



**Quietly grows amid desolation,
building an intergenerational juggling fantasy.**

The project's artistic core and social intervention philosophy are deeply inspired by the book, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* written by the anthropologist, Anna Tsing. As a distinctive kind of fungus, the pine mushroom (matsutake) is unique as it cannot be cultivated artificially and often appears quietly in seemingly desolate, human-damaged ruins. More importantly, the mushroom exists through a hidden infrastructure: an underground fungal network of interwoven mycelium systems that are invisible to the naked eye. Through mutualistic symbiosis, they connect with one another while not interfering with each other's autonomy, forming a highly interconnected organic world.

The team turns the "Ecology of Matsutake" into a metaphor for grassroots communities in Hong Kong: in the cramped urban fringe spaces such as the subdivided flats, tight and resource-scarce dwellings, and other marginal living areas, underprivileged families, children, and elderly residents are facing the issues of limited space and a lack of social connection. Yet, this grassroots community contains a form of life resilience akin to that of fungi. This project aims to guide the public to discover the wisdom and beauty of life with limited resources, like mycelium in the neglected corners of the city, and to build their own community/ network of connections. At the same time, the project draws on the essence of juggling and embeds its four-core physical vocabulary of juggling—**Control, Throw & Catch, Illusion, and Balancing**—into the daily lives of the underprivileged families in Hong Kong. We eliminated the traditional juggling props and embrace the concept of "juggling as part of life", exploring the relationships and possibilities that arise between human beings and objects under New Materialism.

Research Focus Points:

Material Transformation: How can the most ordinary and household everyday objects (e.g., clothes hangers, scrap paper, balloons and laundry baskets) be redefined through the physical trajectories of juggling, and successfully transformed into juggling props with theatrical aesthetics?

New Materialism: In modern utilitarian society, humans and objects are alienated into a one-way relationship of “users” and “tools”. Through juggling theatre, how do the physical properties of the objects (e.g., the air resistance of balloons, the gravity affecting scrap paper, and the balance point of hangers) shape human bodily senses and mental experience? What is the significance of “returning to the essence of the object” in juggling creation?

Intergenerational Connection: In underprivileged communities where digital products are ubiquitous and cross-generational communication is fractured; how can community juggling theatre reconstruct relationships across different generations—especially by reshaping bodily interaction patterns and emotional networks between various age groups?

Methods:

Focus Groups (August - December 2025): Conduct interviews with underprivileged families to understand their current conditions and play habits, while also testing everyday life juggling movements.

Community Workshops (January 2026): Organize balloon and everyday object juggling workshops to refine juggling techniques and tricks.

Co-Creation & Rehearsals (January - April 2026): Invite community participants and professional artists to rehearse together over several months, turning research findings into a stage performance.

Multi-Channel Dissemination (April 2026): Distribute the physical and digital The Everyday Juggling Pamphlet and publish an impact evaluation report by the academic partner.

Research:

Several months of community research and practice were conducted. We visited different households, elderly community centres and Community Living Rooms. Together with our community friends, we explored a variety of juggling tricks through playful and interactive activities. During the discussions, elderly participants shared that balancing clothes hangers awakened childhood memories—such as balancing feather duster or rolling metal wire. Meanwhile, once children set aside their electronic devices, they became more curious about everyday objects. Participants also shared that, in a fast-paced era dominated by electronic entertainment, they truly appreciated this rare opportunity for direct, face-to-face physical interaction and play— an experience that brought them the most authentic and pure joy.

August - December 2025 [Focus Groups]

Before conducting the focus groups, the juggling artists facilitated three workshops to explore how everyday objects could be used in creative ways. We transformed the clothes hangers and laundry baskets into juggling props to explore the possibilities of juggling within the living spaces. At the same time, we sought to recapture the childhood playfulness from different eras.

