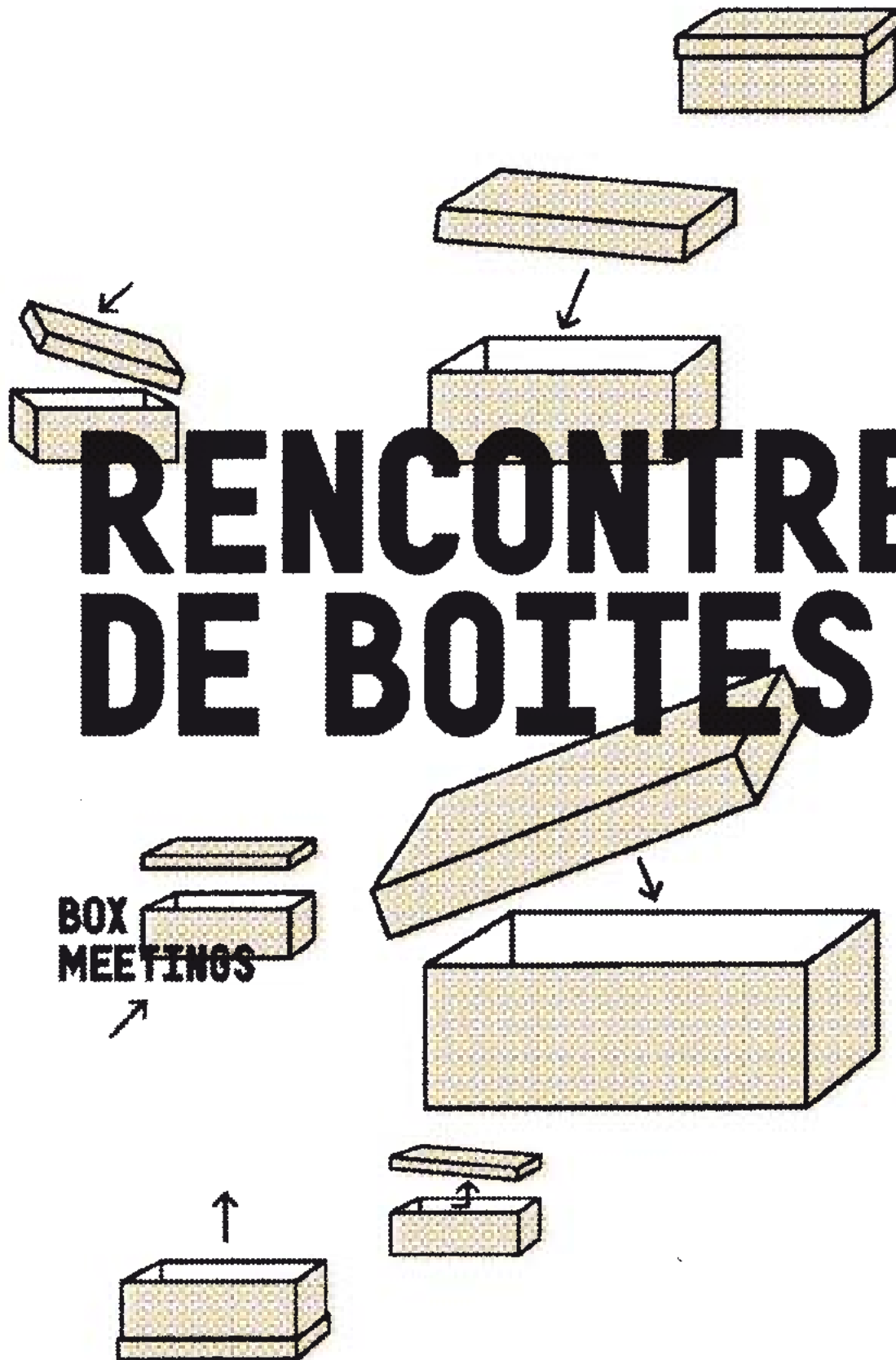


RENCONTRES DE BOITES



BOX
MEETINGS

ENCUENTROS
DE CAJAS



compagnie
kumulus



RENCONTRES DE BOITES

BOX MEETINGS

A SHOW BY

BARTHÉLEMY BOMPARD

ARTISTIC DIRECTION

BARTHÉLEMY BOMPARD

CREATED AND PERFORMED BY

DOMINIQUE BETTENFELD, ERIC BLOUET

BARTHÉLEMY BOMPARD, THÉRÈSE BOSC

JEAN-PIERRE CHARRON, CÉLINE DAMIRON,

MARIE-PASCALE GRENIER, DOMINIQUE MOYSAN

NICOLAS QUILLIARD & JUDITH THIÉBAUT

SUITABLE FOR ALL AGE GROUPS

PERFORMANCE DURATION 1H

MAXIMUM AUDIENCE CAPACITY 200 PEOPLE

PHOTO CREDIT

JEAN-PIERRE TUTARD

KUMULUS - 1114, ROUTE DE NYONS, LE MOULIN

26770 ROUSSET LES VIGNES - FRANCE

+33 (0)4 75 27 41 96 - CONTACT@KUMULUS.FR

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR BARTHÉLEMY BOMPARD

ADMINISTRATION, TOURING AND PRODUCTION

VINCIANE DOFNY, CHARLOTTE GRANGE

& MARJOLAINE LOPEZ

ARTS PROMOTION AND FINANCIAL AID

Abattoir / C.N.A.R. à Chalon-sur-Saône | Atelier 231

/ C.N.A.R. à Sotteville-lès-Rouen | Boulieu / Scène

Nationale d'Annecy | Centre Culturel français de

Belgrade | Centre Culturel français de Skopje | Culture

Commune / Scène Nationale de Loos-en-Gohelle |

D.G.C.A. | D.R.A.C. Rhône-Alpes | Institut français | Le

Hangar / Centre National de Création des Arts de la Rue

à Amiens | Le Parapluie / C.N.A.R. à Aurillac | Lieux

publics / Centre National de Création | Pronomade(s)

/ C.N.A.R. en Haute-Garonne | Région Rhône-Alpes |

Service de Coopération et d'Action Culturelle de Tirana

RENCONTRES DE BOITES

BOX MEETINGS



Box Meetings is built up from numerous characters, men and women refugees, all forced to flee their countries for safety, and with nothing left but a shoebox to carry away the remains of their belongings. They all arrive together as a group, sometimes at night, in an open-air space, with tables scattered about all lit up with candlelight. They are wrapped up warm against the cold, none of them capable of saying where they have emerged from. They talk in mysterious, unrecognizable languages and confront us with their deep stares. They play around with us, asking us questions and sometimes amuse themselves observing us, we who appear so foreign to them. They keep their shoeboxes clamped tightly under their arms, held carefully in their hands, or cleverly placed on their heads

