

Theatre review: Could You Please Look Into the Camera/Traverse Theatre (****)

✘ Mohammed Al Attar's short lunchtime play is a strong and sometimes shocking start to the Traverse Theatre's new A Play, A Pie and a Pint season. Given the overall title *One Day in Spring*, and curated by leading Scottish playwright David Greig, the season explores new work from the Arab world reflecting the tumultuous recent events that continue to shape the region.

Could You Please Look Into the Camera takes us straight into the heart of Syrian detention centres, as film-maker Noura asks three former detainees to describe their experiences there. The harrowing stories of beatings, electric shocks and humiliation are difficult to listen to, yet as the tales are told, troubling ethical and moral questions emerge, ones that are sometimes at odds with the film-maker's own strongly held views.

Al Attar's pithy play blazes with anger, yet also manages to raise itself above the specifics of Syrian oppression to deal with more general questions of resistance, acceptance and the need for human contact.

Director Catrin Evans delivers a taught production that takes over one side of the Traverse bar. Alia Alzougbi convincingly charts Noura's increasing questioning of her own beliefs, and her three interviewees – played by Umar Ahmed, Lucy Hollis and Gerry McLaughlin – give strong, sharply differentiated performances.

Could You Please Look Into the Camera continues until Saturday 28 April, and the *One Day in Spring* season, which includes six plays from throughout the Arab world, continues at the Traverse Theatre until 2 June.

For more details, visit www.traverse.co.uk.