

香港劇場年鑑2016

舞蹈・戲曲・戲劇

HONG
KONG
THEATRE
YEARBOOK

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Dance

Xiqu

Drama



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從小孩的「看見」開始： 思考我們想在演出看到甚麼？

陳膺國

（編按：「小不點創作」由三位畢業於戲劇教育碩士課程的同學於二〇一三年成立，目的是透過創作兒童劇場，「引發教育反思，發掘兒童的創意空間，讓兒童經歷不一樣的劇場體驗」。二〇一六年，小不點創作參與了不同類型的兒童劇場創作和交流項目，本文記述藝術總監陳膺國的創作歷程及外出考察的反思。）

《筋斗王》：小孩看見甚麼？

二〇一五年底我們接了一個工作，需要於二〇一六年到不同圖書館以小型演出的形式講故事，所以演出必需是跟故事繪本或圖書有關。我提議了繪本《筋斗王》。這繪本是關於一個翻筋斗很厲害的雜技人「隨時彈」，他一直希望可以成為修道院的修士去幫助別人。

主辦單位在收到我們的提案後第一個疑問就是：「翻筋斗這是運動嗎？」這真是一條有趣的問題！於是我將之變成每次開始小型演出前的熱身部分，邀請小朋友猜猜別的小朋友在做甚麼運動。最後，演員隨意地做一些動作，然後問小朋友：「這是不是運動？」小朋友的反應可熱烈，鬧哄哄地討論：「有郁動就是運動！」「游水和踢波才是運動！」，出現了林林總總的意見。最後我們介紹翻筋斗最厲害的「筋斗王」出場，然後問小朋友：「翻筋斗是運動嗎？」，引發小朋友的反思。

小演出完成後，我們跟小朋友一起製作「筋斗王」，小朋友有很多不同的變化和創作，例如：把幾個「隨時彈」一起轉、鬥誰轉得最久、鬥誰可以把他轉出來、誰可以把他拋得最遠等。

這個演出計劃令我明白，觀察小朋友的想像是多麼有趣的事情。如果我不給予他們空間，便不會看到這些天馬行空但又充滿睿智的想法。如果我只著眼於令小朋友歡笑地看完演出後離開，小朋友便沒有機會整理自己的觀賞經驗，沒有機會看到自己看見甚麼。然後我們會繼續假設小朋友需要的是某一種經驗，家長也會繼續相信小朋友只喜歡某一種經驗。這次的演出計劃，令我更加相信，看見小孩看見甚麼是非常重要的。

《游向彩色的泡泡》：給予他們自由

二〇一六年另一個對我們影響深遠的演出，就是《游向彩色的泡泡》。

這個演出的緣起，是我們接到學校巡迴演出計劃的邀約，腦海中一直在想兒童劇還有甚麼可能性？無意中在網絡上看到一個名字——「超親密小戲節」。我馬上被它迷倒了，小型偶戲在社區不同的小店演出，還有光影藝術和充滿風格的各種偶，實在太吸引了！於是在網絡上找到了戲劇節負責人，嘗試跟



《游向彩色的泡泡》（2016）
照片由作者提供



《筋斗王》（2016）
照片由作者提供

她聯繫，她就是「飛人集社」的總監石佩玉女士。我「膽粗粗」地嘗試問她可否跟我們合作，想不到她竟然馬上答應！

她強調，他們不是一個兒童劇團，他們喜愛以偶發展不同的說故事形式。這對我的影響很深。如果重點是如何說一個故事的話，在我們看見小孩怎樣看事情前，不應把小朋友的能力看得過低，故事是可以有非常多面向的。

這次創作經驗最初是源於一個想法，如果我問小朋友：「海洋令你想起甚麼？」有很多小朋友會回答：「海洋公園！」「那香港有甚麼魚？」「海豚和鯊魚！」「在哪裡可以見到魚？」「水族館！」於是我便想，為甚麼我們從來不跟小朋友談談香港的魚、本土的魚、維多利亞港下面的魚？

開始創作時最困難的是尋找資料，找著找著，竟然發現「香港魚類協會」出版了一本有關香港魚類的書籍，當中的圖片還是人手繪畫的呢！會不會太厲害啊！但是原來這本書在坊間的書店並沒有售賣，於是我再次發揮我的「膽粗粗」精神，致電香港魚類協會會長傾談，沒想到他馬上邀請我到協會見面。書買到了，還獲得他傾囊相授魚類知識，足足談了兩個小時。在戲偶製成後，他還教導我們不同魚的移動方式。創作一套演

出，自己學到的東西實在是太多了！

在這個演出中，我們運用說書人、偶和偶師一起演出，雖然這不算是很嶄新的方法，但我們也在定位上作出了新的嘗試。例如我們選擇了使用較像真的偶，也不刻意使用童話（簡化了的語言），把重點放在如何發揮每種魚的特性及偶的特點，這方面真的要多謝飛人集社及香港魚類協會的幫忙。

《游向彩色的泡泡》的故事由一直生活在碼頭旁邊的「小泥鰻」帶出，「小泥鰻」聽「青衣」說外面有很多美麗的泡泡，於是展開尋找泡泡的旅程，旅途中遇到不同種類的魚，對自己及泡泡也產生了不同的想法。「青衣」跟「小泥鰻」說，最靚的泡泡是要自己找的。當「小泥鰻」看到海底漂亮的珊瑚，發現原來自己追求的並不只是一種單純的漂亮，於是再遇「青衣」時便決定要走自己選擇的路。

每一條魚的特性，也成為每一個讓小朋友投入的位置，例如「石九公」看東西有盲點、「牙帶」可以垂直游泳、「烏頭」最重視吃東西、「青衣」會弄睡袋、「小泥鰻」靈活機警愛冒險等……小朋友不但對魚類認識多了，還把這些知識鷹架到日常生活當中。在演出完成後跟小朋友互動時，我們問小朋友覺得「小泥鰻」為何要離開，然後邀請小朋

友出來試試演繹自己的想法，用說話來講解。有些小朋友說會去旅行、有些說去找泡泡、有些說回家、也有些說不想走，會留下來和「青衣」一起玩。看見小朋友的「看見」，很是感動。有時候要知道小朋友真正的看見，也要給予自由讓他們真誠地呈現自己的想法，尊重他們的能力，不要事先矮化了小朋友的想像力。

《橘色的馬》：讓小朋友有更多空間

這個年度還有一個有趣的演出，就是《橘色的馬》立體書劇場（我們給這個系列一個小小的名稱——「小盒子劇場」）。在創作時是想製作一個跟小朋友談及信仰的故事，不過在創作完成後，卻發覺故事能盛載的討論比我們所想的更多，所以便把它作為公開演出呈現出來。這個故事源自同名的台灣繪本，我們把它改編為立體書劇場形式去演出，故事中加入了光影及演員的角色去講述這個故事。

故事講述一隻在城市生活的「橘色的馬」。他一直有一個失散兄弟，但他只有半張剩下自己一邊的相片，所以一直也找不到對方。在他最傷心的時候，碰到了「啡色的馬」，他也有失散的兄弟和半張相片，雖然很相似，但「啡色的馬」卻不是「橘色的馬」的失散兄弟。「橘色的馬」感到非常失望，於是「啡色的馬」把自己的半張相剪平，跟「橘色的馬」半張相片拼在一起……

我們除了使用立體書作為戲劇場景外，特別加入了一段光影戲。故事裡加入了一點點懸疑性，讓小朋友在看完演出後猜猜是誰剪了相片、那個人為甚麼要這樣做等等。有小朋友說應該大家也剪開相片才可以再拼合起來、有說甚麼也不用做就這樣貼在一起也可以、也有說不貼在一起也可以成為兄弟或者朋友吧！其實，要看見一樣東西，便要讓那東西被呈現，又或者有空間及時間讓小朋友去觀察。這次的演出，讓我更明白要如何說一個故事，令小朋友有更多空間去看事情，同時也給予我空間去看清小朋友看到甚麼。

「超親密小戲節」：讓我們彼此看見

這個年度，我們還參加了在台灣舉行的「超親密小戲節」，這次的經驗可作為文章的總結。過程中，我們觀賞了不同的演出，也參加了戲劇節的工作坊。「超親密」，所指的是超近距離的演出，有些演出就像和朋友同枱吃飯那麼近，觀眾人數也在二十人左右。有的演出跟味道有關，有的跟偶有關；演出地點也很多樣化：咖啡店、餐廳、貨倉和工作室等等。其中一些演出，是標明小孩「也可以看」的。這件事對於我來說，非常有趣，「也可以看」？那究竟是適合還是不適合看呢？在香港，一般也認為小孩適合或者需要某一類型節目，或者需要使用某一種適合兒童的語言。但「超親密小戲節」的演

出單位，把演出界定為小孩「也可以看」的時候，即是代表演出沒有刻意為小孩而設計，亦沒有遷就小孩的意思，這個做法或想法重要嗎？我認為非常重要。還記得台灣朋友跟我說，戲劇藝術的重點是：我們知道說的是一個怎樣的故事，然後找適合的方法去說。很多時候，當面對小孩時，我們便刻意把事實模糊，或者把事情卡通化，並假設小孩需要這樣。我認為這是一種不健康的情況，會過分矮化小孩的能力。其中一個演出《憂傷動物園》，跟觀眾談動物被人類囚禁，創作者雖然用玩具動物來演出，但當中沒有使用語言，只是把動物擺放，或者拿走，小孩完全明白是甚麼一回事，不用刻意解釋，也不需要把動物可愛化，因為動物被囚禁這件事，其實本身一點都不可愛……

同一時間，我們也參加了一個偶戲大師工作坊「物件的秘密生活」，從發掘每一件物件的特性，到把它發展成不同演出，與不同的物件配合，就是一個真誠地對話的過程，用心發現物件的特性，透過創作與物件對話。

我認為創作兒童劇也一樣，每一次創作，我們需要同時面對創作本身、自己及小孩（觀眾），如何真誠地面對和回應，是一個很複雜和重要的課題。每一個演出都是我們與小孩溝通的機會。如果我們要做到這樣，必需要讓小孩有足夠的「看見」，所以與小孩的距離要夠近，而

且時間要充足。但是這種近距離和時間，正是兒童劇的困難所在。

對於劇團來說，每一次創作，我們也感到無比的興奮，但是要如何營運仍然是我們最大的問題。要做近距離的演出，維持小量觀眾，成本便會提高，同樣是三十分鐘的演出，一場可以有八十位觀眾的演出，與只有二十位觀眾的演出，收入馬上呈現極大差距……可以說，我們正嘗試在對理念及美學的堅持與現實環境作出平衡，不過當我們談論到「平衡」，便很容易墮入妥協的引誘。我們也知道甚麼演出類型受大眾歡迎，亦知道甚麼演出內容是家長看到便會樂意花錢買票，更清楚明白，其實每次演出的宣傳對象是家長，小孩無可避免地成為弱勢或被支配的一群……但是，就像我們參加「物件的秘密生活」工作坊，要發現物件的特性，必需要與物件同步，有著與物件一同的步伐，這是需要時間的。我們相信，令家長和孩子與我們步伐一致，也是需要時間的。兒童劇創作的最大障礙，是大家很容易忘記，沒有真誠對待孩子的代價是有多大。期望我們可以一同「從小孩的看見開始」，一小步一小步地出發，讓每個兒童劇演出，無論是甚麼類型，也能成為一個讓小孩「看見」，同時也讓我們「看見」小孩的過程。

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陳膺國

兩個小孩的爸爸，「小不點創作」藝術總監，喜愛四處走，每次走動就會有奇怪想法跑出來。

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Starting from the Way a Child Sees: What Do We Want to See in a Performance?

Kelvin Chan

(Editor's note: Little Smudges Theatre was established in 2013 by three graduates of the Master of Drama Education programme. The company's mission is to "inspire reflection in education, discover and open up creative space for children, and enable a different kind of theatrical experience for children". In 2016, Little Smudges Theatre took part in a variety of creative and cultural exchange activities in children's theatre. This article records Artistic Director Kelvin Chan's creative journey and reflections on his explorations.)

King Tumbler: What do children see?

In late 2015, we were commissioned to create a series of small scale performance to tell stories in different libraries in 2016. The performances had to be related to a picture or story book. I suggested the picture book *Tumbler*. This book is about a skilled acrobat named Tristan the Tumbler who excels in tumbling. His goal in life is to join a monastery as a monk in order to help other people.

When the organisation received our proposal, their first question was whether tumbling was in fact a sport. What an interesting question! I turned this question into a warm-up session before each small scale performance, inviting the children to

guess what types of sports other children were doing. At the end, the actors would improvise a few movements and ask the children: "Is this a sport?" The children's reactions could get very lively, leading to loud discussions. "If you move, it is a sport!" "Only swimming and football are sports!" In this way, many diverse opinions were generated. At the end we introduced the King Tumbler, asking the children "Is tumbling a sport?" in order to provoke reflection.

After the small scale performance, we would create the King Tumbler together with the children. The children came up with many different variations and creations. For instance, they sent a few "Tristan the Tumblers" spinning at the same time, competing to see who could give the tumbler the most spin.

This programme of performances revealed how interesting it is to observe children's imagination at work. If I had not given them space, I would never have witnessed their wild but wise ideas. If I had only wanted to entertain the children and then have them leave afterwards, the children would not have had the chance to work through their own observations and experiences, and I would not have had the chance to see what they had seen. After which we would have continued to believe that children need a certain kind of experience, and parents would have



King Tumbler (2016)
Photo courtesy: Kelvin Chan



Journey to the Colourful Bubbles (2016)
Photo courtesy: Kelvin Chan

continued to believe that children only like a certain kind of experience. This performance programme reinforced my belief that seeing what children see is extremely important.

Journey to the Colourful Bubbles: giving them freedom

The other show that had a profound impact on us in 2016 was *Journey to the Colourful Bubbles*.

This show came about because we received an invitation to come up with a school touring programme. In my mind I kept on pondering alternative possibilities for children's shows. Surfing the internet, I came across this name by chance — Close to YOU International Puppet Festival. I was immediately captivated: small scale puppet shows in various small neighbourhood shops, shadow puppet shows and a variety of stylish puppets — this was way too cool! Through more surfing, I tracked down the person in charge of the festival, Flying Group Theatre's founder Jade Shih, and attempted to connect with her: I got a little "ballsy" and asked if she would collaborate with us, and unexpectedly she agreed right away!

She emphasised that they are not a children's theatre company, and that they love using puppetry to develop different modes of storytelling. This left a deep impression on me. If our emphasis is on how to tell the story, we should not underestimate the ability of children to see before we have understood how children actually see things, and the story can go in many different directions.

This time our creative experience originated in the following train of thought: if I asked the children "What do you think of when I say 'ocean'?", many children would reply "Ocean Park!". "What kind of fish do we have in Hong Kong?" "Dolphins and sharks!" "Where can we see fish?" "In the aquarium!" This made me wonder why we never speak to children about Hong Kong's fish, our indigenous fish, the fish in Victoria Harbour?

The greatest challenge at the start of the creative process was gathering materials. After much searching, we discovered that the Ichthyological Society of Hong Kong had published a book about different kinds of fish in Hong Kong, with hand drawn illustrations no less! Is that not too incredible! However, this book was not in stock in our local bookshops; therefore, I had to resort to my "ballsiness" again, and I emailed the President

of the Ichthyological Society of Hong Kong for a chat. To my surprise, he immediately invited me for a meeting. I bought the book, and also benefited from his accumulated knowledge on fish. We spoke for two hours. After the puppets were made, he instructed us in how different fishes moved. We learnt so many things through creating a show!

In this show, we utilised a narrator, puppets and puppet masters. Although this method is not exactly ground breaking, we did try something new in our positioning. For instance, we chose to use very naturalistic puppets, and we did not deliberately use children's language (simplified speech). Our emphasis was on how to manifest the special qualities of each fish species, the special nature of each puppet — many thanks to Flying Group Theatre and the Ichthyological Society of Hong Kong for their help.

Journey to the Colourful Bubbles is about Little Rabbit Fish who has always lived next to the pier. One day, Little Rabbit Fish hears Parrot Fish say that there are many beautiful bubbles in the ocean beyond. He goes on a quest to find these bubbles. During his journey he meets many different kinds of fish, which in turn inspires different reflections on himself and the bubbles. Parrot Fish tells Little Rabbit Fish that

he has to discover the most beautiful bubbles on his own. When Little Rabbit Fish sees the beautiful coral at the bottom of the ocean, he realises that what he is looking for is not simply beauty. When he encounters Parrot Fish again, he decides he needs to journey along his own chosen path.

Each fish's uniqueness is also a portal for children to enter. For example, Rock Fish has blind spots, Hair Tail Fish can swim vertically, Grey Mullet Fish loves to eat, Parrot fish can secrete a mucus sleeping bag, Little Rabbit Fish is alert and adventurous. Children not only expand their knowledge about fish, they can also apply this knowledge to their daily lives. When we interacted with the children after each performance, we asked them why they thought Little Rabbit Fish needs to leave, then invited the children to attempt to act out their own thoughts, explaining them verbally. Some children said they would go on a journey, some said they would search for bubbles, some said they would return home, some said they did not wish to leave at all and would stay and play with Parrot Fish. Witnessing these children's ways of "seeing" was a very moving experience. Sometimes, to get to know how children really see, we have to give them freedom to genuinely express their own thoughts, respect their abilities, and not preemptively dwarf their imagination.

The Orange Horse: let the children have more space

Another interesting show in the same year was the *The Orange Horse* pop-up book theatre (we gave this series a little name — Small Box Theatre). We hoped through creating this story to discuss faith with children. After its creation, however, we discovered that the meanings that could be contained by this story far exceeded our initial conception. In view of this, we presented it as a public performance. This story originates from the Taiwanese picture book of the same name. We adapted it for performance in the style of pop-up book theatre, adding shadow puppets and live actors to tell this story.

The story is about Orange Horse, who lives in the city and has a long lost brother. Unfortunately, he only has half a photo left in which he alone can be seen, so he has not been able to find his brother. At his lowest point, he meets Brown Horse, who also has a long lost brother and half a photo. Although they are very similar, Brown Horse is not Orange Horse's long lost brother. Orange Horse is bitterly disappointed, which leads to Brown Horse trimming his half photo to be able to fit together with Orange Horse's half photo and form a whole...

Apart from using a pop-up book as the set, we also added shadow puppetry. Moreover, we introduced an element of suspense to the story, so that after the show children could guess who it was that cut the photo and why this person would do this. Some children said everyone should cut their photo to fit together with someone else's, and some said you can simply glue the pieces together without doing anything else. Others said you could still be brothers or friends without glueing the pieces together! In reality, in order to be able to see something, you have to allow that thing to emerge, or allow children the time and space to observe for themselves. This performance further consolidated my understanding of how to tell a story in a way which gives children space to see, as well as simultaneously giving me space to observe what children see.

Close to YOU International Puppet Festival: let us see each other

This year, we also participated in Close to YOU International Puppet Festival in Taiwan. This experience can conclude my article. During this process, we observed different performances, and took part in the festival workshops. "Close to you" means extremely intimate performances. In fact, some performances were so intimate that it was like


dining with friends at the same table. The audiences consisted of about 20 people. Some performances were related to taste, some to encounter. The venues were also varied: cafes, restaurants, warehouses, offices, etc. Some were designated as performances that children “can also watch”. This intrigued me — “can also watch”? Is it suitable or not suitable for children? In Hong Kong, for the most part, there is a belief that shows suitable for or needed by children are shows of a certain type, or which use a certain language appropriate for children. But at Close to YOU International Puppet Festival, performances which children “can also watch” were not conceived specifically with children in mind, nor had they been adapted for children. Is this method or thinking important? I think it is very important. I still remember my Taiwanese friends telling me that the art of drama is to find a suitable way of telling stories we already know. Many times, when we are faced with children, we will obscure the reality, or cartoonise the story, imagining that children need it to be so. I believe this is not a healthy situation, and will excessively dwarf children’s ability. In one show *Soul-sick Zoo*, the theme was the incarceration of animals by the human race. Although the creator used toy animals to tell the story, he did this without text, only moving the animals around, or taking them away. Children completely understood what this was

about without any need for explanation. There was also no need for animals to be made cute, because animal incarceration is not in the least bit cute...

At the same time, we also participated in a puppet master’s workshop, *The Secret Life of Objects*. From discovering the special quality of each object, developing it for different performances, and combining different objects together, it opens up a genuine dialogue. We discover the uniqueness of each object through the heart; we speak with the objects through the creative process.

In the same spirit, I believe that when creating children’s theatre, each creation requires that we simultaneously face the work, one’s own self, and the children (the audience). How to genuinely engage and respond is a very complex and important topic. Each performance is a chance to communicate with children. If we are to achieve our goal, we have to allow children enough opportunity to “see”, which means that the distance to the children must be minimised, and that adequate time is given. But achieving this kind of closeness and sufficient time is what is so difficult about children’s theatre.

For us as a theatre company, each creation brings us infinite excitement, but our greatest challenge is



operational. If we want intimate performances with small audiences, our costs will increase. The difference in revenues from a half-hour show with an 80 versus 20 strong audience is huge. We can gloss it by saying we are trying to maintain the balance between persevering with our ideals and aesthetics and the reality of the circumstances, but when we speak of “balance”, we fall into the trap of being seduced by compromise. We know what kind of show will be popular; we know what kind of content will seem valuable to parents. We know very well that when we market our shows our target is the parent, since children are inevitably vulnerable or dominated... However; as we learnt from The Secret Life of Objects workshop, to discover the special nature of something, you have to first fall into step with it. Synchronising yourself with something (or someone) else requires time. We believe that falling into step with parents and children also requires time. The biggest obstacle to the creation of children’s theatre is this: it is so easy to forget that the cost of acting without sincerity towards children is very great. I hope that we can all “start with children’s seeing” to embark, one small step at a time, on a process that would allow each children’s show, of any and all genres, to become one that would allow children to “see”, and which would also allow us to “see” the children.

(Translated by Amy Ng)



Kelvin Chan

Father of two children and Artistic Director of Little Smudges Theatre, Chan likes wandering, and he ponders strange thoughts when in motion.