They wander around the space like this, before each of them eventually goes up to someone and invites them to sit down at one of the tables that we have been gradually circling around. All of them take extreme care to listen closely to the other, as in turn they unearth episodes from their past, either a painful moment or something more lighthearted. Nonetheless, we can never entirely understand everything they are saying. They secretly open up their boxes to take out odd objects: a cake tin, a key, underwear, a wine cork, a clock, the label from a water bottle, a stone, a toy, a belt, a bottle top, an Orthodox icon, a broken pair of glasses, an old postcard that has turned all yellow, and other objects ... Methodically, they place each of them on the table, one after the other, before using them to illustrate their story as a means of making themselves understood, despite the language barrier: the key becomes a bird, the label is turned into a lake, the belt becomes a body, and the cork is transformed into an anti-personnel mine... Each of them take it in turn to unearth memories from their past that are sometimes so painful they are brought to tears. Then they carefully put away all their objects, sympathizing with each other, before saying goodbye and parting ways to wander off along a new path, to meet another person, and share other stories.

And this is how these mysterious and disturbing Box Meetings seamlessly follow on from one to another, unfolding before the audience's eyes, and dragging us along into a state of wandering as we meander around the tables, moving from one character to the next, but without ever fully discovering who they all are. At certain moments they cluster together in little groups to sing a song. A single voice suddenly pipes up, all alone, ringing out in what feels like a different, suspended time zone. Then two other voices chime in, and a third, until all of them join together in unison to perform a wonderful song, that we can't understand a word of. Then they calmly slip away, still singing, and the whole group disappears just as it had arrived; without even having given us the chance to speak to them, or make a gesture. They just leave us there submerged in a flood of emotions...

