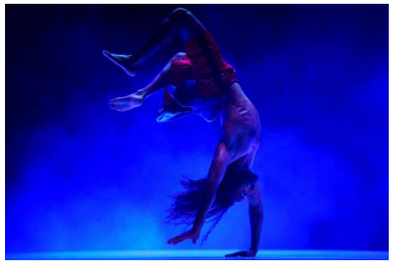
# A TOOLKIT FOR FESTIVALS AND THEATRES, CHOREOGRAPHERS AND DANCERS

# X ATTITUDES

# What's in this toolkit and where can you find it?





# A toolkit for makers and theatres

We share our experiences according to the hip hop adage “each one teach one”.

**Over two years, the hip hop dance network Attitudes toured across Europe. What worked and what could be improved? Attitudes presents a toolkit for institutions and makers.**

Six countries, six cultural institutions, 16 dancers and 25 venues. In 2024 and 2025, Attitudes travelled across Europe with an extensive hip hop dance tour. This was not a conventional dance project but a European hip hop network centred on creation, exchange and touring, with the support of the European Union.

The productions travelled between theatres, clubs and festivals. At each venue, different influences, crews and audiences came together, making Attitudes more than just a series of performances; it became a platform where hip hop dance could encounter diverse cities and contexts. For the dancers, this meant cross-border visibility; for audiences, a glimpse into how diverse and international the scene has become.

What worked and what could be improved? In this document, we will answer these questions and offer a toolkit for programmers and makers. How do you find the right hip hop performance for your venue? How do you connect with the makers? How do you collaborate with local communities and with other international organisations? And conversely, how does a choreographer or dancer gain access to the theatre world?

We share our experiences in accordance with the long-standing hip hop adage “each one teach one.”

There is much to learn. Anyone bringing hip hop dance into the theatre must rethink their assumptions. Hip hop dance is no longer a contemporary “flavour” added to a production to give it an urban edge or to attract younger audiences; it has developed into a force that questions the very foundations of theatre itself.

## Craft and quality

In short, hip hop dance does not seek a place within the existing system; it compels the system to reinvent itself. What constitutes craft? Who decides what quality is? Which stories deserve a place on the stage? Within hip hop culture, these questions are often answered within communities themselves through battles and other forms of exchange. This shifts how cultural institutions programme and produce work.

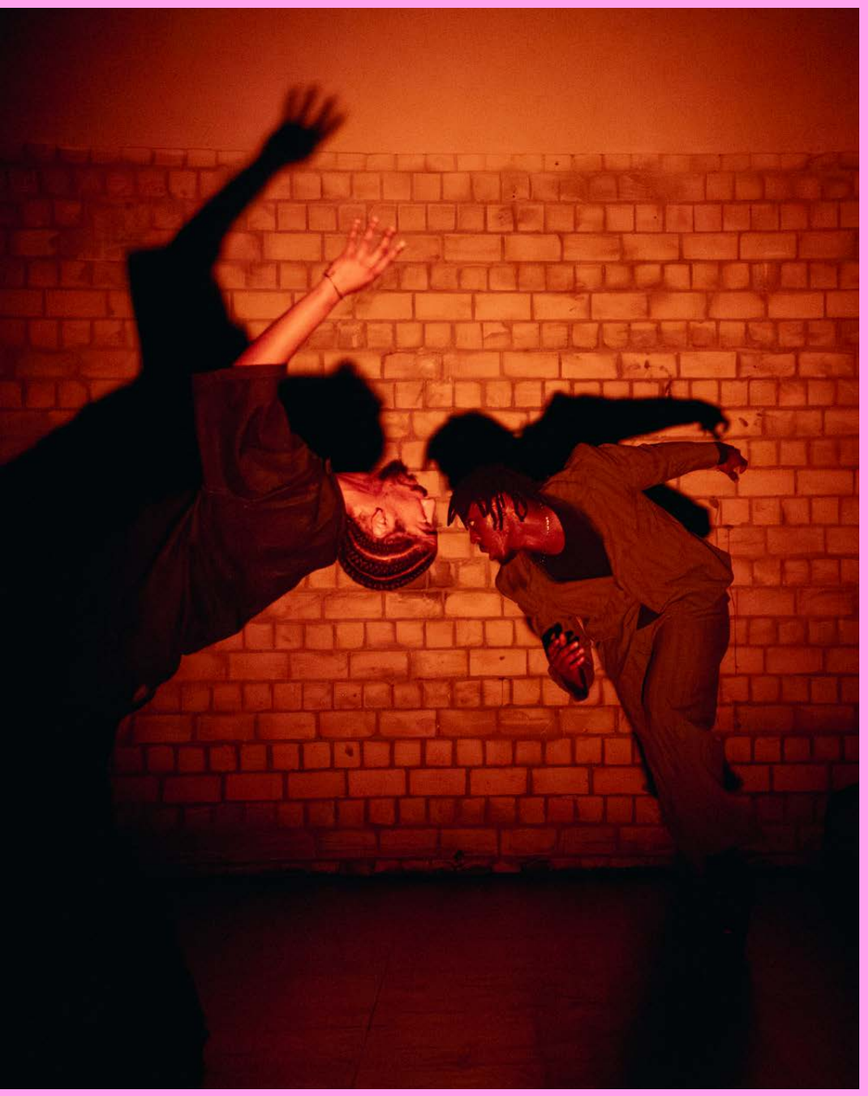
We therefore read with appreciation Hip-Hop in Musical Theatre by Nicole Hodges Persley, Professor of African and African American Studies at the University of Kansas. According to Persley, the key question is not whether hip hop should be allowed to enter the theatre, but how it does so and who holds decision-making power. Authenticity emerges when hip hop is understood as a culture: a practice rooted in black communities, shaped by social inequality and sustained through collective knowledge transfer.

