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# FINNISH DANCE

IN FOCUS



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# WE ARE NOW CIRCUS & DANCE FINLAND!

In January 2023, CircusInfo Finland and Dance Info Finland are merging their operations.

The purpose of the merger is to create a more effective and stronger organisation capable of tackling the future challenges of an evolving field. The new association, Circus & Dance Info Finland, will work to promote and raise the profile of the circus and dance sectors and develop new services for professionals of both art forms.

Dance Info Finland has been working to promote Finnish dance for more than 40 years, while CircusInfo Finland has been working with the circus sector for 16 years. The organisations' collaborations go back years through a range of projects, so combining operations was a natural step and will offer opportunities for regeneration. The new organisation is based in Helsinki's Cable Factory, and the contact people remain the same.

Domestic and international projects will form a large part of Circus & Dance Info's operations. This will allow us to promote the professional operating conditions of both fields and open the door to new international opportunities.

One of the biggest endeavours involving both sectors is the performing arts showcase Performing HEL, due to be held in Helsinki in autumn 2023, which you can read more about in this magazine (p. 09).

As a result of the merger, this magazine will undergo some changes and future issues will cover circus topics as well as dance. You can get your first taste of this in an article in this issue, which explores the collaboration between **Jarkko Mandelin** (Kinetic Orchestra) and **Rauli Dahlberg** (Race Horse Company) (p. 14). So why not show your copy to colleagues who work in contemporary circus – the magazine can be ordered by emailing info@circusdance.fi or it can be read online.

The new common website will be launched in spring 2023 at circusdance.fi !

Helsinki, December 2022

**Sanna Kangasluoma**  
Editor

How do you engage in a dystopian narrative on a trampoline?



© Minja Kaukonieni



© Katri Naukkarinen



© Sinem Kayacan

Buy our art, not our land! 'Matriarchy' by Pauliina Feodoroff

Bringing posthumanist thinking to the stage

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# WOMEN TAKE THE LEAD

## DANCE ARTIST SARI PALMGREN TO LEAD ROUTA COMPANY

Sari Palmgren © Matti Kilponen



Jenni-Elina von Bagh © Ilkka Saastamoinen



## ZODIAK'S NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR IS CHOREOGRAPHER JENNI-ELINA VON BAGH

**THE ROUTA COMPANY**, which has been operating in Northern Finland for twenty years, has chosen choreographer & dancer Sari Palmgren as its artistic director. She will take up her post in August 2023.

Sari Palmgren has worked for over 20 years widely in the dance field: with stage works, immersive and site-specific works, theatre, different social choreography projects, and dance films. She has made choreographies for a.o. Helsinki Dance Company, Zodiak – Center for New Dance, and Routa Company. You can read more about her work in the article on page 32 of this magazine.

“My aim is to make contemporary dance more accessible and vibrant in the region in many different ways,” says Palmgren.

[routa-company.fi](http://routa-company.fi)

Zodiak – Center for New Dance has been a key player in the development of Finnish contemporary dance since 1986. In February 2023, choreographer Jenni-Elina von Bagh will take over as its artistic director.

As a choreographer, Jenni-Elina von Bagh has created a language for contemporary performance, which attaches to the many practices and dramaturgical means of contemporary dance and performance. In curating, she seeks radical new thinking in forms that are also of interest outside the art community.

The majority of Zodiak's programming is selected through an open call for

applications. Each autumn, 150 proposals are received, from which around ten new contemporary dance creations are selected for the coming season. Zodiak's future prospects include new opportunities opened up by the Dance House programming partnership and the big Erkkö stage.

Before taking up her new position, Jenni-Elina von Bagh will premiere her new group piece *As time goes by* – at Zodiak, of course, in early February. ■

[www.zodiak.fi](http://www.zodiak.fi)

## JAVIER TORRES: I WANT TO TAKE THE IDENTITY OF THE FINNISH NATIONAL BALLET TO NEW HEIGHTS

TEXT Emma Vainio PHOTO yebophotography



“I WANT IT TO BE a place where dancers can express their opinions much more boldly and raise matters in the training room and during stage rehearsals,” says the artistic director of the Finnish National Ballet, Mexican-Finnish **Javier Torres**.

“The traditional ballet education system, where students have someone correcting them and telling them what to do all the time, can create a childlike attitude in dancers. This can lead to them being dependent on receiving constant feedback, avoiding deeper reflection and not learning how to take hold of their own responsibilities.”

“On the other hand, the whole ballet world has a history of fear that permeates its general structure, and I am totally convinced that this is unnecessary,” Torres explains.

“I want to create an encouraging atmosphere amongst dancers.”

Javier Torres joined the Finnish National Ballet as its artistic director in August 2022. Even before this, he had close ties to Finland. “It felt like coming home after 14 years.”

Torres moved to Finland in 1989, after

graduating as a ballet dancer and dance teacher in the Cuban Method from the National School of Ballet in Mexico City. Initially, he worked as a dancer in Helsinki Dance Company, led by choreographer Jorma Uotinen. He transferred to the Finnish National Ballet in 1991, and danced there until 2008 – almost his entire career as a dancer.

“The group's level has risen wildly since those years,” the artistic director says.

Javier Torres has worked for more than 30 years as a teacher and choreographer with countless groups, including Lyon Opera Ballet, Nederlands Dans Theater, Stuttgart Ballet and West Australian Ballet. He has also spoken at numerous international dance medicine conferences on ballet pedagogy.

There has been discussion in the ballet world and media recently about how many national ballets are losing their own style and identity.

“If a group pays a good choreographer to create a piece and it proves successful, after just a few months some other group will be dancing that same piece,” Torres explains. According to the artistic

director, this system is to the detriment of the groups' identities, as the handprint of the same choreographer and same piece will eventually be available to audiences anywhere.

“I would like to change this and construct a repertoire that is exclusively ours, as much as is possible.”

The Finnish National Ballet's company has become more international: nowadays, only around 30% of its dancers are Finnish.

“I would happily accept more Finnish dancers into the National Ballet, but I'm not going to compromise on the company's level. Finland is a small country, and the problem is that we don't have enough high-level dancers undertaking ballet training,” states Torres.

“What makes the Finnish National Ballet what it is are the high standards in the way we perform, the high level of theatricality, and the openness and respect towards others, welcoming dancers from all over the world – I think that's our identity.” ■

[oopperabaletti.fi](http://oopperabaletti.fi)



PAULIINA FEODOROFF: *Matriarchy*.  
© Sinem Kayacan

## BUY OUR ART, NOT OUR LAND!

**MATRIARCHY**, a politically important and topical performance, raises painful questions about the rights of the Sámi to their own lands, livelihoods and cultures – rights that have been trampled over for many years.

Skolt Sámi Director and Artist **Pauliina Feodoroff's** piece *Matriarchy* has attracted significant international interest following a period as an installation piece at the Venice Biennale 2022. The piece had its

stage premiere at Zodiak in early December of the same year.

The piece shows how Sámi issues are inextricably interwoven with matters of climate policy. Permeated with a strong ethos of responsibility, the viewer experiences a process of rematriation, in which we return to a world of kinship between people, land, waters, spirits, and other-than-human beings.

The working group, which spans a variety of genres of art, brings to the stage dance, visual and media arts, an auction performance, reindeer hides and various organic materials that tell about Sámi cultures' close connection to the surrounding nature.

"Finland has treated the ancestral land we have lived in for centuries as their natural resource to exploit and sell piece by piece to any market that needs it. Sámi forests are logged for toilet paper. I have spent my life documenting all the losses on multiple levels, but now it's vital to focus on what we still have and how to make it

stronger. When the earth is transforming, life needs havens and time to adapt. My work proposes ways to protect the last remaining old growth forests and let the logged areas have time to heal. Our message is this: please do not buy our land, buy our art instead," writes Pauliina Feodoroff.

*Matriarchy* is also part of a wider project bringing together scientific and artistic work, entitled 'What Form(s) Can an Atonement Take', funded by the Kone Foundation. The aim of the project is to make Sámi languages and cultures visible and build dialogue between different population groups.

*Matriarchy* was created as part of the Sámi Pavilion at the 2022 Venice Biennale and was commissioned by OCA – the Office for Contemporary Art Norway, with Kiasma (Helsinki) and Moderna Museet (Stockholm) as co-commissioners. Zodiak – The Center for New Dance served as co-producer of the piece. ■

[www.zodiak.fi](http://www.zodiak.fi)

## TERO SAARINEN COMPANY FOLLOWS ITS HEART INTO NEW TERRITORY

TEXT Emma Vainio



TERO SAARINEN COMPANY: *Transit* will be shown in October 2023 at the Dance House Helsinki.  
© Kai Kuusisto

"IT IS IMPORTANT for the company to pave the way for a change of generation in good time, as well as bringing audiences pieces by other choreographers, alongside our own repertoire," explains Choreographer **Tero Saarinen**.

Tero Saarinen Company, which was founded in 1996, is expanding its operations and will be producing more pieces also by other choreographers in its portfolio. The first piece TSC commissioned from a choreographer outside the group was Johanna Nuutinen's *H2*, which premiered at Dance House Helsinki in spring 2022.

"The idea of expanding our operations came about a number of years ago, when we were considering long-term goals," says Saarinen. "Organising residencies and through that, opening up our doors and offering different working platforms to the next generation have also been long-time dreams. Thanks to our new premises, residencies at TSC Studio in Helsinki have also become a possibility."

Tero Saarinen Company is one of Dance

House Helsinki's 'programme partners'. "We have three performance seasons at the venue each year, which we use to host new premieres, re-premieres, and visits from international companies," explains TSC's Managing Director **Iiris Autio**.

In June 2023, *Heart Drive* is set to be performed on Dance House Helsinki's main stage. It's a commissioned choreography from Dutch siblings **Imre and Marne van Opstal**. The new Tero Saarinen Company creation was produced in collaboration with the Canadian group Ballet BC.

"I saw the piece *Take Root*, which Imre and Marne created for Nederlands Dans Theater, a few years ago in Germany. I was particularly taken by their talent for creating original movement, as well as by the piece as a whole. The individuality, and the desire and ability to portray something universal and touching through movement, left their mark on me," explains Tero Saarinen.

Ballet BC's Artistic Director **Medhi Walerski** and Saarinen have known one another for a long time – years ago, Walerski danced

choreography created by Saarinen for NDT. "When it became apparent some time ago that we were both interested in commissioning a premiere from Imre and Marne van Opstal for the same season, we suggested a joint production, and Medhi Walerski jumped at the idea," explains Saarinen.

"The objective behind combining resources and collaboration was to ensure a longer-than-normal lifecycle for the piece, and it seems that we have been very successful in that respect," Iiris Autio adds. "It's also easier to agree on performance rights between groups operating on different continents."

*Heart Drive's* premiere took place in Vancouver in November 2022, performed by Ballet BC's dancers. In June 2023, the piece will premiere in Europe, when Tero Saarinen Company's dancers offer their interpretation in Helsinki. ■

[terosaarinen.com](http://terosaarinen.com)



CARL KNIF COMPANY: *Sessions*.  
 © Yoshi Omori



## “I’LL ALWAYS BE A STORYTELLER” – CARL KNIF HAS MANY IRONS IN THE FIRE

TEXT Essi Brunberg

**DANCER, CHOREOGRAPHER, STORYTELLER.** This is how **Carl Knif** describes himself. However, while Knif’s background is in dance, he has also branched out into physical theatre – the most recent of which is *Presidenterna*,

which premiered in Espoo City Theatre last November.

Knif’s interest in physical theatre began with his solo *Red* (2014). During the creative process, he worked with personal themes that required an immediacy in the form of text. Before that, he had worked in more abstract terms – now it was about approaching the audience more directly, addressing universal themes in a more understandable way.

After *Red* and two more autobiographical works, Knif wanted some distance from the self-experienced while retaining the strong narrative aspect. This gave rise to an idea: to start with a manuscript, a story. “I wanted to explore how dancers and actors could collaborate, how the textual and physical expressions could be intertwined,” Knif explains. However, even when directing physical theatre, Knif remains a choreographer at heart. “I work with composition, rhythm. I start by addressing the physical, which is then affected by the characters and the story. It might feel inverse to actors who are more used to starting with the motive, the character. I always create a choreography; all movement on stage is choreography to me, be it props, people, or scenography that moves or is moved.”

There has been an increasing international interest in Knif’s works, particularly in the Nordics. The recent tour of an interpretation of **August Strindberg’s** *A Dream Play*

in Sweden, the commissioned work *Vinterresa* (Winter Journey) in Skånes Dansteater, and several upcoming collaborations are a clear indication of that.

Carl Knif Company celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2022 with a whopping four premieres. “I think we’ve really shown our versatility in our programme this year,” Knif says. “*Sessions* is a dance piece while *Presidenterna* is more physical theatre, my interpretation of **Werner Schwab’s** modern classic. *Två duetter*, on the other hand, is a continuation of my collaboration with DuvTeatern, a theatre whose ensemble consists of actors and theatre workers with and without disabilities. Working with them has been a whirlwind experience, both as a person and an artist. I’ve learned so much from them and all that they do. Everyone can find opportunities to meet and communicate through art and dance – in performing arts, we become visible not only to each other but also to society at large,” Knif says.

In 2023, Carl Knif Company will co-produce the dance theatre performance *Death in Venice* with Oulu Theatre, set to premiere in March. Knif is also preparing a new solo for himself, due to premiere in 2024. In addition to the company’s own productions, Knif will also choreograph and direct two commissioned works in 2023. ■

[www.carlknifcompany.com](http://www.carlknifcompany.com)



Performing HEL 2019  
 © Jeremy Bengts

## PERFORMING HEL 2023 LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

TEXT Riitta Aittokallio

**THE FOURTH EDITION** of Performing HEL showcase takes place August 31 – September 3, at the same time as the Helsinki Festival – the largest arts festival in Finland. The showcase presents the full range of performing arts, including circus, dance, and theatre, also delivered in exciting yet difficult-to-define combinations. In four days almost 30 Finland-based artists and companies present their work through pitch, demo and performance programs.

