

# How to seed a puppet in someone's heart? - Challenges of teaching puppetry techniques at the University

Como plantar um boneco no coração de alguém?  
- Desafios para o ensino do teatro de animação na  
Universidade

*Miguel Vellinho*<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

The author presents the two arms of his pedagogical practice. The first one is the work method Vellino has developed – as a director, puppeteer and actor – to train professionals to the practice of the Animation Theater. His technical procedures have been improved throughout the 18 years of his company, by means of experimentations that approach the Animation Theater to other languages, as Cinema, Dance and Cartoon. The second arm is Vellino's work since 2008 as a professor at the university. The director was responsible for the creation of the Animation Theater discipline at UNIRIO, considering the challenges of public education's reality in Brazil, both at University – field for the students' professional qualification – and at Elementary, Middle and High School – the largest work field for the future teachers. His work seeks to establish real and strong links between the artist and the animated object. In this process, the crafting of the puppets is a special highlight, because that is where begins the comprehension of the puppet in its scenic expression's entirety, a methodology Vellino considers as a gestation.

**Keywords:** Animation theater; puppetry; theater pedagogy

## Resumo

O autor apresenta os dois pilares de sua prática pedagógica. O primeiro é o método de trabalho que desenvolveu – como diretor, ator e manipulador – para treinar profissionais na prática do Teatro de Animação. Seus procedimentos, aperfeiçoados nos 18 anos de sua companhia, aproximam o Teatro de Animação de outras linguagens. O segundo pilar é seu trabalho como professor universitário, tendo criado a disciplina Teatro de Formas Animadas na UNIRIO, considerando os desafios do ensino público na Universidade – campo de formação profissional – e nos ensinos Fundamental e Médio – campos de trabalho dos futuros professores. Sua técnica busca vínculos entre artista e objeto animado, cuja expressão cênica é compreendida em sua totalidade desde a confecção dos bonecos, metodologia equivalente a uma gestação.

**Palavras-chave:** Teatro de animação; teatro de formas animadas; pedagogia teatral

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Ms. Adjunto Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO). Diretor, autor, ator e artista visual. vellinho2001@yahoo.com.br

My experience as a Puppetry teacher began in the 1990s, when I started to teach some workshops and free classes related to this theme. The purpose was to provide an introduction on some of puppetry's basics, outlining some fundamental rules that can be followed as a base for any technique – or for most of them. Such rules deal with questions that I thought - and I still believe – to be essential for the good handling of a puppet, although I also believe that the greatest meaning of puppetry is not simply restricted to its technical absorption. There is no point in understanding the focus of the puppet's gaze, the axis that guarantees its balance, the level, that is directly related to always keeping the same height, and the fixed point that aims its stability if the acting game is not in harmony with these principles. We would hardly be convinced that something inorganic was transformed into a new state, with a strange way of life, then. Or maybe not that strange. Since then I've been developing some training procedures that would take the students to a better understanding of what puppetry is about. And, what is the kind of Theater that takes this puppetry into consideration. As I mentioned above, such workshops were given to people with both high or low level of curiosity on the techniques, and to young artists who wanted to try a new kind of scenic expression. It is important to point out that, in Brazil, most of the artists who decide to work with puppetry are trained in workshops and free courses, because there is no professional training at this area in Brazilian universities. And there's still too much to be said about the huge cultural gap in the country, that tends to concentrate a greater part of its cultural production in the Southeastern region, where are the cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Thus, these brief encounters are opportunities to lend interest, fascination and curiosity put at their disposition to lead the students towards the basics of this segment of the Performing Arts.

After teaching in so many workshops, there was a moment in my career that I needed to train new professionals to create a show in which I, for the very first time, would be the lead director. By this I meant that I could already see myself as a part-time director, conducting a group with relatively permanent members. Thus, gathered with a very select team of professionals - mostly actors - for six months I explained thoroughly all my teaching process achieved up to that moment and I started - in this case, privately - to study and to replicate the human movement, because the technique to be used in this show-to-be would be the direct manipulation. Throughout this period, we started to segment the movements and create a compatible adaptation with movements that were able to be performed with the puppets made for the show. Besides this, in parallel with the rehearsals, I was conducting a research on Muybridge's<sup>2</sup> procedures to break into pieces all the stages of human movement. In this phase of the process, I became aware of the power of all the processes used in the workshops which, with more details and with much more hours of rehearsal, provided the group a true immersion in the universe of the Puppetry, which was also being completed with the creation and the development of the characters that would be used in the show. That moment, unique by the nature of the people involved, and long enough to differ from the limited hours

