

**COLOR THEORY AND PRACTICE: AN ARTISTIC AND SOCIAL
INTERVENTION IN THE POÇO DA DRAGA COMMUNITY**

*TEORIA E PRÁTICA DA COR: UMA INTERVENÇÃO ARTÍSTICA E SOCIAL NA
COMUNIDADE POÇO DA DRAGA*

*TEORÍA Y PRÁCTICA DEL COLOR: UNA INTERVENCIÓN ARTÍSTICA Y SOCIAL
EN LA COMUNIDAD POÇO DA DRAGA*

*THEORIE ET PRATIQUE DE LA COULEUR : UNE INTERVENTION ARTISTIQUE
ET SOCIALE DANS LA COMMUNAUTE DE POÇO DA DRAGA*

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Abstract: This article presents the application of color theory and practice in an urban intervention project carried out in the Poço da Draga community, in Fortaleza, Ceará. The main objective of the proposal was to develop and paint a map of the community on a local wall, using theoretical knowledge about color combined with design practice. The methodology was qualitative in nature, with a participatory approach involving students, residents and community agents. The process included stages such as technical visits, data collection, definition of a color palette and execution of the mural painting. The results showed that the conscious use of color contributes significantly to visual organization, cultural identity and the appreciation of urban space. It is concluded that color, when applied strategically, acts not only as an aesthetic element but also as a tool for communication and social transformation.

Keywords: Color; Design; Community; Urban intervention; Visual identity.

Resumo: Este artigo apresenta a aplicação da teoria e prática da cor em um projeto de intervenção urbana realizado na comunidade Poço da Draga, em Fortaleza, Ceará. A proposta teve como objetivo principal desenvolver e pintar um mapa da comunidade em uma parede local, utilizando conhecimentos teóricos sobre cor aliados à prática do design. A metodologia adotada foi de natureza qualitativa, com abordagem participativa, envolvendo estudantes, moradores e agentes comunitários. O processo incluiu etapas como visitas técnicas, levantamento de dados, definição de paleta cromática e execução da pintura mural. Os resultados demonstraram que o uso consciente da cor contribui significativamente para a organização visual, identidade cultural e valorização do espaço urbano. Conclui-se que a cor, quando aplicada de forma estratégica, atua não apenas como elemento estético, mas também como ferramenta de comunicação e transformação social.

Palavras-chave: Cor; Design; Comunidade; Intervenção urbana; Identidade visual.

Resumen: Este artículo presenta la aplicación de la teoría y la práctica del color en un proyecto de intervención urbana realizado en la comunidad Poço da Draga, en Fortaleza, Ceará. La propuesta tuvo como objetivo principal desarrollar y pintar un mapa de la comunidad en una pared local, utilizando conocimientos teóricos sobre el color aliados a la práctica del diseño. La metodología adoptada fue de naturaleza cualitativa, con enfoque participativo, e involucró a estudiantes, vecinos y agentes comunitarios. El proceso incluyó etapas como visitas técnicas, recolección de datos, definición de la paleta cromática y ejecución de la pintura mural. Los resultados demostraron que el uso consciente del color contribuye significativamente a la organización visual, a la identidad cultural y a la valorización del espacio urbano. Se concluye que el color, cuando se aplica de forma estratégica, actúa no solo como elemento estético, sino también como herramienta de comunicación y de transformación social.

Palabras clave: Color; Diseño; Comunidad; Intervención urbana; Identidad visual.

Résumé: Cet article présente l'application de la théorie et de la pratique de la couleur dans un projet d'intervention urbaine réalisé dans la communauté de Poço da Draga, à Fortaleza, Ceará. La proposition avait pour objectif principal de concevoir et de peindre une carte de la communauté sur un mur local, en mobilisant des connaissances théoriques sur la couleur associées à la pratique du design. La méthodologie adoptée était de nature qualitative, avec une approche participative, impliquant des étudiants, des habitants et des agents communautaires. Le processus a comporté des étapes telles que des visites techniques, la collecte de données, la définition de la palette chromatique et l'exécution de la peinture murale. Les résultats ont montré que l'usage conscient de la couleur contribue de manière significative à l'organisation visuelle, à l'identité culturelle et à la valorisation de l'espace urbain. Il en ressort que la couleur, lorsqu'elle est appliquée de manière stratégique, agit non seulement comme élément esthétique, mais aussi comme outil de communication et de transformation sociale.

Mots-clés: Couleur ; Design ; Communauté ; Intervention urbaine ; Identité visuelle.

1 Introduction

Color is one of the most relevant elements in the field of design, capable of conveying sensations, organizing information and influencing the perception of the environment. In the urban context, its use goes beyond aesthetics, taking on social, cultural and communicational functions.

