

WITHIN A THOUSAND SUNS

OKTAWIA ŚCIBIOR / SAMORY BA



Photo: Emilee Seymour

WITHIN A THOUSAND SUNS

Choreographic piece for 2 dancers

Creation: 1 June 2024 - Le Générateur (Gentilly, France)

Duration: 45 min

Diffusion spaces: theater stage, museums,
repurposed industrial sites

*The piece can be presented on various types of flooring.
A dance mat can be provided by the company upon request.*

Available for touring in 24/25 and 25/26

PRODUCTION

association Slippery Art Project

CO-PRODUCTION

La Briqueterie - CDCN du Val-de-Marne

SUPPORT

Le Générateur, Ballet du Nord CCN et Vous !,
CCN de Créteil et du Val-de-Marne, Ville de Vitry-sur-Seine,
Département du Val-de-Marne, Théâtre du Crochetan (Switzerland)

CREDITS

Concept, choreography et interpretation:
OKTAWIA ŚCIBIOR / SAMORY BA

Musical composition:
JUAN CRISTÓBAL SAAVEDRA

Lighting design:
FABRICE SARCY

Dramaturgy:
LOU COPE

Costumes:
OKTAWIA ŚCIBIOR / LOUISE CARTON

Artistic advisors:
RAFAËLE GIOVANOLA, RAINALD ENDRAß
(CocoonDance)

CONTACT

art.glissant@gmail.com
Oktawia Ścibior +33 7 62 73 36 18
Samory Ba tel. +33 6 62 69 57 09
www.slipperyartproject.com

The Piece

Within A Thousand Suns is a choreographic duet developed over four years of radical experimentation with inline skates and crutches.

In this creation, the unique mechanics of gliding, harnessed by the dancers' precise technique and the choreographers' contemporary artistic approach, serve as the foundation for a daring exploration of movement and forms.

Using unconventional tools to craft a physical language that reimagines the body as both primal and augmented, the performers challenge the boundaries of their own physicality, continually redefining themselves.

Composed as a triptych, the piece unfolds across three distinct choreographic universes.

Each part is designed to be presented individually, offering a complete and compelling experience, while collectively contributing to the overarching narrative of the work.

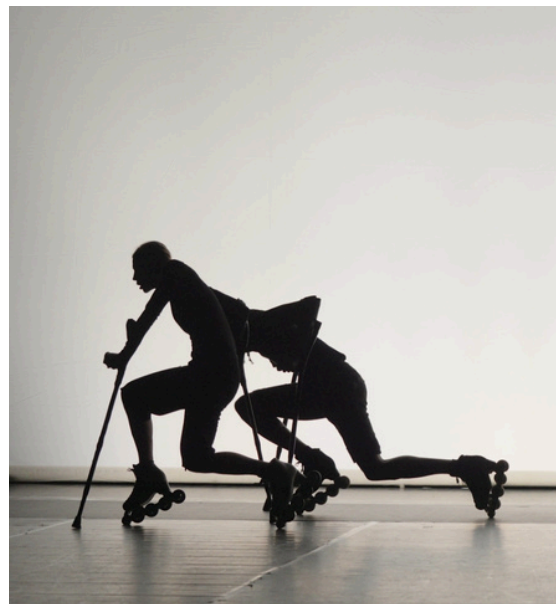
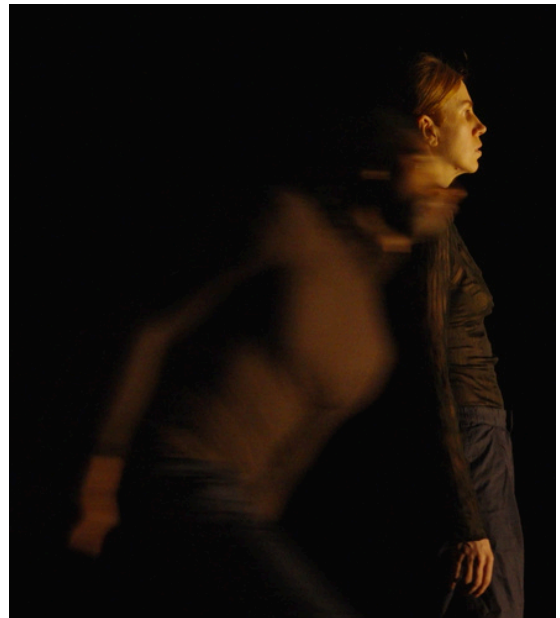
The performance opens with a mesmerizing set of interactions inspired by the entanglement of physical particles. The choreographers investigate a movement generated by a passive surrender to the kinetic principles, using velocity and frictionless locomotion to create a continuous feedback loop.

