

## Comparing cultures. Visual synonyms and antonyms

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It deals with differences between American and Spanish cultures through an artistic research. Visiting a place as a tourist offers a shallow perspective of what you could know and experience there. Then, when you return for that place, you mentally create a mental image that represents all its beauty, undoubtedly connected with your memories. However, living as a resident in a new country let you know other life styles, norms and traditions that are part of this new and strange culture. Time is a key factor, always needed, to become aware of all of those curious traditions in the beginning. Undoubtedly, comparison is always there confronting both cultures. Bearing in mind that the idea of becoming part of a new culture is one of our interests, since it is part of an experience we lived, our focus of interest remains images. Research with images and about images offers new ways to explore ideas visually and also as a language that generates a visual discourse. During previous conferences on Arts Based Research and Artistic Research We have inquired in some ways of using images through photography. Understanding photography from an artistic research makes clear that pictures are a container of meanings, a research tool to find answers and helps understand our own thinking. Furthermore, with a camera, we are able to create visual discourses involving different layers of meanings.

This Artistic research reflects becoming part of American culture by doing comparison through pictures. Our aim has been working comparison using two language figures: *antonym and synonym*. Both linguistic figures establish a semantics relationship with its meaning, either of similarity or opposition. So, We

have transferred these figures into a visual field, paying attention to the connection of meanings that images offers. So, we create some *Visual synonyms and antonyms* that reflect elements of conflicts of American culture.

Taking pictures and playing with images and ideas beyond are part of the process of understanding traditions by comparison cultures. We have chosen different sites that reflect how communities live in the city of Dallas, its norms and habits. So, the idea of belonging or not belonging is always present. Over time, for sure we would appropriate their traditions and make them like if they were own.

***Keywords: artistic research, visual synonyms and antonyms, cultures, comparison.***

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