Theatre makers who genuinely integrate hip hop acknowledge its origins, collaborate with artists who come from the culture itself, and allow form and content to shape one another.

Good luck and Godspeed!

**CCNRB (France), Dansekapellet (Denmark), HOP (Spain), Kampnagel (Germany), Norrlandsoperan (Sweden), Summer Dance Forever (The Netherlands) ●**

# Hip hop dance is here to stay



**Programming hip hop dance is not always straightforward. What happens when institutional requirements, such as formal training and funding criteria, collide with hip hop values like autodidactic learning and collective authorship? Lessons for theatres and programmers.**

Many programmers want to open their venues to hip hop dance but are unsure how to do so. And when they try, they often run into assumptions about quality, audiences, formats and about what "works" in a theatrical context. These assumptions frequently presume a classical dance education and a conventional CV, are largely based on white reference frameworks, and have one thing in common: they are rarely neutral.

The European hip hop dance project Attitudes cannot offer a quick fix for this—nor would we want to. What we can offer is a counterproposal, not by translating hip hop into existing institutional frameworks, but by questioning those frameworks themselves.

The six organisations involved in Attitudes have been working with hip hop dance for years, each in their own way. Norrlandsoperan, for instance, is an opera house, while grassroots festivals such as HOP and Summer Dance Forever are deeply embedded in the scene. What unites these organisations is the conviction that hip hop is not a style to be programmed, but a culture to be taken seriously. This means recognising that knowledge does not reside solely in dramaturgical texts, but also in bodies; that artistic quality cannot be separated from the community; and that visibility without agency results in little more than window dressing.

From this perspective, Attitudes developed six co-productions that toured across Europe. Equally important, however, was what was built around the performances: long-term relationships, international exchanges, and structures that embedded Attitudes in practice. This proved necessary, as hip hop dance is still rarely recognised as a fully fledged art form within the performing arts—let alone supported by structural funding.

## At the heart

One of these structures was the Critical Attitudes Board (CAB), composed of hip hop dancers and community members from different countries. They advised not at the margins, but at the heart of the project. The CAB was involved in setting up open calls, the selection process, and safeguarding the artistic and cultural integrity of the project.

For makers, being selected by peers meant recognition and legitimacy; they were seen and assessed by those who understood their practice. For partners, the CAB provided a critical, experience-based sounding board that exposed assumptions and identified an awareness gap. At the same time, the involvement of respected hip hop figures increased the project's credibility.

Engaging with this critical input was not always easy, several organisations noted, not because the questions were new, but because they became concrete. Who decides when a work is "finished"? Who speaks for whom? And what happens when institutional demands such as deadlines, funding criteria or touring obligations clash with hip hop values like autodidacticism, improvisation, collective authorship and long-term commitment to the community?

## Jam, battle or conversation

For programmers seeking to include hip hop, an important lesson emerges here. The impulse to make hip hop "accessible" to a conventional theatre audience can unintentionally lead to simplification. The focus may shift to spectacle, battles become exotic interludes, and performances lose their sharp edges in order to fit an evening-length format. Attitudes demonstrates the opposite: strong hip hop programming emerges when institutions are willing to let go of their formats.

And yes, that takes some getting used to. The timeline differs from that of a classical premiere, audience arrangements are more informal, communication with artists and audiences changes, and the performance consists of more—and decidedly non-standard—elements: a jam, a battle, a conversation. ›

# Hip hop dance is here to stay

**Strong hip hop programming emerges when institutions are willing to let go of their formats.**

Tensions also arise at an organisational level. Many hip hop dancers learn by doing, work collectively, and combine their dance practice with other jobs. Yet they are still often assessed according to criteria that reward individual authorship, formal education and linear careers. Within Attitudes, a conscious choice was therefore made for long-term residencies, mentorship and peer-to-peer exchange, rather than short-term, project-based trajectories. Not because hip hop needs “more guidance”, but because access to guidance is currently unevenly distributed.

What programmers can learn from this approach is that investing in hip hop does not begin with the premiere but with the relationship. Organisations such as CCNRB, Dansekapellet, Norrlandsoperan and HOP Festival all emphasise the same thing: trust is built through presence. Be visible in hip hop communities. Look and listen. Keep an open mind. Let go of control.

This takes time and can feel uncomfortable, but it also yields something in return. Audiences will recognise themselves in what happens on stage, and makers no longer have to justify their existence.

