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## The artistic text, the context, and the intertext in the elaboration of thematic indexes of artistic-pictorial series

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Artistic-pictorial series represent a unique type of document with informative particularities that pave new paths for representation activities. They prompt the valorization of a socio-cognitive approach that respects the cultural specificities of documentary production in the field of Arts. **Objective:** To discuss the artistic text, context, and intertext in the elaboration of thematic indexes of artistic-pictorial series, specifically focusing on the series "Linguagem do Agreste" by the Pernambuco artist Joaz Silva, based on the socio-cognitive dimension of documentary processes. The index in question was developed for the purpose of representing information stemming from visual narratives with memorial value and contextual production characteristics of the series. Thus, inferences are drawn regarding the series analysis processes, concept categorization, and the structure of the performed thematic index. **Methodology:** The research consists of a qualitative case study with an exploratory and interdisciplinary approach between the fields of Information Science and Arts. It is based on the development of thematic indexes through methodological triangulation for: analysis of works and artistic-pictorial series using the methodologies of Panofsky (1991) and Medeiros and Pinho (2018), concept categorization using facets adapted from Manini (2002), and cognitive systematization of subjects through the production of the index in question. **Results:** It presents the stages of documentary analysis, processing of the results of the documentary analysis, and the structuring of the thematic index. **Conclusion:** The interdisciplinary discussion established broadens and provides opportunities for Information Science discussions on artistic documents. The development of thematic indexes is a social contribution to the arts and artists, serving as material for consultation and reference for the indexing of artistic-pictorial series and for the research community as a source of information and consultation.

### KEYWORDS

Artistic text. Context. Intertext. Thematic indexes.

## O texto artístico, o contexto e o intertexto na elaboração de índices temáticos de séries artístico-pictóricas

### RESUMO

**Introdução:** As séries artístico-pictóricas são um tipo de documento com particularidades informativas que enviezam novos caminhos para atividades de representação. Suscitam a valorização de uma abordagem sociocognitiva que respeite as particularidades culturais da produção documental no campo das Artes. **Objetivo:** Discutir sobre o texto artístico, o contexto e o intertexto na elaboração de índices temáticos de séries artístico pictóricas, em específico da

série "Linguagem do Agreste" do artista plástico pernambucano Joaz Silva, com base na dimensão sociocognitiva dos processos documentários. O índice em questão foi desenvolvido para fins de representação das informações oriundas das narrativas visuais com valor memorialístico e de caráter contextual de produção da série. Deste modo, trazem-se inferências sobre os processos de análise da série, categorização de conceitos e estruturação do índice temático realizado. **Metodologia:** A pesquisa constitui-se de um estudo de caso de abordagem qualitativa e caráter exploratório e interdisciplinar entre os campos da Ciência da Informação e das Artes. Está pautado na elaboração de índices temáticos a partir de uma triangulação metodológica para: análise das obras e das séries artístico-pictóricas pelas metodologias de Panofsky (1991) e Medeiros e Pinho (2018), categorização de conceitos com o uso de facetas adaptadas a partir de Manini (2002) e sistematização cognitiva de assuntos pela produção do índice em questão. **Resultados:** Apresenta as etapas de análise documental, processamento dos resultados da análise documental e a estruturação do índice temático. **Conclusão:** A discussão interdisciplinar estabelecida amplia e oportuniza as discussões da Ciência da Informação sobre os documentos artísticos. A elaboração de índices temáticos é uma contribuição social para as artes e para os artistas, servindo como material de consulta e de referência para a indexação de séries artístico-pictóricas e para a comunidade de pesquisadores, como fonte de informação e consulta.

#### PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Texto artístico. Contexto. Intertexto. Índices temáticos.

#### CRedit

- **Acknowledgments:** Not applicable
- **Funding:** Not applicable.
- **Conflicts of interest:** Authors certify that they have no commercial or associative interest that represents a conflict of interest in relation to the manuscript.
- **Ethical approval:** Not applicable.
- **Availability of data and material:** Not applicable.
- **Authors' contributions:** Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Supervision, Visualization, Writing - original draft, Writing - Review & Editing: MEDEIROS, W. O. de; Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Supervision, Writing - Review & Editing: PINHO, F. A.
- **Translation:** Silvia Iacovacci - MEI

**JITA:** IC. Index languages, processes and schemes

**ODS:** 9. Innovation and infrastructure



Article submitted to the similarity system

Submitted: 18/11/2023 – Accepted: 04/03/2024 – Published: 28/03/2024

Editor: Gilденir Carolino Santos

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the context of discussions in Information Science (IS), Knowledge Organization (KO) has incorporated new ways of thinking about the production and processing of information in documents. Among these, the constant updating of discussions on the ethics of representation processes and the contextual study of the production, use, and dissemination of documents in physical and digital environments are fundamental to the field.

These discussions are born, above all, in the quest to guarantee culturally contextualized activities of Information Representation (IR) that promote the valorization of the production of social artifacts from different fields, including the field of art, based on artistic-pictorial works and series.