We have connected with suitable community organizations to recruit underprivileged families, children aged 6 to 12 and silver-haired groups aged 55 to 80 as research targets. The main partnering organizations included Kwun Tong Happy Teens Club (Hong Kong Christian Service), Caritas Community Centre - Ngau Tau Kok, Jockey Club Wong Chi Keung District Elderly Community Centre (Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association Social Service Centre), Community Living Rooms (mainly serving residents from subdivided units) and Yan Oi Tong etc.



We have conducted a total of five focus groups, focusing on examining the concept of “turning everyday objects into juggling props”:

- **Session 1 (Elderly and Children):** We tested the feasibility of having elderly participants and children use non-juggling items such as paper and balloons for juggling. Even elderly participants with limited mobility were able to enjoy the activities, using white balloons as ‘crystal balls’.
- **Session 2 (Elderly):** We used clothes hangers as props. We found that this could trigger the elderly participants’ childhood memories (e.g., balancing feather dusters and umbrellas) and it sparked greater attention towards “**Play to age**” for older adults. They expressed that compared to simply participating in or watching other art activities, juggling allowed them to focus more on the process and the pure joy of the activity itself.
- **Session 3 to 5 (Underprivileged Families):** We connected with community centres and underprivileged families. Starting from their living spaces, the team experimented and collaborated with the families using prototype versions of the research outcomes.

Date	Time	Venue	No. of participants (Elderly)
13/08/2025	13:30 - 15:00	JTA Juggling Stall	22 (18)
20/09/2025	11:30 - 13:00	JTA Juggling Stall	3 (3)
18/10/2025	11:30 - 13:00	JTA Juggling Stall	12 (8)
25/11/2025	17:00 - 18:00	To Kwa Wan Community Living Room	7 (3)
13/12/2025	11:00 - 12:00	Yan Oi Tong (Tuen Mun)	7 (2)

Research Outcomes:

- We developed a ‘**Tricks List**’ for juggling by using everyday objects such as clothes hangers, balloons, and paper. While the List had not been formally typeset yet, it was already usable as the teaching materials.
- We successfully reached out to intergenerational audiences (the elderly and children), thereby helping to address a common issue in everyday life: while there is often more time for parent–child play and communication, opportunities for grandparent-child interaction are much scarcer.

Community workshops:

Two free community workshops were completed in January 2026. Together with the underprivileged families, we shared the research outcomes and engaged in fun, relaxed workshops focusing on balloons and juggling. To encourage more appropriate target audiences to join, both workshops did not accept open enrolment. Instead, we invited participants who had previously taken part in the focus groups, from community organizations including Caritas Community Centre - Ngau Tau Kok, Sham Shui Po Community Living Room, Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children - Children and Family Services Centre (Kowloon City) and Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association Social Service Jockey Club Wong Chi Keung District Elderly Community Centre, among others.

January 2026 [Juggling Workshop]

At the juggling workshop in January, together with the community participants, we transformed into “Life Observers” and discovered the possibilities of juggling in everyday life. We consolidated the “Juggling Tricks List” developed during the focus groups and shared it with participants during the workshop. This served as a trial for the draft of the “The Everyday Juggling Pamphlet”.



Date	Time	Venue	No. of participants (Elderly)
11/1/2026	14:30 - 15:30	Xiqu Centre Studio 3	20 (11)

January 2026 [Balloon Workshop]

Participants of all ages made their own “Mushroom Balloons” through a DIY session. The whole DIY process required mindful care and teamwork. The elderly assisted by guiding the children on how to maintain the balloon’s shape, while the children unleashed their creativity during the process. At last, everyone picked up their mushroom balloons and danced together to the music—turning the rehearsal space into our “Mushroom Fantasy”!



