discuss and reflect upon” (Veloso & Dunn, 1996, p. 122).

### 3. Hints of Antropophagy and of Concretist Poetry

The mixture of references, its appropriation and further reinterpretations represented an anthropophagic behavior, a concept that was becoming trendy at that period, having influenced directly the Tropicália movement.

In the words of Caetano Veloso and Christopher Dunn, Tropicália establishes “a certain strategy toward cultural production which ‘cannibalizes’ both local and foreign styles” (1996, p. 118). Oswaldo de Andrade created this concept in the *Antropophagic Manifest* of 1928, during the beginning of Brazil’s modern period. The aim was that of “trying to resolve the tensions of cultural colonialism” (Goffman, 2005, p. 337). The manifesto, according to Veloso and Dunn, was “a sort of blueprint for Brazilian cultural production in which European high culture, especially the avant-garde, would be critically ‘devoured’ without effacing local specificity” (1996, p. 118). The poetic-literary movement had the *Antropophagic Magazine* as its main vehicle of dissemination. Oswaldo was not denying the international influences; he was rather incorporating or “devouring cultural inflows from abroad” (Dunn, 2001, p. 6). The goal of this method was to create a Brazilian cultural reinvention, that is, a typical Brazilian art. This process was already discussed in his *Manifest for Pau-Brasil Poetry* from 1924, in which he talked about an “export culture”, just as that of *pau-brasil* – a type of tree abundant during the period of the European discovery of Brazil. The aim was to be able to influence the international artistic production



(Barros, 2016; Julião, 2017). Oswaldo de Andrade, with this idea of exportation, meant that it was possible to create at an already international level (Veloso & Dunn, 1996).

Still within the literary field, one can acknowledge the importance of Concretist poetry of the 1950s as an influence for Tropicalia. The lyrics of Tropicalist songs were being composed through verbal and linguistic games, filled with new assembly and word-fragmentation techniques that suggested puns and jokes (Perrone, 1985). This kind of appropriation emerged also within graphic design through the work of Rogério Duarte. He appropriated the modernist aesthetic previously widespread by the Bauhaus and the School of Ulm, being inspired by the symmetry of geometric forms. He got in contact with these concepts at *Escolinha de Artes do Brasil* (Brazil's Little School of Arts), during classes with Tomas Maldonado, who once was the director of the school of Ulm. Designer Max Bill, former student of Bauhaus and also former director of Ulm, is another figure that stood out in this context, influencing directly the Brazilian Concretist artists with whom Duarte also established contacts. Swiss typography, already widespread in Brazil, was then applied into the “tropical” context through the use of vivid and contrasting colors. This “encounter” between Duarte and Bill<sup>9</sup> – or the Tropical and the Modern – is reflected in Duarte’s graphic style. An example of such dialogue is that of the design for the record cover of Jorge Mautner – for the homonymous album (Fig. 3).

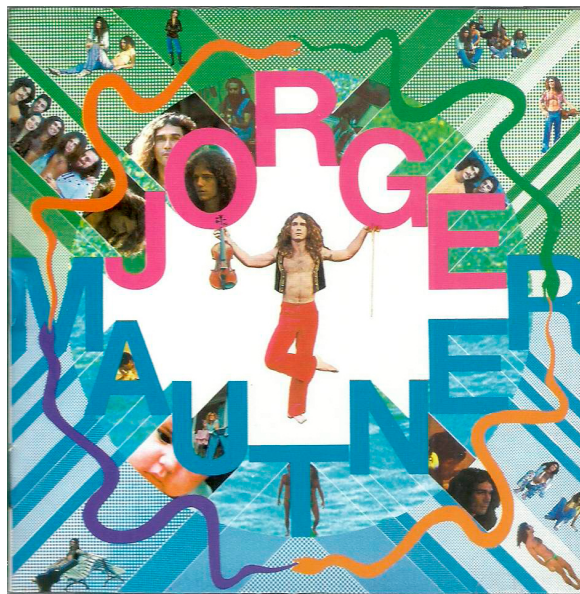


Figure 3. Record cover by Rogério Duarte, for Jorge Mautner, 1974 (left). (Source: Mello, C. H. (2008). *O design gráfico brasileiro: anos 60*. São Paulo: Cosac Naify).

<sup>9</sup> See: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O138134/olympische-spiele-munchen-1972-poster-bill-max/>

According to Rodrigues (2008, p. 199), the graphic language adopted by Duarte is “anarchic and unconventional”, being simultaneously an attempt to get closer to the public and a detachment of the traditional academic rigidity. Manuel Raeder, curator of the exhibition *Marginália I*, held at the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro in 2015, believes that the work of the Rogério Duarte was based on the anthropophagic manifesto – something that allowed him to create a visual language that would later be considered the aesthetic of Tropicália (Rio, 2015).