This article aims to present the application of color theory and practice in the project “Cores e Amores no Poço da Draga” (“Colors and Loves in Poço da Draga”), developed by students in partnership with the community. The proposal consisted of creating an illustrated map of the area, painted on a wall, in order to facilitate internal wayfinding and enhance local identity.

The Poço da Draga community was chosen because of its historical and cultural relevance in Fortaleza, as well as the identification of a problem related to the absence of spatial signage. The project thus sought to integrate academic knowledge with social reality, providing a meaningful practical experience.

1.1 General objective

To develop a map of the Poço da Draga community and paint it on a wall, using theoretical and practical knowledge about colors.

1.2 Specific objectives

- To get to know the Poço da Draga community;
- To research and assemble a color palette suited to the local context;
- To develop a map representing the particularities of the area on the selected wall.

2 Theoretical framework

Color theory is one of the fundamental pillars of design, guiding the application of color in different visual and communicational contexts. Color is not limited to an aesthetic phenomenon; it involves physical, perceptual and symbolic aspects, directly influencing how individuals interact with their environment.

From a scientific point of view, color is related to light and its decomposition. According to the classic studies of Isaac Newton, white light is composed of different wavelengths which, when refracted, give rise to the chromatic spectrum. This discovery underlies the understanding of color as a physical phenomenon, essential to fields such as design, art and visual communication.

In the artistic and perceptual field, Itten (2004, p. 19) states that “colors are forces, radiant energies that act upon human beings in a positive or negative way”. This perspective shows that color exerts a psychological influence, capable of provoking distinct sensations and emotions. Therefore, the use of color must consider not only its technical composition but also its subjective effects.

The organization of colors is traditionally represented by the color wheel, which divides colors into primary, secondary and tertiary. According to Wong (2010), this structure makes it possible to understand the relationships between colors and enables the creation of different color harmonies, such as analogous, complementary and triadic combinations. These relationships are widely used in design to ensure visual balance and aesthetic coherence.

In visual communication, color plays an essential role in conveying messages. According to Donis A. Dondis (2007, p. 64), “color is one of the most emotional and expressive forms of visual communication”, capable of attracting attention, establishing hierarchies and reinforcing meanings. Its strategic application thus contributes to the effectiveness of graphic communication.

The psychology of colors also stands out as a relevant area for understanding chromatic impact. According to Farina (2006), colors carry cultural and emotional associations that vary according to the social context. Warm colors, such as red and yellow, are often associated with energy and dynamism, while cool colors, such as blue and green, evoke tranquility and stability.

Furthermore, color plays an important role in building visual identity. According to Lupton and Phillips (2008), visual elements, including color, contribute to the creation of identity systems that facilitate recognition and the organization of information. In the urban context, this application can help with spatial orientation and strengthen the sense of belonging.

With regard to social design, the use of color in urban interventions has proven to be an effective strategy for promoting transformation and community engagement. Collaborative projects that involve residents in the creative process tend to generate greater identification with the space and cultural appreciation. In this sense, color ceases to be merely an aesthetic resource and becomes a tool for inclusion and social communication.

Color is thus a multifaceted element that brings together scientific, psychological and cultural aspects. Its application in design, especially in social contexts, requires planning and sensitivity, considering both technical principles and the specific characteristics of the audience and of the environment in which it will be placed.

3 Methodology

The project “Cores e Amores no Poço da Draga” was developed using a qualitative, exploratory and participatory approach, aligned with the principles of social design and participatory design. According to Brown (2010, p. 3), “design thinking relies on the ability to be intuitive, to recognize patterns, and to construct ideas that have emotional meaning as well as functional”, highlighting the importance of collaboration and empathy in the design process.

From a methodological standpoint, qualitative research makes it possible to understand social phenomena in their real contexts. According to Antônio Carlos Gil (2008, p. 42), “qualitative research considers that there is a dynamic relationship between the real world and the subject, that is, an inseparable bond between the objective world

and the subjectivity of the subject". In this sense, experiencing the territory firsthand was essential to the construction of the project.

In addition, the methodological process was grounded in concepts from color theory. According to Johannes Itten (2004, p. 19), "colors are forces, radiant energies that influence human beings in positive or negative ways", reinforcing that the choice of color goes beyond aesthetics, involving emotional and cultural aspects.

