



KULOVALKEA

A VISUAL SPECTRUM OF CIRCUS SKILLS



IN SHORT

10 young Finnish performers get back together after having studied abroad in various circus schools. "Kulovalkea" will be an authentic contemporary circus piece, which brings together different views on circus. Kulovalkea draws its inspiration from the dadaistic art movement. Original characters and absurd scenes are linked to one another creating altering images where the unusual skills of circus performers become narrative elements of the show.

BASIC INFORMATION

Name: Kulovalkea

Form: Theatre performance

Circus disciplines: Juggling, foot juggling, acrobatics, contortion, handstands, tightwire, triple trapeze, vertical rope, cloud swing, aerial hoop

Duration: 1h-1h 15min

Artists: 8-11

Director: Olli Vuorinen

Assistant director: Pau Portabella

Visual design and implementation: Isak Lindberg

Performers: Rosa-Maria Autio, Merri Heikkilä, Valpuri Kaarninen, Nelli Kujansivu, Liisa Näykki, Maria Peltola, Onni Toivonen, Petteri Savikorpi, Pinja Seppälä, Juho Yrjölä, Jaimee Allen

Music: Petteri Rajanti

Light design: Teo Lanerva / Isak Lindberg

Production: Sirkum Polaris & Cie Nuua

Materials: Valpuri Kaarninen

Sirkum Polaris:

sirkum.polaris@gmail.com

+358407708896 (Valpuri Kaarninen)

Cie Nuua:

info@cienuua.com

+358500435286 (Olli Vuorinen)



STARTING POINTS

10 Finns spent their childhood in Sorin Sirkus youth circus in Tampere. From there they scattered around the world to study circus in different schools. Now they want to get back together, share their skills and knowledge, and create a show together.

Kulovalkea draws its inspiration from the dadaistic art movement that circus has often represented as an art form. In Kulovalkea absurd images and scenes escape meanings to create a foundation for post-modern circus expression. Kulovalkea offers a dramaturgy inspired by comic books. Eventually the spectator will stop looking for meanings and give in to the events and rhythm. Original characters and absurd scenes are linked to one another creating altering images where the unusual skills of circus performers become narrative elements of the show.

Academie Fratellini in France, Dans – ock Cirkushögskolan in Sweden, École Supérieure des Arts du Cirque in Belgium, Codarts in Netherlands and École National de Cirque in Canada are no doubt some of the best circus schools in the world. Now the young Finnish artists who trained in these schools want to get back together and share what they have learnt about circus. The result will be a young, fresh and acrobatic show, which presents the far honed skills of the performers in new ways in the form of contemporary circus.

The Finnish artists who manage to get through the selections to the foreign schools often tend to stay and work scattered abroad. We plan to bring together a large group of Finnish artists, produce a large scale contemporary circus show, re-think contemporary circus as an art form for bigger stages and bring it closer to the great public.

Skills, vision, connections and high level performers already exist. Now it's time to make big dreams into reality.

INITIAL RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Creating Kulovalkea begins with getting together and sharing. We plan to share skills, that we have worked on during the past years and see, what are the different possibilities of combining them.

SEPARATING SKILLS FROM EQUIPMENT

We want to break the traditional cabaret format, in which everyone presents a solo act or their own little section. We want to create scenes, where different skills are utilized together. How does a collaboration between a juggler and a contortionist look like? Can you juggle a person? What kind of circus technique is created, when jugglers and foot jugglers work together?

The group is one of the key elements of the show. We are interested in ideas that require a lot of people to work. We want to create images on stage specifically around the group and keep the other elements on stage in a supportive role.

At the same time we are interested in how the exceptional skills we have learnt can be used outside of the classical disciplines in more relatable everyday situations, where they create absurd imaginery. The skills to move in the air, to throw objects with hands or feet or balancing on a tight wire can be transferred into other contexts than the traditional circus disciplines.