Joël Cramésnil

HOW THE PROJECT CAME TO LIFE

The idea for Box Meetings originally emerged in Saint-Gaudens: the basic concept was that each actor would fill a shoebox with personal items that would be used to tell his or her own story. The subject was fairly open. That's how we started building up a theatrical work around the notion of the object.

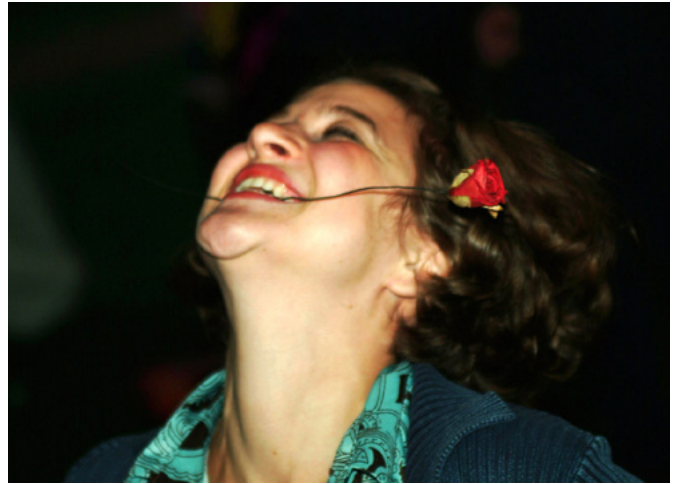
As a rule, with Kumulus we mainly base our work on the actors themselves and the characters that spring up from their own private lives, obsessions and dreams...; for each production it is the actors who provide the raw material. We didn't have much time to play with, so the result was probably a bit unpolished, but what we did have were the makings of an interesting concept.

There's a particularly close link with the audience. It is right there, next to you, able to stare at you up close. The audience is there with us taking part in the story. I found this relationship very interesting and I figured there was a lot that could be done to develop it.

At the end of 2001 we started work on End(s) less Route, a production based on the themes of population exodus and social exclusion. So I suggested to anyone who wanted to be involved in the next production that we should all go off traveling on a trip together.

Which is all very well, but to do what? And that's how the idea of Box meetings came back to me as being the perfect vehicle for getting to meet people. You get down to the nitty-gritty and cut to the essentials straightaway, getting to know people in their daily, private lives. The point of the trip was to expand our horizons and find news sources of inspiration, to experience something different to the daily routine of 6 hours of rehearsals in a theatre hall; we wanted to set off on an extraordinary adventure together!

Barthélemy Bompard



THE PROJECT WITH AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

A project divided into two stages :
A 5-day workshop followed by
two *Box meetings*.

The Box meetings are not a form of performance show, and the aim is to not to reach a level of artistic excellence. They provide a means by which people can meet, human to human, in the most sensitive and sincerest way possible. They give the participants the courage to open themselves up, to accept the challenge of revealing their weaknesses to the eyes of others, and to evade the rule imposed by the social consensus that dictates that one should hide one's true self. Whatever emotions come out, they are 'real treasures.' Quite unlike apolished, accomplished performance, the artistic value of these meetings is constantly being brought into play by all of the participants.



WORKSHOP

The workshop that takes place prior to the *Box meetings* is led by members of the Kumulus theatre company. The participants are required to attend these workshops conscientiously, as well as to take part in the *Box meetings* performed in front of an audience. The project should be approached as a whole, with each participant becoming a member of this 'new and transient Kumulus theatre company.'

" YOU ARE EJECTED FROM YOUR HOME, YOU HAVE 5 MINUTES TO PACK UP YOUR MOST PRECIOUS BELONGINGS AND LEAVE, WHAT WOULD YOU TAKE WITH YOU ? "

The workshop is spread out over five consecutive days, ideally from Saturday morning to Wednesday evening included (schedule : Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., and Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evening, approximately 3-4 hours per evening). Obviously these timings are flexible based on each person's individual needs, as the basic idea is to form a group. The workshop is carried out prior to the *Box meetings* and is built on a very sensitive process of progression. Two artists from the Kumulus theatre company lead the workshops and focus the creative attention on the actor, the object, singing and made-up languages (muttering).

