

A Book Literally Made of Clichés.

Did you know cliché is drawn from a French printing term? A cliché was a printing plate cast from moveable type which, interestingly, was also called a stereotype. Instead of setting letters individually to form words, it saved time to have whole pre-made words cast – words that were used commonly. This later expanded into the first stock imagery – commonly used images to accompany text. Hence, cliché came to mean a common phrase or idea, and stereotype a way to conform ideas into simplified concepts that required less explanation, so therefore, less typesetting.

Brazilian graphic designer Gustavo Piqueira has used the history of the cliché to create a book about the history of his country – told through cliché. *Brazilian Clichés* plays on the dual meaning on the word, illustrating stereotypical views of Brazilian history and the country today, such as the arrival of the Portuguese, slavery, the conversion of the native people to Christianity and the export of coffee and gold.

With images layered on top of one another to attribute new meanings and altered in colour to play on their original uses, (look at the clovers printed in blue, applied repeatedly to create an enchanted sea) the entire book is an enjoyable exercise in punnery, witticisms and the potential stories you can tell with stock imagery, limited resources and a pile of clichés.

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