



## **Some Thoughts on The Hatchery Project** **--Claudia La Rocco, Hatchery evaluator/documenter**

*All of my work has been in (some sort of) collaboration and yet I've always found these experiences of working together difficult, often unpleasant, and continue mainly because I have some ideological belief in it: that in working together with other people it is possible to make something more compelling, more tender, more unexpected, more vulnerable than it is possible to make alone. I don't know if I genuinely believe this (anymore), in reality, but I continue to believe it in some other sense: as an ideal or fantasy. Then the question becomes: how does this ideal or fantasy interact with the difficulty of the reality? What do I do with my frustrations and disappointments? How do I lower my expectations while at the same time working towards something worthwhile? – Jacob Wren, from “A short text on certain aspects of collaboration,”  
<http://radicalcut.blogspot.com/2014/08/a-short-text-on-certain-aspects-of.html>*

I came across these words of Jacob's by chance this morning, while coffee was making its way through my tired system and I was making my way through the inexhaustible system that is Twitter and thoughts on how to even begin this letter to you, whoever you may be, were nowhere to be found. It perhaps seems a strangely pessimistic note on which to start a conversation about collaboration—but actually I find it to be rather hopeful and beautiful, as it acknowledges the very real difficulties of working with other people, while still leaning in toward the tender, compelling, unexpected possibilities that come only in the company of others.

I've been working as a writer or documenter or evaluator (terminology, as tends to happen in experiments, has been slippery) for The Hatchery Project since late 2012, when I think it was Sara Coffey emailed or called me with a proposal to come along for the ride, as a sort of insider-outsider, as five people from four organizations tried to figure out how to collectively support the choreographers luciana achugar, Beth Gill, Annie-B Parson and Reggie Wilson over a three-year period.

It's safe to say I had no clear understanding of what I was getting into. I said yes for a few reasons, including of course a steady paycheck (freelancer manna)—but mostly because of the cumulative integrity of these individuals: Jennifer Calienes, Sara Coffey, Sheila Lewandowski, Craig Peterson and Brian Rogers. Of course I wanted to come along for the ride.

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We tend to lump people into categories. When I'm the “artist” I do this with “arts administrators,” for sure, and when I'm the “critic” I see the “artists” doing it to me all the time. It's easier that way to generalize (and speculate) about people's behaviors, I think, and to defend our own turf. I mean that in the gentlest way—life is hard, and we are fragile, and it's not so bad to protect ourselves sometimes.

But it's also dangerous, this protecting. It becomes too easy to back ourselves and others into corners: “This is what artists need” and “This is what administrators demand.”

Working with the Hatchery has been a constant reminder to step away from this sort of group

labeling. Because what any of the project's partners think of any one proposal (either from themselves or the artists they are working with) is as varied and unpredictable as how the four artists respond—not just because these are people working in vastly different organizations and locations (though of course they do share a lot of values, and that also is important, to identify your people), but because they are people. And, well. People aren't types. And we aren't stable or consistent, either.

Early on, the Hatchery partners were adamant about resisting the idea that their experiment should be conducted with an eye toward “models for the field.” There is no one successful way of doing business, beyond understanding that there is no template that can replace the hard work of honest and detailed communication. It's so easy to fall into easy summations and self-congratulatory truisms (I can feel myself doing it, even in writing this letter: “the hard work of honest and detailed communication”). I think that, if we can save ourselves from anything, it is this slide away from thorny specificity.

And so. Below you will find two things:

The first is a collaged letter, written by 34 dance artists and detailing the varied, contradictory, idealistic, pessimistic and in between responses to this question, posed by me as part of ongoing Hatchery research: “What does an ideal residency look like? Your answer to this question can be as short as you would like it to be, it can focus on past experiences you have had, it can suggest what a residency should NOT be like, it can focus on hometown or far-flung residencies, on production or research.”

The names of the artists you will find below the final response. This was a structure I proposed, for reasons laid out elegantly by one of the artists who responded: “I think that your plan for listing the quotes and the names of the artists feels fair and honestly allows me to reply more freely. I am so grateful for the opportunities that I have been given and would hate to sound negative, but for the same reason, I seldom give real feedback about my experience. I feel like we (myself and a few other choreographers who I have talked to) are nervous about criticizing the few places that support dance making. That alone may be useful to know.”

The second, following the artists' names, are very lightly edited versions of the first two interim reports from The Hatchery Project, written by me with input from the five partners. These give a sense, as well, of the great diversity and productive disagreement in even a very small sampling of “the field.” (In some terrifyingly ideal world, I imagine The Field and The Audience Member and The Artist meeting for a drink, working it all out...)

To end this letter with a quote from Craig Peterson, which also ends the second interim report: “We are not going to reach full consensus on some of these finer points—and that's probably a good thing. We are four separate entities, five individuals all with different missions and operating structures. So I kind of like the subtle misalignments—we don't have to work exactly like one another to advance residency work and raise the profile of creative process.”

Here's to misalignments. There's no creative process without them.

Yours,  
Clr.  
October 1, 2014  
Brooklyn, New York



### 34 Dance Artists Responses to the Question: "What Makes an Ideal Residency?"

To Whom It May Concern:

Thinking about this and knowing there will be more opportunities at the Alliance of Artists Communities Conference to discuss, I keep coming back to the same point, which is that there isn't and shouldn't be a standard format for a residency. Support inevitably needs to be tailored to the person receiving it. However, I also want to point out that there is no one way that a person/artist wants to be supported. Flexibility seems like a value that could/should be practiced on both ends of the equation being looked at.

Regarding the amount or style of institutional involvement throughout a residency's planning and execution I similarly question the notion of a single positive model. I have had positive experiences that felt deeply connected to the people and institutions supporting us. I have also had positive experiences where the lack of institutional contact and involvement has allowed me to find a more private focus in the studio. Both are possible and both can be positive within an artist's creative process.

I tend to appreciate situations where I can "move into" a space. This statement can be taken literally, referring to the amount or kind of access and/or permission an artist is given within physical spaces. It can also act metaphorically to suggest some combination of openness, potential and real infrastructure that must be present for an artist to be able to move in, invest and make something of it.

All this said, the reality of the field is that resources are more limited than ever before and yet expectations to deliver powerful and meaningful art remain just as high so artists are inevitably pushed to be efficient, thrifty, productive, goal oriented and ultimately use their creative energy to figure out how to be creative.

Whatever money, space or situation you set up to support them, they're going to take it and make something of it. The really critical issue remains figuring out how to make more money, space, resources and opportunities available.

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I would love a residency that didn't require the artist to fulfill some kind of organizational audience/community development quota through a showing, talk back or lecture. I just want the opportunity to work with my collaborators without the added pressure of completing or showing something at the end of the residency. Research time is the most important to me and these residencies often fall right at the beginning or in the middle of a process where I don't want to show anything...I just want to try all the bad the good and the ugly stuff out and not worry about it being witnessed.

I would be open to more of a "true" open rehearsal kind of a thing...if we are experimenting with some of the more "embarrassing" ideas, I would rather people just watch them get constructed, cut, played-out rather than a more curated version that we end up pulling our teeth out for right before a showing.

I love working with students and always look for more opportunities to teach during a residency...this always seems to inform my process.

For local week/month intensive residencies a weekly stipend for collaborators would be ideal.

For out of town residencies coverage for travel, pay for performers, food and child care would also be essential. Given the fact that I just had a baby, that is a major issue for me at the moment in addition to many other choreographer moms/dads and the list keeps growing.

I am not as interested in tech residencies.

Some very positive and productive residency experiences have included:

- \*No stated goals or need to produce a particular piece of work, time to truly explore without product or teaching (if there is a need for teaching or sharing, perhaps a later visit in which that happens separately from a period of artistic process)
- \*Autonomy and freedom
- \*A place to cook with the dancers or gather to eat healthy food
- \*Funds to be able to pay the dancers to participate so that they can take time off from their jobs to be on the residency
- \*Competent support staff to help organize travel and lodging so that the choreographer doesn't have to handle all the logistics
- \*Interested people on site who might visit rehearsal and be "eyes" in a casual way without it being an official showing
- \*A chance to interface with local public— the residency institution doing the work of connecting artist to the public
- \*People on site who help make connections to resources (people, materials)
- \*Someone who acts in the role of translator or diplomat, so that artist doesn't have to do all the local outreach and explaining of artistic process
- \*Land where it's possible to work out of the studio as well as inside
- \*Respect
- \*Heat (in cold places!)
- \*Understanding that many New Yorkers don't drive and may need lodgings nearby or help with groceries (if not staying on the grounds)

Also... All too often residencies are a one-shot-deal, so even though there is a stated freedom, there are pressures from the outside to "accomplish" as much as possible professionally. A multi-phase residency like you describe [with the Hatchery] would be excellent to relieve that pressure and allow artists to take advantage of many benefits of residencies (free exploration and turning inward, nuts and bolts work on a project, connecting to a public to try things out, etc.) without trying to do it all at once.

Also, more and more, I crave being able to work at a residency site that is in line with the values of my work— so for example, I might be supported by an institution that wants to support my work because of its environmental interests but then find when I am there that the institution operates in a way completely at odds with those values. How open is the institution to actually letting the work of its artists have an impact on it? How open is it really to what artists are saying?

Finally, I see a lot of "residency programs" that charge artists to be in residence. I understand their

(often extreme) need for funds and the perceived sense that the artist should pay for what they are receiving, or at least contribute to the costs. But I think residencies need to understand that serving artistic process is an investment in our culture, and need to be serious about the work of fundraising and operating a program. There is a sense among some less established residencies that now it is “easy” for artists to raise money because of crowd-funding platforms like Kickstarter and that this justifies having artists be a primary source of revenue. Genuine support for the arts should not be ‘pay to play’.

