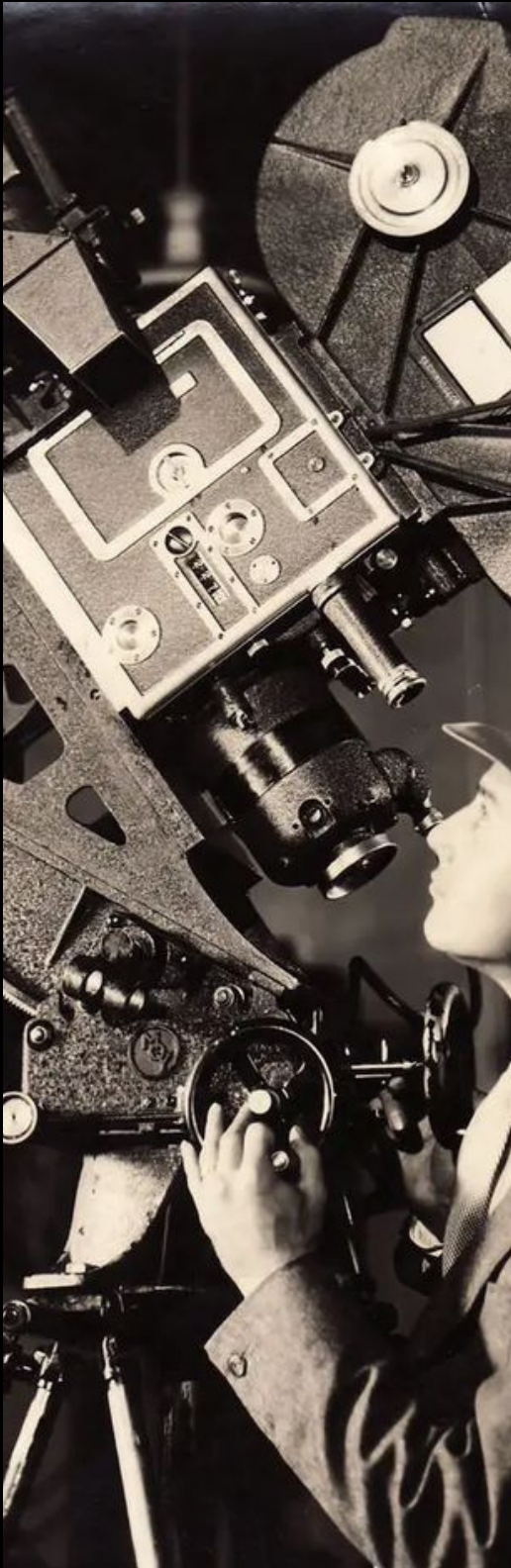




THE FILM COSTUME AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

*restoration,
conservation, and
preservation of stage memory*



What Is Film Costume?

Costume is an important element in the creation of a character. It reveals the character's social status, profession, personality, and connection to a particular period.

Colors, fabrics, silhouettes, and accessories contribute to the visual language of a film.

In many cases, a costume becomes a recognizable symbol of the film itself.

We can also say that a costume can “tell” a story even outside the screen.





FILM COSTUME AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

A costume becomes a cultural asset when its significance goes beyond its practical function as a garment or prop and it acquires historical (when it is associated with a particular era, event or important period in history), artistic (when it was created by a significant designer or represents an interesting technique, style or artistic approach), documentary value (when it preserves information about fashion, textiles, crafts and lifestyle at a particular time), symbolic value – when society recognizes it as a symbol of a particular image, work or cultural period.

“A costume becomes a cultural asset when, from an object of use, it becomes a bearer of memory and testimony to the culture of its time.”



COSTUME AND STAGE & SCREEN MEMORY

“Stage and screen memory” includes the memories and cultural meanings associated with a particular performance or film.

A costume can evoke a specific character, actor, or iconic scene. The physical object transforms a past film story into something tangible.

In this way, a costume becomes a kind of “archive of memory.”

Example: Even when a film was made decades ago, an original costume can recreate the visual world of the production.





What Is Restoration?

Restoration aims to preserve the authentic appearance and material of a costume as much as possible.

Main activities include:

- examining the materials and techniques used;
- assessing the condition of the costume;
- cleaning;
- stabilizing damaged areas;
- restoring only where necessary;
- documenting all conservation and restoration procedures.

During restoration, it is important not to erase traces of time when they are part of the object's history.

Main Preservation Challenges

Film costumes are particularly vulnerable to: humidity and sudden changes in temperature; light and UV radiation; dust and pollution; insects and microorganisms; improper storage and transportation; natural aging of textiles.

Therefore, appropriate museum conditions, specialized packaging, and regular monitoring are essential.





From Film Prop to Museum Object

Not every costume automatically becomes cultural heritage. Its significance may increase when: it comes from a famous or historically important production; it was worn by a well-known actor; it is connected to an important moment in film history; it represents a particular fashion or textile technique; there is reliable documentation of its provenance.

In this way, the object can move from being a working film prop to becoming a document of cultural history.





Digitization and Modern Preservation

Today, physical restoration can be complemented by digital technologies.

High-quality photography and 3D scanning.

Digital catalogues and archives.

Recording information about materials and condition.

Virtual exhibitions. Digital reconstructions of missing elements.

A digital copy does not replace the original, but it provides an additional way to study, preserve, and promote it.

Why Should We Preserve Film Costumes?

A film costume can be simultaneously:
a historical document + a work of applied art + part of film
history + a carrier of memory.

Preserving it allows us to:

- study the past;
- preserve the memory of cinema and its creators;
- explore fashion and textile history;
- educate future generations;
- maintain the connection between material culture and
audiovisual art.





Conclusion

A film costume does not end its life when the film ends. After filming, it can continue to exist as material evidence of an era, a creative team, and a cultural environment. Restoration and proper preservation do not simply mean “saving the garment.” They mean preserving the history, image, and memory associated with it.

When we preserve a costume, we preserve not only the material itself, but also the memory of the images that have left a lasting mark on our culture.



*The
End*