

**OBJECTS OF TOURIST DESIRE - CONSUMING MUSEUM SOUVENIRS FROM
OBJECTS ON DISPLAY**OBJETOS DO DESEJO DO TURISTA - CONSUMIR SOUVENIRS DE MUSEUS DERIVADOS DE OBJETOS
EM EXPOSIÇÃOOBJETOS DEL DESEO DEL TURISTA - CONSUMIR SOUVENIRS DE MUSEOS DERIVADOS DE OBJETOS
EN EXPOSICIÓN**Karla Estelita Godoy Waizbort¹** **Leonardo da Silva Vidal¹** **Ari da Silva Fonseca Filho¹** ¹Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói, RJ, Brasil

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Abstract: Purpose – Souvenirs are objects of desire often consumed when traveling. In museum stores, one finds what is called “museum souvenir” – which reproduces, in some way, works of art and other museum objects. In this sense, the link between the consumption of museum souvenirs and the relationship between tourists and objects on display was investigated. The research aimed to analyze the consumption of this type of souvenir in museum stores, in theoretical dialogue with the theme of souvenirs and their consumption in tourism, and with the concepts of “aestheticization” (Lipovetsky; Serroy, 2015) – appropriation of beauty as a consumer good –, and “technical reproducibility” (Benjamin) – the substitution of the unique existence of the work by a serial existence.

Design/methodology/approach – It is thus clear that subjects are not separated from their materialities (Miller, 2013) and that souvenirs are part of the universe of material things that make up the materialities of tourism. The ethnographic-based field research took place in museums in the city of Rio de Janeiro, adopting systematic observation and interviews.

Findings – Results point to the existence of a symbolic dimension in the relationship between the consumption of museum souvenirs and the exhibition visited, as they are connected to the experience and aesthetic fruition of tourists with works on display.

Research limitations/implications – Adopting souvenirs as an object of study from this perspective has enabled the expansion of analyses on their consumption by tourists, identifying gaps of scientific interest and projecting relevance to the research.

Practical implications – Other public profiles interested in souvenirs of different types and in consuming them for different purposes and in different places cannot be ignored. However, this qualitative research identified tourists who clearly demonstrated a desire to consume these categories of museum souvenirs.

Originality/value – The approach gives the article an innovative character and possibilities for theoretical and methodological contributions to future studies, such as theoretical dialogues with authors from the field of anthropology, with the existing theory on souvenirs and their consumption in tourism. Furthermore, it stands out from the most recurrent perspectives found in the literature on the subject in the area of tourism, as it seeks to deepen the understanding of the production of meanings.

Keywords: Tourism. Museums. Souvenir. Consumption. Materialities.

Karla: Professor Doctor of the Tourism Department and Graduate Program in Tourism (PPGTUR) at the Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói, RJ, Brazil. E-mail: karlagodoy@id.uff.br. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6753-5999>.

Leonardo: PhD student and Master in Anthropology (PPGA-UFF) at the Universidade Federal Fluminense. Niterói, RJ, Brazil. E-mail: leonardov@id.uff.br. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9928-8651>.

Ari: Professor Doctor of the Tourism Department and Graduate Program in Tourism (PPGTUR) at the Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói, RJ, Brazil. E-mail: arifonseca@id.uff.br. Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4492-5446>.

Resumo: Objetivo – Os souvenirs são objetos de desejo frequentemente consumidos em viagens. Nas lojas de museus, encontra-se o intitulado “souvenir de museu” – aquele que reproduz, de algum modo, obras de arte e outros objetos museológicos. Nesse sentido, investigou-se qual o vínculo entre o consumo de souvenirs de museus e a relação dos turistas com objetos em exposição. A pesquisa visou analisar o consumo dessa tipologia de souvenir nas lojas de museus, em diálogo teórico com a temática dos souvenirs e seu consumo no turismo, e com os conceitos de “estetização” (Lipovetsky; Serroy, 2015) – apropriação do belo como bem de consumo –, e de “reprodutibilidade técnica” (Benjamin, 1987) – substituição da existência única da obra por uma existência serial.

Desenho/metodologia/abordagem – Percebe-se, assim, que os sujeitos não estão separados de suas materialidades (Miller, 2013) e que os souvenirs integram o universo de coisas materiais que conformam as materialidades do turismo. A pesquisa de campo de base etnográfica ocorreu em museus do município do Rio de Janeiro, adotando observação sistemática e entrevistas.

Resultados – Resultados apontam para a existência de dimensão simbólica na relação entre o consumo dos souvenirs de museus e a exposição visitada, uma vez que se conectam à experiência e à fruição estética de turistas com obras expostas.

Limitações/implicações da pesquisa – Adotar o souvenir como objeto de estudo nessa perspectiva possibilitou a expansão de análises sobre seu consumo pelos turistas, identificando-se lacunas de interesse científico e projetando relevância à pesquisa.

Implicações práticas – Não podem ser desconsiderados outros perfis de público interessados em souvenirs de diversas naturezas e em praticar o consumo com distintas finalidades e em lugares variados. Contudo, esta pesquisa, de cunho qualitativo, identificou turistas que demonstraram claramente querer consumir essas categorias de souvenirs de museus.

