





**PAGU AND THE GROUP THEATER:  
forgotten narratives in the historiography of mid-twentieth-century Brazilian theater**

PAGU E O TEATRO DE GRUPO:  
narrativas esquecidas da historiografia do teatro brasileiro de meados do século XX

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 [doi.org/10.70446/ephemera.v8i14.8019](https://doi.org/10.70446/ephemera.v8i14.8019)

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**Abstract:** Patrícia Galvão, known as Pagu, was a writer, translator, cartoonist, journalist, communist militant, and feminist. Less well known, however, is her work as a director and playwright, as well as her significant role in the development of the Brazilian theater scene in the mid-twentieth century, particularly through her contributions to the group theater movement of that time. In general, she is often remembered as a muse of Brazilian modernism. It took decades for her contributions to receive due consideration and for her achievements to gain visibility. The reflections presented here, grounded in the importance of making women's protagonism more visible in the historiography of Brazilian theater, aim to gather and articulate information on Patrícia Galvão's importance to the theatrical scene of her time. Special attention is given to her final decade, during which she dedicated herself to translating plays that have since become key references in contemporary dramaturgy, organizing amateur theater festivals, and promoting the careers of young artists – such as Plínio Marcos – and theater groups including Teatro Oficina and the Teatro Experimental do Negro.

**Keywords:** Pagu; group theater; Brazilian theater; women in the scene; dramaturgy; feminism.

**Pagu e o Teatro de Grupo:  
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**Resumo:** Pagu, Patrícia Galvão, foi escritora, tradutora, cartunista, jornalista, militante comunista, feminista, mas o que pouco se sabe é que ela também atuou como diretora, dramaturga e teve um importante papel no desenvolvimento da cena teatral de meados do século XX, contribuindo especialmente para o movimento de teatro de grupo de sua época. De maneira genérica, sua figura é lembrada como musa do modernismo. Passaram-se décadas para que suas contribuições começassem a ser consideradas e para que seus feitos ganhassem visibilidade. As reflexões a seguir, considerando a importância de dar visibilidade ao protagonismo de mulheres na historiografia do teatro brasileiro, dedicam-se à tarefa de reunir e articular dados sobre a importância de Patrícia Galvão para o teatro de sua época, destrinchando especialmente sua última década, quando se dedicou a traduzir textos que hoje são referências para a dramaturgia contemporânea, a organizar festivais de teatro amador e a impulsionar a carreira de jovens artistas, tais como a de Plínio Marcos, e grupos de teatro como Teatro Oficina e o Teatro Experimental do Negro.

**Palavras-chave:** Pagu; teatro de grupo; teatro brasileiro; mulheres da cena; dramaturgia; feminismo.



## 1 Introduction

Pagu was an anarchic angel who came to the world to push our boundaries.  
(Plínio Marcos *apud* Furlani; Ferraz, 2010, p. 261)

This article opens with a claim: Pagu – Patrícia Galvão – as a theater woman! You, who start reading this text – have you ever thought of her as an important figure in the theatrical scene of her time, whose impact still reverberates in our current theatrical references? In particular, can you recall any woman in mid-20th century Brazilian theater who stood out in directing, in theatrical thought, and in promoting collective theater?

Group theater may be understood as a form of theatrical organization and production in which a collective of artists comes together to work in continuity on a shared poetic, aesthetic, and political project. According to Carreira,

From the 1980s onward, the term group theater became part of the Brazilian theatrical vocabulary, and within a decade, it came to represent a common notion mostly associated with alternative models of theater production. We may debate this idea of an alternative voice considering in detail the varied forms of theatrical labor and their relations to funding mechanisms. Within the “group theater movement”, there are organizations structured according to traditional principles of cooperative groups, others that operate similarly to commercial theater companies, and even some that resemble family-run companies (Carreira, 2010, p. 1).

The reflections that follow trace the biography of Patrícia Galvão and her contribution to Brazilian theater, particularly group theater. This task also enters the conceptual realm of *herstory*, a term that first appeared in the anthology *Sisterhood is Powerful* (Morgan, 1970). In contrast to the English word history, herstory addresses women’s histories, which have long been rendered invisible in Western historiography.

