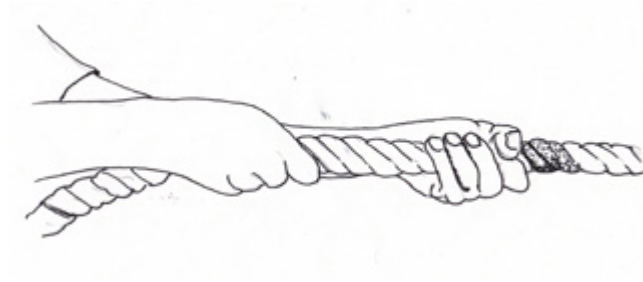


***kumululus***  
company

presents



« There is a secret scroll buried deep within us called fragility.  
And that fragility is now catching up with all of us today»  
Wajdi Mouawad



**Production written and directed by**  
Barthélemy Bompard

**Production pack written by**  
Barthélemy Bompard, Judith Thiébaud

**Production pack graphic design**  
Charlotte Grange

**Production coordination contact**  
Marjolaine Lopez

**DAYTIME** PERFORMANCE

**PERFORMANCE DURATION :** About 75 mn

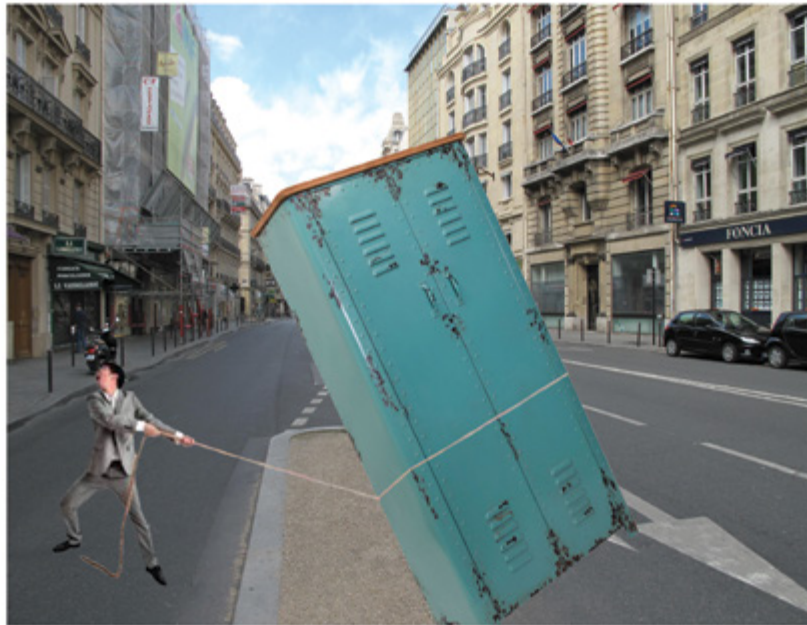


## Director's note :

We made it through the 2000s in a stunned state of dismay.

Some people predicted there would be an apocalypse. Others said it would mark the end of humanity.

But it is vital we believe that human beings forever continue to organize themselves and evolve, weathering the storms of life, however hard.



20 years down the line, and **once again the street is awakening**, coming alive, shouting, moving about and becoming restless, rising up and rebelling against the pervading state of chaos so as not to surrender to all the violence in the world.

The street is re-appropriating itself again in various forms, as people pour back outside into public spaces staging ephemeral events and meetings. It unites the charms that lie in our differences, stretches the boundaries of colour and challenges our imagination by inviting the young, the old and utopians from all walks of life to once again take possession of this area that has been held hostage for too long due to security rules and concerns.

Divide and rule, and the notion of the individual as a single entity no longer holds sway, as people have had enough of seeing their freedom tied up with their purchasing power.

People today want meaning, to act together as a group, to have rituals and meet others.

They no longer want a world that neglects its own priorities.

From north to south, east to west, **people are taking to the streets** to question society and invent alternative solutions together.

What is so wonderful about these floods of crowds that regularly spill into the streets is their wealth of ideas and inventiveness, despite the violence of the backlash.

