

# SOMEWHERE ELSE



Talking to children about war is often avoided, usually with the excuse that the subject is too difficult for them and there is no point in burdening them with it. But children are constantly exposed to war - through the internet, through television, through conversations between parents and other adults, through public debates in which they may not yet participate but of which they are aware, and for some also through personal encounters with refugees - for example, with refugee children who come to their school or with relatives from the Balkans who were directly involved in the last Balkan war. When talking to them, it is therefore important to address general issues related to the war as well as to give concrete examples and tell the stories of real people who were affected by the war in one way or another. Books, films and plays dealing with the topic can also be very helpful. Through them we can bring the difficult issues of war, conflict, refugees, etc. closer to the children.

Through the undisguised gaze of a child, performance *Somewhere Else* subtly connects the world familiar to young people with the distant image of war. Through the inventive use of contemporary technology and film animation techniques in the context of puppetry, the school blackboard becomes a spinning interactive board and the setting for a girl's experience of war, immersing the audience in a dynamic narrative. The sensitive approach to the subject is reflected in the simplicity and accessibility of the child's everyday life as well as in the thoughtful dialogue with social reality, both in terms of content and performance, which the actress opens up by vividly shaping the plot and its scenic environment. On the stage, she translates the horrors of war with sound, light and puppet effects into a sensual and poetic atmosphere, filling it with a humanity that touches the audience with all its power through the construction of the narrative.

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## EXPERIENCING THE PERFORMANCE

- Summarise your feelings about the performance. In what part of your body would you locate the experience you had watching the performance?
- Briefly retell the story.
- Did you enjoy the performance? And why? Would you change anything?
- If you had to describe the performance in one word, what word would you choose? How about one sentence?
- Is there a scene that particularly stuck in your memory?
- What was the atmosphere during the performance? Did the performance affect your mood?
- How would you describe the main character of the story? What about the other characters?
- How many actors and actresses were in the play? How many characters were there?
- Describe the setting of the story and the space in which the performance took place.
- Which object was in the focus?
- Who is the victim and who is the perpetrator in the story?

## PERFORMANCE POETICS

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- If you take out the story, how would you describe the performance? How was it made?
- Why is it subtitled "Animated chalkboard tale"?
- Was the performance a puppet show?

*Somewhere Else* incorporates a range of contemporary technological approaches to puppet theatre. Classical puppet animation is interwoven with spatial video projections and virtual drawing. An animator draws on a rotating table the environment in which a girl moves. With chalk she draws hilly landscapes, tall skyscrapers and ghostly soldiers. It is a simple line drawing that miraculously comes to life in the performance. The drawn figures begin to move on the rotating surface of the board and react to the environment they are in.

This is possible because the chalk drawing is secretly supplemented by a projected image. This image moves according to the principle of stop-motion animation.

The combination of a moving and a non-moving drawing creates the illusion that the chalk has come to life. With the help of dynamic video mapping and specially developed sensors that track all the movements of the chalkboard live, the boundary between the real and the projected image is blurred. In puppet theatre, this is a completely new technique that crosses and blurs the boundaries between different genres.

[Here you can watch a video about the making of the production.](#)

**Stop-motion** is one of the animation techniques in which the object to be animated is moved from position to position, keeping the changes as small as possible. The object is photographed in each position; when the photos are then played back quickly one after the other, a sense of movement is created. Stop-motion animation can be done with different objects, materials or drawings.

**Video mapping**(or projection mapping) is a technique of projecting onto a surface that is not flat and/or not white. Video mapping can create the illusion of a space that is completely different from reality. It is often used on outdoor surfaces (such as building facades), indoor spaces or theatre stages. In addition, video mapping can also be performed on other surfaces, such as the face.

In 2017, the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre organised a stop-motion workshop for children in co-production with ZVVIKS and the Dagiba Institute. [The result is a short animated film Dodgeball, which you can watch here.](#)

## TEXT

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The creation of *Somewhere Else* followed a particular path, because from the very beginning the idea of performing the play was at the forefront. The planned directorial concept, which combines classical puppet animation, spatial video projections and virtual drawing, influenced the form of the text and the principle of narrating and drawing scenes/situations. In the performance, text and animation are in a constant relationship, complementing, commenting on and developing

each other. Language, animation and visual images create the whole story in parallel and, as central elements, play an equal role in the final effect. Therefore, when creating the text, it was crucial that the words and the images capture the desired atmosphere and message through the right relationship with each other.

- How would you describe the message of the performance?
- Was it expressed only through the text spoken by the actress-animator?

## WAR

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- What is war?
- What is peace?
- Can you name three differences between these two terms?

The dictionary defines war as "a state of armed conflict between different countries or different groups within a country" and peace as "a state or period in which there is no war or a war has ended."

- Have you ever heard of a war? And where?
- How do you imagine a war?
- Have you ever seen a work of art on the subject of war?

Most children in Europe today have had no direct experience of war in their home countries, nor have their parents and - for most - grandparents. Since the Second World War, Europe has consciously worked to finally create lasting peace on a continent that has experienced virtually no centuries without war in its history since antiquity. This includes education systems that, at least in official policy, consciously educate children towards pacifism and tolerance.

- Do you know where wars are fought today? Open a world map and look together for the current war zones. How many countries lie between us and them?

