Brazil — a country known for its racially mixed cultural formations — is slowly coming to recognize and display the vitality of its popular cultures. These are the very cultures that the colonizing mentality, which also played a formative role in the nation, had always opposed.

Mamulengo, or traditional puppet theater, is one example of this long-repressed cultural legacy. Working in popular culture, and with mamulengo in particular, is a pleasure, a profession and a mission inherited from the masters of this tradition. It is also an effective means of holding up a mirror to the public. By identifying with the characters, their stories, their passions and their creative spirit, the spectator discovers the possibility of confronting life with creativity and humor.

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“La noche está estrellada, y tiritan, azules, los astros, a lo lejos”

— Pablo Neruda, “Poema 20”, Veinte poemas de amor y una canción desesperada
A panoramic view of the Milky Way Galaxy from El Paranal, Chile. 
(Photo courtesy of the European Southern Observatory)

“The night is shattered
and the blue stars shiver in the distance”

— Pablo Neruda, “Poem 20,” Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair