

Clowning around Brazil: an overview of the teaching of Brazilian clowns ^{1 2 3 4}

Palhaceando pelo Brasil: um panorama sobre o ensino de palhaças e palhaços brasileiros

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Abstract

Rooted in modern culture and strongly linked to the circus, the art of the clown and of clowning reveals itself as a fruitful space for the reflection on artistic training. This article aims to provide a critical look at the processes that trainers of clowns had received in their artistic training. From the data resulting from an online questionnaire carried out in 2019 and disseminated on social networks, we found 110 professionals in the teaching of clowning spread across the five regions of Brazil. By analyzing the obtained responses, we can have a first understanding of the various processes of clown formation currently taking place in the country. A critical look at what has been and is being done allows improving what can be done in the future.

Keywords: Clown, Teaching, Brazil, Performing Arts

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Resumo

Sedimentada na cultura moderna e fortemente atrelada ao circo, a arte do palhaço e da palhaça revela-se como um profícuo espaço para a reflexão da formação artística. Este artigo pretende oferecer um olhar crítico para os processos que os formadores e as formadoras de palhaços e palhaças receberam em suas formações artísticas. A partir dos dados resultantes de um questionário online realizado em 2019 e divulgado em redes sociais, encontramos 110 profissionais do ensino da palhaçada espalhados pelas cinco regiões do Brasil. Ao analisar as respostas obtidas, podemos delinear um primeiro entendimento dos diversos processos de formação de palhaços e palhaças que estão acontecendo no país. Um olhar crítico para o que foi e está sendo feito possibilita um aperfeiçoamento do que poderá ser aprimorado no futuro.

Palavras-chave: Palhaço, Ensino, Brasil, Arte Cênicas

Introduction

When talking about clowns, such multiple figures that have been widely present in so many societies from antiquity to the present day (Castro, 2005; Silva, 2019; Soares, 2019), we cannot believe that its recurrence is just a coincidence. The relevance of clowns and the teaching and learning processes engendering generations of artists in this particular language reveal themselves to be multiple and worthy of the attentive look of those who, like us, wish to understand the different possibilities of diffusion of clowning.

For this to happen, we must realize that art also transforms itself in the same way societies transform over time, stressing the last decades with the acceleration resulting from significant technological development in a short period (Rosa, 2020). One example is how the circus has been structured over the decades, always remaining contemporary to the time it operates (Silva, 2011), a fact that also becomes true for the figure of the clown.

These transformations are not limited to its aesthetic. Rather, they are also reflected in the role art, including clowns, plays in society, interfering in their spaces and teaching and creation processes. Considering the current transformations in learning the art of clowning, we note that the paths chosen by these artists diversify over time, creating a complex training network that has been penetrating “through the gaps” (Bortoleto; Silva, 2017) of culture and artistic education nationwide.

In effect, it seems that we are facing a root-like process (Souza, 2012) that cannot be considered linear and unique but rather as a set of possibilities that constantly intertwine, finding new paths in different directions, creating solutions whenever an obstacle is posed. All this simultaneously, arbitrarily, or even laughingly. If we have a figure as controversial as the clown, who transgresses social norms as a starting point for their criticism and laughter, it would not be surprising to observe their formation beyond a single path. In fact, artistic multiplicity seems to indicate a network of training itineraries. It was in search of them that we conducted this study.

This transgressive constancy of clowns opens up the possibility of constantly innovating in the paths chosen for teaching and learning the clowning. Like any craft, clown art requires a lot of preparation and rehearsal, continuous training, and constant improvement. Therefore, asking about the possible processes of training clowns operating in Brazil seems relevant to us.

Therefore, this study aimed to develop a reflexive analysis of the processes that clown masters received in their artistic training. The information was obtained through an online questionnaire, answered by clown teaching professionals in Brazil. From the analysis of the responses, it was possible to outline some of the different training processes in the country.

In other words, we look at the processes currently being developed to map existing connections and try to innovate in the possibilities for teaching, always being careful not to generalize the processes based on a few experiences. In short, the action and, consequently, the formation of the clowns can be observed as a root that connects, diverges, and reconnects an enormous multiplicity of forms, experiences, knowledge, and people—an apology to the arbitrariness and the hyper structuring that seems to have modulated professional and artistic training.

