

Dossiê 5

As fontes de pesquisa para moda. Uma aproximação interdisciplinar e arquivista da história da moda: pesquisa e ensino.

MUSEUM DOCUMENTATION OF CLOTHING COLLECTIONS: CLASSIFYING A HYBRID GARMENT FROM UFPA'S AMAZONIANA ART COLLECTION

**Documentação de coleções museológicas de
vestuário: classificando uma roupa híbrida na
coleção amazoniana de arte da UFPA**

**Documentation de collections museologiques
de vêtements: classement d'un vêtement
hybride dans la Collection d'Art Amazonienne de
l'Université Fédérale du Para**

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Abstract

Based on documentation practices adopted by the Fashion section of UFPA's Amazoniana Art Collection, this article aims to discuss and propose alternatives for the classification of an article of clothing by the Brazilian fashion brand 'André Lima'. By mixing clothing structures that are both open (such as skirts and dresses) and closed (pants, shorts, panties etc.), this object destabilizes a classification logic that assumes infallible categories and nomenclatures for each item of a collection. What should it be called in museological terms? To answer this question, we first sought to relate the main aspects that are involved in the museological documentation of clothing. Next, we explained UFPA's Amazoniana Art Collection documentation practices for this type of object. Finally, we developed an analysis of the piece using the interpretive method of fashion objects developed by Mida and Kim (2015). Besides meeting an internal demand by the collection in question, the study of this object reflects the particularities of managing fashion collections in Brazil. Also, it points out keys to understanding the creative thinking of the designer André Lima and contemporary fashion in Brazil.

Key-words: Museum documentation. Contemporary fashion. André Lima.

Resumo

Tomando como base as ações de documentação dos objetos da Seção Moda da Coleção Amazoniana de Arte da Universidade Federal do Pará, este artigo objetiva discutir e propor alternativas de classificação de uma peça de vestuário de autoria da marca brasileira 'André Lima'. Ao misturar as estruturas de vestuário aberto (próprio das saias e vestidos) e fechado (próprio de calças, bermudas, calcinhas etc.), tal objeto desestabiliza uma lógica classificatória que pressupõe categorias e nomenclaturas estáveis para cada item pertencente a uma coleção. Como identificá-lo em termos museológicos? Para pensar essa questão, buscamos, primeiramente, relacionar os principais aspectos que envolvem a documentação museológica de objetos de vestuário. Em um segundo momento, apresentamos os processos de documentação dessa tipologia de objeto na Coleção Amazoniana de Arte da UFPA. Por fim, desenvolvemos uma análise da peça a partir do método interpretativo de objetos de moda concebido por Mida e Kim (2015). Mais do que atender a uma demanda interna da coleção em questão, o estudo desse objeto reflete particularidades da gestão de acervos de moda no Brasil, além de apontar chaves de compreensão do pensamento criativo do estilista André Lima e da moda contemporânea brasileira.

Palavras-Chave: Documentação museológica. Moda contemporânea. André Lima

Resumé

En partant des actions de documentation des objets de la section de Mode de la Collection d'Art Amazonienne de l'Université Fédérale du Para, cet article propose à la fois une discussion sur une pièce de vêtement créée par la marque brésilienne 'André Lima' et une mise en revue des possibilités pour la classer. Lorsque l'on mélange les structures de vêtements ouverts (des jupes et des robes, par exemple) aux structures de vêtements fermés (des pantalons, des shorts, des culottes etc.), on déstabilise la logique de classification qui suppose des catégories et des nomenclatures stables pour chaque article d'une collection. Comment classer ces articles dans un cadre muséologique? Pour réfléchir à cette question, il nous faut d'abord mettre en relation les aspects majeurs de la documentation muséologique des objets vestimentaires. Ensuite, il sera temps de présenter le processus de documentation de la typologie d'objets dans la Collection d'Art Amazonienne de l'UFPA. Nous procéderons enfin à une analyse de la pièce en question à travers l'interprétation d'objets de mode, une méthode conçue par Mida et Kim (2015). Plus que répondre à une demande interne de la collection en question, cette étude reflète les particularités de la gestion des collections de mode au Brésil. Elle offre également des outils pour la compréhension de la pensée créatrice du designer André Lima ainsi que de la mode contemporaine brésilienne.