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The ideal residency is one where I have 24-hour access to a space set aside for the sole use of me and my collaborator. (Of course, in NYC, it's next to impossible, considering the dearth of space and the almost limitless number of people who need some. The Park Avenue Armory may be the exception and you don't have 24 hours but you can push it)

From the earliest stages of our work, when I'm writing and working out a movement vocabulary, my collaborator is thinking about the environment that will contain the work. We set up a channel for a feedback loop or better, we make various attempts at constructing an exoskeleton that can help grow and contain the muscle, bone and soft tissue of the piece.

And of course, I like to have the option of working at odd hours, early in the morning or deep into the night after our little girl is sleeping, it can be more strange and freeing.

But the ultimate residency and perhaps the most far flung and improbable idea would be to have particular artist residences that included at least 4 studios in the residence, that would replace the laundry room space or the gym. Where people sign up to have sole access by the week or month. Or housing that included studio spaces or potential space to create a studio. The old, live/work space idea.

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I have done a number of dance-based residencies like MANCC and The Yard as well as fine art based ones like the Ucross Foundation, Headlands Center for the Arts, the Santa Fe Art Institute, etc.

For me, the defining factor, which people talk about often, is just having open and uncluttered time. At Headlands Center for the Arts we had 24-hour access to an old basketball gym for over nine months. We basically lived at the studio, and just had the time and space to follow any instinct that flew passed us. We didn't feel the pressure of rehearsals being from this time to that time, but rather could just really drift around in the process. It really developed a process of being able to play, fail often, love things and then realize months later they don't work, and just experiment with process. Another nice plus of being at that residency is we performed in the space that we had lived and created in. So we built all the installation ourselves, born out of a real affinity with the space.

Many of the good residencies I've done are excited about your work, and the work you do, but have no expectations on how the residency will play out or what you will explore there. So many choreographers are fulfilling the expectations of grants they have written, audience expectation at times, and I think not afforded the ability to just wander out into the territories that seem completely baffling to them.

Residencies that I have done that don't work, is where you feel hemmed in by the institutions expectation of what should happen, or logistics that seem overly stringent. We did a residency at a

prestigious art center that was interested in us creating a work relative to their non-public spaces. This intrigued us and we were excited about the opportunity. As the residency progressed, nearly every move we wanted to make needed to be cleared by the center and security. For instance, we would in our process do these long improvisations in space, wondering about how environment affected the generation of movement. At places like the Headlands, these could be full days of just videotaping and hoping something of interest would float to the surface. At the other art center, we would need to arrange the times, and then have a security officer come and watch over us while we worked. So there I am improvising, wandering about the space, with a security officer ten feet away from me bored out of his mind! And then at the end of the residency, and after the performance, one of the curators said "I am sitting here reading your initial proposal to us, and after seeing your show, it seems like you failed to accomplish what you set out to do." I had to remind him that if the center was truly encouraging of experimentation, then naturally what I thought would happen and what actually happened could or would be nearly completely different.

I recently just did an interesting offsite MANCC residency where myself and a collaborator traveled throughout the rural South wondering about what dance and performance means to people in those communities. This stems from a project I initiated a couple years ago which explored the rural West. It was amazing in the South, to feel untethered to a dance studio and have limitless time to research and explore, and I admire MANCC's courage and the various people who funded the project to realize a dance residency could essentially reside anywhere. (Or nowhere!)

I certainly feel passionate about residencies, and they've always had such a deep impact in how my process unfolds. Even when I do have time constraints in other projects like commissions, I try to remember how I feel when spaciousness was part of the make up of a new work.

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My ideal residency situation of course depends on what I'm working on but here are some general desires:

I have a studio with wooden floor and/or theater facility with basic technical equipment to explore lights sound projection design ideas that is at least 30 by 30 feet ... could be local or somewhere else ... if I'm leaving my home my dinners and childcare needs would be taken care of ... that I have resources and accommodation to bring collaborators and my child ... internet access

Extras: surrounding environment was easy to navigate (transport, getting food etc.) and there were places to be outside in nature

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I think the ideal residency prioritizes supporting the artists in a way that is ultra mindful of finances. For example, a residency must either occur in the location where the supported artists live or, if the residency occurs elsewhere, the sponsor must bear ALL related costs (full salary for the artists at a rate that the company usually pays them, as well as travel and housing). Other than that, full time access to a well equipped (sound, lights) rehearsal room with tech support. No mandatory showings or outreach on any kind unless requested by the artists. Sorry to sound like a spoiled brat but you said ideal.

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Here are a few ideas I have:

- residency location should be easily accessible by inexpensive transportation
- residency should be paid - allowing artists to take time off of other jobs to attend without loss of money and while also paying them for their time

- optional community engagement or showing - there is too often pressure to show something and then the residency becomes about putting something together for that, instead of preparing for a larger show or deepening a process. people who want that showing should be able to engage with it, but only if it makes sense for their way of working.
- residency should not have the pressure of possibly leading to a show - again adding a sense of pressure that often takes away from the process and/or continued work on a project.
- residency should provide food or easy access to cooking facilities and grocery.

If possible, it would be great if all residencies were in calming, natural places that provide both mental and physical space for artists to roam.

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My ideal residency is in a place that feels like a respite from busy urban life (Earthdance, Silo both good examples), with communal living and an ability to cook our own food, unlimited studio time close to where everyone is staying so we can decide, if we want to, to go to the studio at midnight, and where someone (the residency itself, or a grant) is paying everyone (NPN rates or so) for their time.

Things that would also be nice are: access to an audience for showings and experiments with the audience/performer relationship, access to a restaurant that serves good vegetarian food, and access to some kind of technical stuff, like some lighting instruments to play with or a video projector (or just time in a theater space). That said, the residencies we've done have always been for creation and research, not technical/production, so the empty studio and time to work has really been the key for us.

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Residencies should be a room for possibilities. Artists should be given access to a space in an almost Victorian Era, Virginia Woolf, *Room of One's Own* sort of way. Livable wages should also accompany residencies for the participating artists and their collaborators. I think that PACT in Essen, Germany has a solid example of how to create residencies that support the creation of new work. Residencies should not be "vacations" away; they are work.

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In terms of an ideal residency, lately for me this would be something more local to Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens areas. As an artist and parent of a young child, I have found that bringing along a small child isn't often met with understanding or support. For me, ideally a residency would entail a year-long relationship with a space/organization/network which could provide 8-10 rehearsal hours per week for say 40 weeks out of a year as well as a stipend which could be used towards payment to collaborators (say \$3000 per 6 month period). Culminating towards a work in progress showing or open studio time as best suits the work/artist. BAX has a nice model for a local residency. We were not selected for their program, so I'm not sure how the actual experience would be.

My collaborator and I have experienced 3 different residency models and each was very beneficial in its own right:

- 1- month-long residency in New Zealand: included housing, weekly grocery stipend, unlimited dance studio space and art studio space. This was before we had kids, so the arrangement was very fruitful for us at an early phase in our process.
- 2- Mount Tremper residency. Beautiful inspiring studio, surrounds, meals. Opportunity to show

work in the summer festival as well as process time during off season. Sleeping arrangements for 8 people worked well for our cast. Overall very inspiring to get out of the city and work in a beautiful environment.

3- Philly LAB. 1-week of studio time, small stipend and housing. closing with participation in a showing series to get feedback from local artists and audience. Wonderful to hear feedback from a new audience that wasn't familiar with our work.

For shorter work periods, getting out of the city can be so useful to open up creativity. A stipend/fee is always necessary to make it feasible to leave behind money-making jobs and pay for child care as well as costs of transporting, feeding and paying collaborators while away. Being included in a community aspect with other artists is also very useful to open up dialogue around the process. I think having options for how to "show" the work at early stages is also important. In other words that the "rules" of what the artist gives back to a community can be flexible so that this exchange is real and useful to the participating artists and not something to check off the list: i.e.. artist talk, master class, showing, open studio, meet with other artists, etc.

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It's actually great to be asked these questions and see how clear the answers feel to me. I didn't know that I do know EXACTLY what I want. (Since of course anything is helpful, and I'll take whatever is given.)

I know that this answer would be different depending on where in a process I am. But I am answering it as if the residency doesn't have a specific goal in mind - is more about supporting an artist towards the beginning of a project, more in research stages and not production or needing tech people...

The ideal residency is a magical balance of private work time and a communal support network. I need to be ALONE for many hours or days - with unlimited space that I can shape into MY space. But after about three days, I want to come together with people for dinner and conversation. I want to talk about what I've been working on and hear what other people have been working on. I want to hear responses to some of my ideas. I want conversations that INSPIRE me to go back into the studio. I want to take a day to step inside another person's process, give them feedback, and invite them into my space. Then I want to repeat this process twice more. Not with the objective of making a product, but also believing that whatever happens in that kind of time period is worthwhile in some way, can be material or information. To share whatever this looks like at the end of a residency is necessary for me - it keeps me in line and moving forward. I want to be alone but I need to be seen.

This is put together mostly from looking at things that haven't worked for me. Two trips in particular stand out:

-It is really disappointing to fly across the world only to be given fewer hours in the studio each day than I would have booked in New York. Or to be given not only a shared living situation with another artist, but a shared bed with someone you don't know (I kid you not!). While on residency, every moment is a working moment. I personally really need to have my own living space.

-It's exciting but not productive to have constant events for participants to go to - what makes connections between participants special is encountering each other between moments of intense work periods. To instead be seeing each other all day, every day, makes you close as friends, but not intimate as artists.

