

COLLECTIF MAD / GALAPIAT CIRQUE  
PRESENTS :

# MAD IN FINLAND

DURATION 75 MIN  
FOR AUDIENCES FROM 5 YEARS UP  
A BIG TOP PRODUCTION  
OR A FRONTAL STAGE VERSION



# BACKGROUND

In 2012 seven Finnish women who are circus artists were invited to create a performance at a circus festival in Brittany, France organised by Galapiat Cirque.

The artists had a common bond in that they have each left their motherland for the love of circus. They observed how their relationship with the «real» Finland gets blurry and one easily starts to draw a national romantic picture of the homeland when touring the world.

At the time when *MAD IN FINLAND* was created, the support for the extreme right wing political party had jumped to record levels in Finland. The artists had to deal with the question whether a certain political trend had taken the exclusive right to talk about national identity with the tone of their choosing? How would be the positive national identity that can be proudly shared with others? As a result, *MAD IN FINLAND* was born answering these questions with the unique absurdity of circus, tenderness, humor and a great deal of self irony.

The original purpose was not to tour with *MAD IN FINLAND*, but due to public demand, the show has been touring now for over 10 years, touching audiences all over Europe.

During the years the show has matured together with the artists and has remained relevant. The aging of the artists has brought new dimensions to the show, questioning and addressing the expectations of femininity and gender norms.

In 2018 it was time for some of the original members of the cast to move on to new adventures and the show was revamped with «new» members. The show has developed into a concept that adapts according to the space and the performers.



# ABOUT THE SHOW

A circus show about Finnish folklore, melancholia, madness, and highlights from the history books. Because of such passionate responses, the show has been touring now for over 10 years, touching audiences all over Europe. The seven powerful women transform the circus tent into a crazy and seductive act of new circus, chopping with axes through the expectations of femininity and gender norms.

All the artists of Mad in Finland have a common bond in that they have each left their motherland for the love of circus. With a gentle irony they show their country as they remember and dream of it. This distorted and warm-hearted satire of identity is portrayed through top level skills from foot juggling and clowning to wire dancing and aerial acrobatics. Circus, comedy, and live music tell a story of an imaginary and reinvented Finland where Finnish sadness has something magical about it and where the harsh climate encourages strong characters.

Meanwhile, the sauna is heating up.



In the North, dark falls.  
It is cold and lonely.  
Seven women with Sisu.  
Finding comfort and warmth in the sauna.  
Heating up the soul with alcohol.  
Swimming in the frozen lake.  
Naked with the nature.  
Skiing through the woods.  
To hunt. To pick berries.  
To dance tango.  
Sometimes commit suicide.  
Waiting for the sun.  
In silence.

## DICTIONARY

Tervetuloa : Welcome

Moi : Hello

Moi moi : Bye bye

Anteeksi : Sorry/excuse me

Kiitos : Thank you

(word please does not exist in Finnish)

Sisu : Does not exist in English. Means sustained courage, determination and perseverance.

Suomi : Finland

Sauna : Sauna

Hyvä : Good

Valo : Light

Viikonloppu : Weekend

Kippis : Cheers

Latua : Give way on the ski track

Ota : Take

Poro : Reindeer

Naistenhaku : Ladies´ turn to invite men to dance

Perkele : The strongest swear word

Salmiakki : A mystical black candy that separates Finns from citizens of other countries.

Salmiakikossu : Vodka with salty liquorice (Salmiakki)

There are 25 different words for snow in Finnish, depending on the consistency of the snow.

## INFORMATION

Population: 5.5 million.

Number of saunas: 2.2 million.

Population density: 15 habitants/km.

75% of the country is covered by forest.

In Lapland the sun does not rise above the horizon for 52 days during the polar night.

Finland ranks high on suicide rates but it has also been selected as the world´s happiest country by the UN for the fifth time in a row.

Nokia originally designed rubber boots.

For Finnish people silence is an important part of social interaction.

Finland was the first European country to give women the right to vote.

Since 2019 the Finnish government has been led by five women and the worlds youngest female prime minister. Finland has also had a female president.



## THEMATICS

The show is inspired by the famous novel *Seitsemän Veljestä* (The Seven Brothers) written by the Finnish national author Aleksis Kivi in 1870. It is the first novel written in Finnish, and it tells a story about seven orphaned brothers and their growth to adulthood with responsibility in the 19th-century Finland. The brothers spent their youth rebelling against rules and regulations, fighting, drinking, and ending up being forced to leave their village as outcasts. The novel is a real pioneer of realistic Finnish folklore. It has been considered to be an accurate description of Finnish people, and the seven brothers are a representation of the classic Finnish character traits.