Originalidade/valor – A abordagem confere ao artigo caráter inovador e possibilidades de contribuição teórico-metodológicas para futuros estudos, como diálogos teóricos realizados com autores do campo da antropologia, com a teoria existente sobre o souvenir e seu consumo no turismo. Além disso, distingue-se das perspectivas mais recorrentes encontradas na literatura da área do turismo sobre o tema, na medida em que procura se aprofundar na compreensão sobre a produção de significados.

Palavras-chave: Turismo. Museus. Souvenir. Consumo. Materialidades.

Resumen: Objetivo - Los souvenirs son objetos de deseo que se suelen consumir cuando se viaja. En las tiendas de los museos se puede encontrar el llamado “souvenir de museo”, que reproduce de algún modo obras de arte y otros objetos del museo. En ese sentido, se investigó el vínculo entre el consumo de souvenirs de museo y la relación entre los turistas y los objetos expuestos. La investigación tuvo como objetivo analizar el consumo de este tipo de souvenirs en las tiendas de los museos, en diálogo teórico con el tema de los souvenirs y su consumo en el turismo, y con los conceptos de “estetización” (Lipovetsky; Serroy, 2015) - apropiación de la belleza como bien de consumo - y “reproductibilidad técnica” (Benjamin, 1987) - sustitución de la existencia única de la obra por una existencia en serie.

Diseño/metodología/enfoque – Se observa así que los sujetos no están separados de sus materialidades (Miller, 2013) y que los souvenirs forman parte del universo de cosas materiales que componen las materialidades del turismo. La investigación etnográfica de campo tuvo lugar en museos del municipio de Rio de Janeiro, mediante observación sistemática y entrevistas.

Hallazgos – Los resultados apuntan a la existencia de una dimensión simbólica en la relación entre el consumo de souvenirs de museos y la exposición visitada, ya que están conectados a la experiencia y al disfrute estético de los turistas con las obras expuestas.

Limitaciones/implicaciones de la investigación – Adoptar los souvenirs como objeto de estudio desde esta perspectiva permitió ampliar el análisis de su consumo por parte de los turistas, identificando lagunas de interés científico y proyectando la relevancia de la investigación.

Implicaciones prácticas – No se pueden ignorar otros perfiles de público interesados en souvenirs de distintos tipos y en consumirlos con distintos fines y en distintos lugares. Sin embargo, esta investigación cualitativa identificó a turistas que demostraron claramente un deseo de consumir estas categorías de recuerdos de museo.

Originalidad/valor – Este enfoque confiere al artículo un carácter innovador y posibilidades de contribuciones teóricas y metodológicas para futuros estudios, como diálogos teóricos con autores del campo de la antropología, con la teoría existente sobre los souvenirs y su consumo en el turismo. Además, se diferencia de las perspectivas más recurrentes en la literatura turística sobre el tema, en que busca profundizar en la comprensión de la producción de significados.

Palabras Clave: Turismo. Museos. Souvenir. Consumo. Materialidades.

INTRODUCTION

The souvenir is one of the several important items of consumption bought by tourists during their travel. In the area of tourism, this is a subject that is often discussed, although what is called “museum souvenir” here is a typology that is rarely mentioned in academic literature, nationally, especially when adopting the anthropology of consumption as an analytical perspective.

Anthropological production regarding consumption has a considerable dimension in the studies on souvenirs. Classic ethnographies, such as those by Malinowski (2018) and Evans-Pritchard (2013), demonstrate a traditional approach, related

to the ability of goods to establish and maintain social relationships through structured exchange systems, and based on collective practices already significantly known in the anthropological field (Gomes & Barbosa, 2004). Even though this approach does not refer to the consumption covered in this investigation, its fundamental concern is related to the domains of production and the circulation of material things.

Campbell (2001) highlights arguments that support a change in perspective and a closer look at consumption and its symbolic character. The author's contribution lies in his explanations about "the transition from consumption as an event subordinated to production and the conditions of social reproduction, to the condition of a sociocultural event of the first magnitude, no longer limited to economic conditioning" (Gomes, 2007: 316). Thus, consumption comes to be understood as a ritual process and a cultural practice that highlights goods as part of a system of meaning in social life (Sahlins 2003; Douglas & Isherwood, 2013).

Consumption, following this understanding, is something active, relational, and social that goes beyond a rational, utilitarian, and private act (Appadurai, 2009; Douglas & Isherwood, 2013). It opposes the theory of demand, which interprets it as a practical and utilitarian need of the subjects. It is in this sense, therefore, that this research proposes to think about the materialities of the tourist phenomenon, specifically that of souvenirs. After all, they are immersed in a symbolic dynamic, which expands their condition as objects of exchange. In museums, as it will be seen, the consumption of these goods has different meanings from those commonly found in tourism studies.

In addition to the generally obvious relationship with the souvenir as a memory item and as material proof of a trip, the experience of visiting museums and the aesthetic fruition arising from the relationship with the objects on display can be decisive factors for a type of consumption that refers to this universe. Consuming a museum souvenir provides a kind of symbolic acquisition of certain works of art or other museum objects, since the originals cannot be materially obtained. In this way, it is considered as a hypothesis that the consumption of museum souvenirs – those that reproduce, even partially, the work of art or other museological objects in a museum, replicating them into objects of the most varied prices, aesthetics, purposes and desires, and making art, in some way, consumable – could be intrinsically linked to the connection that the subject establishes with the objects on display. Therefore, it became a fundamental reflection and research problem to investigate what is the link between the consumption of museum souvenirs and the relationship between tourists and works of art and other objects displayed in museum institutions.

