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[journal@dresshistorians.org](mailto:journal@dresshistorians.org)  
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# The Clothes Worn in 1785 for the Betrothal and Wedding of Carlota Joaquina of Spain and Dom João of Portugal

Fausto Viana

## *Abstract*

*A marriage of the nobility, especially between two significant European imperial houses, such as the Bourbon and the Braganza, that date back to the thirteenth and seventeenth century, respectively, was a reason to celebrate. This article seeks to identify the clothes worn at the celebration in Madrid, Spain in 1785, based on two recently discovered paintings of the marriage of Carlota Joaquina of Spain and Dom João of Portugal.*

Part of the project, Dressing the Contemporary Scene: Patterns and Dress in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Brazil, developed at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, involves investigating dress, sewing and tailoring manuals, pictures, and iconographic material in general. In Brazil, the study of eighteenth-century dress is a challenge. No trace of dress from that period has yet been found in private or public museums in Brazil, and iconographical resources are scarce.

Brazil was for a long time a colony of Portugal, and clothes were only part of the cultural knowledge shared for more than three centuries, 1500-1822. People from Portugal would travel to Brazil under many circumstances, normally related to the exploration of the land in terms of gold, diamonds, and other natural resources. From the point of view of the coloniser, the strategy was to go to the colony, explore and experience it for a period, and then return home to enjoy the fortune acquired in Brazil. The country was not isolated in terms of clothing influences. Not only did members of the Portuguese court sail to Brazil, but travellers from all parts of the world came through Brazil on their way to other countries in South America, Australia, and Pacific destinations. A whole diversity of costume was worn in Brazil, even though there are no material remains.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Portugal and England maintained deep financial relations with Brazil, and England was the main supplier of fabric and other textile materials to Brazil. In order to conduct object-based dress research of Portuguese and English dress, Brazilian dress historians must travel to Portugal and England specifically in search of historic costumes, fabric, and haberdashery of the period. In 2016, an exciting dress-related discovery occurred, which opened new research opportunities. Two paintings were discovered in Portugal, which depicted the royal wedding of Carlota Joaquina of Spain and Dom João of Portugal in 1785. These paintings were found at The National Palace of Queluz, a national museum located 12 kilometres from Lisbon.

## A Royal Wedding

Carlota Joaquina (1775-1830) was the daughter of Carlos IV of Spain and a descendant of Louis XIV of France. Dom João (1767-1826), who would become Dom João VI, King of Portugal, Brazil and Algarves, was the son of Pedro III and the Queen Maria I, both of Portugal. The marriage of Carlota Joaquina and Dom João had been previously arranged in the late 1770s, as Rui Ramos stated in his History of Portugal:

The early years of the reign of Queen Maria were also marked by a policy of approaching Spain, sponsored by King Carlos III. It was in this context that they celebrated, in 1785, the crossed marriages of Prince João and the Infanta Dona Mariana Victoria with the infants of Spain, respectively, Dona Carlota Joaquina and Dom Gabriel Antonio.<sup>1</sup>

On 2 May 1784, the preliminary marriage agreements were signed in Aranjuez.<sup>2</sup> It was to be a double wedding: the Prince of Spain marrying an Infanta from Portugal while the Prince of Portugal, Dom João, marrying an Infanta from Spain (Carlota Joaquina of Spain). This article will focus on the latter wedding between Carlota Joaquina of Spain and Dom João of Portugal.

Also in 1784, and almost a year before the wedding, the staff at the Ducal Palace of Vila Viçosa, the seat of the House of Braganza, situated 187 kilometres from Lisbon, were already preparing for the actual celebration.<sup>3</sup> On 10 March 1785, a wedding treaty was signed. On 27 March 1785, a scripture and a matrimonial contract were signed in Madrid, in the presence of Dom José Moñino y Redondo, count of Florida Blanca, who represented the King of Spain. Also present at the contract signing was Dom Henrique de Menezes, the third Marquis of Lourical, who represented the King of Portugal.

