# Mini Rio: Exploring Rio de Janeiro Through 100 Pictograms

By Fabio Lopez

Discover the vibrant culture of Rio de Janeiro through 100 unique pictograms. This design project explores the city's landmarks, traditions, and daily life, offering a visual celebration of its diverse identity.



With the Olympic spotlight shining on Rio de Janeiro, interest in this vibrant city has surged. *Mini Rio* is a collection of 100 pictograms and illustrations designed to visually showcase the

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city's rich cultural heritage. This independent project, developed over 17 months, offered an opportunity to explore new narratives and design tools.

#### **Content research**

The initial goal of creating city illustrations evolved into a collection of 100 pictograms. Defining the content proved challenging. While extensive research informed the selection, some important aspects may have been omitted, and others included might not resonate with everyone. Some ideas translated better visually than others. Subjective factors like personal relevance, thematic diversity, and political positioning also played a role. Ultimately, the project reflects a personal perspective of Rio.



[Content research] Definition and categorization.

*Mini Rio* isn't an idealized portrayal. It acknowledges both the beautiful scenery and the social challenges of a large city. While not focusing solely on problems, they are not ignored.



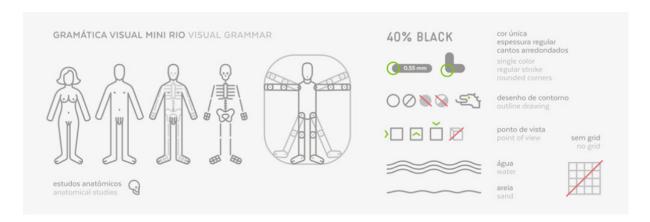
[Content research] Referential images.

To balance the pictogram development, subjects were categorized into: tourist attractions, culture (music, art, museums, tradition, events), lifestyle (customs, habits, points of interest),

everyday life (objects, services, urban equipment), nature (fauna, flora, geography), and problems. Some overlap between categories is inevitable, and the final definitions reflect a personal interpretation.

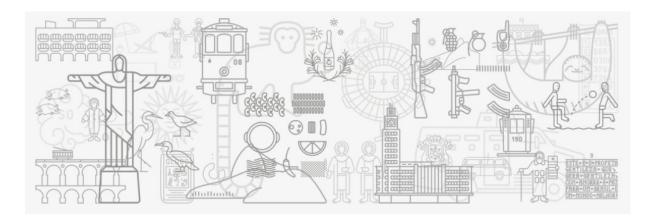
## **Creation stage**

Over 1,200 images were collected and produced for the pictograms. Each pictogram was carefully drawn, demanding attention to detail and technical accuracy. The set followed specific rules: unfilled shapes (outline drawing), uniform line thickness, single color, rounded corners, no perspective, geometric alignment, and standardized human figures.



[Rendering] mini Rio visual language and grammar definition.

The visual language is intentionally simple, given the complexity of the content. Abstract illustrations would hinder comprehension. A rigid construction grid was deemed inappropriate due to the project's scope, and visual coherence was achieved through the repetition of common characteristics rather than strict geometric forms.



[Rendering] Pictogram system.

All pictograms were tested at small sizes (less than 2 cm) to ensure recognizability. Some

required numerous revisions, while others came together quickly. Often, completed pictograms were revisited for refinement or differentiation.



[Rendering] Prints and small size tests.

### **Typography**

To integrate image and text in pictograms featuring alphabet characters, two exclusive typefaces were developed: *mini Tipo* and *mini Gentileza*.



 $[Typography] \ Exclusive \ type faces \ with \ the \ same \ pictogram \ characteristics.$ 

Both typefaces share the pictograms' visual characteristics: rounded finish, uniform width, and simple structure. *Mini Gentileza* was created specifically to evoke the traditional writings of the city's prophet and wanderer.<sup>1</sup>

#### + 100 and mini Lab

Nearing completion of the initial 100 pictograms, the possibility of complementary images emerged. This led to the creation of another 100 smaller, simpler pictograms, enabling animation in certain applications.



[Mini pictograms] Additional pictograms for each subject.

Following the pictogram creation, a dedicated period called *mini Lab* was initiated to explore the potential of the visual language. This involved expanding and combining pictograms to create colorful designs, patterns, animations, new pictographs, graphics, and complex landscapes.











[mini Lab] Visual language lab mini Rio.

# **Next steps**

The next phase involves commercializing the pictograms and derivatives through partnerships and licensed products. A book about *mini Rio* is also in production to provide further context for each pictogram.

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1. These fonts can be downloaded from the project site.



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