The interest in museum souvenirs in the national academic panorama can be considered scarce. Researching souvenirs is a practice generally neglected by scholars from different areas who consider them to be of little scientific value. As a rule, they are seen as banal objects, without major significance, consumed in a random and massive manner by tourists (Gordon, 1986; Machado, & Siqueira, 2008), and judged as a factor of cultural mischaracterization (Ruschmann, 1999). However, taking them as an object of study makes it possible to expand different analyzes of the tourist phenomenon. From this perspective, we can see the scientific efforts that this study was responsible for developing.

We opted for ethnographic field research, carried out in three museums in the city of Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte do Rio / Rio Art Museum (MAR), Museu do Amanhã / Tomorrow's Museum and Museu Histórico Nacional / National History Museum (MHN). In addition to the considerable tourist appeal of the region in which these museum institutions are located – the result of the political project to build Rio de Janeiro as an Olympic city and the country's main destination (LEITE, 2019) –, these museums were also chosen because they have been research fields of the authors since 2016, granting continuity and depth to the research.

The article is divided into sections that deal with souvenirs in the tourist experience, museum souvenirs, the research methodology used, and the analyzes and results found based on field research carried out in the three institutions mentioned.

THE SOUVENIR IN THE TOURIST EXPERIENCE

Tourism, understood as a sociocultural phenomenon, is characterized by its intangibility. One of the ways to materialize this experience is to consume goods at the destination, which makes tourism "a phenomenon deeply marked by consumption in all its dimensions." (Machado & Siqueira, 2008: 2). From before traveling – with the purchase of travel tickets, entry tickets to tourist attractions and hotel reservations – to eating on site and purchasing tangible and intangible goods, tourism expresses its relationship with consumption in diverse ways. And the capacity of tourism – as a sociocultural phenomenon or as an economic activity – to imply changes in society and to modify itself with these social processes, allows broad perspectives for analyzing tourist consumption.

Museum souvenirs are part of this complex and dynamic system; however, they also participate in other social dimensions

and can be analyzed according to different experiences (Gordon 1986; Stewart, 1993). As Horodyski, Manosso & Gândara (2014) point out, “the possibilities for studying souvenirs surpass discussions of authenticity and the marketing aspect, when they understand that the consumption of these goods is symbolic and generates experiences for people.” Therefore, this study emphasizes the consumption of these souvenirs when related to the experience of visiting museums.

Souvenirs are part of “the system of objects that mediate experiences in time and space” (Stewart, 1993: 61) and, in this way, can evoke memories of the experience involving the past and present (Morgan & Pritchard, 2005). They allow people to symbolically move from the confines of their homes to the places and moments associated with their trip (Swanson, & Timothy, 2012), and, for these reasons, they are configured as a “industry of memories” (Schlüter, 1998). Therefore, souvenirs are characterized as one of the main resources for remembering the tourist experience, as “they combine with memory in a procedural way and as representations of a time, a location, an experience, provoking sensations of prolongation of the experience” (Godoy, Vidal & Mees, 2019).

The value of these objects emerges and operates in the approach to the other, in the relationship between visitors and visited, between tourists and hosts. Making the tourist experience tangible is an approach present in publications by Gordon (1986), Schlüter (1998), Swansone and Horridge (2006), Freire-Medeiros and Castro (2007), Reis (2008), Swansone and Timothy (2012), Paula and Mecca (2014), Horodyski, Manosso and Gândara (2014), Godoy, Vidal and Mees (2019) and in other studies and research that seek to establish the idea of representation and prolongation of experience.

The classification developed by Gordon (1986), although some more critical analyzes are necessary, allows an initial understanding of souvenirs, as it can provide a basis for different studies, even if mostly utilitarian, as it creates a possible classification through typologies. However, to delve deeper into the topic, this classification can be a limiting factor, as the author understands these objects according to their usefulness, since they materialize something immaterial: experience. Despite being a famous and relevant study on souvenirs, which, according to Horodyski, Manosso and Gândara (2014), allows us to understand a little more about the variety of these objects, it forms typologies taking into account only the physical characteristics, and is reduced to a classification that does not consider the subject-object relationship, nor the possibility of new analyzes in this field, as is the case with museum souvenirs (Godoy, Vidal, & Mees, 2019).

One of the meanings attributed to souvenirs is related to status. Collecting objects that represent the travel experience confers a certain position for those who consumed them and exhibited them as a cultural asset. In consumer society, “being sellable,” as Bauman (2008) states, is one of the premises for maintaining individual status in a social group. In this sense, “showing off” objects that prove the individual’s presence in a certain destination or place – such as clothing, accessories and other types of souvenirs – is configured as a factor of differentiation, a characteristic of the liquid-modern society that encourages consumption as a response to conflicts about identity and the need to be individual, unique and different from others (Bauman, 2008).

Identities also permeate the discussion about the consumption of these objects. For Barbosa and Campbell (2006), the relationship between consumption and the production of identities is evident which, in the context of tourism, is not an exception. It is clear, therefore, that subjects are not separated from their materialities (Miller, 2013) and souvenirs are part of the universe of material things that shape the materialities of tourism.