On 8 May 1785, Dona Carlota Joaquina de Bourbon arrived at the Ducal Palace of Vila Vicoso. She was introduced to Prince João and his parents, who were surprised as Carlota Joaquina “was not only a child, but also extremely short, not very attractive in terms of appearance, her hair curly, and she was very awkward looking.”<sup>4</sup>

After a religious ceremony, there was a great feast celebrating the event. *The Lisbon Gazette* reported that “...all the royal family dined in public, a ceremony that had not been practiced since the royal wedding in 1729. The family and the Spanish entourage dined at several of the state tables and were served with magnificence, profusion, and delicacy.”<sup>5</sup> On 9 June 1785, the religious wedding ceremony took place in Lisbon, at the Chapel of the Barraca Real. The ceremony was followed by three days of festivities, and there were fireworks in the Praça do Comércio.

Mariano Salvador Maella painted a portrait of Carlota Joaquina (Figure 1) in 1785, the year of her wedding to Dom João (Figure 2). In Figure 1, Carlota Joaquina was painted when 10 years old, much younger in age than her mother-in-law had been when she married at the age of 25. Carlota Joaquina at 10 years old was the same age at marriage as was Maria Anna of Austria, Queen of Portugal (1718–1781) (Figure 3). Maria Anna of Austria, mother of Queen Maria I (1734–1816) (Figure 4), married in 1729. It is also worth noting that the husband of Queen Maria I, Dom Pedro III, was the uncle of Queen Maria I. To secure thrones, power, and property, negotiations between Imperial families worked in this manner.

In her book, *Maria I, the Crazy Queen*, Louise Boléo stated that many of the costumes worn during the reign of Queen Maria I were inspired by the fashions of the Spanish and Austrian courts.<sup>6</sup> The Austrian influence is well highlighted in the severity of the dress of Maria Anna of Austria in Figure 3. When analysing paintings and portraits of rulers or other women in Portugal, the deep and powerful pressure imposed on them by the Catholic Church must be acknowledged. In the eighteenth century, the moral influence of the Catholic Church was wide-reaching and its condemnations and judgments very strict, affecting the way people dressed.

Boléo stated that even for simple daily wear, “The toilettes of women were time consuming and hairstyles required hours. In festive days they had to be elaborated with pearls, according to the taste of Queen Maria I and clearly shown in the paintings that have survived until today,” as one can see in Figure 4.<sup>7</sup> The use of feathers in women’s hair arrangements in Portugal did not become as excessive as in France, which, Boléo stated, was “curious because Portugal had access to rarer, more precious, and exotic feathers coming from Brazil.”<sup>8</sup> The hair of Portuguese women was neither as powdered nor high as the French.



*Figure 1*  
*Carlota Joaquina of Spain, Queen of Portugal,*  
 Mariano Salvador Maella, 1785,  
 oil on canvas, 177 x 116cm,  
 Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain, P02440.



*Figure 2*  
*Dom João as a Child,*  
 artist unknown, late eighteenth century,  
 Museum of the Inconfidencia, Ouro Preto, Brazil,  
 unaccessioned.



*Figure 3*  
*Maria Anna of Austria, Queen of Portugal,*  
 Jean Ranc, 1729, oil on canvas, 112 x 88cm,  
 Prado Museum, Madrid, Spain, P02331.



*Figure 4*  
*Portrait of Queen Maria I with a Crown,*  
 Giuseppe Troni, circa 1783, oil on canvas, 259 x 162cm,  
 Gripsholm Castle, Sweden, NMGrh 666.

Neither the hairstyles nor wigs were high; however, in party costumes the bustles and petticoats were largely used, thus resulting in a round silhouette, with corsets embroidered with lace and very low-cut dresses. The stockings were embroidered with silver thread and the shoes made of silk or satin, embroidered in the same colours of the dresses, as well as the reticules. The cloaks in velvet or heavy silks completed the toilette.<sup>9</sup>

French dressmakers arrived in Lisbon in the nineteenth century, but before that, there was a reliance on Portuguese dressmakers, as described by Boléo. “In the eighteenth century, court ladies could meet Portuguese dressmakers in their well-located ateliers in town, where they could browse through the first fashion magazines edited abroad.”<sup>10</sup> The Court of Lisbon was not, in fact, as exuberant or luxurious as other courts of Europe. But riches coming from Brazil, then a colony of Portugal, allowed some excesses; “in costumes of great galas, semi-precious stones would glitter, as they came from Brazil.”<sup>11</sup>

Dress historians have been unable to locate any dress (or images of dress) utilised by Queen Maria I or Carlota Joaquina on 8 May 1785 at the royal wedding at the Ducal Palace of Vila Vicosa. The following, though, is a description of the dress worn in Figure 1 by its artist, Mariano Salvador Maella.

