



UN LOUP
POUR
L'HOMME

GRAND-MOTHER PROJECT

OR « I WILL ALWAYS HAVE DREAMS, MUM »

CREATION 2021



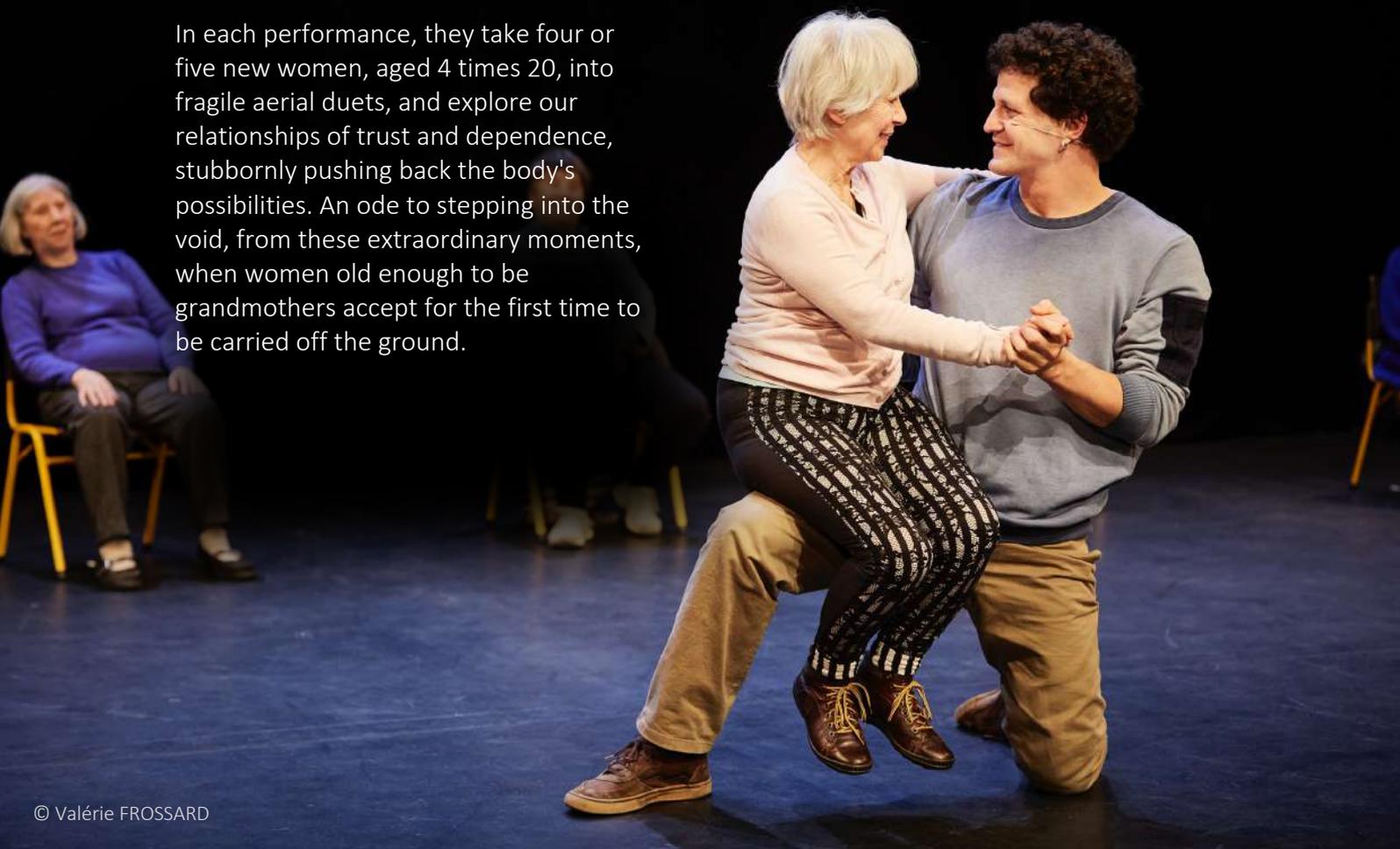
GRAND-MOTHER PROJECT

Or « I will always have dreams, mum »

You don't just suddenly let yourself be carried by a stranger. It takes time, a delicate search for intimacy and special attention. Alexandre Fray and André Rosenfeld Sznelwar, acrobatic bases, take it (in turns) to meet women of grandmotherly age.

With these elderly women who have never, or rarely, been carried, those acrobats question the stakes of a discipline that the horizon of prowess often leaves in the shadows.