Performing HEL brings to Helsinki dozens of presenters, programmers, and theatre and festival directors from across the world. The showcase is a pocket-size platform creating a cozy atmosphere where artists and presenters have a chance to meet up and make meaningful connections. In the next edition of Performing HEL, the production model and content

of the hybrid event will be developed to meet the needs of both the artists and the presenters.

The program will be released in March 2023 – stay tuned and follow [www.performinghel.fi](http://www.performinghel.fi)!

### WHAT NEW DIGITAL TOOLS MEAN TO US

While waiting for the autumn showcase, six work pairs and experts in the Finnish performing arts are working around digitalization in a series of future workshops.

The future workshop is a collaborative, interdisciplinary space where artists and producers are exploring with changing experts a wide range of topics related to the digitalization of arts, performance captures for the screen, and various cross-media performance concepts. The workshops are led

by dance filmmaker and director **Thomas Freundlich** (Lumikinos Production Oy) and choreographer **Valtteri Raekallio**.

“Digitalization in the performing arts is a topic that we all should be thinking about, irrespective of where the primary focus in our work lies. In some way, we’re still dealing with the age-old problem of how to translate something that exists in a live performance space into another medium on a two-dimensional screen. This is a discussion that has been going on since the advent of cinema over a century ago, and is still as relevant as ever,” says Thomas Freundlich and continues, “However, on the other hand, it’s also clear that we are at a point where new digital tools do enable ways of creating performances, storytelling and genuine human connection that really are different from what was possible before. So the question becomes, what should we do about all of this, and what does this mean for whatever it is that I am personally doing in the performing arts space?” ■

Performing HEL has received funding from the European Union economic recovery package, Next Generation EU.



[www.performinghel.fi](http://www.performinghel.fi)

# VELI LEHTOVAARA IS TRACING THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN DANCE AND ECOLOGY

TEXT Heidi Backström TRANSLATION Lola Rogers

“**ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS** eventually circle back to affect our living bodies,” says dancer, choreographer, and doctoral researcher **Veli Lehtovaara**. “That’s why there’s a place for dance in considering and solving questions related to the environment, biodiversity, pollution, energy, and our relationship with nature in general.”

Lehtovaara, together with visual artist **Eija-Liisa Ahtila** and sound designer **Jani Hietanen**, created an ambitious series of three premiers in the fall of 2022. As part of the program of the Moving in November festival, the triptych *Nature Untitled* took place in three separate venues: a massive oil silo converted into an event space, Zodiak’s black box theater, and in a public area of the Redi shopping center. There was one premier each week for three weeks. The entire piece is part of Lehtovaara’s doctoral research project at the Helsinki Theater Academy, and asks: How does the ecological poetics perform between dance, site and image?

## CAREFULLY NURTURED CURIOSITY

Lehtovaara has a vivid childhood memory of skiing in the snowy outdoors with his father in his native corner of central Finland. Because Veli had so many questions, the two of them kept stopping every so often. His father would patiently answer the child’s questions, and then they would go back to skiing. “I’m naturally curious. I like to ponder things and ask questions, of myself and others. There was room for that in my childhood.”

Lehtovaara grew up between a forest and a construction site. “The place was a source of direct relationship with nature, while playing at the construction site taught me about the handprint of humans, and about incompleteness. Those elements are still present in what I do and in how I think about art and research.”

“Recycling in a dance creation is a structural, material, artistic, and philosophical question for Lehtovaara.”

That forest edge in central Finland fostered a dance artist interested in questions of ecology and corporeality who works as a performer and choreographer, and studies to become a researcher. Lehtovaara came to dance at the age of 17 after he gave up playing basketball. He was accepted into the Theater Academy on his first try, as a 21-year-old philosophy student. In the middle of his master’s studies in choreography, Lehtovaara moved from Helsinki to Brussels to continue at P.A.R.T.S. in the Research Cycle program. He ended up living and working in Belgium for 10 years.

## FROM THE STARDUST OF BRUSSELS TO HIS OWN COMMUNITY

Unlike in Finland, dance art was well-supported in Belgium in the early 2010’s. Many famous companies and artists visited its stages and Brussels had its own diverse international scene with artists from many backgrounds.

“It was a momentous coincidence that I got to study in Belgium. Dance and its paradigm changed for me,” Lehtovaara recalls, and says that he made two decisions that proved to be good ones in connection with moving there: “I decided to always keep one foot in Finland, and to be both a performer and a choreographer.”



LEHTOVAARA, AHTILA, HIETANEN: *Nature Untitled*.

© Sinem Kayacan



1. **LEHTOVAARA, AHTILA, HIETANEN: *Nature Untitled*.**  
 Sinem Kayacan
2. **VELI LEHTOVAARA: *Peltotiekeskustelu | Feldweg*.**  
 Sanni Siira

During his years in Belgium, international productions and the touring life became familiar to him, but his desire to return to Finland eventually grew stronger. The clean air, lack of noise, and nearness to water and forests drew the artist home in 2018.

Lehtovaara also found a meaningful place in Kainuu, in northern Finland, at the Mustarinda residency & association, a coalition of artists and researchers whose purpose is to promote cultural and natural diversity, the ecological reconstruction of society, and the connection between art and science.

“Through the residency, I found the community that I had been looking for elsewhere for a long time. It’s one of the places where the art and research that I feel is necessary is being done.”

#### CREATION RECYCLING AND RECYCLING IN CREATION

Lehtovaara had already begun to think about ecological issues in relation to choreography a couple of years before returning to Finland, at a time when his role was shifting from dancing to a greater focus on choreography. In 2018, his work *Peltotiekeskustelu | Feldweg* had its premiere at Zodiak. This thinking continued and in 2019 came the piece *Katkelma | Passage 468*, at the oil silo. In 2020 and 2021, Lehtovaara created his work *Ikimetsä | Clearcut*, with a shopping center as its milieu. These three works dealt with questions of corporealities, dances, ecologies and habitats, from various perspectives. Each performance had its own strong relationship with the post-industrial world – with oil, consumption, and being in bodies, as bodies. They all served as a basis for the large-scale work *Nature Untitled – Movements I-III*, seen in 2022.

Recycling in a dance creation is a structural, material, artistic, and philosophical question for Lehtovaara. He wanted to create a larger piece and recycling served his ideas both ecologically and economically. The three parts of *Nature Untitled* happen in the same or similar places as his three previous works. Materials, concepts, visual elements and sounds are all recycled and recirculated throughout the triptych. So are the choreographic scores, and sequences of movement that circle and transform from one part of the piece to another. All three

parts are also informed by the methodical practice of dancing bodies, which Lehtovaara has been developing with the performers for some years.

#### AN ART-IN-PRACTICE ORIENTED RESEARCHER

At some point, the model where a piece is created through enormous effort over two or three months and then the focus immediately moves to the next project no longer seemed a meaningful process to Lehtovaara.

“I was lucky and privileged to be in a couple of works where there was time to think, to reflect and write. I noticed that a scholarly, researcher’s approach has been present in my choreographic work for a long time already, although I hadn’t put it into those words before.”

The structures of the field of arts also influenced his decision to become a researcher: “I didn’t want to start my own company, but I wanted a context that would support sustained work. Uni-arts Helsinki and the Performing Arts Research Centre (Tutke) offered that.” At the research centre, Lehtovaara also found, to his surprise, a community where he could share his thoughts about artistic creation. “In the freelance field, there are too few places and moments to truly discuss, meet and ask questions together. It usually only happens with close colleagues.”

In his research, Lehtovaara investigates how theoretical thinking and knowledge about ecological problems are related to sensuous experience and kinaesthetic perception. How can performing, dancing bodies create a place where these things can intersect and come together? What is the ecological poetics of dance and how to write with, from and through it?

It is likely that Lehtovaara will not be creating a new performance for a while, but will instead consider how the issues that emerged when making *Untitled Nature* can be articulated and presented in a documentary way. Lehtovaara formulates his research philosophy: “For me, artistic research is a practice of perceiving the diverse worlds through the means of the arts.” ■

# HOW DO YOU ENGAGE IN A DYSTOPIAN NARRATIVE ON A TRAMPOLINE? – MOMENTS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN A CIRCUS ARTIST AND CHOREOGRAPHER

TEXT Emma Vainio TRANSLATION Claire Ruaro

**AT ITS BEST**, the trampoline offers escapism. “The trampoline truly comes into its own when you just focus on your movements, jump, enjoy and fly,” says Circus Artist and Trampoline Acrobat **Rauli Dahlberg**. “It’s really addictive! When you manage to do something you didn’t think possible, it gives you this feeling of pure empowerment.”

Rauli Dahlberg, known for the raw audacity of his style, is the artistic director of Finnish contemporary circus group Race Horse Company, which he co-founded with circus artist **Kalle Lehto**, and which has now toured approximately 25 countries. Dahlberg is a 2007 graduate of the French CNAC (Centre national des arts du cirque) circus school.

The circus artist’s solo piece, *O’DD* (2020), which took years to mature into its final form, dives into the world of sci-fi: the visually stylised piece explores humanity and change at the hand of forces greater than the individual. “I read loads of sci-fi and creating this solo piece has been a long-term dream of

mine. I’d often thought to myself, if I incorporate ultra-physical acrobatics, could I use that to bring more depth, storytelling and a kinaesthetic quality to performances. And would it be interesting?’ Dahlberg explains.

“The contemporary circus piece *O’DD* is a dystopian, evolutionary adventure story,” he continues.

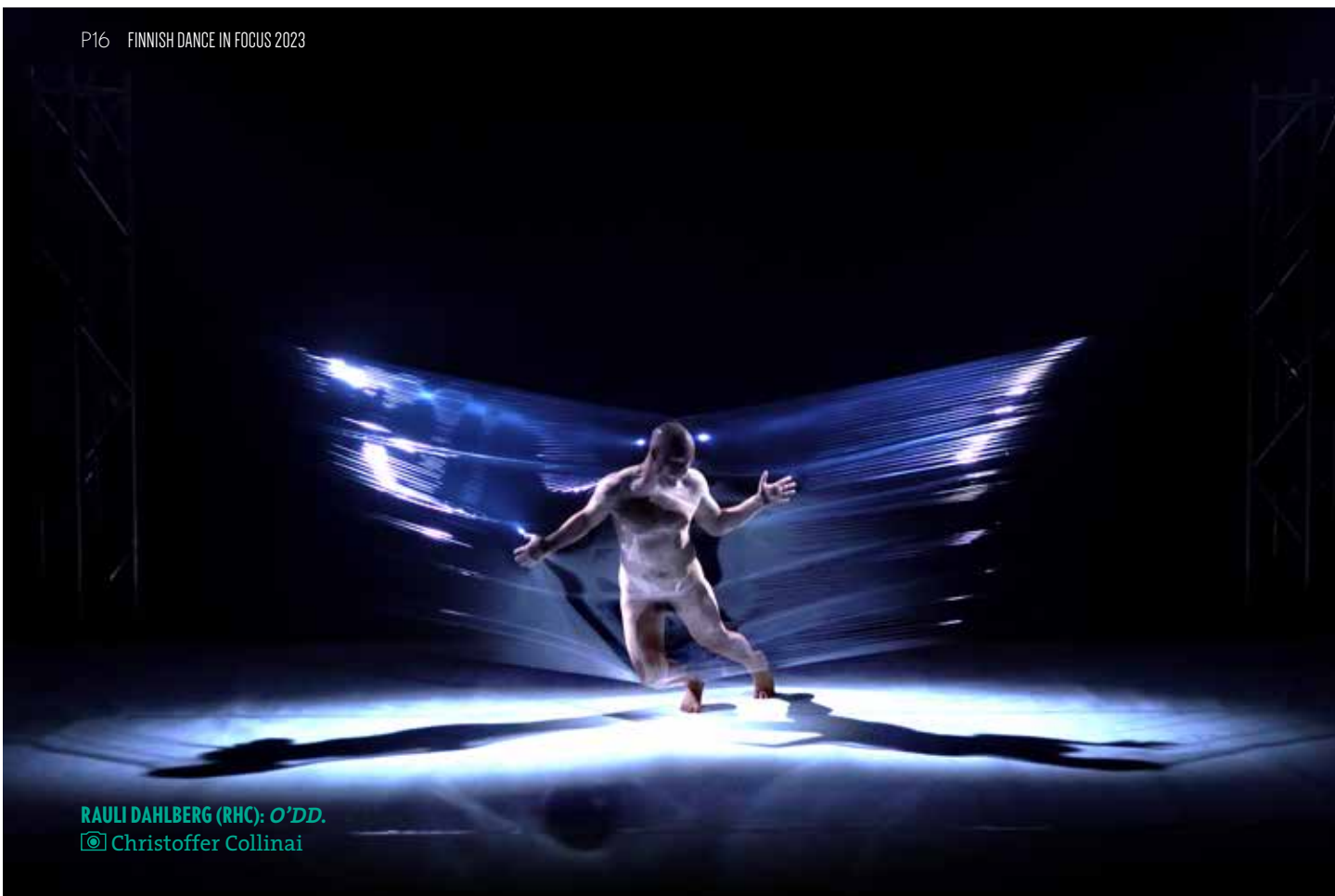
The process has been ambitious right from the very first idea, and seeing *O’DD* through to completion took eight years in total. Towards the end of the project, Rauli Dahlberg got in touch with Choreographer **Jarkko Mandelin** and asked for his choreographic assistance and help as a fresh pair of eyes, to provide clarity on how the narrative content should proceed.

