

REAL DANCE

Festival

PRESS RELEASE

October 11, 2023

Real Dance Festival January 24 – 28, 2024, in Hannover

New International Dance Festival Called Real Dance. Presale of Tickets Starts November 24

The new dance festival in Hannover finally has a name. As the artistic director Melanie Zimmermann has announced today, the festival will be called Real Dance and will take place annually at the Staatstheater Hannover as of January 2024. The Real Dance Festival will succeed the TANZtheater INTERNATIONAL festival, which ended in the fall of 2022, after being run by Christiane Winter as the artistic director for 38 years.

The name and corporate design was developed by the festival team together with Kiriakoula Kremantzouli and Melanie Rosenauer from ItYt, a graphic design firm from Hannover.

The main sponsors of the new dance festival are the State Capital of Hannover, the Stiftung Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony Foundation), and the State of Lower Saxony.

The Real Dance Festival will showcase the international diversity of dance from different cultures and styles. The first edition of the festival will present a broad range of dance styles. The audience can look forward to contemporary dance, hip-hop, and voguing, as well as choreographies from Iran and India, all celebrating cultural diversity and artistic innovation in dance. The festival will provide a platform for all the different forms of dance and promote the exchange between already established artists and young talent.

In **Melanie Zimmermann's** first edition of the festival, the name sets the tone. The festival celebrates different perspectives and realities of dance, thereby focusing on real bodies, real stories, and real passion for dance:

“I'm very excited about the invited artists who have such different perspectives on dance, and who develop and experience it in different contexts. All of the artists

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Real Dance Festival
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are representatives of their own style and have pressing themes that they want to share with the audience. The Hannover perspective should also be included in the international context, of course. We are therefore working with local dance professionals to lay the foundations for future collaboration. One example of this is the opening piece *Apaches* by the French choreographer Saïdo Lehlouh, who has cast 15 dancers from Hannover, Lower Saxony, and other parts of Germany out of more than 180 applicants. This large number demonstrates how important Saïdo's work is for the dance scene, and also how many people want to work with him here in Hannover. We want to garner more attention for dance while promoting connections within Hannover and beyond. Dance is never just local. In order to grow, it must be connected with international dance artists, and it must be linked in an interdisciplinary way. This is the nature of dance. I can hardly wait for everyone to come together here in Hannover in January to start the 2024 dance year with us.”

Falko Mohrs, Minister of Science and Culture of the German State of Lower Saxony:

“I'm looking forward to the new dance festival finally beginning, and I am grateful to Melanie Zimmermann for the hard work she has put into preparing for the festival. Now we can see that she has not only used this time to put together an exciting program for Real Dance; she has also laid the foundations for establishing a major dance network in Hannover and Lower Saxony. I wish Real Dance a brilliant start in January!”

Konstanze Beckedorf, Head of Cultural Affairs of the State Capital of Hannover:

“After the long and successful era of the TANZtheater INTERNATIONAL festival, now something new is beginning. Through the variety of styles and innovative presentation formats, we will experience something different on stage and hopefully discover many unfamiliar faces in the audience. Social change must also be reflected in the world of culture by making it more easily accessible to a diverse audience. The new festival pursues precisely this approach in a refreshing way. May the festival team be able to successfully convey these progressive ideas and may they have an open-minded dance audience!”

Lavinia Francke, Secretary General of the Stiftung Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony Foundation):

“Real Dance—what a beautiful and promising name! I'm very happy that, together with the State Capital of Hannover and the State of Lower Saxony, we were able to establish an important international dance festival here in Hannover. Real Dance has grown out of the longstanding tradition of the TANZtheater INTERNATIONAL festival. Under the expert leadership of Melanie Zimmermann, it will highlight a vibrant international scene every January, while singling out especially expressive artistic productions with the aim of addressing current issues. The exchange with the regional dance scene will also play an important role. I would like to thank all the partners involved in financially supporting the festival, who have made it

possible, as well as Schauspiel Hannover, where Real Dance will be presented from now on. I'm looking forward to an inspiring and entertaining first festival next year!"

Sonja Anders, Artistic Director of Schauspiel Hannover:

"The boundaries between genres are no longer as distinct as they were a few years ago. Performance, video, music, dance, and theater merge in an exciting way, resulting in entirely new forms and content. With this in mind, we welcome Melanie Zimmermann and her Real Dance team and are excited about exchanging ideas and inspiration. A major gain for Hannover!"

The festival performances will take place at the Schauspielhaus, the Ballhof Theater, the Cumberland stage, and in the Kunstverein Hannover. Five stage productions have been invited to present five different dance genres, including the largest Kiki Ball ever to take place in Hannover. The program also includes workshops, conversations, and parties, as well as the new funding program FOR REAL.