To the encounter

Considering the territorial vastness and countless other limitations to accessing artists who occupy this large country, we began this journey by surveying clown trainers throughout Brazil. It is essential to consider the relevance of this figure within society, its expansion in academic research, and the fact that there is no similar survey in the country. Therefore, in 2019,

we developed an online questionnaire to map these professionals to understand how clowning is being taught in the country.

The questionnaire displayed a brief presentation of the study and the informed consent form and comprised 15 open-ended and seven close-ended questions, organized into five topics: I – Participant identification participant; II – Information on academic, professional, and artistic training; III – Process of training and professional performance as a clown; VI – Process of teaching the clowning that one develops; V – Additional information and indication of new participants.

Distributed via the digital platform Google Forms and widely disseminated on specialized social networks, we are based on the principles of the snowball sampling described by Vinuto (2014), seeking to map the respondents with the greatest possible reach. Participation in the study also depended on self-identification as a clown trainer and the condition of residing in Brazilian territory at the time of participation.

After three months of disseminating and circulating the questionnaire, we obtained 131 responses, of which 110 were considered valid, according to the above criteria. We obtained respondents from all five regions of Brazil (Table 1), reinforcing the presence of clowns throughout the country.

Table 1.
Number of participants by Brazil region.

Brazil region	Frequency (%)
North	06 (5.4)
Northeast	20 (18.2)
Central-west	09 (8.2)
Southeast	65 (59.1)
South	10 (9.1)

Source: prepared by the authors

As we did not find any previous similar survey, we considered a significant number of participants involved, consistent with the increase in specialized literature in Brazilian territory.

When analyzing the answers about the artistic training processes of this great diversity of professionals, it was possible to find more common paths in Brazil. By examining the training these masters experienced as apprentices and crossing them with the processes they built to guide new artists, we can also draw an overview of these possible paths of teaching/learning the art of clowning.

Within the circus family

The symbolic and factual association of the clown with the circus is not baseless (Avanzi & Tamaoki, 2004; Bolognesi, 2003; Castro, 2005). In fact, our respondents indicated that the training was structured in a space where the clown gained great notoriety, the traveling circuses. As briefly mentioned about the generational learning process, many trainers went through a process of transmitting oral knowledge within the family circus (Silva, 2015).

My father was my great master, and to this day, he is my mentor. I am very inspired by my father's work to achieve good results. I was born and raised in the traditional circus. I learned a little bit of everything, and today, I pass it on with all the care and affection, just as it was passed on to me (T.S., 2019).

With the oral learning found within circus families, we see knowledge being transmitted continuously and in-depth, mixing artistic knowledge with behind-the-scenes technical knowledge, administrative knowledge, ethics built within the family business, and so many other necessary learnings for the continuity and maintenance of the family. This knowledge is usually transmitted from the most experienced to the children, an artisanship (Sennett, 2009) that is passed on through a large portion of observation and association in minor roles to learn the profession. In addition to the purposeful dissemination of knowledge, children are born amidst this operating logic and are often inserted into the show when they are still infants. Training that lasts over time, training for life so that it is possible to maintain the family.

This true immersion in the daily artistic and technical work of circus life means that children learn daily, not only by acting or participating in rehearsals but by observing the work of each person involved in the shows and helping with tasks involving lighting, sound, or stage managing (Bolognesi et al., 2019, p. 174).

For many, this is the way they learn from birth, and it is possible to observe that these children's games are often reproductions of their parents' and family's performances, which can be improved over time by becoming part of their presentation. It is generational and continuous knowledge; everyone participates directly or indirectly in this construction.

The body skills learned and the artistic productions of the circus permeate the children's games and daily lives, improving the development of body skills over time. In this case, teaching integrates the child's daily life, thus building a cultural heritage (Bourdieu, Nogueira & Catani, 1998) for the apprentices, who are already accustomed to the logic of artistic creation.

At the same time that everyday life naturalizes artistic reality, these children begin to be taught from an early age, going through techniques understood as primary by circus performers to create a body prepared for the necessary responses and perfect a specific skill.

Along with this training, apprentices must also come across the impact of presenting to the public. Their first appearance to the public often happens when they are still infants. Other times, these children are "thrown" into the arena without any prior warning so that the surprise puts them in a state of vulnerability, thus making it possible to see how the apprentice reacts to the unexpected encounter with the public (Avanzi & Tamaoki, 2004; Seyssel, 1997). From these situations, configured as a rite of passage, it is possible to direct the continuity of teaching for these young artists.

