

# CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

## COMMUNION DRESS

Nylon (parachute fabric)

1953

MAH2012492

Used by its donator in her Solemn Communion in 1953 and kept in Angra do Heroísmo Museum since 2012, this white nylon dress reuses the cloth of a military parachute, a textile available at Terceira Island after II World War, particularly around Lajes Air Field. It is included in the museum's Textile collection, specifically in the sub-collection of Children Costumes.

The white clothes symbolism in several life occasions is a very old tradition. White is a symbol of purity and peace, being this the reason why so many ritual vestments, like the ones used in baptisms, communions and weddings, have this colour. The reutilization of this kind of silk or nylon fabric in wedding dresses is well known.

This recycling habit is connected to the very own nature of this fabric, light and thin and, often, of immaculate white colour. When silk, for its strength, called the militaries attention and its price went up, the reutilization of this new synthetic fibre became highly appreciated, not just on account of the general lack of resources but also for the novelty and deep symbolism. Many brides married using the fabric fallen from the skies that had saved the lives of their partners.

The body dress features a round neckline with an embroidery of mechanically made lace while the chest is decorated with small symmetrical folds around the neck, topped by the same lace. The opening, in the back, features seven buttons covered by the same dress fabric and, inside, equal number of metallic springs. The sleeves, gathered at the shoulder and the fist, end in a small element of the same fabric, tightened by a metallic spring. The long skirt falls from the body, in a light ruffling. It also features a small purse, of diamond shape, in the same fabric and identical to the neck contour.