

## ***Cobertor de Papa* applied to Fashion Design**

### **Alexandra Cruchinho**

Escola Superior de Artes Aplicadas do Instituto Politécnico de Castelo Branco – ESART/IPCB  
[alexcruchinho@gmail.com](mailto:alexcruchinho@gmail.com)

### **Paula Peres**

Escola Superior de Educação do Instituto Politécnico de Castelo Branco – ESE/IPCB  
[paula.peres@ipcb.pt](mailto:paula.peres@ipcb.pt)

### **Alexandra Moura**

Escola Superior de Artes Aplicadas do Instituto Politécnico de Castelo Branco – ESART/IPCB  
[alexandra.moura@alexandramoura.com](mailto:alexandra.moura@alexandramoura.com)

### **Abstract**

*Cobertor de Papa* is a culture identifier of a region within the country - Guarda, Portugal. Traditionally it is a woven piece of craft processes and was used as a blanket to warm and protect pastors of very low temperatures in winter. It was also used for heating in the beds, the houses in the region to cope with the cold that is felt in Guarda.

The challenge and objectives are to develop proposals for garments or other products fashion taking into account the characteristics and applicability of the raw material.

The methodology consisted, in a first phase, research and literature review on the topic – *Cobertor de Papa*, to understand the origin, history and the resulting characteristics of the production process and the raw material that originates. The development of the creative process follows the architectural design methodology enunciated by Bruno Munari, where all process steps are carefully followed.

The study results in the creation of new products, either by re-interpretation of the *Cobertor de Papa* or by its use in clothing or accessories suitable parts.

Key findings to the realization of this project relate to the potential of this raw material, namely, waterproofing and thermal characteristics.

The research limitations relate to the traditional process of *Cobertor de Papa* design, not allowing any changes on the raw material. Are still limitations, weight, texture and feeling to the touch of the blanket.

The originality of the products reveals a value of increase in local and traditional economy and revolutionizes the form of use for which the product was designed.

### **Keywords**

*Cobertor de Papa*; Fashion, Tradition, Culture

### **Article Classification**

Conceptual Paper

## Introduction

Several were the questions posed by the identification of the problem - Is it possible to develop garments in *Cobertor de Papa*? The questions arise around the problem and the goals started to emerge.

The challenge launched in this research brings us to the development of products in Fashion Design, with the application of *Cobertor de Papa*, a raw material characteristic of a region and simultaneously mark the culture of a people.

Traditionally, the *Cobertor de Papa*, so characteristic of local and regional heritage of the Serra da Estrela, is produced with wool of sheep in this region and, according to the Holy Spirit (2010), "*brought an important historical, ethnographic and economic contribution to the parish Maçainhas and the surrounding region*" (p. 8). For centuries Maçainhas lived production of this kind of blanket and in the XXI century, against the expectations of those who announced their extinction, the *Cobertor de Papa* still survives thanks to the efforts of those who have sought to maintain its production in traditional ways. Thus, Maçainhas community seeks to overcome the challenge of "preserving the authenticity of this product, combining the tradition the necessary innovation, restoring him some of the lost quality and adapting it to new uses." (Pinheiro, 2004, p. 38 ). To this has contributed: (1) the School of Arts and Crafts Maçainhas, who hired a weaver and an artisan to continue the production of blankets on a loom wooden manual; (2) Mr. José Freire Pires, who has provided the stomp, the percha (cards) and râmolas to finalize the blankets; (3) the City Guarda, which has supported and publicized the *Cobertor de Papa* through a set of actions, of which stands out the proposal made to a Fashion Designer to interpret the *Cobertor de Papa* integrating this textile object in their collections. In this context, make sense the words of Albuquerque (2012) when he remembers that if the wool industry, these days, has difficulty in evidence, it is undeniable that left us their history and heritage and that their craft origin left deep marks that endure and that can feed the imagination of interior and fashion designers.

The proposal was launched a Portuguese Fashion Designer with recognition both at the national level and internationally and is presented in Fashion weeks as ModaLisboa, Portugal Fashion, London and Paris Fashion Weeks. This is the Alexandra Moura Fashion Designer.