Using Mauss (2003), it is also possible to understand souvenirs as a resource for giving. Such objects “materialize the imaginary of travel and gain symbolic contours for those who acquire them, by their own choice or when gifted by third parties” (Godoy, Vidal, & Mees, 2019) – just remember the different products with the stamp “I was here and I thought of you”, typical souvenir to exemplify this characteristic. Therefore, they play a fundamental role in symbolic exchanges. And, in this sense, it is also possible to point out another value attributed to these objects: the ability to influence and be influenced by tourist imaginaries.

Images are directly associated with the tourist experience, since, visually, tourists come into contact with the destination even before their physical presence there, through photographs, audiovisual productions, websites and social networks. For this reason, they build feelings in relation to the place and objects, that is, they build imaginaries (Gastal, 2005). Still from this perspective, Siqueira and Siqueira (2013: 156) state that “by appropriating certain images, media systems select, edit and reproduce everyday elements, also acting in the construction of imaginaries”. On the other hand, at the same time that souvenirs can be a factor in the creation of these tourist imaginaries, often stereotypical, that guide tourists’ views, the subjects themselves are also responsible for creating imaginaries, for example, when tourists produce their photographs. In this sense, “the tourist’s gaze produces images and imaginaries that, in turn, will compose the complex tourist phenomenon” (Godoy & Leite, 2019).

Souvenirs are part of the complex dynamics of the circulation of goods, integrating the most varied social and cultural

contexts, from their production and circulation to their consumption. In summary, souvenirs are characterized as a relevant topic of study for the field of tourism, due to the varied possible approaches to understanding them. It is what the present study proposes in order to support the analysis of museum souvenirs.

THE MUSEUM SOUVENIR

Just as tourist consumption experiences in museums are diverse, museum souvenirs also have an endless variety. In this section, such objects, predominantly found in the stores of these institutions, will be studied considering the concepts of “aestheticization”, which originates from Lipovetsky and Serroy (2015), and “technical reproducibility”, from Walter Benjamin (1987).

The aestheticization of everyday life, based on the incorporation of art by capitalism, results in what these authors call artist capitalism, which, as Godoy and Luna (2018, p. 4855) clarify, is when “capitalism appropriates beauty as consumer goods”. Tourism is directly associated with this conception – since consumption is intrinsic to its dynamics – as are museums, which are spaces for the sacralization and consumption of art (although not exclusively).

This logic of aestheticization was already somewhat present in the literature of Walter Benjamin, specifically in the text “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility”, when he states that “the work of art has always been reproducible” (Benjamin, 1987: 166). However, according to the German philosopher, as reproduction multiplies, it replaces “the single existence of the work with a serial existence” (1987: 168), leading to the loss of its “aura”. As Benjamin (1987: 171) points out, “the reproduced work of art is increasingly the reproduction of a work of art created to be reproduced”, and, in this sense, the massification of the reproduction of the original, which carries with it the sense of authenticity, contributes to the loss of its uniqueness and directly affects the unique value of the object. Therefore, if the tourist souvenir meets the idea of reproduction and representation of objects in general, the museum souvenir is capable of reproducing, in some way, the work of art or other museological object in a museum.

Approaching and possessing the object sometimes becomes a kind of contemporary social necessity. Immersed in the postmodern consumer society, individuals are part of an important social system of provision and access to goods and services that have, in consumption, the mechanism that moves and brings them together. For Benjamin (1987), bringing the object closer to oneself, humanly and spatially, is to remove it from its shell to the extent that its mass reproduction would affect its uniqueness, therefore, destroy its aura. In view of this argument, museum souvenirs would be nothing more than a mass form of technical reproduction of the work of art.

From this point of view, the decoding of meanings, representations and experiences based on the subject-object relationship stands out. As Godoy, Vidal and Mees (2019: 23) emphasize, “stores compete for the feeling of aesthetic fruition arising from the relationship with art, when, in their spaces, replicas of works or artistic objects created especially in reference to these works are placed within the concrete reach of the public”. The museum souvenir, in this way, meets the proposal of museums to be more accessible (Godoy, 2017), as not only the collection, but also the museum itself, materially and imaginatively, becomes closer to the public. Therefore, “the acquisition of a museum souvenir may represent a desire to remember the experience lived during the visit and to indirectly obtain that object or work of art that touched the tourist aesthetically, affectively” (Godoy, Vidal, & Mees, 2019: 32).

Those who consume them thus assume another type of relationship with souvenirs, beyond the economic perspective and the idea that objects with no absolute artistic value are only consumed on a mass basis by tourists. Benjamin (1987: 168), when dealing with technical reproduction, states that “it can, for example, through photography, accentuate certain aspects of the original [...] not accessible to the human eye”, and still adopt resources that approximate the work of the individual. Although the author speaks critically on the topic of technical reproducibility, based on his analyses, it raises the possibility of reflecting on how souvenirs, even as serial objects, could become a catalyst for art and history references to generate, at the same time, the trivialization of the represented object, leading to its devaluation.

According to Benjamin (1987: 167), “the here and now of the work of art, its unique existence, in the place where it is found”, becomes an absent element, even in the most perfect reproduction. However, in the case of museum souvenirs, “it is as if [the subject] could [...] take with him, in addition to the materialized [...] experience, the work itself belonging to the museum or the fragments of historical objects arranged in the narratives of the exhibitions” (Godoy, Vidal, & Mees, 2019). This kind of approach to the work is directly related to “mass movements” (BENJAMIN, 1987: 169).