Tangible tools for storytelling that stretches the limits of the human body in a breathtaking way include the trampoline and a large, air-filled exercise ball that serves as an acrobatics ball. On it and from it, Dahlberg performs acrobatic feats, spinning and pinballing effortlessly through the air.



RAULI DAHLBERG (RHC): *O’DD*.  
© Minja Kaukoniemi





RAULI DAHLBERG (RHC): *O'DD*.  
 © Christoffer Collinai

**“We have similar obsessions with pushing ourselves outside our comfort zones.”**

“I’d seen Jarkko’s pieces and needed some help opening up the movement elements of *O'DD*. Right away, Jarkko started asking all the questions that I needed to hear at that point in the process,” the circus artist explains. “If you only ever work by yourself, it’s easy to get stuck in a rut with the same habits.”

Jarkko Mandelin is the founder and artistic director of contemporary dance group Kinetic Orchestra. The group is known for its distinctive style, where carefully-considered partnering with an acrobatic twist is combined with forms borrowed from contact improvisation. Mandelin attended the Ballet School of the Finnish National Opera and Ballet and trained as a choreographer, as well as having a strong background in acrobatics and styles such as breakdance. Alongside his artistic work, he also teaches and trains others.

“I started performing in amateur theatre when I was relatively young, and the stage became my second home,” says Mandelin. “I don’t feel that the cooperation between Rauli and

I is a meeting of circus and dance: what we do, when viewed as a whole, is kinetic art.”

“When things feel fun or look cool, there’s often some internal logic to them that’s become clearer in the process. For example, the partner technique Kinetic Orchestra uses is based largely on the same basis as the ball acrobatics Rauli does,” Mandelin explains.

In Kinetic Orchestra’s partner technique, the dancers maintain contact, jumping or whirling rapidly over each others’ bodies, while for Dahlberg’s spinning, flowing movement, somersaults and vaults, momentum comes from a large, flexible exercise ball.

“What’s more, we both enjoy challenging ourselves. We have similar obsessions with pushing ourselves outside our comfort zones,” Dahlberg laughs.

When Jarkko Mandelin came on board with the project, Dahlberg had already made significant inroads with the dramaturgy, and the storyline and goal were clear. So what new developments did the collaboration bring about?

“Well, to give one example, right at the start *O'DD* has a lengthy scene depicting the birth of the character. The original idea was that I’d start as a baby and learn to move right from the very beginning. However, Jarkko and I decided to bring in a few acrobatic movements pretty early on: that way we let our audience know right away that the performance isn’t just



RAULI DAHLBERG (RHC): *O'DD*.  
 © Minja Kaukonieni

**“In my choreography, I borrow movement ideas from not just circus but also athletics, martial arts, whatever I can find.”**

going to be twitching about on the floor,” explains Dahlberg.

“Instead of the character learning to move, at the start it’s as if they find it hard to move. So we don’t start with belly crawling, moving about on all-fours and standing on one leg, moving towards acrobatic movements, instead we built into the narrative right from the beginning falls that end up, as if by accident, in a sequence of acrobatic movements,” says Mandelin.

“This foundation set the undertone for the whole performance,” Dahlberg adds.

Jarkko Mandelin states that in his work he is constantly borrowing movements from everywhere: we all might benefit if those boundaries between artistic disciplines, and perhaps also types of dance, could be forgotten a little more often.

“If a piece is based solely on one dance technique – let’s take tap dance as an example – all I can see is the lost opportunities. I start to gain an appreciation for the performer as a tap dancer, but I can’t bring myself to watch the piece. For

example, gymnastics in itself is pretty amazing, but how long can you spend watching endless flips and back flips in floor routines?” Mandelin asks.

“In my choreography, I borrow movement ideas from not just circus but also athletics, martial arts, whatever I can find – and I adapt these works-in-progress into exactly what the piece I’m working on needs. The elements might be dance or circus, but I could just as easily borrow ideas for my pieces from visual arts or thinking.”

Jarkko Mandelin and Rauli Dahlberg’s collaboration continued in autumn 2022. In the international Circus Laboratory the duo run in Helsinki, six dance and circus professionals come together to seek innovative perspectives, tools and methods where the two different art forms meet. The work, which concentrates on presence and the moment, focused on group and equipment work with acrobatic movement, in particular working with an acrobatics ball.

“We’re continuing to explore the quality of movement. The opportunities the acrobatics ball offers are infinite. Imagine all the new things the momentum it gives us could bring!” Dahlberg exclaims. ■

[www.racehorsecompany.fi](http://www.racehorsecompany.fi)  
[www.kineticorchestra.fi](http://www.kineticorchestra.fi)

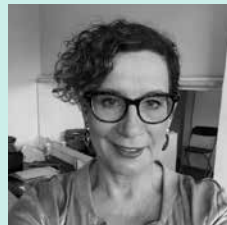
# LARGE VENUES' REPERTOIRES NEED NEW AND SURPRISING WORKS, TOO

TEXT Sanna Kangasluoma TRANSLATION Lola Rogers

Frederick Gravel  
© Brianna Lombardo



Virve Sutinen  
© Virve Sutinen



**IN SPRING** of 2022, Helsinki finally got a venue with a large stage dedicated to dance when construction was completed on the long-planned Tanssin talo. What kinds of new opportunities will the 700-seat hall bring to the field of dance, and what sorts of challenges could a large venue create for contemporary dance artists and program planners? How can they reach large and diverse audiences? Many such questions about the role of large venues have been the subject of discussion among dance professionals both in Finland and elsewhere.

Focus magazine asked dance artist **Frédéric Gravel** and **Virve Sutinen** – who has, among other roles, served as artistic director of the Tanz im August festival – for their views on what is most essential when talking about large venues, what to expect from them, and how to make them work.

## FRÉDÉRIC GRAVEL: THE AUDIENCE HAS THE BIGGEST PART IN THE SHOW

Canadian dance artist and choreographer Frédéric Gravel has experience creating work and performing in many different arenas. For him, the audience is key.

“The smaller venues where we tour are often focused on dance, and there we meet a kind of a specialized audience, who may see from five to twenty contemporary performances a year.

When there is a smaller audience, you, as an audience member, will hold a bit more responsibility – it’s a different kind of attention. In a bigger space, you are part of something different,” explains Gravel.

Gravel has a strong sense of the audience’s energy that is conveyed to the performers. “When it’s a full house in a

big venue, half of the show is already done in so many ways! Having organized it, getting all those people in, and then it’s already happening... You feel this expectation, the energy from hundreds of people.”

Gravel considers the effect of a large, heterogenous audience’s reception of a performance.

“When you are surrounded by a lot of people, then you see the piece with multiple eyes, you see things differently. You imagine more minds seeing the show than when you are in a smaller space – and more people means a multiplication of perspectives.”

Gravel believes that creating a piece for a large venue is an opportunity, and all you have to do is make it work. There’s no need to feel afraid of a large audience and a large stage.

“Sometimes it’s even easier – when you play in a big space, the technical resources are wonderful, the sound is good, it looks nice, and lots of things are easier. But to make the work relevant – that’s not that easy,” he says, musing on his own practice, which is based on somatic research.

The other side of the coin is the fact that a big, fancy space can take over and influence the form of a piece more than you intend it to.

“Space is always formalizing. If there are more technical elements, that means a larger crew, and the show is more rigid. Then you have to find out how to pervert the formalization – that’s really satisfying when it happens, but it’s not that easy,” he points out, explaining that the by “pervert” he means “do something you’re not supposed to do”.

Whether on a small or large stage, art means taking risks.

“I like the work to be more risky than rigid. That’s a challenge in big spaces because what’s on stage has to be happening for real. If there is no vulnerability and risk in the work, I think we are wasting our time.”

## VIRVE SUTINEN: THE ROLE OF LARGE VENUES IN ESTABLISHING A CONTEMPORARY DANCE CULTURE CAN'T BE OVERLOOKED

Virve Sutinen, whose varied roles include leading Stockholm’s Dansens Hus and serving as artistic director for the Tanz im August festival in Berlin, sees large venues as an important factor in creating and maintaining the whole culture of watching dance.

“Dance culture should have a place for both small and large spaces and stages. If and when you want to approach a ‘large audience’, you have to also think about the social conventions associated with theater-going that those attending performances at large venues may already be familiar with. Not just the performance but also the experience as a whole is important – what happens before the performance and during the intermission, what sorts of services are available,” Sutinen says.

“Personally, I enjoy having a lot of people around me. It’s a different feeling of community than in an intimate space. On a large stage it’s also simply easier to grow your audience and achieve the kind of visibility and importance that will, ideally, promote the development of the whole field of dance.”

“The importance given to dance is influenced by everything built around dance in our society, everything that supports the entire field—the media, publicity and criticism, information centers, schools, dance venues and theaters, everything that serves to maintain dance culture as a whole. All of it requires funding and resources, mechanisms of some kind that can assure continuity and make long-term work possible,” says Sutinen.

“The importance of institutions—which large venues invariably are—is clear in the way they’re capable of appreciating and communicating artistic work and making it visible in a way that gets an audience to come out.”

It is difficult for the freelance field, where the vast majority of dance productions are created, to maintain and support the whole field of dance, because it doesn’t have the same kind of funding, influence, and permanence that institutions have. “Creating a culture of watching contemporary dance, building a relationship with the audience, can’t all be left to freelance artists,” Sutinen emphasizes.

She calls for continuous development work from large venues. Artists who have worked in smaller arenas and have the potential to grow into larger productions need support in many ways, on many levels, including in areas external to the arts.

“There are no magic tricks. All processes of development are long and take years – five to ten years, easily. Building and maintaining a relationship with the audience is central for the dance industry, and the larger the audiences we dream of, the

more important it is to remember that the audience is our most important partner and defender at times when that is needed.”

Large venues have to do the work of development so that they remain relevant and interesting from the audience’s point of view.

“It would be great if the audience learned to expect something new, surprising, and wonderful even in large venues. Too often, the large stages play it safe, which leads to a narrower artistic output. There is diversity to be found in dance, new creators and new points of view that can be drawn on to widen the audience,” Sutinen suggests.

“There are many transnational projects happening in Europe aimed at increasing the diversity in dance,” she says. “One of these is Big Pulse Dance Alliance, which supports new choreographers’ efforts to develop their skills in creating a larger production or dance organization. I hope that in future this will be visible in more artists from a variety of backgrounds and styles appearing in large venues. There is a need for openness and courage about what is thought to be of value in dance. It could be anything from dance theater to experimental dance and it could happen on both large and small stages, or off them.”

Canadian Frédéric Gravel also yearns for new audiences. He worries about the current inequality at larger venues—young people feel that they are not the target audience because the ticket prices are out of their reach. The accessibility of larger stages needs to improve because, at their best, they can be places for demonstrating the idea of multiple meanings in art.

“The best, achievable goal would be that the art is the thing getting different kinds of people together in one experience. Because it’s ok to not see it the same way – art is meant to be seen differently: you liked it but the one next to you didn’t. That’s perfect. It’s meant to be like that.” ■

**DANCE HOUSE HELSINKI** has two stages and four permanent program partners – Cirko Center for New Circus, Dance Theatre Hurjaruuth, Tero Saarinen Company, and Zodiak Center for New Dance. The venue also has visiting performers and stage rentals.

**SPARKS** is a Dance House Helsinki project in which selected dance artists receive support and assistance in developing and producing new works for both the large and small stage. Artists **Milla Koistinen** (Magenta Haze, fall 2022), **Johanna Nuutinen** (fall 2023), and **Elina Pirinen** (spring 2023) will have upcoming premieres on the large stage. **Outi Markkula** (Kulkue-Parade, fall 2022), **Mikko Hyvönen** (fall 2023), and **Marika Peura & Kaisa Nieminen** (spring 2023) will make their premieres in the smaller, 235-seat Pannuhalli stage.

[www.tanssitalo.fi/en](http://www.tanssitalo.fi/en)

## BROAS & NYBERG:

Can a living body and an installation be equals on stage?

**BROAS & NYBERG** are an artist duo made up of dance artist **Jenna Broas** and spatial and video artist **Fabian Nyberg**.

Jenna Broas studied dance at The Place – a contemporary dance school in London, and at Uniarts Helsinki's Theatre Academy. As a freelance dancer, she has worked with the likes of Tero Saarinen Company and Jenni-Elina von Bagh, Sara Gurevitsch and Petri Kekoni. "My bodily history spans a range of different techniques and perspectives and my collaborations with lots of different choreographers are also reflected in my work," Broas summarises.

"I am particularly interested in different kinds of improvisation and somatic tools. Exploring the limits of the body and, on the other hand, its limitlessness, also fascinates me," she adds.

Set designer and spatial artist Fabian Nyberg, who is responsible for the light and video design and installations for Broas & Nyberg's pieces, also appears on stage with Jenna Broas. "We like the idea that our creatorship does not have to stay within the limits of just one area," says Nyberg.

The artist duo have explored choreography and movement through the present body, as well as materials, space and light.

Their light sculpture series, *Ljusbunga*, explores breathing as a phenomenon from different perspectives. *Ljusbunga II* (2022) is a breathing, moving, abstract installation that seizes onto the choreography of light. The piece explores nature's enchanting process of photosynthesis, which transforms light into matter, while also creating life as a by-product, in the form of oxygen.

"I am constantly inspired by nature: I can't help but wonder at all the interesting things there can be outside human structures," Fabian Nyberg explains.

