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## Paris Quartier d'Été, various venues — review: 'Quirky'

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Gandini Juggling in 'Smashed'

Since 1990, Paris Quartier d'Été has brought a measure of artistic life to the usually sleepy weeks between Bastille Day and the start of the new cultural season. It tends to be a quirky affair: festival founder Patrice Martinet has a knack for finding unconventional works and venues. His last edition at the helm is no exception.

With its industrial, working-class roots, the La Chapelle district is hardly a performance hub. With "Vorrei tanto tornare a casa", however, a 15-storey local housing estate found itself in the spotlight. For this installation, created in Brussels, Italian artist Anna Rispoli asked the residents of a building to spell out in Morse code the phrase "I so want to go home" by turning the lights on and off in their homes.



It's the simplest of gestures, but when the windows all lit up at once, the sizeable audience, sitting or standing in a carpark, let out a collective gasp. Lights flickered in time to a Stravinsky recording, and for 20 minutes the imposing building came alive. The residents seemed newly united by this unlikely bond, and waved excitedly when the applause came. The estate is named after Raymond Queneau; the one-time Surrealist would probably have approved of this poetic transformation of the most mundane

of landscapes.

By day, Paris Quartier d'Été continued its tradition of itinerant performances, starting with the British troupe Gandini Juggling. This innovative company is performing in parks and plazas across the city, and in the Parc Georges-Valbon, next to the banlieue of La Courneuve, families and passers-by delighted in *Smashed*, which looks like something Pina Bausch might have produced had she dabbled in juggling. The nine performers channel the late choreographer's love of formal wear, nostalgic-sounding songs and gender politics. There is also a British sense of awkward absurdity to their vignettes, whether they're throwing apples and flirting or smashing a tea service to pieces.

The dance duo of Johanne Saunier and Ine Claes is also appearing throughout the festival. *Framed*, performed in the garden of the Picasso Museum, which they danced together with Richard Dubelski, mixed text and movement with an unerring sense of rhythm but limited depth as they skirted around the issue of surveillance.

Better to see the pair's *Ballets Confidentiels*, impromptu performances staged all over Paris. Atop Daniel Buren's Palais-Royal columns, their mirrored lines and compact, toreador-like energy created immediate tension. None of the outdoors performances was cancelled in the wake of the Nice attack; good on Paris Quartier d'Été for soldiering on. Festival continues to August 7, [quartierdete.com](http://quartierdete.com)

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