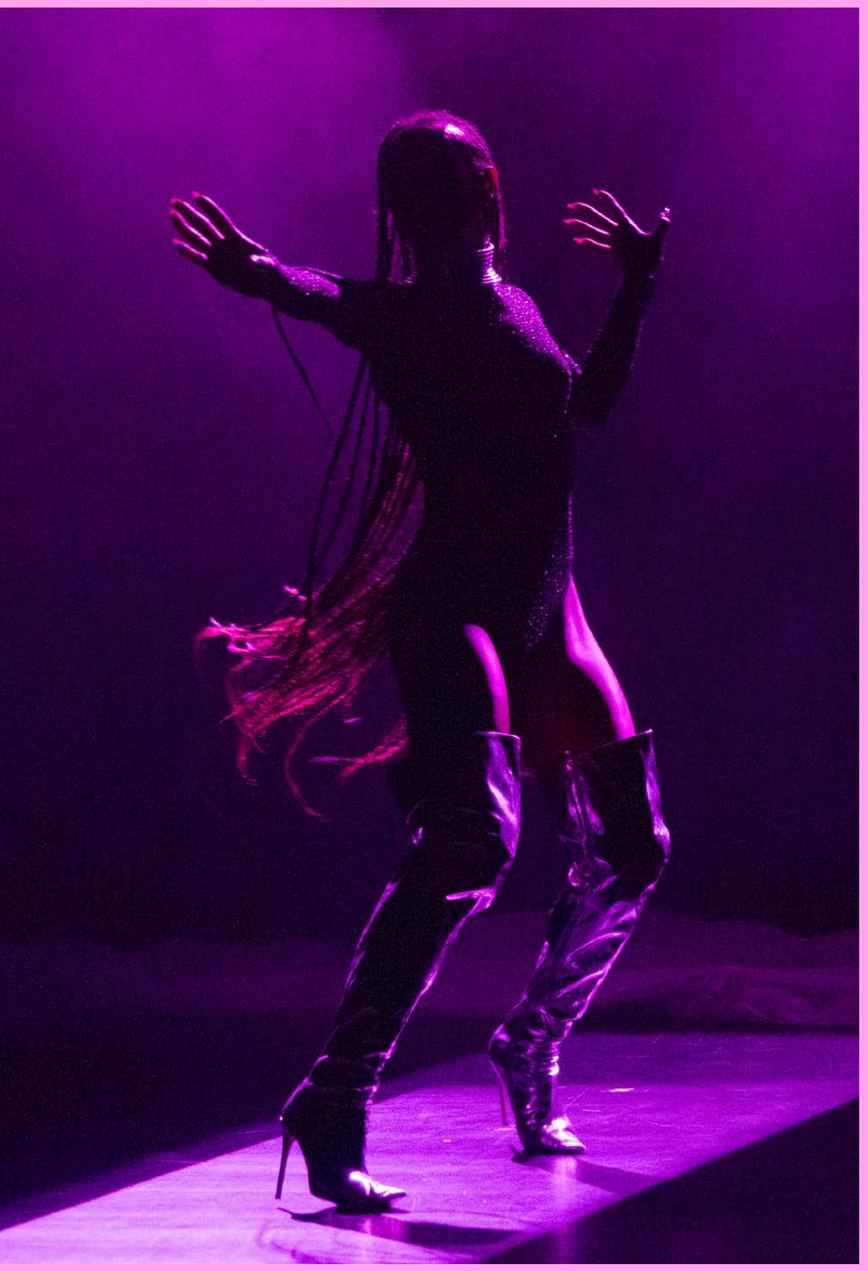
## Homogeneous juries

Equally important is who gets to decide. Attitudes shows that inclusion does not stop at the stage, but begins with governance. As long as programmers, committees and juries remain homogeneous, hip hop dance will continue to be measured against a yardstick that was not designed for it—certainly not for her. Choreographers, dancers, graffiti artists, musicians and other voices from hip hop should therefore be involved in decision-making processes. This must go beyond symbolic gestures and entail a redistribution of expertise.

This requires programmers to ask different questions. Not: Does this fit our venue? But: What does this work ask of our venue? Not: Will this attract new audiences? But: Who feels welcome here and, crucially, who does not? And also: What are we willing to let go of in order to do justice to this work?

Attitudes demonstrates that when institutions are willing to question their assumptions, space emerges for performances that have an impact both on stage and beyond it: on how we look, choose and value. This is not an easy task, but it is an urgent one ●

# Looking for Makers with Courage



**For emerging makers, cultural institutions can feel overwhelming. Who do you need to speak to? Where can you find funding? And how do you retain artistic agency? Tips for choreographers and dancers.**

Imagine you are a maker working in hip hop dance, a choreographer or dancer, for example. You have an idea for a performance and want to present it at a festival, theatre or another cultural institution. But you don't know where to start, who to approach, or how to bring your work to attention. And you worry about your idea being diluted.

Relax. You are not the only one. Makers before you faced the same concerns, and makers after you will continue to do so. Attitudes cannot remove these concerns entirely, but it can help you find your way.

First of all, gaining insight into the field takes time. Not in order to adapt to it, but to understand how it functions: who makes decisions, which forms of knowledge are recognised, and which career paths are considered "logical". Still, through conscious action, it is possible to build a sustainable practice. Such a practice is not defined by a single application or presentation, but by long-term engagement. In this way, your work can develop, exist and be recognised.

## A successful maker is visible

In this field, one principle is key: be visible, be present, and build long-term relationships. You do this by regularly checking open calls from theatres, festivals, production houses and community centres, and by actively following them. Subscribe to newsletters, follow their social media channels and attend their events.

At the same time, we know the field does not consist solely of open calls and deadlines, but also of encounters, familiar faces and informal conversations. By following, visiting and continuing to engage with institutions, festivals and presentation venues, context emerges—not only about what is being shown, but also about how decisions are made.

Artistic directors and programmers are important interlocutors, but do not overlook other members of the artistic team. They can offer insights that are not visible in public communication. Moreover, this is how they get to know, recognise, and remember you—even when you are not presenting work yourself. By consistently being present, entering conversations and staying connected to the right places, you actively create the conditions for opportunities to arise.

When you attend a battle, present a showcase, take part in a panel, organise an event or something similar, invite others into your practice as well. Organise educational workshops and panel discussions in which you can share depth and help others better understand your work. By being part of such "ecosystems", you increase your visibility and create opportunities for residencies, presentations and shared funding.

## You can build relationships

Although the cultural field is often described as a network, in practice it operates through relationships. Actively seek contact with people who already have experience and strong networks. Go to places where you can meet them—and keep coming back.

There are also specific spaces and events designed for these kinds of encounters, such as workshops, residencies, mentorships and development programmes. Here, you receive feedback from mentors, exchange ideas and experiences, gain insight into how institutions work, and gain access to new networks.

Connect with other makers who are at a similar stage in their careers. After all, networking is not an individual strategy, but a collective practice. Share struggles, doubts and experiences, and exchange practical knowledge. Talk to artists who have already received funding and ask how funds work in practice and what institutions are really looking for.

