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https://husamabed.com/



The Smooth Life

Brief:

A non-traditional solo documentary puppet performance for 8 spectators with a culinary surprise at the end. Stories and situations from the family life of a Palestinian man born and raised in a refugee camp in Jordan, performed and directed by him in an intimate account of his homeland's history since 1948's Palestinian Nakbah/Catastrophe.

Husam Abed was born and raised in Baqa'a refugee camp, the biggest Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. Audience sit around the table while food is prepared, he tells the stories of his family's diaspora in a charming and evocative way in the context of the political events in region. With soulful music and the power of the objects you get very close to something that seems very distant. All this is accompanied by video projections objects, photos, maps, videos and especially raw "recycled" materials - tin cans, wire, paper, wood, rice grains - and a good old storytelling. Abed speaks loudly, whispers, hits the table with his fist, sings and dances. We hear stories about a life and experiences far away from our reality. At the table, art connects with life and creation mixed with realism. Abed uses the stories of his own personal and daily life to create an atmosphere that fills all our senses.

Creative Team:

Stage Design: Réka Deák | Dramaturge: Marek Turošík | Performed and directed by: Husam Abed | Music: Folk, Tareq Al Jundi, Sokout, Sanaa Mousa, Rim Banna | Production @ DAMU - Czech Republic

Premier 24 May 2014 @ KALD - DAMU

About the performer:

Husam Abed is a Palestinian Jordanian theatre director, puppeteer, musician and producer who is living in Kladno/Czechia. He holds a master of Directing for Alternative and Puppet theatre at DAMU /Czechia. He is a PhD student at Bath Spa University/UK. He is a co-founder of Praguebased theatre company Dafa Puppet Theatre. He is a co-founder of LIV'in festival in Czechia and Ya Kahyal Theatre Lab. for refugee and local youth in Jordan. His performances took part in festivals in Europe, Arab countries and South East Asia.

Publishing materials:

Smooth Life was highlighted at:

Purcell-Gates L. (2020) Spectacular Bodies, Unsettling Objects: Material Performance as Intervention in Stereotypes of Refugees. In: Meerzon Y., Dean D., McNeil D. (eds) Migration and Stereotypes in Performance and Culture. Contemporary Performance InterActions. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-39915-3_3





Trailer:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3-5FzJ4yIU

Full video:

https://vimeo.com/188585280

Performance at Atalnte Theatre, Goteborg, Sweden

Reviews:

"I think it is kind of theatre occasion which is based on this kind of meeting at the table. From some point of view, it is eating ritual. Its intimacy was done not only by the space, but also according to the story. One's personal experience with his culture, traditions different from western world, but the way of thinking is many times the same. I think it is kind of Lehrstücke-kind of his personal and artistic statement and lesson - one finds his/her own home after leaving it. At least this is kind of lesson for me".

MgA. Eva Kyselova - pedagogue at DAMU - Prague

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"What a powerful performance. I was impressed by the attention to details and choice of set design, the symbolisms used throughout the play (The rice to represent family members) the map, the circular approach, the natural material, found objects used in order to create the puppets. Husam tells his story in a very impactful way, while creating a very intimate, safe, and inviting experience for his audience. I was moved by his personal story, his relationship with his father, its many different intertwined layers rooted and tied in with Historical facts. Again Which I thought was told with great perspective and respect for his audience. I felt totally transported. That sense of hope and resolved he gives despite such hardship transpires throughout his play. A very moving story, told in a beautiful way - rich in colors and flavors. A must experience".

