

Galapiat Cirque Association

Presents

MAD IN FINLAND

Sanja Kosonen
Turku.
Leaves Finland in 2003.

Stina Kopra,
Tampere.
Leaves Finland in 2005.

Lotta Paavilainen
Sääksjärvi.
Leaves Finland in 2005.

Elice Abonce Muhonen
Vantaa
Leaves Finland in 2003.



Mirja Jauhiainen,
Tampere.
Leaves Finland in 2001.

Sanna Kopra
Tampere
Leaves Finland in 2001.

Heini Koskinen
Helsinki
Leaves Finland in 2006.

Collective Production - 2012 – Contemporary Circus

For audiences from 5 years and older
Duration 1 h 15 min

Summer Tour 2013: France

Night falls for six months
Seven women.
Lonely,
But organised.

In the sauna, the bodies warm up,
In alcohol, the souls find comfort.
Dig in the frozen lakes to have a swim.
Put on skis and hunt the bear.
Sometimes commit suicide.

And then, we dance the tango,
And we wait for the sun.

In silence.

The seven artists that make up MAD IN FINLAND have in common the fact that they are circus women, are Finnish and have left their country to live from their passion for the circus. With this shared background, they wanted to deal with the question of identity, incorporating the hindsight instilled by the geographical distance to their country, while giving free reign to homesickness, the dreams and fantasies aroused by leaving one's own country.

As far right political parties are becoming more prevalent, everywhere in Europe, particularly in Finland, grappling with the question of identity is not innocent. What is it to be Finnish? What is it to be a stranger? Can a Finn feel himself a Finn outside his country? How does one live with his own language or culture in France, Germany or in any other country?

With lots of humour, love and energy, the seven women of MAD IN FINLAND reveal their country, how they perceive or dream about it. An imaginary and reinvented Finland where "Finnish depression" has something magical about it, where the harshness of climate engenders strong natures.

The show is also about circus because that is what the artists are fully immersed in, having chosen to live on the road, perform in Big Tops and showing to the best of their abilities very skilled techniques. These seven women express themselves through different circus skills: slack trapeze, tightrope walking, aerial silks, balance board, acrobatics, trapeze duet and live music.



Background

The show is very much inspired by the famous novel "The seven brothers" by Aleksis Kivi, considered as the Father of Finnish literature. This coming-of-age novel evokes the lives of seven brothers, a very close-knit, excessive and explosive fraternity. Having passed their childhood fighting and drinking they are forced to leave the village, disapproved of by the inhabitants. In the forest where they find shelter, they need to cultivate, hunt, pick up wood, manage on their own, and work...



Dictionary

Suomi: Finland
Valo: Light
Sauna: Sauna
Perkele!: The Devil !
Kiitos: Thank you
"Please": nonexistent in Finnish
Sisu: (nonexistent in English) meaning something close to courage, tenacity and perseverance.
Salmiakikossu: Vodka with salted liquorice
Kännykkä: Cellphone
Naistenhaku: The time when girls invite boys to dance
Kippis: Cheers
Suksi vittuun!: «Ski in pussy !» (Get away!)
Menoks!: Let's go!
Latua: Move away from the ski slope!

Information

- Population: 5.5 million.
- Number of saunas: 2.2 million.
- Number of cell phones: 5 million
- Density of population: 15 inhabitants/km²
- 75% of the country is covered by forests
- In the North, night falls around October and day lengthens again around March.
- The number of suicides in proportion to the population is higher in Hungary followed by Finland, Denmark and Austria.
- The UNO has designated Finland as best country to live in
- Nokia originally designed rubber boots
- For Finnish people, silence is an important aspect of social interaction
- Finland is the first European country to have authorized women's vote

Here, seven sisters, in their daily life, depict several typical aspects of Finnish identity using circus as a means.

