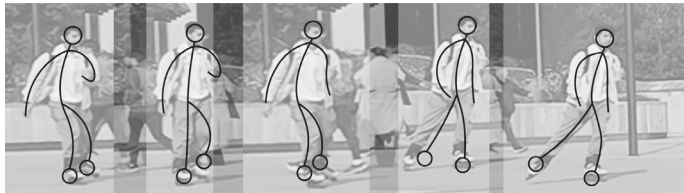


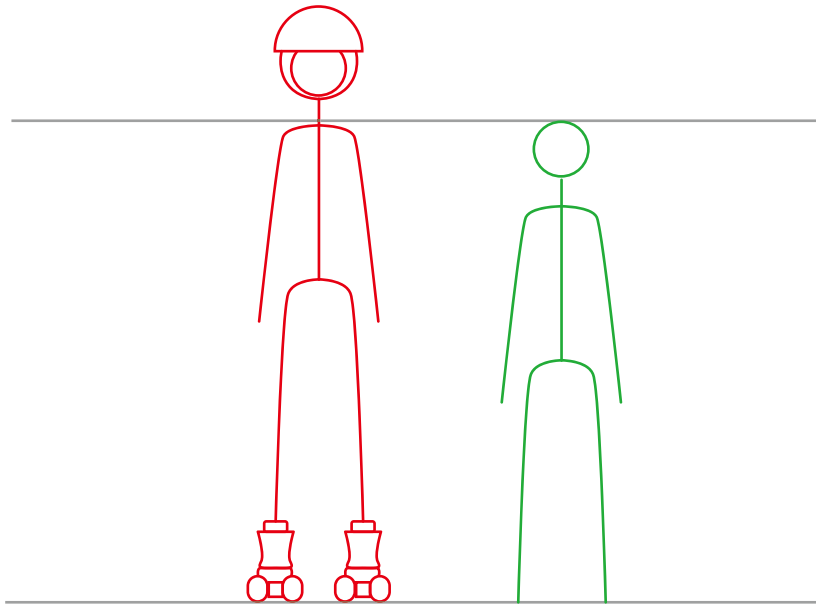


TENSIONS IN MOTION

What does it mean to feel safe in a public space?

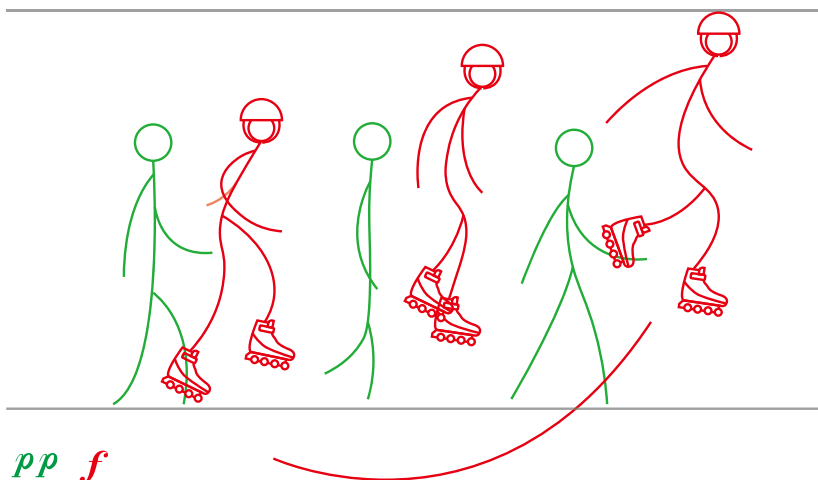


At ground level, where movement and presence intersect, safety becomes an elusive, shifting sensation. In Stratford, roller skaters move through pedestrian zones with a confidence and speed that both disrupt and redefine the space around them. Their presence is striking – not just visually but in height, sound, speed, and intensity.



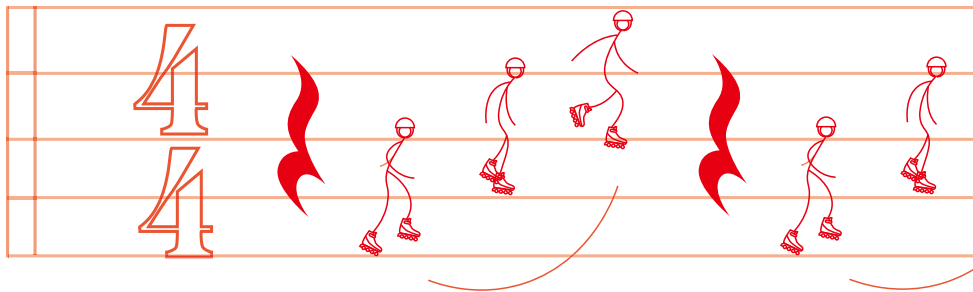
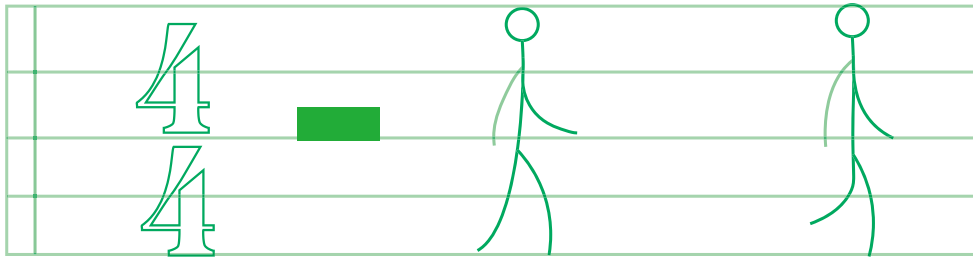
Height and Dominance