In *Mad in Finland*, seven sisters create their own interpretation on stage about Finnish character traits, identity, and culture through circus. The seven sisters take the audience on a journey through the cold winter with snow and eternal darkness to the endless sun at midsummer night dance balls. The scenes are telling the story of the Winter War and loss of Karelia to the Soviet Union, and the reconstruction of the country after the war. The show also portrays Finnish people's love and enthusiasm towards unusual competitions, Nokia phones, ice hockey, spectator sports, and most importantly the sauna – the most sacred place for a Finn.

# THE SEVEN SISTERS FROM THE ELDEST TO THE YOUNGEST

## THE ELDEST : JENNI KALLO (CLOWN, DRUMS)

Jenni Kallo is an experienced physical theatre and circus artist who has performed in several countries for over 20 years. Besides being a comedienne and a clown, Jenni also works as a teacher and a director. Jenni is a founder of Kallo Collective (State Prize for Circus Arts 2020), which is producing shows and organising an international physical theatre festival NouNous festival in Helsinki, Finland.

## THE SECOND SISTER : HEINI KOSKINEN (AERIAL SILK, VIOLIN)

After graduating from the circus school Le Lido Toulouse (2009), Heini has been working with several companies, such as Circo Aereo, Tanssiteatteri Hurjaruuth and Groupe Bekkrell. In addition to performing Heini is also a teacher and a choreographer for aerial acrobatics. She is a founding member of Clowns Without Borders Finland as well as one of the founders of Mad in Finland collective.

### **Viivi Roiha in replacement of Heini Koskinen (vertical rope and singing)**

Borned in Finland, Viivi graduated as a vertical rope specialist from the French National Center of Circus Arts (CNAC – Final production *This is the end* by David Bobee). In France, she has collaborated with Árpád Schilling and has been working with Chloé Moglia since 2015. In the Nordic countries, she has been collaborating with Circo Aereo since 2012 and has performed in *Ro-pu*, *Pienempiä paloja* and *Mumbai Express* productions.

## THE THIRD SISTER : SANJA KOSONEN (WIRE DANCING, GUITAR)

Sanja is an internationally acclaimed tight wire dancer, who's been performing internationally with companies Circo Aereo, Les Colporteurs, Galapiat Cirque and Cie Timshel. Year 2021 premiered Sanja's direction *Cry Me a River*, which is inspired by Carelian crying hymns. Sanja is a founding member of Mad in Finland collective (State Prize for Circus Arts 2015).

### **Ulla Tikka in remplacement of Sanja Kosonen (wire dancing, guitar and singing)**

Ulla Tikka has been drawn to circus arts since she was a little girl. She trained in Paris and Berlin as a tightwire specialist. She lives in Switzerland and tours all over Europe with companies such as les Colporteurs, Cirkus Cirkör, etc.. In 2002, she founded her own company F-ART and later Roikkuva company in 2012. She produced several performances but also collaborated as a director and choreographer.

## THE FOURTH SISTER : MIRJA JAUHAINEN (TRAPEZE, CELLO, BASS)

Mirja has been touring the world for over 15 years as an aerial acrobat. Her main disciplines are trapeze and wheel of death. She is a founding member of *Mad in Finland* (State Prize for Circus Arts 2015), as well as of Origo contemporary circus experience for babies. Mirja is the artistic director of Sirkusfestivaali Pusu and a founder of Taideyhdistys Nyt ry.

## THE FIFTH SISTER: TEIJA SOTIKOFF (VOCALS, KEYTAR, FLUTE)

Teija is a freelance singer/musician, who has graduated from the Helsinki Pop & Jazz Conservatory (2007) where she received a mention for the best thesis and was rewarded Klaus Järvinen scholarship. Her most active band is party orchestra Teija Sotikoff Band.