In 1965, just a few years before the rise of Tropicália, Duarte published a text in the magazine *Civilização Brasileira* (Brazilian Civilization), entitled “Notes on industrial design”. Here, he wrote about the relation between the subject and the object in the design process as something “operative”, or even “consummative”. For Duarte, that relationship was “anthropophagic”. In the same text, he also dealt with issues related to the aforementioned Bauhaus and Ulm Schools, to communication and mass products, and even to American graphic design. Those were questions that already exceeded his reality as a professional graphic designer and that eventually influenced him directly – either by adopting or subverting them – in the creation of the Tropicalist graphic language. That is what Almeida, Fuchs and Kaminski (2018, p. 72) consider “an underlying argumentative line on Tropicalist and postmodern aesthetics on Brazilian soil”.

Some of his designs reflect the anthropophagic behavior through the way he melted diverse influences, in order to produce his distinguished graphic style. As Veloso & Dunn (1996, p. 126) put it, “in cultural cannibalism, you eat everything there is and then produce something new”.

One of the most notorious examples is perhaps the cover design for the album *Ogum & Xangô* of Gil e Jorge (1975) (Fig.4). The design strategy adopted by Duarte plays, first of all, with Umbanda, an old Brazilian religion from the state of Bahia (Duque & Inhan, 2018). His intention here was to create the layout through an amalgam of national and international references that were processed, “shaken”, re-thought, and finally re-presented to the public. In this case, he established a dialogue between cultural inputs of Bahia and the bright American psychedelic graphic design. *Ogum & Xangô* – both Umbanda entities – were represented by two conch shells – a type of seashell used as garments and also to foresee the future. On the other hand, the psychedelic influence blossomed through an overlap of both vivid and colored yarns and dots that formed a sort of musical notation embracing the seashells (Duque & Inhan, 2018). As for the background, it held five vertical bands that resembled those of guitar arms, covered with colored strings that played with the foreground. The title of the album and the names of the musicians were placed respectively at the top and bottom of the central vertical axis of the composition, marking an axis of symmetry for the layout. This kind of “geometrization”, perhaps remnants of the modern style he was going against, was a feature that would be present in many of his works.



Figure 4. Record cover by Rogério Duarte, for *Gil & Jorge: Ogum, Xangô*, 1975. (Source: Gilberto Gil's official website).

#### 4. The importance of the Psychedelic Input

Psychedelia, with a fascination for sensorial perception and the multiplicity of possible effects over it, is one of the main international influences of Tropicália. Within the psychedelic phenomenon of the late 1960s, either in the United States (US) or the United Kingdom (UK), the musical scene was inseparable from graphic design. The same would later happen with Tropicália. Such a liaison may derive from the fact that many musicians worked also as graphic artists (or were somehow related to graphic design) and vice versa (Mellor, 1996). It is thus important to note that Rogério Duarte, besides the meetings with Veloso, Gil, and the other members of Tropicália, was also working close to the music world, writing lyrics for Tropicalist musicians such as Caetano Veloso or Gal Costa (Reader, 2018).

Psychedelia's manifestations started to spread both from the United States' west coast and from the United Kingdom, creating different music styles and graphic design approaches in what comes to color and shapes. According to Miles (2016, p. 105), "in both Britain and the US, the underground scene quickly grew big enough to develop its own alternative press, new schools of cartoon comic art, poster design and illustration, and, most of all, rock music". This phenomenon developed its own communicational channels, being fed by a will for existential and artistic experimentation. As a result, it created a graphic language that eventually expanded the very limits of graphic design (Hollis, 1994). Although being influenced by the psychedelic manifestations of the two places, Caetano Veloso stated that Tropicalists "digested large helpings of the North American counterculture of the 1960s" (Veloso & Dunn, 1996, p. 118). If the Vietnam War and the fear of nuclear weapons were

important elements for the US-UK counterculture and psychedelia, the authoritarian regime in Brazil was definitely the main boosting event behind Tropicália.