# Looking for Makers with Courage

## Connect with others. Networking is not an individual strategy, but a collective practice.

You can also seek mentorship by reaching out to someone you admire. Choose mentors and allies who align with your artistic vision and understand where you come from and where you want to go. On the one hand, this helps you get to know yourself and your artistic practice better. On the other, a mentor can open doors, offer perspective and connect you to residencies, open calls and workspaces.

People who understand the production and funding side of the field are often willing to help. They can point you towards grants, festivals, databases or funding schemes that genuinely fit your practice, and help you understand informal rules.

But to do so, you need to know where to look and dare to ask for help. Research who sits on boards or is involved in key institutions. Invite them for a coffee and come prepared with your questions. This knowledge is crucial for future applications.

### No gatekeepers, but partners

If you are unsure whether your idea fits a particular fund, contact the staff in advance. Each fund applies its criteria differently. Some assess artistic quality primarily based on your CV, while others focus more on your artistic vision. It is therefore important to understand how they define their criteria and how these apply to your application. Insight into institutional processes does not mean adapting your artistic identity.

The way culture is funded across the European Union varies from country to country, making it difficult to generalise. Still, one thing can be said. Cultural funding in Europe is often based on public resources from governments, municipalities and public funds. This means the funding belongs to society, and the institutions that manage it are accountable to the public.

People who understand the production and funding side of the field are often willing to help.

## Know where to look and dare to ask for help.

The people working within these organisations are therefore not gatekeepers to be avoided, but partners with whom you can discuss your ideas and needs. Asking questions is legitimate and even encouraged.

Funds also organise information sessions or informal advisory moments where you can test your idea, ask questions and clarify expectations. Do this well before the deadline, so you can still incorporate feedback into your application. A short conversation can save time and sharpen your proposal.

Do not limit yourself to funds alone; theatres, festivals and similar institutions often have budgets to commission or co-produce new work. Contacting them can open up alternative funding routes to realise your idea.

### It doesn’t have to be perfect

You may recognise this: endlessly refining your proposal, yet never feeling satisfied. Here’s the eye-opener: it won’t become perfect this way. Our advice: begin before everything is perfect. Share your work, respond to open calls, collaborate and test ideas publicly. Momentum arises from action, not from complete readiness. Be brave and start, even if it takes multiple attempts. Every step brings greater clarity about your practice and the field ●

# Do's & Don'ts

## 5 Do's
## What works when programming hip hop dance

### – Include hip hop voices in decision-making

Ensure that dancers, makers and community members are not only performers but also help decide what is programmed, how and why. This can take the form of boards, co-curatorship or structural advisory roles with real influence.

### – Invest in relationships, not just performances

Strong hip hop programming grows out of long-term engagement: being present in community spaces, building trust and showing up consistently. A one-off performance without context rarely leads to lasting impact.

### – Adapt institutional formats to the practice of hip hop

Be flexible with timelines, formats, audience set-ups and production methods. Hip hop often works better with different rhythms, more informal settings and space for interaction between stage and audience.

### – Recognise embodied and collective knowledge as expertise

Take autodidactic paths, peer-to-peer exchange and collective authorship seriously. Artistic quality is not found solely in written dramaturgy or academic validation.

### – Programme hip hop as an artistic core, not as an audience tool

When hip hop is programmed out of genuine artistic conviction—rather than as a "diversity moment" or audience-development strategy—both makers and audiences can feel it. Authenticity is essential.

## 5 Don'ts
## What producers should avoid

### – Don't programme hip hop as an "urban add-on"

Avoid tokenism: one battle, one urban night, one "young audience." This reduces hip hop to style or entertainment and ignores its complexity, history and political charge.

### – Don't expect hip hop to adapt to existing norms

Do not ask makers to make their work more "theatrical," "polished" or "accessible" for the stage. The more relevant question is what the stage needs to change in order to do justice to the work.

### – Don't confuse visibility with inclusion

A full house or a European tour means little if makers lack agency. Without access to power, resources and decision-making, visibility quickly becomes extractive.

### – Don't assume a lack of knowledge or professionalism

Hip hop is too often perceived as less "finished," less "developed" or less "artistic." This overlooks the high standards, discipline and innovative forces that have shaped the scene for decades.

### – Avoid symbolic advisory structures without influence

A board or community advisory group without clear authority can be counterproductive. Critical reflection must be structurally embedded, with time, budget and real impact.

## 5 Do's
## What works for hip hop makers

### – Learn how the system works without losing yourself

Understand how institutions, programmers and funders operate: their language, pace and decision-making processes. This is not about adapting your artistic identity, but about strategic insight that helps you protect and articulate your vision.

### – Build relationships before you need them

Invest in long-term relationships with programmers, curators and artistic teams, even when you have no work to present. Being visible, having conversations and building mutual understanding strengthen trust and opportunities over time.

### – Actively participate in spaces where change happens

Join conversations, advisory boards or planning sessions within institutions. Being present allows you to bring community knowledge into the room and contribute to structural change, even when this creates friction or discomfort.

### – Stay firmly rooted in your culture and community

Change takes time and can feel slow. Precisely for that reason, staying connected to your history, practice and community is essential. This grounding gives strength, clarity and legitimacy to your work.

### – Use development opportunities strategically

Residencies, labs, mentorship programmes and open calls are key entry points into the professional field. They offer space to experiment, fail, reflect and build networks that often lead to new collaborations or funding.

## 5 Don'ts
## What hip hop makers should avoid

### – Don't believe the system defines your value

Slow processes, rejections or unclear decisions say nothing about your artistic quality. Do not confuse institutional pace with artistic judgement.

### – Don't limit your network to "the top"

Don't focus only on directors or lead programmers. Conversations with other members of artistic teams often offer valuable insights and unexpected entry points.