By highlighting the universe of visual arts, it is understood that KO is connected to the arts not only from the point of view of understanding and documenting artistic content, but also in the art institution itself (Ørom, 2003), which accompanies the historical process of building and transforming society, reflecting on artistic, cultural and social manifestations over time. The KO is also present in the systematization movements for the presentation and exhibition of works of art, through physical exhibitions, and today, just as importantly, in the configuration of virtual spaces for the dissemination of artistic images.

This research presents a discussion of the artistic text, context and intertext in the elaboration of thematic indexes of artistic image series, specifically the series "Linguagem do Agreste" of the Pernambuco artist Joaz Silva. In this way, it highlights the IR developed for the purpose of representing information from visual narratives with memorial value. The results of Medeiros' (2022) research efforts to develop a specific methodological approach to the IR of this type of document are widely disseminated.

In this work, the term "thematic index" is adopted to refer to the subject index, while the documentary product to be presented is configured from a contextual approach that verifies and appreciates the memorial character of artistic production, thus being a product and tool that arbitrarily expresses this domain.

Inferences about the artistic text, context and intertext surround the socio-cognitive dimension of the document indexing activity. Among other factors, they define the aspects of completeness and specificity, which act as qualitative measures to measure cultural aspects. In this way, they emerge as necessary qualities for an IR activity committed to ethics.

Studies on artistic-pictorial works have been of interest in the field of IC, in the search for ways to treat their contents thematically. These include studies by Agustín Lacruz (2006a), Maimone (2007; 2009), Maimone and Gracioso (2007), Maimone and Talamo (2008), Debastiani (2012), Oliveira (2014), Oliveira and Pinho (2014), Medeiros (2014), Medeiros (2017), Medeiros and Pinho (2016; 2017; 2018a; 2018b) and Medeiros, Pinho and Correa (2019), which, based on the need for methodologies that consider IRC for artistic images, discuss the informative potential of artistic-pictorial works, and also under which perspectives of IC these works can be treated to identify themes/subjects, and their documentary recording on platforms that enable access to their information.

Medeiros' (2022) research indicates that there has been a progressive development of discussions about the KO for iconographic documents. When dealing, in particular, with artistic-pictorial works, his production denotes a concern to devise a way of bringing artistic images, especially paintings, closer to IR processes, in terms of delimiting concepts and identifying subjects with a memorialist character, for the purposes of information retrieval. In this process, discoveries about the artistic text, context, and intertext demonstrate a socio-cognitive approach to KO that respects the cultural particularities of documentary production in the field of Art.

A presente pesquisa, ao mesmo tempo que contribui para os avanços na OC, valoriza

a produção artístico-pictórica contemporânea, especialmente aquelas com retratos diretos da cultura e do cotidiano de cidades e grupos de pessoas. Deste modo, navega pelo papel comunicativo e direcionador de sentido para formação ou transformação de ideias, e pela valorização destas temáticas.

At the same time as contributing to advances in KO, this research values contemporary artistic-pictorial production, especially those with direct portraits of the culture and daily life of cities and groups of people. In this way, it navigates the communicative and meaning-directing role in the formation or transformation of ideas, and the valorization of these themes.

Research such as this, which provides a theoretical and practical reflection on IR, makes it possible to fill theoretical-methodological gaps in IC, stimulating the perception of specialized methodologies for the purpose of understanding social memory, providing the simultaneous use of theoretical approaches and IR techniques, together with documentary research in the field of art. At the same time, this research opens space for new reflections on the dialogue between the general aspects of identifying and categorizing concepts and the nuances of organizing domains of knowledge, explaining spaces for deepening the processes of analyzing artistic-pictorial information that reverberate in the results of the specificity and exhaustiveness of indexing activities.

Finally, the social role of IS and the technical activities of TTI in the evaluation of the artistic and cultural production of society is highlighted. It contributes to the improvement of a professional field of activity in the search for a greater assimilation of the social and institutional history of art, while meeting the emerging demands of users of information on art and memory, such as students and researchers in art and history.

## 2 THE ARTISTIC-PICTORIAL SERIES

Artistic images are a type of document resulting from art and culture. They inspire studies in IC because of their expressive complexity and the informational value added through symbols and signs in the composition of their semantic relations, which stimulate specific actions in the use and development of documentary products and tools. | 4

Investigative approaches to the informational potential of these documents are common. However, in addition to these, there are increasingly studies based on the development of methodological paths for the Thematic Treatment of Information (TTI) focused on these documents, with the aim of developing documentary products for their representation and retrieval in physical and digital spaces for the storage and preservation of information, as in the case of Medeiros (2022), to whose results this research refers.

The communicative value of artistic images, as Agustín Lacruz (2006b) points out, goes beyond their aesthetic and expressive perception. The environments of analysis can be refined through different aspects that observe "[...] its contexts of production, emission, and reception; the communicative functions that it develops; the different layers of meaning that construct it; as well as the codes that it uses for its representation" (Agustín Lacruz, 2006b, p. 17).

For the purposes of defining the document, when referring to artistic and pictorial works and series, this research considers artistic paintings in particular. Within this, there are two ways of presenting them that represent different approaches to TTI: one that considers the individualized study of works, and the other that considers the study of sets of works with generalized informational value, typified as series.