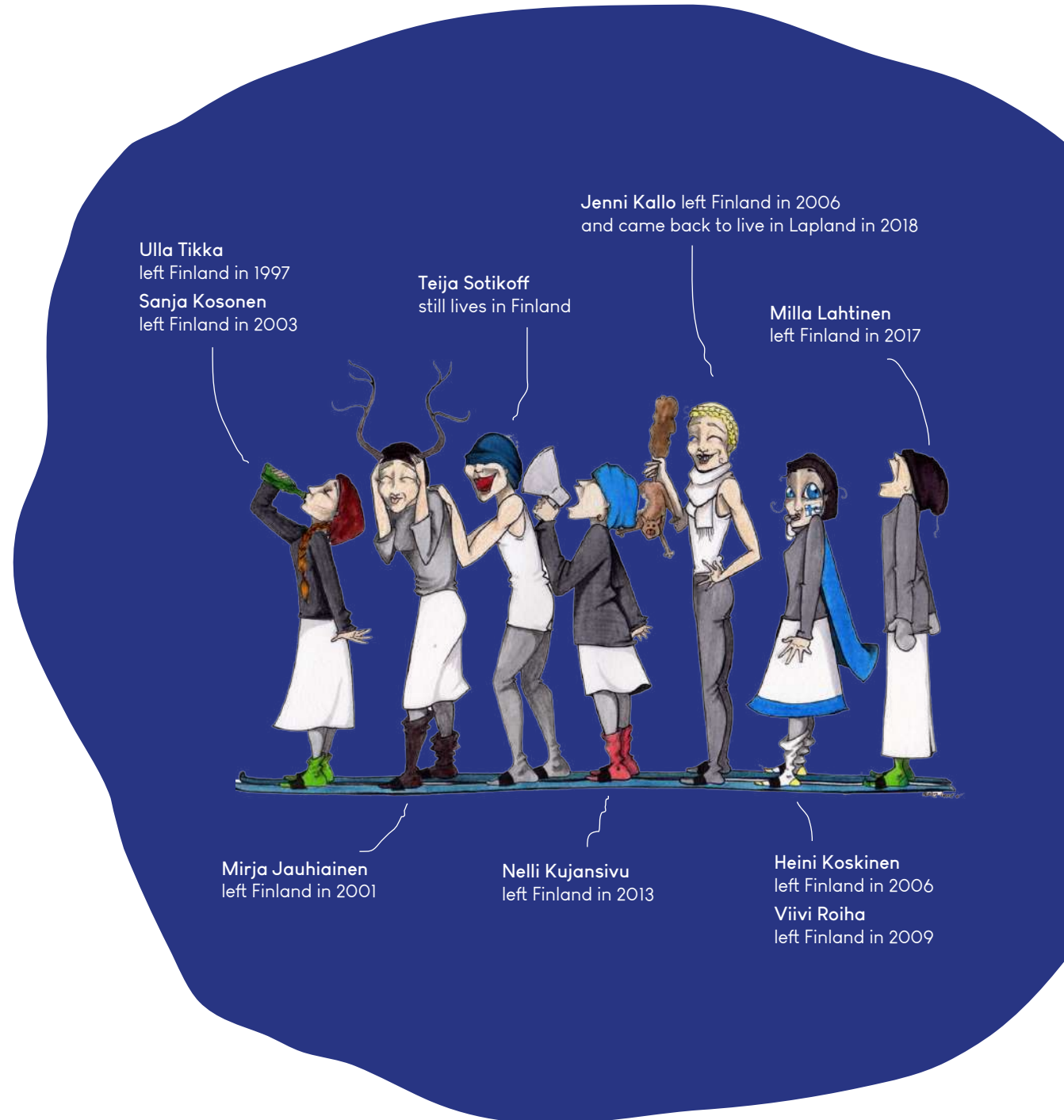
Teija has been performing with *Mad in Finland* on special gigs since 2013 and became a part of the the core team and in 2018.

## THE SIXTH SISTER: MILLA LAHTINEN (SWINGING TRAPEZE)

Milla is specialised on swinging trapeze and partner acrobatics. She is a founding member of Finnish circus group *Sisus Sirkus* and a performative electro punk band *Muovipussi*. Milla is also a visual artist, whose exhibitions have been displayed around Scandinavia. Milla has been part of *Mad in Finland* since 2019.

## THE YOUNGEST SISTER: NELLI KUJANSIVU (FOOT JUGGLING, DRUMS)

Nelli graduated as a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Circus from the University of Dance and Circus in Stockholm 2016, with a specialisation on foot juggling. She has been performing with several different companies around the world such as *Cirkus Cirkör*, *Östgötateatern*, and *Kompani Giraff*. She is one of the founders of the contemporary circus companies *Company Afterclap* and *Sirkum Polaris*. Nelli has been touring with the *Mad in Finland* collective since 2018.