The painting depicts the future sovereign (at the age of ten) in a monumental palatial interior, with a pilaster at the background, a large curtain and a big cage on a Louis XVI console. The floor is carpeted with sumptuousness and the room, perhaps invented, can correspond to any room in those royal palaces. The girl is dressed in gala or court dress, according to the terminology of the period, with a pink corset adjusted with ribbons over the sleeves, and they get bigger over the elbows. The skirt on the pannier has a skirt that falls over it, opening in a tail. The fabric is a marvel of silver, embroidered with flowers and bouquets ... She has a high hairstyle, with a headdress of flowers on top. The fashion is typically French and reminds us of the last years of the Ancien Régime; and evokes the clothes Marie Antoinette and women used in the surroundings.<sup>12</sup>

As a ten-year-old girl, Carlota Joaquina may have felt uncomfortable, in a place where she was not adapted or respected. But in terms of costumes, she would not feel isolated because the two courts, Portugal and Spain, were both extremely refined and traditional. The royal family of Braganza dated back to the 1640s (the roots of the family reach to 1442, after the House of Borgonha) and the royal House of Bourbon began to reign in Spain in 1700, with Filipe V, the grandson of Louis XVI, King of France. The royal family of Bourbon in France had been reigning since 1268.

## The Celebration in Madrid

The Infanta Carlota Joaquina lived in the Palace of Queluz, formerly called Old Palace, located 14 kilometres from Lisbon. Dom Pedro III, her father-in-law, expanded and reformed the Palace of Queluz from 1760 onwards. In 1821, when Carlota Joaquina departed Brazil and returned to Portugal, she returned to Queluz, where she passed away in 1830.

In 2016, during a research trip to the Palace of Queluz, two significant paintings were studied (Figure 5 and Figure 6) that helped to understand the dress of the Spanish and Portuguese courts. The web site of the company that manages the parks and palaces of Sintra and Queluz points out that:

The wedding and consortium of Braganza-Bourbon happened in 1785, and it was a motive of great manifestations and celebrations of joy and in the two peninsular kingdoms (Lisbon, Vila Viçosa, Madrid, Aranjuez, among other places). Great festivities were organized in Madrid to celebrate the wedding ... To celebrate the wedding of Dona Carlota Joaquina, the Portuguese Ambassador in Madrid, Henrique de Menezes, 3rd Marquis of Loureçal, set





*Figure 5*

*View from the Pavilion Built to Celebrate the Wedding of Dom João and Carlota Joaquina in Madrid, Muzzi, 1785, gouache on paper, 40 x 50cm, The Palace of Queluz, Queluz, Portugal, unaccessioned.*



*Figure 6*

*View from the Garden with the Pavilion Built in the Background, 1785, gouache on paper, 40 x 50cm, The Palace of Queluz, Queluz, Portugal, unaccessioned.*



Figure 7

*Henrique de Menezes, 3rd Marquis of Lourical, and Family*  
 (his wife, Dona Maria da Glória da Cunha, Dom Luiz Eusebius and Dona Constance),  
 Noirdemange, circa 1785, oil on ivory, 16 x 17.5cm,  
 The Palace of Queluz, Queluz, Portugal, unaccessioned.

up a huge pavilion suitable for the so desired marriage, where he received about 2000 guests.<sup>13</sup>

On 27–29 March 1785, the envoy of Queen Maria I of Portugal, Dom Henrique de Menezes, offered a feast for 2000 guests, celebrating the marriage of Carlota Joaquina. As this article discusses dress, it is necessary to pay close attention to the possible costumes of the host of the wedding celebrations in 1785, who acted on behalf of her Majesty, the Queen of Portugal (Figure 7).

