

## Review Scáling:

By Mathew Palluch for Gramilano – Dance Opera Photography

(Written after the premiere in LBS in London in November 2022)

<https://www.gramilano.com/2022/11/candoco-dance-company-in-side-out/>

On Wednesday 16 November, audiences saw *Object Permanence*, the latest work by dance artist and Candoco Independent Researcher, Kat Hawkins. On Thursday 17 (and Friday 18 November) the programme was altered to include *SCÁLING* “an intimate and detailed performance practice” by Candoco dancer Markéta Stránská in collaboration with dance artist Charlie Morrissey.

This was the one for me and, in retrospect, basically what I came to see. Seriously good work. Important work. Morrissey momentarily introduced the piece, suggesting it was a work in progress of sorts and would take about 20 minutes to complete – and off they went.

They ‘performed’ the work in the round (chairs and cushions had now been placed on the additional three sides of the stage) and it felt like an industry audience kind of night – and that proved evident as the audience perhaps became aware that they now had an audience themselves.

I don’t know Morrissey, but I like him. Some people just exude a good soul. This was the third piece Stránská danced in the evening, so we already felt like friends. Morrissey and Stránská met in a dance class in 2019 and haven’t looked back since, and it’s evident why. If lucky in life you meet your soul mate. The same happens for dancers – a kindred spirit who just gets you, your body, your inner movement.

The work is a practice as research experience. It’s an honest, no holds barred exploration of partnering and what it entails. The observational learnings suggest trust, awareness, guidance, responsiveness, risk, and bravery. As a duo they’re so connected, but much more than just physically. There’s a mutual sixth-sense situation. The piece builds throughout: it starts minimally, and as the connection and trust builds so does the movement, in size and scope. This isn’t a ‘pretty’ piece – we are invited to watch the actual nitty-gritty – with moments of discomfort, questioning, elements of failure and recuperation. It’s very engaging.

As an able person I can’t pretend to understand how it must feel to live otherwise. I imagine many persons with disabilities feel they waste a lot of time trying and having to ‘fit’ into able environments when their personal needs, and overarching inclusion is negated. This work was the antithesis of that. The exploration was about dance and partnering, acknowledging, and working specifically with Stránská’s body – she’s a single leg amputee. I didn’t want to mention this as it feels exclusionary in manner, but *SCÁLING* was developed from her being. Her body. It wouldn’t work on a different dancer in the same way and that’s what takes it into the realm of rare, movement authenticity. Something that only tends to happen when a practitioner is also the creator – a double whammy. Stránská’s reality being supported and matched by Morrissey’s commitment and sensitivity. See this necessary work if you can.