The festival center will be in the foyer of Ballhof Eins. Parties and warm drinks will welcome guests to linger and spend time there on cold winter days. The visual and tattoo artist Franziska Nast will be presenting a selection of her works in the foyer as well. Those who are interested can book an appointment with Nast to get their own tattoo as a lasting work of art.

The productions in detail:

The festival will open with a hip-hop performance by local dancers

The dancer and choreographer **Saïdo Lehlouh** will open the festival at the Schauspielhaus with a version of his performance *Apaches*, which he developed especially for Hannover and is on a successful tour. The idea behind this performance is the collaboration and transfer of knowledge between French and local dancers, as well as performers from the last city on the tour before this performance. More than 180 applicants responded to a call for the project on social media, and 15 dancers who represent various dance styles of Black dance culture were chosen.

The first Kiki Ball in Hannover will bring glamour and energy to the city

Another highlight will be the *Cosmic Nights Kiki Ball* in Ballhof Eins. **Parisa Juicy** and **Amowia Wang** from the international houses of Vera Wang and Juicy Couture, together with the voguing scene of Hannover, invite everyone to attend. This will be the largest Kiki Ball that has ever taken place in Hannover and will be an homage to the ballroom culture that was established in New York at the end of the 1960s, especially by Black and Latino trans women. Ballroom is a culture based on artistic exchange, competition within the community, and the principle of self-empowerment.

Members of the scene from all over Europe will be coming to the *Cosmic Nights Kiki Ball* to compete with each other in categories such as “Old Way,” “Vogue Femme,” and “Runway.”

Sensuous duet by Marga Alfeirão

Marga Alfeirão's intimate duet *Lounge* is a masterful choreography of lesbian sensuality and intimacy. Two performers explore the state of active and passive relaxation, while playfully welcoming the audience. The oppositions within this duet, like movement vs. stillness, giving vs. taking, privacy vs. public, capture the audience's imagination.

A dancing artifact and forbidden dances on the Cumberlandsche Stage

The dancer and choreographer **Mandeep Raikhy** explores the long-lasting political conflict between India and Pakistan in his work *Hallucinations of an Artifact*. He brings the 4,500-year-old bronze sculpture of the “Dancing Girl” to life and shows how she greets the looks and interpretations of today's world through traditional Indian forms of dance, like Odissi.

The female choreographer and dancer **Ulduz Ahmadzadeh** explores the little researched and in some areas forbidden dances of the pre-Islamic, Western Asian cultural heritage in *TARAB*. In the course of European colonial and Islamic translations of this dance material, women became sexualized entertainment dancers or they were forbidden from dancing at all. Seven dancers let this material for movements, which is thousands of years old, engage in a dialogue with contemporary dance. The internationally successful percussion virtuoso Mohammad Reza Mortazavi is also part of the cast and has performed at the Elbphilharmonie and the Sydney Opera House, among other places.

New funding program: FOR REAL

The new festival format FOR REAL aims to establish a network of people in the local dance and art scene. By bringing together choreographers and people from inside and outside the dance scene, the understanding of dance and its possibilities are questioned, while new forms are developed in collaboration. The first edition will bring the contemporary choreographer Tiago Manquinho and the hip-hop dancer Manuela Bolegue together to sound out the similarities and differences between the different styles of dance. After practicing together, the two will present the results of their research in the form of a choreography at the Kunstverein Hannover—a place that, under its director Christoph Platz-Gallus, stands for curiosity, internationality, and openness. This will be the first time it will cooperate with dance professionals.

Accessibility

In order to make the Real Dance Festival more accessible to all visitors, the festival team has developed the following services:

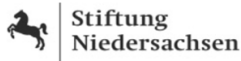
- Audio descriptions, and tactile tours for people with visual disabilities

- Relaxed performances
- Beanbags as alternative seating
- A service to accompany people, offered in cooperation with the Kulturschlüssel Niedersachsen
- Introductions, offered in cooperation with the Braunschweig University of Art (HBK)

Furthermore, Real Dance is inviting regional dance professionals in cooperation with the University of Hildesheim to attend a workshop on audio description, so that they can apply these skills to their own performances and/or be able to offer audio descriptions for future editions of the festival.

The presale of tickets starts November 24, 2023. An overview of the entire program will be available online on the festival's website at www.realdance.de and at the ticket booths in the Staatstheater. Ticket prices range from € 9 to € 28. Conversations, introductions, and events in the festival center are free of charge.

The 2024 Real Dance Festival is an event of the Niedersächsische Staatstheater Hannover GmbH and is funded by the State Capital of Hannover, Stiftung Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony Foundation), and the Department of Science and Culture of the German State of Lower Saxony.



Free images of the press conference, along with the festival program and further information can be found [here](#).

Free images can also be found under **[Press](#)** on our website.

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