### – Don't withdraw in the face of disagreement or friction

Disagreement is a normal part of change. As long as conversations remain respectful, tension can lead to deeper understanding, growth and mutual learning.

### – Don't do it alone

Many makers face similar challenges: funding, language, legitimacy and access. Isolation weakens your position; sharing knowledge and peer support strengthens it.

### – Don't wait until everything is "finished" or perfect

Visibility, feedback and development come from starting. Showing work, hosting open practices and submitting applications are part of the creative process, not the endpoint ●

→ table of contents ● Introduction ● Background ● Who we are ● Do's and don'ts ● Short history ● Diversity ● How to

# From the street to the stage

## How hip hop dance entered the theatre

**From an abandoned factory hall in the Bronx to a national dance institution in Europe, hip hop dance has travelled a long way.**

Hip hop dance emerged in the early 1970s in the Bronx, New York. By working with two turntables at once, DJ Kool Herc created breaks in funk records. On those breaks, dancers developed new movements: breakdance, headspins and freezes.

The b-boys and b-girls were born.

In those early days, hip hop dance was not a performance but a response to social marginalisation, economic exclusion, a racist society and gang violence. It functioned as identity, ritual and competition against oneself, against each other, and against the outside world. Within hip hop, dancers created possibilities they were often denied elsewhere. Here, they could fail and try again, grow, challenge themselves and others, and experience success—a triad of opportunity, development and recognition largely absent from their everyday lives.

The idea of performing in theatres did not yet exist. In the 1970s, hip hop dancers lived for battles in open spaces, abandoned factories and schools, and improvised clubs. Theatre producers, in turn, paid no attention to hip hop. To them, it was street culture—and street culture did not belong on established stages.

It would take 20 years for that to change.

### No clip without moves

In the 1980s, hip hop crossed over into mainstream pop culture with the help of MTV—no music video without dance moves. Rock musicians took notice of their hip hop counterparts: rock band Aerosmith and rap group Run-DMC scored the massive hit Walk This Way; Malcolm McLaren, the mind behind the punk band Sex Pistols, collaborated with hip hop dance collective Rock Steady Crew on the video Buffalo Gals.

Embraced by white pop culture, hip hop music and dance rapidly gained popularity. Mass culture beckoned, along with big money. Now theatres, too, began to show interest. Showcases and stage-like live performances emerged; Rock Steady Crew brought So! What Happens Now? to Broadway.

Choreographers and dancers from the underground entered the theatre world, with choreographer Lorenzo “Rennie” Harris leading the way. In 1992, the Philadelphia-based artist founded Rennie Harris Puremovement, one of the first and most influential street dance theatre companies.

Although Harris grew up in the “new” street culture, he drew inspiration from the classics. His production Rome & Jewels (2000) is a hip hop interpretation of Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet. Set in the streets of North Philadelphia, the work won three Bessie Awards. Rome & Jewels demonstrated that hip hop dance could tell stories, convey emotions such as love, violence and grief, and that its movement language was not limited to battles or music videos.

Remarkably, it was not the United States but France that initially made space for Harris’s hip hop dance in the theatre. Rome & Jewels was funded by the Théâtre de Suresnes Jean Vilar, located in a Parisian banlieue. While hip hop in the United States developed largely through commercial pathways, in France it became embedded in la politique culturelle. In the early 1980s, Jack Lang, the visionary Minister of Culture in the socialist Mitterrand government, embraced the new hip hop culture as it rapidly spread across Europe.

The French recognised in hip hop the universal values of their own revolution: liberty, equality and fraternity. They saw hip hop not only as an art form, but as an emancipatory movement that—in line with socialist ideals—gave a voice to the excluded. Crucially, the French government backed this vision with substantial investment, putting its money where its mouth is. In theatres across France’s suburbs, hip hop dance flourished. Investment was not only made in buildings, but in people: companies, dancers, and ultimately the entire movement.

The French hear echoes of their own revolution in hip hop: liberty, equality and fraternity.

# From the street to the stage

## How hip hop dance entered the theatre

## No moves without engagement

In the United Kingdom, artist Jonzi D began referring to hip hop theatre as a genre, a form in which hip hop is not merely danced, but interwoven with dramaturgy, poetry, music and social reflection. Hip hop theatre combines traditional theatrical practices with the four pillars of hip hop: dance, music, graphic art and the culture of the master of ceremonies, the MC.

In the decades that followed, the cultural significance of hip hop dance and music was increasingly acknowledged, yet outcomes differed widely. In the United States, commercial artists such as Jay-Z and Drake turned hip hop into a multi-million-dollar industry. Hip hop theatre companies, however, remain rare due to a lack of public and private funding.

France, often cited as the model case, has treated hip hop dance as a fully fledged art form for over 40 years, funding it accordingly. From the outset, companies and dancers were protected as part of the professional performing arts sector. This explains the significant artistic head start French companies enjoy today.

## No hip hop dance without theatre

Other European countries lack comparable support and funding, resulting in very different developments and scales. Instead of decades of sustained cultural policy, there is a more recent agenda driven by the urgency of diversity and inclusion. Over the past 10 years, this has led to increased support in various European countries and at EU level.

With that support—both ideological and financial—hip hop dance has begun to reshape theatrical practice. Not only in what happens on stage, but also in how work is curated, produced and perceived ●

# Let’s share power

## Hip hop dancers often come from communities shaped by exclusion, but also by solidarity and self-organisation. On diversity and inclusion.

Diversity and inclusion cannot be easily reduced to a single definition. This is not a convenient conclusion, but an acknowledgement of how inequality operates in practice. Exclusion does not occur along a single axis, but at the intersections of gender, skin colour, class, sexuality, ability, and access to power. What works for one person may fall short for another. Anyone seeking to work more inclusively must therefore be willing to examine structures, their own position within them, and experiences that often remain out of sight.