Thus, series, as opposed to works, represent a variation in the way artistic images are conceived and presented, denoting a documentary configuration that presents peculiarities that distinguish them not only from a physical presentation perspective, but also from the contextual singularity they assume in their production and artistic significance, which significantly reflects

on the identification of concepts and semantic relationships for IR purposes, including the preparation of thematic indexes.

When navigating through the history of painting, it is possible to verify, based on Oliveira's (2007) discussions, that the emergence and evolution of artistic-pictorial series are linked to historical transformations in art production and changes in the way visual narratives were expressed. These transformations ranged from the search for individual and technical improvement by artists to the commercialization of works based on commission relationships between artists and clients, which guided the production of paintings.

In this sense, Oliveira (2007) highlights two perspectives on the production of artistic series: one through the perception of House (1986) and the other through the perception of John Klein (1998). The first author refers to series based on the time frame in which they were produced, where the motifs and artistic techniques are similar, with the aim of exhibiting them together. The second author, on the other hand, refers to the series by linking them to this qualification in the context of commissioned production, where the artist-client relationship, in terms of requirements, configures a purposefully related production, but which could be marketed individually.

Oliveira (2007), in highlighting the artistic series, refers to the pictorial production of Claude Monet in the mid-19th century. In a contemporary context, we refer to the artistic production of the artist Joaz Silva to elucidate the production of series, which is the subject of the thematic index presented in this research.

With the aim of creating a thematic exhibition, the artist in question produced a series of works in 2014, which he entitled "Linguagem do Agreste" (Language of Agreste). These works were to be exhibited at the Espaço Zé Caboclo Clay Museum in Caruaru-PE, which took place in 2015 and had an international impact. To create this series, the artist wanted to portray the daily life of the population of Caruaru around the art and craft.

The 16 works that constitute the series in question were created based on historical research to recover part of the city's social memory. Among other themes, they list aspects of the northeastern scenario, thus forming an important documentary base for the historical, artistic and cultural contextualization of the city of Caruaru.

Understanding the works and artistic series is of great value for OIC studies, especially as a means of investigating indexing practices. In the cyclical process of information production, where the artist plays the role of researcher, manipulator, and creator of information, there are spaces for scientific and interdisciplinary progress in the field that are opportune for the development of a socio-cognitive approach to IS.

In these interlocutions, we contribute to the advancement of studies on social memory that go beyond the meaning of works of art as materialized social products. This opens up space for the investigation, construction, and validation of fields of action and social transformation relevant to IS and OIC, broadly related to the cultural aspects that shape the elaboration and meaning of society's informational artifacts.

Studies such as those by Medeiros (2014, 2017, 2022), Medeiros and Pinho (2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2019) and Medeiros, Pinho and Corrêa (2019), Medeiros, Pinho and Silva (2019) and Medeiros et al. (2013), already mentioned, show that the thematic focus of the works and artistic image series express such spaces of investigation, due to the range of observable and analyzable features in the IR of these documents. Among these documents, the aforementioned "Linguagem do Agreste" series has already been the subject of discussion within IS.

In addition, changes in the way the visual arts are produced have an impact on the understanding of the artistic text and the abstraction of meaning that the documents express and, above all, guide the way that information professionals handle, index, and present these documents.

In the creation of thematic indexes, these transformations have made it possible to identify thematic sets and subsets, for example, in the appreciation of artistic-pictorial series, which broaden the perspectives for identifying concepts and translating terms.

Thus, in order to understand the depth of TTI with artistic artifacts, it is necessary to know some inherent and guiding aspects for the indexing and preparation of thematic indexes of artistic-pictorial series, such as the artistic text, the intertext and the context, which will be discussed below.

### 3 THE ARTISTIC TEXT, INTERTEXT AND CONTEXT IN IR

One of the ways in which the fields of IC, starting with the KO, and Arts and Culture intersect is through the formation and treatment of specialized or heterogeneous collections that contain artistic images, where the interlocution between institutions, methodologies, and the practice of scientific research contributes to the identification of trends and the promotion of interdisciplinary actions.

In this respect, the TTI emerges as a fundamental point in these interlocutions, since it is the place where the content of artistic documents is derived and, through processes and the development of documentary products and tools, such as subject indexes, the dissemination, and formation of knowledge through the possibility of retrieval in information systems.

Documentary practices, when focused on the TTI of artistic-pictorial documents, require a sum of informational skills, specialized methodological prospecting and contextual recognition, both of the processes to be carried out and of the documentary diversity to be treated. This sum provides, through institutionalized action, the constitution of what Fernandes (2011) presents as informational artifacts.

Among the informational skills, professionals involved in indexing activities, for example, need specialized knowledge to identify and delimit concepts and to study and recognize the terminological limits of the document. At the heart of the matter, methodological research accompanies the indexer, from the choice of methods for analyzing the document, to the delimitation and translation of concepts, to the evaluation and choice of how to present the final documentary product.

The contextual aspects, on the other hand, are inherent to all TTI, since they guide the decision-making process by adapting the processes to the environments in which they take place, thus respecting the purposes and approaches of the professional, the institution and the informative dimensions of the document, based not only on what it represents, but also on the various orientations of its production and presentation over time.