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I'm happy to share with honesty my own experiences in this realm because, as we all know, in the U.S. choreographers suffer from a lack of support and belief in the purely research and developmental process part of the creation cycle, and as a direct result many of us are less able to take risks artistically as we continue to grow (particularly when we've achieved any degree of success in mainstream dance and other people depend on our continued success.)

I've been granted four residences in my career that were supported with studio space, sometimes technical support and sometimes a fee in addition to these resources, and that - most importantly - didn't require teaching, performances, community engagement or the setting of work on students. They were the CalArts/Evelyn Sharp Cronson Foundation Summer Choreographic Residency, the BAM Fisher Residency, MANCC and Djerassi.

These kinds of residences are by far the most valuable because they (mostly) offer the freedom to be alone in process. I can take the risks necessary to challenge myself and my collaborators beyond our current skill-sets, reflexes and safety zones because I'm not concerned with public viewing, deadlines, or meeting the needs of someone in a position of power to affect my artistic trajectory as well as the livelihood of everyone I feel obligated to (at least in part) support.

The BAM residency is the only one in which I was able to involve my whole company as it took place in New York, so I didn't need to pay out-of-town fees to my dancers. Despite the fact that it was a truly incredible experience and opportunity, and that BAM did their best to help us make it work with goodwill and compassion, my company took a huge financial hit when we tried to take advantage of the opportunity to explore technical possibilities during our two weeks at the Fisher. Affording all the theater's tech costs as well as our own designer/artist fees for the exploration time (especially in what turned out to be a terrible funding season) nearly broke us in two. While it did move me forward artistically in a significant way and I'm deeply grateful for the gift of time and space, I'd think twice before "leaping" like that again as that choice had far-reaching consequences for my organization.

The CalArts residency offered a \$5,000 fee in addition to 2 weeks of unfettered studio access, a few days playing around with their resident LD in their black box theater, and also required a showing on the last day for board and VIPs. I was able to bring one dancer with me and truly use it as a purely exploratory period, not worrying too much about the showing, but I think this is because of where I'm at artistically and psychologically. As a younger, less experienced artist I wouldn't have been able to NOT target the working process toward the showing, which as you probably know, vastly changes the temperature and tone of work in the studio.

The MANCC residency was the most free-feeling and therefore, the most fruitful, of all the residencies I've experienced. I was given a \$10,000 fee with which I covered all expenses related to the two weeks, including travel, housing, per diem and fees. I was able to bring two dancers with me from New York and during one of the weeks a composer/violinist joined us from SF. We had what felt like 24-hour access to the studios, a computer lab as well as a sound studio, and MANCC was extraordinarily willing to procure anything and everything we could dream up to experiment with, including composers from the community, computer experts, sound engineers, student volunteers and a truck to bring set materials in from home depot, and just general goodwill, curiosity and enormous positivity. While there was a student interaction component, I remember that we tailored it to fit within our working process and, for that reason, it didn't feel like an interruption of process. And importantly, Jennifer Calienes and her assistant, Lindsay, simply couldn't have been more wonderful to work with.

The Djerassi Residency involved no fee but offered 4 weeks of studio space plus meals in an exquisite setting in Northern California. As a result, I was there by myself yet it was an early and highly formative residency for me as the cross-pollination with other artists was highly stimulating and the monk-like atmosphere of daily solo practice and exploration yielded a huge wellspring of information that I've continued to draw on for years.

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Mostly I think that matching the arc of a project to the opportunities a residency offers is most important. I am about to go on a 5-day residency that affords me quiet and support for research. I will be alone and that is just fine. In fact I can't wait as I pile up the questions and the materials that I plan to dwell on. But at MANCC such an offer would be to squander the beauty and possibilities that come from begin there.

MANCC is amazing. I have had two residencies there and I can absolutely describe the importance of it, the nature of the time and the work. Somehow the staff completely understands how to be present and not present. Even the rooms themselves seem to aid in the making of work.

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A residency is a reprieve, a time away from the usual condition of many competing responsibilities. Even if the hope is that it be a time of significant productivity, the best residencies are a time to regroup rather than exhaust. I always appreciate an understanding, or even an encouragement, that not every hour need look like hard work. By extension, any public sharing of "results" should be explicitly framed as simply where things are now, a window into an artist's thinking rather than an example of their work. While a showing deadline can be generative, the pressure to present more settled work undermines what I see as a significant potential of a residency. Practically, in addition to access to suitable workspace, the most important things for me are reliable access to private space (does not have to be round-the-clock but substantial) and independent access to food. The best residencies I've been to feel luxurious in their simplicity, and more remarkable for it. While I think it's important that an artist's working time be well-protected, philosophically, I like the idea that when benefitting from such a opportunity, there is some component of offering back, be it a public showing, workshop or, simply, some work, chores, or other involvement with the community in which one is in residence.

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I find a residency is most successful when both parties are completely honest and straight forward in regards to expectations. There's nothing worse than an artist being disappointed with the realities of what a residency can actually offer. Same is true when a residency expects an artist to do a certain number of community classes or open showings, etc., and has not communicated those requirements before arrival. Clarity is best.

I've had some pretty awful res experiences where the space was freezing. There was flooding. The producer and the artistic director were at odds which stressed me out and thus my production suffered from poor technical communication. The list goes on.

My ideal residency is all expenses paid: housing, transportation, per diem, meals, and a fee to pay my rent in the city while I'm away. I personally think research and production residencies are the best.

Lastly, it's great having a scholar or dramaturg in residence to work with. As a soloist and indie curator, I'm the only performer so it's nice to be in dialog with someone.

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What I want to bring to the forefront here is the other aspect of artists' work. The work you see onstage is also supported by the work they do outside of the creative process. I can be so involved in the project that I forget that my project is not only supported by the generous funders and programs of the dance organizations, but also by our artists.

We create a process during the residency and the product of this process may not be visible to those who sit outside of it. Furthermore, the artists' other aspects of life (putting hours in a day job or school, taking care of the family, and so on) are not visible in the work we create. But we live with these aspects before, during, and after the residency. The residency heightens the tension between Life and the Creative Process, and makes me see what supports my work when everything else stops supporting my work.

It is known to the residency program organizers that it's crucial for artists like me to have a space where movement, interactive media, and installations can be developed. It is also important for it to be known how artists put effort to rearrange their lives to make themselves available to participate in the creative process. I work with dancers, interactive media artists, computer programmers, musicians, visual artists, and philosophers. We use lots of equipment. It is difficult to find a space to rehearse where 12 (or up to 36) video monitors, video projectors, computers, brainwave head gears, and cables can be stored. There is only one place where we can rehearse with our equipment in NYC. They have a storage space, but it is forced and not free. We need the space to provide sufficient storage space for all our equipment, with the ability to securely lock them each night. We've had break-ins before in previous residencies. We became too much trouble to the owner of the space and had to move out. When the world was about to close on us, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council took us to their residency program.

Sometimes, the situation makes it impossible for us to continue making work, but somehow we find ways. Ultimately, our work develops where the dancers dance, but the digital media component develops outside of the dance floor. Usually, we have separate dance rehearsals and media rehearsals. Our dancers participate in both, but the media artists don't attend most of the dance rehearsals. They work from home and I work with them wherever we can open laptops and I can dance to test a new version of the software they create. We spend two to three years developing one work. This is a long time and life intersects at any time, asking us to change the plan.

The residencies we have participated in in NYC were either for the premiere of a new work or for the development of a new work with a public showing component attached. In the former setting, we get to work in the theater for two weeks. We don't get to build the entire production until we load into theater, so this is a very exciting and super-heightened period of the process. We rearrange the theater space, set up the projection surface, build video and sound installations, and test the wireless signal in the new space for our interactive systems. We plan by the minute; we calculate whatever is possible, trying to invent more time than clocks can count.

We always need more time to finesse the production and more time for the dancers to rehearse, while battling with other events happening in the space. We try to leave life behind us, just to live in the theater for these two weeks, but it's not so easy. Although we plan ahead and well, the situation turns out to be that one has to be in two different places at the same time, theater and work/family. The production schedule jams. It's 15 minutes to tech rehearsal and the artists are still on their way

to the theater. The rest of us in the theater try to hold on to a wisdom and work on things to push the schedule forward. Just about when I reach my limit, everyone arrives and takes their places. I drink more coffee and we move on.

The latter residency setting is longer term, usually for three to six months. It integrates into our everyday life. We go to a class, work, and rehearse. We fill up the space with our equipment, which, outside of the residency, is usually stored in a container in Connecticut. I spend the first day or two opening the boxes one by one, like greeting an old friend. We also bring new gadgets, fool around with them, and end up building a new system with them. We build momentum, coming to work here every day and night, with it starting to feel like a second home. While acknowledging how crucial it is to us to have a long-term residency in NYC, the last long-term residency in NYC was disrupted by Hurricane Sandy. We took all of the equipment to my studio apartment in the East Village. The room was filled almost completely. I needed to walk in sideways through a slim space to get to the kitchen from my futon, which I have to fold and unfold to invent the space to breath.

