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Theatre review: Sticks, Stones, Broken Bones

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The Edinburgh Festival
fringe

Jeff Achtem from Montreal shambles on to the stage in an old tweed suit, communicating with his audience using squeaks and tiny shy noises.

On a washing line behind him is pinned a strange collection of mangled junk which doesn't appear to be anything at all. But with the aid of a light projector and a giant screen Achtem transforms this collection of misshapen objects into shadow puppets projected on to a giant, fluffy edged screen.

He brings us flying ninjas, galloping horses and whiskery old men, and demonstrates how to create a puppet from scratch using a balloon and a roll of masking tape.

A member of the audience is encouraged to have a shadow fight with one of the puppets and at one point Achtem uses his feet and a strange contraption housed in a suitcase to create two characters at once.

The choice of subjects leans a little too much towards the grotesque - and a few cheerier tales would not have gone amiss. But it is funny and fascinating to watch Achtem's strange and rather grim imagination at work.

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