Artistic-pictorial documents are discussed not only in terms of their informational value, but also in terms of the search for instruments that make it possible to identify subjects and process information conceived in visual formats. These themes can be expressed in various contexts, including techniques, concepts, expressive dimensions, thematic directions, relationships with the social environment through memorial heritage, among others.

The importance of context becomes even more apparent in the processes of representing information in artistic images, especially when we consider their production in the form of series - strategically constructed or assembled to deal with related issues, either in terms of visual narrative or aesthetic conjuncture, in which intertextuality directs the connection between works.

To deal with the general sphere of content that surrounds the construction of the artistic-pictorial series, especially those with memorial representations, is to admit to being involved in a broader message that is constructed as it is combined with other images from the same series. The series of artistic-pictorial works include subjects and themes that go beyond

what can be seen in the works produced individually, given the breadth of motivation and intentionality of the artists.

Focusing on scenes of representation, such as those of the artistic-pictorial series, which arise from the discussion of unconventional documents, introduces into the most contemporary IC debates the need to update and develop theoretical and methodological perspectives that support the TTI of these documents, as well as the conception or recognition of tools that support this process, for the most diverse retrieval purposes.

Thus, by referring to IR, starting with the indexing of artistic documents and the creation of thematic indexes, this research finds itself in one of the new paradigms of art, highlighted by Ørom (2003), related to social history and the history of the art institution itself.

This relationship is emphasized in the creation of interdisciplinary dialogues and in the study of the pictorial text, highlighting intertextual semantic relationships between artistic images that reveal social aspects and discursive contexts relevant to contemporary interests in the use of art, especially in the context of documentary research for indexing purposes.

Understanding the concepts of artistic text or image text, intertext, and context are fundamental to indexing artistic image works and series. Regarding the former, it is understood that

The semiotic notions of artistic text and pictorial text formulated by U. Eco and O. Calabrese show great theoretical power and sufficient instrumental capacity to conceptualize each artistic image as a communicative structure organized systemically and characterized by a functioning, which is actualized in an interpretative process, whose rules of generation coincide with its own rules of interpretation, which allows its structures to be approached at successive levels of complexity, in order to order and interpret them (Agustín Lacruz, 2006b, p. 44).

Thus, in Documentary Analysis (DA) activities, in order to carry out the reading and analysis processes, the understanding of the artistic text must guide the strategies for understanding the visual narratives and is fundamental to the indexing stage.

In TTI, as Sousa (2013) points out, the processes are purely cognitive. Reading artistic texts, similar to verbal texts, is an intellectual process that requires the abstraction of subjectivities in order to elaborate senses and meanings. As in the approach to bibliographic documents, the indexer must adhere to a representation that values the document in its entirety, without forgetting that the representation is made for users, where thematic value activities require a search for an understanding of the methodologies that surround the entire operation (Sousa, 2013).

As Fujita (2004) points out, reading is a social act. It is a process of communication based on interaction between those who produce the text and those who read it, guided by their pre-established goals (Fujita, 2004). In the production of artistic images, this process takes place through the visual elaboration of the artist using various artistic methods and techniques, where the text is composed of visual elements that convey its message. The interaction with the reader takes place through the exhibition of the works, where the community accesses the visual elements, either for contemplation or analysis, as happens in iconographic and iconological studies, or in documentary processes such as indexing.

This type of perception, which is sensitive to the context of the document, as in the case of artistic and cultural documents, confirms the perception of IS with a socio-cognitive approach. The focus of this approach shifts from individuals and machines to the social, cultural, and scientific world, where discourse shapes tools, concepts, meanings, structures, and information needs (Lima, Fujita and Redigolo, 2021; Hjørland, 2002).

From a socio-cognitive approach, it is possible to infer that the artistic text imprints characteristics of elaboration and communication that involve elaborate processes of meaning construction, such as proposing a dialogue with other texts (artistic or not) through intertextuality.

Intertextuality manifests itself in the realm of artistic imagery through the intersection of themes, subjects, and concepts from visual narratives expressed in artistic works. It can take place, among other forms, through the visual citation of other works, through the use of references to artistic styles and movements, through cultural dialogues that reflect specific production contexts, through intellectual self-citation, and through the establishment of conceptual relationships within the theme that can be deepened through investigation and research.

Still on how intertextuality occurs in artistic images, Barros and Fiorin (2009, apud Zani, 2003, p.121) tell us that it refers to the "reference or incorporation of one discursive element into another" and can be recognized in works when the author uses the reference for construction, through textual, pictorial and/or sound elements, from other authors or their own work (Barros; Fiorin, 1999 apud Zani, 2003).

The term intertextuality appeared in 1969 and was used by Julia Kristeva "to explain what Mikhail Bakhtin understood by dialogism in the 1920s" (Zani, 2003, p. 122). The relationship between intertextuality and dialogism was perceived by Julia Kristeva "to the extent that it is possible to observe in any text or artistic discourse a dialogue with other texts and also with the public that appreciates them" (Robert Stam, 2000, apud Zani, 2003, p. 122).