For aerialists we want to build a visually interesting aerial-acrobatics construction, which can work as a base for utilizing and mixing different aerial techniques. Within its limits we want to be able to present acrobatic skills of rope, as well as hang solidly while throwing flyers from one place to another. In this way we are able to expand the performance space from floor level and fill the space above the stage as well.

RESHAPING GROUP DISCIPLINES

In circus schools we have all found new and unique views on our own circus disciplines, but breaking the conventions in many group disciplines is not as far yet. For example we want to work together with some of the disciplines from our times in the youth circus, such as skipping rope and pyramids, and bring them into more creative and unique directions. The skills within these disciplines we already have, but we haven't yet made them original and look like us.



With skipping ropes we are interested in producing sounds and rhythms when the ropes hit the ground as well as visual effects that can be achieved by lighting the ropes in new ways

With pyramids we aim to break the usual time structure and classical lines of pyramids. Usually pyramids are built, kept standing for few seconds and then broken down. But what happens to the base, if the flyer takes their time to climb up, or doesn't want to come down at all? What if instead of building stiff human structures they are partly relaxed and melted instead?

REALISM WITH LIGHT AND SOUND

Kulovalkea returns to the origins of circus and invites the audience closer to the action and details, letting them experience the more genuine side of circus skills. On top of the visual side, we bring forth the sound, breathing and the pressure in the body during the intense movements, the more realistic side of virtuosity.

Things like breathing and props hitting the ground are natural sounds that are created when tricks are made. Recording them for the audience brings the skills closer to the viewer and makes them even more realistic.



SCHEDULE

We are going to use 3 months during years 2017-2019 for creating the show. Currently we are in the planning phase of the project and the active creation of the show begins in 2018. Even though the project is just in the beginning, we are already looking for support, because any kind of monetary assistance helps in the realization of the project and makes planning for the future easier.

TENTATIVE PLANNING FOR SCHEDULED RECIDENCIES

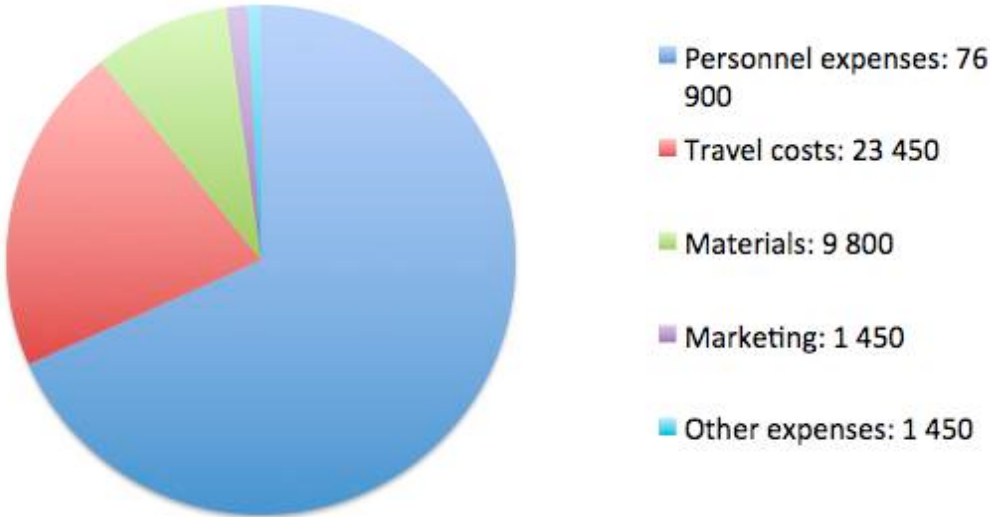
- September 2017, Cirko-center, Helsinki, 2 weeks (confirmed)
- February 2018, Cirkör Lab, Stockholm, 2 weeks (confirmed)
- July 2018, Sorin Sirkus, Tampere, 3 weeks (in discussion)
- August 2018, Tampere, work in progress presentation at Circus Ruska Festival (in discussion)
- January 2019, 2 weeks
- March 2019, 2 weeks
- Summer 2019, 3 weeks