Children constantly face the challenges of overcoming their bodies, vocal and interpretative skills, and constant exposure to the public. From the regular rehearsal of their acts, the constant observation of the masters on stage, the practical experience with the public, and the experience with this logic of social functioning, they acquire the necessary tools to develop the art of a clown.

The clowns' teachings generally focus on knowledge about the sketches that are part of the circus repertoire. The clowns with more experience dictate the scenes' actions, lines, and rhythms. Such a construction is not only technical but also sensitive to how comics work (Castro, 2019). A learning experience improved over the years by several clowns who came before the one transmitting their knowledge. The apprentices within this structure will develop their peculiarities by mastering the technical elements. In addition to technique, the artist must master a specific repertoire of body language and jokes. Thus, when all these elements are very

well internalized, the clown finally masters the tools necessary to develop the improvisations so present in the art of clowning.

In short, the teaching that emerges from the circus family is based on the constant monitoring on the constant monitoring of the master to their apprentice's daily lives. Observing other artists on stage (or outside of it) is of great importance, as this is where one begins to understand the rhythm of this comicality (Bolognesi *et al.*, 2019). Immersion seems to produce a profound experience, creating, in many cases, an intense relationship between master and apprentice, often belonging to the same family, establishing processes that are repeated for generations and, in some cases, creating an artistic family tradition.

Distant lands

Another possibility for learning the art of clowning is teaching abroad. Despite mentioning in the questionnaire some countries, such as Italy, Belgium, the United States, Canada, Spain, and France, we noticed a substantial presence of French matrices related to Jacques Lecoq's school (Lecoq, 2010).

This school is focused on teaching interpretation and acting techniques for actors and actresses. For artistic development, they work with various theatrical techniques, such as the neutral mask, body mimesis, *commedia dell'arte* masks, buffoon, and clown mask. The process developed by Lecoq for clown learning (Miranda, 2016) takes a different path to teach this art than was done until then in the circus environment.

If, on the one hand, family training is a prolonged and constant process, on the other hand, within Lecoq's school, the construction of the artist's knowledge in working with clowning is condensed and immersive. Apprentices in this situation immerse themselves in the comic universe of clowns in one of the interpreting and acting training modules. Thus, we see that the focus of learning, initially, is not necessarily linked to training new clowns but to teaching new ways to improve students' interpretive skills.

Another interesting point to discuss in the development of this comic figure within Lecoq's school is a change in the dramaturgy of the scene. The classic circus sketches no longer

become the plots these new clowns will act out. This new theme arises from the artists' concerns, expanding the possibilities for subjective and intimate issues.

Notably, it seems that based on this educational training, close to the theater and its reputation, that a distinction began to emerge between the circus clown and the clown who occupies the theaters. This is further consolidated when Lecoq decides to use the English term "Clown" to define these figures that are being built in his school. This differentiation has already been discussed at various festivals, seminars, and even in theses (Sacchet, 2009). However, what interests us in this research is to observe this other path for training clowns, gaining visibility for the propagation of this art.

The knowledge that gains power in Lecoq's school is disseminated by him and his apprentices, who begin to teach their courses, transmitting this knowledge to the cities and countries they visit. An example of an artist trained at the Lecoq school is Philippe Gaulier, who first became a teacher at the same school and, shortly afterward, he decided to open his school, with solid foundations in Lecoq's teachings, but also with a different pedagogical process (Gaulier, 2016).

The answers to the questionnaire showed a more significant influence of Gaulier (14.5%) among Brazilian clown trainers than of Lecoq himself (7.5%), being the most sought-after training course abroad among those who had this opportunity. Many other international trainers who were mentioned were students of either Lecoq or Gaulier, thus reinforcing the emphasis on French schools' teaching of new clowns.

On the other hand, the Clown through Masks course, taught by Canadian Sue Morrison (Coburn & Morrison, 2013), was also frequent among the participants' answers (10%). The course is based on the teachings of Richard Pochinko after his death. Pochinko looked to the shamanic culture of North American Indigenous people for a fruitful path for developing his clown. The course is structured in two states per mask, with a total of six masks worked, i.e., not everyone who participated in this course went through the 12 worked states.

