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# FINNISH DANCE

I N F O C U S



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# WE NEED ART NOW MORE THAN EVER

We are currently faced with a difficult paradox. Concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and global sustainability in the future are weighing on the minds of the whole sector. Gatherings of groups of people pose an infection risk, and people and goods travelling from continent to continent is destroying the environment.

But in today's world we are quick to jump straight to the risks and dangers, completely disregarding the positives art brings people: understanding of the world, life, others and ourselves. Some time ago, art and culture were even seen as promoters of world peace; now we talk of inclusivity and diversity, which art can spread through many different means.

Artists are resourceful when it comes to finding ways to talk to audiences about topical matters, although there are restrictions. In this issue we talk about topics such as pieces that are performed in the forest, at a landfill site or at a museum – where audiences can be reached in different ways to in a traditional performance venue (p. 28). **Sonja Jokiniemi** accumulates textiles, building materials, and wordless speech as her art moves viewers in their cells, in its affects (p. 12). In these digital times, **Johanna Nuutinen** instead opts to delve into the body and senses (p. 8), while **Janina Rajakangas** explores the fragility of men as they age (p. 32).

Bringing artists' work and performances to audiences in different contexts and cultures, exposing audiences to new and different things, is fundamental and essential to us all as people right now!

Helsinki, December 2021

**Sanna Kangasluoma**  
Editor



DANCE INFO FINLAND acts as a gateway to Finnish dance art through international networks and by providing information about dance in Finland. Our mission is to support the development of Finnish dance, and to open new horizons and create professional

opportunities and connections for Finnish dance artists. We are partners in collaboration projects and exchange programmes, and work closely with the Nordic dance sector and platforms.

Founded in 1980, we are funded mainly by the Ministry of Culture and Education in Finland. Read more on [www.danceinfo.fi](http://www.danceinfo.fi).

## Dance House opens its doors.



© Hannu Rytty

## Choreographer in Focus: Janina Rajakangas



© Jenni Pystynen



© Tomas Uyttendaele

## Sonja Jokiniemi challenges forms of storytelling.

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## ICE HOT NORDIC DANCE PUTS SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES AT THE FOREFRONT

TEXT Sanna Kangasluoma

**THE ICE HOT PLATFORMS** held every other year bring together hundreds of dance professionals from all over the world. Whilst we all feel that there is no substitute for meeting face-to-face and enjoying live performances in the flesh, concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and global sustainability in the future weigh on the minds of the whole sector.

The objective of the Ice Hot Nordic Dance network is to bring international

visibility to Nordic dance, tours, and work opportunities for artists. At the same time, international touring as we commonly know it – artists flying frequently from one country to another – poses a serious threat to the environment.

However, we must balance this with the fact that performing live is the essence of the art form itself and development in our sector.

### WHY HAS SUSTAINABILITY BECOME SUCH A PIVOTAL ISSUE FOR ICE HOT?

The Ice Hot network wants to do its part and help strengthen the sustainable ecosystem in the dance sector, taking into consideration the particular characteristics of the sector and the importance of international exchange in the modern world.

“We need to examine sustainability from all dimensions. With our aim of strengthening the sustainability of dance sector activities, we must take into consideration not only ecological issues, but also social and financial ones, amongst others. After all, from a sustainability perspective, they are all intertwined,” explains Project Leader for Ice Hot Helsinki 2022 **Katarina Lindholm**.

Increasing the international connections of the Nordic dance sector will likely strengthen the entire dance ecosystem financially, socially and culturally. Yet at

Ice Hot partners: Danjel Andersson, Ólöf Ingólfssdóttir, Katarina Lindholm, Johannes Öhman, Samme Raeymaekers.  
© Tanja Ahlsten

We need to examine sustainability from all dimensions and take into consideration not only ecological issues, but also social and financial ones.

the same time, we must seek to minimise the load we place on the environment: travelling more sensibly and carrying out production of our art using the most ecological solutions, as well as saving energy.

Ice Hot’s sustainability policy has been named “Soft footprint, strong handprint”. This means that for our events we consider how to soften the carbon footprint of the platform through practical means and maximise the positive impacts the event can generate for the sector.

The Ice Hot platforms bring hundreds of people from around the world to one city for a few days. The performers partaking in the programme number almost 150 alone. Feeding, accommodating and the material consumption of such a large group of people all increases the event’s carbon footprint. At Ice Hot we aim to rein this in by accommodating guests at eco-certified hotels and serving only vegetarian food. Recycled materials and reuse are always the

preferred option where possible, and guests are encouraged to use public transport.

“We also work in collaboration with Zodiac’s Side Step festival, with four of the dance groups staying on in Helsinki and performing their pieces several times and to a wider audience than just that of the Ice Hot Platform,” explains Lindholm.

The digital provision of the performing arts has developed significantly over the last couple of years. Can’t promotion be done online?

“We are definitely aiming to develop the digital communication and online content of the platform event, in order to increase access to the programme without travelling and to minimise production of materials,” says Lindholm.

However, when it comes to conveying the nature of live performances digitally, less progress has been made and not all have access to the same technical facilities and opportunities. What’s more, after a couple of years of minimised travel, presenters and other professionals in the sector are feeling a burning need to meet face-to-face again. Matters progress and ideas develop more naturally when interaction takes place between physically present parties.

It is also worth remembering that digital devices and streaming of data have environmental impacts. Digitality also consumes natural resources and energy.

### HOW DO WE CREATE A STRONG HANDPRINT?

Ice Hot’s sustainability policy talks about a strong handprint to refer to the desire to make positive impacts on the entire Nordic dance ecosystem. But what does that mean in practice?

“We create frameworks that are as fruitful as possible for artists and other

professionals in the sector to come together and engage in discussion, and we don’t think of platforms as simply a market place, but rather as events to support development of the sector,” Katarina Lindholm emphasises.

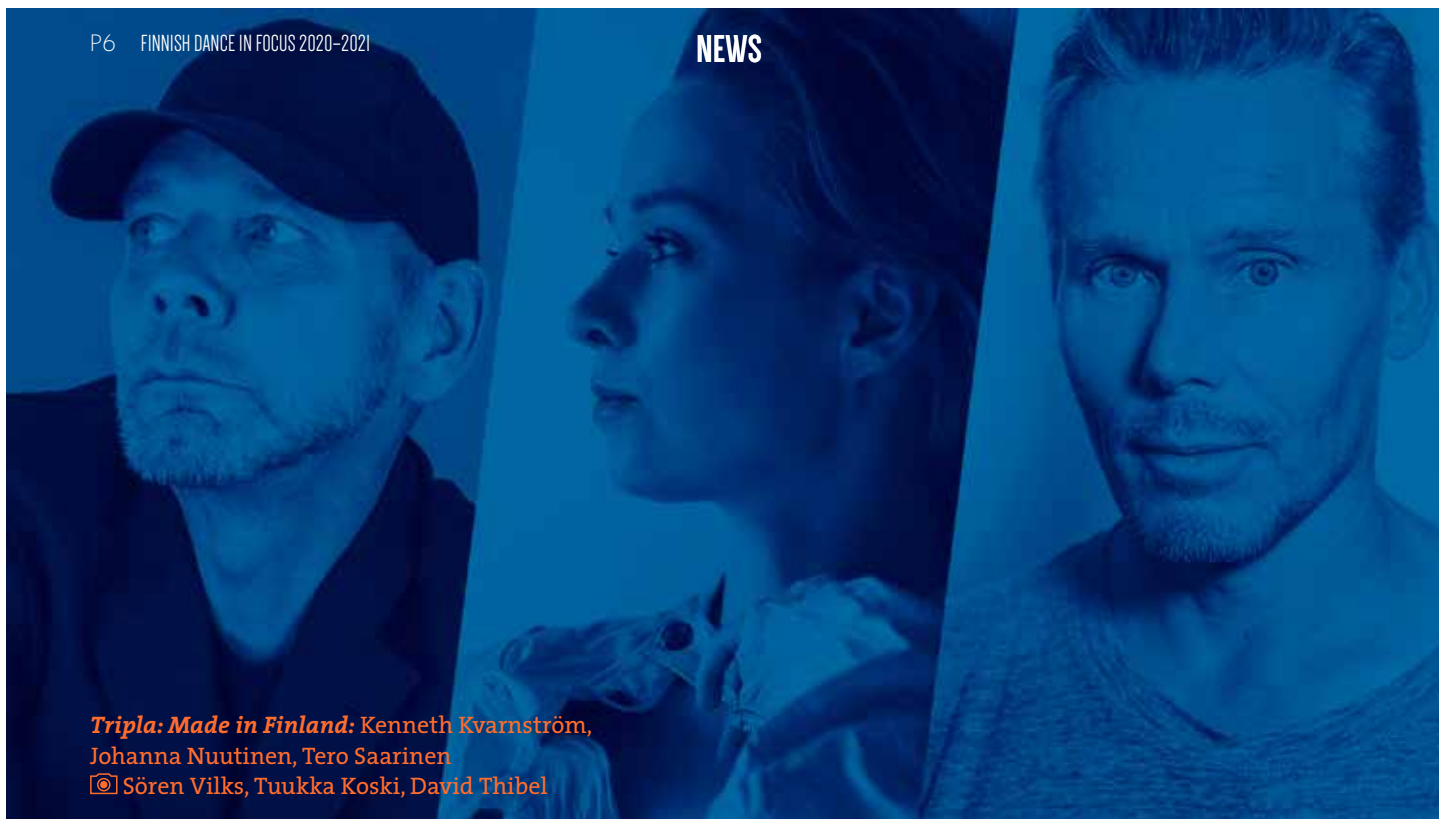
At Ice Hot, performing artists are offered, for example, the possibility to travel ecologically over land and to stay in Helsinki for all days of the platform, by covering their travel and accommodation expenses accordingly. This allows them to benefit from the event more than they would if they were to just travel back after one show.