BUDGET

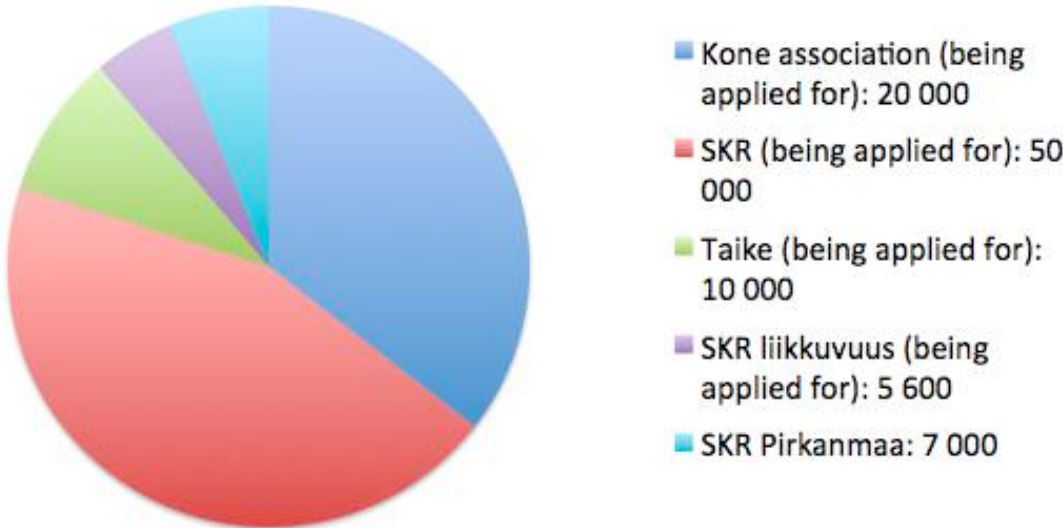
The biggest necessary expenses for the project will be the travel costs for the performers and the artistic team as well as the compensations for the artistic team (direction, light, sound, costumes).

The large amount of performers makes the show expensive, but we try to keep the project otherwise light in all the ways possible. It will neither include large amounts of stage structures nor other heavy transportable equipment. Instead we plan to fill the stage with people. At the same time we try to do as many things as possible around the project ourselves and utilize the group, so that the project doesn't expand into being impossibly big.

EXPENSES



INCOME





Cie Nuua

NUUA was founded by a Finnish circus artist Olli Vuorinen and a Brazilian artist Luis Sartori do Vale in 2012 in Finland as a company of visual theater and contemporary circus. In Finland Nuua is one of the established second generation companies in the field of contemporary circus and in a short time Nuua has taken its place in the international scene of performing arts. Nuua's first performance "Lento" (2013) reached over 35 000 spectators in 13 different countries. Nuua collaborates together with various international artists around Europe, shares experiences and brings back to Finland a new taste of circus.

What makes Nuua's works interesting is the fact that they are designed and carried out in co-operation with the whole artistic team as collective piece. Assistant director, performers, light designers, sound designer and costume designer combine their different skills and can realize their work in more personal level, making the performances creative and rich.

Sirkum Polaris

Sirkum Polaris was founded in 2015 by 10 young artists who had grown up together in the Sorin Sirkus youth circus in Finland and later studied abroad in various international circus schools. The idea was to gather together the various skills acquired abroad and continue the learning and research that can together. The first creation of the company, "Kulovalkea", will be created in collaboration with Cie Nuua.