For Benjamin (1987: 168), as an original artistic object is reproduced, its historical testimony and consequently its authenticity is lost, making the “authority of the thing, its traditional weight” disappear. Throughout his analysis, the philosopher

highlights that the concept of aura summarizes these characteristics. In other words, it is precisely the aura of the work of art that atrophies in the era of technical reproducibility.

A possible dialogue about the dimensions of the aura is found in Araújo (2010), when he states that art objects adapted to the social and cultural changes of the 20th century, when market logic overcame cultural logic, in the sense of “subordination from cultural production to [...] expanded reproduction of capital” (Araújo, 2010: 129). It is the moment capitalism incorporates the field of arts and aesthetics into its ideologies. In Lipovetsky and Serroy (2015), the concept of artistic or creative transaesthetic capitalism concerns the adaptation carried out by the economic system in order to incorporate aesthetics. Godoy and Luna (2023) explain that transaesthetic is the hybridization of art and culture with consumption, that is, when capitalism appropriates beauty as a consumer good. In this way, museum souvenirs would be consumed as an aesthetic representation, as “every passing day the need to possess the object becomes more irresistible, as close as possible, in the image, or rather, in its copy, in its reproduction” (Benjamin, 1987, p. 170).

Regarding the subject’s experience as a visitor to a museum, the construction of meanings and the feeling of connection with the exhibited collection and the institution directly influence their consumption relationship with museum souvenirs. In other words, in museological institutions, a dimension of the aura, linked to aesthetic fruition, arising from the sensitive relationship between subjects and the objects of the exhibition, would, in some way, be within reach of the public through reproductions available in stores and other spaces of consumption. When purchasing a “souvenir” directly associated with the displayed object, the “here and now” of the work of art becomes remembered, as it carries meanings for the person who acquired it. Thus, despite their mass reproduction, the subject conferred particular value to each of these consumed objects.

Therefore, if museum souvenirs can be assimilated according to the meanings that the subject attributes to them, it is possible to formulate a classification that characterizes them in this way. In view of this, five “representation categories” (RC) of museum souvenirs were created for the present study, which reflect such assimilation by the subject. They will methodologically assist the analysis of the relationship between the subject (tourist) and the objects (souvenirs).

METHODOLOGY

The first step of the research methodology was to systematize and describe the categories of museum souvenirs.

The first category (RC1) refers to souvenirs that refer to the idea of elaborate knowledge. Educational items such as catalogues, books and videos make up this group, whose meaning for those who acquire them would be directly related to the construction, acquisition and/or demonstration of knowledge and cultural capital.

In the second category (RC2), there are souvenirs that represent status and power for those who consume them. These are not just luxury items or products that require high purchasing power on the part of the consumer, but those that symbolize values linked to a certain socioeconomic stratum and social position. This category of museum souvenirs includes jewelry, decorative objects, exceptional clothing items, even signed by designers or in partnership with famous brands in the world of fashion, as well as special limited-edition pieces and artifacts.

The third category of museum souvenirs (RC3) concerns those that have a direct and essential relationship with the work of art or other museum objects present in the exhibition, such as reproductions in original size or in miniatures, everyday objects with images from the exhibited collection printed on them and souvenirs that represent a piece from the museum. In this sense, it is as if the visitor could take the work itself or part of it with them, expressing a strong desire to acquire it.

The fourth category (RC4) is made up of objects that the consumer chooses with the intention of giving as a gift. Generally, they are simpler souvenirs with utilitarian and affective value. These can be stationery items, everyday objects, games, toys, and even edible products.

In the fifth (RC5) and last category, there are souvenirs that remind the subject of the museum institution and the location in which it is located. Examples are any objects that carry images or inscriptions referring to the museum and the city, the state, the country.

It is worth highlighting the possibility of the same museum souvenir being included in more than one category, as what will define its classification are not its physical characteristics nor its material typology, but the representation and symbolic value attributed to it, which “emerge from the people’s own inter-subjective experience in interaction with each other, and with the world” (Silveira, & Lima Filho, 2005: 38).

That said, the present investigation focused on ethnographic field research in museum institutions recognized as tourist

attractions, in order to identify the consumption of museum souvenirs in their stores.

From the first incursions, it was possible to confirm the extreme relevance of the field for structuring the methodological body of research. As Brandão (2007) highlights, “fieldwork is an experience, that is, more than a pure scientific act [...] it is the establishing of a knowledge-producing relationship” (Brandão, 2007: 12) As defined by the author, there are two moments of field research: first, getting to know the subjects who are part of the field and, based on this contact, developing a project with study data and the researcher’s prior knowledge; the second moment is the research itself, when the research interest is already known. And this is how the two phases of the present research took place.

The approaches to the field took place at different times and circumstances. Initially, during the years 2018 and 2019 – pre-Covid pandemic period – and, later, in 2022 and 2023 – a post-pandemic period. Returning to the field ensured possible changes in the consumption and production of souvenirs, thus making the research up to date.