Pagu, or Patrícia Rehder Galvão (1910–1962), was a writer, poet, translator, illustrator, cartoonist, journalist, communist activist, and political prisoner. She even brought the first soybean seeds to Brazil in a dream of eradicating hunger. She also worked as a theater director and playwright and was crucial in shaping the theater scene of the mid-20th century, especially in promoting amateur group theater. In general terms, she is remembered as the “muse of modernism,” the wife of Oswald de Andrade, and a communist activist. However, her complexity and versatility unfold in a mosaic as broad as the many pseudonyms she adopted: Irman Paula, Mara Lobo, Pat, Pt, Ariel, Patsy, Gin, Solange Sohl, among others.

She was undoubtedly a central figure in the modernist movement, though she did not participate in the *Semana de Arte Moderna* (1922 Modern Art Week). Beyond her unconventional marriage to Oswald de Andrade, her poetry readings, illustrations, and writings were part of the modernist agenda and its publications. Poet Raul Bopp gave the nickname “Pagu” to her; however, after her modernist phase, she preferred to be called by her real name. She was a woman ahead of



her time, revolutionary for her behavior—seen as extravagant and political—and for her defense of minorities and women’s freedom.

Modernism is generally understood as an elite movement linked to a select group of São Paulo intellectuals associated with the emblematic 1922 Modern Art Week. However, with the emergence of the first favelas and Carnival, followed by the boom of print media and photography, modernism reached across social classes and geographic regions, as discussed by Rafael Cardoso in *Modernity in Black and White*, (2022). The collection *Modernismos 1922–2022*, organized by Gênese de Andrade (2022), also supports this perspective, offering a complex cartography of modernism and revealing a network of reflections involving race, class, and gender.

It becomes evident that several issues raised by Brazilian modernism – such as the appreciation of Brazilian art and cultures; democratization; plurality; transparency in social relations; innovation; and new modes of engaging with art and audiences – remain currently relevant. At that time, Brazilian society was emerging from a tradition-bound structure and beginning to chart its own course. A diverse and dynamic Brazil slowly began to distance itself from European models, taking its first steps toward a still ongoing decolonial process.

It is not surprising that Pagu initially became known as “muse of modernism”, given how traditionally the role of muse has been assigned to women. Yet she was far more than that. In 1931, she joined the *Partido Comunista do Brasil* (Brazilian Communist Party PCB). At that point, she embraced a radical transformation – working in factories and living in tenements. In that same year, Vargas’s political police arrested her for helping to organize a dockworkers’ strike in Brazilian city of Santos. It was the first of 23 arrests she would face throughout her life.

In 1933, she published the novel *Industrial park*: a proletarian novel, under the pseudonym Mara Lobo. The book centers on the lives of marginalized working-class women, many of them Black, thus bringing issues of race and gender to the forefront. She also adapted the work into a play. In that same year, she left for a global tour to study socialism, leaving Oswald de Andrade and their son Rudá in Brazil.

Her journey took her through the former Soviet Union, China, and Europe. She was arrested in Paris for her involvement in communism. Upon returning to Brazil, she was repeatedly imprisoned and subjected to torture. Upon her final release in 1940, she broke with the Communist Party and began supporting a Trotskyist vision of socialism. She joined the editorial team of the periodical *Vanguarda Socialista*. While imprisoned, she wrote a number of texts—later published posthumously—many of which hold strong dramaturgical potential, especially *O Homem Subterrâneo* and *Até Onde Chega a Sonda* (2023).

The same year she left prison, she began a relationship with Geraldo Ferraz; they moved in together the following year. From that union – which lasted until the end of her life – their son Geraldo was born. After years of separation from her first son, Rudá, following her breakup with



Oswald, Pagu eventually reunited with both sons and her husband in São Paulo. Around that time, she traveled to China to launch new artistic work.