"One corporeal starting point that has been inspiring me recently has been language, words and writing. I'm often also inspired by other artists' thinking," Broas adds.

The visually strong stage piece *Designing the End* (2021) is a dystopian work that explores the future in a style punctuated with absurd humour. The artist duo are interested in experimenting with whether an installation or video can exist and be presented just as strongly as a performer when alongside them on stage, if there is only one performing body on the stage.

*Designing the End* deals with the end of modern civilisation and also reflects on the future's relationship with the present and the past. "We don't want to suggest any one specific idea of the future, instead we seek to explore, observe and try to understand something that is much greater than us," Broas summarises.

In 2023, Broas & Nyberg are set to complete their video piece *Poetry from Topian Futures*. In addition to this, the themes from *Designing the End* will be continued in the form of a stage piece in spring 2024: What will the new beginning after the end look like?



**KAROLINA GINMAN:**  
Working at the border of conscious and preconscious  
enthral me

"THE ENERGY of dance has burned bright within me since I was young," states **Karolina Ginman**. As a child, she did ballet, from where she progressed to street dance. "When I was upper secondary school age I discovered contemporary dance, and with it a feeling of having come home."

Ginman graduated from London's Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in 2008. Since then, she has worked as a dancer, choreographer and educator in Finland and elsewhere in Europe.

Alongside dance, Ginman has also studied psychology at the University of Helsinki. Psychoanalytical thinking, in particular, has been closely interwoven with her artistic work. For her thesis, Karolina

Ginman explored how children interpret interaction between people on the basis of body language. How do we read and interpret each other socially?

"I wish to tempt and nourish a deep-looking and complex approach to human nature and reciprocity through dance, movement and corporeality."

The psychophysical practice Ginman has developed – 'A reformulation of free association for the poetic body' – entices out the body's preconscious, poetic speech and expression – something that stretches beyond reason.

"I start the creation process from the body. I want to give movement space to emerge from the subjective and collective

subconscious, as dancers meet themselves and one another from a very intuitive place. The themes and topics of the pieces gradually start to well up at the interfaces of the conscious and preconscious."

Karolina Ginman's solo piece, *Fluvial* (2022), is a stage fantasy created by the body, an unruly substance, forth-bubbling language and the sound of 200 horns. Breath plays an important role – and through it, interaction with the self, others and the surrounding world.

"I'm interested in the leaking that happens when we breathe – through it the world penetrates us and we simultaneously penetrate the world," Ginman contemplates.



**SAMULI EMERY:**  
I dream of a world with more solidarity through art

AT EIGHT YEARS OLD, **Samuli Emery** started contemporary dance classes, and the dance world pulled them in like nothing else. "At 13 years old, dance was everything – I didn't want to do anything else anymore," they remember.

The Finnish-British dance artist graduated in 2019 from SEAD – Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance in Austria, majoring in choreography. Over the years, multi-award-winning Emery has immersed themselves in the cultures and movement lineages of different club and street dances.

Emery also teaches and organises large-scale international events for the ballroom scene, a community created by Black and Latin trans people in New York. They aim to strengthen and uplift the position of the ballroom scene in the Nordic countries.

"I want to offer performance spaces and create events where queer people can be empowered and flourish," Emery explains. "I dream of a world with more solidarity through art."

The Solo Series is a performance and touring platform of new dance, created by Emery. The idea is to give dance artists the opportunity to do small tours in Finland. Emery chooses the artists for the project through an international open call.

The piece *to be brutally honest* (2022), produced by Zodiak, was created in collaboration with dance artist **Jessica Piasecki**. Playing with the roles of performer and spectator, this intensive performance seeks to shatter the traditional use of a stage into pieces. "We wanted to go as far as possible from the idea, where art is reduced to a detached, elitist source of entertainment, disregarding the climate crisis and mass extinction."

"What kind of physicality do we absolutely have to present, call forth and project onto audiences in this day and age, when huge crises are raging all around us?"

In recent years, Emery has worked widely with many different choreographers from around Europe. In Summer 2023, they will be working as a dancer in Tero Saarinen Company and Canadian Ballet BC's jointly produced piece *Heart Drive*, which was created by Dutch choreographer duo **Imre & Marne van Opstal**. ■



# CHOREOGRAPHING PEOPLE, OTHER LIVING BEINGS AND MATTER – BRINGING POSTHUMANIST THINKING TO THE STAGE

TEXT Minna Tawast TRANSLATION Claire Ruaro

Dance artist Sari Palmgren explores people as animals and wants to see factual information incorporated into the creative process. Jenni-Elina von Bagh seeks to turn the viewer's attention away from the performer's body and instead direct it towards items and matter.

JENNI-ELINA VON BAGH: *Void*.  
© Katri Naukkarinen

**POSTHUMANIST THINKING**, which spread more widely into the performing arts in the 2010s, can be seen in many ways in artists' work. Criticism of the privileged position humans occupy, both intellectually and legally, and thinking about 'a post-human age' has inevitably influenced artists' self-image and work in a variety of ways.

Choreographers **Sari Palmgren** and **Jenni-Elina von Bagh**, who have both been incorporating posthumanist themes into their work for a number of years, see their relationships with posthumanism in different ways.

"My work is, in some ways, rooted in posthumanist themes, but I wouldn't say that I am a posthumanist. My pieces speak more about the relationship we have with animals, and dominance in the relationship between people and animals. That then gives way to all kinds of questions about otherness in this regard," explains Sari Palmgren.

She has also been considering humans' relationship with climate change and sustainable development in her work for more than a decade now.

## DANCERS IN A CAGE

Palmgren's pieces delve deep into what human behaviour should look like, if both we and other species are to coexist and thrive. This thinking can be seen in the piece *Utopia (on empathy)*, a new version of which was performed at a former prison in Helsinki's Katajanokka district in 2021.

"The piece premiered back in 2015 at Helsinki's zoo on the island of Korkeasaari. The performance in its initial iteration studied animals' relationship with us, as humans. In the first performance, the viewer sat outside the cage and the performer inside. The viewing angle, through the bars into a small cage, which not long ago had held several bears, made for a unique



JENNI-ELINA VON BAGH: *A Prologue*.

© Katri Naukkarinen

experience. The performances at the prison drew on the same history of keeping a creature in a cage, although the performances did not take place in the cells.”

Emphasising issues of sustainable development inevitably also influences working practices. Palmgren explains that, when embarking on a new piece, she engages in a great deal of discussion with the working group and they consult with scientific experts.

“Different layers of the topic come out when you involve an expert. It’s healthy to keep doors open and talk to your team. However, I create dance pieces, so the experts are just one, albeit very important, part of this.”

Palmgren is also interested in documentary theatre and dance, which personal investigation ties in with. The relationship between art and science in performances is always situational.

Relationship with other creatures is key to the choreographer, and more than just theoretical. Horses are close to her heart – she has worked in stables since she was young and feels she has learned a lot from the animals. At times, she has even dreamed of a performance involving horses, but is starting to have second thoughts in that respect.

“We’ve had animals in rehearsals before, but bringing them into a stage setting has its issues. The animals don’t want to be in the middle of this big, open space – they just try to get away.”

Palmgren’s latest two works, *Soidinmenot* (‘Mating dances’, 2022) and *Lame Tamer* (2019) explore humans as animals.

“In *Lame Tamer*, we practised escaping or trying to get out – like animals. However, the intention here was not to represent animals, but rather to explore the idea that humans are, of course, animals ourselves. There are plenty of similarities.”

#### THE BODY IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTY

Choreographer Jenni-Elina von Bagh considers the relationship between identity and posthumanism an interesting issue – what kind of change does it require to your whole lifestyle as a dance artist, human, or mother.

In von Bagh’s view, the concept of posthumanism as a general ‘time after anthropocentrism’ and as seeking a connection with nature is not a theoretical issue at all, but rather an experiential one.

“When it comes down to it, dance dismantles the mind-body dichotomy. And that’s already posthumanistic. But I have a fairly solid background in **Deborah Hay’s** practice, where the dancers are continuously attentive to what they are experiencing physically. It’s a background that is difficult to shut off. I’m interested in questions like whether you can perceive in a way not based on the human body, looking again at the relationship with perception. I’m curious about how the concept, used in a philosophical context, converts to the stage.”

SARI PALMGREN: *Lame Tamer*.

© Ia Samoil

Von Bagh talks about ‘converting’, how linguistic-discursive portrayal becomes compositional, how the relationship between the elements of the composition – the movement and the bodies and the items in the performance space, props, etc. is broached. The relationship with materials is, thus, important.

“I rarely have living creatures other than humans in my pieces. Once, I used a worm – keeping it alive was no mean feat. We’ve also used living bacterial cellulose and the outfits for *Void* (2022) featured a biological colour pigment that changed as time passed. These kind of fancy details.”

Von Bagh explains that, for example, a tree stump on a stage creates a powerful experience.

“The stump is, at the same time, an unknown element. The body’s relationship with any object is very relevant. Who is observing whom? Is this plate observing me or am I observing it? Or, what is our relationship and how does it change?” the choreographer says, laughing at her example.

Is it also a question of ethics?

“Yes, it is. But in such a way that I want to put humans’ agency, their truism, under the magnifying glass. I don’t, as such, have a view politically or ethically on who the subject is and who the object is. It’s more a question of being open, noticing that we are sharing space with these materials. It is meaningful to me that the relationship is rich and valuable.”

The staging, ensuring that people are not at the centre of everything, is challenging.

“In performance situations, people’s eyes are drawn to human forms that look like themselves, and breaking that habit is difficult. But it is possible for the viewer’s attention to not be on a person all the time. When I created my solo piece, *A Prologue* (2020), refocusing the audience’s attention was a real problem. I found myself thinking ‘Do I need to leave the stage in order for you to get your attention off me?’”

“It’s interesting to invite the audience to look at something else. At the same time, I’m interested in the convergence of the body or its parts with an object. A pen in a hand forms a new entity. Where do the boundaries of the pen and hand go?” asks the choreographer, twisting the hand holding the pen into different positions.

Philosophical and posthumanist thinking also affect how von Bagh works. However, sometimes this is challenging, as we live in a production-centric environment where both time and money are scarce.

“How I listen to a designer, for example, and how I let their work happen – that’s something I’m always practising. I cannot take full control or make decisions alone. It is a bit like dancing with peoples’ idiosyncrasies.” ■

[www.jennielinavonbagh.com](http://www.jennielinavonbagh.com)

[www.saripalmgren.com](http://www.saripalmgren.com)

# THAT FUNGI FEEL MAIJA HIRVANEN ON BEING ENMESHED IN THE MORE-THAN-HUMAN

INTERVIEW Tang Fu Kuen, Magazine im August

**MAIJA HIRVANEN'S** new choreography *Mesh* premiered in Tanz im August 2022. The dance of *Mesh* arises from tuning in with many life forms and the question of being human at the same time. In *Mesh*, Maija has particularly worked with the connections of the way of being of the fungi, and the networks that run within and through the human body.

Curator **Tang Fu Kuen** asked her about the work's foundation in entanglements with other species and the challenges of assimilating many life forms into choreography. The article is published by courtesy of Magazine im August.

Tang Fu Kuen: With *Mesh* you deepen your inquiry into how human bodies commune to produce difference and identity and move towards open sensibility. Could you elaborate on the politics and paradigm of the 'old anatomy' and 'fungi feel' you are engaged in?

**MH:** The choreography is based on movements and sounds that can be simultaneously human and of other species and life forms. The dancers are entangling, blooming, electrifying, decaying, howling, meshing. And they are breathing, like the audience members or the building. Breathing connects us to the breathing of others, to the air, to the wind. Out of this a certain 'old anatomy', as I call it, emerges. If you observe the bones in a bird's wing, they resemble the bones of our hands. Human anatomy is interlinked and enmeshed with the anatomy of fish, fungi, mammalian forms. From this perspective individuality as we often understand it disappears. In *Mesh* the dancers perform through an 'old anatomy' that understands an individual human body as part of a long continuation of life, that dances times, places and energies connecting to times

beyond our lifetime and cycles that run through us as minerals, waters and breaths.

**FK:** What incited your interest in fungi?

**MH:** I learned sustainable forestry from my father, it's a family tradition. I created my first performances in the forest. Over the past decade, I have spent a great deal of time deep in the woods, particularly during autumn. I look for mushrooms, I wander, I get lost, I empty out, I get surprised. I gently peek under the mosses and say hello to the mycelium. I have learned from the way fungi think and are; and in dancing with them, I have become more fungi-like. The dancers and I have connected with the way of being and thinking of fungi in the studio too. Instead of playing mushroom networks, the dancers have found something in the way of being of the fungi out of themselves, as a group. A kind of fungi-human-hybrid way of being. To learn from and tune in with a 'fungi feel' for me is to work with perception, orientation, attention, expression and senses in a way where the totality of an individual body disappears and the collective corporeality, with all affects involved, appears. 'Fungi feel' relates to expanding imagination, to playfulness, and not-knowing.

**FK:** What challenges have you faced in dealing with the 'representation' of non-human bodies?

**MH:** When one walks away from one representation, another representation comes into place. And there are always multiple representations and readings going on at the same time, consciously and unconsciously. So for *Mesh*, it's been a question of concentrating on the concreteness of the physical performing body, the contact between dancers, the intentions toward



MAIJA HIRVANEN: *Mesh*.  
© Dajana Lothert

audience perception and working with multiple possibilities of representation at the same time. The main focus, for instance, is not the representations that the sound of breathing creates, but breathing itself. Similarly, some practices of *Mesh* work with and study the way mycelium moves, thinks, relates and traces these principles in our human body, corporeal wisdom and group behavior. But at the same time, the dancers are still **Marlon Moilanen, Marika Peura, Suvu Tuominen** and **Pie Kär**, with all their histories, feelings and thoughts. They are also unique creatures, a collective of artists with different identities – and they also perform animal, fungal and bacterial bodies, bodies of knowledge and time, in and through themselves. ■

**MAIJA HIRVANEN: *Mesh***  
Premiere August 12th, 2022 @ HAU2

Production: Zodiak – Center for New Dance, Tanz im August, Friends of Physical Contemporary Art

Currently, Hirvanen is working with her long term artistic direction in the area of more-than-human choreography as a **THIRD Research Cohort Fellow** at the Research Department of DAS Graduate School in Amsterdam.