We can understand the paths taught by Richard and Sue guided being the construction of 12 qualities of masks. These diverse energies are the raw material for developing the clown mask. The figure, for them, moves between the different masks continuously, bringing from the mixture of states the vivacity of the artists' scenic presence.

In total, 52 (47.3%) answers indicated courses or workshops on clowning in international schools or with professionals from outside Brazil, consolidating it as a relevant form of training.

The academia opens its doors

Another space cited with relevant visibility in the development of clowning is Brazilian universities, not only due to the number of participants (Table 2) in the questionnaire who highlighted the importance of academic training in the decision to pursue an artistic career but also due to the growing dedication of artists, professors, and researchers in producing research related to this universe.

Table 2.

Influence of higher education on pursuing a career as a clown.

Answers	Frequency (%)
Influenced	47 (42.8)
Did not influence	36 (32.8)
Started undergraduate courses because they are clowns	06 (4.5)
Did not attend higher education	21 (19)

Source: prepared by the authors

If we look at this scenario four decades ago, academic production related to the artistic work of clowns was very scarce on the national context. At that time, research on clowning was not yet a field of knowledge production, which made access to this knowledge difficult. This reality is constantly changing, and we can currently find several texts about the world of clowning. Research on clowning, clowns, jokers, and the like has increased, not limited to the arts but also including research from other areas of knowledge, such as education (Flórez, 2019), physical education (Miranda, 2016), psychology (Azevedo, 2017), public health (Marinho, 2015), and anthropology (Fernandes, 2012), among many others.

Clowning is a topic for several research studies, which gives visibility to several masters of this art. This information becomes increasingly accessible through books, dissertations, theses, articles, seminars, lectures, and other possibilities based on scientific research.

Not only did the research expand space for the clown within the university, but also the undergraduate courses themselves. The survey showed more than 27 different undergraduate courses among the participants, highlighting performing arts (18) and theater (15) courses, as expected, followed by artistic education courses (5), philosophy (5), letters (5), physical education (4), and pedagogy (4). Obviously, not all graduate participants in the research began their clowning training at university. However, the courses offered within the undergraduate courses and university extensions (Bracciali & Bortoleto, 2020) appeared as a gateway to clown research and performance. It is worth mentioning that six (4.5%) participants indicated that the search for higher education arises from the desire to deepen the work already carried out in clowning, showing that the university can become a means of continuity and deepening.

There are several clown training projects developed at universities. Some examples that were mentioned in the questionnaire are *Palhaços Visitadores* in the Theater course at the Federal University of Uberlândia (UFU), coordinated by Prof. Dr. Ana Wuo⁵, *Enfermaria do Riso* at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO), coordinated by Prof. Dr. Ana Achcar⁶, *Grupo de Pesquisa e Experimentação cotidiana* using the figure of the clown as a paradigm at the State University of Maringá (UEM) coordinated by Prof. Dr. Marcelo Colavitto⁷, among others. Furthermore, some did not appear during the answers but continued to enable new artists to experience the state of the clown.

For hospital care

While the involvement of artists in spaces of social vulnerability is nothing new, in Brazil, since the 1990s, there has been an intense movement of clowns within hospitals. We can highlight both the work of the *Doutores da Alegria* (Nogueira, 2005) and that of Ana Wuo (Wuo,

⁵ <https://www.instagram.com/palhacosvisitadores/> (Accessed on: January 11, 2022).

⁶ <https://www.instagram.com/enfermariadoriso/> (Accessed on: January 11, 2022).

⁷ <https://www.instagram.com/grupomeuclown/> (Accessed on: January 11, 2022).

2011). There are two aspects of the participation of clowns in hospital spaces that still reverberate throughout Brazil today.

The impact of these initiatives was so significant that new projects began to emerge⁸. A significant part of the projects comes from the voluntary work of the clowns involved. With this, another aspect of training emerges with teaching focused directly on working in hospitals. This data aligns with the results obtained in the questionnaires, which indicate that voluntary work is the fourth most cited reason (65.4%) for looking for clown training courses (Table 3). It thus becomes a new path to learning the art of clowning.

Table 3.

Frequency concerning students' objectives when seeking clown training.