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<sup>2</sup> Eadweard J. Muybridge (1830 – 1904) an English photographer known for his experiments with the use of multiple cameras to capture human and animal movement. Inventor of zoopraxiscope, a projecting motion pictures and series device, the celluloid film precursor, which became popular throughout the 20th century with the introduction of Cinema.

of the workshop classes, was decisive for my training as a teacher and director - and also for the cast, which, by my point of view, had left a zone of restricted artistic expression and potentially extended their performing abilities. I repeat the words used by Professor Marthe Adam, when she points out that:

Acting with a puppet gives us enough condition to develop the deployment faculties, making the distance visible, it exercises the concentration, the accuracy of the gaze and the various levels of presence (Adam, 2015, p. 154).

Those long months of preparation for my first direction encouraged the idea that we should stick together and follow the same path, reaffirming Puppetry as the main characteristic of my company, PeQuod, which in 2017 completes its eighteenth year of existence, with a unique journey in Brazil.



*Sangue bom* (Estreia - 1999). Cia PeQuod - Teatro de Animação.  
Diretor: Miguel Vellinho. Foto: Simone Rodrigues

With over ten shows that mixes research and experimentation, the company have harbored, along this time, several professionals who, in different "harvests", have learned the procedures of manipulation motivated by a desire and by a career choice that allows people to join the extremely unfair Performing Arts work environment in my country, pursuing a proper journey associated to a company that has gained credibility and respect over time. Due to personal preferences and technical affinity, we choose to use direct manipulation as the base of our performance, for I was already familiar with this technique and knew how to teach it with fair efficiency, and satisfactory handling procedures. I emphasize the particularities of this chosen technique for its approach to human movement, and the organic quality in it, that makes the audience believe to be in front of something alive, even if their manipulators, as in our case, are always at sight, and for the possibility of tangling believable and unbelievable right before the eyes of the audience in rather vertiginous action sequences.

Such appealing features forged the first generation of Pequod's puppeteers, who are constantly highlighted in theatrical reviews for the excellence of their

work. Even though sticking to the use of the same puppetry technique, there are, in my opinion, huge differences between each of PeQuod's shows, which lies on the nature of the puppets, on its proportions - which varies in each show - or on our choices about portraying the characters. One way or another, there is no possibility of comfort or ease in the choices that we have made.



*Filme Noir* (Estreia - 2004). Cia PeQuod - Teatro de Animação.  
Diretor: Miguel Vellinho. Foto: Simone Rodrigues

At first, we focused our work on the anthropomorphic puppet put at the center of the staging, but also stretching some *dogmas* that brought us closer to the cinematographic language. This approach remains as one of the main features of our earlier days. As the shows grew more intricate, they allowed the verticalization of a research that begun in 1999 and has never stopped, inspired mainly in Eisenstein's<sup>3</sup> writings. Procedures linking the handling of the manipulation tables during the scene - suggesting travellings -, duplication of puppets - for facilitating their movement across the stage -, and the use of some sort of stage lighting - which kind of "edited" the scenes - were the basis for our dialogue with the grammar of narrative cinema, which served as a motto for some of our main and most celebrated stagings, such as *Nice Blood!* (1999), a vampire story; *Film Noir* (2004), a black and white show that emulated this cinematographic subgenre on the stage; and *Marina* (2010), a musical and underwater adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*.

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<sup>3</sup> Sergei Mikhailovitch Eisenstein (1898-1948), one of the most important Soviet filmmakers, linked to the Russian avant-garde art movement, actively participated in the 1917 Revolution and the consolidation of Cinema as an artistic expression meaning. His silent films such as *Strike* (1924), *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925), *October* (1927), *Alexander Nevski* (1938) and *Ivan the Terrible* (1944) are known, respected and studied worldwide. His books: *Film Form* (1929) and *Film Sense* (1942) brought definitive contributions on the use of the cinematographic production and influenced the classic narrative cinema until today.