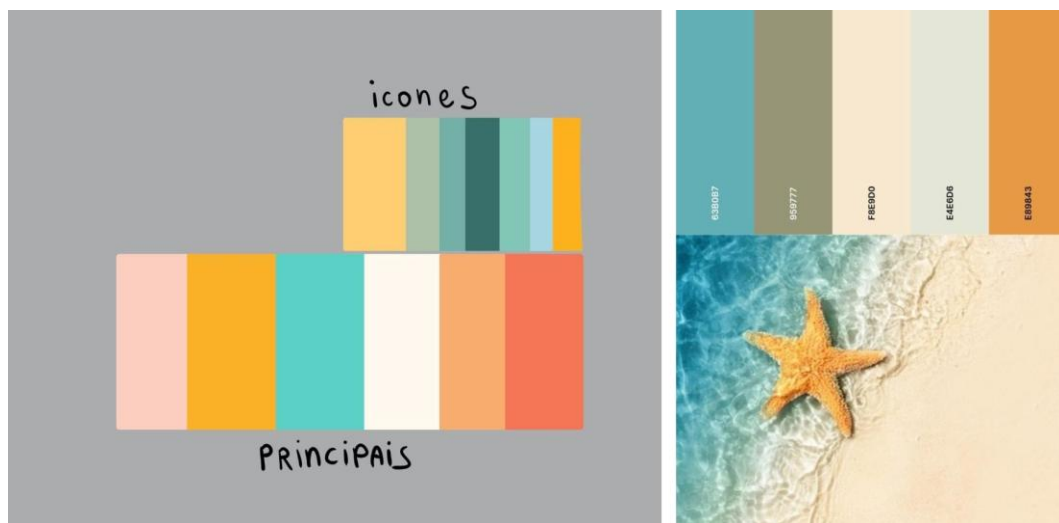
The methodology also engages with the principles of visual communication. For Donis A. Dondis (2007, p. 64), "color is one of the most emotional and expressive forms of visual communication", being essential to the organization of information and the construction of visual meaning. The map was therefore conceived not only as an artistic element but also as a functional tool for spatial orientation.

The experience took place in the Poço da Draga community, located in Fortaleza, Ceará, from April to June 2024. Students, community residents and representatives of local organizations took part in the project, making it an interdisciplinary and collaborative practice.

The development of the project followed these stages:

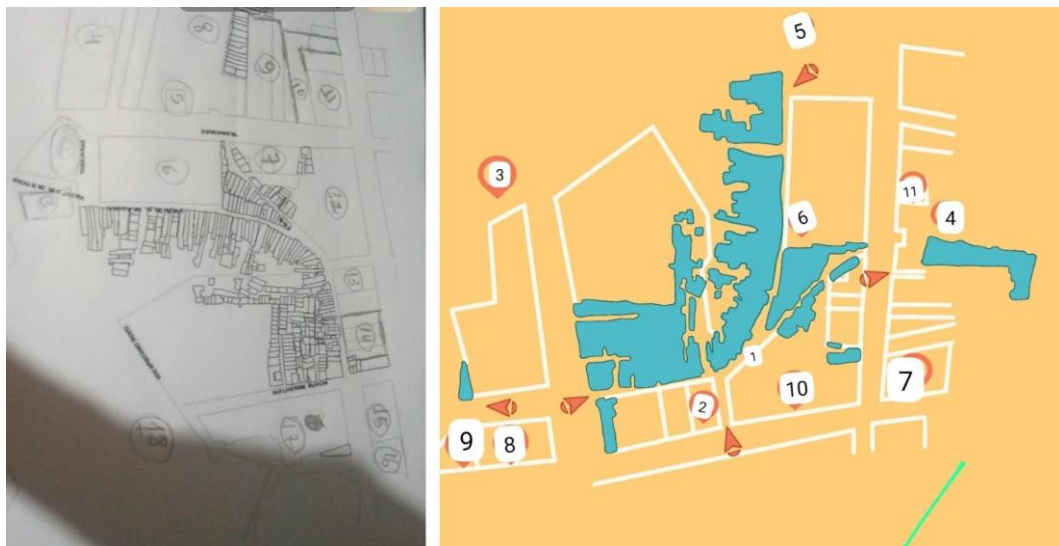
1. Choice of location (04/2024): selection of the Poço da Draga community as the intervention site, considering its sociocultural context and the need for internal signage.
2. Theoretical grounding (04/29/2024): lecture on color theory and design, covering concepts such as the color wheel, primary and secondary colors, harmony and the psychology of colors.
3. First technical visit (05/04/2024): getting to know the territory with the support of Serginho, a resident and geographer, allowing initial information gathering and observation of the space.
4. Problem definition (05/13/2024): meeting and discussion to identify the design problem — the absence of internal wayfinding — and to divide roles among participants.
5. Materials planning (05/17/2024): definition and request of resources, prioritizing paints in primary colors, considering that, according to Itten (2004), the combination of these colors allows a wide chromatic diversity.
6. Second technical visit (05/27/2024): deepening of the information with the support of Gerlane, a representative of the NGO Velaumar, reinforcing the participatory dimension of the project.
7. Definition of the color palette (06/04/2024): choice based on the principles of harmony and contrast. According to Dondis (2007), chromatic contrast is essential to ensure legibility and visual impact.