In 1952, she fell in love with theater and enrolled at the Escola de Arte Dramática de São Paulo (EAD), bringing her theatrical productions to the city of Santos. Aligned with avant-garde theater, she presented her translation of *The Bald Soprano*, by Eugène Ionesco. She also translated and directed *Fando and Lis*, by Fernando Arrabal, in an amateur production that marked the debut of the young actor Plínio Marcos. Widely known as a cultural animator in Santos, where she settled in 1953, she mentored and encouraged emerging local talents. Her main focus was group theater, especially amateur collectives. Her career came to a close ten years later, when she died of lung cancer.

Patrícia brought to the press the great innovators of language, emphasizing the importance of thinkers of thought – authors such as Albert Camus, Antonin Artaud, Arthur Adamov, Arthur Miller, August Strindberg, Eugène Ionesco, Fernando Arrabal, Jean Tardieu, Federico García Lorca, Fernando Pessoa, Jean-Paul Sartre, Louis Vauthier, Luigi Pirandello, Michel de Guelderode, Octavio Paz, Samuel Beckett. The function and role of writers – as a female author at that time – cannot be forgotten or underestimated (Teixeira, 2023, p. 10).

This article focuses on the final decade of her life, when she devoted herself to theater, and analyzes her relevance to the group theater movement of her time. The information presented here draws from multiple sources, including works by and about the author: *Paixão Pagu: autobiografia precoce de Patrícia Galvão* (2005), by Pagu herself, organized by Geraldo Galvão Ferraz; *Pagu: vida-obra* (2014), by Augusto de Campos; *Patrícia Galvão – Pagu 1910–1962 - Até Onde Chega a Sonda: escritos prisionais* (2023), organized by Silvana Jeha; and especially the extensive work of her main biographer, Lúcia Teixeira. The Teixeira volumes consulted include: *Pagu – Patrícia Galvão: livre na imaginação, no espaço e no tempo* (1999); *Viva Pagu: fotobiografia de Patrícia Galvão* (2010), coauthored with Geraldo Galvão Ferraz; *Croquis Pagu: e outros momentos felizes que foram devorados reunidos* (2021); and *Os Cadernos de Pagu: manuscritos inéditos de Patrícia Galvão* (2023). As the researcher notes: “The *Cadernos* also document her first steps as a playwright, in drafts of the unpublished play *Industrial Park: A Proletarian Novel*, written in 1931, the year she was imprisoned in Santos (Teixeira, 2023, p. 10)”. (Teixeira, 2023, p. 10).

Understanding the act of making visible as a decolonial feminist action by strong transformative power, this article brings Patrícia Galvão into focus and formally recognizes her as a woman of the theater. In a country where 20th-century theater historiography remains dominated by narratives of male playwrights, directors, and thinkers, little has been said about the women who dared to write, direct, and promote theater during that time. Especially in South American contexts, rethinking historical processes in the performing arts opens space for new, decolonial artistic landscapes. Pagu is widely remembered for her beauty and rebelliousness but scarcely recognized for her contributions to Brazilian theater.



This article recognizes Patrícia Galvão as a key thinker of contemporary theater, whose work engaged political, social, and affective dimensions. It also challenges the systems of recognition and social intelligibility that mark and exclude certain bodies, compiling evidence that highlights how Pagu's theatrical actions also mobilized identity-based struggles against violence and the logics of neoliberal and neocolonial domination. Her contributions played a pivotal role in shaping Brazilian theater and advancing critical practices in the Global South, grounded in an intersectional perspective that resisted historical processes of de-historicization and enduring structures of biopolitical exploitation.

There is an urgent need to permanently dismantle the mythologized image of Patrícia Galvão—better known as Pagu. At least until her complete works are published, which would allow us to move beyond the popular fixation on her extraordinary biography. Acima de tudo, é essencial envolver-se com a poeta, escritora, jornalista, cronista, tradutora, crítica original e dramaturga. A maioria de seus escritos permanece inédita em forma de livro. Muitos leitores que a encontram por meio de obras disponíveis ou, mais recentemente, pelo portal da Internet, ficam impressionados com a beleza radical e o caminho que ela traçou antes dos 30 anos de idade - e param por aí. No entanto, embora sua personalidade pública possa brilhar sob essa luz, sua atividade principal - escrever - se desdobrou ao longo de sua vida, muitas vezes nas sombras do terror interno e externo (Jeha; Pina, 2023, p. 8).