The group consists of: Rosa-Maria Autio, Merri Heikkilä, Valpuri Kaarninen, Nelli Kujansivu, Liisa Näykki, Maria Peltola, Onni Toivonen, Petteri Savikorpi, Pinja Seppälä, Juho Yrjölä

A black and white close-up portrait of Olli Vuorinen, an artistic director. He has dark, slightly messy hair and a light beard. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

artistic director
OLLI VUORINEN

Olli Vuorinen, founder of Nuua company graduated from a French circus school Academie-Fratellini in 2011. After that Vuorinen did two award-winning performances in Cirque de Demain-festival and his company got selected in 2012 to a EU-funded Circus Next-project. Since 2011 Vuorinen have been working closely with one of the pioneer companies of contemporary juggling Les Objets Volants in a performance Liaison Carbone.

Olli Vuorinen is very productive Finnish contemporary circus artist. Past years he has been performing over 20 different countries. Vuorinen is known from his personal approach to performing, innovative juggling techniques and varied objects theatre skills.

PERFORMERS



Onni Toivonen

Onni Toivonen started circus as a hobby in 2005 at Sorin Sirkus youth circus in Tampere. Onni practised the basics of all circus disciplines and specialised finally in juggling with clubs. Onni graduated from high school in 2013 and was straight away accepted to study juggling in the renowned **Dans –och Cirkushögskolan in Stockholm**, which is world famous for its juggling teaching. Onni graduated from circus school in 2016. In 2017 Onni was chosen to participate the **Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain** and **Young Stage** festivals from which he won special prizes. Onni performs also in the 2017 **Cirko Aereo** production **Kinema**.



Maria Peltola

As a child Maria danced ballet, played violin and sang in a choir. At the age of 13 she found her way to Sorin Sirkus. In 2010 Maria and her partners Ronja Vilponen and Valpuri Kaarninen were selected to perform in the Wiesbaden circus festival and there they found the motivation to apply to a circus university in Brussels called **École Supérieure des Arts du Cirque**. After graduation they have been working with their trapeze group **Wise Fools all around the world for example in Barcelona, London, Seoul, Haifa and in different cities in Germany**. One of their biggest achievements is **the silver medal from the high level Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain in Paris**.



Petteri Savikorpi

Petteri was born in Valkeakoski, in Finland 1991. After 10 years of training in a local youth circus called Sorin Sirkus Petteri moved to **Paris** to study in the renowned **Academy Fratellini** (2013-2016). In France Petteri became a multi-skilled circus artist, who is specialized in dance, acrobatics and movement. Petteri is especially interested in the dynamics and extremism of movement. At the moment Petteri is **working on his small performance called "KATVE" and takes part in a French project "Les Sens du Sacrifice"**.



Nelli Kujansivu

Nelli started circus at the age of 4 at the local youth circus of Tampere, Sorin Sirkus. During the time in Sorin Sirkus, she took part in the European Youth Circus festival in Wiesbaden and in 2013 in the Young Stage Festival in Basel where she won the Swish Cup prize. In 2013 Nelli was accepted to the circus school of her dreams, **Dans- och Cirkushögskolan in Stockholm**. After 3 years of hard work Nelli graduated with bachelor's degree in the spring of 2016. Since then she has worked for example with the Finnish **Artteatro**, the **Krystallpalast Variete** in Leipzig and she is one of the **founders of a contemporary circus group CIRC6**.



Liisa Näykki

Liisa started circus already at the age of 4 when her father took her to Sorin Sirkus youth circus in Tampere. In 2012 Liisa was accepted to **École Supérieure des Arts du Cirque circus school in Brussels** and she graduated with a bachelor's degree in the spring of 2016. During her time in the school she also became familiar with Canadian contemporary circus, due to her exchange in **École National de Cirque circus school in Montreal** and a project with the world famous **Cirque Éloize**. As a professional Liisa has worked for example with **ArtTeatro**, **Cirkus Zorba**, **Cirque Rouages**, **Cirque Galapiat** and **Cie des Chausson Rouges**. She has also performed in multiple high profile events like the Paris fashion week 2017.