In Figure 7, the host Dom Henrique de Menezes is shown in 1785 with his family. He was a gentleman of the House of Queen Dona Maria I, a knight of the Holy Order of the Golden Fleece of Spain. He was sent to Madrid, as seen, as an ambassador in charge of negotiating the wedding treaty of the Infantas of Portugal and Spain, Dom João and Dom Gabriel. The costume of Dom Henrique de Menezes is an example of what one would see at the wedding party in 1785, at the venues illustrated in Figure 5 and Figure 6. His dress is a combination of a dress coat, waistcoat, and breeches, as seen in the extant outfit in Figures 8 and 9.

Dom Henrique de Menezes wears a sophisticated set of clothes in Figure 7, but the patterns of the clothes can also be applied to the costumes of the musicians of the party, for example, in a variety of





*Figures 8 and 9*

Dress coat, waistcoat and breeches (front and back), 1770–1780,  
National Museum of Costume, Lisbon, Portugal, 3966, 3967 and 3968, photography by Fausto Viana.

colours but with simpler fabric for the musicians. The coat of Dom Henrique had a similar cut to the musicians' coats, but with a much more sophisticated fabric. The fabric of the coat of Dom Henrique included embroidered silk, as seen in the extant dress Figure 10, worn along with a silk waistcoat as in Figure 11. Other men depicted in Figure 5 and Figure 6 could wear the cut of the waistcoat in Figure 12, but tailored from somewhat more rustic textiles. Alternately, men at the wedding party could have worn a waistcoat with attached long sleeves, or *véstia*, as it was called in Portugal and Brazil.

An important male presence at the wedding party in 1785 was in the form of those in military uniforms, as shown in detail in Figure 13, with blue coat, white waistcoat with red neckerchief, and white breeches. According to Carlos Daróz, the colour of the Spanish military uniform would change from white to blue at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> In 1926, the uniform became khaki.

In the lower left-hand section of Figure 14, a man and a woman are dressed in Turkish style, with harem trousers and turbans with feather trim. An official guest list of the night of the event has not yet been found, but presumably those in Turkish dress are artists hired to perform during the event. To the left of the detail in Figure 14, many well-dressed women are standing behind a barrier, as spectators. In the upper-right quadrant of Figure 14, there is also a group of five, who are wearing Turkish dress. In the foreground to the right, a group of musicians brighten the environment. Next to them, there is a Harlequin dressed in traditional Italian costume, flanked by an *Innamorata*, another traditional character of the *commedia dell'arte*, wearing a face mask.





*Figure 10*  
Detail, embroidered dress coat, 1780-1790,  
National Museum of Costume, Lisbon, Portugal, 3972,  
photography by Fausto Viana.



*Figure 11*  
Waistcoat, 1770-1780,  
National Museum  
of Costume,  
Lisbon, Portugal, 4011,  
photography by  
Fausto Viana.



*Figure 12*  
Waistcoat, 1760-1780,  
National Museum  
of Costume,  
Lisbon, Portugal, 3925,  
photography by  
Fausto Viana.



*Figure 13*  
Detail, *View from the Pavilion Built to Celebrate the Wedding of Dom João and Carlota Joaquina in Madrid*,  
Muzzi, 1785, gouache on paper,  
40 x 50cm, The Palace of Queluz, Queluz, Portugal, unaccessioned.





*Figure 14*

Detail, *View from the Garden with the Pavilion Built in the Background*, 1785, gouache on paper, 40 x 50cm, The Palace of Queluz, Queluz, Portugal, unaccessioned.



*Figure 15*

Detail, *View from the Garden with the Pavilion Built in the Background*, 1785, gouache on paper, 40 x 50cm, The Palace of Queluz, Queluz, Portugal, unaccessioned.

Regarding women's fashion, Henrique de Menezes, the host of the wedding celebrations in 1785, was accompanied by his wife, Dona Maria da Glória da Cunha, who wore an elegant robe à la anglaise (Figure 7). The dress could be tied and adjusted at the back. In contrast, the woman featured at the far left-hand side of Figure 14 wears a robe à la française, which is also known as a Watteau dress, sack back dress, or sack dress. The Watteau dress was a popular fashion during the time and place of the 1785 wedding party depicted in these paintings. In the foreground of Figure 15, there is masked woman whose back is clearly in view, and her gown features the characteristic Watteau pleating cascading down the back. Many women's ensembles feature shawls; there are a variety apparent in the paintings.