Mots-clés: Documentation muséologique. Mode contemporaine. André Lima.

1 INTRODUCTION

Based on documentation practices adopted by the Fashion section of UFPA's Amazoniana Art Collection, this article¹ discusses and proposes alternatives for the classification of an article of clothing from the Brazilian fashion brand 'André Lima'. Identified as 'RTM.AL.I.17' in UFPA's Amazoniana Art Collection, the object presents a hybrid construction framework, destabilizing a classificatory logic which presumes infallible categories and classifications for each item belonging to a museum collection. What should it be called? With this question in mind, the work was divided into three parts. First, we shall list the main features involved in the museum documentation of clothing – from the acquisition to the cataloging process. Secondly, we will explain the clothing-documentation practices adopted by the Fashion section of UFPA's Amazoniana Art Collection. Finally, we will analyze the object in question using the interpretive method for fashion objects developed by Mida and Kim (2015), which is comprised of three steps: 1. Observation (description of the physical characteristics of the object); 2. Reflection (sensitive experience of the subject-researcher with the object studied and a gathering of other contextualizing sources such as similar parts, photographs and scientific papers)²; 3. Interpretation (cross-checking data obtained in previous phases with the objectives and the theoretical perspectives of the study).

Por fim, o terceiro estágio consiste no cruzamento e na síntese dos dados levantados pelo pesquisador nas etapas anteriores com as teorias, propósitos e perguntas da investigação. O que há de diferente no objeto analisado? A que tipos de tendências estético-culturais ele se conecta? Trata-se, nesse momento, do exercício de interpretação dos resultados, ou seja, da articulação da experiência empírica com os horizontes teóricos e as informações obtidas durante todo o processo de análise do objeto.

2 DOCUMENTING CLOTHING COLLECTIONS: BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

Besides conservation, research and communication, documentation is one of the guiding axes of museological work (FERREZ, 1994; DESVALLÉES; MAIRESSE, 2013; PADILHA, 2014). In museological terms, documentation refers to the identification, registration and maintenance of all information relating to an institution. According to Padilha (2014), it is classified into two types: 1. Documentation of administrative practices: records of official museum proceedings (such as technical reports, loan terms of objects, procedures manuals, etc.); and 2. Documentation of objects: from the surveying and general identification of a collection to the analysis of contextual and physical characteristics of each object (registration, classification and cataloging of each object according to parameters established by each institution). As Cândido pointed out (2006, p. 36), documentation systems should focus on "clarity and accuracy in recording object data", "compliance with rules and predefined procedures which should be consolidated in specific manuals", "the control of terminology using controlled vocabulary", "the elaboration of research instruments", and the establishment of "security measures regarding system maintenance". Specifically, in relation to the documentation of clothing, guidelines set for-

¹ The article presents part of the results of the thesis *Museum Documentation of Contemporary Fashion: Cataloging André Lima's disobedient clothes at UFPA's Amazoniana Art Collection* (DIAS, 2018), conducted at Universidade da Amazônia (Master program in Communication, Languages and Culture). Advisor: Mariano Klautau Filho.

² The first and second steps are taught using a 60-question form that is divided into nine axes: General; Construction; Textile; Labels; Use, Alteration and Wear; Supporting Material; Sensory Reactions; Personal Reactions; and Contextual Information.

th by The International Committee for Museums and Collections of Costume (ICOM COSTUME³ state that in the act of acquiring an article of clothing, as much data as possible should be gathered about its history. Regarding the process of cataloging clothing, ICOM COSTUME (ibid.) recommends that the catalog registration form of each object should contain the registration number; name of the cataloger and date; date; dimensions; color; form; material; technique; drawing, and sketch or photograph. In this sense, Bickley (2013) emphasizes that in cataloging an object, one must seek to identify the materials that it is made of, measure its main parts, describe the object as a whole and in detail, characterize alterations and/or repairs (if any), indicate the location and the content of labels, record its location and any changes in location, and also describe the contexts in which the object was used. In respect to terminology control, Coffey-Webb (2016, p.51) observes that the documentation of clothing collections faces two specific challenges: “Costume terms are generally hard to codify mainly because they follow fashion and the vernacular. (...) Plus, clothing can be worn in different ways. If a shawl is worn as a scarf, a sash, a fichu, or a sarong, is it a shawl or not, and therefore, what should it be called?” Considering this dilemma, ICOM COSTUME⁴ recommends that attributing a name to an article of clothing should be as follows: 1. Generic term; 2. Secondary Term (identification of the model); 3. If necessary, a third item identifying a variant of the previous term. Regarding contemporary and/or regional terms, these should appear as a second, third or fourth term between parentheses, brackets, quotation marks or other convention stipulated by the institution in question. Regarding terminology challenges related to clothing documentation, it is worth noting that since 1971, ICOM COSTUME has been striving for a “common understanding of terms used in the description of clothing and accessories” (DRUESEDOW, 2014 apud ICOM/BENARUSH, 2014). Currently, the committee’s website offers glossaries of basic terms for cataloging apparel in English, German, French and Spanish⁵. The Portuguese version was published in 2014 through a partnership between ICOM COSTUME and the Ministry of Culture of Rio de Janeiro (ICOM/BENARUSH, 2014).

3 CLOTHING DOCUMENTATION IN THE FASHION SECTION OF UFPA'S AMAZONIANA ART COLLECTION

Conceived and curated by Orlando Maneschky, UFPA's Amazoniana Art Collection was founded in 2010 with the purpose of forming a collection of contemporary art that would reflect the differential of the Amazon artist: his location “far from the great cultural centers of the country” and his consideration for “a region that is forgotten and oppressed by public authority and the strength of capital” (MANESCHY, 2017, p.2). When the fashion designer André Lima closed his studio in São Paulo in 2014, the *Amazoniana* was able to incorporate into its collection a significant portion of the fashion designer’s personal archives. The objects were personally chosen by André Lima together with Yorrana Souza⁶. Regarding this process, Souza (2015) explains that the basic criterion that guided the choice was to compose a set of objects that encompassed the designer’s

3 Available at <http://network.icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/minisites/costume/pdf/guidelines_portuguese.pdf>. Access on 7/21/2019.

4 Available at: <<http://network.icom.museum/costume/publications/terminology/>>.

5 The *Amazoniana Art Collection* has been deposited at the Museum of the Universidade Federal do Pará (MUFPA) and in the technical reserves of the Laboratory for Preventive Conservation of Movable heritage at the same university’s School of Visual Arts.

6 For her master’s thesis, Yorrana Souza researched André Lima’s creative process. See Souza (2013).

career since its beginning in the 1980s in his hometown of Belém until his last runway show held at São Paulo Fashion Week (Summer 2013 season). Thus, in 2015, the *Amazoniana Art Collection* inaugurated a section dedicated to Fashion. Considering the broad range of the acquired object typologies, Orlando Maneschy and Yorrana Maia formed a partnership between the bachelor's degree in Museology at Universidade Federal do Pará and the bachelor's degree in Fashion at the Universidade da Amazônia to deal with the objects. Using an interdisciplinary team, the inventory of items revealed 1050 objects/sets of objects divided into five categories, as follows: 256 articles of clothing, 56 samples of prints and fabrics, 239 accessories, 382 documents, and 117 notions. In respect to terminology control, the guidelines for the classification process of the Fashion Section were the publications *Thesaurus para acervos museológicos* [thesaurus for museum collections] (FERREZ; BIANCHINI, 1987)⁷ and *Termos básicos para a catalogação de vestuário* [vocabulary of basic terms for cataloging costume] (ICOM COSTUME/BENARUSH, 2014). Specifically concerning the documentation of clothing, the general identification of objects is performed by means of a preliminary diagnostic form with the following fields: registration code of the object; title; common name of the object; description; images; conservation status; observations; and responsible technicians (CABRAL; SANTOS, 2016). To organize the category, Santos (2017) adopted the class (Personal Objects) and the subclass (Clothing) present in the publication *Thesaurus para acervos museológicos* (FERREZ; BIANCHINI, 1987) and the terms (name and models of the pieces) found in the publication *Termos básicos para a catalogação de vestuário* (ICOM COSTUME/BENARUSH, 2014). Currently, clothing items are being cataloged based on the record card established by Santos (2017). The model has 35 fill-in fields divided into 4 parts, as shown in the table below:

Table 1 – Structure of the Record Card.

Partes	Campos de preenchimento
(1) Identification of the object	Collection; registration number; term; class; subclass; title; author; date; date of acquisition; origin; provenance; material; techniques; mode of acquisition; dimensions [height, width]; location; image of the object; description of the object; photographic data.
(2) Conservation Analysis	Conservation [good; bad; normal or very bad]; loss of material [yes; no]; interventions [yes; no]; recommendations; description of the conservation diagnosis.
(3) Historical analysis	Historical data; publications; iconographic characteristics; stylistic characteristics; archival and bibliographical references
(4) Fill-in Data	Responsible for filling in / date; reviewer / date

Source: Authors based in Santos (2017).

4 RTM.AL.I.17: DETERMINING THE CLASSIFICATION OF A HYBRID GARMENT

Among the 256 articles of clothing donated by the fashion designer André Lima, the object of our study was the 17th on the list. The piece raised questions as to its classification since it presents a hybrid structure. In the front, it is formed by a bodice and a miniskirt that covers a pair of panties. In the back, it is formed by a white bodice and a bla-

⁷ Created by Helena Ferrez and Maria Helena Bianchini, the publication *Thesaurus para acervos museológicos* (1987) at first aimed to include objects from the Museu Histórico Nacional (MHN), however ended up becoming a reference work widely used by Brazilian museums (PADILHA, 2014).

ck pair of panties. There was no term to describe the garment in the publication *Termos básicos para a catalogação de vestuário* (ICOM CUSTOM/BENARUSH, 2014). Based, then, on the interpretive method of fashion objects developed by Mida and Kim (2015), we began analyzing the physical and contextual characteristics of the object. The item has strapless bodice and geometric cutouts that form a pattern of alternating black and white rectangle triangles in the middle of the front. Nine covered buttons and an invisible zipper in the center-back serve to close the garment. We observed a tag attached to the garment with the logo of the brand 'André Lima', a sticker with a bar code, and a reference to the fact that it is a runway show item (size 38).

Figure 1 - Front and back of the object 'RTM.AL.I.17'



Source: Dias, 2018.

On the inside, the piece features three labels. The first identifies the 'André Lima' brand. The second contains data about the confection process, edition and size. It reads: "This is a limited edition and produced by craftsmen. Correctly follow the care instructions for its perfect conservation / 38". The third displays the legal information of the brand 'André Lima', the textile composition, a reference code, origin, and seven symbols that indicate the garment's care instructions. It reads: "IMPÉRIO; CONFECÇÕES LTDA-ME; CNPJ: 03.998.818/0001-33; Material: 100% silk; Lining: 100% polyester; Ref: 2225470; Do not soak; MADE IN BRAZIL". After this initial acknowledgment of the object 'RTM.AL.I.17', we examined a series of videos and pictures⁸ of the fashion shows held by the brand 'André Lima' to learn when the piece was made. In the photos of the fashion show Summer 2009 André Lima, we saw that a replica of the object being studied was used in the fifth outfit. Among the 23 outfits presented, we observed a maximalist-style collection⁹ marked by successive geometric decomposition exercises. We also noticed the presence of a garment similar to 'RTM.AL.I.17' in outfit number 10.