Slogans and multi-faceted disguises and costumes in all shapes and forms, revolutionary songs, engaging and politically-engaged dance routines, conferences voiced with wild gesticulations, giant objects like nurse's cotton buds and extraordinary huts sprouting up on roundabouts: these are just some of the rich display of examples which prove that creativity lies at the heart of revolt, and vice versa.

Since the beginning of time, mankind has always needed to join forces as a group to dream up and create something good and beautiful.

To say we are here, we are alive, in the here and now.

Through our new production « *Fragile* », we want to salute all those men and women across the world who are bravely giving meaning back to our public spaces.

As with all Kumulus works, we are setting ourselves the challenge of experimenting with a theatrical form that we have never used before



« *Fragile* » will take the format of a **strolling musical, sound, dance and visual procession**, which winds its way across the town or city like a loud artistic cry piercing through the streets. And along the way, we'll be bringing on board a few 'assistant' of the audience, planted in the crowd, who are 'in on the secret' to take part.



# The Show :

The show will not look like a street demonstration as such, but rather simply model itself on the protest march as an act of collective grievance, while paying tribute to the emotional intensity that emanates from such demos through simple, direct actions.

The procession will be broken down into 4 distinct phases: :

***6 characters will leave from 6 different starting points in the town or city, to then converge at one same meeting point.***

**Phase 1** - The 6 characters each start off alone, wandering down the street, dragging behind them a selection of their own everyday objects, all of them as bizarre as they are loud, clanking along the ground.

They walk along in a headstrong fashion. When they stop to take a pause, you get to see snippets of their lives, and a sense of their immense loneliness. They look around at the world for an instant, stroke the hand of a member of the audience, exchange a glance, show an emotion, utter a small part of their interior monologue, and then they are off again, letting their loud cry rip through the streets.

**Phase 2 :** The 6 characters all converge on the same wide boulevard, trailing in their wake an audience of people who have been following them, and there they each discover the other 5 characters who resemble them, and yet more crowds of audience.

The '*assistants*' planted in the audience gradually reveal themselves through a series of little actions and gestures.

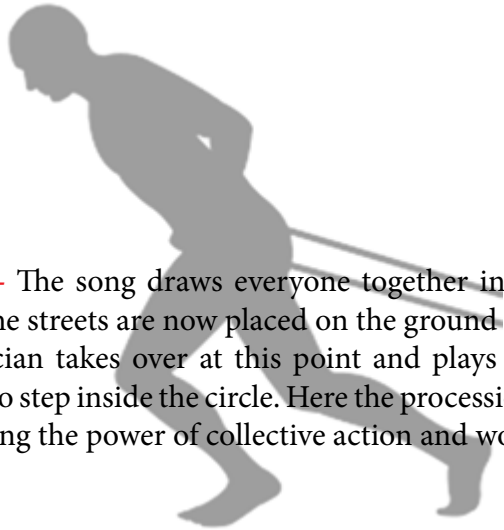
An electroacoustic musician moves around amongst the actors, recording and amplifying the sounds they make via microsensors that are placed on the characters' objects and costumes.



**Phase 3** - The procession then reaches a halt in a central open space. At this point the six characters gradually join together as one to form a little group, and this transition is accompanied by all the sounds previously recorded by the musician, which are played back over an amplifier, progressively becoming louder and louder. The ‘*assistants*’ planted in the audience then take out their mobile phones and start playing on loudspeaker a set of pre-recorded sounds, which, as if by magic, blend perfectly with the din of noise created from the clanking objects dragged along the ground, the samples created by the musician and the actors’ voices. The bodies also join in, punctuating the clamour with everyday gestures to accompany the symphony of sounds.

Finally, the voices of the actors and ‘*assistants*’ planted members of the audience chime in in harmony with the overall soundtrack filling the air.

Gradually, a forceful song begins to emerge from the cacophony, bringing everyone together as one in its melody.



**Phase 4** - The song draws everyone together in the centre of the space. The objects previously dragged through the streets are now placed on the ground to form a giant circle.

The musician takes over at this point and plays a soundtrack over a speaker, while the actors invite the audience to step inside the circle. Here the procession metamorphoses into a type of ritual of our own making, accentuating the power of collective action and working as a group.





**« *Fragile* » is a work about our own humanity.**

**It is about ordinary men and women dragging behind them a world in flames, and rising like the Phoenix, they are driven by a fierce hope that something better will be born from its ashes.**



## Active Involvement :

We will invite the audience not only to follow us through the streets, but also take part in this artistic demonstration, as the show comes to a head with a ritual which encourages everyone to join in and get involved.

To help achieve this effect, in advance we will invite 6 to 12 members of the audience to play an active role as '*assistants*,' and we will help them prepare their involvement during a two-day workshop held prior to the performance. During this preparation phase they will work with us as actors, they will learn the songs and a dance routine, and therefore be equipped to reinforce the images, gestures and actions that we aim to gradually convey at different stages throughout the performance.

They will also help us encourage other audience members to join in the ritual at the end by suggesting very simple actions and gestures. Here are a few examples to illustrate, though it is not a complete list because at this stage we prefer not to define all of the actions in advance: a silent dance, closing your eyes to get a glimpse of the world through your ears ....

All of these elements will be devised during the artist residency, and will naturally evolve as the production tours and matures. Nothing is fixed in stone. We want to give ourselves the possibility to test out ideas on the '*planted*' audience members during the two-day artist residency so that each performance is the unique culmination of the work developed and shared beforehand. In addition, we want to give ourselves the freedom to be inspired by world events, keeping in step with current affairs, and make our collective response as relevant as possible to the changing times.

To inspire the audience to get involved we also want to use social media, given that it is a highly effective tool to organize spontaneous meetings, such as flash mobs or unplanned demonstrations.

Why not even use social media to spread a poetic rumour about the town or city?

This way, we can once again rely on the *'planted audience members'* to spread the invitation to their friends via Facebook or Instagram, encouraging them to take part in a simple event at a given time during the performance.





# The acting approach :

The characters in «*Fragile*» are just like demonstrators: they are first and foremost citizens, taking to the streets, reappropriating public spaces across villages, towns and cities, and speaking out.

You can tell that they are slightly out of sync with reality once they begin to move: their gestures are slow, deliberate and spread out, as if stretching out a bouquet of their own emotions.

The piece will explore the notion of solitude, through a plain and simple dramatic device in which the actors get carried away, swept along from laughter to tears, and thereby mirroring the state of stupor into which society as a whole is pushing us.

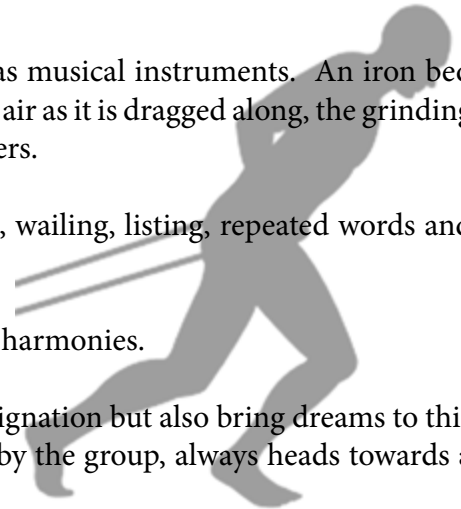
The actors' performance will also be built on the role of the sound:

-the sound of familiar, everyday objects that the characters will use as musical instruments. An iron bed being scraped along the ground, the chaotic clang of a guitar filling the air as it is dragged along, the grinding squeak of a set of shelves being dragged along too behind the characters.

-the sound of the characters' interior monologues: a mix of scansion, wailing, listing, repeated words and phrases ...

-the sound of the group's voice performance: poetry, speeches, songs, harmonies.

They will come to observe, to take stock, to voice our own cries of indignation but also bring dreams to this corner of humanity, which when pushed along by a collective drive, by the group, always heads towards a better place.





## The music :

«*Fragile*» will take the form of a **strolling musical, sound, dance and visual procession**, winding its way through towns and cities like a loud artistic cry piercing through the streets.

Music will serve as the backbone to this new work. Once again, Kumulus will be calling upon the musical talents of Léo Plastaga, the musician and composer behind «*NonDeDieu*». Trained in electroacoustic and electronic music, for this production he will attach simple microphones to the objects being dragged along by the cast.

Once the procession has arrived in the square, the sound signals picked up by the microphones will be processed via a laptop using software that plays with the sounds.

The final, transformed layer of sound will be played live through speakers on a portable audio system. Its volume level will balance that of the noise of the objects being dragged along the ground, as well as the voices of the actors and audience participants also taking an active role as 'assistants', so that its intensity follows the actors' emotions as closely as possible.

In addition, before the production, a sound piece will be composed on the theme of 'the scream', throughout time, and in all its different forms.

Starting off as a low and discreet murmur in the background, the sound will gradually swell to fill the space as the main melody while the actors offload their objects and form a group in the middle of the square.

The sound continues throughout, up until the final tableau, prompting the audience to join in and dance.



## Choreographic work :

For this new creation, we'll be pushing the role of dance further than usual.

Obviously, we won't be working with professional dancers, but in the same vein as Pina Bausch, we will use the style of 'dance theatre' so that the actors can truly embody every move to the full.

***“The way in which Pina Bausch works is now famous. Very early on in her career, the great German artist adopted a choreographic approach rarely seen at the time, which involved asking her dancers questions. By probing her performers as way of drawing out the raw material with which to shape the theme for a new work, Pina Bausch seems to have delved deep to the innermost reaches of human behaviour. By gleaning little bundles of detail of daily life and spreading them out on stage, she has managed to shed light on those layers hidden buried inside all of us, and expose under the spotlight our relationship with ourselves and the world.”*** Mylène Joly

Every so often, the characters will stop still in their tracks, alone, and then go through passages of fear, loss, being reunited again, helping each other, alertness, resistance, love, longing, escape, compassion, rebellion, desire, doubt ...

This journey through the realm of feelings will be carried through the actors' performance, but also by using the choreographic material as an emotional vector.

The aim is to explore the notion of gesture as a powerful form of release, and also explore the vehicle of trance through repeated gestures and polyrhythm.



## The costumes :

The costumes will be designed and created by Marie-Cécile Winling. The cast will be wearing everyday clothes. However, what will make the actors stand out from the audience will mainly be their posture and attitude, and the way in which they look out at the town or city around them.



***Throughout history, and especially today as our planet goes through a health crisis on a scale never seen before, a crisis that has forced people to live at a distance from one another, we can clearly see to what degree human beings are built on herd instinct and need contact and warmth from each other.***

***This is the reason why we would like to use our new production as a platform to let emotions speak out again. To cry out loud and clear that humans are intrinsically good when they are fragile.***

***We want to show that our primary need is much more than just buying and consuming : our primary need is each other, seeing each other's faces, smiles and tears.***





# Arts promotion and financial aid

Atelier 231 | C.N.A.R.E.P. in Sotteville-lès-Rouen

Les Ateliers Frappaz | C.N.A.R.E.P. in Villeurbanne

Le Fourneau | C.N.A.R.E.P. in Brittany

Le Moulin Fondu | C.N.A.R.E.P. in Île-de-France

French ministry of culture

Le Parapluie | International Center of artistic création in Aurillac

Pronomade(s) in Haute Garonne | C.N.A.R.E.P.

Sur le Pont | C.N.A.R.E.P. in Nouvelle Aquitaine

L'Usine | C.N.A.R.E.P. in Tournefeuille/Toulouse Métropole

Eclat(s) de rue | City of Caen

...and more to come



# Residency

29th November - 13 December 2021 - Pronomade(s) in Haute Garonne | C.N.A.R.E.P.

30th January - 11 February 2022 - Atelier 231 | C.N.A.R.E.P. in Sotteville-lès-Rouen

07th - 20th March 2022 - Sur le Pont | C.N.A.R.E.P. in Nouvelle Aquitaine

11th - 24th April 2022 - Le Fourneau | C.N.A.R.E.P. in Brittany

06th - 18th May 2022 - L'Usine | C.N.A.R.E.P. in Tournefeuille/Toulouse Métropole





compagnie  
**kumulus**

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**administration, touring, production**  
Vinciane Dofny, Charlotte Grange & Marjolaine Lopez

The Kumulus Theatre Company is subsidised by the French Ministry of Culture / D.R.A.C.  
(French Regional Cultural Affairs Authority), and works with the support of the Auvergne Rhône-  
Alpes Region and the Drôme Department.