This understanding of intertextuality is an important point of observation for the representation of works and artistic series and for the identification of subjects because it also allows us to consider information relevant to the representation, which guides the delimitation and translation of concepts. Thus, it goes beyond the mere descriptive perception of the artistic image, which guarantees the possibility of a contextual investigation.

As Agustín Lacruz (2006b, p. 22) puts it, pictorial portraits are cultural devices among which it is most possible to "[...] represent, propagate, persuade, indoctrinate, and even transgress established power, and which best testify visually, through various strategies of iconographic representation [...] to the social order in which they are produced".

The expressiveness of these cultural devices in relation to the magnitude of these strategies of representation requires the indexer to study the production space of this type of document (its context) in order to, as with any other type, "[...] identify its terminological universe and thus find the meaning of the text and the choice of terms that best apply to the document" (Maia; Oliveira; Neves, 2017, p. 17).

Thus, intertextuality can be understood as related to a socio-cognitive approach, where the social and historical context directly implies the subject's understanding of the text (including the artistic text). As Lima, Fujita and Rodigolo (2021) argue, this contextual relationship also involves cognitive aspects for understanding the context of production, which is observed not only about users, in their various reading possibilities, but also regarding indexers, as they are the bridge between the document and the user. As Koch (2002, p. 24 apud Lima; Fujita; Rodigolo, 2021, p. 292, emphasis added) puts it, this socio-cognitive approach is also a context in which

[...] it is stored in the memory of what he calls "social actors", which we understand as prior knowledge or cognition, namely: linguistic knowledge, encyclopedic knowledge, knowledge of the communicative situation and its rules, super structural knowledge, stylistic knowledge, knowledge of other texts (intertextuality). This prior knowledge will be used through strategies.

In the TTI of artistic-pictorial works and series, context is a crucial aspect of research for indexing and delimiting concepts. Lima; Fujita; Redigolo (2021, p. 283) state that "[...] the conceptual representation of an area of knowledge can be influenced by the context (social, cultural, aesthetic, political) in which it is inserted".

Still from the authors' perspective, to which this research agrees, context is associated with situations and events, including all aspects of human behavior and experience, connected, from their individuality, to the experiences of other human beings (Lima; Fujita; Redigolo,



2021) revealing, consequently, an ethical field of observation for directing documentary practices to determine meanings and semantic structures. That said, the practice of indexing and preparing subject indexes has a social responsibility to verify the context of concepts and, consequently, the choice of terminology to represent them.

In the indexing of artistic images, the contextual aspects of the document guide professional practice in the choice of terminological control methods and instruments, guided by the domain of origin/production and the thematic content available. Terminology research in indexing practice must refer, among other aspects, to the ontological context of the concepts and the contextual aspect of the term, for an alignment that benefits the retrieval process, thus being socially and culturally sensitive. As Schiel (2021, p. 90) proposes, the "[...] correct concept associated with a canonical term depends on the context of that term. This context is determined by the document in which the term is found and by its position in that document".

Likewise, in addition to the ontological context, the author predicts the verification of the temporal and spatial context that situates the concept for its social understanding, including in this process the determination of concepts implicit to the document, identifiable in the semantic relationships between concepts (Schiel, 2021). The concept contexts listed by Schiel (2021) are guided by the epistemic basis of Dahlberg's Concept Theory (1978, 2012), where the context is related to the characteristics of a referent (understanding 'referent' as the object or reality to which the concept refers).

The challenge for the indexing of works of art and artistic image series is therefore: to master the reading and analysis of the artistic text in order to delimit concepts and select terms that are contextualized in terms of socio-cognitive aspects, sensitive, among other things, to the intertextuality of the artistic text and the historical and cultural aspects of the documents.

Contextualization in indexing is linked to the aspects of completeness and specificity, as a specialization of this activity for predefined objectives in document retrieval. In order to maximize retrieval possibilities in information retrieval systems, the degree of completeness and specificity of indexing can be adjusted to meet specific information needs. An example of this is thematic research on works of art and artistic image series, which can be based on studies of memory, culture, history, and art in general.

What can be observed, however, is that indexing does not generally take place in a contextualized way. Evangelista, Simões and Guimarães (2016) attribute a possible reason for this to the subjective nature of this process, which does not pay attention to time and space as contexts. Likewise, the failure to contextualize indexing contributes to the failure to recognize ethical aspects of ICO, not considering "[...] social, cultural, political aspects, a whole set of values, principles, prejudices, and beliefs that involve the context of this operation" (Evangelista; Simões; Guimarães, 2016, p. 59).

The consideration of cultural attributes in indexing allows, far beyond providing access to the document, to establish, in the field of artistic-pictorial works and series, a representation adapted to the niche of the users and the main purposes for which the documents are presented in the search, also adapting to the new emerging art paradigms. This is in line with what Evangelista, Simões and Guimarães (2016, p. 59) clarify as the "triangulation between the content of the document, its representation and the informational needs of the user" in a socio-cognitive bias.