Stephanie Filippi - Prologue to the Performing Arts - Toronto - Canada

"I want to mention my greatest experience - different from other events -I took at this year of Skupa's Pilsen. It was just before the midnight on Thursday at the club of Alfa Theatre and it was the show of Palestinian refugee Husam Abed, currently a student of KALD at Academy of Performing Arts who lives in Prague now, sitting around a small table we watched him playing and narrating about his life and about the fate of his family. He gave us a strong personal witness about the sorrows and tragedies of people coming from areas of Israeli-Jordanian region. The performance was called Smooth Life and Abed told (eight spectators seated around a wooden table) in Arabic and English about escape of his father and mother from Israel (Palestine) into Jordan, about life there, his emigration from there, the complicated relationship with his father and his death, which came before they could meet after years and - perhaps reconcile. All this was accompanied by video projections and used photographs, maps, and especially raw "recycled" materials - tin cans, wire, paper, wood, grains of rice. He spoke aloud, whispered, banged his fist on the table, sang, danced, looked into our eyes. Finally, he served us during the show prepared tea and boiled rice with sauce and meat. It is performance straight as a real life. Performance that hits and strokes you together. I wish all spectators. creators and festival promoters to see or invite productions like this one". Vladimir Hulec - Critic and Jury member of 30th Skupa Plzen 2014 -Czech Republic, LOUTKAR magazine - page 22-27, translated by Katerina Lešková-Dolenská, 4 /2014

It was truly surprising and exotic being audience at Husam Abed's performance and to have the opportunity to see his play was a miracle too. In a small flat of my small hometown, separated from the rest of the world, suddenly I was the guest of a world-traveler, I could listen his story, and the story of his family and of his nation, and of his planet; I mean the world through the eyes of his rich culture. It is a performance if you want, he uses puppets also, but in a very natural way, so it seems that he just uses objects to make me understand better the language that he speaks during the evening, and I'm a guest in his home, invited for a dinner and talk.

Attila Budaházi, dramaturge, Miercurea Ciuc, Romania, 10/4/2015







"From the personal autobiographic story to the strong theatre statement by using traditional homemade storytelling visual elements as well as original puppet theatre elements and that all packed into family get-together with food and drink".

MgA, Brano Mazuch - pedagogue at DAMU - Prague

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"Funny and altogether sad story a little bit about a family coming from different culture. A story that touches the audience".

MgA. Katerina Lešková-Dolenská - Senior Editor at LOUTKAR "Puppeteer" magazine

"Smooth Life is an interesting personal peep into somebody's life - life so different from our European experience, yet full of love, hope and expectations. Husam creates an atmosphere for all senses; therefore his solo is so impressive you want to participate even more".

MgA, Marta Ljubkova - pedagogue at DAMU - Prague

Smooth life? I would like everyone to visit this show. You spend even an hour and a half in nice company, all you will not perceive the time. Already for a long time didn't happen to me that I was so pulled into a story that someone tells. I became on there for an hour and a half of the total part of the whole performance. Mr. Husam Abed is able to play so that you have the feeling that you're not at the theater, that it's a fact. You feel his feelings and experience it with him. It is an experience that you vryje under the skin and into the mind. At all we didn't want to leave. The sheer respect and recognition! I liked the puppets, ideas, theatre work, music ... it was for me inspirational. It was the interconnection and use of all the senses. I Applaud!!! And thank you!!! Milena Stoklasova, Teacher, Czech Republic, July 9, 2015.

Husam Abed's 'The Smooth Life' a solo performance telling the story of Palestinian family life in a refugee camp was one such performance. This was an intimate show that used puppetry and object theatre to unravel a personal history within a deeply divisive and violent political narrative. Staying clear of propaganda, 'The Smooth Life' is all the more powerful and thought-provoking for the normality and joyful moments of life that it portrays in the face of brutal politics.

https://puppetplace.wordpress.com/2015/11/20/rachels-puppetry-festival-round-up/

Rachel MacNally, a member Jury of A puppet is a human too festival and executive producer at Puppet Place UK, 20 November 2015.

Tonight I went to see a very intimate immersive theatre piece performed by Husam Abed with puppets made by his wife Reka Deak who also ran the film, slides and video. While he performed he also was cooking a delicious chicken and rice which he fed us at the end. Billed as "A non-traditional documentary and puppet performance for eight spectators with a culinary surprise at the end" the play re/quires the audience to engage with the issues, the performance and each other in a very authentic way. Unlike the highly structured small audience pieces in the festival, this one leaves room for improvisation and it creates a kind of genuine awkwardness- a little uncomfortable and therefor quite moving. Palestinian Husam Abed was born and raised in a refugee camp in Jordan. In a charming and evocative way he tells the stories of his family in the context of the political events in his country over the past 30 years. The puppets are rough and whimsical and he and his wife are filled with warmth and kindness. Shukran.

http://www.jessicalitwak.com/travel-blog/2015/11/25/smooth-life
Jessica Litwak, La Mama Theatre, New York, USA, 25 November 2015.



