



Look Mum, No Hands! evaluation 2022

About the show

Look Mum, No Hands! is a Daryl & Co and Mimbre co-production.

Look Mum, No Hands! is a tender story about friendship and growing up. It explores a visually beautiful, and physically surprising, coming-of-age story about two friends testing their own boundaries. Together they explore freedom, taking risks and independence and how they change depending on who you are and if you're Disabled, or not.

Look Mum, No Hands! playfully explores this idea of independence vs interdependence, vulnerability and strength, using striking physical imagery that will linger in people's minds. The performance takes creative advantage of the fact that one of the characters uses a wheelchair to create new acrobatic shapes and choreographies that are original and unexpected. Using a combination of theatre, movement and acrobatics as a powerful narrative tool, the two friends play, pushing the boundaries of what is possible, until together they find the perfect balance of each of their limits.



Publicity photograph – Rachel Hardwick



Creative team

Co-Directors | Daryl Beeton and Lina Johansson

Cast | Laura Dajao, Danielle Summers, Kat Ball (roleshare) and Sophie Page (understudy)

Composer | Gareth Cutter

Production Designer | Jonathan Van Beek

Inclusive Acrobatic Consultant | Rick Rodgers

Company Stage Manager | Stella Kailides

Project Manager | Zsófi Szendrei

Concept devised with Maiya Leeke and Rosy Roberts

Creation process

2019

During 2019 to 2021 Daryl & Co. worked in partnership with Half Moon Theatre, New Wolsey Theatre, Mimbre, Attenborough Arts Centre and TYA UK to develop a national strategic partnership project called **A Different Way**, which supported the growth of Disabled-led theatre for young audiences. As part of this Daryl & Co. ran workshops with young people from Mimbre Youth Programme, Graeae and Spark Arts for Children.

2021

In 2021 with funding from Blueprint: Without Walls R&D Investment Fund #Blueprint2021, we developed the concepts for Look Mum, No Hands! further. This included researching different flooring options that would work for acrobatics and wheelchairs, developing the storyline with Maiya Leeke and Rosy Roberts, and a wonderful few days at 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space with a group of wheelchair-using and non-wheelchair using performers, exploring inclusive acrobatic techniques with additional expertise from Rick Rodgers, Paralympic Cheerleading coach and former dancer for Candoco. You can see photographs and watch a video from that residency here: <https://mimbre.co.uk/inclusive-acrobalance-training-residency/>

2022

In 2022, commissioned by FESTIVAL.ORG and Hat Fair, and supported by Without Walls, The Spark Arts for Children, Foyle Foundation, The Golsonscott Foundation, Leche Trust and Arts Council England, the show was finally produced and taken on tour with 52 performances across the country, reaching nearly 9,000 audiences (easily exceeding our original target of 4,100) and receiving great feedback. Below is some further information about the tour, how we approached access, visuals from the production and some wonderful comments from our audiences.



Rehearsal photographs - HeardinLondon

Access

Thanks to the solid support from our funders, we were able to make sure access was included across the production and tour. We were able to employ two extra performers as understudies/roleshares, and create a retainer system for them to be on standby to step in if the main performers were unwell, exhausted or injured.

We created an Easy Read introduction and synopsis for our audiences to look at before they attended, to get to know the show, the characters and the story. There is also an audio introduction and synopsis for our audiences to listen to before they arrive. They can both be found here: <https://mimbre.co.uk/look-mum-no-hands-easy-read-and-audio-description/>

We toured with a variety of seating options for audiences with the aim of making the experience of watching the show completely inclusive – without making Disabled audience members sit in a special cordoned off section. This generally worked well, but on festivals with a big audience it could still be hard to access the seating, so we are reviewing it further for 2023 to make the audience actively involved in looking out for other people's needs as part of the pre-show.