Throughout the exploratory phase of the research, we sought to understand the functioning of each of these museums, their typologies, the types of collection, the public that each space receives, as well as their communication with their different visitors, the historical and social context in which they are located and in which they were created, the general functioning of the museums, their opening hours and activities, and most importantly: the dynamics of the souvenir shop in each of them.

Next, systematized observations began. As it was a qualitative research, there was in-depth analysis of the subject and detailed investigation (Patton, 1990). To help understand and interpret the information, a field notebook was used combined with the application of semi-structured and open interviews, in addition to participant observation, typical of the ethnographic-based research that we chose to undertake. In total, 40 interviews were carried out with tourists who visited the exhibitions and shops of the researched museums, 15 of which were in the National Historical Museum, 13 in the Rio Art Museum and 12 in the Museum of Tomorrow.

Two introductory questions guided the interviews: 1) Did you look for something in the store that you saw at the exhibition? 2) Did you find anything in the store that you didn’t see at the exhibition? Throughout the dialogue, the discussion was directed to the subject of interest of the research with the inclusion of other questions created according to the evolution of the interview with each person, in order to clarify any possible doubts, resolve any possible sidetracking from the topic on the part of the interlocutor, and to build a conversation that is closer and more directed towards the research objectives. Boni and Quaresma (2005) state that this interview model favors deeper analysis on the topic, obtaining more spontaneous responses, greater openness and trust between interviewees and the researcher, providing greater freedom and the emergence of unexpected questions. The authors also add that these “types of interviews greatly contribute to investigating the affective and evaluative aspects of the informants that determine the personal meanings of their attitudes and behaviors” (Boni & Quaresma, 2005: 75).

The results of the field research will be presented in the next sections, which portray the three museum institutions researched: the Rio Art Museum (MAR), the Museum of Tomorrow and the National Historical Museum (MHN).

FIELD RESEARCH AT THE RIO ART MUSEUM (MAR)

At the Rio Art Museum, which opened on March 1st 2013 and is located in Praça Mauá, it was observed that the souvenirs sold in the store do not have significant relationships with the collection on display. Tensions were found between the institution and the store and the museum – such as authorizations for the use of images and the transfer of funds – which depend on both to be resolved. They directly affect the types of souvenirs available for consumption.

Most of the pieces are design and decorative, created by national and international artists. They are directly related to the idea of aestheticization, developed by Lipovetsky and Serroy (2015), since there is an appropriation of beauty for consumption. They fall into the second “representation category” (RC2) listed in this research, that is, they concern the socioeconomic condition and social position of those who will consume this type of souvenir.

There are also souvenirs that exemplify the fifth category (RC5), that is, that refer to the museum itself and its location. Postcards with the image of MAR, that express serial reproducibility (Benjamin, 1987), are examples of these objects sold in the Museum store. However, those that portray the city of Rio de Janeiro and its icons – such as Copacabana beach and Christ the Redeemer – are more easily found, as well as those that reproduce the architecture of another museum, neighboring MAR, the Museum of Tomorrow. This reflects the preponderance of directing souvenirs more to the external space than to the internal one, which reinforces the predominance of RC5.

Throughout the research, we diagnosed the need of several tourists eager to consume objects that were more significant in relation to the experiences that occurred during their visit to the museum. Therefore, although the Rio Art Museum store instigates the desire to consume, it does not provide tourists with a diverse relationship with consumption, which would be based on integration with the objects on display and with the different representations and attributions of value experienced by them during their visit. The image of the museum's architecture on cup holders and postcards can be the beginning of an attempt to establish a feeling of bond and affection, according to the aesthetic enjoyment of this visitor.

FIELD RESEARCH AT THE MUSEUM OF TOMORROW

Although the institutional discourse is guided by environmental issues and sustainability, the Museum of Tomorrow store encourages mass consumption. The establishment does not belong to the institution and its main objective is to have not only souvenirs linked to the museum, but a variety of products from different suppliers.

Complaints from tourists were observed during the fieldwork and the most recurrent were the lack of souvenirs about the museum. In addition to what was found on site, it was also possible to find, on the Reclame Aqui (Complain Here) website, complaint¹ about the high prices, the little relationship between the souvenirs sold in the store and the objects displayed in the museum, and an outsourced company that photographs visitors to later sell the developed photograph as a souvenir for those portrayed. This, in fact, is a practice that has been observed in other tourist attractions but has collected controversial opinions regarding satisfaction with the service provided.

In some field situations, different interlocutors stated that they were able to associate some souvenirs from the store with what was on display in the museum due to the environmental theme and the discussion about sustainability – which could be classified in the third category of representation (RC3). For others, the souvenirs are not even related to the subjects covered in the exhibitions. According to these visitors, in other museums it is possible to buy a souvenir relating to the works seen in the exhibition. Such a comparison expressly demonstrates the consumer desire for this type of object.

The image of the museum, located in the port area (Pier Mauá) could be identified in some items, such as drawings and paintings – therefore classified in the fifth representation category (RC5). In this sense, the image of the institution is considered aestheticized (Lipovetsky; Serroy, 2015), as the reproductions (Benjamin, 2015) take possession of its architectural dimension as beauty to be consumed. However, according to some interlocutors, these 'are souvenirs from the city, not from the museum itself'.