*Marina* (Estreia - 2010). Cia PeQuod - Teatro de Animação.  
Diretor: Miguel Vellinho. Foto: Simone Rodrigues

There were in this early period two other moments that stood out for their importance as a trigger for a new internal investigation that provided new developments, either in the staging and in the academic and textual thought, and that realigned my pedagogical perception at the head of the actors group that I worked with. In *Peer Gynt*<sup>4</sup> (2006), our production that celebrated Henrik Ibsen's centenary of death in Brazil, we opted for a hybrid scene that allowed us, in response to an appeal from the cast at the time, that actors and puppets were on an evenness state on the scene. Starting from a premise that was related to the dubious moral status of the protagonist, the scene sometimes presented Peer with the figure of an actor, and sometimes as a character in the form of a puppet. And, other doubles replicated this procedure, for a better scenic resolution, which required puppets or not. Also in *Peer Gynt*, our first puppets that did not have much of an anthropomorphic configuration appeared, as the case of the character The Bøig (The Curved One), which was a gymnastic ribbon operated by an actor hung upside down about three meters high who also assumed the character's state. The dialogue held with the protagonist was portrayed not only through speech, but also by setting the ribbon in motion, which led to a confrontational dynamic. This new physical portrayal of a character at that point of the play, allowed other layers of discussion about non-figurative aspects of representing characters related to Ibsen's own propositions.

The hybrid features concerning our staging of *Peer Gynt* set the path to other performances that sought other performance possibilities. Which happened to the segmented hybridization seen in *A Chegada de Lampião no Inferno*<sup>5</sup> (*Lampião Arrives in Hell*, 2009), a show in which its 20 last minutes relied exclusively on the actors, with no puppets, for reasons totally related to dramaturgy choices<sup>6</sup> Different from the overlapping hybridi-

<sup>4</sup> The show debuted in 31 of August 2006, at the Teatro de Arena do Espaço SESC, Rio de Janeiro (RJ), with the following cast: Liliane Xavier, Mario Piragibe, Maria Cristina Paiva, Márcio Nascimento, Márcio Newlands and Mona Vilaro.

<sup>5</sup> The show debuted in 15 of April 2009, at the Teatro III of the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil (CCBB), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), with the following cast: Gustavo Barros, Liliane Xavier, Marise Nogueira, Márcio Nascimento and Thiago Picchi.

<sup>6</sup> *A Chegada de Lampião no Inferno* is a production inspired by the popular tradition of *cordele* literature from the Brazilian Northeast region, and the ceramics crafts procedures of the same part of the country. It used metaphors concerning the baking and finishing stages of ceramic pottery the finishing processes metaphor of this type of handcraft, the staging sought to recreate this type of workshop, showing from the cleaning of the clay, through the molding, burning of the pieces in the oven and finishing with the painting. The metaphor used approximates the life of Lampião, one of the most famous northeastern cangaceiros (outlaw thief) from the early twentieth century, from this cultural manifestation, with the trip to the furnace replicated as if it were a descent to hell, recreating with local colors the trajectory of Dante Alighieri in one of The Divine Comedy's books.

zation seen in the adult version of *Marina*<sup>7</sup> (2010), in which the scenes were overlapped with puppets and actors acting in different levels of the scenic space simultaneously. Such combinations provided new impulses to the work that started back in *Peer Gynt*, while it attracted a new wave of artists to our company, which, for all that was mentioned here, ended up having less contact with the anthropomorphic puppet and, therefore, less experience with the direct manipulation.

I don't want to sound pretentious as I expose here only the positive moments of our journey – I emphasize, proudly, the huge internal crisis that happened during the rehearsals of Shakespeare's "The tempest" (2012)<sup>8</sup>, which resulted in the complete eviction of the puppets from our stage. Well, not complete, as we could use subtle experimentations with Shadow Theater, although in a sort of heterodox way. However, the heterogenous configuration of the group of professionals gathered unfortunately ended up exposing some acting deficiencies which resulted in a show that shifted away from the company's original features. Our version of "The tempest" joined the list of countless other contemporary experiences with the Shakespearean work who haven't turned out to be an effective contribution, and the absence of the animated object compared PeQuod to many other actors' companies existing in Rio de Janeiro city, one of the main centers of theatrical production of Brazil, with no special highlight. However, the urgency for a recovery of the main company feature made us go through one of the deepest, most coherent working processes ever lived by the group, that aimed to redeem the puppet figure, this time, through dance. Or, to put it in other words: through the poetical gesture and not the everyday life movement.



