from the archives to the stage:

Cultural Production of Biographical Testimonies from the African Diaspora

The project investigates the collaborative processes and practices between historians, artists, and cultural producers when taking archival research beyond the academic space and into artistic platforms.

**APPROACH**

Collected photographs, performance recordings, documentaries and scripts from multiple cultural productions based on Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua’s life history.

Interviewed those involved in the research, conceptualization and creation of said productions.

Analyzed materials using Pierre Nora’s key ideas about lieux de memoire (sites of memory), Stuart Hall’s concepts on cultural identity and diaspora, as well as best practices in public history and cultural history theory.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Baquaqua’s cultural productions aim to explore current issues of belonging, identity and Blackness through this – his own – historical narrative. Revealing how memory, history, remembering and telling intersect in the process of exploring diasporic identities.

The balance between historical representation and re-imagination is rooted in the artist’s desire to create spaces (sites of memory) of possibilities and freedom.

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**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- In the context of Black diasporic cultural production, how do public history initiatives re-image and represent individual traumatic narratives which emerged during or after Atlantic enslavement?

- How do artists approach, explore and/or embody an historical figure and the detailed descriptions of their narrative?

- How does memory and history intersect with the processes of remembering and telling?

As a public history initiative, the discussions were edited and are available to the public as a podcast series.

Photo Credit: Leandro Verissimo

Hélio Lima in “M. G. Baquaqua - Corpo e Fé Africana”

Photo credit: Baquaqua – Documentário Dramaático Extraordinário