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UUT15 Puppetry in the Face of War: A Study A Study of Odessa Puppet Theatre

From the Odessa Polytechnic: project coordinator - Dr Tamara Rozova, Professor of
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From the University of Portsmouth: project coordinator - prof. Matt Smith



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1. The purpose of the project and subjects of the investigation

- The aim of this research - to study the trends and peculiarities of the work of the Puppet Theater during the war, including the socio-political, culture and therapeutic (applied puppetry) impacts.
- Subject –Odesa Academic Regional Puppet Theater





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2. Tasks of the project

Tasks of the project are ...

- - Understand how puppetry operates during a war
- - Share the stories of people working through a time of national trauma
- - Raise awareness of puppet theatre in Odessa
- - Provide opportunities for links with other organizations and develop collaborations with stakeholders





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3. Waiting for project results

1. Conducting interviews with staff of the Puppet Theatre.
2. Organization of a seminar on the zoom platform: «Puppetry in the face of war».
3. Publication of a peer reviewed articles in the Ukrainian academic journal «Cultural studies: almanac» and «Philosophy and Humanism».
4. Publication a peer reviewed article in «Research in Drama Education» (RIDE)



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4. Road map of the project

Key Stakeholders

- UoP
- Department of the cultural studies at National University «Odessa polytechnic»,
- Odessa regional academical puppet theatre,
- Holodomor museum <https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/en/>,
- Kamil Kopania, Professor at The Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw
- UNION INTERNATIONALE DE LA MARIONNETTE
- UNIMA and The British Council.
- Outputs as a part of this research would include performances, seminars and a peer reviewed article in Research in Drama Education RIDE
- Journal«Puppetry international review»



Project execution schedule

Collection of research materials, conducting interviews with Puppet Theater employees, questionnaires, OSINT (open source research)	April 30 - May 20
Preparation for the seminar	May 20 - June 22
Preparation for the publication of two articles and a collection of the journal "Philosophy and Humanism" (Index Copernicus) dedicated to the conference	June 22 - August 30





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5. Obtained project results

Interviews

- 1. Ten interviews were conducted with the theater staff, recorded on a Dictaphone, translated and sent to Portsmouth's colleagues. Each interview was accompanied by the signing of a consent form for participation in the study developed by the ethics committee of the University of Portsmouth.
- One interview was obtained as a result of filling out an online questionnaire (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScJ3mfsYtUz55dc1qG6vDb40jI5AMwY3SXooBh_agqA7jOqKQ/viewform), and one interview by the phone call.



Seminar

Instead of the planned one seminar, two seminars were

held - one in May 23 and the second in June 22.

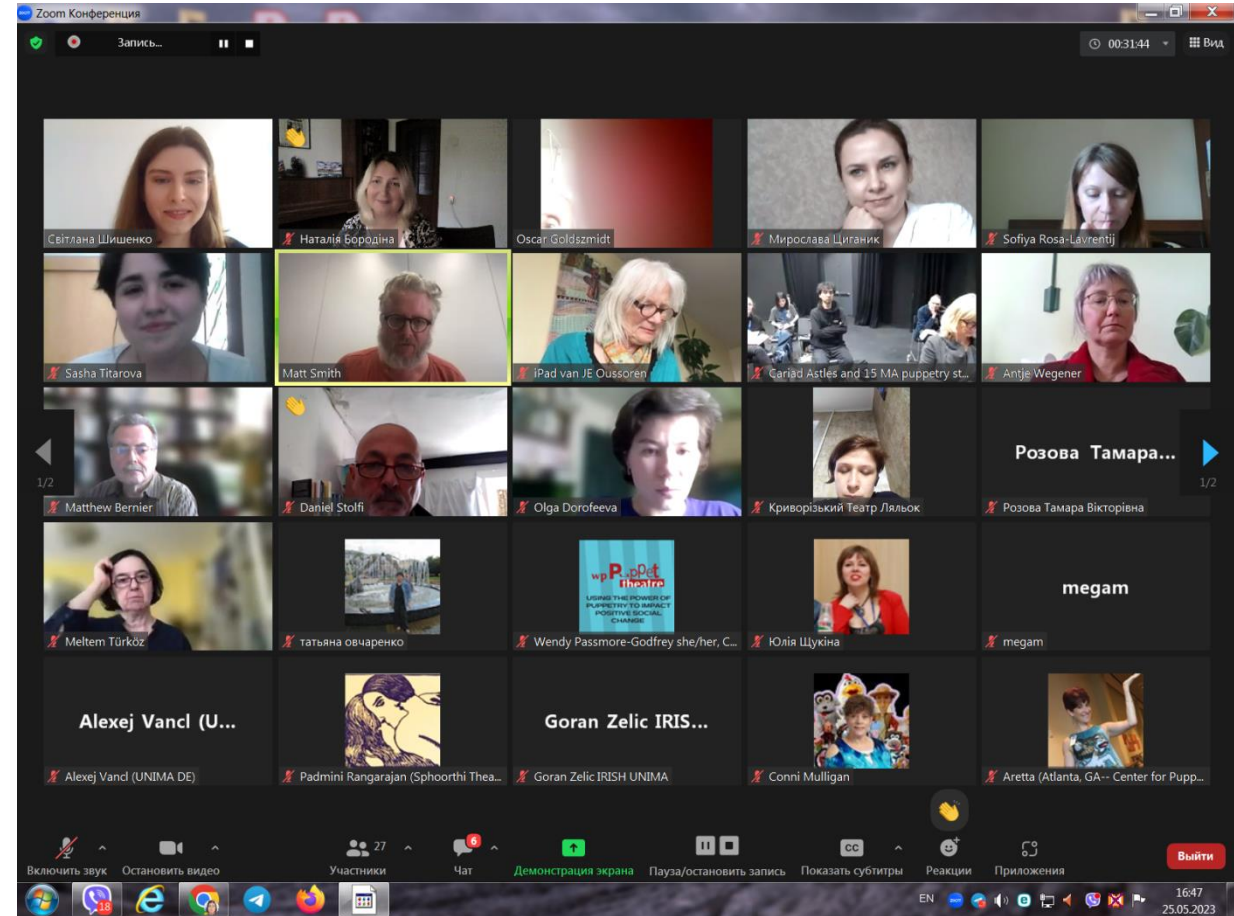
- The seminar was attended by researchers from the

Department of Theater Studies and Acting of the Faculty

of Culture and Arts of the Ivan Franko Lviv National University, the Department of Theater Studies of the

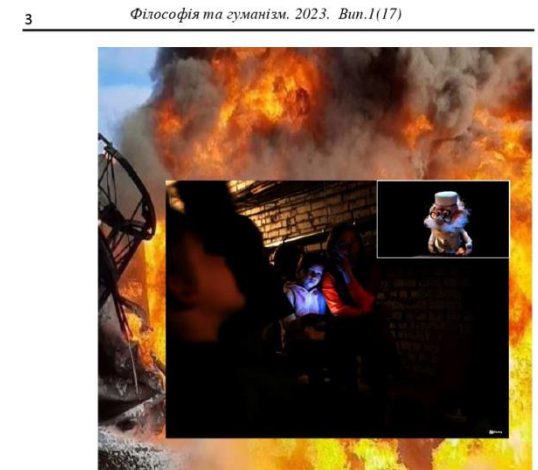
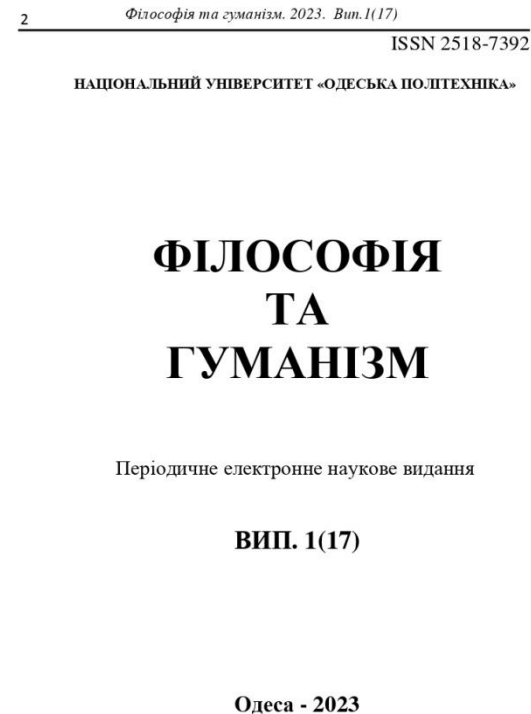
Kharkiv National University of Arts named after I. P. Kotlyarevsky, professors of The Royal Central School of