What do students look for in the training you offer?	Frequency (%)
First contact with clowning	98 (89.1)
Improve clown work	93 (84.6)
Self-knowledge	73 (66.4)
Carrying out voluntary work	72 (65.5)
Curiosity about the subject	71 (64.6)
Professionalization	61 (55.5)
Improve public communication	55 (50)
Hobby	27 (24.6)
Others	11 (10)

Note: Maximum value 110

Source: prepared by the authors

The most diverse procedures are applied to choose new volunteers for these projects. Some projects offer in-depth training for aspiring clowns and monitoring and observation of older project participants. A particular mode of formation that operates in each of them.

I started volunteering in 2002 in a group of clowns at Holy House of Limeira. In 2003, I met Wellington Nogueira, who started teaching clown workshops for the group. Later, I participated in the first group of Palhaços em Rede, having a workshop with the staff of Doutores da Alegria: Soraya Saide, Raul Figueiredo, Thais Ferrara, Val de Carvalho, and Roberta Calza (E.G., 2019).

⁸ There were 1,300 groups of hospital clowns linked to the *Palhaços em Rede dos Doutores da Alegria* in 2018. Available at <https://doutoresdaalegria.org.br/blog/como-foi-o-5o-encontro-nacional-de-palhacos-que-atuam-em-hospital/> Accessed on: January 20, 2022.

Others also demand continued training for clowns and constant participation work in workshops and courses to develop new skills and improve their work within the hospital.

However, not all groups of hospital clowns take the same care with the training of their members, as some participants mentioned. They often put the volunteer at risk in a space as delicate as a hospital. Furthermore, we find groups of hospital clowns who accept new participants with more superficial training or even no artistic or care training to enter and work in hospitals.

In the training of new volunteers for clown work in the hospital, it is widespread to find teaching little dedicated to the artistic development of participants whose primary focus is only the reproduction of sketches and pre-structured scenes by other artists or just preparing songs to entertain the children. This makes the artists themselves learn the need for improvisation when thrown into the ring, which can be traumatic if we consider the vulnerability surrounding the hospital environment.

Without discussing the merits of good or bad projects, the important thing is to understand that this new path of training clowns has grown on the national map, opening doors for people who never imagined working in art, changing the direction of their lives to not only being in hospitals but continuing to work in other areas of activity.

Drop by drop

We live in a time of significant technological advances that enable a global reach of communication and information in seconds, resulting in a substantial social acceleration (Rosa, 2020). We increasingly have less time for learning processes to take place, and, at the same time, we are required to present excessive and constant productivity. The fragmentation of teaching, the compression of the learning process, the demand for multiple knowledge, and the need for an inflated curriculum of courses are some symptoms of our society.

By analyzing the answers to the questionnaires, it was possible to identify that the most common process among the participants (approximately 70%) was training based on several short courses with several masters. We can see that this is a Brazilian reality when we observe the formats in which these clown trainers work. A reflection of this is also seen in structuring

the courses the participants took, with 78% of the courses being introductory to clowning (Table 4). Furthermore, 69% of the recommended training courses last up to 20 hours (Table 5), and it is widespread for them to take place intensively over two or three days.

Table 4.

Type of training provided by study participants.

Type of training	Frequency (%)
Initiation	86 (78)
Improvement	25 (23)
Performance creation	15 (14)

Source: own authorship

Table 5.

Duration of training courses.

Duration of the course	Frequency (%)
Up to 20 hours	76 (69)
21-50 hours	45 (41)
Over 50 hours	26 (24)

Source: own authorship

Obviously, this training is not enough for the in-depth development of a clown. The formation of art is a long and tortuous process. Therefore, initiation courses in the art of clowning should be considered a first contact to navigate the particular logic of this universe. A short training period is not enough to deepen techniques, not even research into corporeality and vocality, although it can be considered the first step towards a more extensive trajectory.

To solve the training problem, these artists participate in several short initiation courses to broaden their experience in this universe. These clowns study with different professionals during their training and do not stay with a single master long enough to direct the development of their artistic work. On the other hand, the rotation of masters allows the apprentice to have different perspectives on clowning, experience the most different training paths, and lead to greater autonomy to choose the most fruitful processes for each one.

Short-term courses gain importance, mainly when we verify access to this type of learning in cities outside the significant artistic production areas. Considering the data collected in the questionnaire, we observed that 40% of participants are located outside the capitals (Table 6). Furthermore, we must highlight that 75.6% of professionals not located in the capital cities

reside in the southeast region (Table 7). In other words, we have a vast Brazilian territorial extension with greater difficulty accessing these trainings.

