

London International Mime Festival 2017: What to see at this eye-popping extravaganza of visual performance

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Celebrate the Festival's 40th birthday by making sure you catch these breathtaking shows

- [JESSIE THOMPSON](#)
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• **10** show all

You can kick off your 2017 with some clowning about this January, with the London International Mime Festival celebrating its 40th year.

The festival returns next week (January 9) with four weeks of contemporary visual performance, crossing the spectrum from circus to masks, puppetry to physical theatre. Established in 1977, it has since been the go-to place for gasp-inducing visual performance, offering the chance to see many international companies.

Held at venues across London including [Sadler's Wells](#) and the [Barbican Centre](#), it runs from January to February 4. Here are some of the highlights.

Smashed

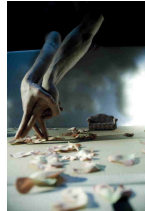


(Erik Frings)

Inspired by dance auteur Pina Bausch, this show from Gandini Juggling returns to Mime Festival after receiving its first performances there. It's since been performed over 500 times around the world. The show features some of the world's greatest jugglers, and has been expanded for the festival's 40th birthday from nine performers to 20.

The Peacock, January 9-10; sadlerswells.com

Kiss and Cry



(Marteen Vanden Abeele)

Have you ever seen a pair of hands star in a film? You can now, with Charleroi Danses' ballet returning to the festival. It offers the chance to see a journey through one woman's memories, all told through clever prop manipulators and small scale sets - and hands.

The Barbican, 1-4 Feb; barbican.org.uk

Imbalance

It's called Imbalance but that's a bit misleading - these acrobats are breathtakingly agile. This the London premiere of Joli Vyann's exploration of our obsessive dependence on technology. It is performed by stunt man and circus artist Jan Patzke and ex-gymnast and dancer Olivia Quayle - prepare to be blown away.



(Movingproductions photography)

Lilian Baylis Studio, January 16-19; sadlerswells.com

The Nature of Forgetting

This piece is inspired by neurological research and interviews with people with dementia. It's the world premiere of Theatre Re's examination of what happens when memory is gone, and is inspired by the work of theatre director Tadeusz Kantor.



(Richard Davenport, *The Other Richard*)

Shoreditch Town Hall, January 18-20; shoreditchtownhall.com

Here Lies Shakespeare

Taxidermied animals in Elizabethan costume - do you need to know any more? Puppets add their penny's worth to the Shakespeare authorship debate, with this French company self-describing the aesthetic of their show as 'a mix of Catholic mass and Muppet Show'.



(JP Estournet)

Jacksons Lane, January 11-15; jacksonslane.org.uk

Teatro Delusio

This German theatre company perform with beautiful masks, telling the story of behind the scenes at a great opera house. With only three actors bringing to life a cast of many characters, this promises to be an action-packed and joyful evening.



(Simona Boccedi)

The Peacock, 12-15 January; sadlerswells.com

Ashes

This multi-visual show uses video projection, actors and life-size puppets to perform a gripping version of the bestselling Norwegian novel, Before I Burn. It's about an arsonist who terrifies a small town, whilst those living there begin to wonder who is behind it.

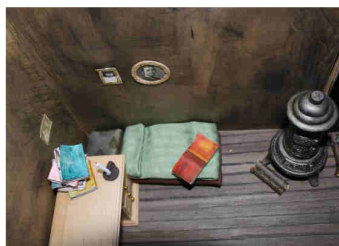


(Claire Leroux)

Jacksons Lane, 27-29 January; jacksonslane.org.uk

Only One Suitcase Allowed

This show is sold out, but keep your eye on any tickets that become available. Only one person can see the show at a time, and it lasts just 15 minutes. Inspired by the story of Anne Frank, Nordic Puppet Ambassadors' show, it's a peep show into a miniature world.



(Outi Sippola)

Southbank Centre, January 27-29; southbankcentre.co.uk

Only Bones

This is micro-physical theatre. Performer Thomas Monckton uses only his face and hands to tell a story, and it's bound to make you wonder what your body is really capable of.



(Aurélia Tassafi)

Soho Theatre, January 23 - February 2; sohotheatre.com

Marée basse

How on earth are they doing that, you'll be asking when you see these mind-boggling acrobats, Sacekripa, perform their show. There will be wine-drinking and knife throwing, so take a deep breath before you take your seat.