The organisers will also assess the event’s carbon footprint and aim to compensate for it. The Ice Hot partners want to serve as examples of sustainable dance promotion. They feel that it is very important to talk openly about the entire learning process taking place at the event. They want to share both successes and failures with the whole audience.

Without sharing and open discussion, it can be difficult to get a grasp on what sustainable development might mean in the dance sector. This is why Ice Hot Nordic Dance puts sustainability issues at the forefront. ▀

Ice Hot Nordic Dance Platform 2022 takes place in Helsinki, 9–13 February.

The next Ice Hot will be held in another Nordic capital in 2024.



*Tripla: Made in Finland:* Kenneth Kvarnström, Johanna Nuutinen, Tero Saarinen  
© Sören Vilks, Tuukka Koski, David Thibel

## CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE FINNISH NATIONAL BALLET IN 2022

TEXT Emma Vainio

**THE FINNISH NATIONAL BALLET'S STORY** began exactly a hundred years ago; Director of the Finnish National Opera **Edvard Fazer** had an interest in dance, and professional performers were needed for the operas' dance scenes. The first full-length ballet to grace the stage in Helsinki was *Swan Lake* on 17 January 1922.

In the group's Ballet's early years, its programme consisted largely of Russian classics, bolstered undoubtedly by the fact a number of dancers had fled St Petersburg and settled in Helsinki. Gradually, relations with the west, other Nordic countries and Europe, also began to strengthen.

Internationality has played a pivotal role over the decades, throughout the

group's history. Nowadays, the auditions are an international affair, with Finns making up just under half of the dancers. The communal working language is English and the programme is featuring more and more productions leased from abroad.

In honour of the National Ballet's anniversary year, a book entitled *Se alkoj joutsenesta – Sata vuotta arkea ja unelmia kansallisbaletissa* ('It started with a swan – a hundred years of daily life and dreams at the National Ballet') tells the story of Finnish ballet for the first time.

Fittingly, the National Ballet's 100th anniversary celebrations will kick off in with *Swan Lake* in January 2022, and spring will see a number of Finland-themed premieres.

In February, Choreographer **Jorma Elo's** ballet *Sibelius* will take to the stage for the first time, telling the love story of Finland's national composer, **Jean Sibelius**, and his wife, **Aino Sibelius**. Elo has created choreographies for countless large, international ballet companies and is the resident choreographer for Boston Ballet.

"This full-length ballet tells the story of the composer's whole life, from his youth all the way to the end," explains Jorma Elo. "I love Sibelius's music, and for the ballet we chose pieces that support the narrative of the drama in ballet form."

In honour of this anniversary year for Finnish dance art, the National Ballet will also be hosting premieres of pieces by three internationally successful contemporary Finnish choreographers: **Johanna Nuutinen**, **Kenneth Kvarnström** and **Tero Saarinen**. The three choreographers' joint evening *Tripla: Made in Finland*, will take place on the main stage in the spring.

In August 2022, the National Ballet will welcome a new artistic director, when Finnish-Mexican dancer, choreographer and teacher **Javier Torres** steps into the role. "I would like the National Ballet to shine even more than it shines now," Torres says of his aims for the position. ■



## STAYING ONE STEP AHEAD OF DIGITALISATION

TEXT Johanna Terhema

**DANCE INFO FINLAND** coordinates Digital Leap, the international Erasmus+ project, which is striving to build the digital competence of dance and circus artists. The objective is to inspire and increase understanding of the creative opportunities digitalisation offers.

There is a shift underway towards a digital and virtual presence, with interactions in daily life becoming digital, homes going smart, and the number of cultural and entertainment products available online increasing. This transition has been accelerated by increasing awareness of the climate emergency as well as the dramatic impact on the performing arts caused by the COVID-19 crisis. There is an urgent need to diversify the international operating models used in the performing arts.

In order to keep up with – or rather, stay one step ahead of – digitalisation, artists need to be equipped for new ways of creating. Those responsible for compiling programmes and presenters must also keep up with developments in order to support the artists in their work.

"We would like to see a general improvement in skill levels. It is in our common interest to help the sector gain a foothold in the larger forum of digital content," says Katarina Lindholm, manager of

international affairs at Dance Info Finland.

Lindholm believes that the project will be useful in many ways. Digitalisation can help reach a wider audience and provide additional means for achieving better competitiveness in the arts market. Digital works of art can be appealing even to those who usually are not interested in watching performances, and furthermore, digitalisation can help solve accessibility issues around dance and circus.

Despite all the opportunities on offer, bringing performances to digital platforms is challenging. First of all, choosing the right platform for a piece is difficult and working with a new format can also mean compromising on the artistic vision in order to make it work on screen.

"After all, not everything can be posted online or converted into a digital format," says Lindholm.

Is it even possible to connect with the audience by digital means? The project coordinators believe it is. To help artists deal with the challenges they may face, the project is organising four international learning modules that approach the topic from different angles. The project invites experts from various fields – such as digital marketing and technology – to work as

teachers and facilitators.

The modules will be organised in connection with relevant art festivals in the destination countries, enabling the participants to network and share their learning experiences directly with the target audiences. The idea is to produce learning materials based on the four modules and to disseminate them both nationally and internationally.

"It is important to learn about these things together: between artists and together with experts and facilitators," Lindholm stresses.

The project is a learning opportunity for the coordinators, too. It is a collaboration between eight expert organisations from seven countries – the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Lithuania, Norway, Spain and Sweden. Even though the partner organisations are competitors from the perspective of marketing communications, Lindholm believes that everyone has a common goal: developing the digital capacity of the arts sector. ■

[digital-leap.eu](https://digital-leap.eu)

# JOHANNA NUUTINEN DELVES INTO THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL PRESENCE AND SENSES “PERFORMING ARTS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECONNECT WITH OUR OWN BODY”

TEXT Emma Vainio

**IN WHAT WAYS** do we exercise power through the gaze? Can touch be based solely on presence? How does the constant torrent of sensory stimuli we are exposed to in the modern world affect us?

Choreographer **Johanna Nuutinen** and her working group are currently working on a series of pieces dealing with the senses.

“Whilst the numerous different digital platforms and social media sites that are constantly vying for our attention allow people to keep in contact with one another, they only create an illusion of community, and separate people from their own body,” Nuutinen states contemplatively. “I want our work to invoke questions about the significance of sensory perceptions and encounters and provide the viewer with an opportunity to reconnect with their own body.”

Encompassing strong visual elements in her work has long fascinated Nuutinen. In 2011, she created the choreography *X-it* for the Finnish National Ballet. For the commission, she created another reality on the stage through the medium of film, which the dancers could seemingly step into from the stage. In 2019, Nuutinen adapted the piece for the West Australian Ballet in Perth.

“At the time, I found the empty black box challenging. In my mind I would always

take the movement in another space. As a result of this, film started to become an integral part of my pieces, as a way to expand the spatial experience.” Last time the choreographer used film on the stage was in the piece *Iris* (2017). “Lately, the organic entities conveyed by the body, sound and light have been at the forefront of my work with our artistic team.”

In her most recent choreographies, Johanna Nuutinen has delved into exploring the senses of vision, hearing and touch. *Opia* (2021) examined looking and being looked at, whilst *Hz* (2022) is a deep dive into sound waves and how noise pollution affects us.

The piece *Hz* is produced by the Tero Saarinen Company and is the company’s first commission from a visiting choreographer. “How does the constantly surging noise in our environment drive us to an overstimulated state, without us even being aware of it?” Nuutinen asks, introducing the theme of the piece. And, on the other hand, what quieter signals within us does a heavy noise hide?

“In collaboration with sound designer **Tuomas Norvio**, we chose the theme of water as a metaphor. In water, sound travels much faster than in air,” says Nuutinen. “On average, the human body is 60% water, so the power of sound can actually move us,

make us vibrate.”

The work *Skin Hunger*, due to premiere in 2023, explores touch and examines, amongst other things, how the feeling of touch and the traces it leaves in our memory look and sound.

Both *Hz* and *Skin Hunger* have been designed to be performed in large performance halls, to audiences of hundreds. The soundscape of *Skin Hunger* will be made three dimensional. “I’m drawn to powerful contrasts. We want to create an intimate experience for each individual audience member, whilst in a large-scale performance space,” Nuutinen reveals.

“Despite the distance, how can we get as close to the viewer as possible?”

## PREMIERES AND PIECES IN 2022:

**OPIA:** Ice Hot Nordic Dance Platform  
12 February, Side Step Festival 13–15 February.

**HZ (Tero Saarinen Company):**  
31 March–9 April

**Hyöky / Surge (Finnish National Ballet):**  
6–20 May

**Zero-Zero (Skånes Dansteater):**  
29 October

Dancer Saida Solla in Nuutinen’s *Hz*.  
© Jonas Lundqvist

## GOOD NEWS

### HELSINKI INTERNATIONAL BALLET COMPETITION

30 May – 6 June, 2022

The competition program consists of both classical and modern repertoire. The first HIBC was held in 1984.

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

### DEEP MOVEMENT - EXHIBITION

@ Theatre Museum, Cable Factory, Helsinki. Open until the end of 2022.

Exhibition of the international history of Finnish contemporary dance. In the interviews Marjo Kuusela, Jorma Uotinen, Susanna Leinonen, Katri Soini and Valteri Raekallio talk about how internationality has affected their work.

### DANCE! MOVEMENT IN VISUAL ARTS 1880 - 2020

Exhibition @ HAM Helsinki Art Museum

25 March – 11 September, 2022

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

### BIG PULSE OPEN AIR PROGRAMME

ALIEN by Finnish choreographer Taneli Törmä/LOCATION X, is selected to Big Pulse Dance Alliance co-production programme that supports free, outdoor dance performances touring in Europe.

