



DEÁK RÉKA

Puppeteer and
Social Artist

PORTFOLIO

2008-2025



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About me

It took me over ten years to define myself as a Socially Engaged Puppeteer. To deliberately create performances and artistic interventions that serve as a platform for social change and community engagement, rather than just artistry or entertainment.

I worked as a puppeteer at a state puppet theatre for about six years. Throughout these years, I experimented with numerous techniques and met fantastic colleagues. It was a safe area. First, I enjoyed being involved in all creative processes and worked to develop my skills in this area. Now I'm a freelancer. Every day, I see how this delicate situation stimulates my creativity. The freedom provided, allows me to interact with the world around me more intensely: assist people make their own puppets and tell their own stories of change.

We are all catalysts for change. Through socially engaged artistry, I can envision a better world for my daughter, Sara...



EDUCATION

• PHD- THEATRE STUDIES

Charles University, CZ
2021 -

• EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Micromaster at Michigan
University, US
2020-2022

• DESIGN FOR ALTERNATIVE AND PUPPET THEATRE - FREE MOVER

Academy of Performing
Arts (DAMU), Prague, CZ
2013-2014

• DIRECTING FOR CONTEMPORARY THEATER - MASTER

University of Arts,
Tirgu Mures, RO
2008-2010

• ACTING-PUPPETRY - BA

University of Arts,
Tirgu Mures, RO
2004-2008



PERSONAL INFORMATION

Date of birth:
27 September 1985
Nationality:
Hungarian and Romanian
Mother of Sara Abed

LANGUAGES

Hungarian- mother tongue

English - C1
Romanian - B1
Czech - A1
Arabic - A1

WORK EXPERIENCE

Facilitator

Academy for Actors of Social Change - Pro Progressione (HU)
2022-2025

Guide students, young professionals in exploring activism and socially engaged theatre through hands-on practice, while supporting them in developing facilitation tools, collaborative skills, and awareness to apply within their own diverse contexts.

Facilitator, puppeteer and Scenographer

Data Puppet Theater (JO&CZ), 2016 until now

Initiate and lead puppetry training for members of the community, perform as well as design and build puppets, props, and scenography for Data shows.

Co-founder and Manager

Flying Freedom Festival, 2014 - 2021

Participation in facilitating meetings amongst artists in Romania, creating and conducting seminars, performing, and networking as a co-founder and Manager for Flying Freedom Festival. The fundamental goal of FFF Romania (three editions: 2015, 2016, and 2017) was to cultivate a collective of international artists who share their own culture and creative practice with communities in Harghita County.

President

BABU Cultural Association, Romania, 2012 - 2019

Primary responsibilities were designing and leading workshops, facilitating art concepts, directing, performing, and organising cultural events and festivals. This was then carried out in collaboration with a freelancer creative team.

Actress & Puppeteer

Ariel Children and Youth Theater, <http://www.teatrariel.ro/>
01 Dec. 2006 - 30 Sep. 2013

Participation in workshops and festivals, as well as performing and animating puppets/objects in numerous Ariel Children and Youth Theatre performances. Developing and implementing pedagogy/enrichment programmes for teachers and for the Down Syndrome Association.

Theatre Pedagogue

Talentum Foundation for Gifted Children
<http://www.talentum.ro/>, 15 September 2008 - 30 September 2013

Creating performances with children, launching multidisciplinary initiatives, and developing the art curriculum for the afternoon theatre programme.

SELECTED PROJECTS SOCIAL ARTIST





SOCIALLY ENGAGED THEATRE-ACADEMY FOR ACTORS OF CIVIL CHANGE

Develop and lead a socially engaged theatre program between 2022-2024. This, by tackling social issues and searching for an identity through supporting self-knowing and social issues mapping, conceivably made the participating students more responsible and conscious. Organised by Pro Progressione, funded by Erasmus, Visegrad Fund and Danube fund.



THE NIGHT THE EARTH SHOOK

In 2020 with Monica Hunken & Dafa Puppet Theatre we started a series of performative workshops. These will lead to devised site-specific outdoors performances investigating themes of mass migration and climate change. Kick off was in Wien (Brunnenpassage), then in Prague (Hlavni Nadrazi).



CULTURAL SUMMER IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE

A Flying Freedom Festival social project with the help of Visegrad Fund. I was leading shadow, paper puppetry and music workshops for children and youth from remote areas. This project toured in Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and Czech Republic in 2016.



WONDERBOX REVIVAL

With Husam Abed, Palestinian artist we tried to revive this magical tradition of 'WonderBoxes'. Now after 5 years we ran many workshop in many refugee camps in Jordan, theaters, museums across Europe, Asia. Participants made more than 100 boxes.

SELECTED PROJECTS PERFORMER





TÜNDÉR ILONA

TIBOR ZALÁN : PRINCE ÁRGYÉLUS AND
TÜNDÉR ILONA, D. PÁL LENGYEL,
ARIEL CHILDREN AND YOUTH THEATER,
2008

The staging was based on an ancient Hungarian folktale. As a traditional aesthetic performance, it featured a sophisticated directorial-fine art approach and a classic puppetry style.



