

# **Interview Art And Culture** with Gustavo Werneck

## EDITORIAL / INTERVIEW

## INTERVIEWER

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Gustavo Werneck is a doctor, professor and actor. As a doctor, professor, and coordinator of the Public Health Internship at Faculdade de Ciências Médicas de Minas Gerais (FCMMG), plays a key role in training future healthcare professionals by encouraging a comprehensive, community-based approach to addressing public health challenges. This interview highlights the commitment of Werneck in integrating art and health, recognizing the importance of culture and artistic expression in individual and collective well-being. The interview was recorded on stage at the Feluma Theater (*Teatro Feluma*), located at the building of FCMMG.



**ARTIGOS** 

[Ana Gusmão] Hello! Welcome everyone! This is the first interview of our interview project for the Health Extension and Education Magazine (Revista de Extensão e Educação em Saúde) of the Faculdade de Ciências Médicas de Minas Gerais. The idea of this series of interviews is to articulate art with science. In every issue, we will have a special guest who will share with us a little about their story, their experience of living in different fields of knowledge.

My name is Ana Gusmão, I am a professor here at the Faculdade de Ciências Médicas and I also coordinate the Art Culture of Research Extension project (Arte e Cultura da Pesquisa Extensão).

In this first interview, we have a very special guest, who is doctor and professor Gustavo Werneck, who, in addition to being a professor and coordinator of the rural boarding school, is also an actor. By the way, a great actor. Gustavo is true. I am your big fan, ok? Welcome. To begin with, I would like to thank you for accepting our invitation to inaugurate our series here at Feluma Theater. Let's say it's a very special debut for us and I wanted to start by asking you to talk about your story, both in medicine and in theater. We would appreciate it if you could share some insights into what this journey was like.

[Gustavo Werneck] So, Ana, first I would like to thank you very much and thank the magazine staff too, right? This interesting magazine that is growing here inside the college. It's an honor for me to be here at this moment. And talk a little bit about myself. I am a doctor. Formado no início da década de 90/92, eu estou fazendo agora 41 anos de formado. E é quando.

[Ana Gusmão] 92 or 82?

Gustavo Werneck: 82.

[Ana Gusmão] You said 92.

[Gustavo Werneck] So, it's 82, in 82. In this perspective, I'm turning 41. During this period, we lived in a country, a very effervescent moment like that, at the end of the dictatorship period and the political discussion was very fierce, very, very strong, at that moment. Within the health area, there was the health reform movement, which was building a new health system, creating the conditions for a new health system. And I graduated during that period, and I discovered social medicine during that period. And I decided that what I wanted was this. I didn't go to the clinic, I didn't go to surgery, like all my colleagues, and we went to public health, social medicine. I did a residency, and from there, I started working at the State Department of Health. I worked in a research center at UFMG, and ultimately, the Unified Health System (SUS) was created in 1988. In 1990, I received an invitation to come to Faculdade de Ciências Médicas de Minas Gerais to work in the rural internship program, which was just starting at that time. It had just started. And I accepted this invitation because it was something that I really liked, especially considering my previous experience with the internship. And I went to work. At that time, we were working in the North of Minas, traveling a lot, which, by the way, we still continue to do today. But back then, it was a more heroic thing; we used to go visit the students by bus, and it was quite a story, a cool story, indeed. And from then on, I realized the following: I became a professor without much preparation to be a professor.

I think most teachers are like this, teaching happens in life, right? And I realized it, I became a professor out there, trying to understand what this was. And I see in this perspective, that gradually I began to comprehend what my role was, what my field, my specialty was, and how I could convey to the students what it meant to be a social doctor, as we used to say at the time, right? I think that social medicine is part of health, of medicine as a whole. So, it's about developing in students a sensitivity to the social aspect within medical practice, right? You understand what the social determinants of health are, how they affect people's lives, right? And in this way, I also became excited about teaching. And nowadays I have 32 to 33 years at Faculdade de Ciências Médicas de Minas Gerais...

carry on throughout the years, finding a way to reconcile both. Both careers, let's say in this way.

## [Ana Gusmão] But as a professor, tell us the secret. How do you manage to reconcile these two careers?

[Gustavo Werneck] Look, I think, as a matter of fact, just like in our professional lives, we have moments when we feel more motivated, and moments when we feel less motivated, right? So, in this way, I was able to work on good projects, I participated in good projects in the artistic field, I had a theater group where, well, we never discussed anything related to health there, you know? It was kind of a separate thing.