This triangulation allows us to enter into a contextual investigation of artistic images, evaluating not only the technique used, but also the materials and theoretical-historical conditions of artistic movements and the subjective order in the production of series in painting as spaces for delimiting concepts. The study of these spaces, together with the study of the mode of exhibition/display as a whole, makes it possible to build a broad and malleable channel of communication - which can be established according to an order of specific, individual and/or collective interest, both for the purposes of studying art, history and culture, and for improving indexing practices.

Clearly, considering the breadth of indexing in the artistic domain of the series is an important step in expanding the possibilities of information retrieval in collections that hold this type of material. Not only in terms of increasing search recall, but also in terms of developing increasingly complete documentary records, with the possibility of references to works and materials that are related or part of the same series, which can support research and meet the needs of different researchers in their search for culturally contextualized data and information.

As important as the need for methodologies for the ICO of artistic image series is the appreciation of the user as a consumer of information products and services. Improving the discussions and methodologies applied to this type of iconographic document means contributing to a framework that supports information professionals, not only by offering them solutions for everyday practices, but also by guaranteeing efficient and ethically significant performance when working with diverse collections.

What follows is the preparation of a thematic index of the artistic-pictorial series "Linguagem do Agreste", in order to consider the methodological path taken and the particularities of its artistic text, intertext and production context, valuing the specialized nature of the indexing process for information users in the field of art.

## 4 METHODOLOGY FOR DRAWING UP THE THEMATIC INDEX

As Mendonça and Poni (1991, p. 238) point out, the "[...] subject index is the instrument that guides the librarian in both indexing and retrieving information". It is also, according to the authors, "[...] an alphabetical, controlled, and dynamic vocabulary containing all the descriptors identified in the analysis of the indexed documents [...]" (Mendonça; Poni, 1991, p. 238).

In the context of artistic-pictorial series, the preparation of indexes is a complex task when guided by a process of analysis and conceptual delimitation such as the one presented here. This is mainly because it is a specialized approach whose indexing purposes take into account contextual and intertextual nuances in the development of a process with a high degree of exhaustiveness and specificity.

In order to prepare the thematic index for the artistic and pictorial series "Linguagens do Agreste", a path was chosen based on the triangulation of methodological perspectives for the **delimitation, categorization and cognitive systematization of subjects**, which allowed the delimitation, analysis, and grouping of the concepts of the series for their documentary representation.

The process consisted in dividing the treatment of the corpus into three main processes, related to the **analysis** of the works and the documentation generated in the process, **the processing of the data** obtained in the analysis and, finally, **the construction of the documentary product**: the thematic index.

These stages, which are described in detail below, are the actions taken to deepen the treatment of the artistic and pictorial series.

### *4.1 Analysis and Delimitation of Concepts*

In the analysis, we looked at the relationships between the subjects of the works, their relationship with each other and the relationship of these subjects with the social, memorial, and production context of the artist, in order to value the cultural dimension linked to the production of the series and the visual text of the works.

This stage corresponds to the thematic investigation of the individual works and the relationship of meanings expressed by the context in which they were produced and grouped together in the series. Thus, the process of analyzing the series was carried out using the methodological perspective of Medeiros and Pinho (2018), based on two moments: moment 1, corresponding to the IR of the works that form the series, and moment 2, related to understanding the set that makes up the series.

Panofsky's (1991) methodology was used to analyze the works individually (moment 1). This analysis methodology, applied to artistic images by nature, establishes three levels of analysis of the visual content of the works (pre-iconographic, iconographic and iconological), allowing in-depth thematic investigation as well as a list of concepts to be translated in order to draw up the index.

The analysis then began with a general description of the visual content, corresponding to the pre-iconographic analysis stage, with a survey of concepts based on the simplest visual elements, such as places, people, objects, etc. Next, the works were subjected to the identification of themes and artistic motifs, corresponding to the iconographic level. Iconographic analysis made it possible to understand the visual elements identified in the description stage, relating them to the motivations for artistic creation, contextualizing the narrative in order to further refine the themes central to each work. Finally, the deeper and more subjective issues adjacent to the visual narrative were identified through iconological analysis. The thematic content identified at the other levels was then interpreted based on the indexer's inferences and the conceptual conceptions intrinsic to the artist's creation and execution.

The analysis of the series as a whole (stage 2) was based on four stages: **Delimitation of the conceptual relationship between the content of the works** (corresponding to the identification of thematic convergence and partial identification of adjacent themes derived from semantic relationships); **Identification of themes arising from the relationship established between the content of the works** (corresponding to the identification of themes, translation, and verification of the relevance of the terms adopted for them); **Identification of the intertextual and contextual conceptual relationships of the series - intentionality and message** (corresponds to the general evaluation of the message of the set of works and field research on aspects of historical context, artistic purposes of production and exhibition), and; **Identification of subjects arising from the intertextual and contextual conceptual relationships of the series** corresponds to the identification of subjects, translation, and verification of the relevance of the terms adopted for them).

After carrying out the actions in the analysis stage, the result was a list of concepts, contextualized and with a high level of completeness, which served as material for the next stage. In addition, a report was written to serve as a record of this process.

#### *4.2 Processing the Analysis Data*

In order to process the data for analysis of the series, the data was processed by categorizing subjects. The categorization of subjects served as a guiding parameter for the construction of the thematic index.