[Follow this link to see a map of the current war zones.](#)

## HOW DOES WAR HAPPEN?

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In her book *Big Questions From Small People And Simple Answers From Great Minds* (ed.: Harris, G. E. New York: Harper Collins, 2012), war reporter Alex Crawford answers the question of how war happens like this:

*"Wars happen because people do not talk enough. In Afghanistan, I interviewed fighters who hated the West. I come from the West - and you probably do too. Afghanistan is a country where soldiers from America and Europe have been fighting the Taliban for years. When I meet a Taliban, he is often surprised by me, because I am the first Westerner he has ever spoken to in person.*

*When we start talking about family and children, and when I tell them what many people in the West think about the war and them, their attitude towards me changes. We realise that we are not so different and that we often want the same thing. We all want peace.*

*Wars usually take place because the governments of our countries are afraid. It is as if you are sitting alone in the backyard because your friend is not in school and*

*the people from the other group are making fun of you. What do you wish you had done then? I bet sometimes you wish you had said something nasty to them. And when you start arguing, it's hard, really hard, to be the first to admit that you are in the wrong. It's the same with countries."*

## WAR DIARIES

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One of the most famous war diaries through which people tried to understand the horror of the Holocaust after the Second World War is *the Diary of Anne Frank*. The first entry is dated 14 June 1942, two days after Anne's 13th birthday, and the last 1 August 1944. The diary has been translated into more than 60 languages and is included in many lists of the most important books of the 20th century.

[Here you can visit the website of the Anne Frank Museum in Amsterdam, where video interpretations of Anne's diaries are also produced.](#)

Zlata Filipović wrote her diary from September 1991 to November 1993, during the time she spent as a young teenager in occupied Sarajevo. She got the idea for her notes from *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and according to her own words, she also wrote because her friends did. *Zlata's Diary* has been translated into more than 20 languages.

[Here Zlata Filipović explains why it is important to talk and write about differences.](#)

- Read an extract from one of the war diaries presented. Why do you think people write diaries? Why did Ana Frank and Zlata Filipović write diaries? Have you ever written a diary yourself? Try writing a diary. Write in it what makes you angry or worried, but also what you are looking forward to.

# MIGRATIONS

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A refugee is a person who has fled his or her country because he or she has a well-founded fear of persecution from which his or her country has been unable to protect him or her (or indeed it is the country from which the threat emanates). In the other country, he or she has the right to international protection.

Most people who come to Europe come from countries where there is armed conflict and other violence. In addition, anyone who is persecuted as an individual, for example because of their political opinion, ethnicity or other personal circumstances, has the right to international protection.

- Have you ever met refugees or do you know someone who has had this experience? What can they say about the encounter - how it took place, what the contact was like? What can you say about the refugee (what language did he/she speak, how old was he/she, where did he/she come from, where did he/she go etc.)?
- Can you imagine going to school and no one understands you and you do not understand anyone? How would you cope if you were in such a situation? Try to explain to others what you like to do in your free time without saying anything. Do your classmates understand you?
- On a piece of paper, write down the things you like (people, toys, games, food, pets, etc.). Then cross five things off the list that you could do without. Then cross off three more and finally one more, so that only one word remains. Was it difficult to decide? Discuss the fact that children have to lose people and things they love in war.
- Imagine that Mina comes to your country and becomes your classmate. How would you welcome her? What would her school class look like? Would you give her a welcome party? And how? What do you think would make her happy? How would you help her feel comfortable? Collect some suggestions and put them into action (draw pictures for the welcome, set up the school desk, sing a song).

[You can read more about the war and refugees at this link.](#)

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## UNFAIRY TALES

*Unfairy Tales* is a series of three video animations - true stories of children fleeing war and conflict - about the terrible reasons why children are forced to leave their homes. They show that some of the stories were never meant for children. At least 65 million children and young people around the world are fleeing war, poverty and extreme weather conditions - in search of a more stable life and a place to call home.

Video stories are available on YouTube:

- [The Story of Ivine and Pillow](#)
- [Malak and the Boat](#)
- [Mustafa goes for a Walk](#)

## FLIP BOOK

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Create a flip book based on the theatre sheet for the show. Take some papers and cut them into equal sized strips of about 10 x 5 centimetres. Choose a simple object that is easy to draw repeatedly (e.g. a ball flying from one corner to the other). Draw the object on the paper strips so that it is slightly shifted in the direction of movement on each strip. Then fold the strips into a stack. Add a cover of slightly stiffer paper on the front and back. Staple, glue or sew the bundle of paper strips together on the left side with a stapler and thread.

## FURTHER READING

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- *My Hiroshima* is a picture book for children in which author Junko Morimoto describes, from a child's perspective, the experience of the atomic bomb in her hometown of Hiroshima in 1945, at the end of World War II. It is considered one of the most important and moving accounts of the war written for children.
- *The Day my Father Became a Bush* by Dutch writer Joke van Leeuwen tells the story of a little girl, Tode, who leads an ordinary life in a nameless country until one day armed clashes break out in the south of the country between "the one" and "the other" and her father is forced to leave the army. But she flees with her grandmother from her hometown to the neighbouring country. The story, which describes the horrors of war and refugees from a child's perspective, was the strongest literary reference for the creation of *Somewhere Else*.

Educational material prepared by Ana Duša.

POKROVITELJA GLEDALIŠČA

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