Exodus is a sensitive as well as topical subject. It gives the opportunity to have a fresh perspective of the world, either in close-up terms or from a more distant viewpoint. It also enables one to reflect upon different economic, political, religious, ecological etc. situations, which have a destabilizing impact on man, and which simultaneously bring out profound themes such as uprooting, separation, identity, hope and the dream of another world.

Based on the following theme, each participant is invited to build a character with its own language, to make up the contents of a shoebox with whatever he or she wishes, and to tell a story (5 minutes max) using the objects that he or she has chosen. The story can take on any format. The shoebox must look like a shoebox from the outside, and inside it can be remodeled in any way (e.g. collages, constructions...). There is free choice for the content.



THE BOX MEETINGS

A few weeks after the workshops, or indeed immediately afterwards, without a break, the entire Kumulus theatre company returns to meet the local participants. This marks the beginning of three more days of work together.

A few weeks after the workshops, or indeed immediately afterwards without a break, the entire Kumulus theatre company returns to meet the local participants. This marks the beginning of three more days of work together.

The first day involves a group workshop of no less than 4 hours. It is essential that all the participants attend, as it is during this workshop that we will form a new team, even if it is only temporary. All the different aspects covered in the past workshops are looked over again, and a brief run-through is held in the rehearsal room.

Then, there are two performances of the Box meetings which are given in front of an audience, inside or outside, during the day or in the evening (see the Performance Specifications). Each person takes part in the group warm-up that takes place three hours minimum before the start of the performances, meaning that the organizer must take this factor into account when drawing up the play schedule. (Warning : during the week, if the performance time is fixed at 8 p.m., then that means the local participants have to be on site as of 5 p.m.).

RULES OF THE GAME

The participants, namely the artists from Kumulus and the local participants all mixed together, all enter as one into the space which is made up of tables and chairs (1 table for 2 participants : 2 chairs per table). The participants all position themselves, each of them behind one of the chairs and put their shoeboxes down in front of them

The audience scatters itself freely around the tables, before moving as it pleases around the performance area. After a pause in silence, the participants sit down.

One participant in each pair opens his box and tells his story to the person sitting opposite. Once the box is finished, he closes it again and lets the person opposite tell his or her box story, before closing the box in turn. Each story lasts 5 minutes maximum. Then the participants stand up and walk away in silence in search of another partner.

Box meetings follows this binary pattern form, up until the point where everyone has told their box story 3 or 4 times, depending on how long their story is. The performance lasts approximately one hour and reaches a conclusion with a group song.

THE KEYSTONE

THE *BOX MEETINGS* ARE BASED ON A GROUP PROJECT THAT IS BROUGHT TOGETHER BY THE ORGANIZERS, THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE COMPANY.

FOR THE ORGANIZERS, the essential part is not just a desire to take part in the project, nor simply wishing to buy it, but your role also involves finding participants. This task often proves to be much more arduous than expected.

FOR THE PARTICIPANTS, your role consists of having the desire, of committing to be on board a project which requires you to be involved from start to finish.

FOR THE COMPANY, the role is to take the participants to a place they never imagined going, where the impossible is visible, and to give them the courage to confront their worries and fears facing others and the audience.

THE ORGANIZER'S ROLE FINDING PARTICIPANTS

Several key factors need to be taken into account in order to carry out all the necessary steps to find participants:

Know well the area where the work will take place, or provide someone who is able to go out and meet the inhabitants. Avoid focusing only on one particular population group, but rather aim very wide, that is to say addressing social centers, retirement homes, youth community centers, a wide scope of clubs and associations... your own entourage, family, friends, friends of friends... as this is an ambitious project.

Set up a communication system that is best suited to the project, and use a wide array of communication channels to circulate the information.

Organize a briefing meeting well in advance of the workshop (4 to 5 months in advance).

THE PARTICIPANTS' ROLE: TO BE INVOLVED IN A THEATRICAL PROJECT AND A HUMAN ADVENTURE

Anyone between 15 and 80 years old, people who have never done any theatre before and who aren't particularly interested in art, amateurs, and artists of all art forms... A diverse mix of profiles (sex: M/F, different age groups, different ethnic origins....) is vital. These meetings need two essential qualities: the desire to take part in a project such as this one, and the time and availability throughout the given period, namely each day of the workshop, the group workshop the day before the first *Box meeting*, and the two *Box meetings*.