A succession of scenes, dealing with different topics:

- Day and Night
- Winter, with its huts, snow and animals
- The loss of Karjala: an historical episode that traumatized a whole generation with the loss of this territory to the Russians resulting in 400,000 refugees, the equivalent of 10% of the population.
- The reconstruction of the country after the war
- The Nokia generation
- The love of Finns for contests of all kinds
- The balls in summer, when dancing always ends up in the sauna

The show ends up precisely in a sauna installed in a converted caravan. A sauna, so typical of Finnish culture, a refuge from long and cold winters.

The seven sisters

The eldest: Heini Koskinen, aerial silks, violin and singing

Heini began her formation in Finland at the Circus School of Lahti and then at the Arts Academy of Turku from which she graduated as a Circus teacher. From 2006 to 2009, she carried on at the Lido- School of Circus arts in Toulouse, where she specialized in aerial silks. The fact that she has studied violin and singing since 1985 is apparent in the characteristic musicality and rhythm of her artistic personality.

Heini participated in the production of Circo Aereo "Trippo". She tours worldwide with her solo "Työ" and participates in various short terms productions. Her influences range from Finnish poetry to "flying percussion".

The second sister: Sanja Kosonen, Tightrope walking, guitar and singing

After graduating from the Arts Academy of Turku in Finland, Sanja continued her studies at the National Center of Circus Arts (Centre National des Arts du Cirque-CNAC) in Châlons-en-Champagne (2005). She has collaborated with Circo Aereo in "Louisiana Circus" and works on a regular basis with Antoine Rigot and the company Les Colporteurs in the productions "Le fil sous la neige", "Tarina", "Haute Pointe" and "Sur la Route". Her work, characterized by a virtuoso sense of balance and movement is also a performance on the emotional level.

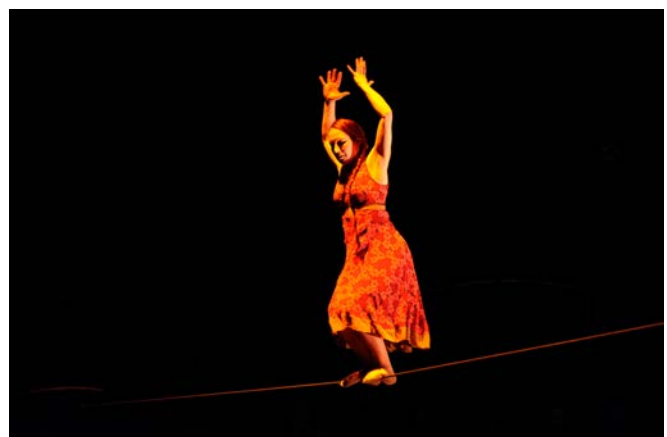
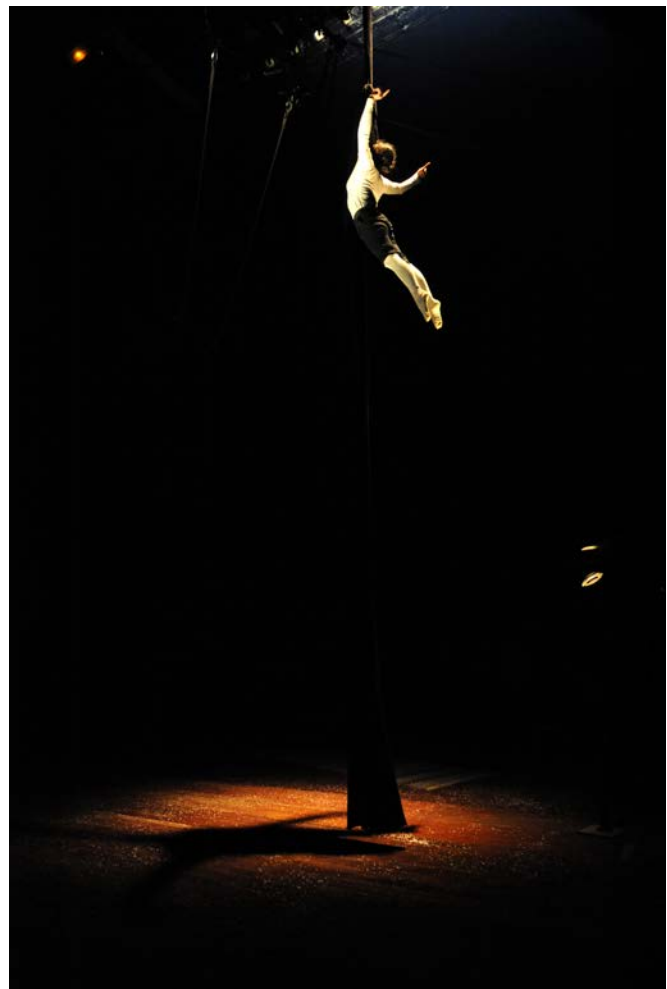
She currently explores an old circus skill: Hair Hanging with the trapezist Elice Abonce in "Capilotractées".

