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# PLAYING WITH WONDERS, OBJECTS, ROLE-PLAYING GAMES AND THE CULTURAL LEGACY OF BISPO DO ROSÁRIO FOR THE CITY OF RIO DE JANEIRO.

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# HOW DO OBJECTS IMPACT THINKING?



ARTWORKS AT THE BISPO DO ROSÁRIO MUSEUM



## THE INITIAL REFLECTIONS

- How can **objects influence our knowledge** about the culture of a place?
- How could an object be used to **rescue stories and memories** linked to a city, and thereby expand the existing cultural heritage of the place?
- How can storytelling and role-playing connect with these objects, and from this mixture **emerge narratives and role-playing games** that involve the history of Rio de Janeiro?



## LIVING OBJECTS

- They are elements created to cause people to have **strange and awoken thoughts**, beyond those established by reason alone
- They stimulate the exploration of **fantasy, desire** and **daydreaming**
- They enable **new creative paths for imagination**

| a witz in thought | a derangement in the current logic |

| an estrangement in the way of thinking |



## LIVING OBJECTS

We focused on objects that are part of the **cultural heritage of the city of Rio de Janeiro**, especially those created by a historical figure, **Bispo do Rosário**, who produced several artistic objects during the decades that he was a patient in a psychiatric hospital.





# “ONE DAY I JUST SHOWED UP”

ARTHUR BISPO DO ROSÁRIO

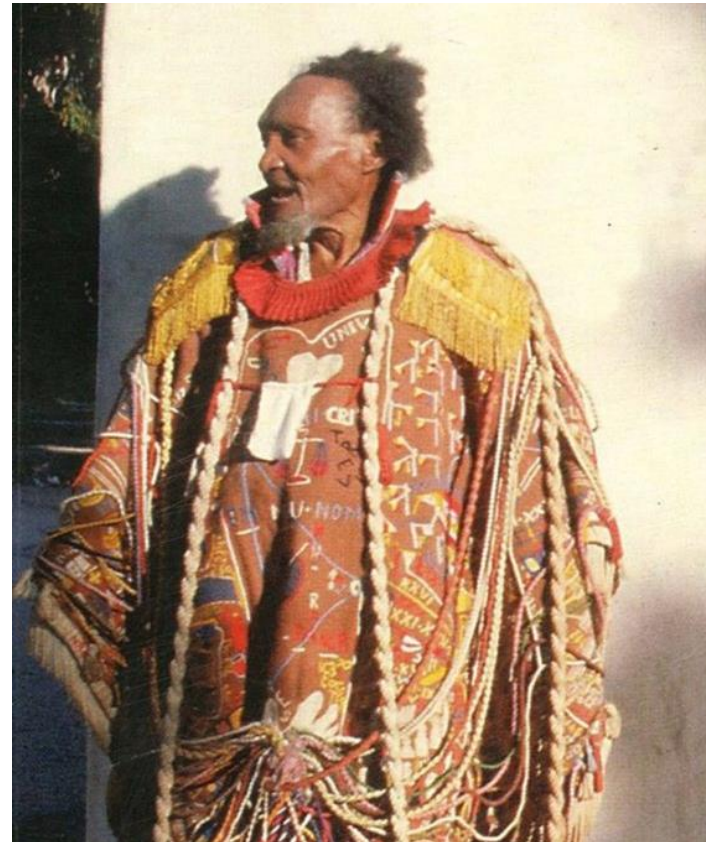


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## ARTHUR BISPO DO ROSÁRIO

Our thoughts were intensified by the contact with **the artistic work of Arthur Bispo do Rosário**.

He was an artist who spent almost all his life as a patient in a psychiatric hospital, and **produced more than 800 artworks**, and became one of the biggest names in contemporary art in Brazil.





## ARTHUR BISPO DO ROSÁRIO

"At first, in the absence of material, Bispo would have unraveled the Colony's own blue uniform to reuse the threads in his embroidery. Undoing his own uniform, deconstructing one of the great symbols of psychiatric power and reusing the raw material to build his parallel universe, his utopia."

**Hidalgo, 2011**



## ARTHUR BISPO DO ROSÁRIO

His creative process consisted of **resignifying elements** and creating objects, which referred to people, places and memories.

Bispo mixed reality and fiction in his pieces, **building worlds** in the midst of the space that had been restricted.

"He began to pick up objects from the hospice and reorder them in a different aesthetic, colorful, playful, subjective."

