

LLB residency REPORT  
Sergiu Matis

ICI / CCN Montpellier

The residency at ICI / CCN Montpellier took place between the 15th and the 26th of September. Here we had the chance to start a new project, titled *Blazing Worlds* in the studio Bagouet, which is the black box theatre of the CCN. It was quite utopian to start the project, which has as departure point utopian and sci-fi literature, in a fully equipped theatre and with technical support. We used the technical residency to already try out ideas that we developed while preparing the project, together with the stage designer and video artist, with the light designer and with our technical director / sound technician. It was great to be able to use two large screens, two projectors and one camera in our first try outs. In our first choreographic sketches, we were already able to use six head sets, beside the sound system of the theatre as well as the light objects that we requested. I could only wish for all the projects to start directly on stage with these ideal conditions. Even in the early phase of the project it is very important to already try out the technical ideas, which usually, in the case of my previous projects we can only get to try towards the end of the creation process.

It's also one of the few black box theatres that I know that has windows with shutters, and that can be opened. It was great to be able to rehearse with opened windows, during the late summer days, and start the rehearsals with day light, not having to spend the entire day with the artificial stage lights. The many windows which are at the back of the stage, letting the sun in at different angles, influenced our light design. We'll keep this inspiration for the piece. It was just a great mix of fantastic working conditions! Also the fact that the common kitchen for the residents is just one floor above the backstage area, influenced a lot the quality of the working time at CCN, as well as supporting very well the group building experience. The yard of the convent with its sunny and shady corners was also a great place to relax and rest in the breaks. Not to mention the fantastic team of the CCN, which was super helpful, supportive and attentive to our needs.

On the 21st of September I gave a workshop as part of *Club de Danse*, which is a CCN format for the guest choreographers to share their practices with dancers of mixed levels in the local community. I was sharing some of my movement meditations, improvisation and composition tools to a large group of very enthusiast dancers. It was a great way to meet some of the local dance scene.

Only few days after the residency had started, on the 22nd of September we had an open showing, where more than 60 people came. Again, showing that the CCN and the city of Montpellier are surrounded by many passionate dance lovers. It was a rather early stage for us to open the process already to an audience, also considering that with some of the dancers in the project I haven't worked before, but we used the situation very well, by preparing a long session of tasks and scores, just in the way we usually work. We tried to integrate already some written material, the work with the voice and the camera, as well as video projections and inviting the audience through the resulting installation in the last part of the presentation. The open showing with the Montpellier audience gave us a good sense of what the piece could become, also due to the fact that they engaged into very interesting conversations with us afterwards, and because it is a very invested and experienced audience.

## WSF Budapest

The residency was postponed twice due to covid, but it finally took place between the 4th and the 18th of May 2022. WSF Budapest is one of the co-producers for the project *DRANG*, and the residency was supposed to be the research phase for it. The piece premiered in February at Radialsystem Berlin, as planned. Therefore, the residency in May changed its function. As the piece had already been created, but also because of the short notice cancellation of the accommodation back in September 2021 (due to covid), we lost big part of the budget, meaning that in May I travelled to Budapest without any collaborators. Being alone in the studio is a very rare situation for me, so I used it as time for reflecting on how the process and the creation went. It's been quite a luxury to have the time to re-visit, on my own, the freshly generated tools in my movement practice, developed during the work on *DRANG*, as well as writing about them. This is part of the continuous accumulation and notation of the Catalogue of the practice — the Visible Thinking Body (VTB), which I keep working on and with since 2013.

The rare occasion of being able to take time to look back into a project that just finished, is a very healthy way to close a project. I'll take this experience as a model for the future. I wish that after each process there will be time, space and support to reflect on it. Also, speaking about the future: the attentive work of documenting a process that just finished, opens up questions and interests that can be taken into the next work. Already in Budapest, during the residency, I started thinking and planning the next project: *Blazing Worlds* from the point of view of the topics and logics that appeared out of *DRANG*. This type of continuity is very important for my practice and for my artistic processes. The residency allowed me to spend time actively linking the recent past experience with the future project, that is planned to start in September. Budapest was the perfect location for this transition moment, the time between two projects.

During the first week of the residency I was using the studios at Jurányi, which are situated on the Buda side of the city, and in the second half I was at the studio in Trafó, on the Pest side. The change of scenery, not only gave me the chance to experience different sides of the city, but also to observe how the local dance scene is connected, and during these difficult times, is very supportive and collaborating closely with each other, at institutional level.

I saw two performances at Trafó, of Budapest based choreographers, one of them being Anna Biczók, also a Creative Crossroads artist. This was a great way to meet two fellow artists from the same network, as Karin Pauer (LLB artist too) was performing in Anna's dance piece. I was happy that we finally managed to meet in real life, and we were already excited about the next LLB gathering in Vienna, during Impulstanz.

In the last weekend of the residency I gave a workshop, where I was sharing some elements of my movement practice to dancers and performers from the local dance scene. It was another great way to meet other people of this city that are interested and passionate about dance. I also managed to see the run through of two dance makers and give them feedback before the premiere of their collaborative work, getting to know and admire other aspects of the diverse and rich dance scene of Budapest.