The challenge has proved useful for Information because in addition to raw materials already chosen for the new collection joins the *Cobertor de Papa*, with all its very own characteristics and not used in clothing.

The theme or concept of the collection proves to be of great importance, given that this will determine all the choices around the completion and presentation of the collection publicly. The application of a methodology suitable project to the achievement of a final product, provides the definition of a theme or concept for the development of collections after conducting an initial search and this is the methodology that the designer follows for carrying out their work.

The research methodology is based on a content analysis and focuses on collecting information either through literature review, either by conducting open interviews and appropriate treatment of information. This is an exploratory study with application of a mixed research methodology and qualitative analysis that leads to the realization of a project in Fashion Design.

Initially research focuses on the collection of information which allows the literature review on the one hand, knowledge of the history of the *Cobertor de Papa* and production technology, on the other hand the identification of working steps leading to completion of the collection.

After bibliographic research, develops the creative process and the study of Information work, namely the developed creative research, the search for inspiration and the definition of a concept which determines all the work that follows until the submission of the final product on parade.

As regards Galliano, quoted by Seivewright (2008, p. 7) "*The creative research is the secret and the trick that highlights all the original design.*"

Finally, we present some conclusions about the investigation and the practical implementation of the project.

### **The history revolutions – Cobertor de Papa**

Since prehistoric times, Maçaínhas parish was "*shepherds of destination and flocks and beginning and end of some of the most important peninsular routes of wool, open the paths of transhumance*" (Pinheiro, 2004, p. 21). It is likely that domestic production of blankets pope has accompanied the development of the region given its climate specificity.

In the early twentieth century were counted nine looms in Maçaínhas belonging to nine families dedicated to the manufacture of *Cobertor de Papa* (Reis, 2003). However, in the industrial manufacturing concerns, Pinheiro (2004), based on Fradesso description of Silveira says that in 1864 the Wool Factory of Thirty, located next thirty village of Maçaínhas, was producing woolen blankets. The same researcher refers to the existence in Maçaínhas three factories, two of which have labored in 1936<sup>1</sup> and, along with other small businesses had installed 40 looms and employed 120 workers

Nevertheless during the twentieth century the home production have kept track of industrial production, there were several periods when the production of this kind of blanket fell. "*On the edge of the end*" it is what Kings (2003, p. 18) announced to the *Cobertor de Papa* in the early twenty-first century. In 2010 only one of José Pires Freire wooden handlooms continued to manufacture the *Cobertor de Papa* by hand then last weaver Maçaínhas because "*the younger generations no one wants to learn this art that requires much effort*" (Reis, 2003, p. 18).

Albuquerque (2012) refers "*to change the social paradigm, economic and labor market developments, the emergence of an impatient consumerism and the urgency to respond to*

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<sup>1</sup> On that date the companies that operate in: Jose Pires da Fonseca and Artur Freire.

*population growth*" (p. 254) as reasons that led to the near extinction of blankets. Other authors add: (1) the use of synthetic fibers with the consequent production also hot items but lighter and softer (Holy Spirit, 2010; Morgado, 2004; Reis, 2003), (2) the replacement of the *Cobertor de Papa* while manta pastor for waterproof coats (Reis, 2003), (3) increasing the size of the beds that was not accompanied by an increase in size of the *Cobertor de Papa* (Holy Spirit, 2010; Reis, 2003) and (4) the great manual load associated with this product (Reis, 2003).

It was in this context that in 2007, the School of Arts and Crafts Maçainhas was created in a traditional house rehabilitated with support from the LEADER + program. On 27 November of that year was installed the loom wood Manual No.10 – 1804<sup>2</sup> and in 2013, following a course of vocational training in weaving attended by the current school weaver, it recovered on a regular and continuous basis, the traditional manufacturing *Cobertor de Papa*. Currently the school still has the support of an artisan, a key element in the preparatory operations of weaving and the *Cobertor de Papa* finalization of operations. As stated Pinheiro (2004) seeks to not only preserve, but also reinvent the "*result of a multi-secular know-how that enriches our cultural diversity and is a unique asset mark on the national landscape*" (p. 20).

