

## *Ângelo*

by André Arruda

The dream of any fiction writer is to have the imagination and competence to create a figure as fascinating as that of Angelo Barbosa Monteiro Machado, portrayed in the short documentary “Angelo”, by Mariana Machado (granddaughter of the title character). Presenting himself as a scientist, professor of neuroanatomy and zoology, playwright, writer, environmentalist and entomologist, with a special passion for dragonflies and butterflies. On top of all that, Angelo is extremely charismatic – “Cats have 7 lives. As I only have one, I have to do everything on this one” he says at one point, in a summary of his life and sense of humor.

In fact, this mix of performativity with the protagonist's authenticity can also be understood in the documentary filmmaker's own approach, in which, even though she seems to value her grandfather's personality as an attractive figure, she does not fail to punctuate the aesthetic and narrative choices she had to make in the film itself. For example, the moments in which the director's voice appears narrating the decision to include footage of her grandmother (already deceased) or her frustrated desire to build a final scene of the grandfather surrounded by butterflies show her (welcome) ambition towards this project. Still, exposing the narrative decision-making demonstrates to the viewer the complex process that is to imagetically approach someone as the protagonist, which is still adequate to the work's proposal.

However, there is also a certain insecurity in her approach, when the director leaves no room for the spectator's interpretation, which becomes clear in the sequence in which she arranges her grandfather's objects on the table. By itself, this moment is already fascinating due to the apparent randomness of the objects, in a perfect summary of the protagonist's personality, but the voice over exposing the reasons for the choice of each item sounds unnecessary, weakening precisely the most important element of those objects, since (again) the apparent randomness is the clear materialization of their care and affection over a lifetime.

But this becomes a small sin compared to the sensitive and expressive gaze that the director has towards Angelo, giving space for him to show affection, intelligence, vanity and authenticity in front of the camera. This is not just a work of fascination for a grandfather, but for an irreverent old man who is magnetic, who talks passionately about insects, says romantic verses or even sings unexpectedly in his bathtub.

Composed of several amusing moments in which the protagonist tells his stories and accomplishments, the project benefits not only from the expressive and almost caricatured face of the individual, but even from Angelo's not always understandable speech, since we feel extreme satisfaction in each story or joke that we can get from the character. As a result, we leave this documentary with a fresh insight into how caring and deep passion for life can be expressed in different ways and in different materials, building rich legacies and connections with our loved ones.

Were he a fictional character, Angelo Machado would already be charming, the fact that this is a portrait of a real figure makes that elderly person's worldview even more contagious - and transforms the documentary itself into another materialization of

affection centred on that figure. And if there's something that Angelo and Mariana Machado have in common, it's the ability to demonstrate how passionate and three-dimensional affection can be.