



WATER

Written by Amina Henry / Directed by Gretchen Van Lente / Designed by Angelica Borrero

THE SITUATION...

WATER focuses on the country of Ethiopia. It is located in the Eastern part of the continent of Africa. The country is a Federal Democratic Republic. Within this new system of government (which was adapted in 1993), the country has known unrest off and on since 1998. This includes border disputes, violent riots and, in 2011, two consecutively missed rainy seasons brought about the worst drought that East Africa had seen in 60 years. The weather in Ethiopia is typically rainy, though, so you might ask why they don't have enough water to drink? Well even if it rains, when it is so hot the water evaporates very quickly, leaving ponds and wells completely dry. Also, many of the water sources are dirty and people get sick from drinking from them. Remember - they are not just looking for water, but water that is safe to drink. Here are two very different accounts of growing up in Ethiopia, along with some other information: <https://thewaterproject.org/water-crisis/water-in-crisis-ethiopia>

THE STORY...

In the play WATER, Sela lives with her mother in a village in Ethiopia. Bo is a boy in her village who is in love with her. It is Sela's job to get the water. It takes all day: 3 and a half hours to get to the clean water well, and 3 and a half hours to get back home. Once the water jug is full it is very heavy. And the road is not paved so it is not the most pleasant walk. Not to mention the wild animals, hot temperatures, and angry Gods that might pop up (Read more about them below). I don't want to give anymore away about what happens in the story....

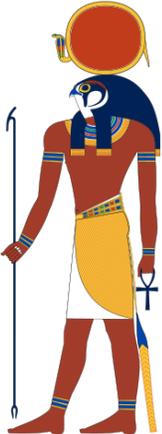
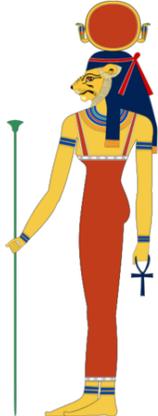
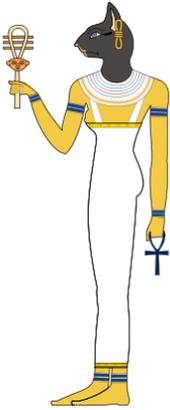
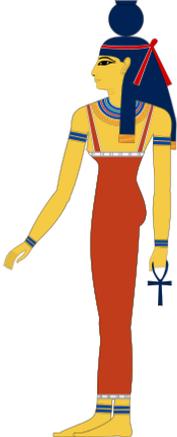
THE DESIGN & PUPPETRY...

As you can see in the show, there are not many puppets in this piece. It is a visual play, with puppets. The Goddess tells a myth with fans, transforms into a cat and a snake, and makes toys come to life. An overhead projector creates moving scenery and special effects. Simple percussion instruments are used to punctuate important moments in the piece. But really the play is about how the actors move about the space. Originally the actors walked, really walked, and the audience had to move with them. We have since adapted the show to be presented in a more traditional manner, so that it can be seen by more people. You can get a sense of both versions on the website. Which way do you think you like better?

<https://www.dramaofworks.com/water>

WATER -- WHO ARE ALL THOSE GODS?

Today the major religions of Africa are Christianity and Islam. But about 10% of the population still practice traditional or older religions. You may notice in the play that Sela is going on and on about the Gods. It really annoys Bo sometimes. But who are these "old" Gods Sela cares so much about? For this, Amina took inspiration from the Pantheon of Egyptian Gods - a country north of Ethiopia...

	<p>NU</p> <p>The watery chaos. Some call him the father of Ra. Others believe it was from Nu that Ra created the world.</p> <p>RA</p> <p>The Egyptian God of the sun. All forms of life were believed to be created by Ra. He is represented as a human with a falcon's head.</p>	
	<p>TEFNUT</p> <p>The Goddess of rain and rivers. She is the daughter of Ra and sister to Shu. She is represented with a lion's head</p> <p>SHU</p> <p>The God of peace. He is the son of Ra and brother to Tefnut. He is represented in human form with an ostrich feather.</p>	
	<p>NUT</p> <p>The Goddess of the sky. She is the daughter of Tefnut. At night she swallows up Ra and then gives birth to him every morning.</p> <p>BAST</p> <p>The Goddess of protection and joy. She is the protector of women, and enjoys music and dance. She is represented as a sacred cat.</p>	

Some more about the Egyptian Gods and Goddesses:

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/history/egypt/ancient-egypt-gods/>