#### [Ana Gusmão] A long time.

[Gustavo Werneck] Long time, long time. And here I practically dedicated myself to rural boarding school. I took some classes too, a time when I worked with Public Health Practices, however, it was basically, you know? And it's like that... Theater is something that took place in my life before Medicine. Before Medicine, at Colégio Estadual (State high school), I had the opportunity to live an experience, to put on a show and experiencing that for me was spectacular. It was something that totally moved me. And I felt like it made sense in my life. I realized that made a lot of sense. But then, afterwards, I entered in Medical school and then I decided to return to theater. Still within the Medical School. And I also found my theater group, right? And we went on. I never gave up on theater, you know? It has always been present in my life. And it was something that I managed to

## [Ana Gusmão] It was also a way to change the subject a bit...

[Gustavo Werneck] Yes, it was like what we used to say back in the day, "flipping the record." In the era of records, we would flip the record. So, it was something that helped me clear my mind. I lived and interacted with other people, with other topics.

## [Ana Gusmão] Just out of curiosity, how many theater awards have you won?

[Gustavo Werneck] Not that many, but I did win a few, I won a few. I participated in some very successful projects, which was outstanding. And I believe being a doctor allowed me to choose the things I really wanted

to do. You know, if I were just an actor, maybe I would have had to work on projects that weren't as interesting.

[Ana Gusmão] Thus, with a more commercial character...

[Gustavo Werneck] Selective. I made a lot of choices, and I think that was very beneficial. I participated in numerous projects. Now, I believe that art is something that resides within us. You see, I don't feel like someone who has these two worlds separate within me. Instead, I feel like a person with these two worlds deeply integrated. I consider myself an actor and I can work in theater, but I can also incorporate that aspect within medicine, got it?

I believe medicine has given me the opportunity to also learn about the evolution of the healthcare system through the Unified Health System (SUS), as well as the field of health education. Health education is something so important that came with SUS. It's about the way you transmit, the way you deliver health information to people. Theater is a fabulous tool for that. People connect directly and engage with the story being told and the content we can bring to the table, right?

I had some opportunities for that, but strangely enough, it didn't happen here within the university because it was as if art couldn't enter. And that's something that makes me very happy. I see that at Faculdade de Ciências Médicas de Minas Gerais, art is now present, and it is part of the universe of this institution, you know? This is a relatively recent development. So, it encourages the artists within this institution to also express themselves artistically.

[Ana Gusmão] And it also encourages students who may not feel a strong connection to artistic languages to try out these art forms.

[Gustavo Werneck] Of course, absolutely! Look, we see students. I've had many students who were artists, you know? So, it must be said that these are not opposing worlds, right? It is possible to have a coexistence of these two worlds, and they can even nourish each other. And I believe that everyone should express themselves and find their own artistic expression, as it is essential, essential for the human soul and beings as well, you know? That's how I see it.

[Ana Gusmão] And, professor, to wrap up, what do you think has been the greatest gain for you in being able to combine and not abandon either of these two passions, theater, and medicine? We know that both professions demand a lot from their practitioners. In theater, we rehearse a lot, right? There is a level of demand and dedication as immense as in medicine. So, I would like you to share with us, after so many years lived in both professions, with so many experiences and paths taken, what do you think has been the gain of being able to integrate these two passions throughout your life?

[Gustavo Werneck] Well, I think the main thing for me was being able to express my sensitivity. As a human being, you know? Theater has given me several opportunities to embody different characters, tell numerous stories, and explore the most sensitive aspects of the

human experience. And medicine also offers that possibility, doesn't it? It's not just a technical matter.

[Ana Gusmão] It's about telling and listening to stories as well.

[Gustavo Werneck] To tell and listen to stories and to exercise one's sensitivity, you know? I believe that's what it means to exercise and never cease to be open to capturing what surrounds us and using it in the best possible way within our profession, whether as a healthcare professional or as an artist. These two things, they nourish each other, you know? Together, they have tremendous potential, much greater, you know? I hope that Faculdade de Ciências Médicas de Minas Gerais can develop the projects that are being nurtured here. There is a theater group, an interesting project involving a choir, and other initiatives as well. And I truly hope that these endeavors will only flourish within this university.

[Ana Gusmão] For sure, as far as we're concerned, it's growing, and we count on you as well, right? In a way, we can go on this journey of articulating these two languages, these two fields of knowledge. So, we would like to thank you for this...

[Gustavo Werneck] I thank you for everything...

[Ana Gusmão] ... for this interview and see you soon next time. Thank you so much. Bye, bye.

#### TECHNICAL SHEET

Gustavo Werneck, interview given to Ana Gusmão, on June 5th, 2023, at Teatro Feluma, for the Art and Culture Project / Health Extension and Education Magazine of Faculdade de Ciências Médicas de Minas Gerais (FCMMG)

#### interview video

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