[bigpulsedance.eu](http://bigpulsedance.eu)

### INTERNATIONALE TANZMESSE NRW

31 Aug – 03 Sep, 2022

Dance Info Finland and many dance companies from Finland will have a booth at Tanzmesse in Düsseldorf. See you there!

# DANCE HOUSE HELSINKI IS FINALLY HERE!

TEXT Sanna Kangasluoma TRANSLATION Claire Ruaro PHOTO Hannu Rytky

We are in the midst of historic times in Helsinki. The city has gained a new, unprecedented performance venue dedicated to dance, which will give dance's profile as an art form a boost throughout both society and in the field of art and culture.

**MIKAEL AALTONEN**, programme manager at Dance House Helsinki ("Tanssin talo" in Finnish) describes the venue as a fantastic space for dance. The Erkkö Hall, situated in the new-build part of the venue, can seat up to 700, making it unique in its versatility in the world of dance in Finland.

Bringing Dance House Helsinki to life has been a long-standing goal, with work to achieve it underway in the sector for decades. As far back as the 1980s, a campaign was staged in front of Finland's Parliament House for a dedicated dance venue.

"With Dance House Helsinki, we have an important role to play in promoting dance in its entirety," explains Director of Dance House Helsinki **Niki Matheson**. The opening of the venue puts the spotlight firmly on the whole sector, increasing its visibility.

"It's not every day that something with such a strong presence and benefits for the performing arts comes along in our world," Mikael Aaltonen muses.

The creation of Dance House Helsinki has been influenced not only by the relentless work of the dance community, but also the support of a key patron and the determination of public bodies. There has been a need for a venue of this kind and size in Helsinki for many years, so Dance House Helsinki is plugging a sizable gap when it comes to this kind of operating environment – a venue for dance, other performing arts and larger festivals, for example.

The venue features the large Erkkö Hall, named after the venue's patron, as well as the smaller, 235-seat Pannu Hall, which has also been renovated to feature state-of-the-art technology. The bookings calendar for the larger hall is now largely full for autumn 2022.

"The scale and the context in general are a novelty for many dance groups. Previously, there were relatively few opportunities in Finland for pieces requiring large stages and attracting large audiences," says Aaltonen. "It's been interesting to see different artists' visions for the venue!"

## ENCOURAGING DIVERSE AUDIENCES AND GENRES TO FEEL AT HOME AT DANCE HOUSE HELSINKI

Whilst Dance House Helsinki will certainly not have a monopoly on dance in the Helsinki metropolitan area, concentrating the dance programming at one venue will be beneficial for both the sector and audiences.

"Dance House Helsinki will serve as something of a cultural centre: as a platform, a location, that welcomes all kinds of audiences, from those keen to experience highly experimental pieces to fans of contemporary circus or dancesport," envisages Niki Matheson.

"Our location at Cable Factory is hugely important in ensuring people find it easy to access Dance House Helsinki,"

Matheson continues. "It's really important to let people know that we are here for all kinds of dance, serving contemporary dance equally alongside other forms of dance."

There are plenty of dance house venues elsewhere in Europe, but there is a huge degree of variety between them. The closest such locations can be found in Oslo and Stockholm. "And in the Nordic context, Oslo appears more clearly to be a national stage for contemporary dance, whilst Stockholm is more eclectic, in some ways closer to what we are offering," explains Aaltonen.

Serving as a guest stage and offering works that straddle genre boundaries are characteristics Helsinki's venue has in common with Stockholm's Dansens Hus. In Helsinki, the stage will regularly play host not just to dance, but also contemporary circus, as Cirko – Center for New Circus, and Hurjaruuth, which produces dance and circus, are house partners. The decision to offer both circus and dance was also based on the lack of sufficient performance venues for either in the city.

## HOUSE PARTNERS PRODUCE PERFORMANCES FOR DANCE HOUSE HELSINKI AND DEVELOPMENT WORK IS CARRIED OUT THANKS TO SEPARATE FUNDING

"At Dance House Helsinki, during the start-up phase we've received funding that allows us to offer subsidised prices when renting out the facilities to dance sector operators," Matheson explains. "Here, we don't work on the basis of a curated programme foundation. This is how Dance House will find its feet in Finland. Only time will tell how the pieces fall into place and our operations and funding develop," states Matheson.



Dance House Helsinki's regular programme will be produced by five entities – dance companies, production centres and festivals – with whom long-term agreements are already in place. In addition to the aforementioned circus operators, the remaining house partners are Tero Saarinen Company, Zodiak – Center for New Dance, and Moving in November festival. Helsinki Festival will also be using Dance House Helsinki as one of its key performance spaces.

Aaltonen and Matheson are happy with the diversity the house partners offer, promising a range of Finnish and international premieres and visiting performances.

Other groups and events in the sector will also contribute to the programme.

"We are a platform for performance activities. We will not be hosting formal application rounds for our programme, instead we will seek out mutually suitable performance dates," says Matheson on the venue's operating principles.

"Dance House Helsinki is needed primarily as a venue for dance, but we are also keen for it to be an active developer of content and operating models. And we can do this thanks to separate funding," says Matheson.

Currently, two projects are underway, which is more or less the upper limit given the venue's relatively small staff body. The SPARKS project has seen the development of ideas for pieces, with the help of

international mentors, which will result in three premieres on Dance House Helsinki's Erkkö stage and three smaller productions in its Pannu Hall.

The other project is a series of international performance visits, implemented with the help of a private grant from the Jane and Aatos Erkkö Foundation, over the next couple of years.

## A PIONEER TEARING DOWN BARRIERS

Aaltonen and Matheson want to ensure Dance House Helsinki does not become elitist.

"Our goal is to foster an open and active culture and showcase the diversity of dance through a varied programme," emphasises Matheson.

Aaltonen and Matheson see Dance House Helsinki as a pioneer, tearing down barriers.

"I don't think it's helpful to segment up audiences – it creates a narrow view of the world and of culture," says Aaltonen. "What's more, we've seen plenty of different forms of expression converging in the performing arts sector, and I feel that this is an interesting development when it comes to audiences."

Dance House Helsinki will be opening with a magical day of celebrations on 2 February 2022. YLE will be broadcasting the opening gala live on national TV.

The first year's programme already features at least 13 Finnish premieres and 10 international visits. Dance House Helsinki is also set to be the main stage and event location of Ice Hot Nordic Dance Platform.

"The pandemic has meant that programmes can end up being confirmed relatively late. In normal circumstances, everything would've been scheduled in a couple of years in advance," states Matheson.

Next year, Dance House Helsinki is set to welcome premieres from, amongst others, **Tero Saarinen**, **Johanna Nuutinen**, **Maija Hirvanen**, and, as part of the SPARKS project, **Outi Markkula** and **Milla Koistinen**.

Aaltonen and Matheson have managed to keep their cool despite the lofty expectations placed on Dance House Helsinki, with some people even going as far as expecting the venue to solve all the challenges facing the sector. In their view, their task is primarily running a venue for dance performances, and attracting as broad an audience as possible to come and enjoy dance.

The Dance House Helsinki operating model is new and unusual for Finland. "We are on the precipice of the unknown!" says Mikael Aaltonen, ready to take on the next challenge. ■

SONJA JOKINIEMI: *HOWL*

© Simo Karisalo



# AND/AND: ON THE ARTISTIC PRACTICE OF SONJA JOKINIEMI

TEXT Heidi Backström TRANSLATION Lola Rogers

Producer Heidi Backström has been following choreographer and performer Sonja Jokiniemi's career and works for several years. Along with her precise language and object-focused solo works, she has grown to be an artist of group works that could almost be called spectacle. Her pieces incorporate visual art, spatial use of textiles, and multi-modal, non speech-dependent storytelling as recurring elements.

**MY FIRST ENCOUNTER** with Sonja Jokiniemi and her artistic thought was in 2015 at Mad House Helsinki, my workplace at the time, where she was spending a residency of sorts as a 'ghost' (!). The 'ghost' participated in meetings and presentations, observed, and lived as part of the live art venue and its various activities. Not long after the ghost post, Jokiniemi performed a version of her 2013 piece *OH NO*, which she adapted for children, at Mad House and her 2016 solo piece *RRRRR* at Kiasma Theatre.

I've had a chance to follow Jokiniemi's artistic arc since then. Along with her precise, language- and object-focused solo works, she has grown to be an artist of group works that approach the level of spectacle. There are also elements in her practice familiar from her time as a ghost. Visual art, spatial use of textiles, and multi-modal, non speech-dependent storytelling are recurring elements and themes that strengthen,

clarify, broaden, constrain, crystallize, and speak to the viewer from one piece to the next.

Jokiniemi's art can easily be described as a fusion of the performance and dance arts with visual art and object theater. But any such definition reduces and categorizes it a bit inaccurately. Jokiniemi's art doesn't move its audience on a storytelling or a purely aesthetic level, but in their cells, in its affect, in the free association roaring within something primitive, something beyond words. I approach the 'and/and' of Jokiniemi's art through pairings of ideas and words, because that best describes what I'm seeing.

## PERFORMANCE CREATOR AND VISUAL ARTIST

Sonja Jokiniemi is a choreographer, performer, and visual artist born in Kuopio, Finland. Her first artistic passion was classical music, which she planned to make her profession until the age of 18. Working with musical instruments has left its mark on Jokiniemi's works. Working with non-humans and with objects as well as making things by hand are a visible part of her performances as elements or players in her pieces as well as modes of performing.

Contemporary dance became a part of Jokiniemi's life at the Kuopio High School of Music. From there her journey continued to London's Laban Centre for Contemporary Dance, from which she graduated with a BA in dance. At the Laban Centre the young artist's interest in hybrid practices and stretching the framework of contemporary dance began, and instead of continuing graduate studies in dance she focused on performing arts at DAS Theatre (formerly DasArts) in Amsterdam, Holland.

In the area of visual art, Jokiniemi is self-taught. For her, drawing is both an important form of expression in itself and a way of approaching choreography and performance making.