By taking a closer look to both psychedelic graphic design – especially posters and record covers from the US and UK – and the work of Rogério Duarte, it is possible to observe the influence of the first upon the design of the Brazilian artist. However, while his work seems to get hints from the visuals of the foreigner Psychedelia, Duarte was still able to create his own style, eventually changing the panorama of Brazilian graphic design (Duque & Inhan, 2018). With this strategy, Duarte drifted away from the widespread Swiss style – then paradigm of cover design – with an innovative approach in search for new a notion of “Brasildade”, i.e., a specific Brazilian perspective. His most psychedelic layouts are perhaps the album covers for Caetano Veloso (1968) and Gilberto Gil (1969). The acid colors, undulating/bright patterns and fonts reflect a psychedelic-like atmosphere, providing a vibrant impact to both pieces. This graphic language shows that Tropicália, just like Psychedelia, “is not economic nor simple. It is complex and allegoric” (Rodrigues, 2008, p. 189). Rogério Duarte, with this irreverent design style, ended up overturning the Brazilian rationalist modernism<sup>10</sup>, whose aesthetical purity was well established, for instance, on the black and red record covers of Bossa Nova musicians.<sup>11</sup>

We analyzed several works from Rogério Duarte, establishing a comparison with the international psychedelic graphic production – either American or British. The discussed examples summarize that analysis and reveal that Duarte both appropriated and reconfigured many visual and methodologic characteristics of the psychedelic scenario. At first sight one can spot some similarities between the psychedelic layouts and those of the Tropicalist Designer. The *Oz Magazine* layout<sup>12</sup> for issue 3 and Veloso’s album cover (Fig.5, left), use illustration as the main element. In both cases illustration embraces and interacts with a picture that is displayed at the center of the layout. However, Duarte’s illustration, despite featuring a female figure as often happens within the psychedelic scene, is more oriented towards a Pop-like style, rather than to the decadent style of Psychedelic graphic design. Duarte draws with a cartoonish style, closer to commix and to Pop works such as those of Roy Lichtenstein rather than to Alphonse Mucha or Aubrey Beardsley, whose influence over the American and British psychedelic graphic designers is evident. The typographic work in the album cover of Caetano Veloso is also similar to that used by psychedelic graphic designers, just like the one employed on the San Francisco Oracle cover.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Interview to Rogério Duarte by Rodrigues (2008).

<sup>11</sup> Developed by the recording company Cast, this rational style basically used photos of the musicians in high contrast, red circles, and interventions in the source used for the artist’s name.

<sup>12</sup> See: <https://recollection.com.au/collections/oz-magazine/gallery#43>

<sup>13</sup> See: <https://archive.org/details/SanFranciscoOracleVol.1No.12D.D.TeoliJr.A.C.1>



Figure 5. Album covers by Rogério Duarte, for *Caetano Veloso*, 1968 (left) and *Gilberto Gil*, 1969 (right). (Source: Mello, C. H. (2008). *O design gráfico brasileira: anos 60*. São Paulo: Cosac Naify).

On the other hand, the geometric pattern applied to Gilberto Gil's album cover (Fig.5, right) denotes an influence of a more acid-like psychedelic style, such as that of Victor Moscoso's or Wes Wilson's poster style<sup>14</sup>. The colored stripes mean to grant movement to the layout and to play with visual perception. Movement is an important, and recurrent, feature on Duarte's work. He systematically tries to bring the idea of movement to the center of his compositions. We can observe this method not only in Gilberto Gil's album cover but also in many of his posters, including the already mentioned *Terra em Transe* (Fig.2) and *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (Fig.6).

<sup>14</sup> See: <https://uh8yh30148rpize52xh0q1o6i-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/1979-34-38-Matt-Flynn.jpg>



Figure 6. Movie poster by Rogério Duarte, for Glauber Rocha's *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol*, 1964. (Cinemateca Brasileira).

This centralization of the idea of movement has been reflected in both psychedelic posters and album covers, together with an exaggerated contrast in colors. The aim of psychedelic graphic designers, such as Wilson or Moscoso, was to create “visual animations” that could fulfill the need of transgression. Duarte, himself controversial and provocative, as recalled by Raeder (2018), applied a similar technique on his *Meteorango Kid*, *Herói Intergaláctico* movie poster (Fig. 7). The “intergalactic” title already suggests an unconventional experience. As told in his essay *Notes on Industrial Design*, Duarte wanted to create solutions that provided answers to our demands, either coming from one's bodies or from one's souls. In the case of this poster, the answer is given through the idea of motion – a swirl that evokes an outer space journey. The vortex expands from the center of the poster and embraces the typography. Every element in the layout is part of that voyage.

The difference on the approach to the notion of movement here is that in Psychedelia this concept is part of a whole hallucinating purpose – the transcendental experience often related to LSD. Movement, in Psychedelia, is part of gatherings such as the several Be-ins, Sit-ins, the psychotropic Kool-Aid trip parties, and even to LSD endorsers such as Ken Kesey and Timothy Leary. However, in the two cases, there is an uttermost urge for change and a strong need to get rid of both the aesthetical pressures of modernism and the oppressions – although different – of the establishment.



