

Press reviews

Libération

Some of them come from Africa wearing flimsy clothing and sandals, others come from Eastern Europe or the Balkans, with scarves on their heads, faces weather-beaten by the sun. Two by two, they face each other and present shoeboxes, containing lying within relics from their past lives. A crumpled road map, amulets, a suspender belt, a plaque engraved with an unknown inscription, stones, sand, a book. Each of them in turn, one after the other, speaks in a foreign language about his or her possession and existence. The person listening, seated opposite, agrees, smiles or goes up in arms, without really understanding what is being said. The audience wanders about, coming up against different dialects, trying to decipher what is being played out.

Pushing the archetypes of poverty to the furthest heights of realism (chipped nail polish, cheap clothes, obscure dialects), these meetings stand the observer face to face with incomprehension and chaos: being incapable of picking up on exactly what is being played out before his eyes, he ambles from one table to the next, and in turn, is thrown into the exodus himself. **Even the confines of theatre lose all of their bearings. Thanks to these duos, which appear to the audience like transient sculptures, Kumulus manages to dissolve the stage and break it up into a sea of little islands. The show surrenders all forms of narration to adopt instead a language in flux.**

Mouvement

Portrait of Exodus (A Europe of Migrants?)

Box meetings, by the Kumulus theatre company open with a disaster scenario: "You are being evicted from your homes. You have five minutes to gather up your personal belongings... everything must fit into a shoebox." The story unfolds in the form of a series of face-to-face meetings between two actors, a mini theatre of objects acted out on ordinary tables.

These tales were initially used as the material to create [*End\(s\)less Route*](#) in 2003, and then later went on to provide inspiration for *Box meetings*, which are conceived to be a moment in which to meet and talk, interaction between generations and communities. Barthélemy Bompard is not making reference to any particular conflict: the woes of the world are all mixed in together, and all seem to deserve getting a hearing, in made-up languages and in mute narratives, all of them universally understandable.

These "story boxes" go on a voyage from one country to another: in an era where communication takes place in real time, is this a way of holding off time and turning it into human time?

VI festival international (Spain)

Box Meetings opens up a space in which to address the issue of self, and to meet others, which according to the company's director Barthélemy Bompard « is the only way in which the world can function a bit better. »

The Nation (Sri Lanka)

The fishing village of Dodanduwa has never been as noisy as it was at the finale of last week's innovative performance of *Box Meetings* by internationally renowned French theatre company; Kumulus. The final performance on Thursday received not only a stand up ovation from the packed audience, but also enthusiastic cheers and whistles.

Box Meetings was created from the real experiences of its French and Sri Lankan cast and examined the notion of dreams and aspirations while also exploring fundamental questions about life. Kumulus Artistic Director, Barthélemy Bompard said, "It was such a memorable experience, working with the people of Dodanduwa. To have achieved so much in such a short time was amazing, and it was satisfying to see the end result, with everyone putting in so much effort and energy into the show."

Dundee Courier and Avertiser (Scotland)

As part of Big in falkirk 2005, Scotland's National Street Art festival, an opportunity as arisen for volunteers to take part to the UK premiere of a performance by French company Kumulus.

One of France's most renowned street arts organisations, Kumulus examine social, political, economic and racial problems for inspiration. They have a fresh and unique approach to producing innovative work and are keen to work with interested individuals of any age.

La Provence

Directed by Barthélemy Bompard, the company decided a few years back to go travelling across countries in exile, and above all across Europe, collecting up the tales of peoples' experiences along the way, whether they be Serbian, Albanian, Macedonian, Turkish **And therein lay the seeds of a form of theatre that is both profoundly simple and human, where it is no longer necessary to speak the same language in order to be understood.** Stories are revealed around the table by means of basic sentimental essentials, and a form of dialogue sparks off quite naturally, almost by itself, centered on the theme of fleeing in exile. This appetite for sharing is what has brought the company to offer today a participative form of theatre. An opportunity to grab...