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# her – Half Moon Theatre[FEBRUARY 3, 2017](https://andsoshethinks.wordpress.com/2017/02/03/her-half-moon-theatre/) BY [FRANCESCA BAKER](https://andsoshethinks.wordpress.com/author/cescawrites/)

Life as a fifteen year old girl can be hard. But living in London it can be difficult to remember just how hard. In conflict zones across the world just the basic struggle to survive is a daily reality. In [her](https://www.halfmoon.org.uk/events/her/), a live graphic novel, combining stage action, film and animation through clever technology, writer and [Brolly Productions](https://www.brollyproductions.com/) and [Half Moon Theatre](https://www.halfmoon.org.uk/) explore the theme of displacement, identity and community, all at a rather timely moment in our history.

The story of a London teenager who finds that suddenly and inexplicably she has become an alien in her own country. Shala Nyx plays five versions of the same girl, after finding out that her world has changed, and she has no house, no home, and what feels like no hope. To start with she’s a familiar teenager on her mobile phone, worried about boys and shoes and arguing with her mum. But then things change, and we move to the stages of discovering that your world is falling down, needing to flee, travelling and being ‘processed’ – quite literally as a number.

As her image and accent shifts from Londoner to Arabic to Scottish, it’s startling how differently the situation portrayed appears. What seems unthinkable becomes a potential reality; what seems incomprehensible becomes identifiable. Terraced houses and bombed shelters all mingle, and the audience does feel a sense of collective identity, even from the safety of this beautiful venue. Although shooting and shadows replace loud music and youthful vigour for all, it may well be hardest for females. We see the girl forces and degraded in order to access basic needs, and ‘be less than I am.’ Independence and identity are irrelevant, and shame and judgement pervade.

Director Dominic Hingorani and designer and illustrator Rachana Jadhav have used the resources well, and Nyx risen to the challenge. Doors open and close and the screen action reaches into the live. In one poignant moment the familiar streets become coated in blood, and when in a café and call centre, being lured to finding a sense of belonging once again freedom fighting group the scene is surrounded by sinister tentacles. When so much has happened, for soldiers and refugees, the need to survive outweighs ideals, and some ‘turn on my truth.’

[Half Moon](https://www.halfmoon.org.uk/book/) is local venue that supports and provides for young people in the community, and the performance of her an important one to show. Engaging the audience and showing a hint of the struggle that some go through, whilst also capturing their attention and provoking debate is hugely important – for all generations. After every show there’s a question and answer session with the cast and team, as well as a day of workshops planned. Whilst I’m not sure that I could say I enjoyed her, I did absolutely love it. [Creative activism](https://andsoshethinks.wordpress.com/2017/02/01/ashford-undivided-creative-community-changemakers/) certainly has a role to play in influencing  the future, and her is a wonderful step towards that change.