*PEH QUO DEUX* (Estreia - 2014). Cia PeQuod - Teatro de Animação.  
Diretor: Miguel Vellinho. Foto: José Roberto Crivano

<sup>7</sup> This show debuted in 06 of August 2010, at the Teatro III, of the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil (CCBB), Rio de Janeiro (RJ), with the following cast: Liliane Xavier, Mariana Fausto, Mona Vilardo, Leandro Muniz, Márcio Nascimento and Miguel Araújo.

<sup>8</sup> This show debuted in 26 of October 2012 at the Jockey Club's Theater in Rio de Janeiro (RJ), had in its cast: André Gracindo, Gustavo Barros, Liliane Xavier, Raquel Botafogo, Mariana Fausto, Miguel Araújo, Paulo Giannini, Thales Coutinho and Pedro Florim.

*PEH QUO DEUX*<sup>9</sup> (2014) show, whose name is a pun with the company name and the dance term *pas de deux*<sup>10</sup> - is, in my opinion, the third and most recent aesthetics twist inside PeQuod, given the singularity of its concept: five distinguished dancing choreographers, with distinct temporal journeys, were invited to create five choreographic performances. Five *pas de deux* that were meant to be a job no human dancer could ever perform, which would only be possible to be performed by a puppet. I had the joy of accompanying and guiding five of the greater names of Brazilian contemporary dance and relearn how to look at the anthropomorphic figure, now in a new way, without the presence of everyday and/or casual gestures. That was a flush of renovation that interfered in my – in our – way of looking, rehearsing, manipulating and manufacturing puppets. I am telling this to show how much it is important, when running a company, to listen to your inner-voice – which shapes my experimentation needs – and also, an outer-voice – that embraces the members' expectations, as well as the audience, that has become loyal over the years. The harmony between these voices, freed from prejudices, judgements and assurances, has made PeQuod become a space of experimental activity in the Theater of Animated Forms, which allowed us to build our journey with verticality and coherence. Moreover, my pedagogical procedures have been enhanced as well, aligned with new ways of perceiving the animated figure, and that pushed me through new surprising ways, most of the times. The acquaintance to dance, in my opinion, is a new trail with several assessments ahead, which stimulates me to strengthen the density of the existing research that has already been drawn and allows everyone to go into the rehearsing room in a renewed way. Rejuvenated, so to speak.



Foto de oficina realizada na sede da companhia (2011). Cia PeQuod – Teatro de Animação. Diretor: Miguel Vellinho. Foto: Miguel Vellinho

<sup>9</sup> Debuted on the 09 of January 2014 at the Oi Futuro Theater, Rio de Janeiro (RJ), had in its cast: Liliane Xavier, Mariana Fausto, Raquel Botafogo, André Graçindo, Marcio Newlands and Miguel Araújo.

<sup>10</sup> A technical term coming from the classic ballet to name a dancing duet, usually a man and a woman, who perform a choreography together.



All the above was said regarding the spread of knowledge about the work with the Animated Forms, from a perspective that involved common professional interests. When I first joined the Federal University of the Estate of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO), nearly 10 years ago, to be a part of the teaching staff for the new Theater Teaching Course<sup>11</sup>, which would begin to offer subjects on Puppetry and Theater for Young Audiences in its program, I was aware that my teaching techniques required a deep assessment, since it needed to match them with the state of public education in Brazil. So, I had to develop new appealing strategies towards Puppetry for the students who wouldn't be able to avoid my classes, since they're a mandatory stage for achieving graduation. Animated Forms Theater is an eight-hour a week subject, with no relation to the other subjects of the Course, which welcomes, especially, young people from 20 to 30 years old, who come, unfortunately, with a very vague idea of what this genre can be. They often come with a careless view, typical of the young adult who sees Puppetry as a childhood reminiscence, a newly abandoned universe that, for the time being, doesn't seem interesting in being revisited. Others come from the countryside, with a few or nearly no information, or even a memory, of what Puppetry is about and, thanks to academic mobility projects, they get to be transferred to cities with higher cultural production, such as Rio de Janeiro. Some of them come willing to absorb part of what is imposed; others, not so much.

Faced with this situation, as soon as I started the classes, I found myself with the same questions as Lorefice, when he said: "Would it be possible to teach? Teach what? It is possible to convey knowledge, base techniques, creative procedures, but... is that enough?" (Lorefice, 2015, p.80). How is it possible to seed a puppet in someone's heart? And in such a short time! For such few months! For only a few hours! I certainly acknowledge that the goal of these classes inside the school program is to increase the range of pedagogical possibilities these teachers-to-be would be able to use in their professional lives. It is there as a step ahead, but it certainly plays a secondary role on their training process. However, as I believe the subject could establish deeper links and insights both inside and outside the classroom, I searched for some things that bond, definitively if possible, the students to their puppets. The real world, though, gives me thirty classes of two hours each per semester to perform such seeding.

