

What's Good Hair?

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Introduction

Hygrographs are the most used devices for measuring RH in museums. Widely accepted they have been used for a considerable time now. Every conservator at least once in his/her life has wondered about the kind of hair that is inside the hygrographs and how it was chosen.

This study is intended to throw some light about this subject and we are sure it will constitute a great advance in the field of monitoring RH fluctuations and controlling the climate in museums. We hope that this approach will be followed and more studies are done in this field which has shown very promising and revealing.

Several types of RH monitoring devices have been developed since the first prototype. In this article we focused in the hair hygrometer for several reasons. Hair is naturally found and in great abundance (note that in some individual cases this is not applied), it is environmentally safe (when clean and properly taken care of) and it is very sensitive to humidity fluctuations. However, not all the hair types are suitable for this use. In this article we will discuss the characteristics of a good hair, a classification of various types of hairs suitable for the different RH ranges and their availability. For this approach we focused on human hair, but we hope to continue our research to include animal hair, and may be angel hair.

Preliminary considerations

Good hair has to be clean, cut regularly to prevent splitting edges, not treated (dyed or permed) and oil free and, of course, free of dandruff. Also the use of hair products must be avoided: gel, mousse or hair spray.

Concerning the source some aspects must be taken into consideration: age of the source and location. When we talk about source we refer to the individual human being who grows this type of natural product and the location is the different parts of the body in which hair grows.

For the analysis we have grouped the samples in different categories, the main category is the "head hair" which we broke down in various subcategories. First- blonde, red, brown, black and grey hair. Second- thick, thin, curled and straight (we have not included frizzy hair due to some reluctance of the source).



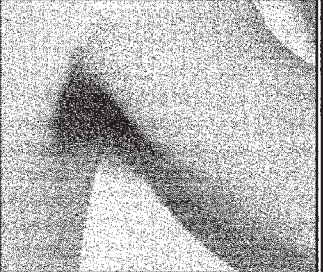
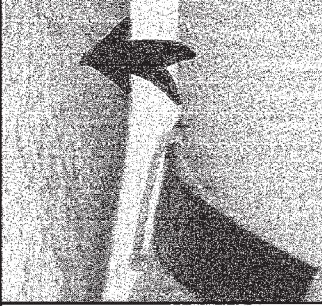
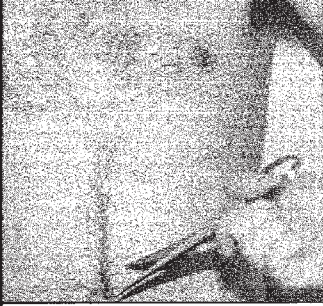

The other category groups hair located in several parts of the body: ears, noses, armpits, legs, arms and chests. We have not include other types due to difficulties in getting the samples, -most of the sources fall in the puritan group and refuse to cooperate-. However, we felt we have enough material to achieve good results. Finally, since these groups are more consistent in typology we have not broken them

Table 1 Performances by different hair coloration

| Color | Blonde | | Red | | Brown | | Black | | Grey | |
|------------|---------------------------------|---|---|---|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type | S | C | S | C | S | C | S | C | S | C |
| Strength | OK | | Hard to find - Hard to get - not worthy | | Good but boring | | Not Bad. Curly - too sensitive Avoid rastafarian types | | Still good. You should be happy you still have hair | |
| RH Sensib. | note- good excuse to get a date | | | | | | | | | |

S - Straight, C- Curled (thick haven't been included because they weren't included. As you can see in the table it didn't really matter which type anyway)

Table 2: Performance by different hair location.

| SOURCE | | | |
|----------------|--|---|--|
| | EAR | NOSE | ARM PIT |
| Illustration |  |  |  |
| Streight | Low | Too painful | Holy Smokes! |
| RH Sensibility | No response | No Response | It us ever painful |
| | ARM | Chest | LEG |
| Illustration |  |  |  |
| Streight | Good Schwazenegger type | Excellent from Mediterranean macho sources | Good |
| RH Sensibility | OK | Perfect | Good |

down into subcategories only curled and straight when referred to legs and armpits. Many museum professionals can think that it is not possible to use these kinds of hair since they are not long enough. To them we have to tell that they will be surprised of what human nature can provide.

Procedures

For the hair sampling, we use a sophisticated electrical devise and we tested all the samples using different commercial shampoos and conditioners and they were washed with tap water at 25°C. After we tested them for strength and sensibility to RH fluctuations.

Conclusion

The final question is probably this: could have I used my own hair for my apparatus? Now you can answer that question for yourself. And remember please don't be so mean to your hair!

Acknowledgments

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