The third sister: Mirja Jauhiainen, Trapeze, string bass, bass and singing

And The fifth : Sanna Kopra , trapeze, sound effects, singing

After having studied at the Sorin Circus School in Tampere, Mirja and Sanna left Finland to study in Stockholm at Cirkuspiloterna, from which they graduated in 2004.

They have toured the world in entertainment shows, cabarets and galas and have participated in Contemporary Circus productions such as Cirkus Cirkor. They perform anywhere, open air, theatre or Big Top. For Mirja and Sanna, circus is more than just a job - it is their reason for living as well as their way of life.



The fourth sister: Stina Kopra, acrobatics, balance board, drums and singing.

And The youngest sister: Lotta Paavilainen, acrobatics, balance board, drums, key-flute and singing

Stina and Lotta started circus at SorinCircus School in Tampere. They both studied at ESAC - college of circus arts in Brussels (Ecole Supérieure des Arts du Cirque de Bruxelles) where they became masters of their skill: acrobatics on balance, very uncommon at that time. As soon as they graduated in 2008 they were engaged by the Wintergarten in Berlin with their act "An ordinary day". This first contract led to many others like Gop Entertainment, Circus Flic Flac, Cirque Baroque, "Sorties 8,9,10" at la Villette... They also participate in the production "Play: Time".

Stina likes using circus and humour to speak of deep and serious subjects. For Lotta, Circus is a way to reveal emotions: to delight people and make them laugh, cry, shudder.

The sixth sister: Elice Abonce Muhonen, slack trapeze, bass, drums and singing

Elice first started circus in schools in Lahti in Finland and at Circuspiloterna in Sweden before studying at the National Center of Circus Arts (Centre National des Arts du Cirque-CNAC) in Châlons-en-Champagne (2009). She is one of the founders of the Finnish groups UZUR (2003) and CirkusprojectXXX (2005). In 2008, she and 5 other artists created the Galapiat Circus company and the production "Risque Zéro" with tours in France, Europe and South America. Since 2012, she's been working on a new production with Sanja Kosonen, "Capilotractées", a duo based on a traditional circus skill: Hair Hanging.

Elice is half Mexican, half Finnish. From this mixed heritage comes the desire to synthesize the cultures and the skills of all the different countries she has been to.



In April 2012, carte blanche was given to seven women, all circus artists coming from Finland, during the festival « Tant qu'il y aura des Mouettes » organised by GALAPIAT CIRQUE in Brittany, France.

After six months of emailing and two weeks of hard work under the Big Top, they gave birth to MAD IN FINLAND. The purpose was not originally to tour with this production but simply to enjoy spending time together and try out new experiences. As if to keep the promise of seven old friends who met at the circus school and who have managed to stay close despite frenetic lives.

MAD IN FINLAND met with popular acclaim and aroused interest among the venue directors. On top of that, the artists were very keen to keep on going...

This is why everyone decided to free up a bit of time in their schedule and follow the adventure.)



Association Galapiat Cirque

Production and Touring Management :

Nolwenn Manac'h

nolwenn@galapiat-cirque.fr

+33 (0)6 76 78 01 19

skype: nol.manach

www.galapiat-cirque.fr

Videos: <http://vimeo.com/50828765>

Photo credit: Sébastien Armengol

Drawings: Lucie Plessis