

Cultural Photojournalism: The Case of the Artists' Portraits and the Visual Construction of Authorship

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Abstract

This presentation is part of an ongoing research project – Culture on the Front Page – aiming to characterize cultural journalism in various portuguese newspapers during the first decade of the XXI century, developed by the Centro de Investigação Media e Jornalismo at Universidade Nova de Lisboa and funded by the Portuguese Agency for Science and Technology (FCT). One of the important focus of the research is to understand the role of photography in the communication of cultural events, understanding it as one of the major locus of the social construction of reality and ideology. Photography as a news media is an immediate and often unnoticed way of conveying a frame to mediated events and of spreading a shared knowledge. For this presentation we will be analyzing one of the major uses of photographic media regarding cultural journalism: the artists' portraits and the visual construction of this modern persona as the most present cultural agent at newspapers pages, reflecting their own social position in the cultural social field. We will be using a socio-semiotic approach in the context of a broader visual culture and image history frame in order to map the rhetorical visual devices in use and interrogate the status of this mediations within journalistic routines, their editorial pertinence and relation to the cultural industries market where authors often emerge as brands, though interrogating the somewhat thin separation between journalism and the market.