1.  
SONJA JOKINIEMI: *Blab.*  
© Tomas Uyttendaele
2.  
SONJA JOKINIEMI: *ÖH.*  
© Katri Naukkarinen

... the world can be looked at in many ways. If a coffee cup starts to talk, what knowledge does it impart?

Her process of constructing every performance begins with associative drawing. The drawings begin to intuitively tell her what the work at hand is or could be. Textile art, rya rugs, and other large spatial textiles are other visual art forms typical of Jokiniemi. They also connect this carpenter's daughter to the tradition of making things with your hands, as well as to feminist practice.

Jokiniemi often works with and/or pairs: human and non-human, construction and destruction, fumbling and sureness. These word pairs are not intended to represent or reinforce binaries but rather to serve as fruitful sources of generative tension within a work.

Jokiniemi's practice can be described as cumulative. Her characteristic way of creating is to pile up layers, with the notion that both the subject and the world are polychromatic and multifaceted, and actually moving away from binaries, or at least questioning them. Templates and ideas from her 2016 ghost residency can be seen in works like her most recent piece

*ÖH*, from 2020, in its figures and forms and the visible common threads in its background. These threads aren't direct references and aren't intended to form a defined continuum, but they have made the ripening and development of some ideas—and perhaps the artist's internal mission as well—possible.

#### VIEWERS' FANTASIES AND THE POTENTIAL OF IMAGINATION

Jokiniemi is interested in the many-structuredness of language, in multi-modal forms of communication and storytelling. What kind of language is demanded by so-called dominant modes of storytelling, and how can that be challenged? Jokiniemi has been working on this subject for nearly a decade with collaborators such as people on the autism spectrum. Creating new knowledge and opportunities, and art as a part of that, are also burning issues for Jokiniemi. She explores these themes from a language systems point of view in *OH NO*, her 2015 piece *Hmm*, and *RRRRR*.

At the moment, Jokiniemi is more attached to broadening ideas about language and to poetics than to creating language systems. She's also interested in her works' animistic potential, which leads her to something approaching an experience of wonder, to imagining that the world can be looked at in many ways. If a coffee cup starts to talk, what knowledge does it impart?

Because objects have a central place in Jokiniemi's art, her work is often approached as New Materialism. It is also often read as eco-philosophical meditation or psychoanalytical performance art. Jokiniemi feels that her art moves in the spaces between these terrains as well as rubbing against them. Her custom as an artist is not to start with a theory or concept to get to artistic output. Jokiniemi's artistic language is born first, then a contextual frame forms around it. Eventually those who view and experience a piece attach their own interpretations





1.  
**SONJA JOKINIEMI: *ÖH*.**  
© Katri Naukkarinen
2.  
**SONJA JOKINIEMI: *Hmm*.**  
© Timo Wright

and ways of reading to it. The intention is not to leave things too open, however, or to lead viewers astray, but rather to lead them toward a world of individual associations and meanings, with the piece serving as that world's beginning.

As a viewer and traveling companion, I would categorize Jokiniemi as a creator of affective works, if they could be said to have any orientation or ism. Jokiniemi's art has offered me mercy in many forms. The freedom of the viewer is one of Jokiniemi's important values. She wants to provide the viewer a surface for projection and to stir up fantasies as both subjective and collective experiences—without defining what any particular person's collective experience should be. It's also important that viewers are able to follow a work with their own individual knowledge and skills. Viewers of many backgrounds can get inside Jokiniemi's works, but the performances demand that the viewer surrender or relinquish something.

#### IN FINLAND AND ACROSS THE WORLD, OUT FRONT AND BEHIND THE SCENES, IN THEATERS AND IN GALLERIES

Aside from theater spaces, Jokiniemi is also interested in galleries and museums as venues. Changing the context changes a certain theatrical aspect of the work, and the behavior code of the audience. An object that is unavoidably read as a variety of stage prop in a theater auditorium can take on new, more distinctively individual dimensions in a visual art context. In a gallery, Jokiniemi's art can be on display not only as objects or entire performances but also as 'cut-outs'—short excerpts of staged works. The bread masks and phantoms familiar from *ÖH*, for example, could be seen moving about Vienna's Leopold Museum in the summer of 2021. They didn't constitute a performance or serve as a teaser for *ÖH*. They were more like images that had taken human form and thus become mobile.

In addition to her own practice, Jokiniemi also works as a curator, interlocutor, and outside eye as well as creating stage objects, drawings, and costumes for other artists. She is

doing her part to create the kind of art scene in Finland that she herself would like to belong to. Introducing other artists and sharing with them are an inherent and important part of Jokiniemi's own artistic thought and activity, whatever role she happens to be in.

Since she was a student, the international arena has been a fertile field for Jokiniemi. Her networks are not only in Finland but also abroad, especially in Belgium, Holland, Sweden, and Switzerland, now her second home country. Jokiniemi's productions are often collaborations with artists from other countries and her works tour the stages of Europe. International activity is important to her personally, but she also feels it's important to art. She believes that the fact that art travels—keeping in mind the situation in the world—makes an experience of a diversity of expressions broadly possible.

At the moment Sonja Jokiniemi is working on a 5-year grant from Arts Promotion Centre Finland and preparing a three-part series of works. The series, planned as an international collaboration, includes both solo and group works, textiles, drawings, and familiar elements and collaborators. Jokiniemi's long-time dream is to create a work for children that continues the ideas of her *OH NO* solo piece from the distance of several years.

"Crumble, crumble, crumble."

#### UPCOMING:

*ÖH* @ Ice Hot Nordic Dance Helsinki, February 9–13, 2022.

Textile installation @ Helsinki Art Museum (HAM) exhibit *Dance! Movement in Visual Arts 1880–2020*, 25 March – 11 Sept, 2022

Learn more at [sonjajokiniemi.com](http://sonjajokiniemi.com)

Heidi Backström is a culture journalist, author, audience member, and cook.



# THE INTERNATIONAL HISTORY OF FINNISH CONTEMPORARY DANCE

TEXT Aino Kukkonen TRANSLATION Loga Rogers

Dance in Finland has always been international. This internationalism has meant training and making a living, artistic collaborations of many kinds, and an opportunity to compare the quality of one's work in international competitions. Dance scholar Aino Kukkonen ponders how these international contacts were born, how have they have served as inspiration, and what they have produced over time in her article on the flow of influences between Finland and other countries in the field of dance.

The field of professional dance as an art form began to take shape in Finland in the first decades of the 20th century. Finland didn't have a tradition of a court ballet; ballet and modern dance at that time were developing in tandem. The first production of what is now the National Ballet was a performance of *Swan Lake* one hundred years ago, in January of 1922.

**Maggie Gripenberg's** work (1881–1976) was among the first that allowed Finnish audiences to see modern dance as an art form. Her career was an interesting example of the work of the international woman artist. Gripenberg was born to an aristocratic family supportive of music and other artistic endeavors. She was on her way to becoming a visual artist but the direction of her life changed decisively when she took a long study trip to Dresden in 1904 and saw **Isadora Duncan** perform. Maggie began studying dance under the guidance of a pupil of Duncan's in Sweden and continued her studies in Germany and later in England.

Gripenberg worked as a dancer and choreographer at the Finnish National Theatre and the Finnish Opera and also created original works for her advanced pupils. In the 1910's she actively performed abroad as well, in the Baltic countries, England, the United States and elsewhere, which was not uncommon among professional dancers of the time. Gripenberg's group won a gold medal at an international dance competition in Brussels, and her career as a dance pedagogue spanned more than 40 years.

In the 1920's many Finnish dancers had close connections

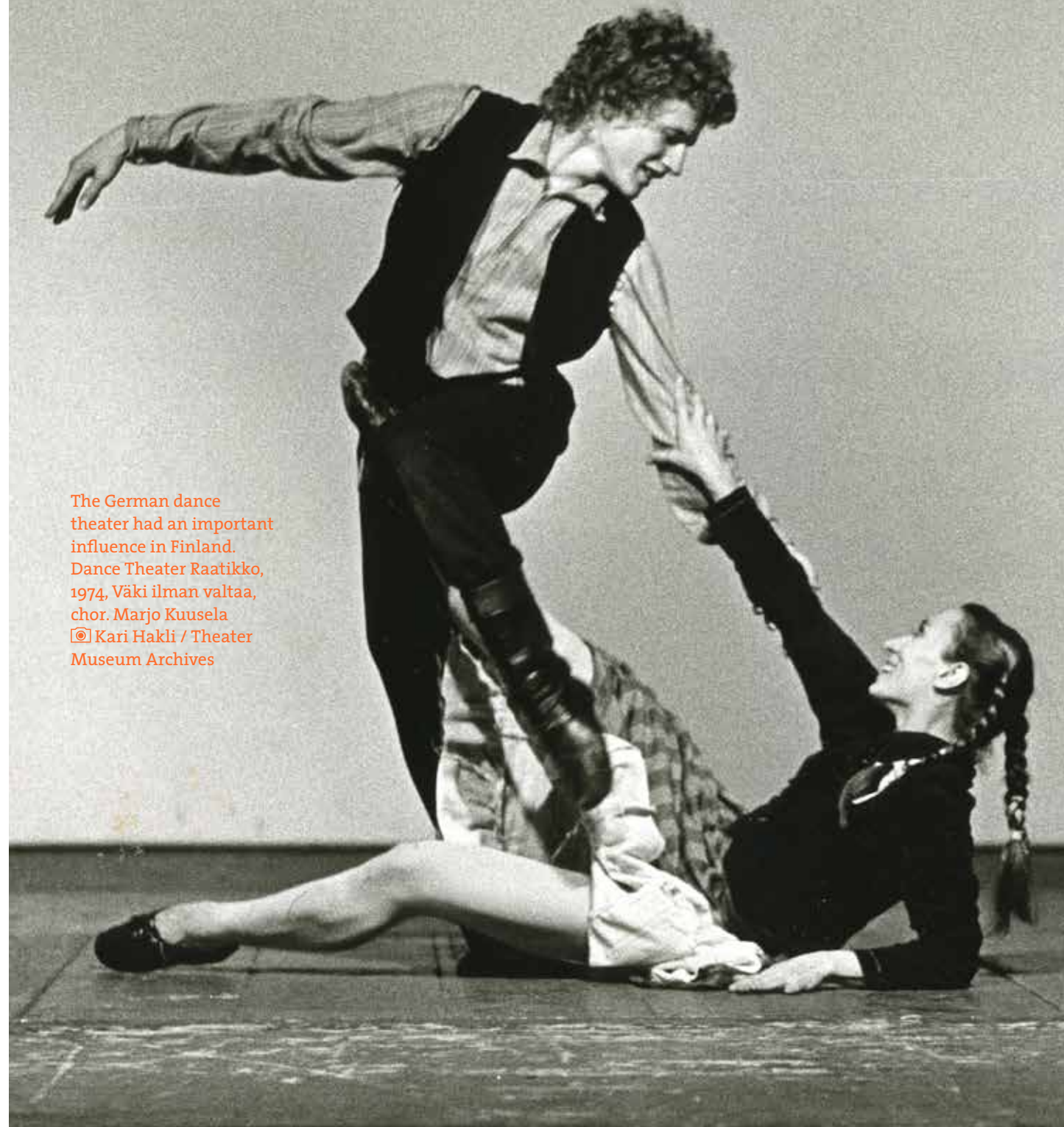
with Central Europe and the influential trends in modern dance there. The Finnish artist **Ester Naparstok**, for example, danced with **Rudolf Laban's** group in the 20's. Key international names of the day also visited Finland. Though the Second World War interrupted dancers' contacts with other countries, after the war Finns successfully participated in Nordic dance competitions.