Figure 7. Movie poster by Rogério Duarte, for André Luiz Oliveira's *Meteorango Kid, Herói Intergaláctico* (1969). (Source: Mello, C. H. (2008). *O design gráfico brasileiro: anos 60*. São Paulo: Cosac Naify).

## 5. Discussion

After looking at some of the most important works of Rogério Duarte, we are able to argue that his work was a great contribution to the Tropicalist aesthetic and to the movement itself, even before the birth of its musical manifestation. Overall, he was concerned with the creation of a new aesthetic that could better reflect the Brazilian culture.

Rogério Duarte made use of the innovative sense of interdisciplinarity that emerged during that period, in agreement with the poetic-ideological discussions that were going on within underground circles. In this context, art got together with music, graphic design, fashion and poetry, in what Figueiredo (2000 Apud Rodrigues, 2006) defined as the moment of contamination within the various artistic fields.

When asked about the movement and if he considered his work as a visual answer of Tropicália, Duarte stated that it was actually the opposite (Longo, 2016). In other words, perhaps Duarte considered that the movement evolved from his own work. Caetano Veloso, aligned with this perspective, stated that if not for his conversations with Duarte, Tropicália may have never existed. Furthermore, the musician stated that Duarte was one of the most important persons regarding his personal, intellectual and aesthetical formation, and one of the deepest, despite less known, figures of the Brazilian counterculture (Lima, 2016).

It thus possible to argue that the designer was not just one of the many participants of Tropicália, but was instead one of his mentors, in whom the essence of the movement already existed. That is possibly the reason why Duarte continued to develop his Tropicalist aesthetic even after the end of its then famous musical sphere.

Nonetheless, Rogério Duarte stated that he did not mean to overturn the Brazilian design of that period. Instead, what happened, according to him, was a natural consequence of both change and evolution. He thus viewed himself inside the continuum of the history of graphic design (*In memorian — Rogério Duarte*, 2016). Despite these considerations, his poster design and record covers seem to have actually overturn the graphic design of that moment, although not intentionally. Such circumstance derives from the use of the symbolic, the metaphorical, and the allegorical as elements of rupture. His work contrasted in form and structure with the Swiss rationalism, that was at the time the design paradigm in Brazil – including the music industry. His compositional freedom, bright colors, and high contrast, together with Brazilian cultural elements, dear to him, composed a brand-new style of graphic design. He influenced several other designers such as Luciano Figueiredo, Oscar Ramos, Aldo Luiz and Kélio Rodrigues, as argued by Rodrigues (2006; 2008).

The meeting of the ideas of Rogério Duarte with the artistic experimentations of Helio Oiticica, and the new musical productions of Gil and Veloso, gave rise to the most striking moment of the Brazilian counterculture. His work both structured and shaped one of the richest countercultural movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## References

- Almeida, F. S., Fuchs, I. M., & Kaminski, R. (2018, January to June). A tropicália de Rogério Duarte em “Caetano Veloso” e “Gilberto Gil” (1968). *Projética*, 9(1), 69-86.
- Barros, P. M. (2016). Tropicália: contracultura, moda e comportamento em fins da década de 60. *Dobras – revista da Associação Brasileira de Estudos de Pesquisas em Moda*, 9(2), 160-177.
- Calirman, C. (2012). Interventions in the social landscape: Parallels between Brazilian artistic actions and the Chilean “Avanzada”. *Notes in the History of Art*, 31(3), 36-42. Retrieved March 9, 2019, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23208593>
- In memorian — Rogério Duarte* [Television broadcast]. (2016). Brasil. Retrieved March 4, 2019, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2zyAJemuew>
- Deball, M. C. & Raeder, M. (2013). *Marginália1*. Berlin: Bom Dia Boa Tarde Boa Noite.
- Drucker, J., & McVarish, E. (2001). *Graphic design history. A critical guide*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Duarte, R. (1965). Notas sobre o desenho industrial. *Revista Civilização Brasileira*, (4), 227-247.
- Duque, J., & Inhan, L. (2018). The graphic design of Tropicália as a confluence territory: Between the northeast of Brazil and Psychedelia of the 1960s. In *Designa 2018. Territory Proceedings. International Conference On Design Research* (pp. 245–253). Covilhã: Universidade Beira do Interior.
- Dunn, C. (2001). *Brutality Garden: Tropicália and the emergence of a Brazilian Counterculture*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.



