

MARIA AUGUSTA RUI BARBOSA'S TEXTILES: PRACTICAL, TECHNOLOGICAL AND RESEARCH APPROACHES

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to find alternatives, possibilities, and techniques to carry out practical and theoretical research in textile conservation, using as an example the case study of garments belonging to Maria Augusta Rui Barbosa, housed at the Rui Barbosa Historic House Museum. The first project about kimonos was an in-depth study, that included nomenclature, materiality, historical context, exhibition, and the history of the owner (Maria Augusta). The subsequent research, focused on the study of the character Maria Augusta through her clothes named *Thinking the woman through her attire: Maria Augusta Rui Barbosa's trajectory from her garments* faced some obstacles: it was impossible to have physical access to available objects, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which interrupted the in-person work.

METODOLOGY

The conservation of the kimonos

The conservation approach included methodologies on preservation of textiles, surface cleaning, scientific analysis, and environmental management of the storage area. In addition, a rehousing of the two kimonos was carried out. The garments were stored inside flat costume made.



Figure 1: The boxes of the kimonos. The rehousing included the manufacture of two boxes, with the following specifications: dimensions of 24 cm x 120 cm x 100 cm, using 800g/m² white alveolar Polypropylene with 3 circular ventilation holes on each side of the box (each hole measuring 6 cm in diameter, just below the cap). The holes were covered with nylon and adhered to the polymer to protect the kimonos from dust entry. **Photograph by** Gabriela Lúcio.



Figures 2 and 3: The new rehousing. During this process, to avoid creasing, rolls of different sizes were placed at all points of folds, made with surgical mesh, and stuffed with acrylic batting. In some points where the rollers were not needed, such as the collar and shoulders, non-woven pillows made of 100% polypropylene batting were placed, sewn with polyester thread, and stuffed with an acrylic batting. The result allowed the kimonos to have as few folds and creases as possible in an adequate position and with little mobility, thus avoiding new problems. **Photograph by** Gabriela Lúcio.

Cleaning

A low power vacuum cleaner, with a HEPA filter and the nozzle protected with a tulle fabric was used to clean the fabric at a distance of 5 cm.

Relative humidity and temperature

The museum is an older construction from the earlier of the 20th Century in Rio de Janeiro, almost two blocks from the beach. We aim at controlling the T and RH as much as possible with fans and opening the windows when necessary.

The exhibition process

A 360° museography technique system was designed for this exhibition. Maria Augusta's kimonos proved to be very suitable for this type of system. These three-dimensional garments with severe deteriorations in their structure, made it impossible to be displayed any other way. In addition, it is an excellent way of making the item available for consultation when the collection is not open to visitors, as it happened during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Figures 4, 5 and 6: The production process of the 360° museography technique system. A professional photographer donated his services, and the gif was assembled by the author of the article. This project exhibition system initiated a pilot project for digitizing the Rui Barbosa Historic House Museum collection. The 360° photos will be available in high resolution in virtual exhibitions, in addition to being included in the documentation of the objects as part of the technical reports and in the collection's database. **Photograph by** Márcia Pinheiro Ferreira.



Figures 7 and 8: Video frames of the two kimonos, produced from the 360° museography technique system. **Photograph by** Gabriel Garcia Silva

Covid-19 pandemic - The use of photographs

With the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic in March 2020, the work became remote, which made it impossible to have access to museum objects. The research continued turning to photographs of iconographic documentation from the Historical and Institutional Archive Service of the Casa de Rui Barbosa Foundation, which portray Maria Augusta individually or in groups, and are available online on the foundation's own website. As a possible solution to understanding Maria Augusta Rui Barbosa clothing and her use of fashion, the photos turned out to be a modern technological tool used in the iconographic analysis, that allowed the identification of styles and their temporalities.



Gabriela Lúcio de Sousa, MSc

Anna Gabriela Pereira Faria, MA
Nathalie Rodrigues Barcellos, BA
Márcia Pinheiro Ferreira, MSc



Figures 9, 10 and 11: Photographs of Maria Augusta present on the Iconography FCRB website used in the research on her garments. **Source by** Iconography FCRB website.

RESULTS

The need for the institution's team to reinvent itself, replacing direct research on objects with research using photographs in a digital file, demonstrates that, regardless of the situation, Brazilian public institutions have a great capacity for resilience, for accepting necessary adjustments and for overcoming difficulties, consolidating an efficient and equally relevant execution of its work. In addition, creativity was fundamental, considering the low-cost solutions, as well as the informative inferences obtained through searches in the institution's database and the ability to produce specific materials for this purpose.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is fundamentally to emphasize that the political, social, and public health situation in the country has made it imperative for the team to take a leading role in defending the production of technical and scientific knowledge in the institution. In recent years, the Casa de Rui Barbosa Foundation, as a federal institution, has suffered, as well as other research bodies, administrative sanctions, which have put at risk years of committed and competent research. However, the dedication of the researchers involved has been the main driving force behind the development of activities. We conclude highlighting the importance of using technology for textile conservation research. This has reinforced the positive impact of a dedicated team, which even under the most unfavorable situations, managed to establish the production of knowledge as a priority among their work activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To American Institute for Conservation & Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (AIC/FAIC), Association for Heritage Preservation of the Americas (APOYOnline), Rui Barbosa Historic House Museum, Beatriz Haspo, Amparo Rueda (Amparito), PPGCINF-UnB, PPG-PMUS-UNIRIO/MAST, and all Brazilian researchers who fight and survive every day. **This study was financed in part by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brasil (CAPES) - Finance Code 001.**