Table 6.
Number of participants in capitals and interiors.

Location	Frequency (%)
Capitals	65 (60)
Inland cities	45 (40)

Source: own authorship

Table 7.
Number of participants from the interior of the states.

Brazil region	Frequency (%)
North	1 (2.2)
Northeast	4(8.9)
Central-west	2 (4.4)
Southeast	34 (75.6)
South	4 (8.9)

Source: own authorship

The possibility of sharing the creation processes of groups in circulation with clown shows becomes a profitable option for supplementing funds, mainly because many of these groups produce their circulations autonomously, without legal incentives or private sponsorship. Thus, teaching short courses has also become a form of sustainability masters.

Furthermore, the emergence of theater, circus, and clown festivals in the country has become a space for training new artists, as it is common to request open training workshops for the general public when contracting the participation of these artistic groups. These workshops have also become frequent counterparts for public or private funding projects. Thus, such events create a space that can overcome the difficulty of accessing training in the art of clowning.

Meeting the public

It is notorious that the training processes are diverse, from a process that takes place during continuous experience to short-term courses for volunteers in hospital projects. Each with particular characteristics. We highlight that, in all these processes, there is a very particular, and even abrupt, moment, which is the meeting with the public. No matter how structured the training of these artists is, meeting the public is always tough to plan. At the same time, this relationship with spectators can be considered one of the greatest learning moments, as the public is the thermometer for the artist to understand how well their work really works.

In the family circus, the encounter starts with a big “push” into the ring, a leap into the void, being placed in a space of vulnerability that triggers a natural response from the artist in the eyes of others. In university projects, we find a more prolonged attempt to expose apprentices in a controlled space, where all spectators are other people who find themselves in the same vulnerable space. Still, the apprentices are not entirely ready for this encounter, as the relationship with the public is a necessary process for developing these clowns.

Considering the great possibility of learning from the public, we found five (4.5%) answers from questionnaire participants who reported that learning about clowning would have happened precisely through the experience of meeting the public, even before going through any of the processes already mentioned above. This choice often happens due to the need for aspiring clowns to work. Many then begin their work by building a “character” to work in the most diverse spaces imaginable and learn to make and develop their performance through the public’s response. Another 20 (18%) participants reported going through a short training and meeting the spectator. It is a challenging path, as there is no support from a master to indicate the small shortcuts in the process or even point out any errors that will occur in their work.

Clown schools

Among so many possibilities, it is essential to highlight the emergence of schools specialized in teaching clowns, such as *Escola Livre de Palhaço* (Rio de Janeiro)⁹, *Escolas de Palhaças* (São Paulo)¹⁰, *Escola dos Doutores da Alegria* (São Paulo)¹¹, and *Academia do Riso* (Ceará)¹².

Activity modules generally structure these schools, and the teachers are masters with extensive experience. During training, apprentices come into contact with this diversity of professionals and learn different working methods.

My training in clowning was in 2014 at EsliPa – RJ. There I was able to study with masters such as Fernando Sampaio, Rodrigo Robleño, Esio Magalhães, Lily Curcio, Grupo Off Sina, Mauro Bruzça, Junior Santos, Ricardo Puccetti, Tubinho, and Azyz Gual, each teaching a module of 30 hours each (C.C., 2019).

Similar to what we found in the processes experienced in short-term courses. However, in this case, the difference is that there is a structure of the path they follow, a sequence between the professionals who teach, and planning in the order in which the contents are taught. Furthermore, there is internal communication between the masters so that the teachings of each one add to what has already been taught previously.

These are important projects for strengthening the art of clowning. However, despite this, they still do not meet the entire territorial extension of the country and the great demand from those interested in learning. The projects are located in large capitals, which makes it impossible for people from the interior of these states to access them, and not all states have clown training schools. Furthermore, there is a screening process for new students in some schools, meaning there are not enough places for all candidates who wish to participate in this training.

⁹ <https://eslipa.org/> (Accessed on: January 11, 2022).

¹⁰ <https://www.instagram.com/escoladepalhacas/> (Accessed on: January 11, 2022).