The foundations of this way of thinking lie in social movements. In the United States, black women were among the first to articulate how different forms of discrimination intersect. Marginalised within both the civil rights movement and mainstream feminism, they developed a new vocabulary to understand inequality. What began as activism later entered academic discourse and eventually informed policy.

In Europe, diversity also found its way into institutions, albeit later and often through legislation and equal-opportunity frameworks. Only in recent decades has the subject truly permeated the arts and the cultural sector.

## A process that creates friction

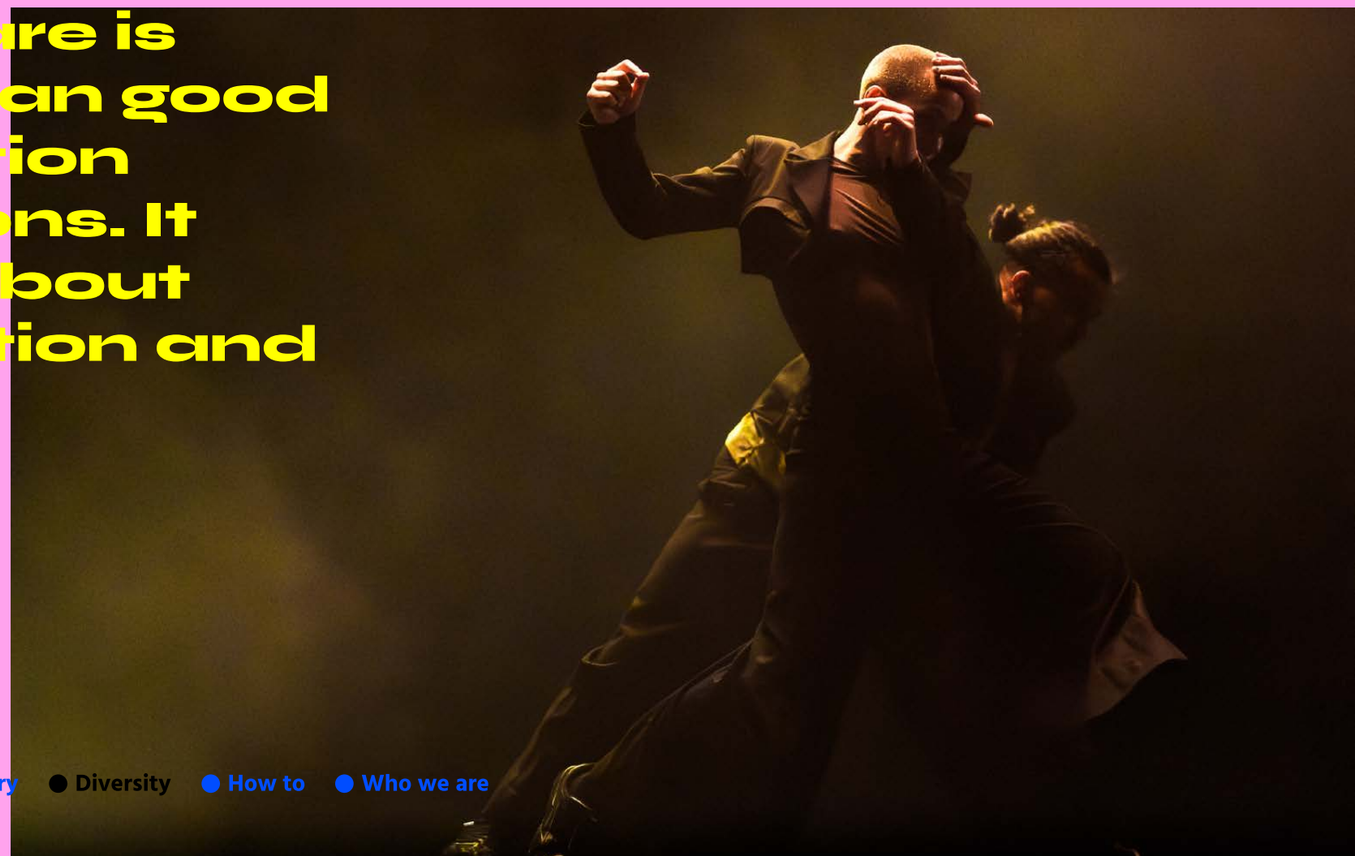
Policy, however, does not automatically translate into practice. Mission statements, codes of conduct, and inclusion policies may offer direction, but hold little value if they remain detached from everyday work. Inclusion requires time, reflection, and a willingness to make mistakes and learn from them. It is not a one-off intervention, but a process that inevitably creates friction.

That tension lies at the heart of the European project Attitudes, which brings together six cultural organisations around hip hop dance. The partners differ widely, from grassroots festivals to established theatres, across multiple countries. What unites them is a shared question: how does a culture rooted in marginalised communities relate to established cultural institutions?

Although hip hop has been visible on European stages for decades, many artists remain on the margins of the professional dance field. This rarely has to do with artistic quality, but rather with access. Those without formal training, institutional networks, or alignment with dominant aesthetic norms often face greater barriers to funding, residencies, and major stages. These inequalities are structural and disproportionately affect artists who are also excluded on other grounds.

Language plays a significant role here. Terms such as “urban” or “street” are frequently used to describe hip hop, but they carry implicit hierarchies, positioning the art form outside so-called “high” culture. At the same time, artists are often asked to extensively explain their work—its history, style, and origins—leaving less space to focus on the content itself. Explanation becomes a prerequisite for being taken seriously. ›

**Artist care is more than good production conditions. It is also about recognition and safety.**



# Let’s share power

## Women, queer and trans artists

Women, queer, and trans artists remain underrepresented in positions of influence within hip hop and the dance world. When they are visible, they are often valued primarily for their aesthetics rather than recognised as political or artistic voices. Those who speak out about injustice risk being labelled difficult or overly sensitive, a risk that is even greater for artists who also experience racism.