## 2 The biography of a theater woman

Patrícia Galvão's earliest writings on theater were published in her newspaper columns. Her first journalistic collaborations date back to 1925, when she was just fifteen years old. In 1931, she joined the Brazilian Communist Party and wrote several sections of the newspaper *O Homem do Povo*, (O homem do povo), which she created and edited with Oswald de Andrade. Her most famous column in it was *A Mulher do Povo* (The Woman of the People). Hence, it was in another section: *Palco Tela e Picadeiro – Diretor de Cena: Piolin* ("Stage, Screen, and Ring – Stage Director: Piolin") that she wrote about the theater and cinema of her time, under the pseudonym Irman Paula.

In January 1933, the book *Industrial park: a proletarian novel* was published and came to be recognized as the first Brazilian proletarian novel written by a woman. At the time, Oswald de Andrade financed the edition. She signed the book under the pseudonym Mara Lobo, as required by the Communist Party. In presenting and discussing the manuscripts of this work, Teixeira argued that "her interest in theatrical arts thus began well before her more widely known engagement in the promotion of amateur theater, which would occur in the late 1950s and early 1960s, at the end of her life" (Pagu, 2023, p. 10).

Nearly a century later, *Industrial park: a proletarian novel* (2022) once again drew national attention and continues to be republished in new editions, such as the one used in this article.





In 2022, the centenary of the 1922 Modern Art Week sparked a series of commemorative events around modernism throughout Brazil, and the memory and work of Pagu were widely revisited, due to her ties to the movement and the enduring impact of her legacy. The 2023 edition of the Paraty International Literary Festival (FLIP) paid tribute to her, highlighting the need to “recognize courageous and significant literary marginalities that deserve renewed visibility. Patrícia is regarded as an inspiring example in the fight for literature and freedom of expression in Brazil” (FLIP [...], 2024). As a result, several plays and performances inspired by her life and work were staged, including a theatrical adaptation of *Industrial park: a proletarian novel*, directed by Gilka Verana, in São Paulo (PARQUE [...], 2023).

At the time *Industrial park: a proletarian novel*, was released, Pagu was living in Flamengo with her son Rudá and without Oswald de Andrade. These were years of financial hardship, and both she and her son went hungry and fell ill. Oswald visited them, and the Party suggested that she took an international trip. The couple followed the Party’s recommendation, and she departed, leaving Oswald with Rudá in Brazil. During this journey, she met Louis Aragon, André Breton, and other key figures of the surrealist movement and the Parisian avant-garde theater scene.

In 1939, while imprisoned, she wrote the texts *Microcosmo* and *O homem subterrâneo*, which were published for the first time in 2023 and served as the basis for a contemporary stage production: the solo performance *Pagú – Até Onde Chega a Sonda*, by actress Marta Nowill, directed by Elias Andreato (PAGÚ [...], 2023). Although these prison writings are not conventional plays, according to Jeha & Pina (2023), they possess strong dramaturgical potential, as demonstrated by their transformation into Nowill’s solo performance. Other recent performances about the author’s life and work have also been staged in the past two years: *Pagu: Auto-retratos*, directed by Regina Miranda and performed by Lígia Tourinho (LABAN [...], 2024); *Pagu, do Outro Lado do Muro*, written by Tereza Freire and performed by Thais Aguiar – staged at the Seminário Pagu 30 anos (SEMINÁRIO [...], 2024) and at FLIP 2023 (MONÓLOGO [...], 2023); and *Pedras Soltas*, also featuring Lígia Tourinho, with dramaturgy and direction by Regina Miranda, which premiered at the eighth edition of the *Mostra Mulheres em Cena*, organized by Cia Fragmento de Dança in the Brazilian cities of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Curitiba (2024).

