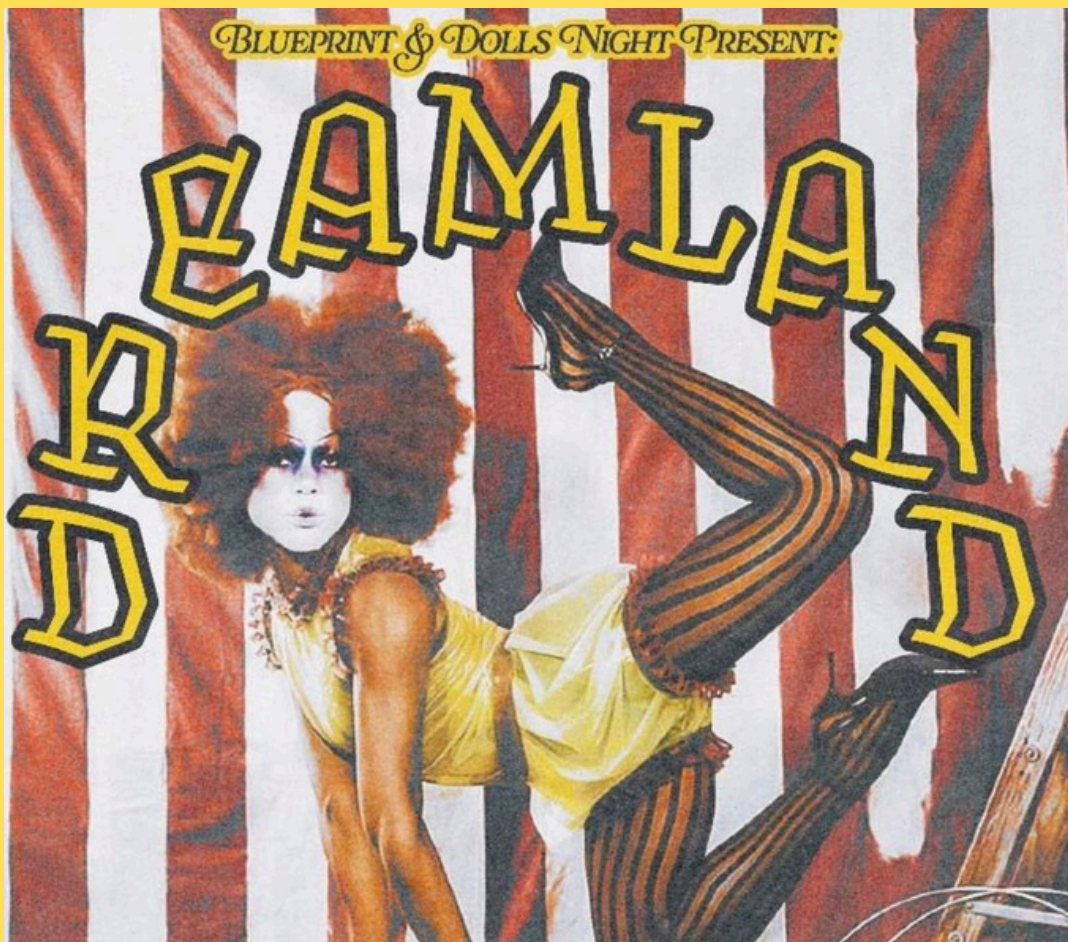


the creation of



Now that Movement weekend has come and gone, we've been able to reflect on our time spent dancing, laughing, listening, and chatting. Movement weekend is one of the greatest weekends in this city all year long. With the abundance of events and parties and influx of people that makes the city feel a different type of alive. I attended my fair share of events and I wanted to take a peak behind the scenes on how events like these happen and the thought, care, and intention that occurs and brings them to life. A few weeks before Movement, I began to touch base with some of Detroit's finest and see the process and production of their event.

It was a cool summer night, I just hopped out of my friend's car parked on a side street and began walking towards Fenkell looking for the entrance to the venue where we found the opening in the fence gate.

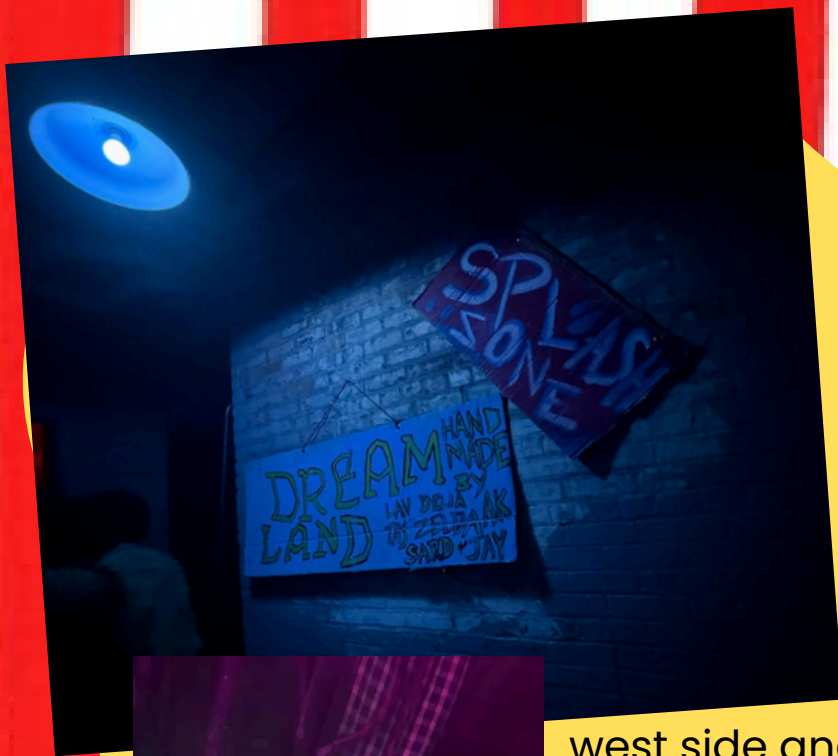
An individual waiting in the parking lot outside the venue politely stops us and calls the people walking in behind us to hurry over to listen in—

**"Welcome to Dreamland," they smile.**

"This party is the amalgamation of dreams, imagination, passion and love of divas hailing from all corners of Detroit. Freedom is paramount at Dreamland and we invite you to unburden your limbsy and release your woes in syncopation with the sonic selections of our cast."

“Tied to this liberation is the care for your fellow dreamers. We are fervently committed to mutual care and will not tolerate any non-consensual touching, violence, racism, transphobia, sexism or ableism – neither in language nor in action. Community Care Liaisons are Dreamland's direct line to safety and harm reduction and can be found around the space for our shared safety. If you see something, say something,” they paused to make sure we were listening. “Keep it cute. Keep it cunt. And shake some fucking ass!” they confidently stated as they allowed us towards security at the door. That moment felt like a nice theatrical pause as everyone walked in jittery with excitement but also served as a moment of intention.

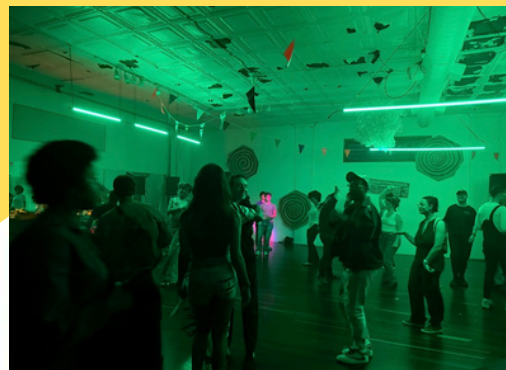
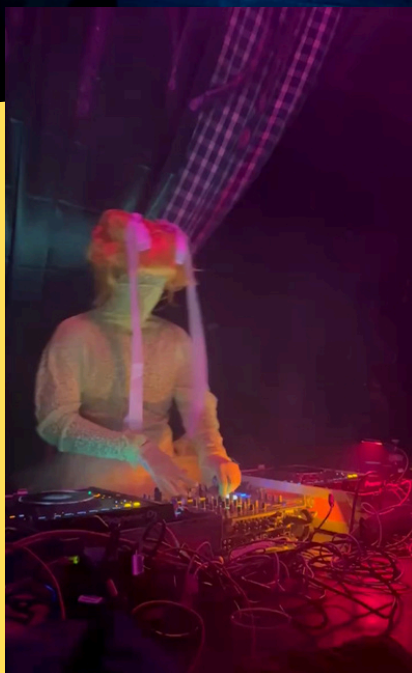




Dreamland was a collaborative event between Blueprint and Doll's Night, two of Detroit's most inclusive dance parties and organizations. The party was held at the

Andy Arts Center on the west side and featured a whimsical, dreamy, circus theme. Partygoers were introduced to Dreamland by a big room decorated with painted maximalist stars, tinsel, frequently changing tube lights hanging from the ceiling above a packed dancefloor boasting fast paced high energy music. Where that room ended, a very large low lit room with people relaxing seated on floor mats and chairs. In the other direction a small

hallway guided partygoers to a room resembling a small bar with couches, warm lighting, places to have a ki, and food by Dawat. From that room you could also hear the music from the second, more intimate dance floor with lower ceilings, mirrors, and moody sexy lighting to accompany the house music.



Now that you can picture this party, its ambience, its flow, its vibe, it's time to think about how we got here, or I should say how they got us here. I had the pleasure of speaking with some of the producers behind Dreamland and watching them set up for this experience. While Dreamland was only one beautiful, extraordinary night, the teams behind the party began to brainstorm about that event right after Movement last year.

## PLANNING STAGES.

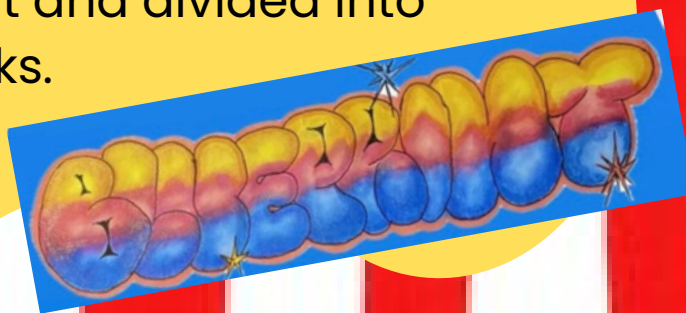
Many of Dreamland's producers reflected on the long timeline that allowed this party to come to fruition. Aidel Hawkins, of Dolls Night, recalls beginning to think about the event almost a year before, "When so much time passes, you're just in it for long on a project like this." Last year Dolls Night and Blueprint hosted separate parties on the same night but teamed up to provide partygoers who attended Dolls Night with half off entry into Blueprint's party. "The past two years we were doing the same night, same time for our parties, we're splitting a group of people who are going to both things and it might have a higher impact if we could come together and collaborate," Crystal Moiner of Blueprint explained. Members from both Blueprint and Dolls Night mentioned confirming a loose timeline and other details



about six months before the event. The groups began holding monthly meetings together to prepare and plan for the event.

## LOGISTICS.

Everyone noted the challenge of working in a larger group dynamic as a unique challenge specific to this event. "Figuring out what it would look like working across different social stratospheres..cause you know when you get seven bad bitches on board to one project you know everyone has their own background and thoughts," Crystal laughed. Janisa Nelson, of Blueprint, agreed, "everyone has their own taste and different ways of doing things, so we had to find a way to meet in the middle." However, the group utilized constant communication, organized schedules, and created smaller groups to work on things. "With this big of a team, a good communication process is important and is actually useful and not something that just annoys people," Jay Phillip, from Dolls Night, laughed. As the two groups came together, they established everyone's strengths and levels of comfort and divided into teams to focus on specific tasks.



I wondered what were some of the hidden aspects of production of an event of this scale, something that wouldn't cross my mind or the average party goer. When asked about this, Crystal confidently stated, "finances" as we both laughed. "We're literally creating a pop up club, we are incurring all expenses around one night, and there aren't other events to help transfer the costs to or spread across an entire month" she explained.

Blueprint and Dolls Night create a pop-up club for the one night event. Jay highlights the challenges in this, "all the venue was for us was a building, anything else that goes into making a party, the sound, set design, like any safety elements, any security, any harm reduction, and we built a green room. Any part of your experience was created for this party." The Andy Arts center prominently functions as a dance studio but also has the dimensions of a warehouse.

## CURATING CONCEPTS + AESTHETICS.

One of the earliest things the group begins to consider is the selection of talent to play the party. "We really try to curate the night, in a way that flows with regards to taste. We really care about the experience," Janisa explained excitedly. Janisa says, "selecting the talent might be my favorite part because everyone is so different and we all have different tastes and it becomes a process of elimination based on the

audience we're trying to serve." Crystal also provided insight on the process of elimination by thinking of who they really want to see and who will be in town.



Crystal Moiner, recalls the collaborative effort to finally settle on the theme of Dreamland, from a record she has from the group Black Box. "We're not the first ones to do a dreamland concept..but we were trying to think of a name and I always like to start from an album. Like let me go through some albums I've been listening

to lately and see if there's any inspiration from there." The group bounced back and forth between themes struggling to conceptualize them. Crystal also recalls solidifying her Dreamland inspiration by the cinematography and set design in a John Waters film she saw at UFO Bar's film night and the fact that his Waters ensemble are referred to as 'Dreamlanders'.

In March, Lavender Morin was brought on to bring the Dreamland theme alive with their experience set design skills. Crystal expressed her need for help with design and thought Lavender would have a vision and could help turn the DJ booth into a hot air balloon. Lavender talked about changing their original designs based on the group's feedback and how the originals were a little "too polished." Lavender has an extensive background in theatre,



Dreamland was the first event of this caliber. Lavender talked about the difference in creating decor for Dreamland versus traditional theatre, "everything is kind of designed down to a T (in theatre) and it's annoying because it can't have that same flexibility and whimsy". The Andy Arts Center is such a big venue that served as a challenge to cover and decorate. Lavender recruited volunteers to help paint and assemble the extensive amount of decor.



Joseph Sardashti and Jay Phillip, from Dolls Night, did their first walk through of the Andy Arts Center to measure the space and get an idea for planning. Together Jay and Joseph create lighting designs and lighting installations under the name, Hard Lite. The two were overwhelmed by the sheer size of the venue and high ceilings. "It was hard to take measurements that were meaningful. We weren't sure where the DJ booth was going to be and we couldn't take measurements of the second dance floor because there was a dance class and we couldn't even go in there," Joseph explained. Over the next few months, the pair built more light fixtures preparing for the event. "The ceilings are so high which is good for dispersion of light but proved to be a challenge to install," Joseph explained. In previous events, the two normally use a scissor lift during the install, "it makes it easier because you can roll around and fix things while keeping everything in the cart." However, the Andy Arts Center has a lifted sprung dance floor that prevents the use of the scissor lift.



Dolls Night and Blueprint are known to prioritize harm reduction and safety within their spaces and their events. Jezebel was in charge of curating a harm reduction crew and plan for the event. Jezebel has worked in nightlife and harm reduction for years assisting both groups as community care liaisons walking around the event with narcan, water, testing strips, snacks, and first aid. "There's no (definitive) end goal other than reducing harm as much as possible," Jezebel explains. Jezebel coordinated with a list of volunteers to cover the event and brought on Sophie, the Harm Reductress and registered nurse, to host a table at the event. Jezebel and Aidel teamed up to implement safety plans and introduced the use of walkie talkies for the event. "One of the most important things that a party can do is implement a vibe check at the door.

## HARM REDUCTION + THE HARM REDUCTRESS

@/ THE HARM REDUCTRESS WILL BE AT DREAMLAND  
HANDING OUT SAFETY SUPPLIES AND AVAILABLE FOR MORE  
EMERGENT OR HEALTH-SPECIFIC NEEDS.

SOFIA IS A HARM REDUCTION SPECIALIST HAVING WORKED  
AMONG VULNERABLE POPULATIONS FOR OVER 12 YEARS. SHE IS  
CURRENTLY A NURSING STUDENT, WORKING TO TRY AND IMPROVE  
HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR THOSE WITHIN THE QUEER & TRANS  
COMMUNITY. HER STATION WILL FEATURE A VARIETY OF HARM  
REDUCTION SUPPLIES, AS WELL AS FUNCTION AS A SPACE FOR  
THOSE NEEDING A SECOND TO CHILL OUT, SOBER UP, OR TAKE A  
BREAK FROM THE PARTY.



Something that lets people coming in know the intention of the party, know the parameters of the party, and how safety exists in this space. Little reminders to let people know, and changes the way people engage with each other," Jezebel exclaims. This couldn't have been represented better and conceptualized in the script that was read to fellow partygoers and myself as we entered the party. I was delighted to later find out the script was written by Jezebel. "When you come in, you're basically told we want you to free yourself, love each other, be at ease, and don't be a freak in a bad way. There's also a mutual care we expect and demand from anyone who's attending and you can tell when a party does that and when they don't," Jezebel tells me. Aidel also mentioned being inspired by a party she recently attended in Berlin, that offered a similar check in prior to entering the venue and how this extra step can go a long way.

BLUEPRINT & DOLLS NIGHT PRESENT:

# DREAMLAND

Welcome to Dreamland  
This party is the amalgamation of dreams,  
imagination, passion and love of divas hailing from  
all corners of Detroit.

Freedom is paramount at Dreamland and we invite you to  
unburden your limbs and release your woes in  
syncopation with the sonic selections of our cast. Tied to  
this liberation is the care for your fellow dreamers. We are  
fervently committed to mutual care and will not tolerate  
any non-consensual touching, violence, racism,  
transphobia, sexism or ableism— neither in language nor  
in action.

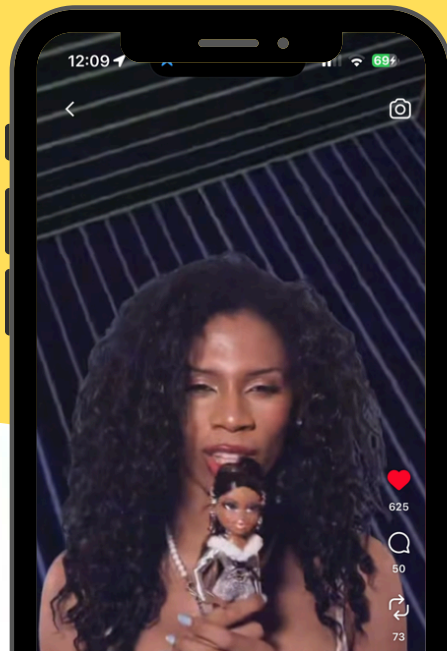
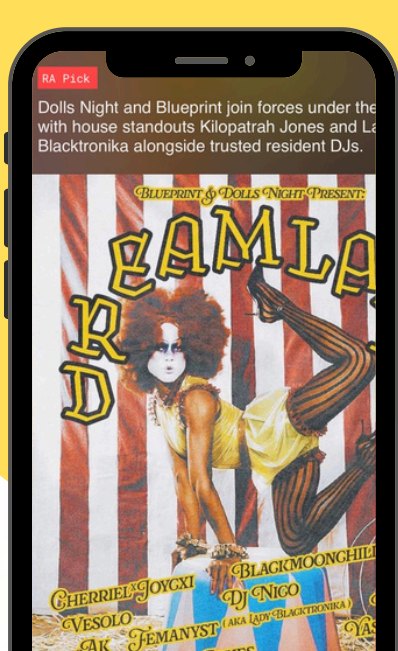
Community Care Liaisons are Dreamland's direct line to  
safety and harm reduction and can be found around the  
space for our shared safety.

If you see something, say something.  
Keep it cute. Keep it cunt. And shake some fucking ass.