"It was really breathtaking! Thank you so much for wonderful energy and delicious meal <3".

Josefa Silena, spectator, <u>Valdštejnská lodžie - kulturní imaginárium</u>, Czech Republic, 9th Nov. 2018.

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Reviews at Macao Fringe Festival:

文/林冰冰 (駐節藝評人, 澳門)

何族崇義堂,這個澳門少見的阿拉伯風格建築,曾經是祠堂、是學校、還是「豬仔館」,一個經歷豐富的空間,導演阿比在這裡撐起一張圓桌,為我們帶來他的成長經歷。

一盞溫暖的小燈,觀眾與演員圍著飯桌,親密的距離,觀看的是世界另一端的故事。米飯的香氣,充斥著整個空間,讓人彷彿來到阿比家裡做客。手工戲偶,帶著粗糙的質感,那是艱難時刻,匱乏時代的自娛自樂。演員的動作表情,聲音配襯,沒有特意地傳遞痛苦,自嘲幽默的手法,卻更加讓人動容。阿比用米來講述故事,米粒是人,是在顛沛流離中樂觀堅強的人,是在砲彈硝煙中如米粒般渺小的人。中東的圓形樂器,悠悠地敲響,有些事,我們不能忽視。

https://www.facebook.com/notes/%E5%8D%87%E8%A9%95%E9%81%8B%E5%8B%95/%E5%8F%8A%E6%99%82%E5%8A%87%E8%A9%95%E5%B7%B4%E5%8B%92%E6%96%AF%E5%9D%A6%E5%A4%A7%E9%A3%AF%E5%BA%97/1494525537242821?hc_ref=PAGES_TIMELINE

http://aamacau.com/2017/02/08/2017-

%E6%BE%B3%E9%96%80%E8%97%9D%E7%A9%97%E5%9C%B0%E5%90%8D%E6%9B %B8%EF%BC%9A%E7%B5%A6%E4%B8%8B%E4%B8%80%E5%80%8B%E5%9F%8E%E5 %B8%82%E6%96%87%E5%8C%96%E7%9A%84%E5%8D%81%E5%B9%B4%E5%82%99 %E5%BF%98/

"It is an intimate story-telling, of a bloody history of the Palestinians since WWII, and a soul-searching journey of a great artist and his compassion for humanity. Powerful! The tea was still warming my heart and the aromatic food still nourishing my hunger for truth. Superb!" Wailap Kwong, Hong Kong, China.

若不是觀賞《巴勒斯坦大飯店》,真不知道澳門有座名字和用途都十分中式的伊斯蘭式建築物:何族崇義堂,圍坐着充滿乾坤法寶的圓桌,聽主人翁阿比講述他的成長故事。經過滾動傀儡另類劇場近年來的推廣,早已習慣神遊在人偶交織出的魔幻世界,但藝術是沒有邊界的,這次演出的驚喜位在於食物:米粒呈現出生命的渺小和流離、偷吃青瓜的懵懂記憶、狠摔蘋果的倔強歲月、維多C和水之間如戀愛般的化學作用,阿比的回憶載體似乎離不開食物。無情的戰火「砰」的一聲把米堆炸往天南地北,其中一粒造訪到了澳門,黏在指頭上的是人,煮在鍋裏的是飯,吃進肚子裏的是情,故事從哪裡開始都沒關係,重要的是我們如何書寫故事。Roy Lee, Macao, China.