Date	Time	Venue	No. of participants (Elderly)
11/1/2026	16:30 - 17:30	Xiqu Centre Studio 3	44 (8)

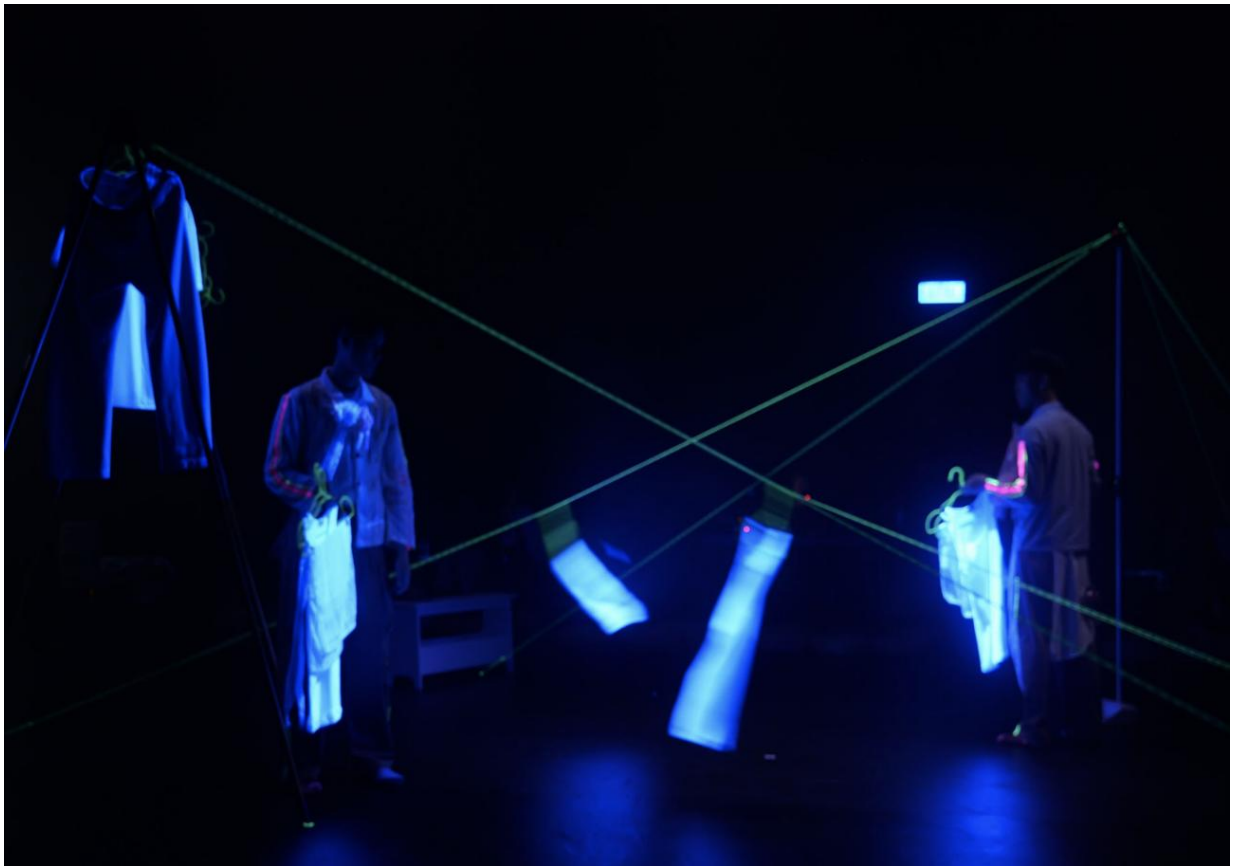
Theatre Performance:

Three performances were completed at Xiqu Centre on 11 – 12 April, 2026. The production was performed by professional juggling artists with live music and community performers from previous community workshops – ranging in age from 8 to 80, thereby enabling meaningful participation from the community and the audience.

Everyday Life • Juggling • Arts

“What is ‘Juggling’? And what is ‘Not Juggling?’”

—This was the first question posed by Juggling Director **Patrick Pun**.