Rosa Autio

Rosa started her circus career at the age of 5 in a local youth circus called Sorin Sirkus and there she learnt the basics of pyramids, banquine and skipping ropes. As her main discipline Rosa chose foot juggling. Rosa graduated in 2012 from an arts oriented upper secondary school and left to **Voionmaa Institute for one year to study acting**. After that Rosa got chosen to study in **École Supérieure des Art du Cirque in Brussels**. In ESAC Rosa has concentrated on foot juggling with many different teachers. She combines her technical knowledge to her strong theatrical expression. In ESAC Rosa has finally found her personal style to manipulate foot juggling objects and she graduated in spring 2017.



Juho Yrjölä

In 2013 Juho decided to stop his studies in the Technical University of Tampere because he was accepted to **École Supérieure des Arts du Cirque in Belgium**. In the school there was a teacher who helped Juho to hone his acrobatic skills further in his speciality the aerial rope. In the summer 2016 Juho graduated from ESAC and today his skills in the rope are of the highest level and his interest in artistical expression is higher than ever. **Juho is one of the few persons in the world who can execute the legendary double twist in the rope.**



Valpuri Kaarninen

Valpuri Kaarninen started her career as a professional circus artist when she graduated in 2014 from **École Supérieure des Arts du Cirque in Brussels** with Maria Peltola and Ronja Vilponen. In the circus school they created an original trapeze act where two catchers swing and toss one flyer. In 2015 the act was awarded with a **silver medal at the 36th Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain in Paris**. Afterwards the trio has been working for example with the world famous **Cirque du Soleil, Germany's largest variety company GOP and street theater festivals in Korea and Israel**. In 2015 Valpuri established a circus company called Sirkum Polaris with her friends and she is at the moment most interested in creating their own projects.



Merri Heikkilä

Merri Heikkilä is 23 years old juggler, who started his career at the Sorin Sirkus youth circus in Tampere. A few years after starting, Merri decided to specialize in juggling and has since been trying to find new ways to manipulate objects. In 2013 Merri decided to head to study circus on a professional level. He was accepted to the circus education of a university of arts - **Codarts in the Netherlands**. Combining juggling, movement and acrobatics, Merri aims to create new kinds of shows and experiences for the public. Merri graduated in 2017.



Pinja Seppälä

Pinja Seppälä found her way to circus through gymnastics. In spring 2009 **Pinja's team "Minetit" won the Finnish Nationals in Aesthetic Group Gymnastics (AEGG)** and after 11 years of gymnastics Pinja wanted to try something new. In autumn 2009 she joined Sorin Sirkus youth circus and there she met Milla Peijari with whom she is working now as Duo Minja. In 2012 Duo Minja took part in **"Finland's Got Talent"** and they were selected all the way to the Finals. Since then Duo Minja has been performing professionally for example in Germany's biggest Variety **GOP Variety-Theater** and in many big productions with **Phoenix Fire Dancers** for example in the USA, Brazil, Turkey and in a G20-meeting in Russia.



Jaimee Allen

Jaimee Allen found her way to the wonderful world of circus through **Zip Zap Circus School in Cape Town, South Africa**. There she developed an interest in aerial disciplines and cloud swing became her speciality. Jaimee got also interested in the behind the scenes work and in 2012 she took a course with Artscape Theater about stage management, lights and sound. After the year long course Jaimee still felt like she wanted get back on stage herself and in 2014 she auditioned for **École Supérieure des Arts du Cirque in Brussels**. She got in and spent the next 3 years being coached in cloud swing by Roman Fedin. In spring 2017 Jaimee graduated from ESAC and **she joined straight away the Finnish trapeze trio Wise Fools**.



CONTACT:

Sirkum Polaris:

sirkum.polaris@gmail.com
+358407708896 (Valpuri Kaarninen)
www.sirkumpolaris.com
facebook.com/sirkumpolaris

Cie Nuua:

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facebook.com/cienuua