If the residency takes place outside of NYC, I would have to bring everything with me. This incurs some cost. My company is incorporated, but we can't offer a fulltime salary annually to our artists, so they all have their own day jobs. When I ask them to leave town with me, I need funds to compensate their missing salaries. Leaving NYC is difficult but always a great joy. When we take on a short-term residency outside of NYC, we expect the space to be solely checked out by our team, and we don't have to share the space with another project/event. This is a rare opportunity where we can build the production and have the dancers live in it. Depending on where we are in the process with the work and what we are creating, not all of the programmers need to be present at the entire residency. In the past, when we were invited to participate in a two-week residency outside of NYC, I wanted some programmers to participate in it for the entire duration. But they couldn't leave their work for that long, so I asked them to join us over two extended weekends (Friday morning to Monday night), travel twice, and take a lower fee. We can get touch with progress over Google Hangout. This arrangement might have looked like a lack of commitment from the artists or that we "missed the point of the residency" to those who were looking at us from the outside. But I have never needed to question the commitment of the artists I collaborate with. We try to continue to make work together and our solutions are not always conventional, but they're ours and practical.

I can make work because I have the support from all of the artists who continue to work with me while supporting their own lives with their day jobs. We will participate in the residency anyway possible. I want the world to know that I am supported by the artists and when I think about residencies, I think of living life with the artists.

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I have a few simple and immediate thoughts:

The first is this. For every residency I have ever had, there is some need that I am required or encouraged to fulfill, whether it is a performance, a master class, a series of showings, having the process videoed, etc. and honestly, I don't mind doing this, but it is so helpful to have this requirement clearly articulated at the beginning. Often times the "task" is useful to the process. But sometimes what the organization needs is buried in gentle requests and I spend a good amount of energy trying to guess what they need from me and that is exhausting. This may seem like a small thing, but I find in so many situations, I am working hard to understand what is being offered and what is expected. Clear communication around this is rare.

My next thought may be something that everyone is saying: Having a residency is expensive and only covering the costs of residency is not enough. I am still responsible for all the daily/monthly costs of running a non-for-profit back in the city. Also, the company cannot tour or perform in New York during an out of town residency, which is how we make a majority of our income, so to be in residence somewhere is actually time where we lose money. I have always had to fundraise to support a residency and this is hard. I think that in an ideal world, the fee for being in residence would be high enough to support the entire process (the residency, the ongoing weekly costs of being a company and the loss of income from "working"). I don't know what that number is, but that change of thinking would feel huge.

My final thought is that I have always wanted a production residency in a theater with my designers and a full crew and maybe even the possibility of preview performances. I love time in the studio, but time in the theater is actually what I need more of and what I cannot afford to do in New York. I can afford to rent studio space for long days. But the cost of renting a theater with full tech options never feels possible. I don't think I am the only choreographer who feels this way. I feel like so much work suffers in the move from studio to stage. Having some support in this step would be profoundly useful.

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My experience is primarily in attending residencies as a dance dramaturg, but I have also been at theater residencies as a choreographer and company member, so that informs my thoughts too. They are not completely coherent, but I can put together a bullet-point list of things that make up a good residency for me...

--ideally a minimum of two weeks, so you can really get into a groove, and there's at least one day off to process things in the midst of all the intense focus.

--whenever possible, at least for works in the mid to late stage of development, it's fantastic to have a workshop that takes place in a performance space, where designers can be invited to develop ideas alongside the evolving work. Anything we can do to keep the designers' work from remaining largely abstract until suddenly it gets tons of attention in the final week before a premiere... This request would be more pertinent for some pieces than others, but I can hardly think of a piece for which it wouldn't be useful.

--for any work with a cast larger than 2 or 3, it's great to have more than one rehearsal location at your disposal. For instance one part of the cast can be working on one section of the piece onstage and another group can break off to explore another section in the other room. Or the second room can serve as a warm-up or rehearsal location while the director/choreographer works with designers onstage. I know this is a luxury at some locations, but as long as we're dreaming up perfect scenarios...

-This may be obvious but I think it is definitely important to have some sort of work-in-process showing, ideally in the same performance space in which you were working. I've also enjoyed the times when the showing didn't come on the very last day of the residency but rather a day before, so that the group had some time together to process what happened instead of dispersing immediately after.

-However, one caveat regarding showings: I don't think it's a good idea to use them to "focus-group" the piece to death. By that I mean I'm not in favor of long involved feedback sessions after a showing. Yes probably the venue, in order to develop its audience, has to give them the satisfaction

of a Q&A session afterwards... but for the artists those post-show comments can offer a lot of red herrings and false positives. The key aspect of a work-in-progress showing is how it allows the artists to examine what they felt about the piece in the moment they had to offer it up to external viewers. The fact of an audience is thus more important than collecting specific feedback. Sure, there have been times when a specific comment from an audience member has been extremely valuable, it does happen. But the most important part of a showing is just 1.) to offer an internal deadline to work towards and 2.) to allow the artists to experience their reaction to the act of making public what has until then been private. You can't theorize that reaction, you need an actual audience there to experience it.

-This one is very dramaturg-specific, though since dramaturgy can be a dispersed job function, taken on by all members of a collaborative cast, it's potentially useful to all. At the locations I've been in residency, the in-house folks are always really generous saying things like "let us know if there's anything else we can get you" or "let us know if you need anything for your research." Then they leave it at that, and it's up to me, or others, to dream up those things they might be able to get us. Usually we don't take them up so much on their offer because there is plenty to do already. However, especially for residencies housed at universities or connected to other institutions that might have privileged access to materials, it might be nice to be given a list of the kind of stuff they COULD get us access to if we wanted. For instance, are there any online video-streaming services for performance films, to which the theater or dance departments already have paid access? How about access to other sorts of films related to the piece at hand? What does the library offer in terms of special collections or access to arts journals? Can we get someone to help us document events in the rehearsal room, are there interns who might be available for that? Are there experts in a field related to our research, connected to the institution, who would be willing to come speak to us? If the venue would create a more detailed list of the kind of extra support they could offer, it might help us brainstorm even more ways the residency could feed the work.

-Last but not least -- regarding the way the collaborators are housed, it is great if it facilitates informal group moments outside of official rehearsal (group dinners or drinks, etc.) AND ALSO the opportunity to break off from the group and have privacy. So a given collaborator has the flexibility to decide whether they want to continue the group energy or get away from it. Some living arrangements, however, tend to enforce togetherness or enforce separation, and that's not as ideal. A lot of real work on the piece can get done during "off" time, but only if people feel like they chose to remain together.

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It's 3 weeks long.

It pays enough to bring everyone I need there (the performers, a rehearsal assistant, collaborators) covering our fees, travel, housing and meals.

We all have single rooms.

We can walk from where we are living to where we are working.

It's in a natural setting but there is a small town with a good coffee shop, bar, movie theater and a thrift store within walking distance.

We have access to both a studio (with good natural light) and a fully equipped mutable theater.

I can be in the studio any time I want to 24/7. There are no "hours."

We can leave all of our stuff in the studio space and theater.

We don't have to do any outreach but can if we want to.

We don't have to do a showing but can if we want to.

There is no one hovering around us. A friendly staff is available if we need them, but it's fine if we don't interact for days on end. There is somewhere to swim near by. There is a great body worker on hand.

I have a private place I can go to and be totally alone away from everyone.

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For the most part, we are happy to work slow and steady (a couple times weekly, always, for over 20 years) at home. Of course, the real currency for a choreographer is space and time. So access to that with maximum efficiency is the number one priority. Long-developed relationships with some small institutions in our home city give us access to space that's cheap (\$5/hour!) and/or very easy to schedule (relatively easy to gain access, easy-ish to change our minds and our schedules, etc.). In a way, it's like ongoing home-town residencies but without the fanfare.

One of the few advantages to residencies away from home is (when applicable, but if not then why bother?) exclusive access to a space around the clock. We don't necessarily like to spend all day in the studio but the ability to spontaneously choose when to use it is amazing.

Residencies can be valuable simply because they take a little planning, force the process to be articulate-able, put us in conversation with others in the field. Again, we're largely happy under a rock making making but it is key to sometimes come up for air and connect. At all stages of the process (beginning, middle, end, post).

Our recent/current experience strikes me as pretty ideal: we kicked off the very start of a new work at MANCC with the knowledge that we would premiere at Walker Art Center nearly 3 years later. The density of our time at MANCC at the beginning made a huge imprint even though we thought we didn't know what we were doing at the time. Then we did our best to stay home for three years and steadily make the thing. Mini-commissions along the way acted like little residencies. For example we had access to the basement under a bodega for a month before a scrappy but stylish gig and the space proved inspiring. Or a commission at a university infused us with some cash and dancers on whom we could try out some ideas. Finally, a couple of week-long residencies in the theater at the Walker were hugely helpful. A LOT of energy can feel wasted in dealing with negotiations about parameters with a large institution. However, it's better to practice how to survive those tricky negotiations early instead of spending the week of your show crying.

And now, post-premiere, we are in a tasty phase of adapting that work for other commissioners' sites which are wonderfully nothing like the Walker stage. Access to these theaters for multiple stage residencies is inspiring radical reworkings of the material. Yum. Perhaps most valuable is the sense we're getting from these venues that they are anticipating our visits, our dance. This may sound dopey but it's really fantastic to feel like someone cares that you're making a dance and they look forward to seeing it and sharing it with whoever they can talk into coming to see it.

Again, reflecting on MANCC:

What they provide is astoundingly astute, appropriate, and sensitive to artists' needs. What they call "Entry Points" might at first glance seem like so many forced "residency activities" tied to performance residencies. At risk of sounding whiny, these extra activities often strain the choreographer/performer in the week before the show when they are almost always already stretched too thin just getting the work up. However well-meaning, they often feel like pandering for audience. For MANCC, sufficient conversation between us and Jennifer Calienes (and now Carla Peterson) ensured/ensures these "extracurriculars" energize creativity rather than sap it. Our Entry Points were incredibly contrived but ultimately massively fruitful. And, again and again MANCC staff has reminded us to only do what we want to do. Old dance-artist-martyr habits die hard. These thoughtful reminders are heaven sent.