¹¹ <https://doutoresdaalegria.org.br/escola/> (Accessed on: January 11, 2022).

¹² <https://www.instagram.com/academiadorisoceara/> (Accessed on: January 11, 2022).

Networked – the boost of the pandemic

Without fear of repetition, the learning and development processes of working as a clown are as diverse as possible, making it difficult to exhaust all possibilities in a text, as even this process constantly changes. We can even see this through the experiences that emerged during the social isolation that began in 2020 as a strategy to contain the transmission of COVID-19. What was previously strange for clowns and trainers began to be normalized, learning how to clown through distance learning. Several courses were published over a year and a half of isolation.

Furthermore, this teaching is not restricted solely to practical courses but also to several other possibilities, such as watching clown performances, listening to great masters talking about their artistic work, readings on the subject, theoretical studies about laughter, the clowning technique, the history of this figure, among so much other possible information, which also became much more accessible during the period of social isolation.

Hundreds of live streams were performed by, with, and about clowns. It was possible to meet artists from all regions of the country and the world and hear how they talk about their creative processes and ways of learning, creating, and teaching. In less than two years, the amount of material on the subject available online has grown unprecedentedly.

Several groups of clowns made footage of their artistic work available on their social networks so that, even in moments of great uncertainty, people could access laughter and the transformative power of clowning.

Laughing is necessary; training is a beautiful challenge

When we talk about teaching clowns, it is necessary to understand that it is a very delicate process, as these comic figures represent human inaptitudes and fragility. The artists place themselves in a space of significant vulnerability, exposure, and insecurity to enhance their inaptitudes to the public and build a different logic of looking at society. This look of the loser, the excluded, the naïve, and the experienced transforms difficulties into strength and makes this power reach the viewer through comical situations that expose the defects of the society in which they are inserted.

The existential complexity of clowns is what enhances the multiple learning possibilities. A figure in constant transformation so that dialogue with the public continues to take place, it would be unlikely to think that this teaching would remain rigid and stable throughout millennia of history.

Furthermore, we are dealing with individualities since no clown is the same as another. Even when the son inherits the father's clown name to continue the tradition, these clowns have individual logic, considering that this logic is also a bodily construction of this artist. Not everyone achieves the same result through a specific teaching process in this individuality. The more variable the learning possibilities, the more significant results can be perceived as a whole, just as artistic potential influences and opens up spaces for new possibilities.

While various directions these masters took for their artistic training were presented, it is essential to note that all these processes took place simultaneously and continue to occur on a greater or lesser scale. Furthermore, we must look at the teaching of clowns from the idea of a rhizome to understand that all paths are interconnected and constantly communicate and, thus, accept the involvement and influence of these artists through more than one training process.

When thinking about Brazil, we have several challenges in talking about the training of clowns, firstly due to the small number of public incentives for the arts, and also because there are few schools specialized in teaching clowning, i.e., few vacancies available for this learning. Furthermore, to make the situation more complex, most training opportunities are concentrated in the capitals, making access for artists from the interior difficult. It also highlights that in the context of universities, including performing arts and theater courses, the art of clowning is not a regular subject in most cases. In other words, not all universities provide training processes for new clowns

In general, people who do not have access to these training spaces, whether at universities or specialized schools, depend on specific projects by groups or companies that encourage short-term courses.

Furthermore, the social differences between regions of the country represent an essential factor when considering training. The incentive that each region gives for the continuity of art is different. We can see the Southeast region as the place with the highest concentration of trainers, courses, and clown schools, with 59% of the answers coming from

this region. This fact must be questioned, not as a way of distributing these trainings to other regions, but of valuing the cultures of each state by encouraging art teaching.

Several problems and questions must be raised when discussing art training and, more specifically, clowning. However, what becomes essential is to look at this multiplicity, recognize the space as each one's clown, and respect individual differences and paths.

Considering the diversity in Brazil, a country with such a sizeable territorial extension, a plurality of miscegenation, and the mixture of so many peoples and cultures, it would not be acceptable to minimize the possibilities of training clowns for a single aspect. There are so many logics within a country, so many spaces for action, so many possibilities, so many stories, so many beings. ... If within each person we are already a personal universe of possibilities, the clown is nothing more than an expansion of that same universe, which has the power to mix with new private universes of spectators - an infinite number of paths, processes, bodies, and arts.

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