# PROMOTE.

Dolls Night and Blueprint have notable presences online and used their platforms to promote the event. Catherine Swan, from Dolls Night, and Janisa teamed up and were tasked with promoting the event across social media. From its early conception the duo created a day by day social media content calendar. The calendar had a detailed plan to promote the event from inception, advertise the first wave of discounted tickets, party updates, party information, and stylized content specific to each platform. Swan recalls the detail and thought that went into the video content promoting the party, “we wanted an 80s-esque vibe and we were inspired by a newscast where some interrupted the broadcast satellite and it was kind of creepy but kind of cunt.” You may have seen the video of Swan on your timeline, the interrupted airwaves of a broadcast and cuts to Swan holding a Bratz doll with a mic attached to it. “Sorry to interrupt the broadcast,” she exclaims. The event also utilized Resident Advisor to presell tickets and was selected “RA pick” against other events of the night.



# SET UP.

Tuesday, three days before the event, Hard Lite, Lavender, and Karlala Sound System arrived at the Andy Arts Center to begin the extensive set up. Karlala Sound System had just got into town from NYC with their hot pink speakers. The install proved to be a challenge for all, Joseph and Jay spent countless hours atop an eighteen foot ladder opposed to their normal use of the scissor lift. Joseph talks about the experience, "I would have to move the ladder six inches over and climb up and down this eighteen foot ladder, it was basically me up on the ladder asking Jay to hand me this and hand me that and if this looked okay or how this looked."

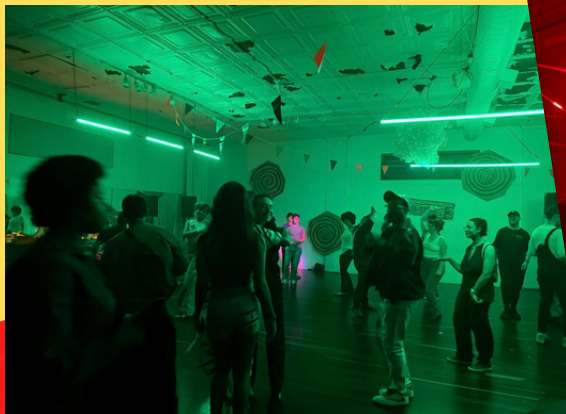
"During venue setup, I had to decide on what to do because I was the person in the space setting up and it might not be what everyone wants but it's what feels realistic right now. We just have to make compromises because we can't be everywhere all together," Jay explained some challenges. Joseph even recalls Karl working alongside them, "they built half of the sound system there, it was mind blowing. He brought the boxes, and was sanding them and putting them together!"



As mentioned earlier, flexibility and whimsy really plays a key role in production of these events. Joseph and Jay hung a quarter of their planned installation and decided to take it down and start over. "I was thinking more linear in the layout, and we went a little more carnival with the lights zig zagging. We were really glad we got those big bendy light fixtures. They really made the funhouse psychosis vibes," Joseph joked.

## EXECUTE.

The party was truly a wonderful experience. I had a great time with friends from Detroit and those in town for the weekend. The flow of the party and the different pockets that offered different visual or auditory experiences was truly unmatched. The contrasting vibes of each dance floor had many partygoers running between the two every hour.



# RESET, REST, REFLECT.

It was interesting to see how all of the producers, creators, and artists felt now that time has passed and people have rested and had time to reflect on Dreamland. "I was happy we had a safe party. We didn't really have many hiccups at all outside of normal party hiccups," Swan said with relief. Jay supported this by stating, "the most the harm reduction team did was hand out water and give someone a bandaid."

"It felt really good to be there. I feel like the planning and the party itself exist in like two different worlds and both are learning experiences and fun at times and later in the night you're a little tired, taking your shoes off and putting on your slides but the party was a beautiful experience," Aidel proclaimed. I'm thankful to experience events like these and I'm thankful to exist in a creative spaces with such talented intentional people. I look forward to Movement every year but I forget how inspired I feel headed into summer reminiscing of the new moments from that weekend.