**Hidalgo, 2011**



## ARTHUR BISPO DO ROSÁRIO

His work inspired us to structure a way of creating stories, fueled by the **“poetics of delirium”**.

"(...) the word delirium suggests not the strict meaning fixed by psychopathology, but the broader meaning that it receives when in the art field context: deriving from “lira” or “furrow”, delirium means moving away from the groove, that is, from the straight path of reason, in this case, of artistic rationality."

**Frayze-Pereira, 2009**



## THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL, AUTOFICTIONAL AND HISTORICAL ELEMENTS IN BISPO'S WORKS

We use this triad as a basis for the experiences we carry out.

And for them, we created a cloak, inspired by one of the most famous pieces by Bispo do Rosário, the **Presentation Cloak**.



## WONDER, STRANGENESS, LIVING OBJECTS, FRAGMENTS AND WITZ

One of the hypotheses on which we base this work, is that the objects created by Bispo do Rosário cause **wonder and enchantment** in people.

This process facilitates thinking that goes **beyond reason**.



## WONDER, STRANGENESS, LIVING OBJECTS, FRAGMENTS AND WITZ

We follow the understanding of **Sarah Tindal Kareem** who, when studying the Wonder in the fantasy literature of the 18th century, said that **this type of sensation involves two forms:**

"(...) both wonder at and wonder about objects. These two types of wonder correspond to two distinct meanings of the English verb wonder, denoting surprise and marvel on the one hand and doubtful curiosity on the other."

**Kareem, 2014, 8**



## WONDER, STRANGENESS, LIVING OBJECTS, FRAGMENTS AND WITZ

In this way, **the pieces created by Bispo caused enchantment among those who had contact with them**, even more so when they left the places in which they were created and began to circulate between museums and exhibition spaces. **This kind of enchantment generated, leads to what João Frayze-Pereira points out that Charles Lefort defines as the unthinkable.**



**WONDER, STRANGENESS,  
LIVING OBJECTS, FRAGMENTS AND WITZ**

"Claude Lefort defines the unthinkable of a work as the work that it itself performs with the receiver (reader or spectator) and that, therefore, it depends on the receiver to make itself think, to consecrate itself as a proper work. "

**Frayze-Pereira, foreword to *Arte por um Fio*, 2022, 21**





## WONDER, STRANGENESS, LIVING OBJECTS, FRAGMENTS AND WITZ

This **unthinkable** and the questions generated by the contact with **the cloak**, make a **conceptual bridge** with the **living objects**.

Since **the objects** created by Bispo do Rosário are aimed at **representation and communication**, and which **cause the unthinkable and questioning** in those who establish contact with them, we understand them **as living objects**.



## WONDER, STRANGENESS, LIVING OBJECTS, FRAGMENTS AND WITZ

In addition to the questioning made by the cloak itself, the elements used when creating the experiences are totally foreign, and **function as a romantic fragment of a joke (witz)** — which causes estrangement and forces who comes into contact with them to think out of the box.

One of **the living objects, provoking witz**, is the clipping of this research — **the Presentation Cloak**.

The Presentation Cloak was the piece that Bispo do Rosário made through **embroidery, names, drawings of objects, fragments of stories, and various historical elements**.



# THE PRESENTATION CLOAK



PRESENTATION CLOAK (FRONT)



PRESENTATION CLOAK (BACK)



## THE STORYTELLING CLOAK

Bispo's work inspired us to develop the Storytelling Cloak, which works by connecting with various biographical, fictional and historical accounts of the participants, **weaving a web of narratives between people, their stories, their memories in and about the city of Rio.**

- It represents the work of Bispo
- It is an easy format object for us to take to experiences
- It is an object that could be created, re-signified and thought of in a unique way by each participant



## THE STORYTELLING CLOAK

- It was conceptualized together with the designer Paula Aragão, responsible for the material development
- It is double-sided and can be used on either side, allowing possibilities of use
- It has a structure that allows people to create elements and reconfigure it, not permanently
- The elements are secured with small safety pins, so they can be removed, and the cloak would be a “blank slate” once again.



## THE STORYTELLING CLOAK

The cloak functions as a source of renewal, the narrative fragments created **form a material repertoire of stories**, collected in its use.