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The ideal residency is extremely flexible and remains flexible and has support on hand at the site. And in the ideal residency I make the schedule - it's not an 'adapted' schedule, but really my own. In the ideal residency we are fed and paid. And of course, I don't think there is one ideal residency or kind of residency. The ideal is a conglomeration or consortium of residencies you go to through the creation of a work or a series of works or at different stages with different works. A residency where you are alone, thinking, writing, standing still, dancing like crazy, whatever. A residency where you have your collaborators with you and space. A residency with other artists of other disciplines working and possibly collaborating. And of course, residencies where it is all about you. A residency where some ideas are flushed out or starting to be and you have the option to share what is helpful with an audience (of colleagues, people, students, staff, community—self defined audience). A residency that gives you time to build relationships and work with people if your work includes the involvement and cooperation with people in a community. A technical residency. Another technical residency. A post premiere residency where you work things out. A residency in the in between space between one gig and another where you have to relearn everything. And other residencies that pick up at some point along this trajectory for the next work you begin. Really, this is ideal and supportive and generative.

Any one residency can be made really good with lots of communication between residency site/coordinators and myself—as long as it is timed well within the creative arc of a work. It would be up to me to say no to a technical residency if I was just starting something. Or to say no to a Headlands type residency if I was to premiere a group work next month. I like to think of residencies as gestational homes for the work—this period of this work was created here and could have been created no where else, this period of this work was supported and nurtured in this other place, and on and on.

I love when residencies surprise me. I had no idea I wanted to work with clay when I went to the Rauchenberg Residency. But the opportunity was there and the support was there and so in my studio I could dance all day and at night work with clay. It helped the dancing the next day. Or when MANCC introduced me to people with whom I have developed deep relationships. These kinds of things happen when a residency site/person cares deeply about the artist and whatever will support that artist's work.

One thing I notice again and again at residencies that support a broad range of disciplines is that while many residencies do and want to support dance, they really don't know how. Not just in terms of having good space and equipment—some have that just fine. It's deeper and related to this whole thing about understanding dance and building audiences. Because when it comes time for the open house, for example—everyone knows how to open the doors to a visual artist's studio and let people walk in. They know how to let audiences choose to come in or not. They know how many hours are about right and what time of day to have the open house. They have wine and everyone knows the works are in progress. And I'm not saying this is totally ideal for all visual artists either, but they really, really don't know how to open the doors to the dance studio at all. So either they just don't or else they do a showing with a sit down in your seats time that no one really wants to go to because people are enjoying the meandering. Or, worse, they suggest that dancers dance about on the lawn in the background. Or worse, worse, dancers/choreographers are trying to find a way to be part so they themselves suggest they dance about on the lawn in the background. I think there is a way to have this discussion with residency centers and I do because I think that together we can figure out new ways of bringing people in to the exciting 'I've been working everyday in this supportive residency and here are the beginnings of some ideas moment' without it feeling like everything has to stop for a show.



What is exciting right now is a focus on writing. On documenting process in many ways - and taking that off of the artist's plate. There are also so many residencies and artists working together in really cool ways - it's all part of that important discussion part. One of my favorite dance residencies was with Vermont Performance Lab - and I didn't dance at all. But instead, Sara Coffey bought tools and gathered people and we started making material for my show. But sitting for a week with people was very important gestational time for the show, as important as the physical labor accomplished and relationships built. And that the people gathered understood this as a process of making dance was also important to me, and to the work itself and I'm pretty sure to Sara and VPL.

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For me, the things that define an ideal residency are directly tied to different phases of a work's development. So I have broken out my responses accordingly...

**Application process:**

Ideal applications are straightforward, and provide advisors to help artists generate a competitive application. Too many applications are encumbered by unnecessary projections of how artists will evaluate their "success," and dance artists often struggle to effectively translate their artistic values into a narrative context.

**Research & Early development:**

At the early phase of a work's development, it is important that a residency partner does not place any pressure on outcome. And more than that, risk and failure should be valued as part of the process. If the residency partner requires engagement activities, it is best when they are geared toward feeding the artist's research and creative process, as opposed to teaching or other activities that take an artist's focus away from their work. Ideally, the residency partner actively connects the artist to resources (people, materials, communities) that will fuel the research and development of the work, but not force these connections if they aren't important to the artist.

**Pre-premiere Technical/Production residency:**

Dance artists rarely have the resources to test out their design and technical ideas in a theater before a work's premiere. The standard dance presentation format of load-in, tech, dress and run does not allow artists to test what works and what doesn't. A technical/production residency can give an artist the time and resources needed to ensure the staging and design is fully realized before the introduction of an audience.

**Post-premiere production residency:**

A post-premiere residency is invaluable to successfully preparing a work for touring. It allows the artists to make substantial changes to staging and design, learned only through the live circumstances of the premiere run. It also helps an artist to learn how the show functions in differently-resourced venues. I have personally had 2 post-premiere residencies (through the support of National Dance Project), and they have proven to be the most valuable to me. Fueled by core values of live-ness and shared experiences with audiences, I make important discoveries about my work during performances, and then continue the development process until touring begins.

**Qualities of ideal residencies in any phase of development:**

- The best residencies are artist-centric and process-based. They foster investment and generosity from all involved to make the residency successful, as opposed to seeking metrics-based results that fill requirements for university bureaucracies or grant applications.
- An ideal residency at any phase of development acknowledges that many artists have families,

and provide resources (ideally financial, but also through networks) to help facilitate child-care onsite so that the artist can focus on their work.

- Ideal residencies help artists to build relationships with regional and national stakeholders through exchanges that process-based and non-transactional. This might be through facilitating a work-in-progress showing (if the artist is ready) with area presenters, or connecting artists to scholars and/or community-members who can give insight into the artist's research.

People who run and support residencies are most effective when they actively maintain an awareness of the real issues facing our field, and are dedicated to adapting as the field changes.

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An ideal residency is an exciting thing to talk about.

I find a residency in general offers the generosity of time and space to generate and have the head space to drop in and away from my NYC lifestyle of running around from teaching clients and rehearsal and just constantly trying to get by. My best experiences have been outside of New York where that has to naturally happen because I am away. I think the conditions are what really make the difference for a New York-based artist, because things can be rough for us in that way.

I think different projects also need different things so sometimes just being asked how we could be helped in regards to the work is significant to me. I think the ideal residency is one that provides enough financial support that it allows for only the work to be the focus and that it extends beyond a week, at least 2 weeks. That the residency is about the space to just generate and be inside the work, while also having resources too research ideas that would serve the work and the people inside it. (I think ideally partners or children would be able to come with some support around that but that just might be my envy for what the Europeans have in that regard, ha!)

That access is abundant to what is needed.

The luxury of time, space to discuss, and if with a group, to spend time as a group together that allows us to reach into the work so that everyone is a part of the research.

Sorry I can't get beyond conditions it seems, I guess that's just where I am at.

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A Utopic AIR

I have pared it down to the essentials for a U T O P I C residency.

1. Away from home
2. Longer than one week
3. Multiple visits over multiple projects (span of support is a minimum of 3 years)
4. Working closely with a Residency Director and/or Staff to shape the individual needs of your residency/project.
5. Adequate place to work: a large room with a great floor that is private with no columns and has an adequate sound system and access to wifi and video. Because this is utopia, let's just add that the windows face out to a great view and you can step out to nature.
6. Supports travel and lodging and has adequate artist fees, not just for the artists creating but also for an assistant and/or dramaturg (because this is utopia).
7. Fresh food prepared—breakfast and dinner—for all artists (no restaurants!). Because this is a

utopia, the food is prepared by a chef other than the team.

8. Has a knowledgeable staff to support tech and admin needs during working hours. Provides studio assistant if artist cannot bring their own assistant.

9. Provides lodging that keeps artists together in a shared space (not a hotel but a temporary home).

10. A defined process for public engagement. In other words, in what ways is it useful to the process to be engaged with a public and how is that public defined (a small group of experts from a particular field, a specific community that a project is addressing, a group willing to explore certain elements or questions or build something)? What is their role in coming into the studio and how can that simultaneously support the process and project itself outward to a greater public?

I have had all 10 of these provided at separate residencies but never all of them at one residency. Each one of these items has provided a different kind of support system to a process but all have in very concrete ways supported a working process. While #7 seems the most luxurious (and I am well aware of that), in practice—having been at two residencies that provided meals—the ability to work and not have to worry about food and having a place where all could gather around a meal that did not mean driving around for restaurants created an environment that gave space and breath for conversations beyond the studio. It took an enormous pressure off and allowed for people to sink in to a rhythm that was more conducive to working.

But the most critical, for me, is #3... knowing that support is not project-based but is supporting the work within a span of time does much to open up an individual working process. Closely after is #4—not fitting your process into a mold but having significant conversations about what a process needs and having the opportunity to shape the residency with the staff. Each residency site will be able to offer different things (university setting, bucolic setting, city, etc.) and being able to shape a residency to take advantage of those things is important.

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The ideal residency has clear parameters set by the hosting organization but is flexible aplenty to accommodate the needs of the artist at that particular point in their career or specific work (early development, completion?, solitary time away from XYZ or process exposed and informed by observers, collaborators, students, local community, etc.)

> Ideal residency is a win-win for the hosting organization and the artist

> Ideal residency is custom made, it is a project by itself, a creation - instigated by the artist and the leader of the organization. I found it most rewarding when stemming from a real interest in each other, an open communication about needs, dreams, possibilities and opportunities. Ideal residency is not a cookie cutter affair, each residency (even if run within a long term program) is ideally one of a kind.