In 1940, Pagu was released from prison and went to live with Geraldo Ferraz. Up to this point, traces of her involvement with the performing arts can be found scattered throughout her work. However, it was in 1952 that her passion for the theater was definitively embraced, when she enrolled in the *Escola de Arte Dramática de São Paulo* (EAD). That same year, as a regular visitor to *Livraria Jaraguá*, she became friends with its owner, Mesquita. She began translating and producing plays in the school context by authors who were then little or completely unknown in Brazil, such as Fernando Arrabal, Eugène Ionesco, and Octavio Paz. Currently, these writers are widely studied and considered essential reading in theater schools across the country.

In addition to discovering new dramatic works, Patrícia Galvão also began writing her own. In 1954, she created short one-act plays as part of her coursework at the EAD. Among them



was *Fuga e variações*, which explored the conflicts of young students struggling with the world, their families, and society. The play delved into existential issues possibilities and impossibilities of freedom as shaped by desire. According to Teixeira, Pagu's creative drive and interest in theater "adds up to this movement of always beginning anew, until she gave herself completely to theatrical making, as a manager, translator, making transgression a creative act" (Galvão, *apud* Teixeira, 2023, p. 10).

In the manuscripts of the play, published in *Os cadernos de Pagu: manuscritos inéditos de Patrícia Galvão* (Teixeira, 2023), her dramaturgical concerns during the process of creating the text can be assessed:

[...]  
Preliminary notes  
Escape is the theatrical flagrant  
Climber girls who must conquer the Mountain.  
Inevitably, the escape is the deal.  
The finding of an island.  
There is no reason to make art.  
Whirlwind of ink.  
Everyone remains in their place, doing their work.  
Madhouse, each one does their own thing.  
A permanent state of escape or solution?  
Crazes – making theater, writing novels.  
To explain a escape, there must be conflict –  
Is there unconsciousness in escape?  
Breaking the frames of false morality: of family, of social, religious, and sentimental solutions –  
The worker depends on the machine.  
The entrepreneur is dragged away by the whirlwind –  
Research – is pulled into laboratories and barracks –  
The artist is crushed.  
Hobby –  
Running on foot is not escape.  
Do not forget the discipline of inspiration –  
Do not forget that theater is action; characters act directly.  
When a man finds nothing, laughter is produced –  
Laughter is a verse of the one who laughs –  
The small posing as the great is suddenly unmasked as small –  
Infinity to zero –  
The movement of the representation must start from the greatest impression to pass to the smallest one –  
Ship Scenery on the scenery with a piece come loose if graduation scenery ship  
Brasília scenery continues the party at the sceneries  
[...]  
Scenery - the ship  
is a scenery for a school play, where the graduation will be celebrated.  
Scenery – the prison ship  
Scenery – the party goes on in the hospice .  
Scenery – the escape –  
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– the ship went away and I was left alone –  
-----  
there are still those who end their lives for love  
an artist who has never seen –





girls should make contact with artists to put an end to this fanaticism.  
(Pagu *apud* Teixeira, 2023, pp. 198–220)

The selected excerpt reveals the beauty and literary quality of her theatrical writing, as well as her constant attention to theatrical inspiration and poetry. It also highlights her particular focus on issues such as the definition of dramatic action, the political and critical dimensions of the work, her persistent call for freedom, and her questioning of the morality and conservative values of her time. All of this is interwoven with dialectical and emancipatory propositions for women.

Committed to her creative becoming, that same year Pagu translated *The Bald Soprano*, by Ionesco. This was for a discipline taught by Décio de Almeida Prado at EAD.

Having read Ionesco, I chose him for the assigned study and, that evening, presented the chart with my notes and Ionesco's text to Décio de Almeida Prado. We had visitors at the EAD – Cacilda Becker and Edgar da Rocha Miranda were there. Décio read the translation and it was a success... My colleagues did not know Ionesco, and Cacilda was delighted. She asked for my translation. It seems she intended to use it. And Luís de Lima came to my house to compare my version of *The Bald Soprano* with his own. We reviewed it together, and he liked most of my solutions. (Pagu, *apud* Furlani & Ferraz, 2010, p. 224)

In 1954, Pagu began working for the newspaper *A Tribuna*, and starting in 1962, she launched a series of essays and columns on literature, arts and culture under the section titled *Artes e Artistas*. She explored themes of playwriting and translated works by major authors, sometimes in collaboration with Geraldo Ferraz. She typically signed these pieces under the pseudonym GIN.