## THE DYNAMIC 60'S

In the first half of the 20th century the movement known as free dance didn't have an established status or regular venues like ballet or professional theater did. To remedy shortcomings in training, the Union of Finnish Dance Artists began bringing foreign dance instructors to Finland in the 1950's. The first course in Graham technique was offered in 1958.

In the 1960's, audiences were treated to appearances by top dance groups. Finland was visited by the Martha Graham Company in 1962, Merce Cunningham Dance Company in 1964, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1965, and Donald McKayle's Black New World in 1967. These visits also influenced future modern dance professionals' experience of what dance could be.

One particular messenger of American modern dance in Finland was **Riitta Vainio** (1936–2015). After graduating as a physical education teacher, Vainio received her dance training at the beginning of the 1960's at the Philadelphia Dance Academy. When she returned to Finland in 1961, the dynamic Vainio began performing and teaching modern dance.



The German dance theater had an important influence in Finland. Dance Theater Raatikko, 1974, *Väki ilman valtaa*, chor. Marjo Kuusela  
 © Kari Hakli / Theater Museum Archives

Visiting instructors at her private dance school included her colleague **Dyane Gray** and their teacher **Nadia Chilkovsky** from Philadelphia in 1963–64. The school was also visited in the 1960's by such dancers as **Ted Shorter**, **Cora Cahan**, **Norman Walker**, **Morris Lee Donaldson**, **Mary Barnett** and **Talley Beatty**. Many also performed and created choreography for Vainio's group.

Vainio's work changed direction at the end of the 60's when she started creating interdisciplinary productions and improvisations. In the 1970's she became interested in dance therapy as well as liturgical dance, reflecting the spirit of the time. Dance was opening up for ordinary people.

#### PARIS, AMSTERDAM, TOKYO

In the 1960's and 70's, Finnish professional dancers trained in Stockholm, Paris, Cologne, and London. New York was naturally also an important city, where such studios as Merce Cunningham's and Martha Graham's beckoned.

Amsterdam became an important place for young artists like **Liisa Pentti** and **Sanna Kekäläinen** in the 1980's. At the modern dance department of the theater school there (later called

The School for New Dance Development), new kinds of thinking were being developed, influenced by such things as American postmodern dance and gentle body awareness techniques. New Dance works of embodied politics and the body-mind relationship got a home when five Finnish women (among them Kekäläinen and **Kirsi Monni**) founded Zodiak Presents in 1986 as a production collective for independent choreographers. New Dance artists were interested in the dance process itself and broke theatrical and aesthetic norms in their works. Many also worked in performance art groups at the time. In the 1990's, Zodiak became Zodiak – Center for New Dance.

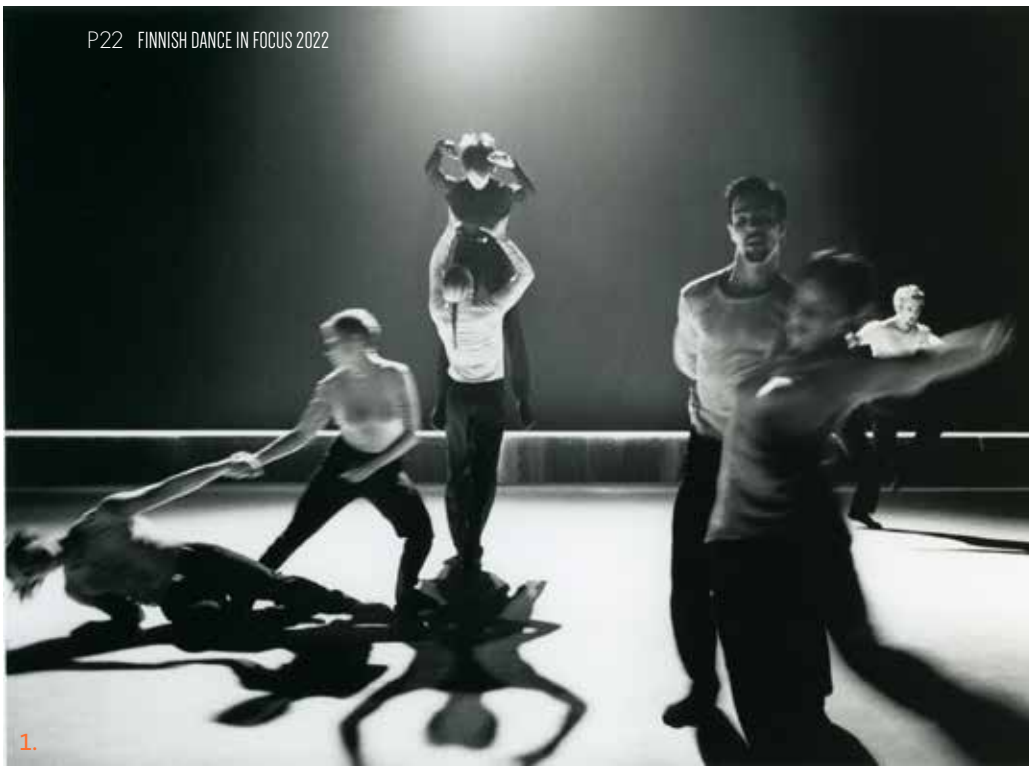
The Japanese butoh aesthetic, its primitivity and intimate, fundamental questioning was a particular influence on Finnish contemporary dance in the 1980's and 90's when artists such as **Kazuo Ohno**, **Charlotta Ikeda** and **Sankai Juku** visited Finland. **Anzu Furukawa** was a visiting choreographer with Helsinki City Theatre's dance group. Numerous Finnish choreographers such as **Tero Saarinen** and **Arja Raatikainen** have gone to Asia to familiarize themselves with butoh and other Asian dance cultures and melded elements of them into their own work.

New Dance artists were interested in the dance process itself, made works of embodied politics and broke theatrical and aesthetic norms in their works. Many also worked in performance art groups.



*Studien über Hysterie*. Chor. Sanna Kekäläinen, Zodiak Presents, 1991.

© Sami Vääänen / Theater Museum Archives



1.

1.  
Helsinki Dance Company,  
1996, *no-no*, chor. Kenneth  
Kvarnström.  
© Stefan Bremer /  
Theater Museum Archives

2.  
ARJA RAATIKAINEN:  
*Opal D*, 2000  
© Sakari Viika

### FINNISH DANCE GROUPS BEGIN PERFORMING INTERNATIONALLY

Beginning in the 1970's, Finnish dance groups gradually started to make appearances at theaters and international festivals abroad. Works by Dance Theater Raatikko, founded by **Marjo Kuusela** and **Maria Wolska** in 1972, combined a variety of styles, and what was most important to them was what dance can say about society. Kuusela's choreography was influenced by **Kurt Jooss's** dramaturgical ideas and work by artists such as **Donald McKayle** and **Alvin Ailey**. From its beginnings Raatikko has actively performed abroad. In addition to the Nordic countries, they have appeared in France, East and West Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Bulgaria, the Soviet Union, the United States, and elsewhere.

Another key modern dance group established in the 70's was the Helsinki City Theater Dance Group (now known as the Helsinki Dance Company). It's international touring began with **Jorma Uotinen's** tenure as group leader in the 1980's. Uotinen's ambiguous, visual dance theater received an enthusiastic reception. His 1985 piece *Kalevala*, based on the Finnish national epic Kalevala, was a bold major work that was presented abroad for roughly five years. Other Uotinen's pieces such as *Huuto* (Scream, 1984) and *Ballet Pathétique* (1989) moved audiences in Europe. *Ballet Pathétique* has lived on not only at the Finnish National Ballet but also in the programs of seven dance groups abroad into the 2000's.