Attitudes did not attempt to bypass these dynamics, but chose to address them directly. The network appointed a diversity manager and established a Critical Board made up of hip hop artists and community members from the participating countries. They were actively involved in decision-making, selection processes, and programming—not as a symbolic advisory body, but as a critical counterforce within the system.

This way of working required trust and time. Decisions became slower, and conversations sometimes more uncomfortable. But it was precisely within that discomfort that space opened up for other perspectives. It became clear that “artist care” goes beyond solid production conditions. It also involves recognising individual needs, ensuring safety and understanding the social and political contexts from which artists emerge, especially within international projects marked by significant power imbalances.

**Decisions became slower, and conversations more uncomfortable. Space emerged for other perspectives.**

At the same time, the project revealed how fragile such initiatives remain. Without long-term funding, structural change is difficult to sustain. Temporary projects may open doors, but they often close again just as quickly. Genuine inclusion requires a rethinking of how cultural institutions operate, make decisions, and take responsibility.

Ultimately, the text positions hip hop not only as a dance form—not only in terms of what hip hop dance is, but also what it does. To work with hip hop dancers is to work with communities shaped by exclusion, but also by solidarity and self-organisation. This demands more than good intentions from institutions. It requires a willingness to share power, to take critique seriously, and to question one’s own frame of reference. Inclusion, then, is not an endpoint, but an ongoing conversation about who speaks, who is heard, and who gets to decide ●

This text is based on the Diversity Guidelines by Georgina Philip, Diversity Manager of Attitudes. **Read the full version on our website:** ➜

# How to

## Have we inspired you? Would you like to bring hip hop dance to your festival or theatre? Then start by asking yourself (and others within your organisation) the following questions:

— How do you build internal support for hip hop dance within your organisation?

— How do you create support among your existing audiences?

— How do you reach the community and new audiences?

— How do you work with the community rather than about the community?

— How do you find the right makers for your context?

— How do you collaborate with other international organisations?

## Have we encouraged you? Are you taking your work and/or skills into cultural institutions? Then first ask yourself these questions:

— How can I enhance the relationships in the theatre field that I already have?

— How can I find new networks in the field?

— How can I make my practice more seen, understood, and remembered?

— How do I organise sessions in which I can share my practice with others?

— How can I communicate my mission and vision in my artistic practice?

— How can I find the people (mentors, peers, producers, advisors) who help me sharpen my ideas and navigate both the artistic and practical sides of the field?

# Who we are

## CCNRB (France)

The Centre chorégraphique national de Rennes et de Bretagne (CCNRB) is a French dance institution dedicated to the development and presentation of contemporary choreography. Based in Rennes, it has been led since 2019 by the collective FAIR-E, which is rooted in hip hop culture. This makes CCNRB one of the national dance centres in France, where hip hop has been structurally embedded within the official cultural system.

Within Attitudes, CCNRB primarily contributes experience and infrastructure. As a national institution, it brings production resources, international networks and expertise in developing and presenting dance projects within a European context.

CCNRB helps bridge the gap between hip hop communities and established dance institutions. This leads to greater visibility, improved access to resources and broader recognition of hip hop dance as part of the European dance landscape.

## Kaê Brown Carvalho & Jerson Diasonama

Born into a family of dancers, Kaê Brown Carvalho (from France) followed his parents, Michelle Brown and Armando Pekeno (Cie Ladaïnha), on their tours from an early age. Trained in capoeira and contemporary dance, he transitioned to b-boying in 2011, founding Les Ratz crew in Rennes, France. Kaê's style, blending the fluidity of contemporary dance with a capoeira touch, has led to collaborations with François Frenetik, Zombeavers and Saïdo Lehlouh, among others.

Jerson Diasonama (also from France), a hip-hop-trained dancer, collaborates with various choreographers, enriching his eclectic body language. Notable works include collaborations with Saïdo Lehlouh and Johanna Faye. In 2017, he founded Essenscorp, exploring movement aesthetics. His performance "Core" won third prize at the Danse élargie competition in 2022.

# Dansekapellet (Denmark)

Dansekapellet is Copenhagen's official dance centre. It focuses on contemporary and urban dance and aims to make dance accessible to a wide audience, from children and young people to professional makers and local communities. The building, a converted chapel complex in the Bispebjerg district, houses not only a stage but also rehearsal spaces, and programmes classes, performances and open dance activities.

Within Attitudes, Dansekapellet fulfils multiple roles. It offers artistic residencies to local and international hip hop makers and presents Attitudes' co-productions. In doing so, Dansekapellet increases the visibility of hip hop dance and brings together different dance forms and diverse audiences.

CCNRB helps bridge the gap between hip hop communities and established dance institutions. This leads to greater visibility, improved access to resources and broader recognition of hip hop dance as part of the European dance landscape.

## Camilla Siddu

Camilla Siddu is a Copenhagen-based hip hop dancer and choreographer. Her dance is grounded in the foundations of hip hop with a focus on freestyle. A member of the Whitenoise crew, she works as a teacher, judge, and choreographer at national events in Italy and Denmark, while also competing at international events.

Michael Rossi is a dancer and music producer with Swiss-Jamaican roots. His dance skills span various hip hop styles, excelling in popping. Part of Whinenoise Crew, he won many international competitions, including Juste Debout Italy and Redbull DanceYourStyle (top 16 world final). He currently works as a teacher, judge and professional dancer.

Zuni Trosborg is a dancer and fashion designer with Afro-Danish roots, based in Denmark. He works as a professional model and dancer for several brands and events, and actively participates in international competitions. He is a member of the Cypher Movement crew (Aarhus) and the creator of Zuni Monney, an up-cycling brand.