In each performance, they take four or five new women, aged 4 times 20, into fragile aerial duets, and explore our relationships of trust and dependence, stubbornly pushing back the body's possibilities. An ode to stepping into the void, from these extraordinary moments, when women old enough to be grandmothers accept for the first time to be carried off the ground.



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Artistic direction

Alexandre Fray

Conception

Alexandre Fray, Miriam Kooyman, Cathy Blisson

With

Alexandre Fray
or André Rosenfeld Sznelwar
and 4 to 5 local grand-mothers

Sound design and grand-mother support

Cathy Blisson

External eye and space design - Christophe Bergon

Video and music - Karim Zeriahen

Technical manager - Pierre-Jean Faggiani (or Romain Antoine)

Production, booking, administration - Lou Henry, Emma Lefrançois, Chloé Vancutsem

Press - Estelle Laurentin

Thanks to Caroline Cardoso

Production - Un loup pour l'Homme

Coproduction

Le Manège scène nationale de Reims (FR-51), Centre Culturel Jean Houdremont La Courneuve (FR-93), Théâtre d'Arles scène conventionnée art et création pour les nouvelles écritures (FR-13), Cirque Théâtre d'Elbeuf Pôle National cirque Normandie (FR-76), Ay Roop scène de territoire pour les arts de la piste Rennes (FR-35).

Support

Lavrar o Mar - COSANOSTRA, Aljezur (PT), Festival de La Cité Lausanne (CH), La Faïencerie de Creil (FR-60). Un loup pour l'Homme is a member of Filage, a cooperative supporting artistic and cultural actors.

Funding

Hauts-de-France region. Un loup pour l'Homme is supported by the DRAC Hauts-de-France as aid to approved companies

ARTISTIC STATEMENT (ALEXANDRE FRAY)

What happens in an acrobatic workshop when it's difficult to turn your head, painful to hold your arm up, impossible to bend your knees?

But despite everything, these women are willing, even enthusiastic, ready to try, once they feel confident.

This is because most of them have a terrible fear of falling, and many of them have already experienced it.

They know that once they're down, they won't be able to get up on their own...

This fear is insidiously incorporated, and little by little, they no longer dare.

No more running, no more jumping, no more bending over.

To the point where they don't know what they're not doing because their bodies can't handle it, or what they're not doing because they think they can't do it.

And, of course, by doing nothing, the body unlearns.

Muscles melt, joints rust, the very image of gesture disintegrates.



What is carrying ? What is taking in charge, what is caring? Or how, at a time when the stranglehold of the inescapable tends to tighten its grip on bodies and lives, to consider acrobatic relationships as a way of reopening the possible.

All my work as an acrobat and performer is directed towards this encounter with the other, highlighting the specificity and beauty of a relationship that is always special. This time, it's not a circus partner with which I usually work, but people who have nothing to do with the world of performance: elderly people, in all the simplicity and complexity of their 4 times 20 years.

What I'm looking for is to take the time for these encounters, to tell each other stories, to listen to each other a lot, to create a climate that's conducive to building trust and getting closer, so that we can then move on to physical work.

There's no question of rushing into contact. It's a search for intimacy, imbued with a great deal of delicacy. You don't suddenly come to carry a stranger, to abandon yourself in someone's arms without this special attention. I want to take the people I meet into my own world of carrying, where the relationship with the other takes precedence. To go as far as possible, quietly, with each person, respecting their fears, their desires... To see what's going on in those extraordinary moments when you accept to be carried off the ground for the first time. To be attentive to the emotions that emerge during this work.

Then, I try as far as possible to prepare what will become a performance in public. Ultimately, it's this feedback to the public that interests me. Here too, you have to be extremely vigilant. Don't force anything, and listen carefully, in preparation and in the moment. Live the moment intensely, because it's all about being attentive to others.

At the crossroads of artistic, social and generational spheres, trusting others to trust oneself could be the credo of this project. To show, in the same gesture, to oneself and to others, that at any age, the extraordinary is always possible.



SET UP

The Grand-mother Project (as far as the public performance “I will always have dreams, mum” is concerned) takes the form of a 1h15 on stage, with the audience seated in the bleachers facing it.

The writing is conceived as a triptych, calling on different media to address three levels of perception of our issues: hearing, seeing, touching.



The first part is a video, projected on 3 screens in the form of a triptych altarpiece. This quasi-documentary work focuses on the body, and confronts the reality of acrobats in training, in full development of their abilities, with that of very elderly people, in institutions, striving to maintain their mobility.

The second part sees a grandmother enter the empty stage, in all the fragility and crudity of her walk to the face. Then another, another, another... And an acrobat. What is acrobacy when you're four times twenty? The approach of successive tasks, whose simplicity reveals their complexity, highlights this very specific cooperation, this need for each person to rely on the other in his or her place.



The last part is an auditory address to the audience, plunged into darkness. An interlacing of women's voices, whose paths are rooted in the previous century and continue to be part of our own.

Through this compilation of interviews with people we met during this long-term project, we reconstruct by resonance an image of what matters.



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By clarifying what is at stake in the gesture of carrying, this last part brings to light the singularities of each of the participants in a fleeting act, through their diversity, and illuminates the beauty of this twilight relationship.

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The specificity of this show lies in part in the exchange and work carried out beforehand with local grandmothers. The quality of the meeting with these grandmothers, and of the final performance, are therefore conditioned by the respect of a recruitment protocol, the main stages of which are outlined below:

At least one month before: Contacting and coordinating the search for participants

Contact with volunteers and writing exercise for volunteers.

Day 1 morning: Group meeting time, between workshop and casting

Morning 1.5-hour group workshop with identified volunteers, or more if needed.

Day 1 afternoon + Day 2 : Individual transmission

More precise, individualized work with those selected for the performance.
Transmission of a score: building confidence, working on the link and the relationship.

Day 3 : technical building and run-through

Set up of the stage, video, lighting and sound adjustments.
Rehearsals and run-through

Day 4 : Performance

End of technical adjustments in the morning.
Preparations, welcoming participants 2 hours before the show
Performance

From the participant's point of view :

Her approach must be voluntary.

The needs of the piece require a diversity of profiles and therefore a potential selection of participants.

Unfortunately, we can't always go all the way with everyone.



Complete protocol and technical sheet :

<https://unlouppeurhomme.com/ressources-pro/>

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ON TOUR

4 persons :

2 artists (arriving on D-4),

1 technical manager (arriving on D-2)

1 production director (arriving the performing day)

Departure of the team the D+1 morning

(Please note : for 3 performances, an off day is required)



POSSIBLE SIDE PROJECT

« The carried walk »

The carried walk is an artistic performance in public spaces. The acrobat crosses urban and non-urban spaces carrying a grandmother on his back. Offered up to the gaze and curiosity of passers-by, this gesture raises questions about how to deal with old age, while remaining first and foremost an ode to maternal tenderness, to what we owe our elders.

Making a short film

While a documentary has already been made, during the stage at La Courneuve, this short film, currently in the planning stage, would like to depict a staircase descent. We've met a number of single women who are still independent in their private apartments, but who have been unable to go out, sometimes for years, because of the insurmountable obstacle of the stairs. The idea would be to seek out a woman in this situation, if possible on the floor of a large stairwell, and assemble a directing team. Alexandre would then carry her outside...



THE TEAM

Alexandre FRAY



Professional acrobat for 20 years, artistic director of the company Un loup pour l'Homme founded 20 years ago.

Circus won out over judo and basic mathematics. After training at the Centre National des Arts du Cirque (2002), he discovered the profession. While pursuing artistic collaborations (with Guy Alloucherie, David Bobée...), he founded Cie Un Loup pour l'Homme with Fred Arsenault, to devote himself to a renewed circus practice, rooted in acrobatic lifts, freed from gymnastic or traditional constraints, unifying because naturally dedicated to considering others and their differences, and revealing our human nature.

In 2007, his emblematic duet Appris par corps laid the foundations of his contemporary artistic approach, which was extended in 2011 with the Face Nord quartet, then in 2017 with the piece Rare Birds, for 6 acrobats and dancers. In 2018, he directed Face Nord Femmes, a female recreation of the quartet.

Since 2006, he has been leading the "Projet grand-mère" project, in which he questions his practice as a performer in contact with the elderly. He initiates unique cooperative ventures, with the world of care (Erasmus project _ with psychiatric disorders_) or particular territories (Invite yourself to the circus, in Flanders-Lys, Ride & Camp _ itinerant forum to support artistic emergence in the Balkans_). He regularly shares his approach in workshops, intervention projects or at the invitation of other creators. In 2022, he directed a new show, Dans l'espace.

André ROSENFELD SZNELWAR



André Rosenfeld Szelwar is a Brazilian circus artist born in Sao Paulo, and trained in 2012 at ESACTO'LIDO - école supérieure des arts du cirque in Toulouse - France.

With his acrobatic partner Renata do Val, they created the Kitsch Kong company. Their artistic dynamism, based on body aesthetics and humor, comes from learning to laugh at their despair. Even if they don't speak to speak, they're not there to say nothing. Together, they produced Ça Trouble and then In Perhappiness, a show that hilariously dissects the mechanisms of happiness. At the same time, he worked with several circus companies, including FERIA Musica (Brussels) and Cie d'Elles (Toulouse).

In 2019, he met the company Un loup pour l'homme, with whom he is still collaborating today. Today, he also works with the companies Le Doux Supplice (Nîmes) and El salto.

Cathy BLISSON



Journalist, dramaturg and designer of documentary performances, Cathy Blisson creates multimedia projects based on writing about reality. A journalist for nine years at Télérama, she specialized in coverage of hybrid contemporary creation, at the crossroads of scenic disciplines and the visual arts.

Still occasionally freelancing, she has collaborated with Libération and Mouvement magazine. As a playwright, she also accompanies research teams (Un Loup Pour l'Homme, Naïf Production, Le Clair Obscur, etc.) to whom she lends her pen, her ear and a certain vision: sound creation

pieces and workshops, dramaturgy for transdisciplinary projects, adaptation of novels for the stage, etc.

Miriam KOOYMAN



After working in the psychiatric sector for 8 years, Miriam set up her own company, Geen Cirkus zonder Suiker, to create visual concepts that enable people to connect. Over the past 12 years, she has worked mainly with installations, costumes and actions that question the act of selling a product or experience. Passionate about both psychoanalysis and visual communication, Miriam also works as a designer or critical eye in live performance.

UN LOUP POUR L'HOMME

The circus company 'Un loup pour l'homme', through its approach of acrobatic hand to hand balancing, aims at defending a vision of humanity made up of social individuals, as different as they are dependent from each other. Enamored of power and freedom, the acrobat appears relentlessly grappling with his own limits; standing the strain of his relation to the other, man reveals his greatness and weakness, the complexity of his human nature.

The origins of Un loup pour l'homme lie in the encounter between two acrobats, the French carrier Alexandre Fray, and the flying crobat Frédéric Arsenault from Quebec. Triggered by two shows created under the direction of Guy Alloucherie, they decide in 2005 to initiate a specific research on their approach of hand to hand balancing. To them, these acrobatics are not only a raw material to give shape to, but primarily a strong relationship between two men.

For Un Loup pour l'Homme, more than a material to give shape to, hand-to-hand balancing is a language and a way to study human relations. The company believes that acrobatic art is about action rather than demonstration. It is an art form where the virtuosity of artists enables to understand mankind in a sensitive way. The group dynamic is always triggered by a voracious curiosity and the wish to put into question what seems to be taken for granted, not really to push one's limits but rather to open the range of possibilities.

With nearly 750 performances of **Appris par corps** (2006), winner of the Prix Jeunes Talents Cirque Europe), **Face Nord** (2011), **Rare Birds** (2017), and **the female revival of Face Nord** (2018), **Cuir** (2020), **Projet grand-mère** (2021), **Dans l'Espace** (2022) and **Passing Swiftly** (2023), the company's influence is now national and international.

Un loup pour l'Homme, which likes to define itself as a "contemporary, itinerant, humanist acrobatic company", has taken a new turn with the acquisition of a big top for the creation of Rare Birds. This mobile equipment, the company's real home, engages its members in a collective adventure and enables another form of integration and action on the ground. After **Ride&Camp** in 2019, which took the company on the roads of the Balkans for several months on the road, the company has been experimenting since 2021 with a long set-up format (lasting several weeks), combining performances, rehearsals, cultural activities, the use of the big top and festive events. In 2024, the company will launch the first edition of **Des Jours Heureux**, an itinerant circus festival in the Hauts-de-France region !

In 2020, Arno Ferrera and Mika Lafforgue created the duo **Cuir**, based on human traction and attraction. Initiated in 2003 by Alexandre Fray, it was in 2021 that **Le Projet Grand-Mère** (or J'aurai toujours des rêves, maman) came a participative triptych involving local senior women.

Since November 2022, **Dans l'Espace**, a circular big-top show for 4 acrobats and 2 live musicians, has continued to tour.

2023 was the year of 2 light creations : **Passing Swiftly**, directed by Špela Vodeb and Christine Daigle, and **Moi Aussi !** directed by Alexandre FRAY and Špela VODEB with 2 apprentices from the Académie Fratellini.

The company is subsidized by the DRAC Hauts-de-France, receives support for its activities from the Région Hauts-de-France, and is associated with Prato, Pôle National Cirque in Lille.



Passing Swiftly © Fabien DEBRABANDERE



Dans l'espace © Valérie Frossard

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