

Edinburgh Festival Fringe Review: Hotel Methuselah (***)

✘ It's not so much the what as the how with this intriguing show by UK-based theatre company Imitating the Dog and theatre maker Pete Brooks. It's a startlingly effective combination of film and live action, all viewed through a six metre-long aperture in a screen at the front of the stage. Actors are only seen from their knees to their shoulders, but their faces are shown on the cinema screen behind them.

The story draws on film noir and French New Wave cinema to tell the tale of Harry, a night porter in a war-torn city who can't remember how he got there. The same events unfold over and over again, with subtle differences, and somehow he finds himself night after night in bed with a mysterious woman in room 14. It's only at the end that the mysterious events are given a frightening explanation.

The show might be a little long, and the pace is certainly ponderous, but the combination of video and live action is fascinating – especially when the live actors imitate unusual camera angles or there's an intentional disconnect between the two media. It feels like a completely immersive experience, in particular when the film leaks from the screen to fill the whole room at climactic moments.

Hotel Methuselah, Summerhall, until 28 August, 14:45.