*Figures 16 and 17*

Women's jacket (front and back), red velvet, 1790–1800,  
National Museum of Costume of Portugal, Lisbon, Portugal, 4175, photography by Fausto Viana.

Several jackets are represented in the painting, as seen in the extant examples in Figure 16 and Figure 17. This is similar in style to that of Dona Maria da Glória da Cunha in Figure 7. It is significant to note that in the paintings that depict the wedding celebrations in 1785, there are many colour combinations in women's dress. The jacket (or bodice) is almost always different from the petticoat. As cited by Baungarten and Watson, there were "dresses for women of all social levels, from the highest ranks to the poorest working women."<sup>15</sup>

The jackets, or *casquinhas*, were made in a range of styles. The front of some had a stomacher, while others were tied with bands, such as can be seen in the woman in Figure 14, who is behind the woman wearing the Watteau dress. Alternatively, the jacket could be buttoned up the centre front, as illustrated in Figure 16.

Aprons are also an apparent dress accessory in these wedding celebrations. In the right-hand section of Figure 14 and in the left-hand section of Figure 15, two women wear aprons. In the eighteenth century, aprons "were not just for cleaning and protection while working. Many were fashion accessories, made of very thin cotton or silk, which could be enriched with embroidery and prints," summarises Baungarten.<sup>16</sup>

As illustrated in Figure 5, the women of high society, since there would be no other reason for them to be there, occupy the front of the central arena, alongside a central figure that must be very important. It is not yet known who is portrayed. It is surely a powerful person.

Figure 18 seems to be indicating jackets (or bodices), similar to the extant garment depicted in Figure 19. These bodices often have petticoats (Figure 20), in the same tone. In the paintings depicting the 1785 celebrations, one can denote stomachers (Figure 21), which provide support for jewellery and other adornments. Those dresses seem to be *à la anglaise*, as the dress of Dona Maria da Glória da Cunha.





*Figure 18*

Detail, *View from the Pavilion Built to Celebrate the Wedding of Dom João and Carlota Joaquina in Madrid*, Muzzi, 1785, gouache on paper, 40 x 50cm, The Palace of Queluz, Queluz, Portugal, unaccessioned.



*Figure 19*

French caraco (jacket),  
1780–1800,  
The Victoria and  
Albert Museum,  
London, England,  
T114-12  
photography by  
Fausto Viana.



*Figure 20*  
Stomacher,  
circa 1740,  
The Victoria and  
Albert Museum,  
London, England,  
T99-1962,  
photography by  
Fausto Viana.



*Figure 21*  
Petticoat,  
circa 1760,  
The Victoria and  
Albert Museum,  
London, England,  
T430-1967,  
photography by  
Fausto Viana.



Figure 22

*"Fourth Car of the Bride and Groom," Fourth Car of the Wedding Parade in Rio de Janeiro, Antonio Francisco Soares, 1786, 31 x 19cm, Instituto Histórico Geográfico, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, L794/Doc-16.*

## Other Parties, New Celebrations

The wedding celebrations of Carlota Joaquina and Dom João were not restricted to European territory. In Brazil, and more specifically in Rio de Janeiro, the viceroy Luís de Vasconcelos organised celebrations that stretched over a month in early 1786.

The carriage depicted in Figure 22 was part of a set of six made to celebrate the wedding of Carlota Joaquina and Dom João. Atop the carriage, one can see the costumes of the future king and queen (that were represented by actors, since the royal couple would only come to Brazil in 1808). But there is other important information. The costume of the knights, who conduct the carriage, become important references when compared to the watercolour of an artist of the same period, Carlos Julião (1740–1811).

The guards depicted in Figure 22 and Figure 23 are very similar, except for the colours, to those of Spain in 1785, as illustrated in Figure 13. Portuguese military costumes were made in England, as discovered during a research trip to The Museum of Carriages in Lisbon. Many of those uniforms were



Figure 23

*Detail, Officers of the Cavalry of the King's Guard, in Blue Jacket, Yellow Waistcoat and Breeches, Carlos Julião, end of the eighteenth century, watercolour, The National Library, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 30306-041.*





Figure 24  
*The Combination That Was So Common at the Party in Madrid: Dress Coat, Waistcoat and Breeches*, Carlos Julião, end of the eighteenth century, watercolour, National Library, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 30306-058.



