



Winner of SACD's 2019 'Auteurs d'Espaces' arts funding scheme for street theatre in public spaces

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

NonDeDieu



A SHOW BY BARTHÉLEMY BOMPARD

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WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF JUDITH THIÉBAUT

CREATED AND PERFORMED BY
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SCENIC DESIGN & BUILDING
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SUITABLE FROM THE AGE OF 8 YEARS OLD

PERFORMANCE DURATION 75 MN

MAXIMUM AUDIENCE CAPACITY

800 PERSONNES

DAYTIME PERFORMANCE

NO FRENCH SPEAKING

AVAILABLE FOR **INTERNATIONAL TOURING**

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NonDeDieu



Or the fine line drawn between life and theatre...

A old man is but a young person, sitting there, still full of life, cries...and challenges



With their bodies ravaged by time, a theatre director and 'his' actors rise to the challenge of putting on a circus show. Bursting with life and shaking up the everyday, the actors on stage are prepared to juggle, even in crutches, and lay themselves bare to the audience. Yet behind the curtain, they come face to face with their habits, and each other's excesses.

That is all there is left to do: carry it away and let go!

They collect together the remains of the theatre company's thirty-year history: scenery, props, costumes, musical instruments and old actors, draw a circle on the ground to mark out the circus ring, set up a few rows of seats around the edge, and they are ready to start the show!

With their bodies ravaged by years of living as street performers, their weary joints worn away from all that loading and unloading of trucks and all those beers with fellow cast and crew, they invent unusual, moving and funny acts that push the boundaries, walk on a knife-edge and take your breath away, as you keep your eyes fixed on the performer who might fall at any second without a safety net.

What is there left to say when it feels like most of your professional, romantic and family life now lies behind you? How can you speak out to others when your memory starts fading, when your words come tumbling out in a muddle, and your elocution as well as joints start getting rusty and stiff?

The director has made a deliberate choice to show both sides of the world of theatre at the same time, both onstage and offstage, what is on 'show', and what is in the wings.

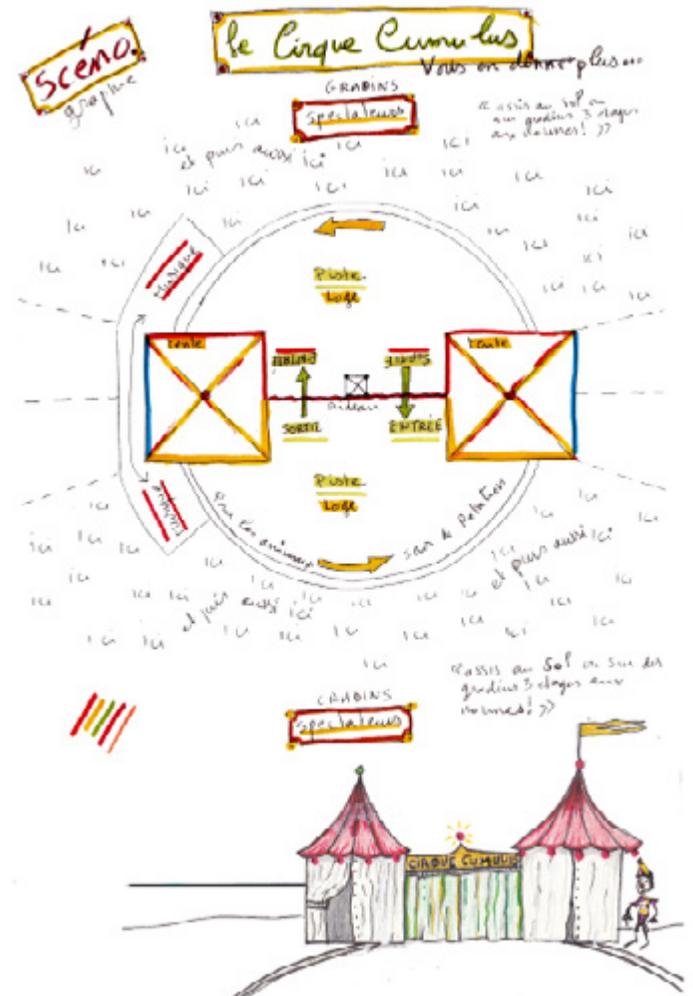
The curtain represents the gateway from one state to the other, the link connecting the private world to persona and performance.

In front of the curtain:

on stage it's a series of different acts, of challenges, a spectacle of total nonsense and creative acts related to the passing of time, face-to-face interplay and physical performance. The artists will all be confronted by their own physical and psychological frailties.

Behind the curtain:

in the dressing rooms you can see the private, "hidden" side – all the preparations for the show behind the scenes, stage nerves, aging bodies caught off guard beneath the costumes, doubt... and all the different emotions and interaction between these men and women.



All of these acts give the audience a peek into what goes on in the wings, the gritty underside of the circus ring with all its dishonesty and frustration, as well as all its courage to face old age with strength and dignity.

In other words... An overflowing energy that purges sadness, and cocks a snook at life.

«Thirty years ago a large number of street theatre companies were set up by crazy utopians who wanted to merge the sharing of popular mainstream and art. Now in 2018, these «same» artists are looking back and forth between the past behind, and the future ahead.

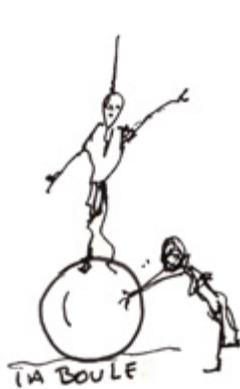
Some have decided to stop, others are still unsure... Towards what kind of future can they push their dreams now?

I set up the Kumulus theatre company in the 1980s.

For the last 30 years, i lead my troupe through thick and thin, always anchored in the idea of being a team devoted to street theatre, that builds every project together.

Today i want to stage a show that projects an image of his own inner qualms and doubts to a certain degree, blending all that goes hand in hand with the great adventure that is uncertainty. I want to use circus as a means of exploring this theme, both as a distancing technique but also as a way of bringing out the basic emotions of laughter, fear and suspense to the best effect, to talk about life without resorting to words.

Barthélemy Bompard



Written in 2019, *MondeDieu* has been performed at the following festivals ...

IN FRANCE

Festival Rencontres d'Ici et d'Ailleurs | Le Moulin Fondu C.N.A.R.E.P. Garges-lès-Gonesse (95)
Festival Friction(s) | Château rouge, subsidised performance space . Annemasse (74)
Festival Furies | le Palc. Châlons-en-Champagne (51)
Festival Les Invites | les Ateliers Frappaz C.N.A.R.E.P. Villeurbanne (69)
Festival de Chalon dans la Rue | C.N.A.R.E.P., Chalon-sur-Saône (71)
Festival Spectacles de Grands chemins en Haute Ariège | Ax Animation . Ax-les-thermes (09)
Festival International de Théâtre de rue | Association Eclat . Aurillac (15)
Festival des Vendanges | Suresnes (92)
Festival Les Echappées Belles | Alençon (61)
Temps Fort de Quelque's P'Arts | CNAREP - Boulieu-lès-Annonay (07)
Festival La Rue est à Amiens | Cirque Jules Verne - Pôle National Cirque et Arts de la Rue (80)
Festival Saint-Amand fait son intéressant | Saint-Amand de Coly (24)
Festival Les Bruits du Monde | Kumulus . Venterol (26)
Saison des arts de la rue | Art'R. Paris (75)
Festival Viva Cité | Atelier 231 C.N.A.R.E.P. Sotteville-lès-Rouen (76)
Festival Le Chaînon Manquant | Laval (53)



RESIDENCY

16th - 19th December 2018 and 3rd - 16th May 2019 - Atelier 231 | C.N.A.R. E.P. at Sotteville-lès-Rouen
8th - 20th January 2019 -Le Moulin Fondu | C.N.A.R.E.P. at Garges-lès-Gonesse
29th January - 8th February 2019 - Le Boulon | C.N.A.R.E.P.at Vieux-Condé
8th - 27th March 2019 - Le Parapluie | International Center of Artistic Creation at Aurillac
15th - 20th April 2019 | MJC Berlioz at Pau





EXTRACTS FROM FRENCH PRESS REVIEWS

TÉLÉRAMA - EMMANUELLE BOUCHEZ

Kumulus theatre company, founded in the 1980s and one of the pioneers of French street theatre, has now created the Cumulus (without a K) circus. Behind the name lies a farce, something audiences are not used seeing in Kumulus' body of work. A far cry from the usually raw and frank approach of its productions, condemning the shortcomings of contemporary society, here it adopts a travelling circus aesthetic to pay vibrant and derisory tribute to the life of performing artists. And more precisely, to those having a final go round the circus ring. In *Gardenia*, the Belgian choreographer Alain Platel delivered a highly sculpted work portraying former transvestite performers. Here however, director Barthélemy Bompard and his acolytes take a direct approach, acceptingly showing "the old remains" (of talent or charm) in their wobbly gestures. It's a simple concept: the circus ring is cut in two by a curtain and dressing rooms, and surrounded by the audience, also split in two, with each side getting to see the 'heads and tails' of the show, without having to move[...] The acts keeps coming, one after another. An acrobat girl tries to save her mother, a former leading man appears as Richard III in a wheelchair ...[...] At the last Chalon dans la rue street theatre festival, Kumulus deftly made the transition into Cumulus. And it was no easy task.

LA MONTAGNE - OLIVIER CEYRAC WHAT A GOD-NOT-DAM GOOD PERFORMANCE!

NonDeDieu is a two-in-one show, with an extraordinary performance put in by the performers of the Kumulus theatre company! There are two stage areas set up. The audience sits either facing the dressing rooms, or facing the stage. Because essentially the production has no wings: it is played out simultaneously on both sides of the red curtain of this whimsical circus.

On one side you see a bunch of funny chaps trying to get prepared and focus before going on stage for this performance without any real dialogue, and you get to understand that the mood of the troupe behind the curtain impacts the quality of the portrayal out on stage. So you can catch the eye of the grotesque and lecherous old knife thrower who is past his prime. And you laugh as you watch the old diva descend into the abyss as she turns desperately to her champagne bottle for strength rather than thinking about her performance to come. But above all you are moved by the actress that nobody wants, who is something of an outcast to the troupe, never managing to fit in, either on stage or even less so behind the scenes. *NondeDieu* offers a picture of what happens on and off stage. The audience is omniscient and made aware of the type of questions that performers ask themselves before going out and starting the show. And it is wonderfully done.



LE JOURNAL DE LA RUE - MÉRIEM SOUISSI

Bonkers and pumped up (and we're not just talking abs here), the Kumulus performers show the unshowable: varicose veins, cellulite, addictions and hopes all escape in *NonDeDieu* [...]

De Gaulle once said that old age is a shipwreck, but then he never saw the Kumulus theatre company with its performers throw themselves into this highly original circus show. Admittedly, there is a modest bit of acrobatics, but this production is mostly a pretext to sketch out a tight bunch of characters into a portrait gallery of men and women who love, hate and berate each other, but who are all united by one concern - performing. [...] It's nutty, ramshackle, joyful and caustic - and also quite tender, but not too much.



JOURNAL DES RENCONTRES D'ICI ET D'AILLEURS

PÉRINE FAIVRE - CIE LES ARTS OSEURS EDITOR IN 2019

Ladies and gentlemen, come on in!

Take your seats around the Kumulus circus ring, with a warm welcome from the ring-mistress!

Choose a seat and enjoy the show.

Soon, before your very eyes, you will be dumbstruck by clowns, tightrope walkers and tamers!

We will be laying on for you a display of breathtaking acts, unique feats and unthinkable tricks,... sparkle and entertainment!

But... if you look closely, you will see that the faded clowns are really going for broke to steal a smile from the audience.

Welcome to the one and only Cumulus Circus!

Between the ring and the wings, you will see performers who are much too old to be working or consumers, and who have nothing left to lose.

They tell their ludicrous stories and share the utopian dreams they still cling to, presenting their old age with courage and dignity.

With this new show, Barthélemy Bompard gives us an insight into the existence of a theatre troupe after 30 years on tour, presenting a life force for performers who are not even dead, **non de dieu!** (god-not-damn-it!).

WHAT THE AUDIENCE THOUGHT



ANNE-SOPHIE DE CHALON

CHALON DANS LA RUE FESTIVAL

« It was both absurd and fantastic. There are some really strong scenes that deal with the difficulties of old age. The show is packed with imagery and symbolism, constantly juggling between funny, absurd and serious. It's amazing. They're such good performers! »

PHILIPPE DE RENNES

CHALON DANS LA RUE FESTIVAL

« Incredible! I love all of this company's work. They are up there amongst the greats in street theatre. There is always depth in what they do. I totally recommend this show. It is very moving. It gives insight into the profession, into the job of being a performer, with all its highs and lows. It's a true lesson in life.»

CHRISTOPHE DE CHALON

CHALON DANS LA RUE FESTIVAL

« I love it when it all descends into chaos and goes off on a completely crazy tangent, a bit like in Kusturica films: it has humour, love and lots of inebriation.»

CÉCILE - RIA - GARGES-LÈS-GONESSE

« Bravo, once again. This is an extremely good show that will definitely go on tour, I'm sure of it. The characters are so appealing, you can really trust them! In their mad struggle with their impending end, trying to escape the despair running hot on their heels! In those off moments, when nothing is happening and they give over to their emotions. In their energy, as people with nothing left to lose, who are trying to live for a little bit longer, whatever happens. In their effort to stay together. »

VANDEGHEN MERIAM - AURILLAC

« Thanks a million for giving us such a wonderful time. It was the perfect end to my last day in Aurillac! Have a safe journey Kumulus, and I hope to see you again one day and be able to show the full weight of your talent to my friends, who are kicking themselves for having missed seeing you this time round! »

SERGE RAVELLI - AX-LES-THERMES

« Watch out Kumulus, because if you carry on being so spot on and pertinent with your work, you run the risk of calling into question our whole leisure culture...

Having seen them in Ax les Thermes ... we want more! ...Oooohhh, my god, Non de de dieu!!!! Huge congratulations ! »





compagnie
kumulus

www.kumulus.fr

Harsh reality and raw sensitivity.

Inspired by the work of Pina Bausch, Jérôme Bosch and Alain Platel, Barthélemy Bompard imbues his work with an air of German Expressionism, pushing emotions to fever pitch.

Kumulus, his theatre company, uses gesture, words and sound to interpret themes from daily life and current world affairs, including racism, madness and exodus...

The way in which Kumulus productions are written and staged revolves around one overriding, theatrical parameter: public spaces.

Barthélemy Bompard.

Born in 1958 in Dakar in Senegal, he left his homeland at the age of 7. Later in Paris, he studied cabinet-making at the Ecole Boulle craft school, before going on to study commercial art at the Académie Charpentier school of Applied Arts.

It was in 1976 when he first discovered the theatre, inspiring him to create Maxibules, his first theatre company (for children). He then collaborated on setting up several theatre companies such as Zéro de conduite, Speedy Banana, Les Piétons. In parallel to his work as Artistic Director, he also branched off into cinema, and over the years he has made several short films, collecting awards at a series of film festivals (The People's Choice Award at Clermont Ferrand, the Special Jury Prize at Cannes, the Best Film Award at Nevers, Best Film Award at Prades, and the Escurial 91 Film Award). He also appears in some of his own films, as well as acting in roles for other directors, including Karim Dridi, Yann Piquer, Serge Le Perron, Jean Marie Maddeddu, Anita Assal, John Hudson etc.

In 1986 he decided to set up Kumulus, a street theatre company, which has since produced some 15 different shows. He won the SACD Street Theatre Award in 2006 in recognition of his work.



Kumulus theatre company produced :

LES SQUAMES [1988] They hideously ugly: heads shaven, their bodies all skin and bones, black as soot, their red pupils nailed deep inside sunken eyes. It looks like a circus parade, plucked straight from the turn of the last century. These « beasts » walk along like apes, giving our screams, screwing up their faces and rolling around on the Tarmac. And the same question comes back again and again: “But what kind of creature is it?” Are they real-fake monkeys or fake-real men? There are a couple of knowing smiles to be spotted from those who have got it, but most of the people in the crowd watching are hanging on to wait and see, clearly disturbed by these “animal-men,” with mixed feelings of both fear and shame. This production aims to excite curiosity and get passers-by talking in the street. And there is no denying that the squames is a performance which manages to do precisely that.

Le Monde - Françoise Limoge

SDF [1992] These homeless people appear to more real than life itself. In fact, you can't even tell that the actors are acting. There is no plotline. Or at least there doesn't appear to be anything resembling a story until halfway through, when the underlying narrative machine does eventually begin to become apparent. Any onlooker passing by who stops to stare is sucked in to becoming a spectator in the most extreme sense of the word. In other words, he has become a voyeur. He takes an inordinate delight in looking at the spectacle of monstrosity; he is paralyzed by his own shame, totally forgetting the double distance, in both social and theatrical terms, that separates him from the homeless.

Jean-Michel Guy

LA NEF DES FOUS [1993] Barthélemy Bompard's work is inspired by the paintings of Jérôme Bosch, which portray how before, in past eras, society would take those who were considered officially mad and ship them off in the boat of oblivion... Through this musical production, Barthélemy Bompard makes his actors focus in particular on the emotion and instinct of their characters. The insanity of seven individuals, each with their own story, gradually unfolds before our eyes. A madness that can bring you to both tears and laughter in turn. A madness that reaches out and strikes a chord in all of us because: “the madman's great secret is to always appear wise...”

Sylvie Pomaret, director's Assistant

BAIL À CEDER [1994] Kumulus offers us the chance to walk through walls, taking us on a tour of an ordinary block of council houses. Craftily slipped between two bourgeois buildings, four floors are stacked up in front of us, giving a cross-section view into the humdrum, uninspiring life of the occupants living inside. *Bail à céder* is an urban farce, imbued with social critique that takes great delight in playing with the vertical layout of the staging, luring the spectator inside to see the sad, boring reality of what is happening, and what is being said in the neighbour's flat across the corridor.**L'Humanité - Achmy Halley**

FAITS DIVERS [1995] Barthélemy Bompard's work *Faits Divers* fits in logical continuation to the particular theatrical approach that he has developed over the years, namely the notion of setting up close encounters between each actor and the audience. In a space that bears no resemblance to the usual formal notions of a theater stage, with only the surrounding town as a backdrop, ten anonymous-looking characters wander on to the scene, and then start to inject into proceedings a healthy dose of offbeat madness. Each encounter sparks off a new scene, and each situation is spun into a show. *Faits Divers* is a highly entertaining theatrical and musical performance, but it is also a vehicle for introspection, and an opportunity for us to question the way in which we lead our daily lives.

FAMILY EXPRESS [1997] *Family Express* is a mise en abyme which mirrors our relationships with one another. It dissects our blood ties and the tiny ways in which we function, and above all, malfunction... A total of eight members of the (human) family are born in front of our eyes. Eight individuals who will all come to their end in a deliberate fashion because the thread of life always eventually frays into nothingness. Yet before reaching that point, the spectator will have followed them through every stage of an ordinary life: work, love, forbidden or not, fights. A few carpets and cardboard boxes, three musical notes and four rumbling sounds. As each scene gradually unfolds one after another, the eight clones (clowns) take you on a strange voyage, winding through moments of emotion, laughter and stupor.



TOUT VA BIEN [1999] We walk past it every day. Unconsciously our gaze is caught by the shapely curve of a breast, by gleaming blond 'Because I'm worth it' hair, or by blue Caribbean skies ... And then one day, that whole parade of signs suddenly becomes disrupted. Acting wholly out of character, the images start to come to life and speak, taking a step away from their formatted string of pre-programmed messages that usually sell us consumer desire. Real characters, as large as life, start calling out to us, their bodies trapped between the two 'Triplex' panes of glass on the Decaux pavement ad stand: an old lady eaten up by loneliness, a young woman flogging hair, dental crowns and kneecaps, her best finery, a cosmetics saleswoman peddling her miracle products, a 'Mr Detergent' ... All of a sudden, 'reality' seeps inside these blandly sterile publicity stands, and takes on the form of slices of life captured from moments of humdrum, strange and fragile humanity.

Mouvement - Gwénola David

ITINÉRAIRES SANS FOND(S) [2003] *Itinéraires sans fond(s)*, is a work inspired by the current exodus of refugees and illegal immigrants. And just like them, the actors and members of the audience all mingle together, wandering about this abandoned site that is the only place that is willing to welcome men and women who have been thrown out from everywhere else. Muttering in Slavic tones, they tell the story of what they have lost, they talk of their hopes, they cry, they sing or they keep warm huddled around a tiny fire. Each of them carries a box with them, containing their most precious items that they were able to throw together before leaving their homes and fleeing. Scattered about in several different places, the members of the cast compel the people in the audience to roam after them, and gather together in little groups, listening to one or two of the actors as they show their personal trophies. **Le Monde - Catherine Bédarida**

LES RENCONTRES DE BOÎTES [2005] This production is created with the participation of amateur actors, and involves a 5-day preparatory workshop which is led by members of the Kumulus theatre company. *Les Rencontres de boîtes* by the Kumulus company opens 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.

Mouvement

LE CRI [2007] *Le Cri* is as hard-hitting as it is euphoric, a powerful moment brought to us by the Kumulus theatre company that is ultimately a highly moving production. Members of the audience find themselves being jostled about by a handful of ten or so actors, all in a trance, each of them embodying a different facet of social destitution. By the end of the performance you emerge in a bizarre state of calm, yet nonetheless all fired up to start campaigning a little bit further to the left of the political spectrum.

Libération – Edouard Launet

LES PENDUS [2009] An executioner, three men, one woman. A dramatic and public death. Four done-for bodies stretched tight, hanging on themselves, all slamming-squatting-belching. These are voices that drag themselves from death, defying time. Final words with fists raised, a call to disorder, a hollering wall of laughter... This is the post-mortem cry for freedom which will never stop making itself heard.

Nadège Prugnard

SILENCE ENCOMBRANT [2011] Striking close similarities to the expressionism of Egon Schiele, Barthélemy Bompard and his company have created a reply to one of the best shows ever seen, the famous *May B*, the homage paid to Beckett by Maguy Marin. And indeed the actors from Kumulus can certainly hold their heads high when comparing themselves to *May B*. In the silence of their permanent failure, they become universal. These people have nothing (left anymore), but they remain clinging on. Isn't what they are living here only the fate of most people? The consumer fights just like Sisyphus to inject beauty and sense into a life which will only end up as dust.

La Stradda - Thomas Hann

NAUFRAGE [2015] We are whisked away around a stage platform evoking St Tropez-like extravagance. As onlookers staring on, we are both full of desire and shock, eroticized and frustrated, rolling with laughter and desperate. And then comes the shipwreck of this world we have been reluctantly dragged along with. The overcrowded clutter of St Tropez gives way to vast stretches of desolation, as we sail out towards the seventh continent, where no one will come and save us. The genius of this theatre company lies in the actors' ability to literally transport you with the help of only a few props, some gloriously ironic costumes, semiological precision and a powerful, ingenious and efficient set design. This is the shipwreck of appearance and reality, which is shown, acted out and broken down by seven actors and actresses, all performing at the top of their game. By the end, we have reached the raft of plastic debris rippling over dead water. If "masterpiece" were ever a term applied to street theatre, then that is what I would call *Naufrage*.

Cassandra - Bruno Boussagol

SÉRIE C [2017] *Série C* is a scathing portrait of women's place in modern society. It aims to be universal in theme, and not just focus on the difficulties faced by women in Burkina Faso.

Adrien Guillot - Agence DEKart

The French theatre company Kumulus has now produced one of its best works ever, charged with the tremendous energy of Africa.

Edith Rappoport - Théâtre du Blog

FAITS DIVERS - NO MAN'S LAND [2020] An art intervention that shakes up the everyday. *Faits Divers - No Man's Land* is first and foremost a production that explores the notions of quirkiness, loneliness, expectation, obsessions, survival rituals, roaming, dignity, the visible and the invisible, privacy and living as a community, all to re-spark your imagination. If we can't officially organize a show for an audience (because of the Covid), this production surprises people as they go about their daily lives in the street by offering different crazy situations and bizarre images that challenge passers-by.

FRAGILE [2022]

This is a true theatrical performance with a grand finale. Packed with excess and outrage, *Fragile* is a show that certainly won't leave you cold. You can't help but become attached to these harrowing and brutal survivors. You grow attached to their angst just as they are attached to the furniture that they drag behind them, wherever they wander, along a thankfully short, limited path. They move forward, revealing snippets of a story, and leaving it up to the audience's imagination to fill in the blanks, everyone with their own version.

Le Journal de Chalon dans la rue
Meriem Souissi



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