

## Report on ASSITEJ's workshop in Uruguay, 12.2015

By Leandro Kees



Dear Colleagues,

When I was asked to write a brief report on the Colonia Workshops in Uruguay, I thought it would be good to do it in a simple manner, by answering some basic questions. Therefore I used a Q&A pattern to write the following lines, with an informal language and with a mixture of descriptions and personal impressions.

I take the chance to send New Year greetings to everybody, wherever you are in the globe right now. So cheers, to those I know already and to those I will hopefully get to know. Cheers, Prost, Salud, Saúde, Skál, Santé, 干杯, На здоровье and the list goes on.

Greetings from an Airport somewhere,  
Leandro.

## WHAT DID WE DO?

**Answer Nr 1:** We held 2 workshops, one in Playwriting (Inés Falconi) and one in Physical Theatre (my self). The participants in the playwriting workshop followed during one week a pilot creative process leading to the script of a short play. They went through diverse creative stages such as formulating ideas, characters and contexts; writing drafts, trying out drafts with public, reformulating material, having the text reviewed by colleagues, and so on. During the Physical Theatre workshops we focussed on the idea of creating theater outside the written/spoken word, while searching strategies for staging a play independently of the audience's language and cultural background, a practice that influences strongly my current work.

At the end of each day both groups would have an informal meeting and peer into the process of the other group, showing some small abstract of the day. After that, the participants made several smaller groups and shared the day's notes, impressions and experiences in detail, so that an exchange of content took place and people got some input of the workshop they did not take.

**Answer Nr. 2:** We met personally, not just professionally. We exchanged as much information during breaks as during the labs. We got to know our colleagues in this very large continent, we got the feeling of belonging to a wider human structure, we tasted a sustainable side of ASSITEJ that many of us -my self included- did not know, which is sharing theatrical knowledge, and not our theatrical productions. We generated knowledge, we contemplated generational differences and talked about theater in a era of massive global economic and cultural influences. We answered some questions, we went home with even more questions.

## WHO WERE THERE?

Theatre practitioners (performers, directors, choreographers ) of mixed ages and backgrounds, all of them focussed in producing work for young audiences. There were participants from Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Spain, Venezuela, and Uruguay. The meeting was coordinated by Gabriel Macció Pastorini (URY) and Daniel Fernández (ARG), in cooperation with several members of ASSITEJ Uruguay.

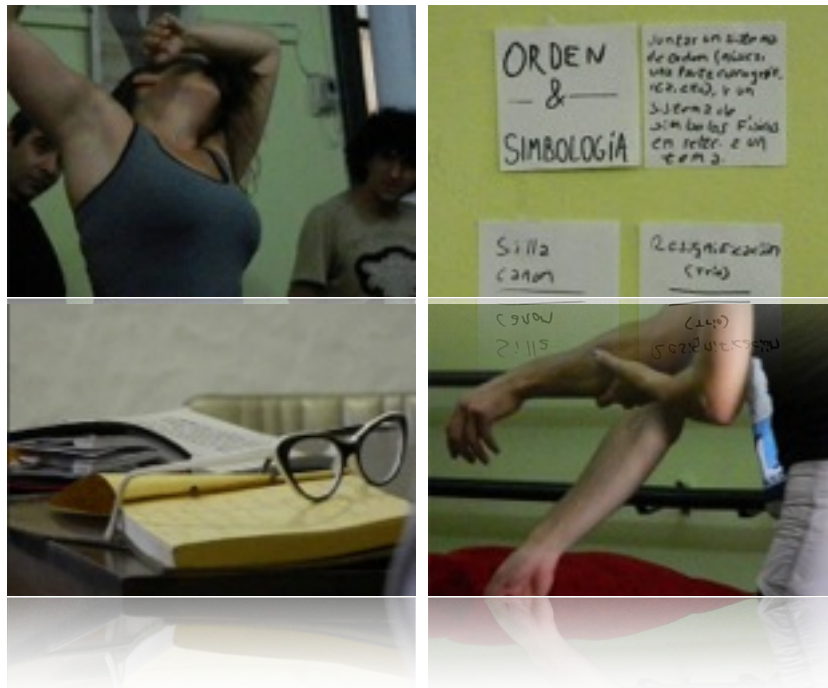
## WHERE DID WE WORK?

We worked in the building of the culture department of Colonia, a small and almost idyllic colonial city in south Uruguay, 50 mins away from Buenos Aires by ferry. The last day we went to Montevideo to the national center for performing arts and held an open talk/conference about the workshop's activities and experiences.

This city as context for this kind of activity was extremely enjoyable, beyond words, and very recomendable if a workshop of this kind were to take place again, as it keeps away from the permanent distractions of a big city, while offering still enough options to take a break at the end of the day.

„ Places like the National Youth Theatre are about meeting people from different backgrounds and different religions and different cultures, and mixing with people that you wouldn't ordinarily meet“

Ashley Jensen on TYA.



### WHAT DO I PERCEIVE AS THE MAIN OUTPUT OF THIS KIND OF WORKSHOPS?

**CREATING NETWORKS:** One of the most interesting effects to look at, was the willingness to exchanges contacts and create informal networks, that might later develop into formal ones. In that way, the workshop came to cover a much needed space for professional exchange and getting to know one's colleagues across the continent.

**CREATING IDENTITY:** In my eyes this encounter served to continue an important dialogue about about identity in Latin-American TYA. This means specially to understand the shared elements with worldwide theater makes, but also to talk about the need to understand, define or maybe even create a south-american identity.

**SHARING KNOWLEDGE:** As mentioned before, many of us were nicely impressed by ASSITEJ's interest in opening spaces to promote the exchange or theatrical knowledge, instead of finished stage productions. I must admit I am not fully informed of ASSITEJ's activities, vision and mission statement, but it seemed new to me, and very necessary, specially with the current global/political situation.

### SUGGESTION:

For a possible future development, I would see as an interesting complement to offer a workshop with a different sets of tools: In one hand to work on **artistic profiling**, to learn how to take a clear position as an artist and be able to create a discourse, that is both on sage as well as when talking about one's work in public. And in the other hand, a introduction to **company management principles** for freelance TYA makers. I see this two points as crucial elements to be developed for any artist working outside the umbrella of a state-financed institution, which I guess must be a big majority in a world-wide TYA perspective.