In my professional background, which begins with some Brazilian masters as well as Phillipe Genty, I realized that the crafting of the puppets isn't only an important step to be dealt and mastered, but is also the key to an intimate building of the artist who works with puppetry. When dealing with the materials that will be part of the future animated object, one can develop ability in the use of innumerable elements that involve the manufacturing steps, it is learned how to use the products correctly, it is understood the origin of each material involved, it is created a network of knowledge that can generate creative and surprising substitutions in the future. It is at that moment, with the puppet's final shape still far from their sight, that the real idea of what a puppet is and does starts to be learned. All this process could still be more pleasant, if

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<sup>11</sup> *The Theatre Teaching Course, now linked to a department of its own. The Department of Theatre Teaching, of the School of Theatre of UNIRIO, receives students to be trained as theater teachers that are mostly directed to work in elementary and high schools. It lasts four years and has in its curriculum subjects taken from the Courses of Theater Theory, Scenic Performance, Scenography and Pedagogy, besides the ones from the Course itself, the Course of Theatre Teaching acquired grade 5, the highest level on the scale of the Ministry of Education, on the first year of rating under the new curricular version.*

we were in a more comfortable environment, if the space and accommodations were more adequate and if there was unrestricted access to the best materials for manufacturing the puppets. However, I must remind you of the hard reality of public education in Brazil, what ends up bringing out more creativity than we can imagine, avoiding the budget limitations. Thus, facing this reality, I obviously give up using the expensive materials I commonly use on the puppet manufacturing process of my shows and, far from what may look like an improvisation,

I choose materials of easier access and that doesn't require, at least initially, many skills from the students. I say that because at this point some blocks concerning material handling tend to arise. It takes some sensibility to help the students to overcome their insecurity concerning manual skills that often occur. Obviously, I don't start the classes in a strict way, or excessively technical. On the contrary, students enter this universe with a module called Study of Forms, which aims for going through the observation and analysis of 2D forms and their transposition to the third dimension. As they leave the flat figure, the student is able to recognize the meaning of the volume and what is its function in the figure composition and finally, to figure out the best resolutions to visually define something. At that moment, some manufacturing skills are assessed, without the obligation to develop a finished figure. It is such experiments that will later lead to greater disinhibition in the handling of the materials. Finally, with such experiments done, they reach the first moment of expressive displacement of the course, working with the shadow created by the object. With the dissipation of the concrete material, the students come across the mysterious beauty of its immateriality and its infinite scenic possibilities.

Past the above mentioned stage, I show the students a sizeable collection of images gathered over many years: taken from books, show programs and numerous encyclopedias, that allow people to glance at the visual, technical, historical and geographical spheres of Puppetry, obviously presenting the main techniques of manipulation, which need to be part of the vocabulary, and the innovations that emerge in the contemporaneity that stretches the anthropomorphic and/or zoomorphic understandings that are usually linked to the puppet. Clear it is that this collection, as broad as it may be, doesn't cover all manifestations, which would be impossible; however, the profusion of the images shown provides a good range of resolutions for the students to use in their own projects.

As stated above, the main part of the course happens when the collective of students begins to do a project for their puppets, which will be made in later class. In this proposition, the idea is that the students practice the preparation techniques previously worked for the creation of glove puppets. I believe that the glove puppet, a classic technique, is the best option for an initial exercise in this universe, mainly for the short time we have. As Balardim points out, the choice of this technique is also due to

its wide diffusion in the Brazilian context [...] and believing that this technique can allow the actor to experiment the basis of manipulation that will compose the puppets poetics, since [...] it is possible to keep the manipulator's look directed towards the puppet, being able to have a good hold of all its shape and spatial movement. (Balardim, 2009, p.159)

Anyway, I think there are other ways to step into this world, but I realize that the glove, in its synthetic and, at the same time, so complex form, gives the beginner a quick response on how amusing this manifestation can be.

