

## Final report from the residency

Dates: 10. – 16. 6. 2024 / 1. – 5. 7. 2024

Venue: CESTA / Transforma Festival / Třafačka Tábor

Project: Liminal Disco

Participants: Alyssa Dillard, Rebecca McFadden, Veronika Matoušková, Scott Tait, Shannon Louise „Minnie“ Hardy-Rowlett, John Alvarez, Ella Pavel

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### OBJECTIVE OF THE RESIDENCY

The objective of the residency was to continue the research and development of the performance Liminal Disco following our initial research presentations and events in September and November 2023. The focus was on the development of the performance and choreography, which we would present at the end of the residency period.

Liminal Disco is a performance about the culture of roller skating and how it brings people together, creating new relationships between people, urban landscapes, movement, and music. The residency version focused on 3 of the 5 characters, each from different backgrounds, showcasing their unique skate styles and levels of expertise, paired with their stories of how they came to skating.

In collaboration with the Skateholders forum, it also featured a lo-fi installation of footage of skateboards at parks around the Czech Republic, displayed on an old tube television, and a photo installation showcasing skateboards. The floor surrounding the television was covered in various skate zines that the audience could observe and read.

Liminal Disco began as an idea during a SE.S.TA residency in August 2022. After that, the main goal was to create events that would bring together the audience, skaters, and artists, with the first WIP presentation of Liminal Disco at Jízdárna Savarin and Divadlo X10. In the final phase of the residency, the goal was to finalize the story and dramaturgical structure of the performance in preparation for the premiere in 2025.

### CONTENT AND PROGRESS OF THE RESIDENCY

#### **Part 1: June 10-16, 2024 – Character Development, Story Development, Movement, and Choreography**

The residency began on June 10, 2024, at CESTA, and lasted until June 16, 2024. During this period, the focus was on developing choreography, working on character development, and laying the foundations for the script and storytelling.

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## Part 2: July 1-5, 2024 – Presentation at Transforma

The next stage involved further developing the performance and preparing for the work-in-progress presentation. We worked on assembling the pieces of the performances that had been developed. Each character was given a 30-minute storyline, which was to be acted out throughout the event/performance. This version of the performance was presented over the course of one hour, with some stories being repeated to emphasize different aspects of the characters. After the presentation, a feedback session with the audience took place.

### Presentation at Transforma Festival:

- July 4, 2024 – First WIP at 18:30
- July 5, 2024 – Second WIP at 14:30

## THE SPECIFIC BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES OF THE RESIDENCY

This residency was beneficial for focusing on the performance and the characters. With a project such as this, which involves many moving parts, including the skates we wear, it is important to balance the spectacle with the story. As the culture of roller skating is also collaborative, we wanted to showcase the work in a festival environment where people would be more open to new structures for performances.

We had some complications with the scheduling and aimed to repeat the performance in a different setting to prevent it from competing with concerts. However, both performances had a larger-than-expected turnout with positive feedback.

The final public output and collaboration with the Skateholders forum and Transforma festival went well, and we had a positive experience with both organizations.

### Project outcomes:

- Audience and festival feedback regarding the topic and material presented
- Dramaturgical clarity and opportunity to run variations of the script in runs to finalize the through-line of the story.
- Character development
- Develop a deeper understanding of the length of the full performance based on the introductory structure we blocked the: opening, 1st solo, transition, 2nd solo, transition, 3rd solo, group and choreography. So now the first 30 minutes of the performance is complete so I would focus on the final 30-45 minutes of the performance noting the ideal length is between 1 hour and 15 minutes to 90 minutes.
- Note: It was important to block this as the performance itself functions as a standalone theatre piece but will also function as a performance inside of the larger Skate Skate Dance Dance roller disco events organized as a part of the performance and community development project.

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## FUTURE VISION

The future vision of this project is to premiere the work in the Spring of 2025. The performance and project would be presented bi-annually in Prague with a large roller skate event and then toured around Czech Republic with aims of collaborating with artists and venues in Germany and Austria for future presentations of the performance. We hope that the repertoire of this performance has a long life in the Czech Republic and believe that the subject matter and presentation would work well in smaller cities in addition to Prague performances.

## CONCLUSION

The event was a success for us! We received excellent feedback from the attendees of the festival and had the opportunity to explore the structure of the performance in a short 30-minute version.

For us, the collaboration with Transforma and Skateholders was beneficial for the nature of the performance, which aims to bring this topic to new audiences in cities and towns outside of Prague. These areas would find the themes of skate culture, community engagement, and public space usage particularly interesting – sometimes even controversial.

Through this project, we learned that each city and town has its own conflict regarding what to do with skaters, as they often carry a negative stigma. However, this community is often very positive and supportive, with older skaters guiding and encouraging younger skaters, and even women and girls joining the scene. The collaboration between roller skaters, space, movement, and music – along with the intersection of skateboarders and the broader electronic music scene through the partnership with Transforma festival – created a unique performance experience that I hope to continue in other cities around the Czech Republic. I believe this performance is an excellent show to tour across the country, using people's various references and relationships to skating, music, and dance to draw them to the performance. This could introduce new audiences, especially young adults (18-30), to theatre and performance.

Regarding the residency at CESTA, we enjoyed our time there and felt supported by Lenka and Chris. However, one of our residents felt uncomfortable staying at CESTA due to allergies, and we believe there are some safety precautions that should be addressed to improve the space. Specifically, the stairs leading to the sleeping quarters and the lower and upper levels. These stairs were uncomfortable, and many residents felt stressed in the house. We even came up with our own plans for how to fix the stairs to make them safer. Other than that, we had a positive experience. Chris was kind and accommodating, and Lenka and the production team worked hard to ensure we had what we needed.

For the event itself, there were some communication issues, but these were mostly due to the fact that we were working as four individual groups trying to coordinate for the festival. Communication between CESTA and the Skateholders Forum went well, but there were occasional misunderstandings with Transforma and the schedule that made things a bit difficult. That being said, I consider these to be normal

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challenges when working with new groups for the first time. I wouldn't say this negatively affected the overall experience. Now that I am more familiar with their working style, I would be happy to collaborate with them again. Ideally, we would premiere in Prague and present the full performance at Transforma in the Electrocentrala in 2025.

## Online Presence:

- <https://www.alyssadillard.com/liminaldisco>
- <http://transforma.cz/t/skate/>

13. 11. 2024  
MgA. Alyssa Dillard  
Artistic Director, OKRA s.z.



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