### CAROLYN CARLSON AND FINLAND

The work of **Carolyn Carlson**, who has Finnish heritage, has been of crucial importance to Finnish dance. Carlson's and Jorma Uotinen's collaboration began in 1976 when Carlson was a visiting choreographer at the Finnish National Ballet and asked Uotinen to join her experimental modern dance group at the Paris Opera. Uotinen

embraced Carlson's central concepts of time, space, form, and movement in his own work. It was through Carlson that **Alwin Nikolais's** legacy of modern dance was later seen when Uotinen joined the Finnish National Theater. Carlson's collaborator **Claude Naville's** arrival in Finland to work with Uotinen was an important influence on Finnish lighting design.

In the early 1990's, Carlson led the Helsinki City Theater Dance Group. The pieces *Kuka vei elokuun* (Who Took August) and *Syyskuu* (September) were performed on the group's extensive tour of Europe. Carlson has also been a visiting choreographer at the National Ballet, Aurinkobaletti, and Raatikko.

Tero Saarinen's breakthrough as a dancer happened when he won the gold medal at the Paris International Dance Competition in 1988 with *B12*, choreographed by Uotinen. Saarinen had in a sense already been in contact with Carlson's dance philosophy when he danced in Uotinen's pieces. In the 1990's their paths converged when Saarinen worked in France in pieces by Carlson and others. Carlson created new solos for him, particularly *Blue Lady (Revisited)* in 2008. In that piece, Saarinen was able to create his own interpretation of Carlson's legendary 1983 solo. Each found in the other an inspiring kindred spirit.

### THE SLIPSTREAM OF FINNISH CONTEMPORARY DANCE

The 1990's was marked by a fast-paced, acrobatic contemporary dance aesthetic like that seen in groups such as the Canadian company La La La Human Steps. There was a lot of movement and physical contact in the abstract works of **Kenneth Kvarnström** when he led the Helsinki City Theater dance company in the 1990's. A smooth, elegant movement language combined with a stark, pure visuality spoke to young audiences in Finland and internationally. Kvarnström was later influential as director at Stockholm's Dansens Hus and elsewhere.



2.

The international direction of Helsinki City Theater's dance ensemble continued when **Nigel Charnock** (1960–2012), a central early figure in the DV8 group in London, became the group's director in the 2000's. The diverse dancers in his rather uninhibited and energetic works took away a great deal from his different methods of expression.

In the 1990's, Finnish contemporary dance gradually started to break through internationally. The breakthrough had its beginnings in the birth of higher education in dance, a broadening freelance scene, and academic models of activity and production that began in the 1980's. Refinements of scenography that put Finland on the cutting edge were also catching on in Europe, where lighting design, for example, could still be quite traditional.

Demand and interest in Finnish contemporary dance also came by way of competitions. **Susanna Leinonen's** career, for instance, took off in the early 2000's with her appearance at the Concours chorégraphique international de Bagnolet in France. Leinonen soon founded her own dance company and her unique, refined signature drew interest abroad.

Tero Saarinen has been among the most well-known Finnish choreographers since the 1990's. Tero Saarinen Company's output has from the beginning placed an emphasis on international productions on large stages and their works have broken through on several continents – in Europe, the United States, and Asia.

### INFLUENCES FLOW IN MANY CHANNELS

Festivals have served a significant function as meeting places for dance pieces and people. The oldest dance festival in the Nordic countries is Kuopio Dance Festival, begun in the early 1970's. In Helsinki, the Moving in November contemporary dance festival began in 1986. Full Moon Dance Festival in Pyhäjärvi danced for

the first time in 1992. Zodiak's Sivuaskel / Side Step festival has been presenting programs on such things as postmodern dance past and present and bringing international guest artists to Finland since the late 1990's. Zodiak collaborations with artists such as **Deborah Hay** have produced new solos, group works, and guest appearances.

Nowadays internationalism manifests in more multifaceted ways than it did at the beginning of the century. The field of dance is growing and changing and becoming ever more fragmentary. At the same time, the content and practice of contemporary dance is changing, too; in recent years, for instance, there have been a lot of immersive and site-specific performances. Work done in the form of international residencies interests many artists.

International activity can also be carried out digitally. Even before the pandemic, **Valtteri Raekallio** made digital connections when his dance films garnered a wide audience through television and film festivals. Working digitally is also a tool for reducing the carbon footprint of the dance industry when touring.

Internationalism is not necessarily a worthy goal in and of itself. Its value lies in how international interactions can bring dancemakers new ideas and help them to encounter new and different dance techniques, collaborators, and audiences. Their own artistic identities have been clarified and international exchange at its best helps them to find their own place in the field of dance.

**Aino Kukkonen, PhD, dance scholar and critique**

The article is based on her manuscript for the Theater Museum's **Deep Movement** exhibit, open until the end of 2022 in Helsinki.

**TIIA KASURINEN:**

**The friction between the internet and real life inspires me**

The internet and social media have always fascinated **Tiia Kasurinen**. “Since I was 11 years old, I’ve been active on almost all social media channels.”

Kasurinen graduated from Stockholm University of the Arts with a degree in dance art in 2017.

When studying in Sweden, she discovered an interest in drag culture. “Being familiar with gender studies, I found it frustrating that, as a woman, I couldn’t be a drag queen,” she explains. “I started watching YouTube tutorials and practising, and ultimately made my drag debut in *Vulva T* (2016).”

She found the experience of performing in drag simultaneously unsettling and empowering. “It allowed me to examine identity-related transformations, something that nowadays is a pretty hot topic,” she smiles.

For her piece *I’m not entirely here (cybersad)* (2020), Tiia Kasurinen spends at least three hours getting ready. The make-up process entails around 50 different stages, including applying face lift tape. What’s more, the dance artist has also used foam to create exaggerated shapes to attach to her body – also using instructions found in YouTube tutorials.

At the beginning of the process for creating *I’m not entirely here (cybersad)*, Kasurinen collected a number of images from Instagram. “The almost cyborg-esque presence of performative, hyperfeminine people on social media, and the poses, body shapes and ways of moving and posing you see over and over again in photos fascinate me.”

Kasurinen explores the contradictory nature of how lonely these big social media stars often are. No one knows what is happening behind the scenes or how it feels for those in front of the camera. “Sometimes reality peaks out from behind the photos, allowing the viewer to sense the real feelings and sadness.”

When she brings the made-up, almost cyborg-like character to life in front of an audience in *I’m not entirely here (cybersad)*, the situation becomes more human and vulnerable. “My aim is not to criticise, but rather to present a kind of image of this particular period in society.”

In her short film *Live Stream* (2021), Kasurinen continues exploring loneliness and sinking her teeth into the culture of voyeurism, reality and YouTube.



**MIKKO NIEMISTÖ:**

**I want to provoke preconscious impulses in my viewers**

“Whilst my roots lie firmly in dance expression, I’ve always felt myself to be something of a wanderer in the arts,” **Mikko Niemistö** explains, pensively. During the course of his career he has studied physical theatre in Spain, undertaken theatre studies in Finland, and graduated as a choreographer with a Master’s Degree in New Performative Practices from Stockholm’s School of Dance and Circus – DOCH.

When it comes to making art, Niemistö feels most at home with and inspired by choreography and dance, but he struggles to restrict himself to one specific framework. “I’ve been fascinated by a kind of roughness and unorthodoxy,” he explains.

Niemistö explores with interest how the human body can simultaneously hold monstrosity and filth, but also magnificence

and poetic quality. “Corporal art is excellent when it comes to creating dialogue with these contradictions concealed within the human body,” the artist contemplates.

Mikko Niemistö has played an active role in the operations of performing arts centre Mad House Helsinki, which was founded and is run by artists. Niemistö, **Elina Pirinen** and **Sonja Jokiniemi** form the curator team of the international BAD HOUSE festival. In 2020, Mad House Helsinki, which is collectivist in nature and constantly strives to diversify its international programmes, was awarded the State Prize for the Performing Arts.

One particular topic Mikko Niemistö has been focusing on recently is his dreams. The swelteringly physical, sweaty and ritualistic piece *Odd Meters* (2020) brings to

the stage not only echoes of the constant presence of entertainment favoured by the digital world, but also feelings and messages from the artist’s own dreams. “Dreams sift the flow of thoughts into symbolic language, through which I can process things without too much emphasis,” explains Niemistö.

“I want to take my audiences to a liminal place, somewhere where the basic norms of society cease to exist or are turned on their head.”

**IINA TAIJONLAHTI:**

**My interests lie in the hybrid formed by combining the human body and technology**

**Iina Tajonlahti** had originally planned to become a screenwriter and director. “I trained for a career in the industry and made a number of short films, but I felt that I needed more movement in my life. My film studies background had left me with a burning interest in visuality and writing.”

Nowadays, the dancer-choreographer combines the likes of dance art and technology in her artistic work. “Right from the start, I set out to apply dance in my work. Working across genres is where my passion lies.”

The relationship between machine and body when it comes to movement began to interest Tajonlahti when she was living in China in 2013–2016. “The performance-focused culture made me think about efficiency, automation, maximising output – and on the other hand, the significance of humanity,” she explains.

As a dance artist she has worked and given workshops around the world, in China, Germany, the USA and Australia, to give just some examples. “China served as a springboard into an international career, even though I didn’t know anyone there when I first arrived.”

The project *Human Robot. Moving Robot*, which began in 2018, saw Tajonlahti dance with a social robot. “The aim was to understand non-human agency through movement. I’m interested in how the human body and technology come together to form a hybrid and interact with one another.”

In 2020, Iina Tajonlahti was involved in creating the piece *LAILA* at the Finnish National Opera, as part of the multidisciplinary Ekho Collective, creating dialogue between art and technology. The piece’s visuals and movements flowed in interaction with the audience. In autumn 2020, *LAILA* won the prestigious international FEDORA Digital Prize.

When Oulu takes on the mantle of European Capital of Culture in 2026, visitors will be able to experience the Ekho Collective’s piece the *Peace Machine* in the city. “Using technology or a machine, is it possible to create a system that could bring consensus and peace to the world?” Tajonlahti asks.