#### ***Cobertor de Papa* – tradition and features**

The *Cobertor de Papa* is presented in the Textiles and Related Terms Glossary (Costa, 2004) as a "*wire wool thick piece or downy cotton, which wraps the body in the bed*" (p. 143). Kings (2003) adds that the name comes from the type of fabric and the long hair that characterizes it. In turn, the Holy Spirit (2010) and Reis (2003), considering the particular color and pattern, listed six varieties of *Cobertores de Papa* (1) *Cobertor de Papa*, itself, in various colors; (2) white blanket; (3) white blanket with three lists at the tips, brown or green; (4) blanket embroidered by hand with blue stripes, red and green on white, and blue diamonds embroidered on one side; (5) lobeira blanket or Spanish plaid with white stripes, brown, green, red and yellow; and (6) Barrenta blanket or Shepherd blanket with brown and white stripes (figs. I e II).



**Fig. I** – Barrenta or Shepherd Blanket



**Fig. II** – Lobeira or Spanish Blanket

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<sup>2</sup> Identificação referente ao cadastro de máquinas da antiga FANIL - Federação Nacional da Indústria dos Lanifícios.

Pinheiro (2004), given the use of the *Cobertor de Papa*, and although currently all of them can be classified as decorative objects, separates the shepherd blanket, referred to as "*coat of pastors*"<sup>3</sup>, the remaining varieties considered "*bed blanket*."

Wool, raw material of *Cobertor de Papa*, "*takes us back to our origins and is one of the most vivid statements of man's relationship with nature*" (Pinheiro, 2004, p. 20).

For *Cobertor de Papa* manufacture, given that it is an article which is characterized by having a very long hair, the most prized wool is from sheep of the Churra race farm<sup>4</sup>, the Beira Baixa district, a yellowish wool, glossy, soft and very moisturizing. Holy Spirit (2010) states that was also common in the manufacture of blankets mixing breed sheep wool Bordaleira Serra da Estrela and Churra sheep breed Mondegueira or one of these with sheep wool Churra Chalana or Arraçada. Although, nowadays, wool no longer be purchased directly from the shepherds of the region, which is used in the manufacture of *Cobertor de Papa* produced in the School of Arts and Maçainhas Crafts is still washed, spun and inked in the region, specifically in city Guarda, trying to respect them as requirements of this unique product.

#### **Method of manufacture - a route with torment**

The manufacturing process of the *Cobertor de Papa* includes several steps that, over time, even with the introduction of new equipment that allowed shorten the manufacturing time, remained virtually unchanged: washing, spinning, dyeing, warp, warp assembly, preparation of weft yarn, weaving and finishing.

Currently, the wool used is mostly washed in Wool Industrial Lavadouro in Guarda and spun in the Company Textile Manuel Rodrigues Tavares, the same city. The yarn carded, 100% wool fiber with twist S, has different characteristics to the web and to the plot. The weft yarn has Nm 1.6 / 1 and a small twist, which facilitates the felting process, while the used web exhibits a more intense torsional and is thinner with 2.8 Nm / 1. As for the dyeing of wool, it is made wool or yarn, never in play. It is there with the natural color is used, for example, in the production of embroidered and lobeira webs.

For the preparation of the warp yarns, in particular as regards the warp, the artisan School of Arts and Maçainhas Crafts proceeds to the organization of the warp threads in a circular creel of quadrangular section, 110 cm square and 180 cm .

Weaving is done on a wooden loom (fig. III and IV) with two liceiras and set No. 14 with 255 cm width. At the output of the loom each blanket woven taffeta is 255 cm wide, 265 cm in length and

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<sup>3</sup> Used as blanket from the shepherd was folded in half and tied with a string. When the shepherds stayed overnight in the mountains the blanket was her only shelter from the ice of the mountain.