# HOP Festival (Spain)

HOP Festival in Barcelona demonstrates how hip hop dance moves between street and stage. Spread over several months, the festival appears across different locations in the city, in theatres, but also in clubs and public spaces.

HOP presents a mix of performances, battles, jams and workshops. It is not always spectacular; at times, its strength lies in practising together, watching, and responding. Makers also use hip hop dance as a way to speak about their backgrounds, their surroundings and their place within the city.

But what happens to a culture that originated outside institutions once it becomes part of a festival structure and European collaborations such as Attitudes? HOP does not present hip hop dance as a finished story, but as a form in constant transformation. In Barcelona, that movement is given space—not to impress, but to be seen.

# Iron Skulls Co

Since 2013, Iron Skulls Co has expanded the boundaries of movement, innovating through the hybridisation of breaking in performing arts, with the goal of cultural transmission. The essence of the company combines the sensitivity of contemporary dance with the strength of urban dance and theatre, transcending the limits of movement disciplines.

Their passion for hybridising external elements in dance is part of the company's distinctive signature, where visual arts and technology play a key role in the creative process. By creating artistic universes that explore the past, present, and future, the dance company produces award-winning performances in the world of performing arts, where innovation is the driving force behind social and cultural transformation.



# Kampnagel (Germany)

Kampnagel is housed in a former machine factory in Hamburg: an expansive cultural site with halls, open spaces and a programme that defies easy categorisation. Dance, theatre, performance, music and visual art intersect throughout the venue.

Kampnagel creates space for experimentation. Artists present not only finished productions, but also works in progress. Art does not need to be polished or resolved; it is allowed to search, hesitate and collide with contemporary realities.

Hip hop dance also has a place at Kampnagel, including through international collaborations such as Attitudes. Within the project, Kampnagel helps ensure that hip hop dance is not presented merely as style or spectacle, but as a fully fledged artistic language. In this sense, Kampnagel functions less as an institution that defines what art is, and more as an open workshop—a place where art is constantly in motion.

# Black Pearl de Almeida

Black Pearl, born in Mogi das Cruzes, Brazil, is a multidisciplinary artist known for her work as a dancer, choreographer, teacher and model. Her career began with capoeira, hip hop and acting classes, leading to a scholarship from the Birgit Keil Foundation in 2010. Graduating from Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Mannheim, Germany, she gained recognition at events like the Prix de Lausanne. Working with prestigious choreographers and companies like Gauthier Dance Company and Richard Siegal/Ballet of Difference, she earned international acclaim.

In 2015, she debuted “Ego” and joined the Queer BIPOC collective House of Brownies in 2022, advocating for representation and challenging colonial narratives and the invisibility of trans entities through her art. In 2021, she initiated the German ballroom scene with The Iconic House of Saint Laurent.

# Norrlandsoperan (Sweden)

Norrlandsoperan in Umeå is a traditional opera house—and more. It functions as a cultural hub that creates space for opera, music, dance and hip-hop-related projects. Based in northern Sweden, the organisation works to make the arts accessible to a broad audience, ranging from classical opera to contemporary performance and community-oriented initiatives.

Together with local and international partners, Norrlandsoperan is involved in projects that demonstrate how dance and performing arts can also reach audiences who do not usually attend an opera house. Attitudes is one such project.

By combining classical art forms with contemporary dance culture, Norrlandsoperan shows that an “opera house” today can be much more than that: a place where different forms of movement, music and audiences come together.

## Majeko

Majeko is a Sweden-based dance collective comprising core members Kaide Gonzalez, Marcus “Mackie” Larsson and Ida “Inxi” Holmlund. In the Attitudes project, the group was reinforced by Fredrika “Freddie” Burvall, who was temporarily replacing Inxi. From triumphs in the battle scene to captivating performances, they embody excellence in street dance. Their common goal is to use their shared knowledge and experience in dance to develop the growth of street dance in Sweden.

# Summer Dance Forever (The Netherlands)

Summer Dance Forever is one of the largest international annual hip hop dance festivals. Dancers from all over the world travel to the city for seven days of watching, learning and dancing, with battles, performances, workshops and club nights spread across multiple venues.

Founded by enthusiasts, the festival combines underground culture with a programme that includes both emerging makers and established names. In addition to the summer edition, the SDF Weekender in February is a more intimate weekend focused on house and hip hop dance, club nights and workshops.

Beyond celebration and showcase, Summer Dance Forever also functions as a development hub, offering livestreams, international exchanges and scholarships for talent development. Through Attitudes, Summer Dance Forever aims to create new co-productions and present hip hop dance across Europe.

## Create 4

Ibrah Silas Jackson is a director and choreographer from Rotterdam. His foundation in creating lies in hip hop culture, but he has also gained knowledge of different movement disciplines such as contemporary, funk and African cultural styles. The core of his work consists of storytelling through visual arts and movements.

Ibrah has directed various short movies and videoclips, is a dancer with the Ghetto Funk Collective and began choreographing theatre pieces in 2021. Recently, Ibrah performed his new piece “Until the Quiet Comes” at Breakin’ Convention Netherlands Tour. He also participated in Back to the Lab at Breakin’ Convention, where he made a preview of “The Hereditary”, which he also performed at Breakin’ Convention London in May 2024.

FAIR-E
COLLECTIF FAIR-E
CENTRE CHORÉGRAPHIQUE
NATIONAL DE RENNES
ET DE BRETAGNE

Summer Dance forever

NO

[k]KAMPNAGEL
KAMPNAGEL.DE

HOP
FESTIVAL

DANSE KAPELLET



Co-funded by
the European Union

DESIGN: BURO—GDS