**LINDON SHIMIZU:**

**A migratory person and making art from an immigrant’s perspective are what resonate with me**

“Wandering and walking without a clear goal have always been important to me,” explains **Lindon Shimizu**. The Japanese-Brazilian artist’s forms of expression are rooted in Japanese martial arts, film, and manga. At the same time, his movement language borrows elements from diverse dance genres and somatics.

Shimizu has a theatre degree and has acted in many Brazilian films and TV series. “At theatre school, my interest in physical practices diversified and I began to explore movement of the body as a source of dramaturgy.”

Since 2011, Lindon Shimizu has been working on research projects with Rio de

Janeiro-based dance artist **Dani Lima** and touring with performances in Brazil and Japan, amongst other activities.

In winter 2015 he ended up by chance in Helsinki on his way from Japan to Brazil. “It was strangely quiet here, I could hear my heart beating. There was space for the air between the buildings and the people.” Nowadays, Shimizu lives in Joensuu, eastern Finland, and teaches experiential anatomy, movement exploration and improvisation, as well as working as a dance artist. “I feel that here, I can find what it is I truly want to do in art.”

Shimizu’s piece *Birongitai* (ピロンギタイ) (2021) digs deep into what it means to

be a migratory being, as the floor below the dancer and audience begins to tremor. “How do you share a common ground? The earthquake moment can be a very powerful, yet gentle way of resetting the space and creating something communal.” The piece will be performed as part of the Ice Hot Nordic Dance Platform programme in Helsinki in February 2022.

Shimizu is currently preparing his solo piece within the *Project M* with Russian dance artist **Dasha Lavrennikov**. Making art from an immigrant’s perspective is a theme that looks set to continue. ■



**WAUHAUS: *A Great Mess*, 2021.** Excavators' meditative sorting of waste transforms into a dance.

© Pekka Mäkinen



# DANCE TAKES AUDIENCES TO A LANDFILL SITE, A FOREST AND A MUSEUM

TEXT Emma Vainio TRANSLATION Claire Ruaro

**COVID-19 AND SOCIAL DISTANCING** requirements in theatres have driven dance away from indoor spaces, and for a while the only place audiences could watch dance pieces was streamed online to their sofas at home. Whilst this was taking place, the significance of site-specific performances grew even stronger.

The WAUHAUS art collective's piece *A Great Mess*, choreographer **Laura Jantunen's** *Summer* and choreographer **Auri Ahola's** *Viehä* each take dance and performing art far from theatres. What kind of relationship do people and nature have nowadays? What layers does the forest as a stage bring to a dance performance? And what kinds of new perspectives, or challenges, do site-specificity create for dance?

The WAUHAUS art collective's pieces are often positioned between different art forms and take place in unexpected environments. *A Great Mess* takes viewers to the highest point in Vuosaari, eastern Helsinki, which now houses a recreational area on the site of a former landfill. The wind blows through grass scorched by summer and gaps between boulders. The view is reminiscent of an Arctic wilderness – even though we are just a metro ride from Helsinki city centre. All the greenery conceals an old landfill, tonnes of waste generated by humans.

*A Great Mess* is also a journey through the imagination: how everything we throw away orbits the earth, and how all species live in a strong symbiosis with one another. How does it feel to eat ice pops in a wilderness landscape painted vivid shades by the sunset, ice pops made from extracts of herbs that have snaked their roots down into the waste of the landfill?

As the performance progresses, excavators also play their role, their meditative sorting of waste being transformed into

a dance. The sunset always arrives at the perfect time, just as the audience have clambered up to the highest point of the recreational area.

"I keep an Excel spreadsheet of when the sun sets," smiles scenographer **Samuli Laine**, who is responsible for sunset timing coordination. "When we perform the piece at a landfill site in Kuopio, central Finland, I have to alter the spreadsheet a bit, because the sun sets at a different time further north."

## WHEN THE AUDIENCE SEE, HEAR AND SMELL THE PERFORMER

Dance artist Auri Ahola lives in Inari, northern Lapland. "It comes naturally to me to create pieces that take place outside of a theatre, because there are so few theatres up in the north."

The Sámi Museum Siida's open-air museum environment and buildings from the 19th century inspire the dance artist thanks to her own Sámi roots. She designed her new piece, *Viehä*, to be performed within the historical site in the museum's grounds, amidst the sharpest frosts of mid-winter.

The plans, made up as they were of many parts, however, changed, and instead of in Inari, *Viehä's* opening night will take place in January 2022 at Rovaniemi Art Museum's Korundi House of Culture. Bringing the dance performance to life required all kinds of resources, not to mention management of a number of details relating to occupational health and safety. "For example, performers need to be provided with a warm space during the working day – we cannot keep them in -30 °C conditions for seven hours a day."

The themes *Viehä* explores originated from the Sámi



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community's simultaneous strength yet unarmed nature in the face of external pressure. "The piece also deals with the loss and misery, yet also hope and sense of community, people experience more broadly," Ahola explains.

The setting at Rovaniemi Art Museum will be adapted to form part of the *Viehä* world. "The audience will be transported along with *Viehä* and live through the piece," states Ahola.

What significance do site-specificity have to the dancer-choreographer?

Auri Ahola is interested in the person behind the dance artist, stripping away the performance element. "Performance and watching performances come with a set of strong customs: we adopt certain roles as viewers and performers."

"Outside of a sterile performance space, the viewer often sees the performer much closer up, getting within touching distance and hearing the sound of their breathing," Ahola elaborates. "If the performance takes place surrounded by the audience, the dancer is unable to hide behind their performance persona – instead they are exposed to the viewer in an interesting way. Emotional states, sweat and every breath are all conveyed without filters."

1.  
LAURA JANTUNEN: *Summer*.  
📷 Liina Aalto-Setälä

2.  
WAUHAUS: *A Great Mess*  
📷 Katri Naukkarinen

3.  
AURI AHOLA: *viehä*  
📷 Janne Airaksinen

### THE MULTISENSORY SUMMER SEEKS A SMALL SLICE OF THE WARMEST PART OF THE YEAR

Choreographer Laura Jantunen's piece, *Summer*, takes the audience to the heart of Viikki woods in Helsinki. "As a bodily feeling, for me summer is like a wagtail, fluttering, swinging its tail, and fluttering again – then disappearing," Jantunen explains. "To me, the time of year means both energy and lethargy."

*Summer*, a piece built of both dance and sound, forms part of the wooded landscape, with the audience sitting on rocks and camping chairs.

Through the rehearsal process, the working group's interest was piqued in what it might be like to perform in a very un-stage-like space. "In front of the audience there are a few metres of empty space, then the woods, and after that, bedrock. We perform in all these spaces, sometimes hiding, other times reappearing."

### THE CULTURE OF PERFORMING AND VIEWING OUTSIDE HAS BEEN STRENGTHENED

Is the strong status site-specificity is currently enjoying here to stay? Will dance still be at home in the shadows of the forest and atop the bedrock, even when COVID-19 restrictions are finally resigned to the history books?

*Summer* choreographer Laura Jantunen believes that plenty of those working with dance in Finland will want to keep planning outdoor pieces regardless. Thanks to the COVID-19 restrictions, the culture of going to see performances in places that are outdoors and not as easily accessible has received a boost.

"It may well prove easier to find audiences for performance pieces taking place outdoors and in the forest, for example, even once these unprecedented times are over," Jantunen ponders. On the other hand, for many choreographers there will also be a sense of relief in getting back to working in studios.

"But it may still be a good while before all performances can take place in theatres," says Jantunen. The countless cancelled and postponed new openings have led to substantial waits for indoor performance spaces.

"I believe that in the near future we will see plenty of pieces being performed both in theatres and out in nature." ■



2.



3.



# JANINA RAJAKANGAS GETS ANXIOUS TEENS AND AGING MEN MOVING

TEXT Raisa Rauhamaa TRANSLATION Claire Ruaro



Janina Rajakangas  
© Jenni Pystynen

When **Janina Rajakangas** started creating her own choreography, she did so on one condition.

“I discussed it with my parents and we agreed that my father wouldn’t come to watch my pieces. Sexuality, for example, is an important topic in what I do, but it might be a bit much for him.”

Thus a mutual agreement was born and it seems to have made things easier for Rajakangas’s father, too. For example, pivotal to Rajakangas and **Neil Callaghan’s** joint piece *Over Your Fucking Body* (2019) was the possibility to freely explore intimate physical spaces and experiences that we’d rather keep private, ones that are difficult

to unravel with words. Dealing with such themes requires use of the body, which has more detailed ways of expressing things than verbalisation can offer.

Rajakangas’s journey from a young girl passionate about ballet into an original contemporary dance choreographer has been varied and international. The unique style of her choreography has been shaped by the study of all kinds of different dance techniques.

**Raija Lehmuusaari’s** ballet school ‘sold’ dance as a hobby to a young Janina, and ‘saved’ her from the turmoil of teenage years. From an early age she knew that for her, the best way to communicate was

through art.

“You can convey meanings and messages through dance.”

After finishing school, Rajakangas found herself with a burning desire to leave Finland, and ultimately she ended up choosing between London’s Laban Dance Centre and London Contemporary Dance School. She graduated from the latter with a bachelor’s degree in dance art in 2000.

“It was a wild experience as a 19-year-old moving from Turku in Finland to a major European city. I ended up at The Place, and what a wonderful time I had learning contemporary dance!”

Rajakangas studied the Graham, Limón

*Meadow*, 2021  
© Jenni Pystynen



and Cunningham techniques, amongst others, and looking back, she recalls her studies during her youth at The Place with fondness. At twenty years or so of age, she felt as if she were on the TV show *Fame*. Getting the chance to soak up what this famous dance school and renowned contemporary dance teachers had to offer was a fantastic experience.

After graduation, Rajakangas headed to Arnheim’s EDDC as a visiting student to study somatic movement techniques, dancing in **Trisha Brown’s** group under **Eva Karczag’s** leadership, amongst other settings.