> Ideal residency offers space, funding and resources specific to the needs of artist at that particular stage of work

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In my first residency experiences, both in the wilds of California, I was deeply grateful for the time and the quiet, for the expectation-free environment, but felt, in truth, terribly isolated. Without collaborators, dancers, technical support, and surrounded by other artists accustomed to working alone, I didn't much know what to do with myself. I read and researched and wandered (all valuable), but I really wanted to make something and I didn't want to do it alone.

MANCC was wonderfully ideal in this way: I was surrounded by collaborators and support. But the necessity to know in advance what I would be doing there, and the need to make a water-tight case for it in my application, made me feel locked into something that shifted considerably over the months I waited to attend. I suppose an ideal circumstance, for me, would be to have the time, space, and collaborators present to make something we didn't know about yet. Some hybrid of the production support of MANCC with the spaciousness of my primary residency experiences would be, for me, a dream.

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At this stage in my career, the most important thing (besides the practical aspects of having lots of/unlimited private studio space where we can make noise and also leave stuff) is the funding to be able to transport and then pay myself and my collaborating artists a livable wage. As a dancer who's been to a lot of residencies, it's great to not have to worry about other work while I'm away. This financial freedom lets there be a sense of leisure for the space surrounding the rehearsal time, i.e. people aren't rushing to and from their other jobs, which then lets the work (choreography) also breathe. Also, when I can pay people enough to be able to leave their other jobs for a week or more, I feel like their time is being honored. It *\*IS\** a job. It *\*IS\** a service. And if we break it down to economics, it *\*IS\** a commodity that supports the economy, not to mention our cultural and social viability (and sanity) and vice versa...but I know this is preaching to the choir and probably not really what you're looking for here. (By the way, I just went to the MoMA on a cloudy Wednesday morning, and the line to get in the building to buy a ticket was 20 minutes long and then another 45 minutes to check your bag, and I was told that it's always like that on a rainy day!! \$25 x 100's of people.)

I was at one short residency where there was a showing at the end. I felt an extreme amount of pressure to put something together (as there was paying audience coming to see this work-in-process along with a "finished" piece), and although it ended up being helpful, it's nice to not have the pressure to show. A choreographer and I just worked at Hollins for 2 weeks, our very first rehearsal period together for a new piece, and he decided last minute at the end of the second week that he didn't want to show anything. Hollins was fine with that (and this setup was not so much a "residency"...he had a teaching gig there and was able to bring me along with other funding and some housing/transportation help from Hollins so we could rehearse every day for 5 hours). It relieved any pressure to force anything into something presentable/ solid/ definable at that very early stage of creation Showings can be extremely helpful, as I said, and they are an invaluable way to build and interact with audience (hopefully more than just a dance department...let's move away from insularity!). Ideally, the organization hosting the residency would make an effort to get people to come to the showing. It's also a great way to interact with the immediate environment, especially at a place like MANCC where we are actually working in a building full of people, so we're not just some mysterious people walking around the building for 2 weeks and then disappearing.

As a choreographer, I'd be happy to teach, do some sort of community involvement...in some way be forced to talk about my work, as this is a skill I'm still developing.

I'm not at a place where I'm working at a high production level, so stage/lights/sound experimentation isn't high on my list right now.

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Briefly, for me the ideal residency combines time and space to work *\*uninterrupted\** with the ability to share what I'm working on. Because the experience of performing gives me so much more

information and insight into a project (even at its very early stages), I always appreciate the ability to incorporate a performance (or performances) of some kind into the residency.

Also, I was recently talking to a presenter (not one who is part of the Hatchery) who told me how difficult it is for her particular organization to manifest a combination of site-specific and concert/theatre work. Because I often have components of both site and stage work within one evening/piece, my conversation with her caused me to reflect more on the potential challenges that presenters face in managing needs of artists who integrate work in a site with work on a stage within the same project. I know that those involved in the Hatchery are brilliant at thinking both beyond and within "traditional" settings, but it made me realize how important it is for me in a residency situation to be able to integrate both aspects of my work.

Finally, one of the best pieces of feedback I got from a presenter once reminds me of another thing that I find especially key in residency situations. She said, "You should have asked me for more." I had barely asked her for anything, and it wasn't until the end of the residency that I realized that she actually wanted to help me more. I was afraid to ask, and she just wasn't sure what I needed. Obviously, those involved in the Hatchery are excellent communicators (demonstrated even by the fact that you are asking for our input), but I think the ability to have easy conversations about what I need as an artist and what presenters also need (or are expecting in a given residency situation) is something I desire as well.

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Of course what is most important is that the dancers, designers and choreographer are able to explore and achieve something significant to the ongoing progression of the collaboration. In my experience, the residencies that have been most successful have been full tech residencies where the collaborative team has been able to explore the integration of design and dance components in some semblance of final production values. In most cases the company was supported with production crews, set mock-ups (if not the fully designed components), media and sound support, and technicians/operators for all designers. These residencies were significant because many of them occurred six months to a year prior to the actual premiere. Only when we as a team were not fully prepared to take advantage of such riches of time and resources did I find the opportunity to be less than optimal.

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My response is based on 3 separate residencies I've have had in the last 2 years or so. I was hugely grateful for: Concentrated time, financial support, residencies where you return more than once to develop the same work, residencies that magically provide an enthusiastic audience with low expectations for a showing of work in progress. (Sidney- showings followed by a q&a or relaxed gathering food or desserts seemed to help the atmosphere tremendously). I was unexpectedly assisted in the professional development sphere of my work in two residencies- I received guidance and tips on next professional steps. Documentation was helpful, I regretted not documenting one of the showings. One residency offered incredible tech support that pushed the creative possibilities of the piece forward, and there was much effort and consideration of choosing an appropriate venue for the rehearsals and showing, and preparing the audience for an "unfinished" work.

In some utopia, I would dream of: childcare expenses to be supported in a residency budget, and to have a better (more comprehensive) sense of what resources have been available to residents in the past so I know what to ask for. Although I'm sure that can be tricky. So far showings to more diverse audiences (not just dance professionals, for example) have been the most helpful/illuminating. Hmm, I wonder about post-residency support (following the showing, what or

who could help the work move forward artistically or otherwise? Maybe this is just up to the artist....)

Ahh yes ... how to keep momentum and morale from deflating post-residency. I'm also trying to find appropriate tools/models to keep interested audience members in tune with the development of the work. Blogging isn't quite what I'm looking for. Maybe video timelines or something that juxtapose tiny excerpts as they develop at each residency.

(Also, after I wrote my response, I could hear a chorus of groans about budgeting for childcare—I understand this is not applicable to all artists and may be a tall ask. These costs just gobble up my and my collaborators' artist fees, especially for kids under 5 years old and not in school. I'm not sure what the solution is).

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An ideal residency does not put the choreographer into debt.

I definitely think in town and out of town residencies are 2 totally different (and both very valuable) animals. When out of town it's good not be someplace too interesting or full of information, so you can disappear into the work. In town residencies have to demand enough of your attention to make you stop functioning in a business as usual way in the city, because that way usually is pretty anti-art and anti-creative process. In town residencies also seem to benefit from putting you in dialogue with peers.

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May I dream?

A beautiful floor—I always always dream of a beautify floor. Recently, I was in residency at OSU/ACAAD and we had access to multiple large, well ventilated, clean studios with big windows... it was almost too perfect... can it be too perfect?

But this was not the dream—as it happens, most of my life is about moving form one artist residency to another—although some are official and others are just of my making. For example, I stayed with a friend who was in residency at place that was very near the ocean... this was wonderful all by itself, but a dance studio in that scenario would be the real dream.

Another ideal scenario I really cherish is walking distance. Or biking distance. To be walking or biking distance form where you sleep, eat and work. They don't all have to be right up on top of each other, actually, a residency embedded in a small city/town is more appealing to me than being 'very isolated' out in the woods, or some such. I have experienced that twice and it always made me feel a bit on edge. But that may be because I am a born and raised city person. So a little [human] action besides my own is important. And it also tends to underemphasize the kind of 'camp' thing that happens at a residency... so my 2¢.

In fact—I didn't think I had so much to say... but I guess I do! The biggest obstacle, or one sizable obstacle, is that dance is not thought of. What that means is that I have been to quite a number of artists residencies that imagined the visual artist, writer, or both... but that legacy is much more well established for the notion of residency anyway.. So I have often found myself doing some ... re-arranging of furniture, and make-shift space... etc.

Once I was at an amazing facility in Canada. I loved it because there were old and new arts – from painting studios and pianos to computer labs and recording facilities. And a big dining hall where everyone [ all sorts of artists] would eat [be fed!] — and a pool. And a town in walking distance...

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**An ideal/dream residency, from an artist's perspective,** would offer travel to/from the site, private accommodation, dance space (at least 4 hours/day), community minded (so that I would have access and interaction with the local artist and non-artist community), and lastly some form of final presentation at the end of the stay (however informal/formal depending on the project). Some stipend for living expenses would be downright decadent!

I had an experience almost exactly like this in Finland...

**Residency experiences and reflections:**

Pushkinskaya-10 in St. Petersburg-Russia: great housing, extensive contact with artists from all disciplines, the host organization was very active in blogging/online promotion of events related to my research, hungry audiences for my final presentations, located in the heart of the city. Awesome all around, except that it was "pay to play"—I flew myself there and paid a small "residency fee" which went to the promotional and administrative aspects of the host organization.

