**Facequeens! (English translation of review by Kata Vass)**

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**Facequeens!**
Nov 18, 2009
Translation from Hungarian of original review by Kata Vass on [www.szinhaz.hu](http://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.szinhaz.hu%2F&h=3AQGFc2zP&s=1)

Relax Your Face at Bakelit Multi Art Center

Relax Your Face—*Three Pieces: This is not, Relax Your Face, and Sisters!*From the title it’s hard to imagine what kind of theatre performance you can expect but, after the opening piece, the first thought is definitely: “I hope it keeps up like this.” The members of Relax Your Face play masterfully with their faces and bodies, their physicality telling us everything that other actors usually express through text.

The variety of this international group is not only related to their cultural diversity (American, Portuguese\* and Hungarian artists), but is based on a common past: the five women trained together at the London International School of Performing Arts, a school based on the theory and methods of Jacques Lecoq. The group made their international debut in Denmark and followed with a performance of three pieces here in Hungary, where they met with huge success. Their Ars Poetica is such: “Charging” the space with their bodies, playing with and fully “embodying” all that they observe…being a dog, or even a tram.

Considering what we now know about the show, it was no coincidence that the group played to a full house at Bakelit. The result was a fun, easy-going evening—what we definitely need before all the little stresses of Christmas—and because their form of grotesque humour is not language-based, the non-English speakers could laugh as loud as the rest, especially during the first piece (“This is not”). The unique charm of this piece is in its presentation, rather than the storyline. What is so interesting about group having dinner? Time and space don’t matter here, just the funny tone of the characters. The dialogue becomes complete and alive through the characters’ stylized way of using voice and text, driving the audience into painful laughter and highlighting the group’s strong physical presentation and expressiveness.

The different characters unfold in the second piece, eponymously-titled “Relax Your Face.” The beauty industry offers hundreds of beauty techniques, and here the audience witnesses a special beauty treatment workshop for ladies, a group most definitely out to achieve the ideal hot look of the 21st century. It is a place where the dark side of human nature and a totally destructive self-concept really prospers. Again, the girls—Flora Bare, Ágnes Domonkos, Anikó Kálmán, Cathleen O'Malley, and Filipa Tomás—inflict upon the audience the muscular pains of heavy laughter whilst bringing us deep into the “suffer for beauty” concept, performing all the while without moving their faces. It’s simply entertaining to watch the fake dolls with massive boobs and a plastic appearance, but there is something more important that we feel during the piece: how much this kind of outrageous theatre performance is needed.

And not to get stuck on beauty, the third piece (“Sisters!”) introduces another aspect of human madness. The plot of the story follows nuns fighting for a chocolate cake during a fast, but the real magic of this piece is in the play and vision of the characters, so much that we forget all about the suffering of the nuns. The visual outcome is incredible, and the ugly fake teeth are the cherry on top, resulting in a type of timeless, classic comedy. The work of these five actors doesn’t dig into psychological themes, but rather creates lively human stories that everyone can interpret differently. Their message to us is simple: Have Fun!