[www.hirvanen.net](http://www.hirvanen.net)

1.  
KATI KALLIO: *Walks with me.*  
📷 Arttu Salo

2.  
KATI KALLIO: *Time Subjectives in Objective Time.*  
📷 Aleksey Patentniy

# MOVEMENT MEETS IMAGE

## KATI KALLIO FOUND THE PERFECT MEDIUM FOR HER ART IN FILM

TEXT Raisa Rauhamaa TRANSLATION Claire Ruaro

**THE THEME OF DANCE ARTIST** and film maker **Kati Kallio's** first dance film was cigarettes. In *Breath*, a short film, Kallio is seen fighting cigarette cravings at a bus stop and, then, in diving scenes, measuring how much her lung capacity has increased by since she stopped smoking.

*Breath* premiered 15 years ago, and since then Kati Kallio has become one of only few Finnish dance film makers. She directs, plans the content and edits the materials, and has collaborated often with photographer **Mika Ailasmäki** and dance artist **Elli Isokoski**.

*Breath* premiered at the *Loikka* short film festival during its opening year in 2008. During its short history (2008–2018), this Finnish festival quickly grew into a major international dance film event. Kallio was one of the founding members of *Loikka*, as well as serving as its artistic director from 2015 to 2018, amongst other roles.

Alongside her own artistic work, Kallio also takes on curatorial roles and has built a network extending from Russia to South America.

“My roles include working in Amsterdam as a tour curator for **Cinedans FEST**, Europe’s oldest and most prominent dance film festival, and I recently put on a Finnish-French dance film series at Institut finlandais in Paris in collaboration with **Virginie Combet**.”

Kallio’s portfolio already features close to twenty of her own short films.

“From the very first film I directed, I realised that a visual narrative was a great tool for my own work. My stage pieces left me unsatisfied with the limited opportunities for visual narration, whereas film offered broader options. Capturing them on film brings a new level of precision to the perspectives the story demands. Film allows me to bring together dance and

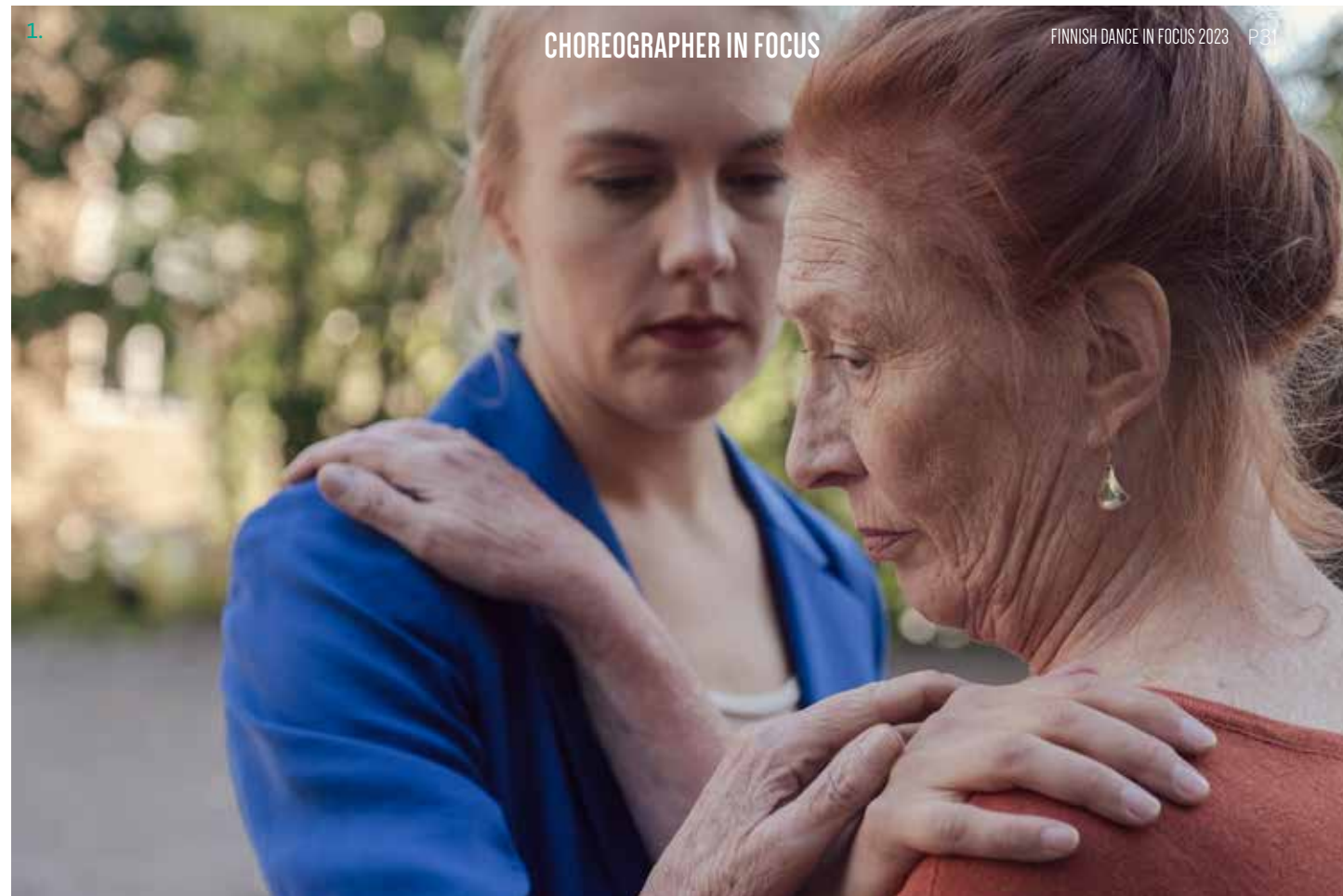
image, putting emotions and stories at the forefront.”

In her work, Kallio’s desire to be a storyteller above all else, takes front seat.

“To me, dance film is both dance art and film art. I’m interested in using physical, non-verbal expression in film. Put another way, I want to make use of cinematic expression in dance art. One absolute advantage of dance film is that its reach extends across the world – there’s no need to use a tricky language like Finnish to get my story across!”

Prior to her career in film, Kallio graduated with a master’s degree in dance art in 2003 from UniArts Helsinki’s Theatre Academy.

“I don’t make this work for myself, I make art to communicate. I want my work to reach a wide audience. As a contemporary dancer, I got bored of how hard it was to succeed in that respect with







Kati Kallio  
© Terho Aalto

**KATI KALLIO:** *Contrapeso*. In the picture: Yeinner Chicas  
© Antti Ahokoivu

contemporary dance. The film format offers an easily accessible platform and can bring a new audience to dance art. The finished film can make its way around the globe with just a few clicks, and you can come back to it years later with ease."

Kallio's latest piece, *Walks With Me*, 2021, was picked up by Yle, the Finnish Broadcasting Company.

The structure comes from the children's game Grandmother's Footsteps and the piece uses movement to transport the viewer through one person's whole life in 10 minutes.

It was selected as the runner up in the experimental category at the *Women Over 50 Film Festival (WOFFF)* in Sussex, UK in 2021.

Jury member **Trish McCare** summarised the jury's thoughts: "The opening scene of the wonderful 94-year-old actor planting a seedling is a hopeful metaphor for the future. The close up shot through the window reflects a life gone by. We watch her as she looks out the window of her life as it dances through time."

*Walks With Me* is a substantial undertaking in terms of its production structure, compared to Kallio's other participatory art pieces, which were developed with **Myrskyryhmä** dance group in a collaboration that began in 2010, working with residents at care homes for the elderly in Helsinki.

"I like older people, working with them offers real meaning. When producing the *Dancing Hands* trilogy in 2018, we wanted

to keep things as light as possible – a 'stick the camera under your arm and go' kind of approach. The focus of the project was getting the participants to partake as actively as possible in the pieces. Putting physicality front and centre, so that we did not need to get bogged down with words."

The performers in the *Dancing Hands* series are elderly people whose face or posture tells a story in itself. All the pieces in the trilogy explore a different style. For example, *Embrace* shows just close-up shots of hands touching, young and old, with the whole story of an encounter told by the movements between them. The third part, *Hope is a Waking Dream*, is a portrait of a man who loved to dance. The piece was awarded an honourable mention at Chile's

Bestias Danzantes festival in 2019.

"I don't have visual guidelines or a style that I follow, as choreographers often do. The style and choices come from whatever I need at that moment to convey the right message. I want to evoke kinetic feelings in my viewers, stirring emotions, getting them interested in non-verbal communication."

"If the narrative requires break dance or hip hop, I'll look for someone with those skills."

The idea behind Kallio's *Searching for Flow* documentary and short film series came from her own memory.

Performing on a big stage in her hometown of Rovaniemi, northern Finland, at just 16 years old, she reached a flow state, a sense of deep immersion when everything

is perfectly in sync, and the moment left its mark on her.

"I wanted to find out how many dancers had had similarly revolutionary experiences."

Between 2016 and 2022, the *Flow* series has resulted in seven pieces spanning Iceland, Russia, Nicaragua and Finland. For Kati Kallio, film work is very much group work, and working through a piece with colleagues is an important part of the process.

"The *Searching for Flow* series allows me to work with artists from different backgrounds. It's interesting to dive into how other artists think and in doing so broaden my own thinking. That's my mission as a creator – to facilitate understanding between people with my pieces."

The latest piece in the series, *Contrapeso* (2022), first came into fruition in 2012 when Kallio began exploring local dance culture in Nicaragua.

"It felt like everyone dances there, it was mind-blowing."

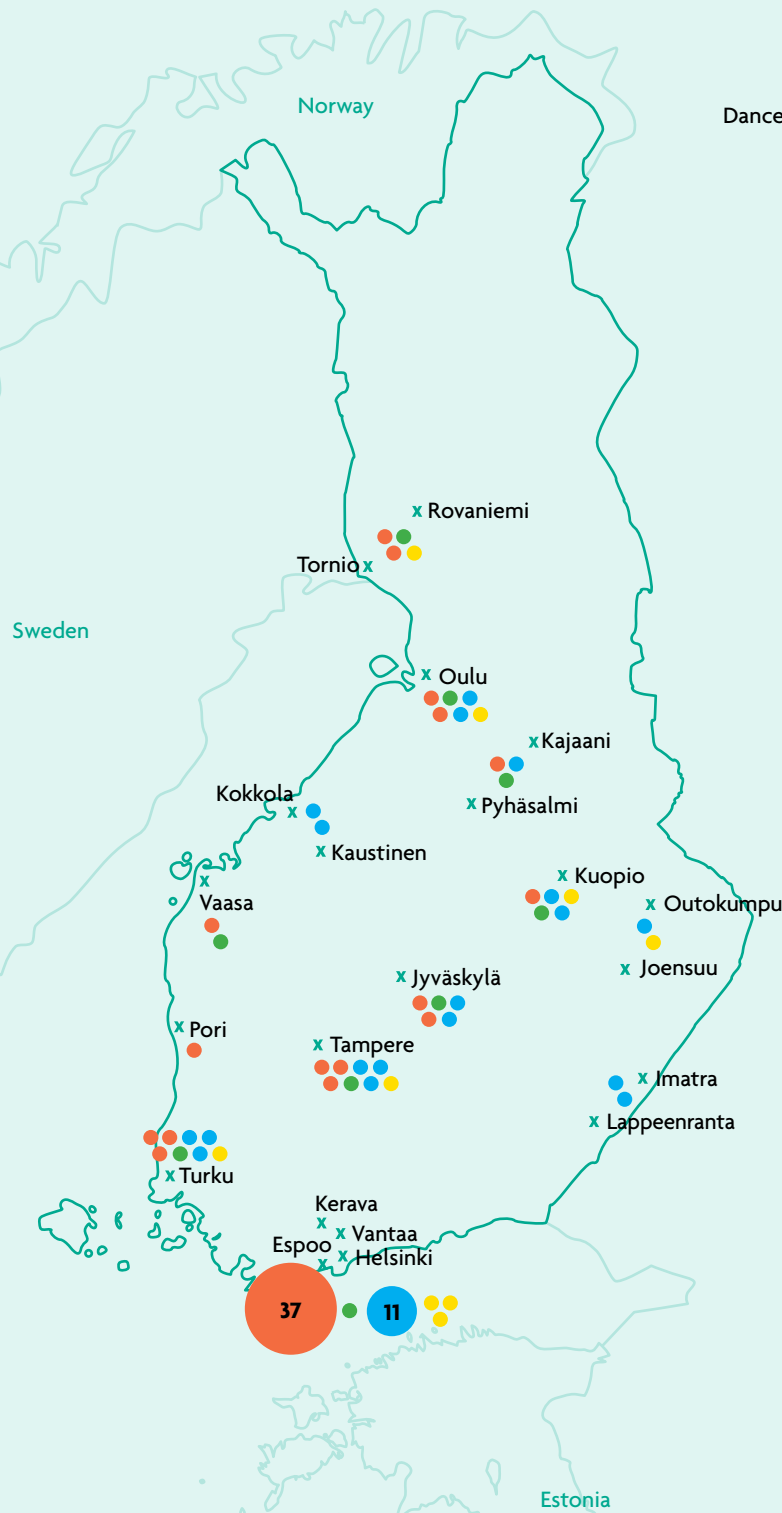
In 2017, Kallio returned to film a piece with choreographer **Yeinner Chicas**. Their collaboration led to a short film exploring the subconscious world through abstract contemporary dance.