Speech and Drama, University of Exter, members of Tharpa (TAPRA Applied and Social Theater working group) and more than 50 theater experts from different



Publications

- 1. Articles of the participants of the seminar were
- collected (the authors were the professors of LNU,
- KhNU, ONPU and other universities) and sent to
- the 17th issue of the journal "Philosophy and Humanism" devoted to the problem of the «Theatre
- in the face of war».
- 3.The article "Puppet theater in the face of war" was
- published in the "Cultural Almanac", 2023, N3
- 4.An article «Puppets in Face of War: Odesa Puppet theatre» was sent to «Ride» and waiting for publication.



Цей випуск періодичного наукового видання «Філософії та гуманізм» присвячений дослідженням феномену функціонування Театру за часів війни



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6. Summary of the results

Qualitative results: therapeutic function of Puppet theatre

«Theatre staff believe that they are providing an important cultural service that is a safe imaginative space of theatre away from the bloodshed and horror of the conflict outside the theatre's walls[...]the puppets were a guarantee of the promised safety, normality and protection». The theater team creates conditions for the integration of temporarily displaced persons - tickets are free for them, as well as for children with disabilities. Children in a stressful situation are characterized by escapism, which they mostly implement with the help of gadgets, which negatively affects communication skills, so the opportunity to attend cultural events and communicate with the help of puppets is very important for children now. Theater also used important principle of psychotherapy - if it is difficult for a child to talk about a trauma, child can show it on a doll. The puppet theater implements this practice during an air raid, children are not left alone in the bomb shelter, animators create an interactive performance with them.

Theater actor Artem Telyashenko also conducts free puppet therapy classes

for people with mental disabilities.



vivo Y33s · Oksana Dolgikh
17 sept. 2023, 16:06

Socio-political function of the puppet theater

During the war, the theater actively demonstrated a pro-Ukrainian position, which is very important for the formation of the worldview of young viewers. The theater participates in the reinterpretation of the imperial past of Odessa, creating a narrative about the Cossack past, in which the cultural hero is a noble Cossack knight.

- An important link in the creation of the Ukrainian cultural space is also the premiere performance: "Ivasyk-Telesyk", in which a classic Ukrainian fairy tale is told with elements of horror, but evil is defeated with the help of laughter.

- Also, an important sign of Ukrainization is the appearance in the repertoire

of the play "The Painted Fox", a classic for Western Ukrainian theaters, which was not performed in Odesa theaters before the war. The theater team practices congratulating children on their birthdays, thereby relieving them of the feeling of loneliness.



Qualitative results:

- Compared to the pre-war period, the number of performances for adults has decreased, and the construction of the repertoire is dominated by the principle of "creating an entertaining safe space".
- But the theater also raises difficult questions – how to study the topic of the Holocaust, which is part of the collective trauma of the Ukrainian people.



Acknowledgment

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Thank you very much for your attention!

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Web page of the project on the university site -
[https://op.edu.ua/international/projects/uk-ukrainetwining-
initiative-15](https://op.edu.ua/international/projects/uk-ukrainetwining-initiative-15)