

# DanceAgenda2024

## **Dance connects. Dance emancipates. Dance inspires.**

Dance not only moves art, but also affects society. Dance stimulates and shapes spaces. Dance as a collective art form is a driving force for innovative work processes and solidary models of sharing. Dance enriches neighborhoods and contributes to cultural education and social cohesion. Dance challenges body norms and dismantles barriers. Dance appeals to an international and diverse audience. And last but not least: dance is present in Berlin like in hardly any other city in diverse aesthetic forms of expression and shows immense innovative potential.

## **Berlin's dance scene is one of the largest in the world.**

2500 professional dance artists  
1800 performances per year  
40 decentralized performance venues in Berlin

Berlin's vibrant professional dance scene is internationally unique and receives international admiration and recognition. Dance has a significant impact on the attractiveness of the city of Berlin and contributes substantially to Berlin's much-vaunted reputation as an international capital of art and culture.

## **Nevertheless, Berlin's outstanding position as a capital of dance is at stake.**

Despite a dance round table in 2018 with 300 participants from the dance scene, cultural policy and cultural administration, despite all the results from external and internal evaluations, despite an increase in funding for dance of around €8.5 million:

## **The situation is more precarious than ever.**

2300 of Berlin's working dance professionals are solo self-employed  
60% of dance professionals reported an annual gross income of < €15,000 in 2017 (RTT)  
12,231 € average annual gross income 2021-2023 (Systemcheck BFDK)

9% funding rate for individual project funding for performing arts + dance 2024  
6% funding rate for research grants for performing arts + dance 2024  
31% less dance in structure-building basic/concept funding, comparison 2024 to 2023

In the Berlin cultural budget, the budget for artistic work, production and presentation, for which 2,300 self-employed dance professionals of all generations compete, amounts to €5 million. An example: If Berlin's independent dance scene were a theatre, 94% of employees would have to be laid off. 6% would be paid the minimum wage.

## **Infrastructure for dance? Missing!**

0 venues with a dance-only program and a permanent budget  
4 dance companies with a permanent budget are the only stable structure for dance  
95% of dance in Berlin is organized privately

2 million for 7 venues with a sole focus on dance  
87 million € for 4 German-speaking spoken theaters  
160 million € for 3 opera houses

Berlin's dance scene is characterized by its decentralized structure: venues with curated programmes exist alongside collectively designed structures and workspaces that also serve as presentation venues (ada Studio, Dock 11, HALLE Tanzbühne Berlin, Lake Studios, Tanzfabrik, Tanzkomplizen, Uferstudios, Wiesenburg with a sole focus on dance or Sophiensaele, Radialsystem, HAU with a partial dance programme). Rising rents are increasingly becoming a burden for artists and venues, some of which have been established for many years. Studio laborgras, for example, no longer exists, while Sophiensaele and Fortuna are in danger. In addition to the decentralized venues, Berlin also urgently needs a house for dance and choreography and a concrete timetable and step-by-step plan for the realization of such a house.

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Yes, dance has experienced an increase of around 54% between the Round Table Dance 2018 and 2024: In addition to slight increases in various cross-disciplinary funding instruments, this also includes the measures genuinely tailored to dance from the Round Table Dance, which are now firmly anchored in the Berlin budget - although underfunded. In the same period, however, the entire cultural budget has also increased, namely by 100% from €500 million to €1 billion. The growth of dance should therefore ultimately be seen as part of a general development.

The figures show impressively how wide the gap is between the productivity of Berlin dance and its consideration in the cultural budget and under what precarious conditions Berlin dance artists still manage to maintain artistic excellence. But this system will collapse and Berlin will risk losing its most international art form if dance is not given serious prospects soon. Perspectives that build and expand the resilience of artists within an equally resilient, sustainable infrastructure. If we don't want both graduates of the HZT Berlin and established dance artists to leave, the demands of dance must finally be taken seriously.

Of course, this requires money. A lot more money. It also requires the realization that dance creation is a real occupation. A funding system is needed that facilitates the entry of the young dance generation in the sense of a multi-generational house, but at the same time also accompanies the life and work biographies of Berlin dancers that have grown over decades so that their excellent dance work can be perpetuated. A funding system is needed that prevents the current unworthy competition between the different generations of dancers and instead enables mutual learning and support, sustainability and resilience. We need a funding system that creates prospects and does not - as is currently the case - destroy artistic life and work prospects for all generations.

There needs to be a commitment to dance as an independent art form with a well-equipped, sustainable infrastructure. Dance must finally be removed from its marginalized position in the canon of the arts and placed on an equal footing in terms of funding policy.

In Berlin's cultural budget, funding for Berlin dance is included in the so-called group of measures 02 "Stage/Dance" together with the two other disciplines of spoken theater and musical theater. In figures, however, dance does not account for a third of this group of measures, but rather 7% or 8.8% of the €347 million (depending on whether venues that only show dance on a pro rata basis are counted or not).

In the interests of serious recognition of dance, we are calling for an alignment with the spoken theater and music theater sectors, i.e. an increase of the rate for the dance sector to 33.3%.

We need to talk about how we get there. Now! With a policy that has dance on its agenda and with an administration that stands by the scene and listens to its concerns, fears and recommendations.

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