“Whilst I had explored a lot of different

contemporary dance techniques up until that point, when I first got there, I couldn’t even get down to the floor.”

Release, meridians, taji – experimental dance involved a lot of new methods and angles of approach.

“The new things I learned were like night and day compared to what I’d learned about dance before.” They gave Rajakangas new opportunities and a boost in her own choreography practice.

“It was like I’d been set free to soar through the sky.”

After graduating, Rajakangas worked as a dancer in Slovenia, in **Iztok Kovac’s** group En-Knap, and with London-based

**Frauke Requardt**, working partners **Requardt&Rosenberg**, and **Robert Clark**, to name just a few.

Following ten years as a freelance dancer on the European contemporary dance scene, Rajakangas began feeling homesick. The Master’s Programme in Choreography at Uniarts Helsinki changed Rajakangas’s career path from that of a dancer to that of a choreographer. Now she is adding to her skills with lectures in dance theory and history.

“The learning resources available in Finland are in a league of their own compared to my experiences in the UK.”

“It moves me to see that dance can



JANINA RAJAKANGAS & NEIL CALLAGHAN: *Over your fucking body*, 2019  
 © Sanni Siira

## “Dance arises from life situations.”

deal with the kinds of circumstances and feelings I have experienced myself. Whilst contemporary dance is a highly artistic form of expression, at the end of the day it all boils down to themes that are very everyday, relatable and shared by us all.”

Elaborating further, she gives an example:

“If I am sad and I start to create a physical equivalent for that feeling, when I sink down, the viewer understands right away what emotion we’re dealing with. Dance arises from life situations. As a choreographer, I try to understand what kinds of physical expressions various situations could be linked to.”

Rajakangas emphasises that her aim is not to depict everyday emotions as they are, but rather to develop them, steering them in a more abstract direction. However, all the while ensuring that the movement is the primary source of interest: how the artist has dressed an everyday, shared emotion with movement, making it into an individual piece of art.

“Movement is a form of communication and it’s worth bearing in mind that the viewer also has a stake in it. In order to attract big audiences, the movements must be linked to the everyday, arising from our own circumstances. I trained as a creator of modern dance and I thrive on using those skills to move the body precisely in a particular way. The form and rhythmicity of the resulting movement are important. From there, I start to cultivate the pieces into dance, as if simultaneously conversing between different techniques.”

Rajakangas is also known as a creator who works just as much with amateurs as she does with professional dancers.

“Community dance, that’s what I really love.”

Part of her practice involves teaching dance in schools.

“I’ve taught a lot and seen in practice how important it is that dance reaches out to non-professionals too. It’s touching to see just how big a change a dance project can invoke in participants who have no previous dance experience. I’ve seen so many people delighted to dance in a joint production or be involved in a shared process.”

For example, Rajakangas’s piece *Teen* (2017) delves into the world of young people living amidst the turmoil of adolescence. The starting point for the piece came from Rajakangas shadowing and trying to understand a teen’s life from her own home, from a stepmother’s perspective.

“As adults, we can be quick to turn our backs on situations that are difficult for teens.”

In *Teen*, Rajakangas sought out forms for young people’s annoyances through the medium of movement. What does the



JANINA RAJAKANGAS: *Teen*, 2017  
 © Sanni Siira

feeling of being a teen look like in the body, when it comes down to it? And how can that be made into dance?

The piece, performed by secondary school aged teenagers has garnered plenty of attention and toured a number of schools. Once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, it will return to its school tour.

“With experiences of the pandemic under our belt, it will feel even more powerful. Anxious teens sat in their own rooms cannot watch it without crying.”

Rajakangas’s latest piece, *Meadow* (Niitty, 2021), dismantles a condition set at the beginning of her choreography journey. Rajakangas’s father is now allowed, and wants to, come and watch *Meadow*, because the piece deals specifically with Rajakangas’s relationship with her father.

“*Meadow* is like a handing over of the sceptre between me and my father. Previously, he was the one with the power, who determined what was good and bad in life.”

For the piece, as her research subjects

Rajakangas used men aged 65+ and the way they are usually presented in the patriarchy.

She seems to be asking what happens when those in power, those strong-looking suited men, grow old. What happens when an aging body becomes frail and the mind becomes sensitive?

“These days, my dad cries at everything.”

The conflict between the powerful image and the reality is what Rajakangas wants to investigate. What about these suited men is shaped by the rules of the patriarchy and where do you start when it comes to unravelling it?

The performers are three retirement-aged men, one of whom is Professor of Folk Music **Heikki Laitinen**. Joining them is one man in his forties and two professional dancers in their twenties.

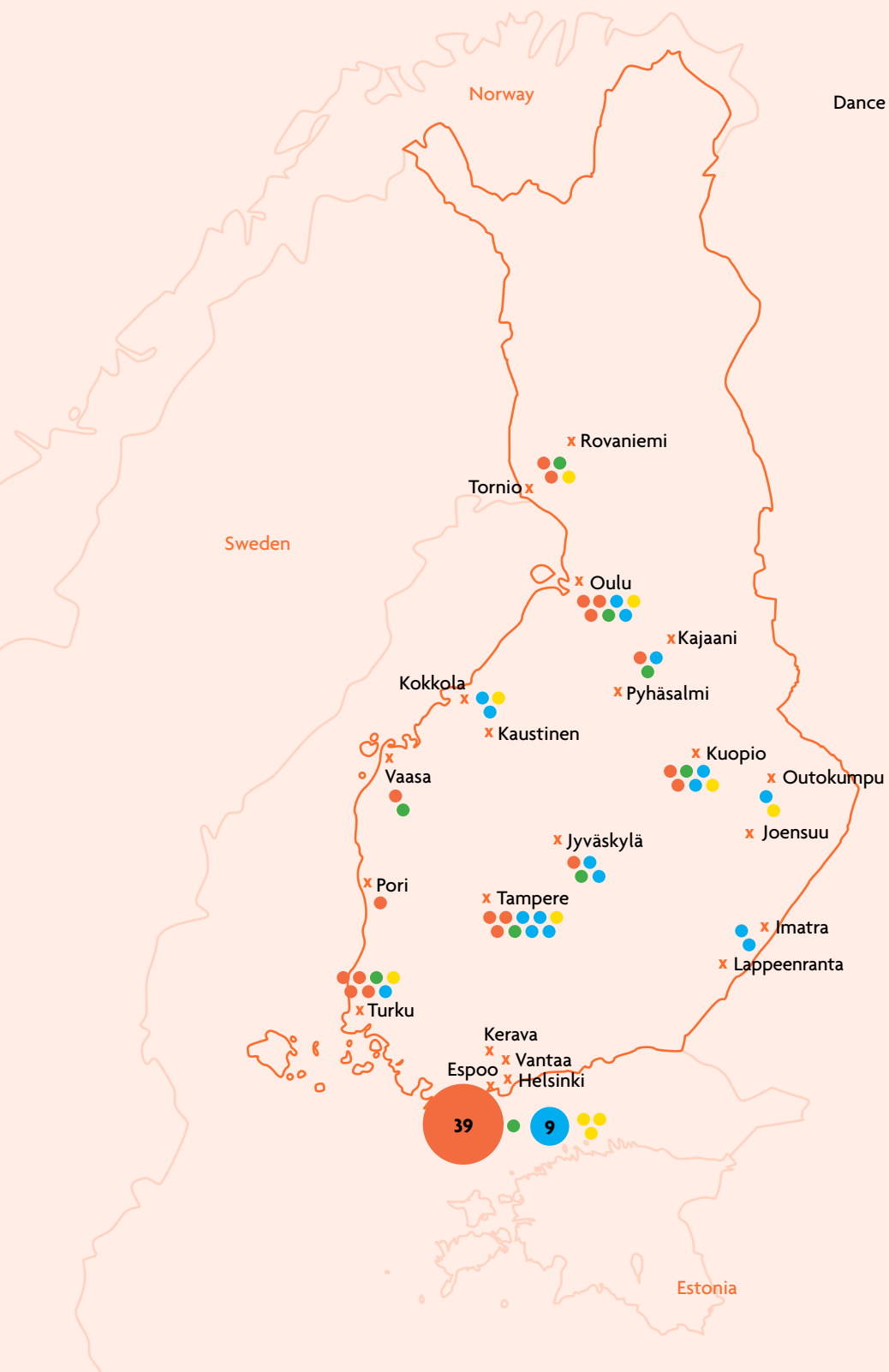
“My father is like a meadow I’ve cultivated. With my father coming to watch this, I hope that other men of his age will also come, because this piece can give them an opportunity to change.” ■

## ON THE GO

Janina Rajakangas is the artistic director of “Tanssin aika”, the Jyväskylä Dance Festival, held in central Finland.

She also works with author-director **Saara Turunen**, whose plays *The Phantom of Normality* and *Medusa’s Room* Rajakangas created the choreography for (Schauspielhaus Bochum, 2021).

# 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:** Madeleine Onne,

Starting Aug. 1st 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, Jiří Kylián, John Neumeier, Alexei Ratmanský and Ohad Naharin. The Ballet employs 75 dancers representing 20 nationalities, plus 12 dancers in its Youth Company. **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

Symboli: lapset



#### COMPANÍA 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.tanssiteatterimd.fi](http://www.tanssiteatterimd.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 Makkonen & 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 it's 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)

Year 2022 is the 50th birthday for Raatikko that is located in Vantaa and also performs on tour. Raatikko creates dance pieces for children, young people and adults, often combining dance, theatre and circus. Raatikko puts on over 300 performances per year, with 2 to 4 premieres, 150 audience events and over 30,000 spectators.

**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:** Heidi Yli-Yrjänäinen,  
Production Manager  
[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's works have captivated audiences and critics in 40 countries, including at Place des Arts (Montreal), BAM & The Joyce (New York), Chaillot & