

# HIMMEL IN SICHT

With: Luzie Ackers, Marianne Cornil, Katja Tannert, Kristi Hughes (Performers) Werner Wallner (Set Design, Technical Director) Mathilde Salaun (Set Design -Intern), Lilli Döscher (Intern) ,Janko Hanushewsky (Music), Aleksandar Acev (Artistic Advisor), Melle Hug (Costume Design)

Sky in Sight is a devised work under the artistic direction of Luzie Ackers and Marianne Cornil. The world premiere took place on May 22, 2010 at the European Street Theatre Festival in Detmold, Germany.

Through the poetry of visual theatre, the trials and beauty of old age are set in short scenes as the production proceeds through the streets.

An old fisherman embarks on his greatest journey, perhaps his last.

Along the way, he encounters schools of fish, a sea of people and an unexpected, massive catch.

Interview collages from people who have lived a long time become the thoughts and reflections of the old fisherman in the story. The narrative is derived from personal testimonies.

At the end, the audience is invited to explore an installation: read texts, listen to individual interviews, look at photographs collected from interviewees and drink a cup of coffee...and perhaps have a chat with the old fisherman himself.

Sky in Sight may be adapted to each performance location through a research period with elderly persons living in that region.

To watch the trailer with English subtitles, please go to:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48FojgKWys>





# THEATRE FRAGILE

Maskentheater im Öffentlichen Raum, Berlin

TheatreFragile is researching new theatrical forms. The Berlin theatre company's productions intertwine dramatic and fine arts with documentary theatre through a combination of mask performance, walk-through art installations, documentary research and fictional narrative.

For each presentation in a different town or region, the team begins with getting to know individuals who closely relate to the chosen theme. For Sky in Sight, the performers meet with persons of 80 years and older.

After a research and rehearsal period, the sound collage and installation are adapted to the performance location and the group of interviewees, therefore giving the interviews, objects, texts and songs a more personal significance. The audience listens to fellow townspeople, neighbours and friends reflect on how it feels to be old, and they look at photos, read texts and letters from people they likely know.

TheatreFragile seeks a new vocabulary that can unite the magic of mask play with the direct audience contact of street theatre. They are fascinated by the various levels of play between distance and proximity, everyday life and the poetic universe of theatre.

Through subtle mask play, TheatreFragile stays in an agile awareness and alertness –listening and reacting with moments of suspension and empathy.

A playfulness with the audience and an invitation to come closer to see and listen to the treasures of the installation give TheatreFragile productions opportunities to share and interact with individuals as well as the group at large.

Currently in the company's repertoire are three devised works and a fourth is in planning. Sky in Sight is the third production. The second show, We meet in paradise - a visual poem about migration – was supported by IN SITU, a European Commission platform for the creation of street arts.



## PRESS:

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### „Life as a Boat Through All Weather Conditions

Heppenheim, Germany.

A human life melds many impressions together. From youth to old age, one's strength, companions and view of things transform. How powerful and full of life one's own existence here is, depends on one's personal point of view. This was illustrated by Berlin-based TheatreFragile with *Sky in Sight* at the Gassensensationen Festival.

The ensemble from Berlin takes on important social and largely sociopolitical themes. In *We meet in paradise*, which was performed last year at the Gassensensationen, they delved into the personal stories of migrants. *Sky in Sight* shows how people deal with the process of growing old.

#### Interviews Carried Out Beforehand

During the creation process, the ensemble ties itself to concrete cases, which are collected, worked through and anonymised and which will then be integrated into the piece. In 2009 and 2010, the actresses conducted interviews with elderly persons in Berlin, Braunschweig and Detmold. These interviews make up the foundation of *Sky in Sight*.

For many over eighty, the sky is a symbol of eternity after death which actually is in view. "I don't have any fear of death, in of itself, but of all that could come before," says one of the interviewees. During the production, the interview excerpts are played over a loudspeaker from a laptop, and what is said is transposed into images.

#### An Articulate Metaphorical Language

The Berlin-based ensemble, TheatreFragile, uses an articulate metaphorical language. The main character of the story is a man, who as a young and old man, (played by Marianne Cornil and Luzie Ackers), determines the action. A fisherman takes off one more time on a ship, returning to memories in his life, and at the end, sharing his experiences with others.

This exchange is exactly what the Berliner theatre group is seeking with the audience. In TheatreFragile's productions, it is not intended that the audience leave immediately at the end of the show after the applause; rather, that they come closer to the installation on the reconstructed, mobile stage and explore. Excerpts from individual interviews may be listened to, quotes may be read and questions about one's own perception of growing old may be answered. In this way, by reading, writing and listening, audience members themselves become part of the installation as they drink coffee and eat biscuits.

"We serve coffee and biscuits because when we went to people's homes for interviews, we drank coffee and ate cake together," says Kristi Hughes from TheatreFragile.

As an echo of life's long voyage, the production *Sky in Sight* personifies life's movement by not staying in one place. Scenes travel from one venue to the next, becoming a wandering theatre. (...) The audience follows the old man on his journey through life, passing through tumultuous storms before reaching calm waters again.

The image of life as a boat that braves through all weather conditions serves as the main metaphor in the piece. It was also this picture that stayed in the audience's minds. "In my life I've tried to be like a boat on water, always staying afloat.," emphasized one of the women interviewed.

### Growing Old Does Not Mean Giving Up

Aging does not mean abandoning one's memory. The "elderly", referred to by TheatreFragile, are still agile, sometimes politically active people who are content with their lives. When speaking of modern wars, this older generation says that they "are senseless" because war does not solve anything. "What wishes do I have?-- Peace in the world," affirms one of the men interviewed.

In *Sky in Sight*, the image of older people is to a great extent positive and yet realistic. Of course, physical hindrances in the old fisherman as well as in the interview excerpts are articulated. This production shows, however, that aging is not an ill fate, rather a challenge that one must actively face.

*Sky in Sight* is a co-production of the Academy of Music Braunschweig, the New Yorker and La Strada Street Theatre Festival in Graz, Austria. Supported by Fonds Darstellende Künste e.V (Foundation for the Performing Arts, Germany) and Stiftung Braunschweiger Kulturbesitz (Braunschweig Cultural Heritage Foundation).

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