<sup>4</sup> Decree n° 55/2015 of 27 February, classifies this indigenous breed, as the risk of extinction, such as grade A (higher degree of risk of extinction).

an approximate weight of 4 kg (590 g / m<sup>2</sup>); the density of the web is 1.4 threads / cm and density of the weft passages 5 / cm.



**Fig. III** – Wood Tear



**Fig. IV** - Teia

The completion operations are carried out by Mr. José Pires Freire with the help of school Weaver. The steps, as with the first blanket stitched to last, is introduced in maceira the fulling mill, a type of tank equipped with water sprinklers to be washed and pisaoda. Are the two packs of stomp that moving alternately hit the step up to become thick and full-bodied. Halfway through the operation step is stretched and then reintroduced into the fulling mill to continue the beating. The fulling of blankets is usually done in the summer because "*the cold winter water is unbearable and the blankets are dry with good time to ensure that the wool becomes very dry and get more rights.*" (Silvers, 2013, p. 15).

After the fulling, the still wet following steps to percha. This equipment consists of a central drum with puados cardetes that with a rotary movement, pulls the wire, particularly the weft forming the fur characteristic of the *Cobertor de Papa*; however, to form the hair on both sides of the blanket, it is wet and turn the step. In the end, we cut them blankets.

The following operation is drying, held outdoors in rectangular metal structures, *râmolos* calls (Fig. V), located near the school in the José Freire Pires land.



**Fig. V** – Drying Blankets structures - *Râmolos*

These structures have hooks on the bottom bar and the top where the blankets are arrested to be stretched in the direction of its width. This is defined by the mark, which corresponds to one of the orifices arranged vertically in the sidebars *râmbolas* and whose counting is done from top to bottom. At the end of the finalization process, the blankets weighing between 2.8 and 2.9 kg, and are approximately 180 cm wide and 220 cm long which corresponds to a shrinkage coefficient in the weft direction two times higher than in the direction the web respectively about 30% and 17%. After drying, the covers are removed from *râmbolas* and follow to the warehouse where they are folded and packed the school craftswoman.

### **The Fashion Designer challenge - Alexandra Moura**

The biggest challenge was to see how to apply the *Cobertor de Papa* in appropriate garments, wearable, functional and aesthetically pleasing given the touch peculiar of this raw material.

At first glance, the logo Information requested parts with two possible types of change. The piece became thinner, lighter, consequently, would be performed with a thinner weft yarn (halved) or blanket have a treatment less harsh become and therefore more pleasing to Touch.

The first hypothesis tested was placed. It was a blanket woven with the same weight on the web but with a halving in the weft yarn. Visually, there was no big difference however, in terms of weight, it became much lighter and slimmer for its subsequent use in garments. Thus, the piece to be tested resistance, it was noticed that during the fulling treatment and percha piece became much weaker for the wire to be more easily breakable, do not damage the blanket.

This hypothesis was put aside to be able to return to better study the technique for developing a lighter and thin piece, without therefore to alter the strength and durability of the final product.

The need to make the smoothest piece touch was solved by mixing various wools of different species of sheep, always with predominantly *churra lâ*. Thus the piece became more pleasant to the touch.

Later, considering the difficulty of reducing the weight of the piece and only its amendment to the touch, there is the need to adapt the parts to design the features of the presented blankets.

### **The Designer Methodology**

The designer has a key role in stimulating and testing of concepts that can trigger new ideas or themes in the design. In this sense, the designer is not limited to creating models but to apply their research in fabrics, colors, silhouettes and proportions that will foresee the future (Matharu, 2011).

The contribution of the Designer is the same, add something new in all that intervenes.

The inspiration of the designer then comes from several sources, it can come from anything or anywhere as books, magazines, movies, music, history, travel, architecture, natural world, different cultures, museums, people, day the day, or even feelings and inner needs as the state of

mind can become an excellent starting point to work, and it is from these sources of inspiration that the designer will choose and set a theme or concept.