With just one person and a prop, countless ways to play could be created. In *Mushroom Fantasy*, we sought to reveal entirely new imaginative dimensions for juggling props. We invited local juggling artists to co-develop the work, transforming everyday objects into juggling props. This time, the performers set aside their most familiar props to re-examine the characteristics of daily objects—such as their shape and texture. This exploration raises the question of what might everyday household objects -- including clothes hangers, laundry baskets, and mop handles -- transform into when placed in a theatrical environment? Once these daily objects are brought to the stage, they are no longer just tools; they become carriers that connect people, bodies and space.



Starting from everyday living spaces, the two performers played with ordinary items, experimenting with different ways to juggle within a small area. Guided by lights and music, they then began to lead the audience into an imaginative space—where clothes hanger became a swing, laundry baskets seemed to come alive, and even dustpans became part of the installation. Crisscrossing lines of drying clothes connected the entire playground. Here, the two performers interacted and played freely. Meanwhile, the sound artists responded to the juggling artists by using different everyday objects—such as glass bottles, plastic containers, utensils, mixers, and other kitchen tools—combining them with fruit and electronic instruments to create a dialogue with the juggling artists.



Intergenerational Connections

In addition to the professional performers, the performance also featured the community performers: Tong Gor (aged over 60), Mr. and Mrs. Yau (aged 70–80), Liu Liu (aged 8), and Liu Liu's mother. Juggling is an art that takes long-term practice. During training, we started with daily movements, then we worked together with everyone to test the juggling games developed during the workshops, shaping them into a stage performance. Finally, we invited them to become ambassadors to lead the audience in sharing the fun. Throughout this process, we were not pursuing technical perfection, but rather the process of communication —through repeated attempts, over and over again.



Image: Winnie Yeung@Visual Voices (Provided by WKCD)

During rehearsals, Tong continuously contributed ideas for the collaborative sections of the performance, knowing best how their own physical conditions related to handling different props in practice. When Tong and Liu Liu's mother discussed their ideas, Mr. and Mrs. Yau listened attentively with warmth and care, sharing their own opinions while enjoying the time spent with Liu Liu. During breaks, they consulted one another on juggling techniques and enjoyed the time together in the lounge, while the performers offered hands-on guidance whenever needed. Seeing the professional juggling artists collaborate with the community performers showed that this project was not only about “trying”, but also about “sharing”.



Image: Winnie Yeung@Visual Voices (Provided by WKCD)

During the performances, we intentionally incorporated a human-voice element into the music. These sounds carried no language; we were brought back to the most original form of sound—like “oh—ya—wow—hee”, and similar vocalizations. In family-friendly shows, children would naturally make noises, and those sounds were exactly what we wanted to include in the performance. At the beginning of the show, children made various sounds, and some parents initially tried to quiet them. However, encouraged by the sound artists, they began to make different sounds together, which engaged the children even more and allowed them to enjoy a performance that truly belonged to them.



Image: Winnie Yeung@Visual Voices (Provided by WKCD)

The Everyday Juggling Pamphlet

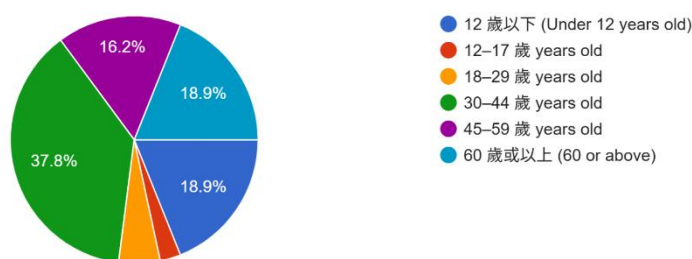
Drawing on feedback from the focus groups and workshops, the team formally compiled the research outcomes into both a printed version and an open-access digital version of the “[The Everyday Juggling Pamphlet](#)”, serving as a continuation of the entire research and development process.

- **Printed Toolkit:** This kit is designed as a playful booklet with clear illustrations. It humorously breaks down juggling tricks of clothes hangers and scrap paper into step-by-step instructions, encouraging families to unleash their creativity at home—even in a small living space.
- **Video Tutorial:** Each kit includes a dedicated QR code that links directly to the *Mushroom Fantasy* page on the If Time’s Limited’s official website (<https://www.iftimeslimited.com/communityarts/mushroomfantasy>). Residents can simply scan the QR code with their mobile phones to watch short demonstration videos recorded by professional juggling artists, alongside creative movement instructions.

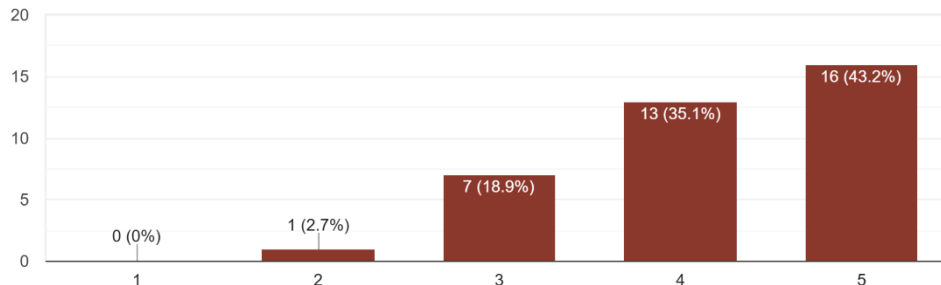
Audience Feedback:

Following the final performances, a questionnaire survey was conducted. Internal registration records and survey results showed that the audience included children, the elderly and families of all ages. Most respondents expressed satisfaction with the performance, and many indicated that they would share the “The Everyday Juggling Pamphlet” with friends and family, as well as participate in the creative juggling games, and be more likely to join other community arts or juggling activities in the future.

您的年齡組別 Age group
37 responses

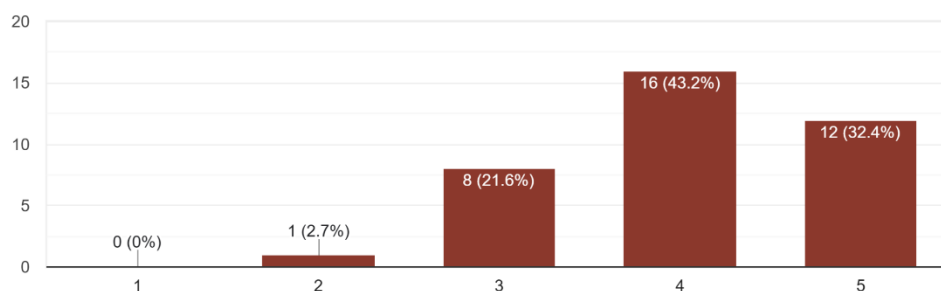


整體而言，您對《松茸樂園》的滿意程度是？ Overall, how satisfied are you with Mushroom Fantasy?
37 responses



1: Very dissatisfied; 5: Very satisfied

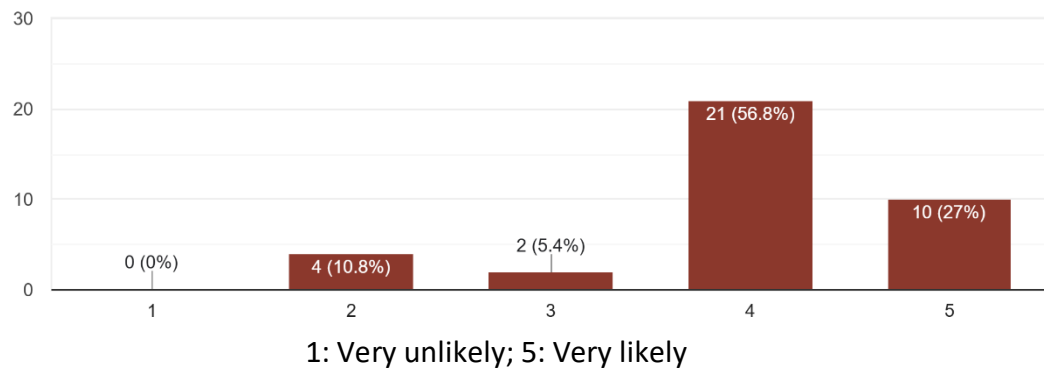
經歷這個節目後，您有多大可能會與親友參閱「生活雜耍小冊子」參與雜耍創意遊戲？ After this experience, how likely are you to try juggling or creative play again at home or with friends/family?
37 responses



1: Very unlikely; 5: Very likely

經歷這個節目後，您有多大可能會日後參加其他社區藝術或雜耍活動？ After this experience, how likely are you to join other community arts or juggling activities in the future?

37 responses



In addition, we also conducted video interviews and informal chats with some audience members. Their feedback was fairly positive. They found this type of theatrical experience novel and interesting, and they particularly liked the part where everyday objects were used as musical instruments. The video will be edited and released on the webpage of *Mushroom Fantasy* (<https://www.iftimeslimited.com/communityarts/mushroomfantasy>). We also received attention from cultural research scholar Dr. Chau Leung, who wrote a post-performance review; it is published on Artistic Moments (<https://www.artisticmoments.net/%e4%ba%ba%e6%96%87/%e5%be%9e%e6%9d%be%e8%8c%b8%e6%a8%82%e5%9c%92%e7%9c%8b%e7%a4%be%e5%8d%80%e8%a1%a8%e6%bc%94%e7%9a%84%e7%9c%9f%e5%af%a6%e5%bd%b1%e9%9f%bf%e5%8a%9b/>)

Execution Challenges and Strategies (Adaptive Tactics)

During the implementation process, the team encountered two common challenges in community project and made some adjustments:

- **Challenge 1: How to accurately reach grassroots communities while protecting their privacy and avoiding labelling?**
 - **Adjusted strategy:** When publicly recruiting participants for the workshops, we decided to forgo rigid income screening and adopt an "invitation-only" approach. Through direct invitations to social service organisations serving underprivileged families/ individuals in areas such as Sham Shui Po, Ngau Tau Kok, and Kwun Tong; and with support from the Community Living Room—we were able to recruit participants while protecting their privacy and ensuring we reached the intended research subjects precisely.
- **Challenge 2: It was extremely difficult to recruit three generations of “parents, children, and the elderly” from the same grassroots family to participate in the various activities of the programme together**
 - **Adjusted strategy:** The team broke away from the fixed requirement of “whole family participation”, instead adopting an “open intergenerational mixed pairing” approach which allowed the elderly and children to attend individually. During the workshops, participants from diverse backgrounds were paired up. Practice proved that the method effectively expanded social networks. Simultaneously, participants were encouraged to take home the juggling skills they learned, allowing family members who couldn't attend to enjoy playing together at home, thus achieving a broader community outreach effect.

To ensure that participants and audience are from underprivileged families, in addition to open registration (community workshops and performances), we contacted 21 core social welfare organisations and Community Living Rooms that serve underprivileged families. These include:

1. Methodist Centre
2. Parent-child Connect Specialised Co-parenting Support Centre (Hong Kong Family Welfare Society)
3. Kwun Tong Methodist Social Service
4. Caritas Community Centre - Ngau Tau Kok
5. Mighty Oaks Foundation
6. Caritas Cheng Shing Fung District Elderly Centre (Sham Shui Po)
7. Kwun Tong Teens Club, Hong Kong Christian Service
8. Yan Oi Tong (Tuen Mun)
9. Children and Family Services Centre (Kowloon City), Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children
10. J Life Foundation
11. Christian Action
12. Jockey Club Wong Chi Keung District Elderly Community Centre (Aberdeen Kai-fong Welfare Association Social Service)

Community Living Rooms in different districts:

Sham Shui Po Community Living Room, Sham Shui Po East Community Living Room, To Kwa Wan Community Living Room, Shau Kei Wan Community Living Room, Nam Cheong Community Living Room, Ma Tau Kok Community Living Room, Prince Edward Community Living Room, Ko Shan Road Community Living Room, Hung Hom Community Living Room

Through direct email promotion (Direct Marketing) and frontline distribution by these organisations, we successfully ensured that the free registration tickets for all three performances attracted the targeted underprivileged families into the theatre.

For most of them, it was their first time experiencing juggling and watching a performance in a theatre.

Discoveries and Reflections:

Life aesthetics of material transformation and narrow-space living

On-site investigations confirmed that most participating underprivileged families had extremely limited living space (e.g., subdivided units or cramped public housing). There is not enough space at home—or even in nearby community parks—for children to stretch and freely move their bodies. This directly leads to children’s over-reliance on electronic devices and social isolation. They often say that this generation rarely engages in physical, face-to-face games with friends.

However, when juggling stepped away from professional props (such as diabolo or spinning tops), ordinary items—clothes hangers, paper and laundry baskets—become the starting point for their play. We invited neighbours to observe the physical trajectories of “home activities”—turning actions like hanging clothes and stretching movements into parts of the games. Through this kind of “life observation”, participants were able to unlock boundless imagination within limited spaces.

Leisure for the elderly and their memories from childhood

In traditional public play spaces (e.g. estate playgrounds), there is a common and rigid pattern: the elderly will bring their grandchildren downstairs, but they often just sit on the stone benches as “observers” or “guardians”. While the children play, the elderly simply watch quietly or do some light stretching in the fitness area.

In the *Mushroom Fantasy* workshops, we broke this routine and invited the elderly to join in the play. Surprisingly, when they practiced balancing a clothes hanger or a balloon in their palms, their bodily memories were awakened. They shared that it reminded them of resource-scarce days in their childhood—when they would balance a feather duster or an umbrella. At that moment, juggling not only released their rich physical experiences but also awakened their childlike wonder. Even participants with mobility issues or joint degeneration were able to experience the same joy through this relaxed, slow, and sensory-driven activity.

Possibilities for local juggling theatre

This research project opened up new possibilities for the development of local juggling theatre. Traditional juggling performances often slip into a showcase of the performers’ extreme technical

prowess and sensory stimulation. *Mushroom Fantasy*, however, successfully transformed that into a people-oriented community connection.

This project breaks the conventional relationship between performers and the audience. As a high-quality family-friendly show, we dissolved the boundary between professional performers and community amateurs. Through cross-disciplinary collaboration—connecting theatre aesthetics, music, local juggling elites, social service organisations, academic research, and grassroots communities—we created an inclusive community space in the Xiqu Centre.

In terms of stage aesthetics and craft, we deeply restructured the relationship between people and objects. Artists and residents have made use of juggling skills such as balancing, tossing, and controlling to transform ordinary items like clothes hangers and floor mops into performance elements. This proved that everyday objects could unlock endless possibilities. Local juggling theatre is not just about entertainment or complex, difficult-to-understand performances; it can also be a medium of communication and a platform to inspire greater imagination in performers.

Closing

“Matsutake” (mushrooms) are a unique lifeform that quietly sprout from seemingly barren land, forming a vast and resilient symbiotic ecosystem underground. We hope this spirit can permeate the community—allowing everyone to discover the most fun in the most ordinary days and reconnecting communities from their cramped individual spaces. We hope that when audiences step out of the theatre and return home, they can also find their own little paradise in their daily life.

May all participants, both adults and children, thrive like matsutake—connecting with themselves and others, building networks even in adversity.

May everyone, like those who harvest matsutake, perceive the wisdom and beauty of life despite limited resources.