**On that note:** Offering workshops while being artist-in-residence has been the most affective way to connect with the dance and music communities in the places I have been... and also to make a bit of money while on location, especially if I had to pay my own travel/living expenses, etc. This is how it worked in Cairo, New Orleans, Beirut.

**Worst residency experience ever:**

\*\*\*\* organization in The Hague - the housing was almost unlivable, zero visibility within even the organization's community, production support was almost non-existent too. And they wanted to charge 5 euro a day for administrative fee.

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I may be a bit of an anomaly in your sampling of who received the email, as my sole residency experience as a choreographer and dancemaker was at MANCC. Since that experience set the bar pretty damned high, I may well be ruined for any other residency I have in the future!

As an artist who also has a full time day job, being at MANCC was life-altering in many ways. The luxury of space and time was obviously a huge benefit and the resources they offered me in terms of research support was incredible. I was there in 2012 and am still working on the same project, so the residency's impact has had a lasting effect. The professionalism and generosity of their staff and their willingness to document everything and provide me with high-quality video footage, photographs and research opportunities, is humbling and still chokes me up. What a gift.

Because working full days on a dance project is not my typical experience, it was also daunting. I overscheduled myself and didn't give myself enough time to reflect and sit with the research, and didn't know any better going into the residency to do so. So perhaps some words of wisdom in regards to this would have been helpful. However, most artists at MANCC are more established and likely more practiced at this than I was and have had other residencies and contexts with which to approach that kind of unique opportunity.

With hindsight, I wish I would have been able to immerse myself a bit in the community. MANCC, although idyllic, was a bit of an island and I felt at sea much of the time. I would have appreciated

talking with some of the dance students. They do a very good job of giving you all the privacy you need and not inflicting your needs on the students, but I would have liked some more casual interactions with students or the campus (maybe an open rehearsal) to combat the isolation.

Another thing I want to mention is that before my time at MANCC, I introduced myself to some artists touring through Minneapolis (where I live and work) who I knew had been at MANCC. I may have been too shy to approach them and ask them about their experience there and for any advice had I not felt so supported by my approaching residency. I am still friendly with those artists and it makes me want to suggest that perhaps staff running residencies could give artists the option of connecting with past residency artists for words of wisdom before they embark on their own residency. The folks I spoke with gave me some helpful context and made me feel a lot closer to them and what it means to be an artist in these times. It helped me take myself and my work more seriously to hear of the things they struggled with during their residencies (too busy, not busy enough, too much teaching, not enough teaching, etc.) as well as the things they loved about it. It made me feel so hopeful.

Sincerely,

Monica Bill Barnes  
Michelle Boulé  
Layla Childs  
Grisha Coleman  
Faye Driscoll  
Katie Faulkner  
Levi Gonzalez  
Emily Johnson  
Jaamil Kosoko  
Liz Lerman  
Juliana May  
Dahlia Nayar  
Jillian Pena  
Julia Rhoads  
Jill Sigman  
Leyya Tawil  
Kate Weare  
Pavel Zustiak

Olive Bieringa  
Yanira Castro  
Hilary Clark  
Katy Dammers  
Moriah Evans  
Beth Gill  
Koosil-ja Hwang  
Alex Ketley  
Paul Lazar  
Abigail Levine  
Megan Mayer  
Okwui Okpokwasili  
Katherine Profeta  
Candice Salyers  
Amy Smith  
Kristin Van Loon  
Talvin Wilks





## THE HATCHERY PROJECT INTERIM REPORTS YEARS ONE AND TWO

YEAR ONE:

*Hi Sheila, Sara, Craig, Jennifer and Brian:*

*Today, I am staring at the beginning of trying to make a new work—deeply confused and “discomfited.” Unsystematic—working by trial and error in a non-empirical system.*

*So your notes on your process with the Hatchery resonated.*

*I cite these quotes from your statements below: I’m not a believer in “models” ... I’m standing on the outside of it, looking in ... We simply don’t know the answer ... Attempting to push beyond assumptions ... Destabilize conventional notions ... I DO care about making my own work better...*

*--Annie-B Parson, June 20, 2013*

What is it to attempt to make something? A thing that will help other things come into being, things you cannot imagine, things that might not succeed or might drive you crazy if they do? What is it to come together with others in this attempt—friends and respected colleagues who may not do business the way you do business? Artists do this. So do producing and residency organizations (funders, too)—this thing which is deeply, maddeningly human, and marvelously, terribly optimistic. As Ralph Lemon said in a recent tribute to Sam Miller, it involves “such a brilliant, beautiful denial—that someday the boulder is not going to fall down.”

\*

It can be tempting to think of the organizations that support artists as static and monolithic—they support creativity and flux, they aren’t themselves beholden to these forces. But of course this isn’t so. The Hatchery Project has now been in existence for a year; it’s a baby itself. Yet in this time, it’s been rocked by one intense change—Craig Peterson’s transition from FringeArts (details attached)—and almost daily weathered a shifting set of negotiations between the five partners and four artists. This flux is not the problem, but, as Jennifer Calienes put it, the point: “As a group we have a constant push/pull between the way we know and the way we don’t...The partners are clear as to what this is not, which is business as usual.”

And yet on one level, business as usual goes on, in the form of these nine individuals doing their work, even as they hold it up for examination. Push/Pull:

At the Vermont Performance Lab, Reggie Wilson and collaborators worked for six days in the Guilford Sound studios to develop and record vocals for “Moses(es),” which will have its premiere in Philadelphia this fall. They shared some of their work in a “Community Shout” at the local Grange hall, and recorded the Vermont audience singing one of the hymns (these voices were added to the sound score). Reggie returned four months later to continue working with sound engineer David Snyder, who has evolved from technical supporter to artistic collaborator. “It was immensely

gratifying,” Sara Coffey said, “to see our community’s participation and imprint become part of this project and the extent to which Reggie Wilson was able to make use of Guilford Sound’s production and design expertise.”

In Philadelphia, luciana achugar decided she wanted to use Hatchery resources in part to collaborate with the composer Michael Kiley, whom Peterson introduced her to last year; achugar realized that her needs would be better suited by an ongoing back and forth between Kiley’s city and hers—as Brian Rogers put it, a sort of traveling, “low-impact residency over many months” between various Philadelphia sites and The Chocolate Factory Theater. In doing so, she will draw strength from her already deep relationship with The Chocolate Factory while working to develop a network of relationships with Philadelphia artists.

Wilson (who also had a 10-day production residency in Philadelphia) used his time at MANCC, said Calienes, “to not only intertwine the academic component of his research with kinesthetic exploration in the studio, but to also further it by interactions with local FSU scholars.” He and a collaborator, Dr. Susan Manning, examined manifestations of Moses across cultures, the Islamic, mystic tradition of Zar, Zora Neale Hurston and fractal symmetry. And Wilson continued his Cohort Tracking Project, which engages students at various developmental sites in the making of “Moses(es).”

These are a few of the early outcomes from the Hatchery’s first year in operation, with numerous site visits and proposals planned for the coming years. Following an April workshop/audition at VPL, and a series of delicate negotiations between Annie-B Parson and Sara Coffey, Big Dance Theater will spend a week in August working with 12 local pre-teens to develop movement and sound for “Alan Smithee Directed this Play,” which will premiere at Les Subsistence in the spring (the company will have additional residencies at MANCC and in Philadelphia prior to the premiere). Following premieres of “Moses(es)” and “Alan Smithee Directed this Play,” Parson and Wilson plan to make use of The Chocolate Factory; Wilson as an open space in which to investigate ideas free from the pressures of developing and contextualizing a product, and Parson as a starting point for a new work. achugar has plans for residencies at VPL in October, following a site visit in April, and MANCC in the following year.

And Beth Gill is in various stages of discussion with all of the partners, with a first residency planned at MANCC for December. A key idea behind the Hatchery is for artists to have time. So that it isn’t about: “ok you have two weeks and \$2000, go! Make magic and do it now and then get out of here and please be sure to credit us appropriately in your program notes.” It isn’t surprising that, as the least experienced of the four artists, and one who has risen quickly to prominence, Gill has needed the most time to best understand how to marshal her resources. Nor that, as a mother of a four-year-old and an artist working outside of a company structure, achugar has been interested in forging more fluid connections with these organizations, while Wilson and Parson have moved quickly to organize around their pending company premieres. The promise and challenge of a pilot program like the Hatchery is to be simultaneously stable and flexible enough to allow individual artists to chart their own courses. “The huge, very important thing, is that they are saying we don’t want to just give you a residency for a piece but we want you to think bigger, we want to support your process,” achugar said in April. “This encourages me to be more ambitious, to think beyond my next production and, even though I haven’t done that much work, to think about my legacy.”

\*

So there it is on paper, pretty straightforward, smooth sailing, etc. In practice? Not quite. During Wilson's residency in Philadelphia, Nick Stuccio of FringeArts quipped that he saw "how much time Craig spent on those Hatchery phone calls." None of the five partners anticipated how much logistical and administrative work it would be to build an adequately durable yet mutable container for the four artists they are seeking to support, particularly in this planning-heavy first year: in addition to 251 combined residency days at MANCC, VPL and FringeArts, three in-person planning sessions (one with all the artists), 13 monthly partner meeting calls, a first round of interviews between Documenter-Evaluator Claudia La Rocco and all the partners and artists, two site visits (Calienes to VPL, La Rocco to Philadelphia), in-take meetings with each artist-advocate pairing and three pre-residency planning visits at VPL, there have been close to 24 meetings with artists and partners (in person and via phone) and countless hours on the phone outside of the monthly partner meetings. These numbers begin to suggest the amount of work it has taken to earn (and keep) each other's confidence and the trust of the four artists, who have understandably been both excited and cautious in navigating this pilot program. This is an ongoing challenge and responsibility, one that the five partners take very seriously. The amount of information sharing among them, both through at least monthly conference calls and a continual flow of emails, is immense, so that they can keep each other in the loop regarding what an artist is thinking, what to watch out for in terms of dealing with a company representative or how to handle a collaborative venture like securing video documentation for an artist (as they did with Wilson, in a coordinated effort between VPL, MANCC and FringeArts that was a direct result of the partners sharing information and problem solving around the particular needs of one artist). And also the support they give each other, sometimes in the form of talking each other off ledges, and sometimes in the form of wrangling, as competing bedside manners and perspectives on best practices jostle in the same space.