For the development of a collection the designer follows a working methodology that allows you to step by step achieve a consistent and coherent collection with a concept that arises from a thorough and constant research in the search for several elements that might influence their work. The Designer is faced with an issue that marks a culture and a region but with other cultural and visual influences for the definition to your collection. The visit – Guarda, Association of Maçainhas - it is essential because it allows experiencing structural, functional and local experience things that only the visit allows the Designer feel inspiration and collect the information you need.

According to Seivewright (2008) the realization of a collection starts initially designated research methodology where the designer collects information.

For Fernandez and Roig (2007) the process of creating a collection expresses the source of inspiration, the theme and all the elements that coalesce the project. The author also states that, before starting the design of the collection is necessary to find the theme or concept that will determine all the choices to be made by the creator thereafter.

The definition of a "*good concept*" is the essence of a consistent collection that reveal unique and customized to the creator, can this be an abstract, conceptual or narrative concept. With the definition of a good concept, the designer can then put into practice all the investigation that reveals the silhouettes, proportions and lines, the details and colors (Seivewright, 2008).

The concept defined by the designer, important to understand how to handle this new raw material, to allow the creation of silhouettes with suitable amounts and proportions to wear.

The creation of conceptual pieces to show, pieces that reinforce the concept defined, become a very strong possibility for a new collection.

Seivewright (2008, p. 94) on the initial research also states that "*the analysis of the research steps will present key elements you should consider when creating a collection, such as shape, color, fabrics, details, prints and ornaments.*"

The development and organization of the various stages of the creative process differs according to the methodology of each designer. Some designers seek to "dismantle" all the research and put the fabric as the first aspect that helps define the subject and often is the basis of the collection. Others, however, immediately identify the theme or concept from the decoding of all the research and then interpret all the elements to its visual narrative as fabrics, colors, shapes, silhouettes, etc. (Matharu, 2011)

### **Alexandra Moura collection with *Cobertor de Papa***

Alexandra Moura presents a collection with the theme of inspiration comes from the absence of gender with the central figure Anohni- Anthony Hegarty, from which comes the term "WoMan"



Fig. V – Alexandra Moura MoodBoard Collection – Creator photo

The Fashion Designer refers in his description of the concept that it is *"a reflection on the impact of women in the male and vice versa because"* in every individual lives a misogynist war. " (Moura, 2015). The quest to understand gender and individual.

According to the Fashion Designer, *"The character and spirituality of Anohni (FKA Antony Hegarty), flooded sensitivity, are the starting point of the collection that was born of his sketches, scrapbooks, collages, their dramatic charge and theatrical, revealing a weakness that calls for comfort. "*

The details date back to ancient times, remember undergarments that, of both genders, merge and merge into a single genre that opens new doors to the future. Silhouettes ancient time refers to the classic are disassembled and deconstructed warning new ways in the future.

Heavy fabrics are unified and reveal the search for comfort as that of a cloak treat - blankets that protect first of all, from unknown or false identities. Strengthening and sophistication of textures and patterns reinforce and consolidate the concept - reveal genres that merge and bring *"the romantic parts and plasticity of other time."* The concept of force is imbued with great spirituality consistent with the concept of the collection. *"The collection is released from a mixture of feminine and masculine characteristics in a single being, spirit and energy"* (Moura, 2015).

Pope blanket thus arises in a single collection that transcends genders or individuals and reaches a unique spirituality of those seeking new records in times past to the contemporary.

The Blanket as a mark of a culture and a tradition of vast decades, is presented by the creator, with new interpretation, silhouettes and use.

The Concept of pieces fill the gaps as a need to mark their individuality they were at the same time brought to life when worn.

Analysis of figures VI, VII and VIII we can see the application of various elements that help the construction of the narrative proposed by the creator. The blanket as a protection element, while unification. The classic silhouettes with a contemporary approach allows, assign to this raw material, a new approach as distinct from that so far has allowed him.



Figs. VI, VII e VIII – Pieces in the collection presented Pope blanket in passerelle - Photo Rui Vasco / ModaLisboa File

The blanket was worked two different ways, one using the draping technique (fig. VI, VII) and other reintreperando its original form through color and embroidery wool (fig. VIII).