Some suggestions for souvenirs were offered by tourists: that the objects should communicate more with the museum's collection – which refers to the third category of representation (RC3) – and that the souvenirs should have an intrinsic relationship with the exhibition, such as a room catalog and QR Code or application in which it would be possible to purchase an audiovisual product, as there are videos shown on the exhibition circuit. It is inferred, therefore, that the museum souvenir is an element of memory production, recollection of experience and a means of satisfying the desire to acquire, indirectly, the object or work of art on display that has, in some way, sensitized the tourist aesthetically and emotionally (Godoy, Vidal, & Mees, 2019).

For some interlocutors who work at the store, "the museum teaches people not to consume unrestrainedly, and tries to deconstruct the idea of mass consumption." However, the same interlocutors analyze the tourists' behavior negatively, when they say: "it seems like they haven't learned anything." Taking into account that the Museum of Tomorrow, opened in December 2015, can be classified as a "spectacle museum" (Abreu, 2013), its creation being linked to tourist objectives and, initially, focused on the flow originating from the major sporting events that the country would host, it is estimated that the store is directly linked to this same logic, despite the statements holding visitors responsible.

Thus, at the same time that certain souvenirs for sale connect to the museum through their central theme, they also become disconnected when they offer a variety of products without the slightest relationship with it, incapable of mediating the affective or aesthetic bond with the subjects. On the part of the store, there is an attempt to create a link based on the discourse and narrative constructed throughout the exhibition circuit, however the stimulus to immediate consumption becomes preponderant, intensifying the superficiality and fluidity of the experience that spectacle museums can also to produce.

FIELD RESEARCH AT THE NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM (MHN)

At the National Historical Museum, created in 1922, the store belongs to the museum itself ² and, perhaps for this reason, it was possible to perceive other circumstances involving tourists. During the research, interlocutors pointed out the presence of many souvenirs related to the exhibition, such as the Automobiles. They make reference to the 1908 Protos automobile, on display since November 1996, which belonged to Barão do Rio Branco and is indicated by the Museum as one of the only examples existing in the world. Souvenirs like these can be included in the third category of representation (RC3), as they have an intrinsic relationship with the object displayed in the museum.

Another category of representation found in the MHN store is the first (RC1), relating to objects that refer to the idea of knowledge. For example, there are several publications in the store, such as the Annals of the National Historical Museum, exhibition catalogs and books related to the institution's collection. "Rio at the MHN exhibition," for example, is one of the themes of *Bonde da História*³. It is also possible to find the book entitled "History of Rio de Janeiro in 45 objects", as well as others referring to the Imperial Period in Brazil, since, during the exhibition circuit, the visitor comes to contact with collections from that historical period. The same souvenirs also fall into the third category of representation (RC3), as they maintain a direct relationship with the collection on display.

Through interviews, some tourists expressed a desire for more books on the history of the building, as, throughout their visit to the exhibition, they became familiarized with the theme of history, which is due to the typology of the MHN itself and its collection.

Some books were considered expensive, which is why some interlocutors did not purchase them. However, they state that, if there was one about the history of the building, it would be purchased, because, according to the research, it would indicate that the person visited the museum. This example falls into the second category of representation (RC2), which brings together objects that represent status and power.

Through observation, more souvenirs were identified and classified according to the research representation categories. Items that represent the museum's architecture as an icon (RC5), which have an intrinsic relationship with the collection on display (RC3) – such as those that refer to the painting "Combate Naval do Riachuelo", by Victor Meirelles – and other simple items to give as gifts (RC4), such as pencils, pens, erasers, magnets, key chains, among others that reproduce (Benjamin, 1987) and aestheticize (Lipovetsky; Serroy, 2015) the works in whole or in part.

Research at the National Historical Museum, located in Praça XV, indicated that the majority of souvenirs desired by tourists can be found in the store and are consumed by them, as they are related to the experience and affections shared by tourists with works on display.

CONCLUSIONS

By assuming that the consumption of museum souvenirs could be linked to the relationship that the subject establishes with artistic objects, this article investigated the link between the consumption of museum souvenirs and the relationship between tourists and works of art and other objects displayed in museum institutions.

The study defined a museum souvenir as one that reproduces, even partially, the work of art or museum object of a museum, replicating them into material objects of the most varied prices, aesthetics, purposes, and desires, making art consumable in some way.

Adopting souvenirs as an object of study from this perspective enabled the expansion of analyses on their consumption by tourists, identifying gaps of scientific interest and projecting relevance to the research. Thus, the approach gives the article an innovative character and possibilities for theoretical and methodological contributions to future studies, such as, for example, the theoretical dialogues held with authors from the field of anthropology, with the existing theory on souvenirs and their consumption in tourism. There was a deeper discussion on the logic of aestheticization (Lipovetsky; Serroy, 2015) and that of technical reproducibility present in the literature of Walter Benjamin (1987), in order to problematize the reproduction of works of art in museum souvenirs.

The ethnographic field research took place in three museums in Rio de Janeiro: Rio Art Museum (MAR), Museum of Tomorrow and National Historical Museum (MHN), the authors' research fields since 2016. Forty interviews were carried out with tourists who visited the exhibition and store of the researched museums. When collecting statements from tourists, two questions were central to the evolution of the research: whether the visitor looked for something in the store that they saw in the exhibition and whether they found something in the store that they did not see in the exhibition. Conducting

the interviews allowed the inclusion of new questions created according to the interaction with the interviewee, in order to clarify doubts or avoid the loss of objectivity of the research. For a qualitative analysis of the data obtained, it was decided to classify museum souvenirs through the creation of "representation categories" (RC), which helped in the analysis of the research.