"When we started this, I wanted to collaborate with these people and not hate them," Sheila Lewandowski said in March. "I'm serious. Collaboration is very hard. I wanted to be able to have drinks about it, and talk about how hard and how wonderful it was, and in the middle of it try to address the problems in this production-driven system."

Twelve months in, they are still working hard on this front (and so far, still able to have drinks with each other). A key challenge for all of the partners has been maintaining the integrity of their individual ways of doing business while being open to change in a collaborative environment. There are as yet no definitive answers as to what is most important about this Hatchery experiment, only more (better?) questions and doubts and excitements and frustrations and possibilities—and that seems exactly as it should be.

"This first year has been an enormous challenge," Peterson said in June. "It has raised many questions for the partners individually and collectively and it has challenged many of our assumptions. At a recent meeting, we all questioned how successful we have been so far. We agreed that we simply don't know the answer to that question yet but that each of us is willing to keep trying to define and refine what this project is and can be."

Stay tuned.

YEAR TWO:

*They are practicing trying to move as a group of four, in a circular motion, with no one really leading, or, well, they all have to agree to go in the same direction and motion, to travel and evolve but not fall apart...*

I wrote those words last October, while watching luciana achugar work on material that would eventually become *Otro Teatro*. I was in a dimly lit theater at Marlboro College, which Sara Coffey had secured for achugar as part of her VPL residency. I realized that achugar's choreography was a perfect metaphor for The Hatchery Project. Outside, it was distinctly New England, fall weather—that unmistakable chill beneath an intensely crisp sun. Inside, it could have been anywhere:

*Working in the studio is working in the studio, the materials don't change that much. The slow, halting, groping figuring it out, the sticky parts, the boredom, the flashes of something else, the pulling together for a show...the real thing here is: how is The Hatchery itself working? And just...how much labor is involved. What a crazy amount—what is this endeavor? But then you go back to—what else is there?—in the larger macro human question? And is it about not getting burnt out, or figuring out how to proceed once you are? For the individual, and for the system...*

achugar interrupted my thoughts, announcing to the room: "I know it's a mess. But I think it has potential."

This past year, year two, I watched The Hatchery partners, both as individuals and a system, get burnt out and figure out how to proceed. I watched them do this while they weathered Craig Peterson's transition to an independent entity in Philadelphia (soon to be New York) and prepared for Jennifer Calienes' departure from MANCC (her successor, Carla Peterson, is just now being brought into The Hatchery fold, slowly and thoughtfully). I watched as the inevitable excitement and anxiousness of year one of a big new endeavor gave way to the more certain and more wearying push through of year two. From "Where to begin?" to "How to go on?"

How to go on: this perhaps sounds problematic—but I think it's inevitable and healthy. Systems have to grow up. To refine themselves. Especially systems that are asking big and unwieldy questions. The following, a final quote from that achugar residency, strikes me at The Hatchery's core question. It isn't going to be answered in a year—or, rather, last year's answer won't work today:

"The work of being an artist—an artist who needs other people, other systems, and so is inherently collaborative—what is the best system in which this work should take place?"

If you are asking this question in America, which The Hatchery Project is, then you are asking a thorny tangle of interconnected questions, using trial and error to try to give adequate support to artists in a country where resources are never adequate.

One example of this trial and error occurred with Beth Gill, a fiercely talented artist whose structural organization isn't quite as focused as her choreography. Year two saw an ongoing and concerted effort from the partners to respond to Gill's pressing needs, but also to help her move into a less reactionary mode of planning. This has been labor-intensive but deeply rewarding.

By the time Gill realized that she badly needed a production residency for her NYLA premiere, it was far too late to apply through the regular channels. The Hatchery partners brainstormed about

this, and reached out to various colleagues to find a way to make this work. In the end, Coffey landed a production residency at Mass MoCA which which included housing and technical staff. VPL allocated \$5,000 of its money earmarked for Gill's activities in Vermont in order to support the off-site residency. VPL promoted the work-in-progress showing at MoCA to its Vermont audience and included it as a destination for VPL's Performance Club.

It's important to see Coffey's individual effort within the collaborative support of The Hatchery, stemming from group conversations and emails. Likewise, Jennifer Calienes conferred with her colleagues to use an additional \$5000 in Hatchery Funds to get Gill's sound designer down for Gill's 11-day MANCC residency (which I also attended—it appeared to be a productive and fulfilling time for both the artists and MANCC staff). Gill focused both on creation and documentation:

“Beth utilized all aspects of the residency documentation to the fullest,” Calienes said. “Photos from the residency were featured (and credited accurately) in *Time Out* and in *The New York Times*. Raw footage from Chris Cameron (MANCC's media specialist) was used by Beth for her successful Kickstarter campaign and a separate video about the work and residency was developed by MANCC and circulated after the premiere.”

Craig Peterson secured a mini-Maine getaway for Gill, so that she could clear her head and have some time away after her NYLA show. And Brian Rogers gave 162 hours of free rehearsal time to Gill and achugar, through the Chocolate Factory's partnership with spaceworks. These weren't official residencies (all of the Chocolate Factory's official Hatchery residencies will happen in the final year. Says Rogers: “I'm actually pretty excited that things shook down this way. All of the artists will have just completed big projects before they come to CF so they will be able to think about our space and resources a bit differently.”)—but they were, like the Mass MoCA activity, brokered as a result of the Hatchery partners understanding the varied and changeable needs of these artists—needs which aren't always legible to organizations working with artists for shorter, product-driven lengths of time.

Of course, there have been ongoing residency activities at the partner sites. Year two saw a total of 475 combined residency days, monthly partner meeting calls, two in-person partner convenings and one private dinner with all of the artists, partners and La Rocco.

One of these residencies was Big Dance Theater's nine-day production residency in January at the University of the Arts' Arts Bank Theater in Philadelphia. Nine cast members and four company technicians worked with a nine-person local crew and three paid interns from Headlong Dance Institute, all hired by Peterson. This labor-intensive stretch also included community interactions, including choreography students observing Anne-B Parson's work and hearing about her creative practice.

BDT also had VPL and MANCC residencies this year. Parson is by far the most organized and structured of the four Hatchery artists, and, along with Wilson, the most established in terms of touring and commissions. Peterson puts it succinctly: “BDT is a machine.” It perhaps at first sounds paradoxical but is not a coincidence that the partners have experienced the most roadblocks (from scheduling to access) with Parson and Wilson, the two more experienced artists in the group. They, like the five Hatchery partners, have developed ways of working in the field—often as self-protective mechanisms—that can be difficult to undo. It is one thing to say one is interested in a true collaboration aimed at raising the visibility and value of the developmental process, and another to shift away from business as usual, when you have a way of working that works for you.

(As well, some of the partners are questioning their own motivations, in terms of how much they are asking from these artists, and why.)

The Hatchery Project was in large part created to offer more holistic and flexible support, and yet the larger realities shaping how artists (especially experienced artists) have been conditioned to deal with organizations have continued to be felt by all, leading the partners to consider whether it makes more sense to work with younger artists, or artists who are more open to a give and take. As Coffey put it: “Access to artists and their process is critical to building value for the research and development process—an argument which is necessary for us to make if we are to sustain a practice of paying artists for their R&D time. To do this we need artists to actively collaborate with us to co-design the best places for audiences to access or engage with an artist and his/her creative process.”

As The Hatchery Project moves to its final year, key areas of inquiry include:

1. What would a second round of The Hatchery Project look like? As Calienes moves away from MANCC and Peterson moves into his new position at Gina Gibney Studios in New York, how would these four nodal points function in the future?

2. What of the role of administration? Speaking to her role as the money manager, Sheila Lewandoswki noted how important it is “to acknowledge the tension that will always exist around money and programming. I am very glad the artists are being supported as fully as they are by the existence of this project and I enjoy some of the policy related discussions, but, by structure, I am an outsider - insider. Something to think about going forward is the importance or structure of this role. How could it be handled differently?”

3. In the American system how is the investment in R&D made visible—how and where does the investment get credited when a project reaches the public?

4. How best to talk to the field at large about what The Hatchery Project is about, and what it is teaching its participants?

This last point brings us to the AAC Conference in South Carolina this October, where the partners will host a daylong intensive, extending their learning community by engaging colleagues who are invested in dance and gathering more perspectives on the larger topics and challenges of this work. This is a major endeavor, reflecting the partners’ shift in thinking around how best to document their efforts and disseminate this information—i.e., moving away from the static presentation of a blog or report toward a less controlled and more inclusive attempt at engaged research. Another experiment.

Of course, with inclusivity comes disagreement. To end with a quote from Peterson, relating to the editing of this very document: “We are not going to reach full consensus on some of these finer points—and that’s probably a good thing. We are four separate entities, five individuals all with different missions and operating structures. So I kind of like the subtle misalignments—we don’t have to work exactly like one another to advance residency work and raise the profile of creative process.”