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### Silk Wings: The Making of Noma

SANDRA C. LOPEZ-MONSALVE  
*Cuny Graduate School of Journalism*

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## **SILK WINGS: The Making of Noma**

A documentary by Sandra Lopez-Monsalve, Spring 2016

Link: <https://youtu.be/5F5xG55IjbQ>

Duration: 12'48"

### **Synopsis**

*Silk Wings: The Making of Noma* is a documentary that follows a group of aerialists, dancers and acrobats as they create an original new show. Conceived and directed by aerialist and choreographer Sara Zepezauer, *Noma* is a show that explores sight, sound, and movement.

Through beautifully shot performances and intimate interviews, the film follows Sara and her troupe through the path of creation and personal motivations. In this vibrant journey, Sara finds inspiration to cope with her father's diagnosed carcinoma.

*Silk Wings* is a story about creativity, perseverance, hope and friendship.

### **Treatment**

Blackout, light comes up and we can see a woman looking up, contemplating a rope made out of silk. After a few moments, she climbs and tangles her limbs gracefully through the champagne-color fabric. Then, Sara Zepezauer proceeds to do arcs, passes and other movements some 15-feet above the floor.

While she tests the silk, we hear her voice as she reflects on what she feels while performing on the silks:

"I feel free, sounds cliché, but I do feel free."

"I feel in control, and powerful, and beautiful. I feel everything."

The stage lights go black and we see the title of the film:

*Silk Wings: The Making of Noma*

Brooklyn Bridge appears on the screen followed by the New York City skyline.

On a black box it reads:

"Noma is an exploration of sight, sound, and movement created by a group of aerialists, dancers and musicians in Brooklyn, NY.

Conceived and directed by Sara Zepezauer, it premiered in September 2015 at the Theater for the New City's Dream Up Festival.

This film follows their creative journey."

Our story begins at the Brooklyn Airspace Studio in New York, 22 days before the premiere of the show. Wrapped in a blue silk some 6-feet high, Sara practices her aerial movements and considers about the risks of falling.

Short segments of the show are revealed followed by a dramatic scene. We see a dark figure brutally attacking Sara, who fights to free herself. Sara reveals that she was inspired to create Noma because of her need to express her frustration with her father's illness; he was diagnosed with carcinoma, a type of cancer.

19 days to opening night and we find our performers warming up on a public park. The troupe of dancers and acrobats mark some of the positions they will use on the show.

The camera is now framing green trees at McCarren Park in Brooklyn; Sara begins to explain her ideas for another piece, where the troupe runs around escaping from the darkness. While Sara explains, the camera follows the girls rehearsing.

Back in the aerial studio, Sara meditates wrapped in the blue silk. She explains what Noma is, the culmination of her artistic path. Sara talks to the camera while we see glimpses of the show she is creating.

11 days to the premiere and we see another group of performers rehearsing a different number in the show.

Wednesday, September 2, 7 days to opening night and we find Sara and the troupe marking the light changes for the show. We hear Sara talking about how she feels.

The camera goes to the Theater for the New City. 1 day to opening night and the full troupe is warming up in the theater and Sara talks about the importance of teamwork in the creation of her show.

On the day of the show, we see people buying tickets and Sara entering the theater. We see backstage, and makeup and hair sessions, and then people are rushing to organize props and rig the silk from the ceiling.

The camera runs backstage with the performers as the theater's manager calls "House in 5." Sara calls for a prayer circle. In an intimate moment, the viewer is right next to the performers as Sara thanks them and asks them to give their best on stage.

The camera is now on stage capturing moments of the show. Beautiful shots gave the viewer a sneak peek into the live show. We see many bodies that create a bigger and moving entity. Sara talks about the driving force of her piece.

The camera shows Sara high on a silk, dancing on the air beautifully. Her body moves with the music defying gravity, amazing and challenging the viewer.

The last reaction of Sara about the intimate process of creating this show accompanies her performance until dramatically she reaches the highest point of the silk, the music goes silent and she falls like a star crossing the sky. The screen goes black.

## **Structure and Style**

Silk Wings visits the mind of aerialist Sara Zepezauer, and documents the month and a half that takes her and her crew to create, stage and perform the show “Noma” at the Theater for the New City. Powerful action footage of performers in action and insightful interviews frame and contextualize the creative journey.

Combining a vérité approach and animation, the film seeks to explore and expose creative minds in action. Viewers will enjoy incredible access to witness the struggles of Sara and her crew as they attempt to create art by putting at risk their own lives every step of the way.

The visual combination of hand-held camera, steady shots, and motion storytelling will place the viewer right next to the performers, feeling their pain and their joy. The camera follows Sara while she works with her team in public parks, aerial spaces, a theater and even rooftops. Multiple points of view of the show, allow the audience an enhanced experience of the beauty of movement.

## **Audience**

The target audiences for this short piece are people in the dance, theater, and circus community. The film offers an enriched experience of an improvisation-based show.

This film follows a creative mind and her experimentation with sight, sound, and movement. This is a film that explores passion, friendship, and creativity; it captures performers challenging artistic boundaries.

As an arts journalist, I feel compelled to share this insights and passion for the use of the human body to communicate ideas.