The tour

Date	Venue	Number of shows	Audience number
05/04/2022	West Bridgeford Library	1	36
05/04/2022	Beeston Library	1	36
06/04/2022	Mansfield Library	1	40
06/04/2022	Worksop Library	1	12
07/04/2022	Newark Library	1	19
07/04/2022	Southwell Library	1	15
08/04/2022	Hyson Green Library	1	17
08/04/2022	Meadows Library	1	24
09/04/2022	Wigston Library	1	26
09/04/2022	Hinckley Library	1	14
11/04/2022	Hamilton Library	1	7
11/04/2022	St Barnabas Library	1	20
12/04/2022	New Parks Library	1	33
13/05/2022	Hackney Showroom lunch club	1	15
14 – 15/05/2022	Brighton Festival	4	340
21 – 22/05/2022	Norfolk & Norwich Festival	4	1100
02 – 03/06/2022	Salisbury International Festival	4	1050
25 – 26/06/2022	Birmingham International Dance Festival	4	510
01/07/2022	Timber Festival	2	250
03/07/2022	Hat Fair	2	430
11 – 14/07/2022	Schools Kensington & Chelsea	5	1020
22/07/2022	London 2012 anniversary event	1	450
23/07/2022	Ensemble Festival by Certain Blacks	2	230
05 – 06/08/2022	Stockton International Riverside Festival	4	1170
20 – 21/08/2022	Just So Festival	4	1350
27/08/2022	Greenwich + Docklands International Festival	2	700
TOTALS		52	8914



Audience feedback

Quantitative

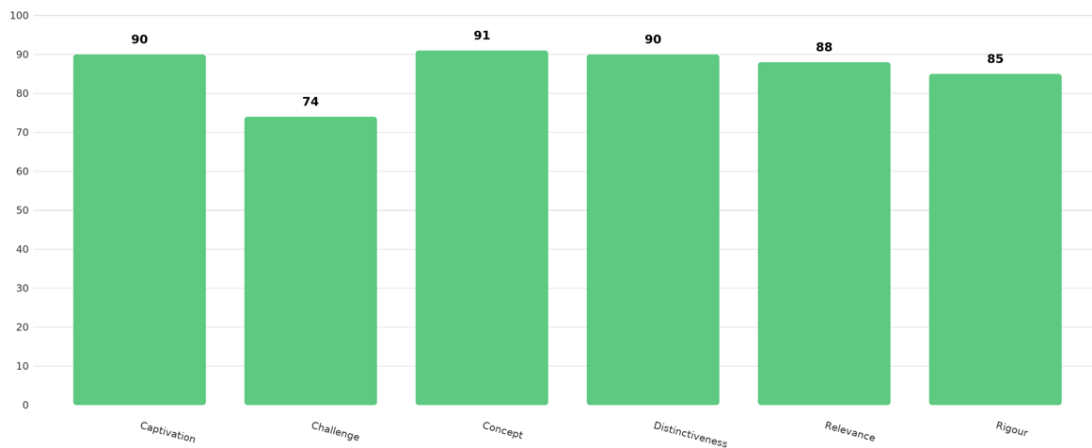
Using Counting What Count's Impact and Insight framework¹, we asked audiences to rate show on a slider between 0 and 100 for the following questions:

- It was absorbing and held my attention
- It challenged me to think in a different way
- It was an interesting idea
- It was different from things I've experienced before
- It had something to say about today's world
- It was well thought through and put together

We had 19 responses in total - which is good for an outdoor production with no ticketing data. These were the results:

Look Mum No Hands! - Survey Summary

Dimension Averages



¹ <https://impactandinsight.co.uk/>



Qualitative

"beautifully, hilariously and poignantly [shows] what can be achieved physically together with some trial and error!" Andrew Miles of Birmingham PHAB camps

"Fantastic crowd reaction for Look Mum, No Hands!" @Ivan_Wadeson

"So fantastic to see top quality companies creating exciting work for young people. #FutureOfTheatre and taking it beyond the "conventional Theatre spaces" Top Ducks!" Karen Spicer

"A great story of the ups and downs of friendship, with a huge celebration of ability thrown in! #LovedIt!"

