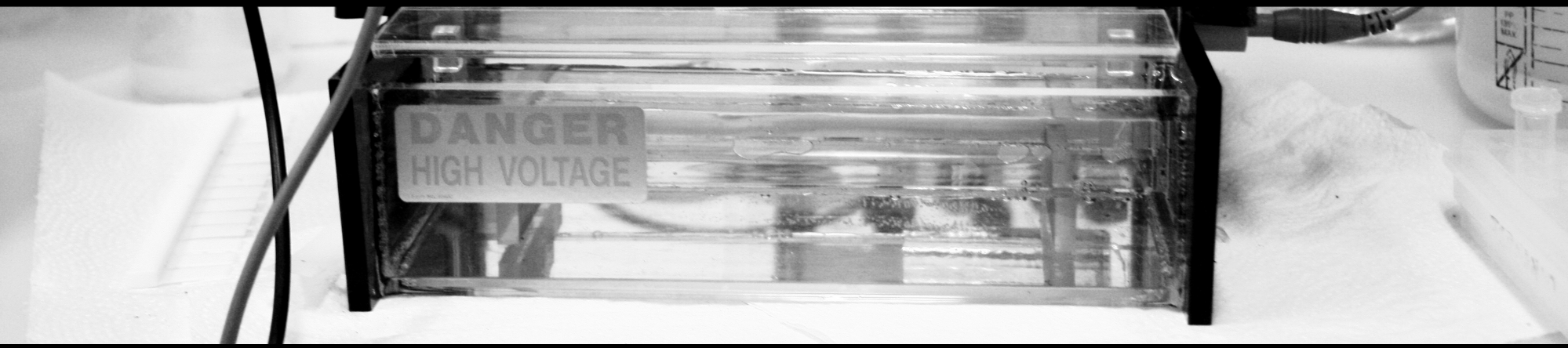
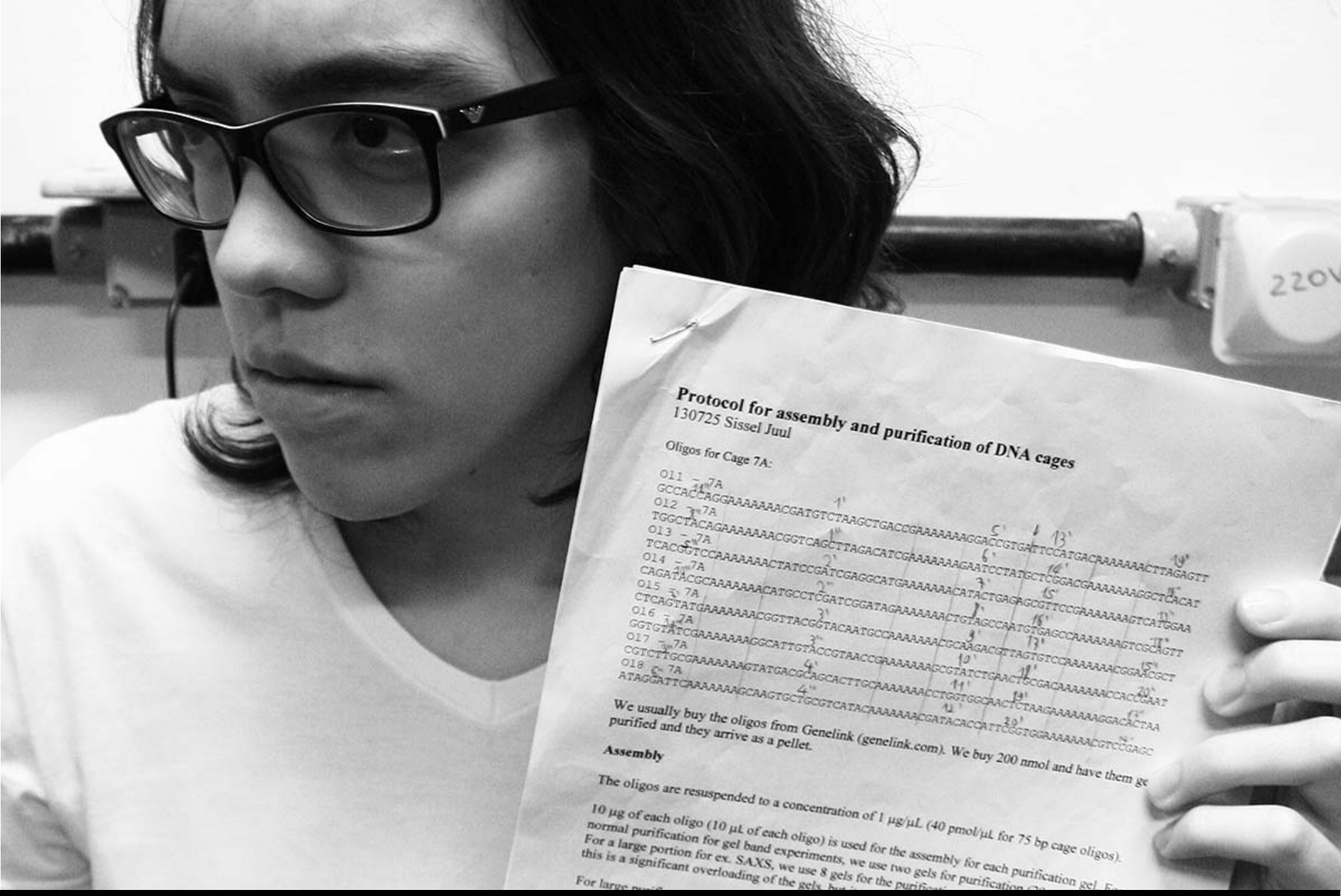
One billionth of a meter



It was my first time there. Nothing changing color or exploding,
just a container full of rusty wire and clips with a clear gel.

And a vertical line, more chubby in some spots,
of an almost transparent pink.

Nicolli explained: this was the electrophoresis and the pink line
was our DNA sample, "running" on the gel from the top down.
The lighter samples go faster to the base,
while the heavier ones park in the middle of the road.



So we could see if we had managed to build our DNA nanocage,
or rather see if a spot appeared on a specific point of
the gel that indicated that yes, in that sample there was something
with a molecular weight close to what the nanocage would have.

We should just wait.

An hour and a half, waiting.

That day it went wrong, apparently the sample did not even enter the gel.
We performed this same procedure 7 more times until we got a good result.

How to see the invisible? In Molecular Biology,
it is through the marks that the experience leaves.
That sounded familiar to me, an anthropologist.

Essay done in October 2015 together with some of the 10 undergraduate students from USP who participated in the BIOMOD international biomolecular design competition. The group was the first South American to participate and had students from chemistry, physics, bimoedial sciences, design, social sciences and mathematics.