⁸ OAt the time of the study, photographs from the fashion section of *Amazoniana Art Collection* were verified in addition to videos and pictures of the André Lima fashion shows available in the UOL Portal archive. Links: <<https://ffw.uol.com.br/desfiles/andre-lima/>>; <<https://www.uol.com.br/mov/busca/?q=andr%C3%A9%20lima%20desfile>>. Access on 06/27/2019.

⁹ It is worth noting that in the fashion industry, 'collection' refers to a selection of garments and/or accessories that have certain aspects in common and are organized according to criteria established by a designer/brand (SEIVEWRIGHT, 2015, 172). In accordance with museums, the word 'collection' refers to "a set of material or immaterial objects (...) that an individual or an establishment is responsible for gathering, sorting, selecting and storing in a secure environment that is frequently communicated to a rather broad audience" (DESVALLÉES; MAIRESSE, 2013, p.32).

Figure 2 – Outfits 5 and 10 of the fashion show Summer 2009 André Lima, 2008.



Source: FFW¹⁰.

Another aspect stands out in the Summer 2009 *André Lima* collection: the use of the black-and-white combination. The combination is seen not only in the piece we studied, but also in six other garments exhibited. When we expand our perspective to other collections created by André Lima, we realized that the positive-negative pattern is used often in prints and cutouts. The pattern also appears conceptually in the runway show for the “*Um desejo só não basta*” collection (Summer 2005) by means of references to the Taoist Yin-Yang principle. Back at the *Amazoniana Art Collection*, we observed the geometric cutouts of the object ‘RTM.AL.I.17’ and noted the Yin-Yang logic: the duality present in all levels of existence; the eternal conflict of opposing and complementary forces; the idea that when there is a black dot on white, there is also a white dot on black. We observed an object that shows – from its hybrid structure and the visual game produced by cutouts – a logic that suggests the use of the conjunction “and” instead of “or”. With this in mind, we investigated other pieces from the Summer Collection 2009 that constitute the fashion section of *Amazoniana Art Collection*. We found two excerpts from the magazines *IstoÉ Gente*¹¹ and *L’Officiel Brasil*¹² of photo shoots containing both a replica of the garment we are studying and a similar piece that was included in outfit 10 of the Summer 2009 *André Lima* runway show. Although the publications do not have a commitment to follow a controlled terminology, there is some discord regarding the terms assigned to objects of similar structure. While the magazine *IstoÉ Gente* highlights the hybrid character of the garment by using the term ‘maillot-corselet’, the magazine *L’Officiel Brasil* uses the term ‘maillot’. According to Catellani (2003), corselet refers to a tight-fitting bodice that goes to the waist, used commonly in feminine fashion to shape the body. According to the publication *Termos básicos para a catalogação de vestuário* (ICOM COSTUME/BENARUSH, 2014, p.11), the swimsuit (maillot) is a “single article of female swim wear, adhering to the body, with or without straps”. Thus, we noticed that the

¹⁰ Available at: <https://ffw.uol.com.br/desfiles/sao-paulo/verao-2009-rtw/andre-lima/1288/colecao/thu_mbs/>. Access on June 29, 2019.

¹¹ *IstoÉ Gente* magazine, Year X, No473, September 29, 2008 (UFPA's Amazoniana Art Collection; item: RTM.AL.IV.56)

¹² *L’Officiel* magazine - BR, October 1., 2008, p. 86 (UFPA's Amazoniana Art Collection; item: RTM.AL.IV.58)

terms employed by magazines disregard the mini skirt that covers the hips at the front of the analyzed garment. Despite this, it is possible to see that the object 'RTM.AL.I.17' has structural similarities with the swimsuit, corselet and skirt. With this in mind, despite its fabric not being suitable for use in the water, the garment studied called to mind the transformations of swim wear throughout history, especially the first women's one-piece swim wear fashion designs that were created and disseminated during the first half of the 20th century. These, according to Delgado (2016), were composed of a type of maillot with an internal pair of shorts or a superimposed mini skirt that hid the groin area. Therefore, given all the data collected on the object 'RTM.AL.I.17', we suggest two classification possibilities: "maillot-skirt" and "maillot-dress". Although the ICOM COSTUME guidelines on terminology¹³ are not explicit regarding the possibility of assigning a hybrid name to an article of clothing, it should be noted that the publication *Termos básicos para a catalogação de vestuário* (ICOM COSTUME/BENARUSH, 2014, p.11), introduces terms such as "dress-apron", "dress-jacket", and "semi-godet skirt". Thus, in adopting a hybrid term, we observe a classification strategy for the studied object that respects both its material and conceptual aspects as well as the documenting logic of the Fashion Section of UFPA's Amazoniana Art Collection. Based therefore on the definitions established by the *Termos básicos para a catalogação de vestuário* (ICOM COSTUME/BENARUSH, 2014, p.11), we believe that the object 'RTM.AL.I.17' can be seen as a mix between a swimsuit and a skirt – "a piece with variable form and length that covers the body from the hips down" (ibid., 11) – generating the term "maillot-skirt". Or even as a dress – "a piece with variable form and length, which can be a one-piece on its own or two elements that integrate with each other: one covering the upper part of the body except for the head, and the other covering the body from the hips down" (ibid., p.12) – which is very short in length and which also exposes the structure of a swimsuit, generating the term "dress-maillot". Comparing the two classificatory possibilities, we understand that the term "dress-maillot" comprises the characteristics of the object 'RTM.AL.I.17' more specifically, since the materials used in the piece are not suitable for use in water. Returning to the context of the Summer 2009 André Lima fashion show, we believe, furthermore, that the fashion designer tried to blend the notions of beachwear and party attire.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

At the beginning of this study, our fundamental objective was to discuss and propose alternatives for the classification of the object 'RTM.AL.I.17' in the context UFPA's Amazoniana Art Collection. Thus, we first sought to list the main demands involved in the documentation of clothing collections in museums. Next, we presented the clothing-documentation practices that have been adopted in the Fashion Section of the *Amazoniana* collection since the acquisition of objects from the atelier of André Lima. Finally, we arrived at the crucial moment of the study when we analyzed the object 'RTM.AL.I.17' and suggested the use of the term "dress-maillot". Using the interpretive method for fashion objects developed by Mida and Kim (2015) we outlined a research path based on approximations and deviations between the object studied, the terminology manuals, fashion history, and the worlds imagined by André Lima in his collections. This cross-check allowed us to question the researched object in various ways and confront visions of

¹³ Available at: <<http://network.icom.museum/costume/publications/terminology/>>.

different disciplines, providing an expanded perception of the issues which initiated the study. Whereas the cataloging process is continuous and the entire classification process can be rather arbitrary, by using the classification term indicated we have sought to establish a balance between the logic of the terminology manuals currently utilized by the *Fashion Section*, the structure of the piece, and André Lima's ideas for his Summer 2009 collection. Looking at other collections created by the designer, we found that the use of the positive-negative pattern was recurrent. The reference to Yin-Yang in the collection Summer 2005 suggest the Taoist principle as a possible guiding axis of André Lima's creative work – an issue to be worked on in future studies. With respect to the object 'RTM. AL.I.17', we conclude that both structurally and conceptually, the piece indicates a logic which does not divide, but instead multiplies; a logic that does not separate, but instead combines.

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Abridged version of the article. Translated by Ruth Hollard.