**Ulla Tikka**  
left Finland in 1997  
**Sanja Kosonen**  
left Finland in 2003

**Teija Sotikoff**  
still lives in Finland

**Jenni Kallo** left Finland in 2006  
and came back to live in Lapland in 2018

**Milla Lahtinen**  
left Finland in 2017

**Mirja Jauhiainen**  
left Finland in 2001

**Nelli Kujansivu**  
left Finland in 2013

**Heini Koskinen**  
left Finland in 2006  
**Viivi Roiha**  
left Finland in 2009



## PRESS QUOTES

« Between nostalgia, love of tradition and humor, these Finnish circus artists put on a real show and send Nordic clichés flying. The girls of Mad in Finland: we are already mad about them! » - **Le Monde**

« Circus lovers can be reassured to get an artistically outstanding level performance, Mad in Finland has all the necessary ingredients to guarantee that. But there is something much more in the show than only acrobatic and musical skills. There is significance and extraordinary attitude that creates a performance full of humor, love, energy and overflowing satirical spirit. » - **Les Trois Coups**

« Extravagant Mad in Finland proves to the audience how peculiar Finnish artists can be. The seven female artists of this performance are masters of swinging trapeze, acrobatics, drums and singing. It is an adaptation of a momentous piece of literature (« Seven Brothers » by Aleksis Kivi) and as appropriate, the show ends up in a sauna. » - **Télérama**

« A seven women choir beats as one heart, jubilant, radiant and floating, defying the laws of gravity, full with the joy of performing together. » - **Stradda**

« They lift, play and embrace each other, shouting loudly on stage all in great fun. Their energy is overflowing and contagious. When it is time to leave the warm and thrilling atmosphere of the Big Top, it is with an immense smile. » - **L'Imprimerie Nocturne**

« Drawing inspiration from « Seven Brothers » by Aleksis Kivi to interpret their country they blow away the clichés of Finland with satirical humor. It is with great fun they shout with laughter and smile at their daring interpretation that is enhanced with outstanding circus skills. » - **Alterlfo**



# TEAM

**Artists on stage:** Mirja Jauhiainen, Jenni Kallo, Heini Koskinen, Sanja Kosonen, Nelli Kujansivu, Milla Lahtinen, Teija Sotikoff

**Concept/original cast:** Elice Abonce Muhonen, Mirja Jauhiainen, Sanna Kopra, Stina Kopra, Heini Koskinen, Sanja Kosonen, Lotta Paavilainen

**Musical advisor:** Rémi Sciuto

**Outside eye:** Siri Hamari

**Technical manager:** Gautier Gravelle

**Light:** Gautier Gravelle or Nicolas Gastard

**Sound:** Franck Beaumard

**Management:** Yvain Lemattre & Camille Rondeau

**Production & touring:** L'Avant Courrier - Anne Heuveline

**Pictures & illustrations:** Sébastien Armengol, Paola Jorquera, Luce\*, Klara G



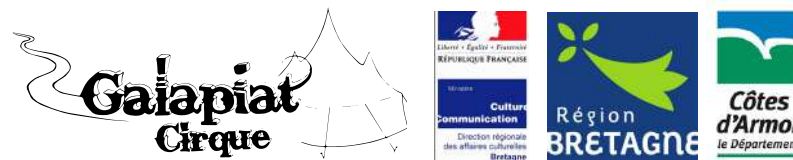
# PRODUCTION

## GALAPIAT CIRQUE

Galapiat Cirque supports, creates and produces shows, events and generates social ties. Galapiat Cirque, consists of multiple itineraries, new productions, all sorts of different projects and a local anchorage in Brittany that is becoming stronger and stronger. Galapiat Cirque is a General interest co-operative (SCIC) of about 50 members, artists, back office, technicians, friends, local authorities and partners.

Galapiat Cirque aims at bringing culture to other territories by reinventing the means of getting there. «Go where Circus does not often go». Our goal is to connect different audiences, generations, sectors of activity around a show or a project... We are convinced that circus is a popular and federative art form, an exceptional medium for generating social change and personal transformation.

**SUPPORT :** Ministère de la culture – DRAC Bretagne ; Conseil Régional de Bretagne ; Conseil Général des Côtes d'Armor ; Saint-Brieuc Agglomération ; Mairie de Langueux – Le Grand Pré ; Institut Français ; DGCA ; DMDTS Aide à l'itinérance Festival Tant qu'il y aura des Mouettes (Langueux, 22) ; La Cascade, Maison des arts du Clown et du Cirque, Bourg Saint Andéol (07) ; Arts Council of Finland ; La Comédie de Caen, Centre Dramatique National de Normandie (14) ; La Brèche, Pôle National des Arts du Cirque, Cherbourg Octeville (50)



PRODUCTION—TOURING

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