Focusrite reveals Flow State: Chicago



One year after five hip-hop producers came together in New Orleans to make music without deadlines or expectations, Focusrite and 22rivrs brought them back together in Chicago to explore what happens when those same artists reconnect, reflect and create again. Flow State: Chicago, the latest documentary from Focusrite and 22rivrs, reunites Raney, Benji., Ashilee Ashilee, Spiff Sinatra and LEALE for a five-day creative retreat centered on music production, collaboration, community and well-being. The picture above shows Ashilee Ashilee, pictured at Flow State: Chicago.

This time, the producers arrive with more than a blank canvas. They bring established relationships, shared experiences and ideas from their first retreat, alongside a year of individual creative growth. Together, they discover how those connections have evolved, and how familiarity can open new possibilities for making music. At the heart of the documentary is a simple question: what happens when artists have the space and time to create without the usual pressures surrounding their work?

Cameras capture the producers writing, playing, producing and responding to one another in real time. Ideas emerge spontaneously and creative roles shift naturally,

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with one artist taking the lead as others find their place within the music. Between sessions, the group reflects on what being in a flow state means to them, how their relationships have developed since New Orleans, and the value of stepping away from everyday distractions. Joining the retreat is Dr. Pyar Seth, whose research explores Black creative practice and the ways multisensory environments can support learning, knowledge creation and creative expression. Seth offers another perspective on the group's experiences, examining how environment, rhythm, technology, community and personal well-being can influence creativity and the ability to enter a flow state. Shared meals, conversation, reflection and time away from the studio become part of that exploration, revealing how the conditions around music-making can be as meaningful as the sessions themselves.

The documentary also takes the producers beyond the retreat and into Chicago's creative community. During a visit to Studio Shapes, they connect with young adults from the John Walt Foundation, sharing their experiences as professional producers and discussing creativity, careers and the realities of pursuing music.

The exchange extends a central idea behind this year's retreat: the value of a creative community grows when its experiences and learning are shared with others. For the Chicago natives within the group, the week also offers an opportunity to reflect on the city's role in shaping their creative identities.

Ultimately, Flow State: Chicago explores more than what five producers can make in five days. It follows the relationships that continue after everyone goes home, the ideas that begin in one city and resurface a year later in another, and the moments when individual artists begin working as one creative unit, and the music that emerges when they do.

Watch Flow State: Chicago here

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