The following year, she began frequenting the *Clube de Arte* in Santos, dedicated to artistic disciplines such as engraving, dance, choreography, painting, drawing, and theater. That moment marked the beginning of the growth of the amateur group theater scene in Santos, and Pagu was appointed to the *Comissão Municipal de Cultura de Santos* (Municipal Commission of Culture of Santos). She arranged a partnership with the EAD to bring a new theatrical production to the city each month. The collaboration began with *The Discovery of the New World*, by Lope de Vega, and included productions such as *Blood Wedding*, featuring graduating student Araci Balabanian, and *The Persians*, directed by Maria José de Carvalho. Young artists who would later become key figures in Brazilian theater passed through Santos—and through Pagu. The Municipal Commission of Culture also organized workshops with prominent figures of the time, including Ziembinski and Miroel da Silveira.

All her engagement with amateur and group theater unfolded alongside her intense production of theatrical writing and criticism. In 1955, she began publishing essays on contemporary world theater in *A Tribuna*, focusing on authors who were not yet widely known. Her first column was on Bertolt Brecht.

Beginning this series, which I hope to publish weekly if conditions allow, I will report on figures and names in contemporary world theater that have not yet entered the most familiar repertoires. The goal is to spark interest in the



prominent voices of modern theater who have not yet reached us, or who have only just arrived. I always speak to amateurs, for I believe they must venture into experimentation and the avant-garde. They are capable of influencing the professional theater that so often runs on routine and commerce. They will have much to gain from these reading notes, from the information gathered here. If they are not published, they will be useless... "It is always necessary to awaken the world's slumber," as one of the great minds of humanity's mental renewal in this century, Sigmund Freud used to say (Pagu *apud* Furlani & Ferraz, 2010, p. 234).

Recognizing that Patrícia Galvão was one of the first people to speak about Brecht in Brazil means giving visibility to facts still unknown to most of current theater studies communities. In a way it is a means of retelling the history of theater in Brazil – a history rarely constructed from diverse perspectives and, in particular, one that has paid little recognition to the contributions made by women.

In line with her mission to introduce new figures in the theater of her time, in 1956, Patrícia Galvão initiated the first activity of the Grupo de Teatro Universitário Santista (TUS), which she coordinated. It consisted of a staged reading in a single act of *The Warrior's Tomb*, by Ibsen, in a translation she co-authored with Pontes de Paula e Lima. That same year, she published translations of Pirandello's texts in *A Tribuna*.

This week marks the 20th anniversary of the death of Luigi Pirandello, one of the greatest playwrights of the century and of all time. The force with which his theatrical work brought to the stage the somber conclusion of humanity's powerlessness in the face of the obscure and arbitrary forces that govern it was awesome. Such forces that collide the walls of the absurd. He is thus the pessimistic pioneer of a theater that places fate at a crossroads, a relativism that explains nothing, immersed in a bitterness bordering on madness. The puppet-man dominates the Pirandellian scene. "I think," concludes Pirandello, "that life is a sad farce! Within us, we do not know how, there is a need to deceive ourselves through the spontaneous creation of a 'reality', one for each of us, never the same for all" (Pagu *apud* Furlani; Ferraz, 2010, p. 234).

Following the chronology of her work, in 1958 she co-directed *Fando and Lis*, by Fernando Arrabal, with Paulo Lara. In that same year, she coordinated the First Festival of Amateur Theater of Santos and the Coastal Region, promoting avant-garde theater in an initiative of the cultural department of *A Tribuna*, in collaboration with the State Theater Commission and the Municipal Culture Commission. Among those attending the meetings of the Grupo de Teatro Amador in Santos were Plínio Marcos and Paschoal Carlos Magno.

On January 25, 1959, Patrícia Galvão mentioned for the first time the then 25-year-old Fernando Arrabal in her article *At the Vanguard of Dramaturgy: The Theater of Arrabal*, published in *A Tribuna*, in which she emphasized that "the function of the press, in a country so impoverished in matters of intellect, is to stimulate culture" (Galvão, *apud* Furlani; Ferraz, 2010, p. 250). She was deeply committed to the dissemination of culture and the promotion of reading habits.