- Freitas, A. (2004). Poéticas políticas: as artes plásticas entre o golpe de 64 e o AI-5. *História: Questões & Debates*, (40), 59-90.
- Fuchs, I. M.; Almeida, F. S., & Fialho, F. A. P. (2017). Rogério Duarte e a revista Movimento 1962. *Triades em Revista - Transversalidades | Design | Linguagens*, 6(2). Retrieved March 4, 2019, from <https://triades.emnuvens.com.br/triades/article/view/90>.
- Gallagher, A. (n.d.). Hélio Oiticica: The body of colour Exhibition Guide. Retrieved February 28, 2019, from <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/helio-oiticica-body-colour/helio-oiticica-exhibition-guide>
- Goffman, K., & Joy, D. (2005). *Counter Culture through the ages: From Abraham to Acid House*. New York: Villard Books.
- Gonçalves, T., & Cardoso, S. G. (2017, July - December). Design e Desenho na Terra do Cinema: Análise Estética da Arte de Rogério Duarte. *Esferas*. Year 6, (11), 83-93.
- Goulart, A. P., Timponi, R., Justen, J., Autran, L., & Oliveira, F. (2013, 30 de maio a 1º de junho de 2013). Tropicália: a contracultura na Música Popular Brasileira. *Anais do 9º Encontro Nacional de História da Mídia* (pp. 1-14). Ouro Preto: Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto.
- Hollis, R. (1994). *Graphic Design: A concise history*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Julião, R. (2017). *Infinitamente Pessoal: Caetano Veloso e sua verdade tropical*. Rio de Janeiro: Batel.
- Lima, J. W. (Director). (2016). *Rogério Duarte - O Tropikaoslista* [Motion picture on DVD]. Brasil: VPC Cinemavideo.
- Longo, M. (2016, November 4). O encontro impulsionador da Tropicália com o Design Gráfico no Brasil. Retrieved March 4, 2019, from <https://medium.com/@folks/o-encontro-impulsionador-da-tropicalia-com-o-design-grafico-no-brasil-6d7544fdd0a0>.
- Mellor, D. (1996). Demain commence maintenant. Utopie et culture visuelle. In Gerverau, L., & Mellor, D. (Orgs.), *Les Sixties: Années Utopies* (pp. 12-29). Paris: Somogy Editions d'Art.
- Miles, B. (2016). The Counterculture. In Broackes, V., & Marsh, G. (Eds.), *You say you want a revolution: Records and rebels 1966-1970* (pp. 98-135). London: V&A Publishing.
- Napolitano, M., & Villaça, M. M. (1998). Tropicalismo: As Relíquias do Brasil em Debate. *Revista Brasileira de História*, 18(35), 53-75. Retrieved March 4, 2019, from <http://scihub.tw/10.1590/S0102-01881998000100003>.
- Perrone, C. (1985). From Noigandres to 'Milagre da Alegria': The Concrete Poets and Contemporary Brazilian Popular Music. *Latin American Music Review*, 6(11), 58-79.
- Raedar, M. (2018). Marginalia 1: Manuel Raeder on Rogério Duarte and the Tropicália Movement [Interview by B. Schwartz, May 08]. Retrieved March 4, 2019, from <https://walkerart.org/magazine/marginalia-1-a-conversation-with-manuel-raeder>.
- Rio, D. M. (2015). Motion picture. Brasil: Lei de Incentivo à Cultura. Retrieved March 04, 2019, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oBIvwSPczA&t=4s>.
- Rodrigues, J. L. C. (2006). Tinindo, Trincando: o design gráfico no tempo do desbunde. *Conexão – Comunicação e Cultura*. Caxias do Sul, 5(10), 72-99.
- Rodrigues, J. L. C. (2008). O design tropicalista de Rogério Duarte. In Melo, C. H. (org.). *O design gráfico brasileiro: anos 60*. (pp. 188-215). São Paulo: Cosac Naify.
- Suárez, J. A. (2014). Jack Smith, Hélio Oiticica, Tropicalism. *Criticism*, 56(2), 295-328.
- Teixeira, N. M. (2012). *Inventário do caos: Rogério Duarte, Tropicália e Pós-modernidade*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Graduate College of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Retrieved March 2, 2019, from <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/34519>

- Veloso, C. (n.d.). [Interview by A. Oliveira]. Retrieved March 5, 2019, from <http://tropicalia.com.br/ilumencarnados-seres/entrevistas/caetano-veloso-2>.
- Veloso, C. (1997). *Verdade Tropical*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.
- Veloso, C. & Dunn, C. (1996). The Tropicalist Rebellion. *Transition*, (70), 116-138.