Figure 25  
*A Robe à la Française, with a Stomacher*, Carlos Julião, end of the eighteenth century, watercolour, National Library, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 30306-057.



Figure 26  
*An Outfit Known as "Short Dress," for Everyday Use*, Carlos Julião, end of the eighteenth century, watercolour, National Library, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 30306-055.

transported to Brazil, but none have yet been found to compare with those in Portugal. The iconographic record is quite suggestive of similarity: Figure 24, drawn by Carlos Julião, is very much related to the basic military outfit in the party of 1785.

As for women's dress, Figure 25 illustrates a robe à la française with a stomacher. Figure 26 shows a costume that was very popular for everyday use, cheap and panned to fasten. An apron was also used to help keep the costume in position, as suggested by Baungarten.<sup>17</sup> As additional evidence of the dress worn during 1785, as depicted in the paintings of the wedding celebrations, Figure 27 and Figure 28 represent a robe à la française, or Watteau dress, in a *Folia de Reis*, a special party held by African descendants to celebrate Twelfth Night.



Figures 27 and 28  
*Coronation of the Black Queen on Twelfth Night and detail*, Carlos Julião, end of the eighteenth century, watercolour, National Library, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 30306-071.





*Figure 29*

Detail, cotton dress, 1780, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, T.274&A-1967, photography by Fausto Viana.

In Figure 27, the women are generally wearing jackets with matching petticoats, with probably more than one petticoat underneath, as the skirt volume suggests. The research quest for this paper, raised additional research questions, with regard to the clothing depicted in Figure 27, such as: what type of textile was used? and was the pattern created by a printed or weaving technique? For this reason, a visit was made to the The Victoria and Albert Museum, where fabric was found that was made by a commercial partner of Portugal and one of the most important suppliers of cotton to Brazil: England. The dress shown in detail in Figure 29 has basically the same print believed to have featured in Brazil during the eighteenth century.

The research for this article, including iconography, textual, and other materials, was accomplished in visits to The Victoria and Albert Museum in London, The National Carriage Museum and The National Museum of Costume in Lisbon, and The Palace of Queluz in Queluz, Portugal. The objects studied in these venues reflect a way of thinking about Brazilian costume or the costumes used in Brazil during the eighteenth century.

As this research continues, more consistent evidence becomes apparent that the fabric and construction methods used in Brazil during the eighteenth century were not so different from the material used in other parts of the world. Brazil was a well-positioned country on the commercial maritime routes, and, after the arrival of the royal family in 1808, there would be even more meaningful exchange with other nations. For Brazil, it was already the start of globalisation.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
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- <sup>9</sup> Ibid, p 143.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
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- <sup>12</sup> Juan Luna, “Carlota Joaquina, Infanta de España, reina de Portugal,” 2006, <https://www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/obra-de-arte/carlota-joaquina-infanta-de-espaa-reina-de/5dcdbf98-5320-4600-9f13-f581c44edca1>. Accessed 28 September 2017.
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- <sup>15</sup> Lisa Baungarten and John Watson, *Costume Close Up: Clothing Construction and Pattern, 1750–1790*, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Hollywood, United States, 1999, p 38.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid, p 47.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid, p 43.

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Email: [faustoviana@uol.com.br](mailto:faustoviana@uol.com.br)

Fausto Viana, PhD, is a fashion, set, and costume design professor at The School of Communication and Arts at São Paulo University, Brazil. He was awarded a Bachelor's degree in Drama in 1992, a Master's degree in 2000, and a Doctoral degree in 2004 in Drama at São Paulo University. He earned a second Doctoral degree in 2010, in Museology at Lusófona University in Portugal. He completed two postdoctoral programmes, one in Textile Conservation in Lisbon and the other in Fashion in Rio de Janeiro. He is the author of several books, including *The Manual of Costume Conservation* (2006), *Theatrical Costume and the Renovations of the Twentieth Century* (2010), and *Costume as Document* (2015).