「第十六屆澳門藝穗節」

22/1 13:00

《巴勒斯坦大飯店》非常獨特的體驗,在圓桌上以玩偶講述個人及家族的歷史,難民營間的遷徙路線,說著學習、戀愛及成長的小故事。最欣賞是身兼導演及演出者的阿比,對節奏的掌握、情感的細膩呈現,及在說唱間營造的哀愁氣氛。飯煮好,眾人邊捧著飯碗吃著香香的飯,邊閒談聊天,演出並無明確的結束,到最後就真的像參加了一場家族飯聚。

22/1 16:00

「藝評擂台陣」港澳台三地藝評人分享觀演體驗與評論。







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https://www.facebook.com/%E6%88%91%E4%BD%9C%E5%8A%87%E8%A9%95-173934089612812/?hc_ref=PAGES_TIMELINE

當演員說他在捷克上大學後,爸爸開始和他談更多,開始明白他在做什麼,直至看到他慢慢地演繹爸爸的餘生。我靜默,眼淚想掉下來。國家之間的紛爭,作為人民,默默承受;兩代之間的掛心牽絆,總望有冰釋一刻。坐在我旁的菲律賓觀眾,我特意用不太靈光的英文解釋我們對談時的廣東話。希望能在於我這小小卻獨特的城市裡,外鄉人能得到一點溫暖。正如這碗巴勒斯坦米飯的溫暖。

「巴勒斯坦飯店」澳門城市藝穗節 Sandy Leong, Hong Kong, China.

及時劇評一《巴勒斯坦大飯店》

<巴勒斯坦大飯店>的及時短評

文/喬亞(駐節藝評人, 澳門)

捨棄華麗的舞台佈景、燈光和道具,樸素的自製偶物,反而更能細說出器物背後與人的情感連結。輕輕一個吻,幾件生活軼事,無需長篇大論,無懼語言隔閡,7500公里不是距離,觀眾輕易進入劇作者的世界,一個多小時內,同喜同悲。

劇作者胡辛. 阿比的成長背景特殊, 因此雖然以「小戲」的形式呈現. 但故事映照出個人、國家與時代三者交織的命運, 加上於一座歷史感厚的建築裡演出, 餘韻悠長。演出以一頓熱氣騰騰的中東雞肉飯(配原味乳酪)作結, 表演者與觀眾閒話家常, 除了藝穗節以外, 亦難尋得此般光景。

https://www.facebook.com/notes/%E5%8D%87%E8%A9%95%E9%81%8B%E5%8B %95/%E5%8F%8A%E6%99%82%E5%8A%87%E8%A9%95%E5%B7%B4%E5%8B%92%E6% 96%AF%E5%9D%A6%E5%A4%A7%E9%A3%AF%E5%BA%97/1494525537242821

برافو، قبعات مرفوعة. شغل ممتاز، أداء عظيم، الدمي المنفذة تتناسب تماماً والقصة بوحشيتها ومينيماليّتها في آن. أهمية "الحياة السلسة" أنه يحوّل التفاصيل اليوميّة إلى أحداث داخل السياقات الكبرى، أي أنّه يعيد إنتاج الفرد داخل التاريخ، بدل الفرد اللاتاريخي الذي أنتجته الرأسمالية وأنماطها الاستهلاكيّة مؤخرًا؛ وفي ذات الوقت: يعيد إنتاج فكرة "الوطن" و"الهوية" خارج سياقات الجغرافيا الانتدابيّة من جانب، وخارج سياق القداسة السلطوية التي تتوقع من الأفراد "التضحية بدمائهم" وحياتهم ومستقبلهم وأولادهم من أجل هياكل كرتونية تفيد استمرار السلطة ذاتها ولا تفيد جمهور الناس. الاستعانة بحبّات الرزّ كمجاز للبشر، حبّات صغيرة، تُطهي وتؤكل، ويتم التلاعب بها، لكن عندما تأتي داخل "شوال"، فهي ثقيلة ووازنة ومؤثرة: هذا مجاز يختزل واقع "الجمهور" من حيث المكانيّة المغيّبة من جانب، وواقعه المُتلاعب به، من جانب آخر. الحياة الفرجة في النهاية داخل صندوق الفرجة على الوجع، وكذلك التنفيذ بهذه الطريقة الحميمة التي تخلّف انزعاجاً ومضايقة في ذات الوقت.

هشام البستاني، كاتب أردني، 29 حزيران 2017

:)



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Where the performance toured before: (220 performances)

Process 6 festival, Academy of Performing Arts, Czech Republic, May 2014. (8 performances)

https://www.facebook.com/events/247669662088045/

Zonglobalizace festival, Pilsen, 1 June 2014. (1 performance)

Arabian Iranian Cultural Evening, Veseli Nad Moravou, Czech Republic, 4 June 2014. (2 performances)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUbJte18lXM

30th Skupa's Pilsen Festival, Divadlo Alfa, Pilsen, Czech Republic, 16-18 June 2014. (3 performances)

http://www.divadloalfa.cz/skupova-plzen/index.php/en/o-festivalu-2 (Off program)

Open Air Festival, Hradec Karlove, Czech Republic, 26 June 2014. (2 performances).

Alfred ve Dvore, Prague, Czech Republic 17 July, 2014. (Special performance for NOVA Czech T.V.)

http://tn.nova.cz/clanek/vikend/vikend-loutkova-predstaveni-kterym-se-tleska-ve-stoje.html

Art Residency "Talent for sale", Kudowa Zdroj, Poland, 18 Oct. 2014. (1 performance)

Backstreet festival, Teatro Alexandria, Egypt, 22 Oct. 2014. (2 performances)

Jalla Jalla, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 25 Oct. 2014.

GT 22, Moment Theatre, Maribor, Slovenia, 27-28 Oct. 2014. (4 performances)

https://goout.cz/en/theatre/the-smooth-life/ixpbb/#

Golden girls film production, flat 10, Robert Hamerlinggasse 23, Vienna, Austrian, 30 Oct. 2014.

Nad Prahou Pulmesic (Crescent moon over the sky of Prague), Na Zabradli Divadlo, 9 Nov. 2014, Humanitarian centrum, 11 Nov., Brno, flat, 13 Nov., 16 Nov. Zahrada Café Therapy, Czech Republic. (8 performances)

http://nadprahoupulmesic.webnode.cz/

https://www.facebook.com/events/1010786032272213/

https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.758186187582547.107374183 2.204248909642947&type=1

Karama film festival for human rights, December 2014, Jordan. (1 performance)

Babu Association, 26-28 February, Csikszerda, Romania. (4 performances) Transformania festival, 13 March, Orco, Prague. (2 performances) https://www.facebook.com/events/704753619635738/

Flying Freedom Festival, 18 March, Ljubljana, Slovenia. (one performance) International theatrical festival Valise, Lomza, Poland, 10-13 June 2015. (2 performances) http://www.teatrlomza.hi.pl/index.php?k=48

Porsgrunn festival, Norway, 15-21 June 2015. (8 performances)

http://en.pitfestival.no/?forestillinger=the-smooth-life

Open Air festival, Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic, 23 June 2015. (2 performances)

http://www.openairprogram.cz/ucinkujici/detail/husam-abed

Chudnik Art Festival, Sidewalk Underground Movement, Kalisch, Poland, 28 June. (1 performance)

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Chodnik-Art-Festiwal/323560724473972?fref=ts





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Alta studio, Prague, Czech Republic, 26 June 2015. (2 performances)

http://www.altart.cz/program/husam-abed-the-smooth-life-host/

Chrudim international puppet festival, Czech Republic, 30 June until 6 July 2015. (10 performances) http://www.chbeseda.cz/utery-30-6-2015

Puppets in Prague, 10 July 2015. (1 performance)

Flying Freedom Festival, Miercurea Ciuc, Romania, 14 August 2015. (1 performance)

Teatrul Csiki Gergely Szinhaz, (Hungarian State Theatre), Temesvar, Romania, 27 Aug. -1 Sep.