We must collectively read, possess, seek out, exchange, and lend books, not only as an economic strategy, but also with the responsibility of returning what has



been borrowed. The spread of reading is a task that requires everyone's care. This does not mean we cannot go to the cinema, listen to the radio, or watch television. Yet why do we own a radio and a television, but not a bookshelf? A city that values intelligence and aspires to a position must prioritize and cultivate a taste for reading (Pagu, *apud* Teixeira, 2023, p. 294).

Also in that year, she supported the organization of the second national student theater festival in Santos, organized by Paschoal Carlos Magno, who also served on the awards jury. The first edition of the festival had taken place in Recife, Pernambuco. He was responsible for encouraging over 400 theater groups of students across dozens of festivals in various arts. Even at that time, initiatives of this nature depended on the enthusiasm of the organizers and operated with minimal resources.

Among the major revelations of the festival was the theater group from the *Grupo do Centro Acadêmico da Faculdade de Direito da USP*, which later became the Teatro Oficina, presenting a play written and directed by José Celso Martinez Corrêa. Onstage were renowned Brazilian actors and actresses, such as Etty Fraser, Renato Borghi, José Carlos Telles, and Fernando Peixoto. Also present at that festival were Antônio Abugamra, Plínio Marcos, Paulo Lara, José Greghi Filho, and Oscar Von Pfhul. The last three lived in Santos and received support from Patrícia Galvão. Cacilda Becker and her sister, Cleide Yáconis, also participated.

Patrícia Galvão served on the festival jury. Among the award recipients were Etty Fraser (actress), Carlos Miranda (actor), Graça Melo (best professional director), José Celso Martinez Corrêa (national playwright), and Amir Haddad (non-professional director). The avant-garde student theater movement in Santos was taking root, and Patrícia Galvão advocated on many occasions for the construction of the Santos Municipal Theatre, which was inaugurated after her death, on March 10, 1979.

In 1959, she wrote in *A Tribuna* about preparations for Fando and Lis, by Fernando Arrabal, which was co-translated and co-directed with Paulo Lara. The play premiered at the Second Regional Amateur Theater Festival of Santos, presented by the Grupo Experimental de Teatro Infantil (GET), and received four awards and three honorable mentions. In February 1960, Arrabal wrote to Patrícia expressing his joy at the perfect understanding and appropriate interpretation of his work in South America (Furlani; Ferraz, 2010, p. 266). The play went on tour the following year in the state of São Paulo, reaching the capital, Santos once again, and several cities in the interior. In that same period, *Barrela*, an iconic play by Plínio Marcos, also premiered and received honorable mentions at the same festival.

To recognize iconic figures of Brazilian culture early in their careers is evidence of her determination and her instinct for the avant-garde. Only someone who sought out the new and the risky could bring together the *Teatro Experimental do Negro* (Black Experimental Theater) (São Paulo), *Teatro Oficina*, and Plínio Marcos. In 1959, while directing amateur theater in Santos, Patrícia discovered the playwright who was performing as a clown in a circus. Plínio showed her *Barrela* – which she described as “a dialogue as powerful as that of Nelson



Rodrigues” – and there began his career in playwriting. Throughout the decades, Patrícia remained attentive to both local and global culture, identifying those who broke with convention (Jeha; Pina, 2023, p. 42)

In 1960, she published the novel *A Famosa Revista* with Geraldo Ferraz, continued writing for *A Tribuna*, and pursued activities supporting amateur and avant-garde theater. She met Jean-Paul Sartre and Eugène Ionesco in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. She translated and directed *Rappaccini's Daughter*, by Octavio Paz, in Santos. In 1961, she translated *The Tunnel*, by Pär Lagerkvist.

This translation was staged by Filmesp (producer and distributor of spiritist films), among others. Spiritualist in tone, the action takes place in the afterlife, featuring a dialogue between two deceased characters. Lagerkvist, a Nobel Prize winner and considered the successor of August Strindberg, described himself as a “believer without faith – a religious atheist” (Teixeira, 2023, p. 11).

