

How to enter the armature manufacturing market?

Exploring the Tools, Materials, and Innovations Behind Professional Armature Production

Exclusive interview with Antonio Oliveira, Armaturist

By Iran Zehn Team

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Q1. Please introduce yourself and explain a little about your collection.

My name is Antônio, I'm from Nova Lima, Brazil. I am a Technician in Industrial Mechanics and I studied Animation Cinema at UFMG (Federal University of Minas Gerais). I currently work producing structures for stop motion animation such as armatures, rigs and winder rigs, I own Meo Mundo Studio which is in my residence.

Q2. How did you become interested in designing and making armature?

During the Stop motion courses at the University, we would have to develop a character project to be animated. I had already seen an armature in an Aardman book, inspired by that picture of the armature, I started designing one. Initially it was with a lot of improvised material, however, as I already had experience with industrial mechanics, I just applied that knowledge.

Q3. When did you start designing and manufacturing armature professionally?

During university, I developed the armature project with the help of professors. As soon as I left the University, I invested in professional equipment, mainly the mechanical lathe and the milling machine. I started to publicize the manufacturing process on social networks, from there, the interest of animation professionals and students in armatures began to emerge.

Q4. Name some projects in which you have collaborated.

I am currently producing rigs and armature for the short film "Wild Jack" which is a 3D, 3D and stop motion animation, I have produced armature for Cyborg and the robot.

I'm producing armatures for a project about stories that take place in the interior of Brazil. I also produced rigs for stop motion animated music clips "Rapdão" by Renan Inquérito and

"Arco Iris" by Tac Tacs.

In addition, I have several requests from students and other animation professionals.

Q5. Which countries do you send armature now?

At the present time, I'm only selling to Brazil, I've already received requests from people from some countries in South America, However, I'm still checking some bureaucratic issues to sell to other countries. My intention is to sell outside Brazil.

Q6. How important is creativity in the design and manufacture of armature?

All the while, the job of crafting armatures requires you to be creative. The idea of the armature is to faithfully imitate the skeleton of the character, but we have the limitation of machines and materials, it is at this moment that the creativity of the armaturist is required. Today, the internet is a great ally, because it is a great source of consultation and knowledge exchange, we have a large community of people who manufacture armature and most are always available to exchange knowledge.

Q7. What material do you use to make the armatures?

For the manufacture of armatures, professional equipment is required, such as a lathe, milling machine, silver soldering torch and a variety of hand tools. In my case, as my workspace is small, the machines I use are small. The materials that make up the armatures are stainless steel and brass, which are materials that do not oxidize and have good durability and quality.

Q8. What is the key point in the design and manufacture of the armature?

In my point of view, the key point for the fabrication of the armature is that it is the closest to the anatomy of the character's skeleton and that it allows the animator to adjust the limbs so that the animation character has a fluidity in the movements.

Q9. Have you made a stop motion project yourself?

Currently, I'm focused on producing armatures. I do have personal projects. In the future, in parallel with production, I intend to develop the project. At this point, it's impossible.

Q10. What project are you currently working on?

I'm working on the production of armatures and rigs for a project about a tale from the interior of Brazil and we're going back with the recordings of "Wild Jack". There are also several small projects where production of armatures has been commissioned.

Q11. As a final word, state a point if you have any.

I'm very happy to see how much stop motion is featured in animations. For instance, we have Netflix's investments in this technique and also with the Oscar for best animation for Del Toro's Pinocchio. I hope this stop motion phase lasts for a long time. I also appreciate the opportunity to talk a little about my work here, and I wish every success to everyone and I am available, always.