Thus, the cloak not only helps in the creation and telling of narratives — for example, in autobiographies, autofictions and historical narratives — but it also **collects and incorporates the stories wherever it goes.**



## THE STORYTELLING CLOAK



STORYTELLING CLOAK (BROWN SIDE)



STORYTELLING CLOAK (RAW COTTON SIDE)



## EXPERIENCES

- The participants were asked whether or not they knew the work of Bispo do Rosário, introduced to the Cloak and the elements available
- They could create new elements in addition to using existing ones.
- Inspired by Luciana Hidalgo's definitions of Bispo do Rosário's work: **each participant was asked to create an autobiographical narrative, a fictional one, and a historical one, related to Rio de Janeiro.**
- At the end a debrief was carried out, as well as feedback and suggestions





## EXPERIENCES

The idea of these experiences was, in addition to testing the creative process with the cloak, rescuing Bispo's practice and presenting his art to the participants, **also to collect stories, characters, places, adventures and memories linked to the city of Rio.**

**The objective was to make the cloak a living object, and an instrument of the imagination so that it could serve as an exploratory tool of knowledge,** while at the same time concentrating and connecting stories that are part of the intangible cultural heritage of Rio.



## EXPERIENCES

The experiences presented to the participants were also designed to incorporate narrative and roleplaying elements.

"Role playing is in line with rules that govern the social interactions between participants, characters, and the story world." (Bienia, 2016, 62) he continues: "Montola explains that the structured social process works as a mindset. It allows a player to optionally use role playing as a method of game playing for any game."

**Bienia, 2016, 62**



## EXPERIENCES

The **world** is in the cloak, and the **characters** emerge from this object and from the memories, people and places created.

The **mindset** is created from interactions with the cloak, the material elements used, and the sharing of stories.

The **narrative** and **role playing process** takes place through knowledge of the rules, and **contact with the world** takes place through the cloak - which works as an intersection portal between this space imagined by Bispo and the one created by the participants.





# “I NEED THESE WORDS – WRITING”

BISPO DO ROSÁRIO



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## CREATED STORIES

In this part we will tell some of the **stories created by the participants**, the narrative experiences developed and how it was to use the cloak.



## CREATED STORIES

A participant created an **auto fictional narrative** and told a story that narrated the development of his childhood until the present day.

Incorporating **the pen used to write on the fabric as one of the props on the cloak**, he represented the time in which he began to enjoy drawing.



PARTICIPANTS WEARING THE STORYTELLING CLOAK



## CREATED STORIES

He later created a micro-roleplaying game, in which **each person uses a fragment of their personal life to narrate a stage in the character's life**, and each person continues the story from where the other left off.

In the third experience, he created **a narrative in which Rio de Janeiro is reported from three points of view from different socioeconomic groups**, reflecting the enormous social difference that marks the city.

It was also described how the story could be turned into an installation:



## CREATED STORIES

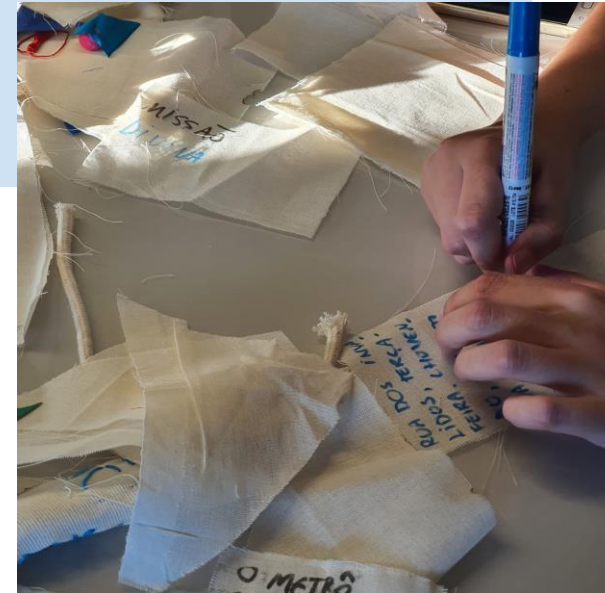
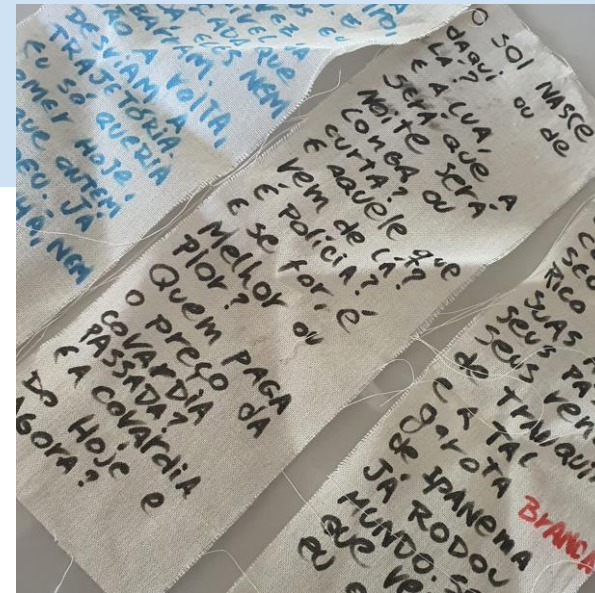
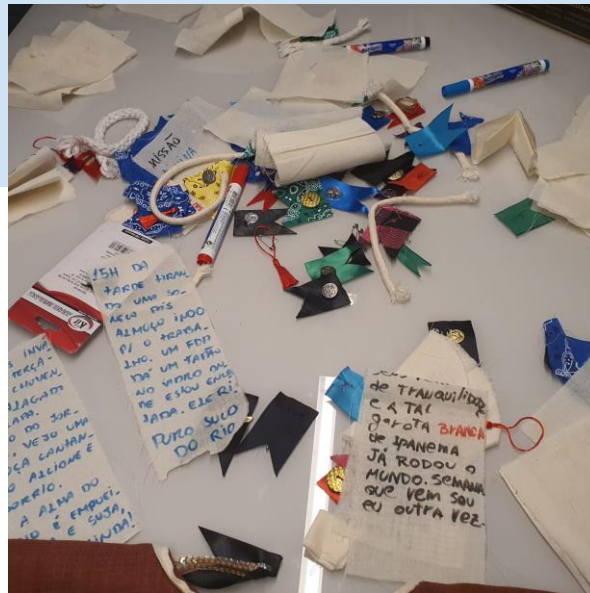
"In this experiment, when reflecting on my view of Rio de Janeiro being always limited to my sociocultural context, I was inspired to try to talk about Rio de Janeiro from a set of different perspectives. From there, I had the idea of a public mobile installation, in which people from each place would write (or represent it using any other graphic expression capable of communicating the same idea) about their perspectives of the place where they live, about their pains and their pleasures. And inside the installation are writings/

expressions and from other people who have been elsewhere. Physically it would always expand from a center each place a new installation takes place, in such a way that new participants are always on the fringes. Conceptually, it would be a way of getting to know this city better from the perspective of the people themselves, and not necessarily from the physical space, first decentralizing our perspective and then getting to know others who would possibly be outside our social bubble, despite coexisting. in the same space."





# CREATED STORIES



ELEMENTS CREATED AND USED BY PARTICIPANTS

## CREATED STORIES

In another experience with the cloak, a participant **told a story from a personal aspect, and she used the spaces of the cloak as a mapping of feelings** — elements that represented affection were positioned next to the heart area, and other elements were scattered over other parts of the cloak.

Other participants also used the cloak exploring its **spatiality**, placing elements not only on the front, but also on the inner side and also on the edges, **as if exploring an imaginary cartography**, and using these resources in the stories and in the narrative games created.



## CREATED STORIES

Another participant, **a nurse**, who happened to be an intern at Colônia Juliano Moreira, the hospital where Bispo lived, **created a series of striking elements of this period** for the first experience of autobiographical narrative.

The most curious thing was **a tile from the hospital, which he got from a patient who had lived there for many decades**, and told him to always carry it with him. He made the tile by folding a piece of fabric, added it to the Storytelling Cloak, and narrated that story. This symbolic tile is now part of the materials that can be used on the cloak.



## CREATED STORIES

In the second experience he created an **interactive fiction structure** using various story elements and fragments, which had already been created by the other participants.

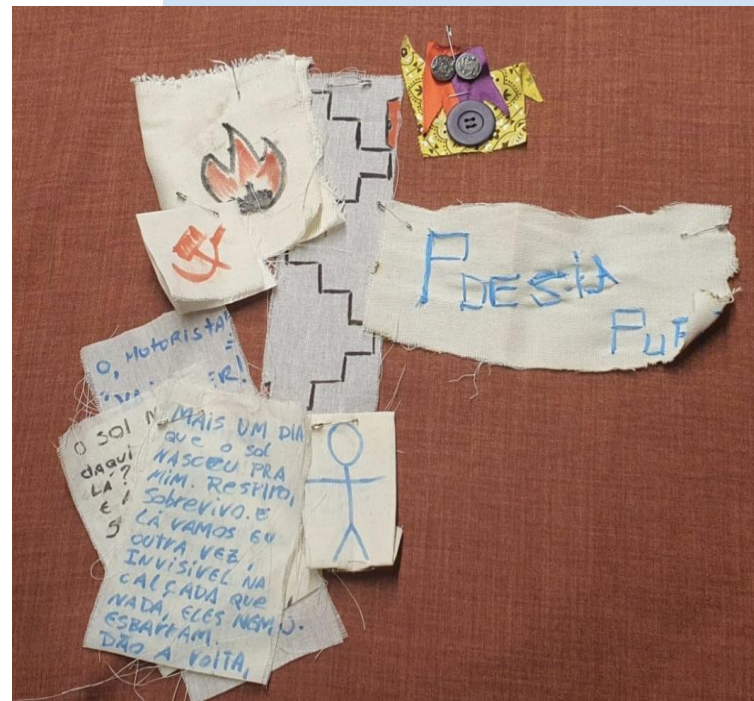
He set up a configuration on the cloak, in which **each door of the labyrinth where the character is involved, leads to a narrative fragment created by another participant**. And whoever is experiencing this character has to create a new narrative, which **works as a kind of fragment of the romantic joke**, as it encourages the participant to create from something that is totally strange and unknown to him.



## CREATED STORIES



ELEMENTS FIXED IN THE HEART AREA (#02)



THE NARRATIVE LABYRINTH CREATED (#03)



## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL - NARRATIVE GAME

From the unexpected connections between the elements I chose to compose the cloak, and from it telling an autobiography, I developed the following narrative game idea:

**Game project** - Living story, to be played by 3 or more people.

**The game** - The players will create a person's story, from the cradle to the grave, based on their own experiences, utilizing relevant elements from their lives.



## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL - NARRATIVE GAME

**Preparation** - Each player must choose 3 significant elements (or less, depending on how many players are present) that define distinct periods and/or contexts of their respective lives, and draw them (or represent them in some other way) somewhere in a common blank paper sheet for all participants.

**The beginning** - The elder player defines the first element relating to the birth of the story's character, and starts their turn. The youngest will choose which will be the last element beforehand, relating to the character's death.



## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL - NARRATIVE GAME

**Development** - Each player in each respective turn, will choose an element to tell about the character's life. This story is being told chronologically, therefore past contextualizing that hasn't been brought up already in the story, won't be allowed.

**The goal/endgame** - The goal is reached when every element has been chosen, with exception of the last one. It will be used to finish the story, telling about the character's death.





## DEVELOPMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

There are still other objects created by Bispo do Rosário to be explored, such as the banners, and there are still many stories to be told. But the experiences with the Storytelling Cloak pointed out new possibilities in the use of objects as forms of creation, which explore the spatial use of the body (and objects) in an inventive way, as well as the boundaries between material elements, imagination, memory, and the intangible heritage of a city.

They were rescued and materialized in objects: characters, places and stories of Rio de Janeiro.



## DEVELOPMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

In this kind of Collective Imaginary Cartography of the City, the space of a place expands beyond its physical borders, whether through narratives or role playing created by the participants, it incorporates feelings, memories, and creations — real, fictional or historical — of those who wear the cloak.

And through this process, a city's historical and cultural heritage grows, incorporating official, unofficial, and marginal elements.

Or as Bispo do Rosário said: **"One day I just showed up."**



## NEXT STEPS



This month, Colônia Juliano Moreira, after 80 years, ended its activities as a psychiatric hospital.



## NEXT STEPS

"Whoever went in did not come out. There are cases of inmates who spent 70 years here and died at 90 inside Juliano Moreira. And a mark is the lack of history of these people."

**Alexander Ramalho, hospital director.**



## NEXT STEPS

We will visit Colonia Juliano Moreira next week.

The idea is now to use the Storytelling Cloak, other objects, as well as narrative and role-playing, so that the stories of those who were in psychiatric hospitals and those who are still there can be told and recorded

And listen to their life stories and what they have to say.





# THANK YOU!

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