The momentum of circular trajectories, collisions, and the inertia of moving bodies gradually shape the dancers' corporeal state, intricating their interactions as they become more and more interdependent. This formal approach echoes with the omnipresent fundamental forces of nature that govern the complex organic world, and drive growth and transformation on both microscopic and macroscopic scales.

In the second part, a unique footwork technique that merges gliding and walking is employed to create a paradoxical locomotion.

With a sense of detachment and satire, a hectic confrontation emerges, evoking a frenetic "static march" that underscores the often absurd nature of human agitation.

Supported by a rhythmic soundtrack featuring shifting time signatures, this distanced but poignant perspective on humanity highlights the challenges of coexistence, the chaos of social behaviors and the profound personal struggle that we are prone to experience.



The concluding section of the piece introduces a singular gestural framework originating in the use of crutches. Usually associated with disability, these tools are re-envisioned here to extend the performers' arm reach, thus enhancing their bodies and enabling them to explore a quadrupedal form, by experimenting with two stable and two mobile fulcrums.

This juxtaposition brings forth a dance that disturbs the familiar and invites the audience to witness a body in flux — intuitive, animalistic, and continuously reshaping itself to reveal an untamed adaptive force. This part plunges into the raw depths of instinct as a physical and emotional transformative force. The dancers embody individuals stripped down to their core needs of self-preservation, each of their moves being dictated by sheer visceral urges.

Through these three distinct but complementary choreographic landscapes, the piece delves into the various conscious and unconscious constraints that shape our actions in an ever-changing world. It questions our conditioning and investigates the interplay between freedom and determinism, and the elusive boundary between them.

Teaser

<https://vimeo.com/1028651193/96ddc25db6?share=copy>



Choreographers' word

More than fifteen years of our lives have been dedicated to sculpting our bodies in the rigor of competitive figure skating... Fifteen years mastering a mobility freed from the constraints of pedestrian locomotion, dancing in the air like tightrope walkers. Since childhood, we have learned to defy gravity, but always within a framework, always in a cage of codes: athletic, shining, docile.

Then came the desire for emancipation. We distanced ourselves from this conservative universe. We questioned what our bodies knew, what they repeated. Slowly, patiently, we freed them from their past conditioning. We joined a collective of skaters who, like us, were seeking to go beyond the habitual experiences and limitations of traditional figure skating. Together, we explored - not to produce or achieve, but to feel.

We returned to the core of our craft - glide, a fascinating phenomenon that redefines the relationship to the ground.

To glide is to defy gravity, to feel the weight fading away, to let each movement stretch infinitely. It is akin to a 'rooted flight', a dance suspended between earth and sky, a state of horizontal microgravity impossible to grasp for dancers 'on foot'.

It is in this tension between flight and grounding that our research takes root. It is where we find the raw material of our art, a singular physicality and a unique field of choreographic possibilities.

The idea of a work combining inline skates and crutches as mediators between our bodies and the ground emerged during the lockdown in March 2020, a moment when space constricted, but our research expanded.

The closure of our habitual landmarks - ice rinks, led us to use public space as a territory for an exploration. We replaced our ice skates with inline skates, and the asphalt became our new floor.

The crutches came later, not as a help, but as extensions of our bodies. They sparked our interest to seek new balances, new lines and a fragile strength. They enabled us to draw new trajectories and awaken a new movement instinct.

From urban space to the studio, our research refined over four years and led to the creation of *Within A Thousand Suns* - a piece that celebrates the emergence of a unique gliding dance, transcending the boundaries of choreographic art.

Oktawia Ścibior, Samory Ba



ARTISTIC TEAM

OKTAWIA ŚCIBIOR

Oktawia Ścibior is a skating artist and choreographer born in Warsaw (Poland) and living in Paris (France). For 15 years, she trained as a high-level competitive figure skater, earning a bronze medal at the Polish Nationals in 2003. Following her athletic career, Oktawia studied Physics and later Bioinformatics, obtaining Master's degrees in both fields. Additionally, she trained in jazz dance at the National Centre for Culture in Poland, and performed in numerous traditional skating shows across Europe.

In 2013 she discovered contemporary skating through the works of the company Le Patin Libre. Since that time, she has been engaged in the development of a contemporary approach to skating, recognizing the medium's vast potential for artistic exploration. In 2016 she founded Slippery Art Project, an association aiming to nurture the emergence of artistic creation via skating. This led her to collaborate with several artists on various contemporary skating projects in France.

Since 2018, she has been performing in the piece *Murmuration* by Le Patin Libre. She also closely collaborates with Samory Ba, experimenting with gliding mouvements on inline skates. In 2020, they created a screendance titled *Rêverie*, which was officially selected for several festivals, including the Nice Dance Festival (FR), Birmingham Dance Festival (UK), Cinematica Festival (IT), and the CAPSULE Festival at the National Arts Centre (CAN).