Coincidentally, as if in an occasional and existential prologue to her own death, this was one of her last accomplishments. Patrícia Galvão exited the earthly stage the following year, on December 12, 1962, a victim of lung cancer.

### **3. The importance of Patrícia Galvão for group theater**

Patrícia Galvão was an active figure in the transformation of the theater of her time, contributing to the creation of solid foundations for major questions that still permeate contemporary theater and the performing arts today. Bringing together political, social, and affective dimensions, problematizing inequality and exclusion, and prioritizing freedom, she embraced – through both her body and her work – identity struggles against violence, neoliberalism, colonialism, and gender-based oppression. She played a decisive role in the development of Brazilian theater and that of the Global South, always attuned to a commitment to art, freedom, desire, and dreams.

I oppose the daily refutation that denies the dreamer reason within consciousness. One must dream. Always dream, live with one's nose pointed toward the sky and the air and the expanse, completely detached from Earth and reason, so that something may come true. Perhaps this notion may put me at odds with advocates of the complex, with educational schematics, and with the apologists of revolutionary manuals. Perhaps the speeches of those mystics who adhere to dogmatic materialism may contradict and refute this reactionary assertion, which bargains with the apocryphal terminology of static science. However, it is in the hidden world of phantasmagoria and absurd desires that I find the apotheosis of conclusive causes and accomplished phenomena. For better or worse, it is the dream that sets things in motion. It is the ideal that leads to realization. All progress stems from dreams. All regression stems from dreams (Pagu *apud* Furlani, 2023, p. 304).

The biographical data on Galvão presented in this article allow us to grasp the importance of her actions for Brazilian theater in her time and the impact that theater had on what we now



call contemporary theater, often categorized as group theater. Even though the definition of group theater as we currently understand it had not yet been fully developed when Patrícia Galvão lived and worked, some of its defining characteristics were then already present. Examples are both the sustained collaborative work to develop an aesthetic, poetic, and political project, and the creation of alternative models of theater production that explored various working formats and their relationship to funding mechanisms.

It becomes clear how central she was to decisive actions in the historiography of twentieth-century theater and how much she contributed to the group theater scene of her time. Major artists and significant theater groups of the twentieth century, at some point in their careers, participated in events organized by Pagu and/or found in her a major supporter: Cacilda Becker, Edgar da Rocha Miranda, Plínio Marcos, Zé Celso and Teatro Oficina, Amir Haddad, the Teatro Experimental do Negro, Antônio Abujamra, among others. These facts remain largely invisible in the historiography of Brazilian theater. Her work organizing theater festivals, producing and directing original and avant-garde plays, as well as developing thought around the most innovative currents of her time, was decisive in shaping what we today call the contemporary scene.

As Jeha and Pina (2023) observe, Pagu's trajectory has often been overshadowed by the image of the tragic muse of revolution. This is why it is essential to center attention on her significant work rather than her mythologized persona. "Her fascination with the theater of the absurd led her to translate plays by Ionesco, Arrabal, and Tardieu to express her dissent from the absurdity in which we may find ourselves immersed, and from the lack of meaning in life" (Teixeira, 2023, p. 10). Her deep commitment to theater positioned her at the forefront of major festivals dedicated to amateur and group theater, making her a key figure in the career development of several leading names in twentieth-century theater.

For me, theater bursts through all the horizons of aesthetics, invades all domains in their marvelous depth, admitting no boundaries of subject, time, or place [...].  
For me, theater is the greatest of all literary genres.  
(Pagu *apud* Teixeira, 2023, p. 10)



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**Funding**

Not applicable

**Ethics Committee Approval**

Not applicable

**Competing interests**

No declared conflict of interest

**Research Context**

No declared research context

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**Contribution of authorship (CRediT)**

Not applicable

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**Evaluation Method**

Double-Blind Peer Review

**Editors**

Ricardo Gomes

Priscilla Duarte

Lídia Olinto

**Peer Review History**

Submission date: 28 March 2024

Approval date: 15 September 2024