For coats, the blanket was placed on the bust where the figure was rising by volume and tridimensionalidade body. The volume and weight of the raw material required some skill in handling and construction.

After completion of the desired silhouette, all elements of the pieces were designed according to the collection of the details.

Use Frills comes from past epochs, where this element was used not only in women's clothing, but that in some epochs were even emphasized in male clothes codes. Thus arises the perfect detail to the fusion of genders.

This detail truly "unisex" was brought oversize shape for coats, it made sense, the sense of size according to the raw material and the whole visual sense that it gives us of greatness.

It has also worked embroidery, this came from a design developed from the picture of an eye painted one of Anohni and one of his book of sketches "Swanlights".

This combination of elements is designed to create a single image, an eye that weeps (figs. IX, X). This Designer reflection, comes the finding of lack of acceptance and social understanding.

This eye weeps art, cries past times, cries the present but above all mourns his statement already achieved.



**Fig. IX, X** - Eye Embroidery Papa Blanket

This eye had its application in traditional blanket form, was embroidered with Churra woolen yarn. with the piece vertically stretched and thus maintained a few days so that the design does not deform.

Through these pieces managed to transmit the volumes of past silhouettes, the times of details that take no gender, and contemporary elegance and conceptualism of the blanket primary issue, as part involving, warms and protects.

The roulement was thought in order to strengthen all the symbolic load of history. Coordinated follow each other enhancing fusion of genders and ambiguity in their identification, and the pope blanket interim reinforces the idea of covering or protection.

After the design of products, Designer presented in several exhibitions of national and international fashion which allowed also the dissemination of this cultural product of the Guard.

The disclosure of the collection of designer, the various specialty communication organs bought this product across borders which allowed the recovery of the region, culture and a traditional product with significant impact.

### **Conclusion**

The challenge of applying the *Cobertor de Papa* in designing garments led to the search for knowledge of the history and the production method of this cultural product.

Knowledge of applications blanket over time helped in its reinterpretation by Fashion Designer, by creating new products.

The search to identify the characteristics of this raw material, allows greater control over it in terms of its handling and Search Usability parts with which it contruam.

The development of new products, requires further investigation to the part of the structure level (warp, weft), allowing, as the Information revealed as the first concern, this raw material becomes lighter, thinner and more pleasing to Touch.

For this, you need to test new structures that conform to the traditional process but innovate in terms of treatment and finishing.

For the development of a collection in Fashion Design is very important to develop an idea, a sense of vision, a subject etc., hence part to an initial survey which withdraw influences and inspiration to define concept or theme of the collection.

Key elements resulting from the research as color, shapes, silhouettes, textures, details and details, will determine the choices and influence the entire aesthetic and narrative to develop.

The designer, seeks his inspiration through the survey and reveals his own sensitivity and visual aesthetics in the development of unique pieces as a whole unify the initial concept.

In parts created, although of great conceptual strength in search of new trends, Designer maintains its traditional use and intensifies the idea of comfort and protection that the blanket traditionally has, however, with a sharp romanticism in silhouettes, in the forms and details .

It is possible reinterpret the *Cobertor de Papa* by assigning it a new approach associated with the design of innovative products. Therefore their diffusion discloses on the one hand, reinforcing identity and culture of a region, on the other hand, can promote the development of this industry products through increase in its demand.

The result of the project, reveals the increasing demand for pieces of blanket Pope manufactured by a traditional craft process very time consuming and dependent on a method of natural drying as described above.

The School of Maçainhas is developing a great job in preserving this tradition, however, with the release of this raw material, and given the length of its production, it is urgent to involve the region's industry in the production of *Cobertor de Papa*. This involvement to aid their preservation and reinvention generates increased production according to demand and consequently the development of the industry. Its development also leads to increased jobs and the development of the region - Guarda. *Cobertor de Papa* can thus become a valuable commodity in the local economy.

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Sr. José Pires Freire – 30th march 2016

Eng. Manuel Tavares – 30th march 2016

Sr. António Gêgo – weaver – 30th march 2016

Sra. Maria Fernandes - craftswoman – 30th march 2016