THE COMPANY'S ROLE

Prior to the project, the Kumulus producers accompany the organizer closely, and an information-location recce meeting is set up to explain the overall approach of Box meetings. It is also the opportunity to find rehearsal rooms, dressing rooms and performance spaces.

The keystone of this project lies in the care and investment brought by these three protagonists.

PRESS REVIEW

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.**

VI FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL

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. »

MOUVEMENT

Box meetings, by the Kumulus 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.

All of these tragic tales about exodus are based on the true stories of people that were come across in Serbia, Turkey, Albania and Macedonia. 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 is 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?

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 there in 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...

BOX MEETINGS PREVIOUS DATES

First performance in 2005

IN FRANCE

Saison de Bonlieu | Scène nationale, Annecy (74)
Saison de Lieux publics | Centre National de Création, Marseille (13) *
Saison de l'Abattoir | C.N.A.R., Chalon-sur-Saône (71)
Temps Fort de Quelques p'Arts... le SOAR | C.N.A.R, Boulieu-lès-Annonay (07)
Festival les Invites | C.N.A.R., Villeurbanne (69)
Atelier 231 | C.N.A.R, Sotteville-lès-Rouen (76) *
Saison des Tombées de la nuit | Rennes (35)
Saison du Forum Jacques Prévert | Carros (06)
Itinérance Rue | Paris (75)
Saison du Cratère | Scène Nationale, Alès (30)
Saison de Furies | Châlons-en-Champagne (51)
Saison du Parc de la Villette | Paris (75)
Festival Parades | Nanterre (92)
Festival Cergy Soit ! | Cergy (95)
Festival Quartiers libres | Grenoble (38)
Festival la Folle Histoire des Arts de la Rue | Velaux (13)
Saison de la Ville de Niort | Niort (79)
Caravane du Conseil Général de la Drôme | Die (26)
Festival de l'Oh ! | Champigny-sur-Marne (94)
Saison de TambourDanSens | Sens (89)
Festival les Expressifs | Poitiers (86)
Festival Travellings – Lieux publics | Marseille (13)
Festival FITA | Grenoble (38)
Saison de Moulin Rousse | Rousset-les-Vignes (26)

ABROAD

Festival Croisements - France-Chine 50 | Pékin, Wuhan et Zhuhai (Chine)
Festival Rendez vous chez nous | Ouagadougou et Komsilga (Burkina Faso)
Festival Teatro Container | Valparaíso (Chili)
Saison du Rex | Belgrade (Serbie)
Semaverkumpanya | Istanbul (Turquie)
Théâtre municipal | Izmit (Turquie)
Musée de la Ville | Skopje (Macédoine)
Festival Pilotobe(s) | Agadez (Niger)
Centre culturel | Zinder et Niamey (Niger)
Festival La Strada | Graz (Autriche) *
Festival UZ Events | Falkirk (Ecosse) *
Festival TAC | Valladolid (Espagne) *
The Chadraveena Ceation Centre | Dodandduwa (Sri Lanka)
Festival Passage | Helsingør, Køkkedal et Fredenborg (Danemark)
Institut français | Dakar, Saint-Louis et Kaolack (Sénégal)

* as part of the *IN SITU* – the European Network for developing artistic projects in public areas.

KUMULUS THEATER COMPANY

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 Escorial 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 12 different shows. **He won the SACD Street Theatre Award in 2006 in recognition of his work.***



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.

Kumulus Theater company was created in 1986 by Barthélemy Bompard. Other compagny's work :

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 *les 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 A 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**

ITINERAIRES 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

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*.

Cassandre - 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

NONDEDIEU [2019] 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. Barthélemy Bompard and his acolytes take a direct approach, acceptingly showing "the old remains" (of talent or charm) in their wobbly gestures. At the last Chalon dans la rue street theatre festival, Kumulus deftly made the transition into Cumulus. And it was no easy task.

Emmanuelle Bouchez - Télérama

FAITS DIVERS - NO MAN'S LAND [2020] An art intervention that shakes up the everyday. *Faits Divers - No Man's Land* is first an 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 surprise 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

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