Respecting all the individualities and particularities, I usually let the student free to choose the character to be made, except for the figures emerging from the mass culture industry, which, in the process, I think, would divert us from a symbolic construction that occurs silently and in parallel to the lessons. With the choices made, the students have a class day to present their projects visually, either with their own drawings or with the combination of reference material which, organized in a clear way, portrays an understanding of the final figure. The importance of the project is the first instance of keeping them stick to the same purpose until their finalization. I do not make it unviable for shifting, which I also believe to be part of several processes, also valid and tempting; however, the idea of a project that may have open instances makes builds up the awareness of a final goal. It is a decision taken by each student, but also a group agreement. Over the course of a few weeks, the manufacturing process gets vertical, requiring each student to make decisions, choices and the understanding of a very particular process that I call the gestation of the puppet. In this movement analogous to a pregnancy, there's a clear perception of the moment when such material demands that begin to go inside the manufacturing process, stop being a burden, an obligation, and become something absolutely exciting and that increases the desire of the students for the object to become ready. This change of mood, which affects everyone in the classroom, is not only a consequence of overcoming a rather slow period of the semester, but the beginning to see in that ensemble of "paper, paint, wood and fabric" something owned, created by them and absolutely unique. This fascination worried me when I began to teach, since it is also necessary to look at the puppet again with detachment, as a scenic artifact, as an ornament, as something that only reaches its completeness on stage, in the play. The enchantment can sometimes disrupt the completion of this process and often mismatch a process that also happens collectively.

There is clearly a displacement of libido in this gestation process, which demands carefulness and attention, since many of the creations that appear in the classroom are related to projections and transfers made by the students, and need much more than just technical assistance. No choice is absolutely random and, of course, there is a game of identification and subjectivity quite evident in this process. It is no coincidence that so many orishas<sup>12</sup> so many fantastic characters and so many celebrities from the world of music, cinema and television inhabit the intimate and referential universe of each student, who find in the course a channel of reconnection with such figures and with their own imaginary. At that moment, my attention needs to be directed to that materialized idea that still needs adjustment and complements, which can be done either with material additions or with substitutions, but also giving more emphasis to what is sometimes shyly sketched. Here, I remind the idea of the glove puppet as a synthetic replication of the man; so, everything in it calls for condensation and concentration. My task at this moment is to add strength to each proposal. To give final adjustments according to each character, suggest different and more suitable materials

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<sup>12</sup> Divinities of African Brazilian religions.

for a better visual resolution, to emphasize characteristics of the sketch with greater visual stimulation – this often goes through color composition, presentation and use of common and uncommon materials that can contribute to a better display of the puppet. It's always good to remember that there are some resources that, despite their popularity among the puppeteers in general, are away from the life of a regular college student. The introduction of such elements extends the understanding of the wide variety of resources that can be part of the manufacturing game and it shows that the unconventional will always be welcome, since it can be perceived as a trigger of new information given to the puppet. Often, we can understand the nature of a character thanks to the choice of materials involved in its creation.

The final stage of the crafting process comes with new challenges, that are in the exercises that involve the practice of glove manipulation, the discovery of each puppet's own vocalization and its most varied relationships - with the puppeteer itself, with another puppet, with the audience. It is a process that, even condensed, shows some results. I can say that this is gratifying for me, that I was able to establish a new and deep relationship between the animated and the animator, and I also see the same feeling among the students who abandoned the initial unhappiness of facing a mandatory and inhospitable moment of the course and found in the Puppetry Classes much more than what they had first imagined. Anyway, if there is a great challenge in college teaching in the Brazilian public university nowadays, it does not rest on the lack of physical space and material conditions. Obviously, everything would be much more seductive if such needs were met, but I believe we are yet far from it. Transform the students' way of seeing yes, that's the great battle to be fought every semester in my classes, in the short time given. It is important to have the right tools and firm hands to open their chests and carefully place a seed that can accompany them for the rest of their lives. It happened to me one day.

A paragraph of pride before the end: Since I began to teach in the University, I came across a few students with the same spark of fascination that I had when I first came to this profession and, little by little, I welcomed some of them in my own company, allowing them to establish a greater and more rewarding contact with the profession. Three of them have been at PeQuod for nearly ten years now. Slowly, the presence of university students in the rehearsing room has ceased to be a minority among to the group that had been with me since the company's early years, and gradually this transition from the University to real professional life has repeated itself more constantly. I came to realize that this is truly a door that has opened in the company and that will hardly be closed. The most interesting thing is to see this transformation from student to coworker, aware of their own work, someone who enters a space of creation which is their own. In May of this year - 2017 - PeQuod debuted another show and I delightfully inform that the former students are a majority in the cast.

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