Figure 1 – Color palette defined for the map



8. Development of the map (06/04 to 06/06): manual and digital elaboration of the design, applying principles of visual hierarchy and spatial organization.

Figure 2 – Manual map and digital map with the defined colors

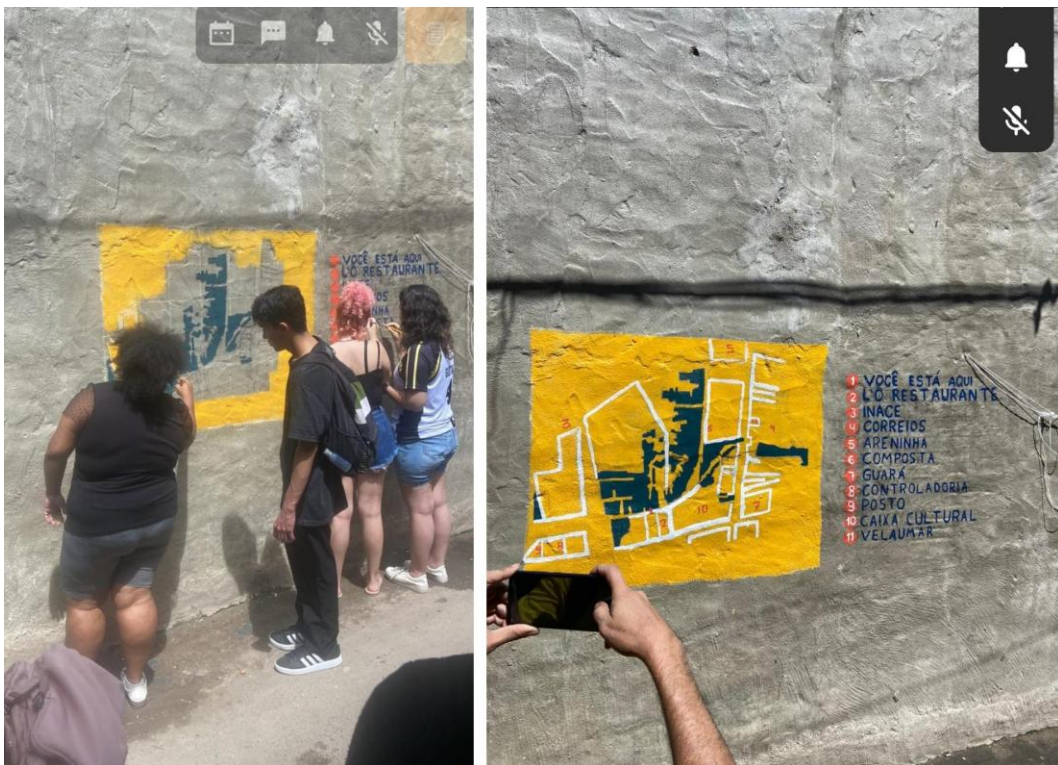


9. Execution of the intervention (06/08/2024): mural painting in the morning (8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.), putting the concepts studied into practice.

Figure 3 – Paints in primary colors. Beginning of the markings to start the map



Figure 4 – The map in progress. The finished map



10. Evaluation and reflection (06/17/2024): discussion of the results. According to Gil (2008), this stage is fundamental for interpreting the data and understanding the impacts of the intervention.

In this way, the methodology integrated theory and practice, allowing not only the application of academic knowledge but also the collective construction of a visual solution with direct social impact.

4 Final considerations

The development of the project “Cores e Amores no Poço da Draga” demonstrated the potential of color theory and practice as a tool for social transformation and visual communication in urban contexts. The intervention not only met the objective of creating a functional map of the community but also contributed significantly to enhancing the space and strengthening local identity.

During the execution of the project, some technical challenges were identified, especially related to the surface of the wall chosen for the intervention. The wall's irregular texture made it difficult to apply the paint initially planned, making it necessary to purchase a new type of paint better suited to the wall. This challenge highlighted the importance of adaptability in the design process, reinforcing that, in design practice, the real conditions of the environment directly influence technical decisions.

Despite the difficulties encountered, the project was completed within the established deadline. This positive result was possible thanks to the organization and collaborative work of the students, who divided the tasks according to their specific skills. This strategic division of tasks contributed to greater efficiency in execution and to the final quality of the intervention, demonstrating the relevance of teamwork in design projects.

The results obtained were extremely satisfactory. The map fulfilled its function of spatial orientation and was well received by the community. In addition, the intervention awakened a strong sense of belonging among the residents, who came to recognize themselves in the space represented. As a consequence, the community itself expressed interest in continuing the initiative, requesting new interventions on site.

In this context, the project establishes itself as an effective practice of social design, by integrating academic knowledge with real community demands. The experience reinforces that design, when applied sensitively and participatively, can generate lasting positive impacts, promoting inclusion, identity and social transformation.

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