Their height commands attention, altering the dynamics of control and highlighting how safety intertwines with dominance. This experience, as social studies confirm, is not solely physical but psychological, imprinting a sense of lost control that unsettles the observer.



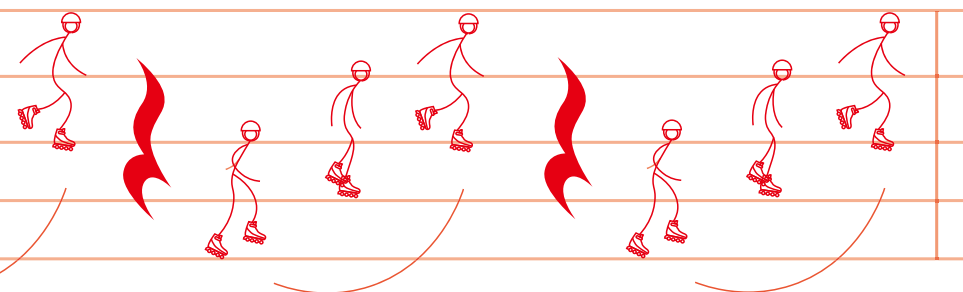
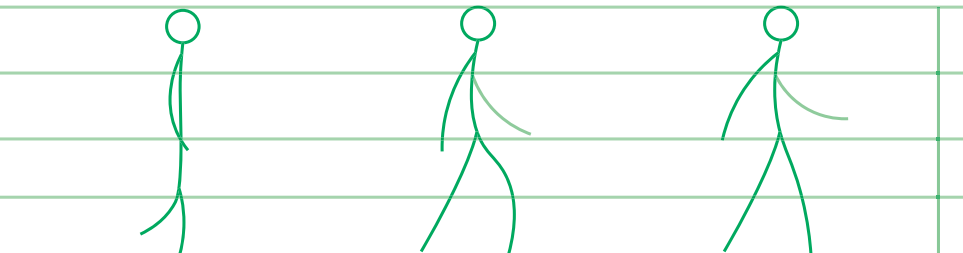
Sound

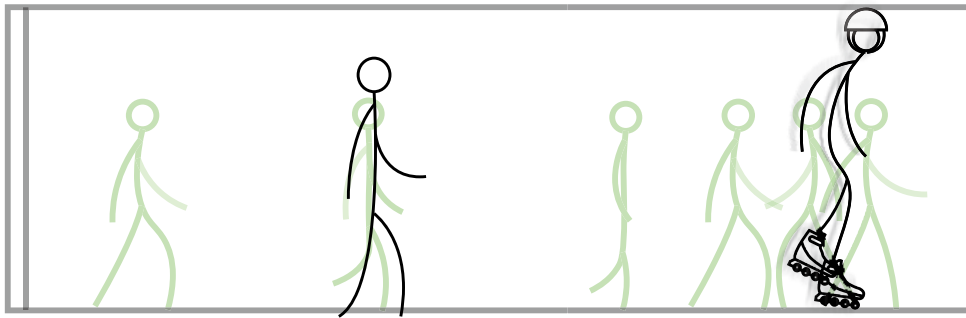
Long before the skaters become visible, the sound announces their arrival. Skates slice through the air with a sharpness that pierces the ambient hum, adding an auditory tension to the environment. The unexpected nature of these sounds amplifies anxiety, making the unseen more present than what's in view.



Speed

In the slower flow of pedestrian movement, the skaters' rapid pace emerges as a form of social dominance. Pedestrians yield, adjusting their paths to avoid sudden encounters, momentarily displaced by the skaters' controlled chaos. Speed, in this context, becomes a tool that shifts spatial hierarchy – a privilege for some that leaves others feeling excluded from the space.





Spatial Compression and Release

As the skaters rush into narrow pathways, space compresses and the pressure mounts. The once-calm rhythm transforms, creating an intensity that fills every inch. This compression of space introduces a sense of impending collision, as though safety hinges on the tension between movement and stillness. As they pass through, the release is palpable – a sigh of relief that signals the restoration of personal space and control.



What is safety?

With in this context,
safety can be understood as control
within a space,
a sense of belonging,
predictability,
and inclusivity.

It is the product of how a space
manages different speeds,
behaviors,
and the psychological impact of
these dynamics on users.

Safety means balancing power
and control within a shared
environment,
ensuring that no group feels
marginalized or overshadowed by
another.

p: Piano, Soft
f: Forte, Loud
mp: Moderately soft