To carry out the categorization, thematic groups were established, represented by facets. The categorization methodology was strategically adopted by adapting the categories listed by Manini (2002) for image representation, contextualizing the contextual and cultural nature of the concepts by their degree of specificity.

In this way, the four categories listed by Manini (who/what; where; when and how) were adapted to the categories of **characters** (intended to group together things and/or people who represent/play a leading role in the works); **spatial-geographical clipping** (intended to group together the location specifications relating to the narratives of the works and listed based

on the analysis); **space-time** (intended to group together specifications of time, whether dates or historical periods), and **actions/events** (intended to group together specifications of actions/events and important events portrayed in the visual narratives of the works or relating to the context in which they were produced), respectively.

These categories partially addressed both the data from the individual analysis of the works and the data obtained from the analysis of the artistic-pictorial series. The adaptation of the terms that represent the categories was motivated to broaden the coverage of data related to each group, thus addressing all the spheres of representation for which the complexity of the research was intended, at levels of completeness and specificity.

In this way, in addition to the pre-defined categories based on the literature, it was complemented with new categories that meet the relative subjective levels of delimitation of concepts about the intentionality and message of the series. The development of these categories accompanied the analysis stage, through the discovery of new thematic groups that could be represented. The following categories were then added: **production intentionality** (aimed at grouping general specifications that correspond to the intellectual process of constructing the series based on the historical and social context of production) and; **intertextual narrative - communicability** (where the thematic categories are finally specific to the findings of the process of analyzing the set of works, based on the central conceptual relationships delimited).

Once the processing stage had been completed, the subjects identified in the analysis stage were categorized, based on the delimitation of concepts, generating, at the end of this process, the material used to structure the thematic index. This stage, like the analysis stage, included the writing of a report that served as a record of the entire categorization process.

Throughout the analysis process, it was possible to identify that the contextual aspects of the series are qualitative in the identification of subjects, at any level of analysis of the artworks and art-picture series, in other words, they set the scene for the meanings, to broaden the general range of representation possibilities to include the identification of more specific subjects, which, in turn, are reflected in the detail of the representation, the objectivity and the potential retrievability of the information, once these subjects are entered into automated systems, for example, to locate the artworks.

By verifying the intertextual aspect between works in the series, a total of seven thematic subsets were identified through which the main communicative messages of the series are realized, these being the result of the artist's intentionality. These categories are: **Artistic Tradition**, which expresses the relationship between clay art production and the city's economic and social development; **Urbanization**, which lists the city's urban transformations, with an emphasis on the preservation of historical heritage; **Agrestina Music**, with the promotion of the region's artistic figures; **Politics**, with the representation of the city's political figures and institutions; **Religiosity**, with the representation of Catholicism through churches, symbols and religious figures; and **Commerce**, situating the history of economic development based on the art trade.

### *4.3 Structuring the Thematic Index*

In this stage, the thematic index was structured based on the results of the categorization of subjects, considering the delimited concepts and the subjects identified and categorized in the previous stages.

This documentary product, although largely associated with the third processing stage of the series, was built simultaneously with the categorization process, and thus corresponds to the materialization of this activity in a documentary record.

In this way, the thematic index drawn up was adapted to the perspective of representing artistic-pictorial series, with a systematic list of terms referring to the subjects, according to the

categorization of the thematic groups, with the respective indication of their location and semantic relationship within the "Linguagem do Agreste" series.

The index was presented in three ways: with the ordered list of terms in the delimited thematic categories mentioned above; with the ordered list of terms categorized according to the facets of intertext and context and; in an alphabetically ordered list containing the completeness of the terms translated in the indexing process.

For each thematic subset, lists were constructed which refer to the works according to their position in the analysis activities in relation to the terms (O-05, for example, corresponds to work number 05 in the series), as can be seen in **Chart 1**, which shows a cross-section of this list.

**Chart 1.** Cutout of the list of terms from thematic subset 6 (Sertanejo figure)

| Subjects<br>Related Projects |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Countryside.....             | (O-05/O-07/O-11) |
| Farmer.....                  | (O-05/O-11)      |
| Agriculture.....             | (O-05/O-11)      |
| Animal feed.....             | (O-07/O-11)      |
| Animal.....                  | (O-01/O-07)      |
| Musical performance.....     | (O-09/O-10)      |
| Leather art.....             | (O-09/O-10/O-11) |
| Folk art.....                | (O-01/O-10)      |

Source : Medeiros (2022)

The categorization was expanded to group the terms from the intertextual and contextual layers of the series, based on the analyses and the thematic subsets defined. This can be observed in **Chart 2**.