At the end of the residency I performed a solo piece of mine: *Nocturne for broken vocal cords* at Turbina, a new venue for concerts, contemporary art and performance. The exchange with the audience was intimate and intense. I was happy to perform this piece in Hungary, as parts of it deal with Transylvanian folk dances, which have Romanian, Hungarian, German, Austrian and Roma influences. The departure point for the solo was a Nocturne by Béla Bartók. It was a great way to end the residency in Budapest with a solo performance, made possible and supported by Workshop Foundation (WSF).

The residency in Budapest was like a retreat: studio time alone, to reflect on a project that just finished — an experience that I will always want to be able to take time for; active transition time between two projects; the relaxing bath houses in the evenings; meeting artists of the local dance scene, by seeing their shows, sharing the practice in workshops, watching rehearsals, and performing. I would love to return to WSF Budapest, hopefully with *DRANG*, or the new work: *Blazing Worlds*. if not with the time in between, towards what may come after...

The last days of the residency we used them to capture the build up to the open showing and to see what kind of directions we need focus on. We slowed down a bit to enter the material and the research in more detail.

Having had the chance to start the project at CCN Montpellier makes me want to always start a project in the very same conditions. This is how close we got to utopian dance making. In 2019, I started another project in a residency at CCN: "Extinction Room", which was since then shown many times in France, but also in Belgium, Romania, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic. We hope to be able to present both these works in Montpellier one day, as we would also like to give back to CCN and to the city all the goodness we received from them!

CCN is one of the coproducers for *Blazing Worlds*, and the premiere is planned for the 20th of April 2023 at Radialsystem Berlin, together with Tanzfabrik.

LLB residency REPORT  
Sergiu Matis

MDT Stockholm

In September 2021 I had the chance to spend 2 weeks at MDT Stockholm. (30.08 - 12.09) I traveled by train - there is a direct connection between Berlin and Stockholm, overnight and it takes about 18 hours. On the long journey I was reading Andreas Malm - Swedish eco-activist and thinker, and I was fantasising about setting a meeting with Greta Thunberg... Or rather trying to imagine in which circumstances such a meeting would make sense and how, if at all can it be connected with my artistic practice - related to eco-activism rather conceptually.

The studio we worked in during the residency, together with my collaborator Orlando Rodriguez, was a beautiful white cylinder, in a former torpedo workshop. That specific room was sometimes submerged in water to test and repair torpedos. This became a subject in our research, somehow aligned with the topics in DRANG (German for "urge", "drive" - the title of the project that we started during the residency at MDT).

MDT is situated on a small island in the heart of Stockholm. The aquatic and nautical themes were omnipresent, being the perfect location to start a project with navigation as one of the topics. Across the building there is also a museum which is built around a sunk ship from 1628! We visited the shipwreck, which was brought back to surface from the depths of the Stockholm harbour in 1961. This baroque relic, with its failed destiny as a battle ship became a great platform of reflection. We started to think of the theatre as becoming a ship, the performance as a vessel and as a journey. The stage design proposal started to look a bit like the studio that we were working in at MDT, such great the inspiration was.

Around this island there are a lot of boats, on which some people live during the entire year. Anchored but still floating, people in vessels, navigating the quotidian. In one of these boats we met a friend of ours, that we knew that she lives in Stockholm, but didn't think we'd just bump into her one morning on the way to the studio. She is an opera singer that we worked together with in Berlin in 2011. Her floating house is few hundred meters away from the entrance to MDT! Quite a coincidence again! Evenings on n her boat we discussed a lot about baroque music, which she often performs herself. In DRANG the plan was to have live harpsichord music, mostly the Fantasias of Frescobaldi, an Italian baroque composer. The plan for the residency was to see how many Fantasias we can choreograph and still keep it interesting. The focus was to find a way to read and understand these very complex scores, then translate them into a choreographic language, that is also aligned with my practice and interests in dance and dance making.

The MDT studio seemed the perfect place to have these baroque complexities resonate and the surroundings gave us more context and inspiration than expected.

The team of MDT was very helpful and supportive. Due to covid restrictions we didn't get to spend much time together, but the care was felt. We even had a separate office room just for us to work and have our lunch breaks in. We felt safe and really really well taken care of. At the end of the residency we had a showing, where we shared our very first sketches of the Fantasias dances, intertwined with Noise / electronic music and with recordings of rainforest sounds. The discussions and reflections after the showing were very helpful and intriguing.

During the residency a student from the MA programme in choreography at the University of Arts in Stockholm had contacted me. She came across my work in Berlin. She came for a shared practice one morning and we had very interesting talks. I became her mentor for the rest of her final year.

We also managed to meet briefly (covid kept our paths more difficult to cross) the other artists in residency at MDT while we were there: Sonya Lindfors and her team. We had the chance to see a run through of their most recent work. In November it is planned to bring that performance to Berlin, in a festival that I'm co-curating.

DRANG had its premiere in February in Berlin and it still resonates the MDT Stockholm traces. We hope we can bring the piece to Sweden one day.

Thank you so much for such a wonderful start in the DRANG journey and for being part of it right at its departure.

Looking forward to seeing you soon again!

With kind regards,  
Sergiu Matis