LOU COPE

Lou has been a performance dramaturg for 20 years. By working with numerous artists and companies across Europe, in ballet, contemporary dance, live art, and theater, she has developed an "organizational dramaturgy." She has collaborated, among others, with Phoenix Dance Theatre, Scottish Dance Theatre, Les Ballets C de la B, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, and Damien Jalet. Lou is also a resident dramaturg at South East Dance (Brighton, UK). <https://www.lou-cope.com/>

FABRICE SARCY

Lighting designer and lighting manager, graduated from Centre national de formation professionnelle aux techniques du spectacle. He has worked for companies such as: Cie Massala - Fouad Boussouf, Compagnie KÄFIG, OUPS Dance Company, Cie ETRA, Tres Esquinas / Rémi Esterle, and Mazelfreten.

SAMORY BA

Samory Ba is a French skating-artist and choreographer of Senegalese origin. A former international high-level figure skating competitor, Samory transitioned to a professional career with several renowned ice show companies. His long-standing fascination with the unique choreographic possibilities of skating eventually led him to redirect his focus towards developing a modern approach to this traditional discipline, exploring innovative possibilities within the medium.

In 2010, he became one of the founding members of Le Patin Libre, a Quebec-based collective of cutting-edge skating artists. Together, they laid the foundations for a modern approach to skating and created the groundbreaking piece *Vertical Influences*, which had its world premiere at the Dance Umbrella Festival in London (2014). The piece received a 5-star review from *The Guardian* and quickly gained international recognition, becoming part of prestigious programming such as Théâtre de la Ville - Sarah Bernhardt, Holland Dance Festival, and National Arts Centre of Canada. With Le Patin Libre, Samory continued to push the boundaries of contemporary skating, co-creating the acclaimed works *Threshold* (2018) and *Murmuration* (2022). These pieces have been instrumental in popularizing contemporary skating on the global stage.

Since 2019, Samory has also collaborated with Oktawia Ścibior on various research and creation projects, exploring the artistic potential of skating as a medium, beyond the current confines of the form.

JUAN CRISTÓBAL SAAVEDRA

Juan Cristóbal Saavedra, also known as *Equipo*, is a Chilean music producer, composer, and sound designer living in Barcelona.

He is the author of several albums of experimental and electronic music (*Adjetivos* (2013), *Tacto e Indiscreción* (2014), *Simulaciones* (2015), *Fin de existencias* (2017)). A former resident DJ at the legendary Tacheles club, he has participated in renowned festivals such as Mutek, Bam, Déleste, Cologne Commons, and Re-New.

In the dance world, he is known for his long collaboration with Marcos Morau (La Veronal) and dramaturg Roger Bernat, showcasing his work at festivals such as the Festival d'Avignon, Festival d'Automne in Paris, Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Tanz im August, and the Biennale di Venezia.

<https://juancristobalsaavedra.com/>

ANNEX

Contemporary Skating: A New Choreographic Art

Historical Context

This creation project relies on an emerging choreographic approach that is part of a historical continuum linked to the traditional discipline of ice skating. Initially related to hunting in polar environments (3000 BC), the practice of skating evolved into a recreational activity during the Renaissance and became structured into clubs reserved for the European aristocracy and bourgeoisie by the late 18th century.

The first official competitions emerged during this period, with the objective of drawing specific geometric figures on the ice while skating. Towards the end of the 19th century, Jackson Haines, an American ballet dancer, proposed incorporating music, costumes, and dance routines inspired by classical ballet into the competitions, marking the birth of artistic skating as we know it today.

The discipline gained popularity following its inclusion in the Olympic Games in 1908 and eventually developed into "On Ice" shows imitating cabaret revues. The foundation of figure skating is therefore largely based on a pastiche of classical dance, and later ballroom dances. This culture of imitation, combined with a rigid judging framework, has been a major obstacle to any truly artistic development of the medium.

Modern Approach

In the 2010s, an innovative group of skaters called Le Patin Libre laid the foundations for a modern approach to skating. They moved away from glitter and sequins, dedicating themselves to formal research that led to the theorization of a contemporary form of skating centered on the medium's unique aspect: glide.

Their research resulted in the creation of several works that have been integrated into the programming of prestigious artistic presenters, demonstrating that skating can be much more than a popular entertainment. Their artistic contribution has opened up new perspectives on skating and allowed the emergence of a new generation of skating-artists eager to contribute to the evolution of this choreographic art. The creation of *Within A Thousand Suns* is directly aligned with this movement.