**Chart 2.** Cutout of the list of terms from the intertextual and contextual categories of thematic subset 5 (Religiosity).

| Religiosity<br>Intertextual           |             |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Cluster of houses.....                | (O-12)      |
| Baroque Architecture.....             | (O-15)      |
| Architecture.....                     | (O-08/O-12) |
| Caruaru.....                          | (O-12)      |
| Bishop's house.....                   | (O-15)      |
| Cathedral of Our Lady of Sorrows..... | (O-15)      |
| Religiosity<br>Contextual             |             |
| North Eastern agrarian .....          | (O-05)      |
| Farmer.....                           | (O-02/O-05) |
| Agriculture.....                      | (O-05)      |
| Apprenticeship.....                   | (O-03)      |
| Folk art.....                         | (O-01/O-04) |
| Clay crafts.....                      | (O-02)      |

Source : Medeiros (2022)

Finally, based on these categorization processes, subjects with general aspects were grouped together (**Chart 3**), broadening the understanding and identification of descriptive subjects for structuring the final version of the index, ordered alphabetically. This categorization was based on the list of subjects, as can be seen in **Chart 4**.

**Chart 3.** Recorte da lista de termos das categorias gerais (Faceta Espaço-geográfico)

| Spatial-geographical cross-section        |   |
|---|---|
| Northeastern agrarian .....               | (O-05/O-06/O-07/O-11)                               |
| External area.....                        | (O-02/O-03)   |
| Commercial Association of Caruaru.....    | (O-16)  |
| Rio Branco Avenue.....                    | (O-16)  |
| Caatinga .....                            | (O-07/O-11)   |
| City council chamber.....                 | (O-13/O-15)   |
| Chapel of Our Lady of the Conception..... | (O-12)  |
| Caruaru.....                              | (O-01/O-02 O-03/O-04/O-05/O-06/O-07/O-08/O-12/O-13) |
| Foundation.....                           | (O-14)  |
| House.....                                | (O-03/O-08)   |
| of masonry.....                           | (O-11/O-12)   |
| of mud.....                               | (O-01)  |
| of the Bishop.....                        | (O-15)  |
| Manor house.....                          | (O-15/O-16)   |

Source : Medeiros (2022)

The general categorization took place in order to group the subjects based on their descriptive affinity, so as to help locate and visualize subjects for the possible purposes of developing new forms of documentary representation and thematic research on the series.

**Chart 4.** Cut-out of the thematic index

| DATES                          |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 1776.....                      | (O-12)       |
| 1922.....                      | (O-16)       |
| 1960 (decade).....             | (O-15)       |
| 2014 (series production) ..... | (CPES)       |
| 2015 (series exhibition) ..... | (CPES)       |
| XIX (century).....             | (O-08/O-013) |
| A                              |              |
| Northeastern agrarian.....     | (O-05)       |
| Farmer.....                    | (O-02/O-05)  |
| Agriculture.....               | (O-05)       |
| Apprenticeship.....            | (O-03)       |
| Folk art.....                  | (O-01/O-04)  |
| Clay crafts.....               | (O-02)       |

Source : Medeiros (2022)

Finally, as can be seen in Figure 4, an alphabetical index of subjects from the "Linguagens do Agreste" series was constructed, based on the subjects and concepts identified in the analysis process as a whole, presenting terms and the works to which they correspond, as a result of an indexing activity that was sensitive to the particularities of the artistic text, to the intertextual aspects eminent in the pictorial artistic series and contextualized, among other aspects, by the cultural dimension linked to the conceptual domain represented in the series.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The indexing applied to artistic works and series should be part of the technical processing of image collections in information, memory, art, and culture units. Its development should always be aimed at satisfying the information needs of these spaces, and it is necessary to go even deeper in the case of specialized information units, where the public can sometimes be specific and selective in its search for information.

We would like to point out that the public that can frequent and become a demand for these spaces, ranges from ordinary users interested in art and culture to researchers and professionals who study and research the meanings that surround artistic narratives and historical and memorial representations, among many other informative aspects that artistic images can offer.

To this end, it is necessary to contextualize these documents within a historical perspective of painting, clarifying their emergence from artistic practices that go back to the need to study artistic techniques, with the repetition of the motto, or the explanation of messages through thematic groupings (either as a result of the constancy of an artist, or the intention of exhibitions elaborated with a sequence of images grouped by thematic affinity). In this way, IC is given the opportunity to visualize in greater depth and expressiveness the peculiarities of iconographic documents, within which documentary typification has positive consequences for representational practices, broadening the horizons of conceptual delimitation with the recognition of layers of analysis that are not merely descriptive.

For the indexing of this type of document, it is clear that for conceptual delimitation in pictorial artistic works and series, the following levels of analysis must be considered the intertextual, based on linguistics to conceptualize and guide, in practice, the identification of the intertext, that is, the textual convergences in the artistic text of works of the same series, and, consequently, the contextual layer, including the contexts of production and exhibition/display of the series, where also the intentional and communicative aspects are considered, which, from the aspects of completeness and objectivity, unveil the conditions for broadening the observation of the cultural aspects that guide the formation of the meaning of the concepts, essential for the ethical development of the activity. These layers house the conceptual relationships adjacent to the thematic content of the series and are studied strategically to meet the social character of the information, in identifying culturally contextualized issues.

Finally, the index presented in this research is presented as a documentary product of the series, prepared with a high level of completeness and specificity, as a representation model aimed at the academic community of IC. It also makes a social contribution to art and artists, as a reference material for indexing works in virtual environments, and to the research community, as a research and consultation material on aspects related to these subjects.

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