As a result, it can be stated that in the Rio Art Museum store, it was identified that the museum space itself is configured as a place to encourage the desire to consume, but does not provide tourists with a consumption relationship based on integration with the objects on display and with the different representations and attributions of value experienced by the tourist during the visit. There was a predominance of categories RC2, with decorative and designer objects, and RC5, with images of the museum's architecture on cup holders and postcards – identified as an attempt to establish a feeling of bond and affection according to the aesthetic fruition of its Visitor.

At the Museum of Tomorrow store, the establishment's workers themselves argued that the institution seeks to educate the public not to consume unrestrainedly, trying to deconstruct the idea of mass consumption. However, their reports highlighted the public's difficulty in grasping this meaning through the exhibition.

Although some tourists noticed some connection between the souvenirs found in the store and the environmental and sustainability themes that the museum seeks to present, others were unable to verify it. According to the categories of museum souvenirs listed, RC3 and RC5 were identified through objects that reproduced only the image of the museum. It is noteworthy that tourists expressed the desire to buy souvenirs that expressed more communication with the museum's collection.

At the same time that certain souvenirs for sale connect with the museum through environmental themes, they also offer a variety of products with no connection whatsoever to the museum, being unable to mediate the emotional or aesthetic bond with tourists.

During the field research, it was found that there was a third-party company taking photographs of tourists who so desired, with the aim of selling them later to those portrayed. The photos would function as a museum souvenir, classified in categories RC2 and RC5. It is worth highlighting that this practice exists in several tourist attractions in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

Finally, in the MHN store, it was possible to see the presence of all categories of museum souvenirs listed, including those representing elaborated knowledge, status and power positions; souvenirs directly related to works of art and other objects in the museum; others identified for the purpose of giving as a gift; and those that refer to the image of the institution. Some interlocutors considered the books available for sale expensive and requested that there be more publications on the history of the museum's construction.

Research at the National Historical Museum indicated that the majority of museum souvenirs are found in the store and consumed by tourists. Such souvenirs are related to the experience and affections shared by tourists with various works on display. It is worth noting that the museum store is managed by the Association of Friends of the MHN, that is, it is linked to the institution itself, and products are purchased through said association and through consignment sales. This is probably due to the expanded representation of the categories of these souvenirs and the care in making items related to the exhibitions and the institution itself available to the public, allowing tourists and visitors in general to consume museum souvenirs linked to the museum experience and to the production of memories.

Therefore, museum stores are configured as spaces for constructing the visitor's experience in the museum. Its existence, in addition to being beneficial, in the sense of providing direct or indirect financial resources to the museum, is also relevant to providing meaningful and affective memories of the institution and its collection.

In this sense, the results point to the existence of a symbolic dimension, which links the consumption of museum souvenirs to works of art and other museum objects on display. In other words, when consuming museum souvenirs, tourists indirectly consume the objects on display, as they connect these souvenirs to their experiences, affections, and aesthetic enjoyment. Thus, the consumption of museum souvenirs is expressed more intensely, contributing to the narrative construction of the experience.

As for the limits of the research, other public profiles interested in souvenirs of different types and in consuming them for different purposes and in different places cannot be ignored. However, this qualitative research identified tourists who clearly demonstrated a desire to consume these categories of museum souvenirs. Therefore, what could represent a limitation in methodological terms, due to the choice of ethnographic research instead of using quantitative techniques, proved to be pertinent in view of the qualitative results obtained regarding the experiences of visitors in the shops of the museums studied. The use of theoretical and methodological contributions from anthropology allowed for greater proximity

mity to interlocutors and their points of view, ensuring proper understanding of the topic in question.

The approach adopted in this study differs from more recurrent perspectives found in tourism literature on the subject, as it seeks to deepen the understanding of the production of meanings.

It was found that the more stores integrate museum souvenirs with museum objects on display, the more they will encourage another relationship of souvenir consumption in these spaces. As consequence, it may also provide dissemination of the collection, promotion of the institution, a greater sense of bond with the museum and encouragement of visits. The museum souvenir, characterized in this way, can be contrasted with the idea that souvenirs are banal objects, without function or representation, consumed by tourists only in a mass and utilitarian way. They express themselves as objects of desire.

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NOTAS FINAIS

- 1 Available at: https://www.reclameaqui.com.br/museu-do-amanha/museu-do-amanha-problemas-do-ontem_vM-NI49rvDy7LNdUL/ https://www.reclameaqui.com.br/museu-do-amanha /lack-of-organization_mnASoQUKgR5tZNzS/#
- 2 The store is managed by the Association of Friends of MHN. The acquisition of objects is made through the aforementioned association and through consigned sales.
- 3 The Bonde da História Project was created with the aim of offering mediated visits focusing on themes generated from the MHN collection and exhibitions.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Karla Estelita Godoy Waizbort: conceptualization; investigation; supervision; methodology; data curation; formal analysis; writing – original draft; writing – review & editing.

Leonardo da Silva Vidal: conceptualization; investigation; methodology; data curation; formal analysis; writing – original draft; writing – review & editing.

Ari da Silva Fonseca Filho: methodology; formal analysis; writing – review & editing.

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