"The processes associated with creating dance films can be long, and sometimes that's fine. I want to give them the time they need." ■

[www.katikallio.com](http://www.katikallio.com)

# DIRECTORY

- Dance companies & Production centres ●
- Regional Dance Centre ●
- Festivals & Events ●
- Professional education ●



This directory offers an overview of the Finnish dance field. It lists dance companies, festivals and events, production centres and regional dance centres in Finland. Discover information about professional dance education and organisations, and more about dance artists and choreographers at [www.danceinfo.fi](http://www.danceinfo.fi).



performances for young audiences



dance films

## DANCE COMPANIES

### DANCE COMPANIES WITHIN ARTISTIC INSTITUTIONS

#### FINNISH NATIONAL BALLET

Helsinki

**Contact:** Sampo Kivelä, Artistic Administrator

**Artistic Director:** Javier Torres  
[www.operaballet.fi](http://www.operaballet.fi)

About 80 performances and 3–5 premieres per season. Also works by contemporary choreographers, such as Tero Saarinen, Jorma Elo, Alexander Ekman, Akram Khan, Justin Peck and Jiří Kylián. The Ballet employs 75 dancers in the main company and 14 in the youth company, representing 24 nationalities.  
**Genres:** classical ballet, contemporary ballet, contemporary dance, young audiences



#### HELSINKI DANCE COMPANY

Helsinki

**Contact:** Antti Lahti, Director of HDC  
[www.hkt.fi](http://www.hkt.fi)

HDC is Helsinki City Theatre's dance company founded in 1973. HDC performers are known for performing physically demanding contemporary dance and expressive dance theatre  
**Genres:** Contemporary dance, dance theatre

### PUBLICLY FUNDED DANCE COMPANIES

#### AB DANCE COMPANY / AURINKOBALETTI

Turku

**Contact:** Urmas Poolamets, Artistic Director

[www.aurinkobaletti.fi](http://www.aurinkobaletti.fi)

AB is known as a constantly evolving, high-quality contemporary dance group which is not afraid to venture outside the limits of its own genre. Its repertoire includes productions for both adults and children by Finnish and international choreographers. The home stage of the company is at Manilla, a beautifully restored former factory on the banks of the Aura River in Turku.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, dance theatre, performances for children



#### COMPañIA KAARI & RONI MARTIN

Helsinki

**Contact:** Sara Hirn, Managing Director  
[sara@compania.fi](mailto:sara@compania.fi)

[www.compania.fi](http://www.compania.fi)

A multicultural and international group of artists characterised by their high-energy and hands-on approach. The Company has combined different cultures in a unique way, moving between dance, music, theatre and strong visual elements. Their style is contemporary, rooted in the rhythms and forms of flamenco. In 2012 they won first prize in three categories in the prestigious Certamen de Coreografía de Danza Española y Flamenco competition with their work The Raven, and they have toured in 15 countries.  
**Genres:** Contemporary flamenco, live

music performance, dance theatre, dance films, young audiences, performances anywhere.



#### DANCE THEATER ERI

Turku

**Contact:** Maarit Keto-Seppälä, Producer  
[www.eri.fi](http://www.eri.fi)

Dancer-choreographers Tiina Lindfors, Lassi Sairela and Eeva Soini founded Dance Theater ERI in 1989. Over the past 30 years ERI has built up a repertoire that now includes more than 300 works. Every year they produce around 130 performances, of which four or five are premieres.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, dance theatre

#### DANCE THEATRE HURJARUUTH

Helsinki

**Contact:** [info@hurjaruuth.fi](mailto:info@hurjaruuth.fi)  
[www.hurjaruuth.fi](http://www.hurjaruuth.fi)

Hurjaruuth is based in Helsinki. It is known for its multi-skilled nature: the dynamic and courageous performances combine dance, circus, music, visual arts and cutting-edge video technology. Hurjaruuth was founded in 1981. Today Hurjaruuth employs over 120 performing arts professionals annually, every year approximately 40 000 audience members come to see them.

**Genres:** Dance theatre, performances for young audiences, dance festival



**DANCE THEATRE MD**

Tampere

**Contact:** Anniina Kumponiemi, Managing Director[www.tansiteatterimd.fi](http://www.tansiteatterimd.fi)

Dance Theatre MD has become known for its high-class choreography and versatile performers. The broad repertoire features shows from classic fairy tales for children to contemporary dance pieces for adults. MD also tours in Finland and abroad.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, dance theatre, dance festival, performances for children

**DANCE THEATRE MINIMI**

Kuopio

**Contact:** Artistic Directors Mikko Makonen & Iiro Näkki[www.minimi.fi](http://www.minimi.fi)

Performances balancing on the borders of circus, dance, physical theatre and other bodily performing arts. Minimi produces creations from both house

and guest artists and collaborate with a variety of partners annually. Productions are often planned for touring and to be suitable for outdoor venues and public spaces. Dance Theatre Minimi was founded in 1991 and currently its home venue is located inside the city theatre in Kuopio.

**Genres:** Dance theatre, physical theatre, street theatre

**DANCE THEATER RAATIKKO**

Vantaa

**Contact:** Jaakko Toivonen, Theatre Director[www.raatikko.fi](http://www.raatikko.fi)

Raatikko creates dance pieces for children and young people, often combining dance, theatre and circus. The 50-year-old Raatikko is the oldest dance theatre in Finland, located in Vantaa, in the Metropolitan area, and also performs on tour.

**Genres:** Dance theatre, young audiences

**DANCE THEATRE RIMPPAREMMI**

Rovaniemi

**Contact:** Matti Paloniemi, Artistic Director & Elina Vähäkuopus, Producer[www.rimpparemmi.fi](http://www.rimpparemmi.fi)

Finland's northernmost professional dance theatre offers a unique mix of Finnish folk dance and contemporary dance. They give about 120 performances annually and have toured in more than 20 countries. Also a repertoire of first-class folk dance and music performances.

**Genres:** Dance theatre, folk dance, contemporary dance, live music, young audiences

**GLIMS & GLOMS DANCE THEATRE**

Espoo

**Contact:** Melinda Näsänen, Producer[www.glimsgloms.fi](http://www.glimsgloms.fi)

The Glims & Gloms dance company was founded in 1999 by Simo Heiskanen and Tuomo Railo. G&G's works are characterised by stylish and inventive visuals

and multi-layered themes.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, dance theatre, young audiences

**SUSANNA LEINONEN COMPANY (SLC)**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Susanna Leinonen, Artistic Director[www.susannaleinonen.com](http://www.susannaleinonen.com)

Susanna Leinonen is one of the most internationally acclaimed Finnish choreographers. Her group, Susanna Leinonen Company, was founded in 2001 and has so far performed in more than 25 countries. Leinonen's unique movement language has been described as highly physical, detailed and expressive. Latest creations: *Body* (2021), *Toxic* (2020), *Nasty* (2018).

**Genre:** Contemporary dance

**TERO SAARINEN COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Iiris Autio, Managing Director[www.terosaarinen.com](http://www.terosaarinen.com)

Tero Saarinen Company's mission is to create, perform, present and teach powerful and engaging contemporary dance at the highest level of artistic excellence in Helsinki, Finland and internationally. The Company has toured at leading venues in 40 countries on all continents. Three yearly seasons at Dance House Helsinki feature new works by Tero Saarinen and other choreographers along with international visiting performances and the group's own classics.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, international co-production, live music performance, dance films

**TSUUMI DANCE THEATRE**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Salla Korja, Managing Director[www.tsuumi.com](http://www.tsuumi.com)

Tsuumi Dance Theatre finds its strength from exploring folklore and creating new artistic ways to bring it on stage. Tsuumi's performers are known for their

skills in contemporary dance, folkdance, singing and physical theatre. Tsuumi produces 2–3 new performances per year and has a large repertoire to tour with.

**Genres:** Dance theatre, folk dance, live music performance, contemporary dance

**INDEPENDENT DANCE COMPANIES****ALPO AALTOKOSKI COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** info@aaltokoskicompany.fi[www.aaltokoskicompany.fi](http://www.aaltokoskicompany.fi)

Alpo Aaltokoski Company has toured in nearly 30 countries worldwide. Holistic visual insight is characteristic to Aaltokoski's artistic work. The choreographer's aspiration is to understand human beings and their personal relations as well as their relation to the surrounding world, never forgetting the comic side of things.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, community dance

**ARJA TIILI DANCE COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Arja Tiili, Choreographer, Artistic Director and Executive Director for *Break the Fight!* project[www.arjatiili.fi](http://www.arjatiili.fi) and[www.breakthefight.com](http://www.breakthefight.com)

Arja Tiili is known for breaking genre boundaries in her artistic work. Her works often depict our dark side: madness, violence, loneliness and greed – but always with a palpable sense of humor. Arja is leading *Break the Fight!* Street Culture Services for municipalities and communities.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, breakdance, eclectic, hiphop, dance theatre, martial arts, visual arts, young audiences, community dance

**AURACO**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Päivi Aura, Artistic Director[www.auraco.fi](http://www.auraco.fi)

Touring dance and mime company producing 1–3 premieres per year. Auraco produces performances for all ages combining dance and mime.

**Genres:** Dance theatre, mime, young audiences

**BALLET FINLAND**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Jouka Valkama, Artistic Director[www.balletfinland.com](http://www.balletfinland.com)

An independent troupe of classically trained dancers and choreographers seeking new forms of classical and contemporary ballet, tradition and thinking. Founded in 2009 the company has performed successfully in Finland and abroad.

**Genres:** Classical and contemporary ballet

**CARL KNIF COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Marjo Pyykönen, Managing Director[www.carlknifcompany.com](http://www.carlknifcompany.com)

After a decade as a freelance dancer Carl Knif founded Carl Knif Company in 2012. The company has risen to the forefront of Finnish dance with a skillful blend of contemporary dance and physical theatre. The straightforward nature of the work, which arises from a profound artistic sensitivity and a strikingly well conceived visuality, makes the pieces memorable. Knif's pieces have so far toured in 10 countries.

Latest creations: *Sessions* (2022), *Ett drömspel* (2021), *Fugue in Two Colors* (2020).

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, physical theatre



**DANCEBOX**

Tampere

**Contact:** Terhi Pinomäki-Lenick, [terhipl@gmail.com](mailto:terhipl@gmail.com)

DanceBox is an independent contemporary dance group from Tampere, founded in 1998. It performs both in Finland and abroad. Performances for a wide range of audiences, young and old, in theatres, at schools and on the streets and at markets.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, dance theatre**DANCE COMPANY GRUPPEN FYRA (G4)**

Helsinki

**Contact:** [www.gruppenfyra.com](http://www.gruppenfyra.com)

Contemporary dance combined with intelligent humour. Dance theatre and improvisation-based pieces performed in places like parks, streets and trams. Touring 2021-22 with the piece The SOIREE by director Reetta Honkakoski.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, dance theatre**DANCE COMPANY OFF/BALANCE**

Jyväskylä

**Contact:** Elina Häyrynen and Terhi Kuokkanen, Artistic Directors**info@offbalance.fi****www.offbalance.fi**

Central Finland-based company with versatile, responsive creations. The company produces 1–3 premieres/co-productions + various events per year with guest choreographers and artists.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, new dance**DANCE THEATRE KAIE**

Kerava

**Contact:** Anne Jouhtinen**www.tanssiteatterikaie.com**

Multi-artistic productions for adult and young audiences. Traditional stages as well as streets, market squares, parks, shop windows and kindergartens function as performance spaces. The Finno-Ugrian roots inspire with their mysticism.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, dance theatre, multi-artistic performances**EHKÄ-PRODUCTION**

Turku

**Contact:** [info@ehka.net](mailto:info@ehka.net)**www.ehka.net**

Co-productions, performances, residen-

cies, the annual XS festival and more. Artist-run Ehkä facilitates works and projects of independent dance and performance artists, groups and collectives. Since 2009 Ehkä has run the Contemporary Art Space Kutomo, which consists of two bright and beautiful studios.

**Genres:** New dance, contemporary dance, performance/live art, young audiences, dance classes, workshops, residency**FLOW PRODUCTIONS**

Oulu

**Contact:** Pirjo Yli-Maunula, Artistic Director**www.flowprod.fi**

Contemporary dance, -circus, music and visuality combined in multidisciplinary productions, site specific, immersive and on stage, choreographer Pirjo Yli-Maunula as the director. Also series of visiting shows through out the year with title Flow-circus.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, multidisciplinary productions**FREECOLLECTIVE**

Tampere, Jyväskylä, Kangasniemi, Espoo, Helsinki

**vapaakollektiivi.blogspot.fi**

FREEcollective // VAPAAkollektiivi operates by inviting guest artists to collaborate. Creating diverse performances for the stage and other public venues; touring, hosting masterclasses, audience outreach programmes.

**Genres:** contemporary dance, multidisciplinary productions**IMPROTANGO COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Minna Tuovinen, Choreographer**www.improtango.fi**

Their unique style blends Argentinian tango with a contemporary vocabulary. In recent years the company has toured extensively in South America, most notably in Argentina and Brazil. The company is diverse, working in dance film, organising international development projects and teaching workshops in dance and camerawork.

**Genre:** Contemporary dance**ISMO DANCE COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Ismo-Pekka Heikinheimo, Artistic Director**www.ismodance.fi**

Choreographer Ismo-Pekka Heikinheimo blends art and performance with new concepts and artistic methods. His social agenda touches on body politics and the aesthetics of movement. His work is multidisciplinary, interactive and transformative, exploring the spectrum of visual culture. For him, dance is a way to perceive, to describe and to be within the world.

**Genres:** Contemporary Dance, Artwork-specific choreography, performances in architectural sites**JENNI KIVELÄ & KIND PEOPLE**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Jenni Kivelä, Choreographer, Producer**www.jennikivela.com**

Creating dance performances since 2002 that combine features from dance and theatre and move between the conceptual and the concrete. Jenni Kivelä has a strong and recognisable style. Recent works: Strange Plant, Rosemary's Room.

**Genre:** contemporary dance, dance theatre, young audiences**K&C KEKÄLÄINEN & COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** [outi@artsmanagement.fi](mailto:outi@artsmanagement.fi)**www.kekalainencompany.net**

The mission of K&C is to promote dance as an intellectual art form with strong potential in political and poetic communication. Choreographer-dancer Sanna Kekäläinen's work expands the experience of a dance performance by combining philosophy, feminism, text, gender and conceptual thinking with highly original movement language.

**Genre:** Contemporary dance**KATJA LUNDÉN COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Katja Lunden, Artistic Director**www.katjalunden.com**

Katja Lunden Company has made a name for itself with its groundbreaking works, including Flamencosauna, Edvard Munch – The Dance of Life, Universo, After-Machine and La Vida de Una Elefante.

The performances are characterised by a combination of theatre, music and dance genres ranging from flamenco to contemporary styles. The collaborators are renowned Finnish and international artists, directors, musicians and choreographers. The works have toured international dance and music festivals.

**Genre:** Contemporary flamenco**KATVE [BLIND SPOT]**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Heidi Masalin, [info.katve@gmail.com](mailto:info.katve@gmail.com)**www.katveblindspot.kuvat.fi**

KATVE [blind spot] produces fresh and versatile danceworks for all kinds of people. Humanity and imagination are the core values of KATVE [blind spot], led by choreographer-dancer Heidi Masalin.

**Genre:** contemporary dance, young audiences**KINETIC ORCHESTRA**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Jarkko Mandelin, Artistic Director**www.kineticorchestra.fi**

In just a short time, this group has created a strong and recognisable style to become one of the most interesting Finnish contemporary dance companies. The movement-based content and philosophy of their works bring together dance techniques, street dance attitudes and circus-like agility.

**Genre:** Contemporary dance**KO-KOLLEKTIIVI**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Satu Tuomisto, Sanna Hento or Amandine Doat, Dance Artists**www.ko-kollektiivi.fi**

Ko-kollektiivi is an artist-led dance collective, focusing on co-creativity, sustainable development and extensive collaboration.

Ko-kollektiivi combines artistic dreaming with academic research and produces creative, utopian and sustainable dance solutions.

Ko-kollektiivi is supported by Arts Promotion Centre Finland and Helsinki City.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, young audiences

**LIISA PENTTI +CO**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Hanna Nyman**www.liisapentti.com**

Liisa Pentti + Co's work is based on the continuously evolving process of asking questions and in experimentation in contemporary society. The company performs and tours in Finland and abroad. It organises training for professionals and non-professionals, and curates and organises events with themes related to the performing arts and their future.

**Genre:** post-contemporary dance and performance

**LOISKE ENSEMBLE / OSIRIS THEATRE**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Riikka Siirala, Artistic Director**www.osiristeatteri.fi**

Loiske Ensemble is a touring company that produces unique dance performances for babies, children and elderly people. We use various ways of communication such as movement, music, rhythm, interaction and sound. Loiske Ensemble performs in theatres, cultural centres, kindergartens, care centers, dance festivals and children's cultural festivals in Finland and overseas.

**Genre:** dance theatre, performances for young audiences

**MALVINIEMI COMPANY**

Vaasa

**Contact:** Mia Malviniemi, Artistic Director and Choreographer  
**www.malviniemi.fi**

Choreographer Mia Malviniemi has created contemporary dance works since 1996, and her company, based on Finland's west coast, was established in 2011. The company produces mainly stage works but there are also site-specific performances in repertoire. Malviniemi often brings together live music and contemporary dance in her works, and offers workshops and community and outreach activities, especially aimed at the elderly.

**Genre:** Contemporary dance, live music, workshops for senior citizens, dance film

**MAMIA COMPANY**

Vantaa

**Contact:** Nina Mamia Artistic Director, Kasperi Nordman Executive Director  
**www.mamiacompany.fi**

Mamia Company is a contemporary dance theatre. The Company's performances deal with contemporary topics, the human condition and society. Member of the International Dance Council CID.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, contemporary theatre, dancetheatre, physical theatre, also for young audiences

**MIKKO KALLINEN & THE COMPANY HELSINKI**

**Contact:** Mikko Kallinen, AD/Choreographer  
mikkokallinen@thecompany.fi  
**www.av-arkki.fi**

The Company is a production company of artists from various disciplines. New creations are mainly video dance/animation and interactive choreographic works.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, audiovisual

**MIMOART COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Mimosa Lindahl & Arto-Oskar Reunanen, Artistic Directors  
**www.mimoartcompany.com**

MimoArt Company creates visual and physical performances and pedagogy in the field of dance, theatre, circus and contemporary art. The awarded debut BODY NOTES (2017) has toured in Europe, and the latest Water Trilogy (2021–2023) investigates humanity's relationship with water. The company collaborates with various international artists and partners.

**Genres:** Visual and physical contemporary performances, contemporary dance, theatre, clownery, visual arts, live music performances

**MYRSKYRYHMÄ / THE TEMPEST GROUP**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Mervi Leivo, Producer  
**www.myrskyryhma.fi**

Founded in 2002. Their work is based on the urge to take dance to people in the midst of their natural environment – in places where dance performances are not a familiar sight.

**Genres:** performances and workshops for senior citizens, contemporary dance, dance theatre, dance film

**RASA COLLECTIVE**

Lapland

**Contact:** Titta Court or Marjo Selin, Choreographers

**www.pistery.org**

As part of the umbrella organisation Piste Kollektiivi Rasa is the northernmost professional contemporary dance group in Finland founded by dance artists Titta Court and Marjo Selin.

The works and concepts of Rasa travel and move people all over the Lapland and internationally. Rasa makes work in dialogue and interaction with their audience to bring more equality and inclusion to the world.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, community dance, all audiences

**ROUTA COMPANY**

Kajaani

**Contact:** Jouni Järvenpää, artistic director / Sari Palmgren, artistic director (from August), Choreographer  
**www.routacompany.fi**

Founded in 2002, Routa (Finnish for 'permafrost') is an open-minded contemporary dance production company. It produces, develops and enables multifaceted and personal dance art. Routa belongs to the Regional Dance Centre of Northern Finland and employs both dance artists and audiovisual artists.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, dance theatre and applied dance

**SAINE ENSEMBLE**

Raasepori

**Contact:** Annatuuli Saine, Artistic Director  
**www.saineensemble.fi**

Produces 2-4 creations and concepts per year in collaboration with scientists and artists from different disciplines and art genres. Works are multidisciplinary including dance, music, visual arts, dance shortfilms and poetry.

**Genres:** contemporary dance and flamenco, site-specific art, community art and performances for senior citizens



Mikko Kallinen &amp; The Company © Patrik Rastenberger

**NOM KOLLEKTIV**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Jaakko Nieminen, Artistic Director

**www.nomkollektiv.com**

The company collaborates on diverse projects such as group pieces and solos, installations and films. The company's creations are described as fresh, new and personal. The relationship with ourselves, our bodies, the other and our time are elements that run through the works.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, new dance

**PETRI KEKONI COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Petri Kekoni, Choreographer, & Anne Peippo, Producer

**www.kekonico.fi**

Kekoni's works are known for their abstract yet robust movement language and strong visual and spatial thinking. The company is a collective of about 20 artists, dancers, composers and designers. In its repertoire: Glow of dimness (2021), 369° (2019), Möhkäle – Erratic Block (2018), The Stop – Dark Matter of Art (2016), Non-Linear (2014), Miniatures – Humans in small scale (2013), Green Armchair (2010).

**Genre:** Contemporary dance.

**PORI DANCE COMPANY**

Pori

**Contact:** Leo Van Aerschot, Producer  
tuotanto@poridancecompany.fi

**www.poridancecompany.com**

Most of the company's repertoire is contemporary and integrative with other forms of art. They have toured in various countries around Southeast Asia, Russia, Europe, Africa and North America. During the years many well known choreographers have created works for the company, and it also functions as a hub for artists of many fields to collaborate and create together.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, dance theatre, performance/live art

**RAEKALLIO CORP.**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Valtteri Raekallio, Artistic Director

valtteri@raekallio.fi

Raekallio Corp. produces Valtteri Raekallio's unique multidisciplinary, immersive site-specific works, as well as stage productions designed for international touring and dance film projects. In 2018, his work was seen at Aerowaves Twenty18 and the Ice Hot dance platform in Reykjavik. Raekallio's recent touring works include School of Life (2022), Recollections (2019), Oneiron (2018), A Performance (2016) and Rehearsal on Love (2015). He is also an internationally recognized teacher in high demand at dance workshops and universities.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance



**SIVUUN ENSEMBLE**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Ninni Perko, Artistic Director and Choreographer[www.sivuun.net](http://www.sivuun.net)

Sivuun Ensemble, founded by Ninni Perko, is a multidisciplinary collective. The Ensemble's performances are intense conversations between different art forms. Motion, music, image and text entwine into a collage of entities, opening seminal interpretations to current issues, significant for individuals and communities alike.

**Genres:** Dance theatre, multidisciplinary productions, community dance

**TAIKABOX**

Oulu

**Contact:** Tanja Råman, Artistic Director [taikabox.com](http://taikabox.com)

TaikaBox creates new ways to experience dance using new technology to enhance our perception of the moving body and engage with audiences on different levels. TaikaBox produces work for stage, public spaces and screen. TaikaBox also organises the annual Oulu Dance Hack and various artist residencies.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, dance/technology, also young audiences

**WAUHAUS ARTS COLLECTIVE**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Julia Hovi, Producer, [production@wauhaus.fi](mailto:production@wauhaus.fi)[www.wauhaus.fi](http://www.wauhaus.fi)

A multidisciplinary arts collective that creates contemporary theatre, performance art, and dance productions, as well as lectures and workshops. The works of WAUHAUS are situated between different genres of art and take place at a variety of venues and locations. WAUHAUS is known for their comprehensive audiovisual stage aesthetics and methods of shared authorship.

**Genres:** Contemporary dance & theatre, performing arts

**WILLMAN DANCE COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Marjaterettu Willman, Artistic Director[www.willmandancecompany.fi](http://www.willmandancecompany.fi)

Willman Dance Company brings together artists who share a passion for dance and stage art. The goal of the company is to create original contemporary dance and dance theatre pieces that focus on the central questions of humanity.

**Genres:** contemporary dance, dance theatre

## PRODUCTION CENTRES

**BARKER-THEATRE, A STAGE FOR INDEPENDENT ART**

Turku

**Contact:** Nina Renvall [barkertheatre.fi](http://barkertheatre.fi)

Barker-theatre is a production house founded in 1997. It hosts various dance productions, provides rehearsal space and offers also possibilities for work-in-progress performances and workshops. Barker also hosts a summer residence for dance artists (applications in January-February).

**TANSSIN TALO**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Mikael Aaltonen, Programme Manager[www.tanssintalo.fi](http://www.tanssintalo.fi)

Tanssin talo is the first large scale dance house in Finland. It provides a high-quality setting with state-of-the-art technology for performing arts. It welcomes people to connect with each other and the world around them.

**JOJO – OULU DANCE CENTRE**

Oulu

**Contact:** Helena Lindqvist, Managing Director[www.jojo.fi](http://www.jojo.fi)

Jojo - Oulu Dance Center is a pro-

fessional dance production center operating in the northern Finland's vibrant dance field, offering international, multidisciplinary dance art programme, with a focus on contemporary dance. The programme also includes the OuDance Festival in the autumn. For dance art professionals, JoJo is a platform for co-productions and visiting performances and offers international residency exchange. There is an open call for applications for production and guest performances in October-November. In addition, JoJo offers workshops for everyone. JoJo is one of the four member organizations of the Northern Dance Regional Center.

**ZODIAK – CENTER FOR NEW DANCE**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Jenni-Elina von Bagh, Artistic Director (from February)[www.zodiak.fi](http://www.zodiak.fi)

Zodiak – Center for New Dance is a progressive dance organisation and the main venue for freelance contemporary dance in Finland. Zodiak co-produces and hosts 12–15 new dance productions each year. Zodiak is a member of several international networks and works with international partners in production, teacher and artist exchange, and touring.

## REGIONAL CENTRES FOR DANCE

**PIRKANMAA DANCE CENTRE**

Tampere

**Contact:** Maija Hoisko, Network Manager[toimisto@pirkanmaantanssikeskus.fi](mailto:toimisto@pirkanmaantanssikeskus.fi)[www.pirkanmaantanssikeskus.fi](http://www.pirkanmaantanssikeskus.fi)

An association for dance professionals. Encourages co-operation, organises various events, meetings for profession-

als, seminars. The center also runs the Liikelaituri venue in Tampere.

**THE REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE OF FINNISH LAKELAND**

Jyväskylä

**Contact:** Mari Hautala, Managing Director [tanssikeskus.fi](http://tanssikeskus.fi)

Regional centre for dance in Central Finland. Promotes dance and creates work opportunities for professionals. Organises the Jyväskylä Dance Festival in September.

**REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE OF EASTERN FINLAND / ITAK**

Kuopio

**Contact:** Eeva Eloranta, Executive Producer[www.itak.fi](http://www.itak.fi)

Promotes dance, creates work opportunities for professionals, offers training and supports dance production in Eastern Finland. Organises the Lonely in the Rain festival in November in Joensuu. ITAK also manages the ITAK-stage venue in Kuopio.

**REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE IN NORTHERN FINLAND**

This regional centre is formed of four companies/Producers in the area:

[www.jojo.fi](http://www.jojo.fi)[www.routacompany.fi](http://www.routacompany.fi)[www.rimpparemmi.fi](http://www.rimpparemmi.fi)[www.fullmoondance.fi](http://www.fullmoondance.fi)**REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE OF OSTROBOTHNIA**

Vaasa

**Contact:** Eleni Pierides, Manager <http://pohjanmaantanssi.fi>

The centre promotes dance art, making the art form accessible and supporting dance artists and professionals in all aspects of their work. The centre strives to create job opportunities for professionals, working with community activities as well as supporting the production of new dance pieces and projects in the region. The centre develops networks and

Save the dates!

# ICE HOT

Nordic Dance Platform

February 14. – 18. 2024  
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Dance House Helsinki

TANSSIN TALO

[www.johannanuutinen.com](http://www.johannanuutinen.com)

promotes collaboration between artists and organisations, both in the region and in the Nordic context.

#### REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE OF WESTERN FINLAND

Turku

**Contact:** Sanna Meska,  
Managing Director  
[www.l-tanssi.fi](http://www.l-tanssi.fi)

Regional Dance Centre of Western Finland covers Southwest Finland and the province of Satakunta. The centre aims to develop collaboration between various agents and actors in the dance field and gain more public recognition for contemporary dance. It promotes dance, supports freelance dance artists to work in the region and arranges meetings, seminars and workshops.

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

#### ANTI – CONTEMPORARY ART FESTIVAL Kuopio

International contemporary arts festival presenting site-specific works made for public spaces. In autumn and various other dates.

**Contact:** Elisa Itkonen  
[www.antifestival.com](http://www.antifestival.com)

#### BALTIC CIRCLE FESTIVAL

Helsinki

Baltic Circle is an international festival for contemporary theatre and performance organised annually in November in Helsinki.

**Contact:** Asta Teräväinen,  
Managing director  
[balticcircle.fi](http://balticcircle.fi)

#### BLACK AND WHITE THEATRE FESTIVAL Imatra

For 18 years, Black and White Theatre Festival has presented a huge variety of different styles: dance theatre, ballet, pantomime, circus, traditional drama, opera, puppet theatre and street performing. The purpose of the festival is to represent the international theatre in all its manifestation and genres. Artistic Director is Kamran Shahmardan. Annually in July or August.

**Contact:** Katri Lätt, Chairwoman mustanjavalkoisenteatteri@gmail.com  
[www.blackandwhitetheatre.fi](http://www.blackandwhitetheatre.fi)

#### DANCING METEORITE Raasepori

A meeting place for Art and Science in Southern Finland. The programme ranges from contemporary dance performances to multidisciplinary and site-specific works, including art exhibitions, workshops and discussions. Biennial. In May.

**Contact:** Annatuuli Saine, Artistic Director and Executive Producer,  
[saine@saineensemble.fi](mailto:saine@saineensemble.fi),  
[www.saineensemble.fi](http://www.saineensemble.fi)

#### FACTORY FESTIVAL MANIFESTI Turku

Annual festival with a wide-ranging programme from contemporary dance and new circus to exhibitions. In September.

**Contact:** [manifesti@manillantehdas.fi](mailto:manifesti@manillantehdas.fi)  
[www.manillantehdas.fi](http://www.manillantehdas.fi)

#### FULL MOON DANCE, INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL Pyhäjärvi

Dance from Finland and abroad; performances, courses and discussions. In July.

**Contact:** [taina@fullmoondance.fi](mailto:taina@fullmoondance.fi)  
[www.fullmoondance.fi](http://www.fullmoondance.fi)

#### HURRAA!

Helsinki metropolitan area  
A national festival of performing arts for children and young people. Every second year in March, the next festival is in 2024.

**Contact:** [katriina.metsalampi@hel.fi](mailto:katriina.metsalampi@hel.fi)  
[www.hurraa.org](http://www.hurraa.org)



#### JYVÄSKYLÄ FESTIVAL

Jyväskylä

City festival for different art forms: concerts, physical theatre, dance, circus, and programme for the whole family. In July.

**Contact:** Kyösti Ylikulju,  
Festival Manager  
[www.jyvaskylankesa.fi](http://www.jyvaskylankesa.fi)

#### KAUSTINEN FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL Kaustinen

The largest folk music event in the Nordic countries – all the folk music and dance you can handle in a week! In July.

**Contact:** [info@kaustinen.net](mailto:info@kaustinen.net)  
[www.kaustinen.net](http://www.kaustinen.net)

#### KOKKOLAN TALVITANSSIT – VINTERDANS I KARLEBY – WINTER DANCE IN KOKKOLA

Kokkola, Central Ostrobothnia

The legendary festival for dance art in the Ostrobothnian region has brought high-level contemporary performances to the city of Kokkola since the year 1994. In November.

**Contact:** Eleni Pierides,  
Chair of the Festival Association,  
[festivaali@kokkolantalvitanssit.net](mailto:festivaali@kokkolantalvitanssit.net)  
[www.kokkolantalvitanssit.net](http://www.kokkolantalvitanssit.net)

#### KUOPIO DANCE FESTIVAL Kuopio

The largest annual dance festival in the Nordic countries. The programme ranges from contemporary dance to classical ballet, including workshops and educational program. 14.-20.6.2023

**Contact:** Salima Peippo, Festival Director  
| Riku Lehtopolku, Artistic Director  
[www.kuopiodancefestival.fi](http://www.kuopiodancefestival.fi)

#### LAPPEENRANTA BALLET GALA Lappeenranta

A meeting place for Nordic dance and international stars. Contemporary works and classics. In August.

**Contact:** Juhani Teräsvuori,  
Artistic Director  
[lapeenrannabalettigaala@gmail.com](mailto:lapeenrannabalettigaala@gmail.com)  
[www.lapeenrannabalettigaala.com](http://www.lapeenrannabalettigaala.com)

#### LONELY IN THE RAIN

Joensuu

**Contact:** Veera Lamberg,  
Artistic Director  
[www.itak.fi](http://www.itak.fi)

Contemporary dance festival in November

#### MOVING IN NOVEMBER Helsinki

A contemporary dance festival organised yearly in the Helsinki area. An invitation to come together and experience new artistic initiatives, visions, and critical thinking both from abroad and the local scene.

**Contact:** Isabel Gonzalez, Executive Producer,  
[isabel@liikkeellamarraskuussa.fi](mailto:isabel@liikkeellamarraskuussa.fi)  
Kerstin Schroth, Artistic Director,  
[kerstin@liikkeellamarraskuussa.fi](mailto:kerstin@liikkeellamarraskuussa.fi)  
[www.movinginnovember.fi](http://www.movinginnovember.fi)

#### OULU DANCE HACK Oulu

Oulu Dance Hack is an annual event that brings together international dance and media artists, educational specialists and technology businesses.

**Contact:** Tanja Råman  
[taikabox.com/hack](http://taikabox.com/hack)

#### OU DANCE FESTIVAL Oulu

International and domestic performances in North Finland from all genres of dance with a contemporary twist. In September.

**Contact:** Helena Lindqvist,  
Managing Director  
[www.jojo.fi/en/oudance-festival/](http://www.jojo.fi/en/oudance-festival/)

#### PISPALA SCHOTTISCHE DANCE MANIA Tampere

New folk dance and folk music, concerts, performances, training. Every two years, next in September 2023.

**Contact:** [info@sottiisi.net](mailto:info@sottiisi.net),  
[www.tanssimania.fi](http://www.tanssimania.fi)

**Vocational education in contemporary dance**

- // 3 year study program, starting Aug 2023, application in March 2023
- // Contemporary dance training for professionals, 5 months program starting Jan 2024, application in September 2023
- // More information: [ulla.paivikko@riveria.fi](mailto:ulla.paivikko@riveria.fi)

*improvisation / performance / contemporary dance techniques / production skills / collaboration*

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**Registration opens in March!**

**PERFORMINGHEL.FI**

**POWER OF DANCE FESTIVAL**

Helsinki

A festival held every year, biannually with programme for adults and biannually for children. Domestic performances from all genres of dance.

**Contact:** Marjaterä Willman,  
Artistic Director  
marjis@willmandancecompany.fi  
[www.tanssinvoimafestivaali.fi](http://www.tanssinvoimafestivaali.fi)

**INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG AUDIENCES**

Helsinki

International Dance Festival for Young Audiences is hosted by Dance Theatre Hurjaruuth. The festival, founded in 1997, offers contemporary and innovative dance performances as well as workshops, meetings with the artists and public talks.

**Contact:** info@hurjaruuth.fi  
[www.hurjaruuth.fi](http://www.hurjaruuth.fi)

**SIDE STEP FESTIVAL**

Helsinki

Contemporary dance, cutting-edge international performances, lectures, artist dialogues and workshops. Organized by Zodiak – Center for New Dance. In February.

**Contact:** Jenni-Elina von Bagh,  
Artistic Director  
[www.zodiak.fi](http://www.zodiak.fi)

**SPRING BREAK DANCE FESTIVAL**

Helsinki

Contemporary dance festival hosted by Kinetic Orchestra. Concentrating on new wave movement works. Located in Eastern Helsinki

**Contact:** Jarkko Mandelin  
<https://springbreakdancefestival.com>  
<https://kineticorchestra.fi>

**SPRING ROLL**

Turku

Spring Roll festival by Ehkä-production brings new dance and performance to the brink of the waking season. Spring Roll is the little sister of the annual XS festival in December.

**Contact:** Anna Torkkel  
[www.ehka.net](http://www.ehka.net)

**TAMPERE DANCE CURRENT**

Tampere

Festival of contemporary Finnish dance held annually in May. Besides impressive stage performances, the programme includes dance film screenings, public discussions, club events and specially commissioned performances by the Dance Current Dance Artist of the Year.

**Contact:** Anniina Kumpuniemi  
[www.tanssivirtaa.net](http://www.tanssivirtaa.net)

**TAMPERE FLAMENCO FESTIVAL**

International flamenco festival presenting high-quality artists and shows. Also a wide range of workshops. In June.

**Contact:** info@tampereflamenco.com  
[www.tampereflamenco.com](http://www.tampereflamenco.com)

**TAMPERE THEATRE FESTIVAL**

Tampere

The programme of Finland's main international theatre festival includes new drama, modernised classics, dance theatre, contemporary circus and street theatre. In August.

**Contact:** Hanna Rosendahl,  
Executive Director  
[www.teatterikesa.fi](http://www.teatterikesa.fi)

**TANSSIN AIKA – THE JYVÄSKYLÄ DANCE FESTIVAL**

Jyväskylä

Every year end of September

**Contact:** Janina Rajakangas,  
Artistic Director  
[www.tanssinaika.fi](http://www.tanssinaika.fi)

**URB FESTIVAL**

Helsinki

An international street art and culture festival produced by Kiasma Theatre. The annual festival program presents ever-changing art and youth culture in many forms such as live performances, visual art and artist talks. In June.

**Contact:** Sara Hirn, Creative Producer & Program Manager, Kiasma Theatre  
[www.urb.fi](http://www.urb.fi)

**VANDANCE**

Vantaa

This annually held festival celebrates the diversity of dance and takes place in different urban city spaces in Myyrmäki, Vantaa, that are not commonly associated with performance art. The festival is hosted by Mamia Company.

**Contact:** Nina Mamia & Kasper Nordman  
[www.mamiacompany.fi](http://www.mamiacompany.fi)

**XS – FESTIVAL FOR NEW DANCE AND PERFORMANCE**

Turku

Ehkä-production's annual Festival for New Dance and Performance XS delights in the beginning of December. Organized since 2009.

**Contact:** Anna Torkkel  
[www.ehka.net](http://www.ehka.net)

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Pauliina Feodoroff: *Matriarchy* / photo: Michael Miller, OCA Norway



Elina Pirinen: *Mortal Tropical Dances* / photo: Venla Helenius



Sonja Jokiniemi: *ÖH* / photo: Katri Naukkarinen

Zodiak – Center for New Dance  
Contemporary Art With a Heartbeat



Sonya Lindfors: *ONE DROP* / photo: Tuukka Ervasti



Tiia Kasurinen: *I'm not entirely here (cybersad)* / photo: Saara Taussi



Janina Rajakangas: *Meadow* / photo: Sinem Kayacan

www.zodiak.fi

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glimsgloms.fi

TANSSIN  
TALO



Mikko Niemistö & Sanna Blennow:  
*SOMETHING AND NOTHING ABOUT DARKNESS* / photo: Katri Naukkarinen



Akim Bakhtaoui: *Humanculus* / photo: Roza Ahmad



Samuli Emery & Jessica Piasecki:  
*to be brutally honest* / photo: Jussi Ulkuniemi



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[oopperabaletti.fi](http://oopperabaletti.fi)

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Artistic Director Riku Lehtopolku

**KUOPIO  
DANCE  
FESTIVAL** FINLAND **54**

14.–20.6.2023

Jasmine Morand-Lumen, Photo: Céline Michel

[kuopiodancefestival.fi](http://kuopiodancefestival.fi)

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