

Digitizing Lily Darboy : When Mountmaking Meets Doll Play!

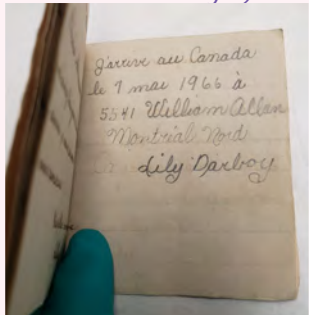
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Introduction

This project was carried out as part of Online Collections, a project showcasing the museum's collections on its website. (<https://collections.musee-mccord-stewart.ca/en/collections>)

Lily Darboy (M2010.10.1.1-200), the name given to this fashion doll, is an incredibly well preserved object, that has over 300 accessories such as dresses, hats, shoes, religious objects and everything its young owner needed to emulate the social norms of 1860s Paris! Its provenance is also of great historical significance: it was purchased in 1863 by Msgr Georges Darboy, Archbishop of Paris, a few years before he was shot during the Paris Commune, in 1871. The doll was passed down to other women in the family, until it arrived in Canada in 1966, as it can be read in one of Lily's notebooks!

For more information, see Guislaine Lemay's article "Miss Lily, a Role Model of Femininity". (<https://www.musee-mccord-stewart.ca/en/blog/miss-lily-role-model-femininity/>)



Left: Lily's notebook with her date of arrival in Canada.
Right: A few of Lily's accessories, with a 25 cents coin for scale! – by Roger Aziz, photographer, McCord Stewart Museum.

Testing for photography and videos

My colleague Roger and I then had to do tests before filming the 360° videos of the ensembles. We realized that the metal rods had to be long enough to avoid seeing the table in the shot, but had to be short enough to avoid any wobbling. The mount also had to be well centered on the Lazy Susan, in order for it to spin on a stable axis. Accessories such as hats and hoods were mounted on metal or composite mounts, and the other accessories and fragile pieces of clothing were photographed flat.



Left: The mannequin and set-up used to photograph and take a 360° video of the ensemble in the right picture – by Roger Aziz, photographer, McCord Stewart Museum.

Making the mounts

At the start of the project, we photographed one of the dresses flat. I decided to create a miniature mannequin to improve the shape and the interpretation of the clothing. The results were remarkable.

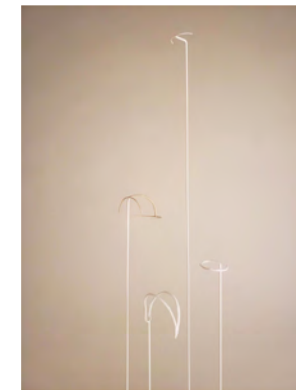
To make the mini-mannequins, I used buckram molded on an ethafoam bust that I sculpted according to Lily's measurements. After sanding and cleaning the buckram, I covered it with stockinette and finished the edges with black bias tape. Overall, I made three different busts, four mini-crinolines, three mini-overskirts, and three pairs of sleeve padding. These were used to photograph four of Lily's ensembles that were deemed stable enough to be mounted on mannequins by our conservation team.



Before and after of the crinoline shape, to emulate an 1860's silhouette. One of the challenges for me during this phase was to reproduce these silhouettes in a very small scale.



Above: A comparison of the same riding dress photographed flat and on a mini-mannequin. By Roger Aziz, photographer, McCord Stewart Museum.



Left: The mounts that were used to photograph Lily's hats.
Right: Final picture of a hood on a composite mount.
By Roger Aziz, photographer, McCord Stewart Museum.

Acknowledgements

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