POLLY

S. NEFZAWI: PERFUMED GARDEN
P: MAIA CHANVIN & RÉKA DEÁK
A: JAKUB MAKSIMOV & HUSAM ABED 2015

Sensual and Object Theatre Performance for adults. Adaptation of a fifteenth-century Nafzawi's poetic erotic book "The Perfumed Garden". A universal human experience expressed through visual metaphors, storytelling, live music, and shadow acts.



SHAMHAT

GILGAMESH
FLYING FREEDOM FESTIVAL,
INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS COLLECTIVE
(CZ, PL, RO, FR), 2015 - 2017

Mesopotamian mythology inspired devised performance that included live music, collective artistic experiments, and improvisation. FFF collaborated with local artists to repeatedly create this performance, which evolved during residencies in each host country.

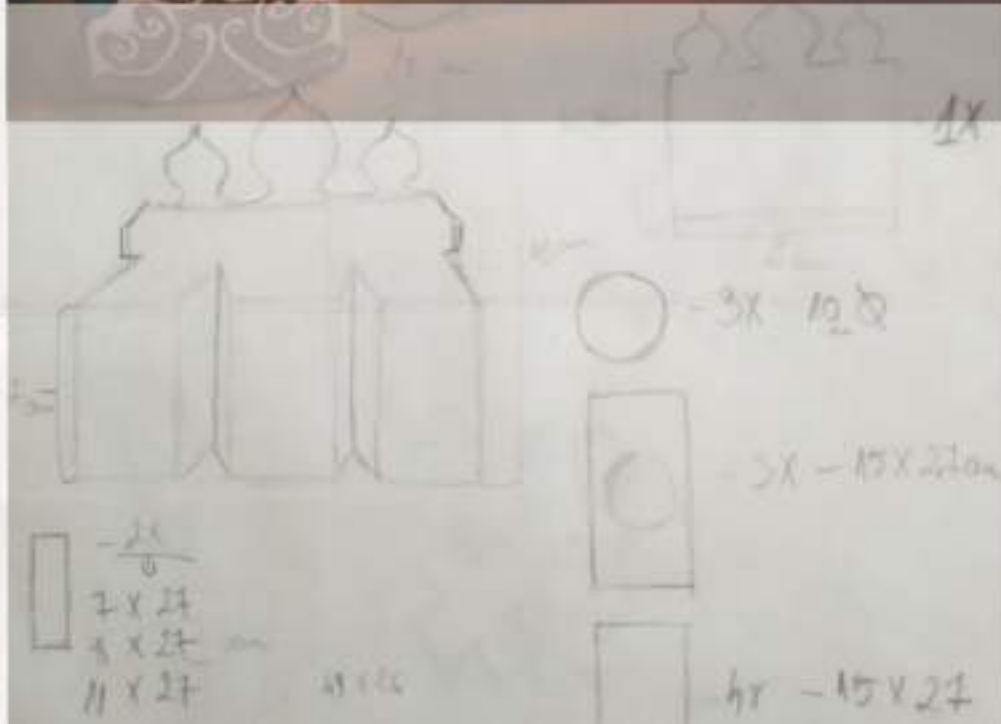


THESEUS

COLLECTIVE WORK BY RÉKA DEÁK AND
HUSAM ABED
BABU - CULTURAL ASSOCIATION 2015

The tale of a father and a young, buster child named Theseus, in a mythological context. Theseus' migration is presented, as he must battle different hellish beings and monsters before meeting Ariadne, his love. Grotesque hand puppet solo performance.

SELECTED PROJECTS SCENOGRAPHER

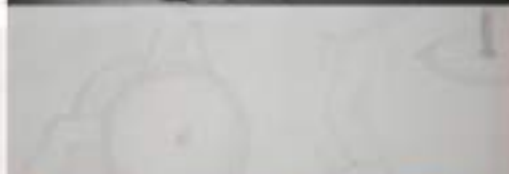




REFUGEE SAFARI

A progressive house musical about war, borders, weapons, natural parks and refugees. Set inspired by news of refugees running away with bikes and the IKEA design of furnitures.

Sweden



SMOOTH LIFE

A non-traditional documentary and puppet performance for eight spectators. It is about Husam Abed's life in Baqaa refugee camp. Design inspired from natural elements: wood and rice; puppets and objects implying simplicity and metaphors.

Czechia



A TALE OR TWO FOR ALEF

"A Tale or Two for Alef" draws on the rich cultural heritage of folktales from across Middle East, and features puppets, music and opportunities for audience interaction. The set is in line with dramaturgy but with contemporary twists

Bahrain



AS WE FORGIVE?

"As We Forgive?" by Sawsan Darwaza is a play that tackles the moral system in this unstable world. The main character is fragmented into alter-egos represented by puppets and body parts. Hyperrealism was a guiding principle.

Jordan





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