2015. (12 performances)

http://www.tm-t.ro/en/?page=program&introlng=en

Project Syria, Kavarna Trojka, Brno, Czech Republic, 15 Sep., 2015. (1 performance)

Cheb Monodrama festival, 3-4 October 2015. (3 performances)

http://www.divadlocheb.cz/main.php?sess=djh&r=2015

Puppet is Human too festival, International Festival of Puppet Theatres and Movie Animations for Adults, Warsaw, Poland, 11-20 October 2015. (6 performances)

http://lalkatezczlowiek.eu/en/

Jihlava Documentary Film Festival, Jihlava, Czech Republic. 30,31 October 2015. (6 performances)

Alfred ve Dvore, Prague, Czech Republic, 10-11 Nov. 2015. (4 performances)

http://www.alfredvedvore.cz/cs/program/the-smooth-life--dafa-puppet-

theatre?pid=532&bck=index

Akcent festival, Archa Theatre, Czech Republic, 25-26 Nov. 2015. (4 performances)

http://www.divadloarcha.cz/en/program/300

Internationale Welser Figurentheaterfestival, Austria, 3-9 March 2016. (7 performances)

http://www.figurentheater-wels.at/

Arab Fest, Plzen, Czech Republic, 31 March 2016. (2 performances)

http://www.figurentheater-wels.at/

Alfred ve Dvore, Prague, Czech Republic, 31 March 2016. (4 performances)

http://www.figurentheater-wels.at/

International Festival of Puppetry and Animated Forms - FIMFA Lx, Portugal, 16-22 May 2016. (6 performances)

Lithuania tour to Vilnuis at House of Puglu, Kaunaus at Ciop Ciop, Kaipeda at Koltoras faktoras, 11-13th October, 2016, organized by Paulina and Solo Renata. (6 performances)

The 10th international documentary film festival in Vilnius, Lithuania, 15th October 2016. (1 performance)

Atalante Theatre, Goteborg, Sweden, 23rd October, 2016. (1 performance)

Erasmus+, Youth Conference (Media and Education), 19th November 2016, (2 performances)

Divadlo Poton, Slovakia, 26-27 Nov. 2016. (2 performances)

Macau Fringe Festival, Macau, China, 17-22 January, 2017. (8 performances)

Wels Puppet Festival, Austria, 9-16 March, 2017. (6 performances)

Sprung Turm Theatre festival, Darmstadt, Germany, Aug. 11th&13th, 2017. (4 performances)

Darmstadt Puppet Festival, Germany, 25-27 August 2017. (1 performance)

Hostpunkt festival, Norway, 14th to 16th Sep., 2017. (2 performances)

Theater Der Dinge, Schaubude, Berlin, Germany, 13-17 Oct. 2017. (5 performances)

Nad Prahou Pulmesic, Czech Republic, 22nd Nov., 20017. (2 performances)

Babuk mini festival, Cluj, Romania, Jan. 2018. (2 performances)

Image festival Amman, Jordan, April 2018. (1 performance)

Arab Fest, Divadlo Na Cucky, Olomouc, Czech Republic, April 2018. (6 performances)

Festival of Five Churches, Gyor, Hungary, 10-14 May 2018. (5 performances)

Brno International Theatre Festival, 20, 21 May 2018. (4 performances)

Polednik festival, Czech Rep., 17-20th Aug. 2018. (2 performances)

Metaculture, Kamenka, Praha, Czech Rep., 26th Aug. 2018. (1 performance)

Divadlo Continuo, Malovice, Czech Rep., 20-23rd Sep. 2018. (3 performances)

Metacultura, Prague, (2 performances), Oct. 2018.

Tabor, Czech Republic, 1 performance, Oct. 2018.

Valdštejnská Lodžie, Kulturní Imaginárium, Jicin, (2 performances) Czech Republic, 9th Nov. 2018.

Metacultura, Prague, Czech Republic, (2 performances), 5th & 6th Dec. 2018.

Cross Cafe, Prague, Czech Republic, Jan. 2019.

Zizkovska Noc, Czech Republic, March 2019. (2 performances)







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Roztoky, Czech Republic, March 2019. (1 performance)

The 4th International Festival of Independent Performing Arts Crossings, Slovenia, May 2019. (3 performances)

Floating on the road, Slovenia, August 2019. (2 performances)

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Awards and Distinctions:

The Jury Grant of distinction for original artistic concept of "The Smooth Life" by Dafa Puppet Theatre at 28th International Theatrical Festival Valise, Lomza, Poland, 10-13 June 2015 http://www.teatrlomza.hi.pl/index.php?wiad=480

The Jury Grant of distinction for The Smooth Life at 20th A puppet is Human too festival, Warsaw, Poland, 11-20 October 2015

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