"A-MA-ZING touching heart-warming"

"Where they worked together while being different - it made me cry - very moving."

"Completely utterly charming!"

"FRIENDSHIP FOR EVERYONE"

"Showing the children the importance of inclusion and also saying sorry :) "

"Happy, exciting and very fun"

"Excellent Excellent & Excellent"

"So joyful and had me (and all the big and little 'uns around me) captivated"

"Entertaining. Graceful. Full of Energy."

"Funny. Heart warming. Entertaining."

Audience testimonial

Andrew Miles, Birmingham PHAB Camps:

"I had a great pleasure of seeing 'Look Mum No Hands' (twice) at the Birmingham International Dance Festival on Sunday and I was lucky enough to meet both Laura and Danielle after!

Firstly, I just wanted to say how blown away I was by them, and by the amazing piece you have devised with them!

I run a longstanding charity (founded long before I was born) that facilitates diversity and inclusion amongst children from Birmingham, by taking large groups of them from all backgrounds, ethnicities, and abilities on holiday together each year to create better understanding and friendships between them. An important way we achieve this is by taking away an exactly equal number of disabled and non-disabled children on each camp we run for different age groups.

For that reason, we see young disabled and non-disabled children come together, meet each other for the first time and suss each other out every year. And your production practically encapsulates that journey. We actually witness our kids dance around the issue with each other initially, either ignoring the difference or over-compensating for it and in neither case getting it quite right, then we see them start to integrate, begin to harmonise and befriend each other. Then we witness the period of over-familiarity and we quite literally see the non-disabled kids start playing in the disabled children's wheelchairs without first checking with them and not understanding the impact of that, through to coming to appreciate and understand each other as genuine friends.

Your production exemplifies this so beautifully, hilariously and poignantly, not to mention showing what can be achieved physically together with some trial and error!



At Stockton International Riverside Festival, photograph by Stuart Boulton,
and at Timber Festival, photograph by Leyla Guler



Other outputs

Daryl Beeton, co-director, wrote an article for Total Theatre Magazine explaining Daryl & Co's approach to what we mean when we say inclusive:

<http://totaltheatre.org.uk/reclaiming-the-mainstream/>

Extract:

“Let's be honest – the mainstream excludes! So therefore, how can it be mainstream if it actively excludes artists, participants and audiences from being involved. The problem with words like 'inclusive' is that they are defined by and seen through a cultural lens of tradition.”

Laura Dajao, performer, was interviewed by TheatreFullStop:

<https://www.theatrefullstop.com/2022/07/14/performer-laura-dajao-talks-about-starring-in-daryl-beeton-productions-and-mimbre-theatres-co-production-look-mum-no-hands-playing-at-certain-blacks-ensemble-festival/>

Extract:

What would you like for audiences to take away from the show?

“A different perspective of disability- to also understand that transparency and honesty starts with a conversation and not assumptions.”

Lina Johansson, co-director, will be speaking at a conference organised by the German Association of Theatre in Public Space on the theme of diversity at the end of October 2022 in Detmold.

A blog post, written by Daryl Beeton, will be appearing on the Without Walls website (<https://withoutwalls.uk.com/category/blog/>) about the challenges of accommodating both accessibility and environmental responsibility.



The Library Tour, photographs by Neil Pledger



At Norfolk & Norwich Festival

The future

We were thrilled by the responses to *Look Mum, No Hands!* Mimbre and Daryl & Co. found the experience of working together excellent – any additional work created by having to communicate more was easily outweighed by being able to split the tasks and bounce ideas between each other.

We already have a schools tour in Leicester booked by Spark Arts for Children for 2023, and then have several potential bookers, including some in Europe, interested for summer 2023.

See the trailer for the show here:
<https://vimeo.com/756735825>

Thank you very much to all our supporters

