

A few questions to José Maria Cunha

On Digital branding for the LdoD Archive, an online platform designed to experience one of the most complex books of Fernando Pessoa's work: The Book of Disquiet



Q: Pessoa's Book of Disquiet is a work which is deeply rooted, definitely more than any other of the same period, in its material and papery manifestation. How did you manage to translate this physical feature into the graphics for the digital edition?

JMC: The Book of Disquiet is deeply connected with the supports you mentioned, as it was written on a typewriter, on the back of calendars, covers, illustrations and tables, among others. We wanted to expand that graphic exuberance with our design project. This new platform enables infinite combinations of the fragments in which the book consists, so our response was a dynamic visual grammar based on the cornerstones of the book: language & typography.

Q: During the process of scouting, did you use material from sources other than witnesses and fragments of the Book? If so, can you make some example?

JMC: I just used the detailed scans provided by my research (you can see a glimpse on [the project's page on my website](#)). The typographic scene of the period was not as unified as in the US. In Europe different countries resembled different typographic characteristics, because of their borders and different types of governments. Nevertheless, I managed to create a typographic ensemble that would feel in place in the context of Pessoa's quotidian life.

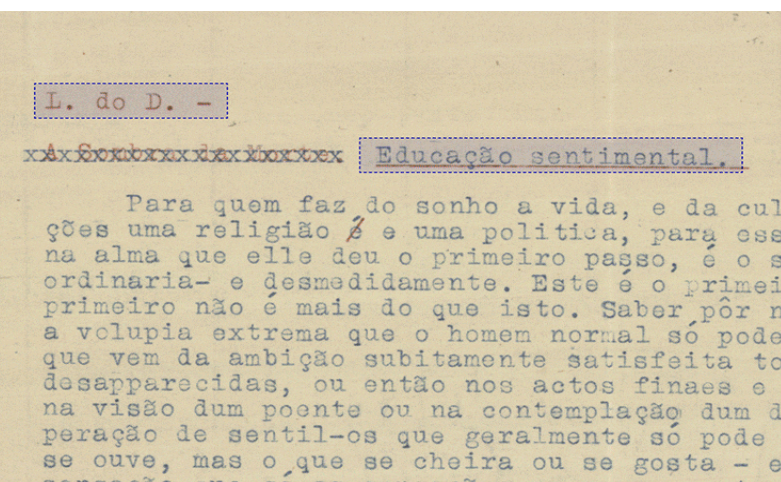
Q: How would you describe the balance between your personal aesthetics and the constraints of being consistent to the original work and to the requests of the project team?

JMC: My passion for design is deeply connected to my passion for typography. This project was the perfect halfway of both themes. I designed the final result as my best possible answer to the design problem itself commissioned by the client — and I'm very happy that they provided the necessary creative freedom and trust: a must in any successful project.

However, as in any other one of my projects, my personal aesthetics did not dictate the outcome. The end result is the product of a collaboration between designer and client. My job is to make my client share my vision for the project — that's something I build up during the design process.

Q: Can you briefly explain the typographic choices you made, especially if types were designed from scratch?

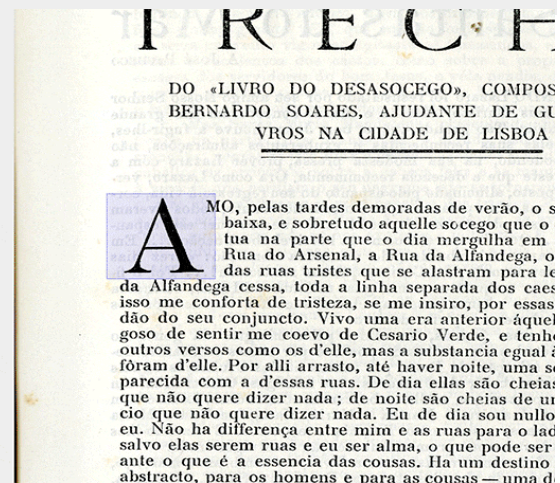
JMC: Following the scope of the LdoD Archive, all the selected typefaces are open source. That was a requirement from the beginning. Maybe most designers would see that as a big constraint, but I believe that limitations are a catalyst for creativity. And who would know that we have such a great cast of free typefaces online?



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Educação Sentimental.

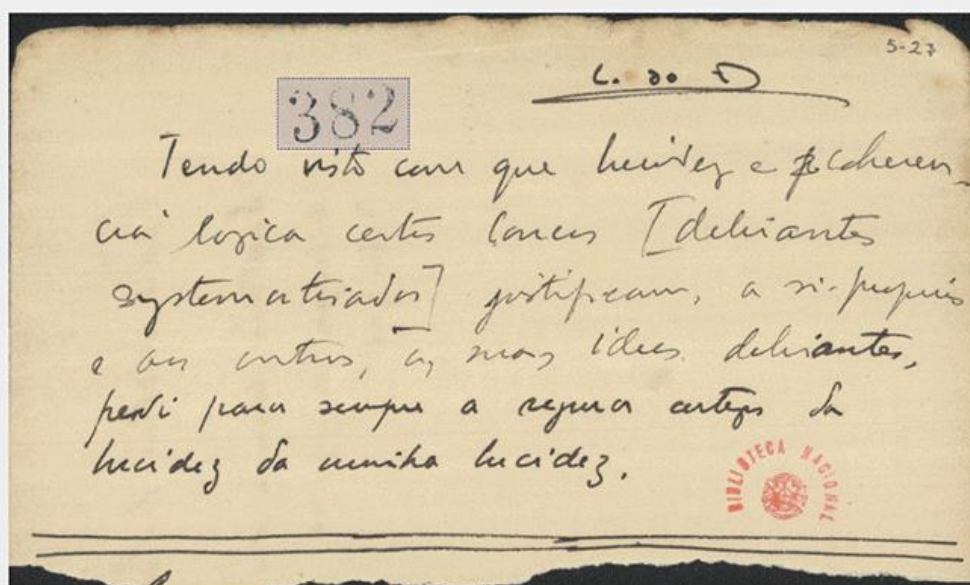
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José Maria Cunha is a multi-disciplinary design consultancy specialist in designing brands and identities, based in Portugal. His experience in the field has been proudly recognized by international publications and awards. His design projects have been exhibited, among others, at the Ginza Graphic Gallery, Japan, and published by Gestalten Books, Germany.

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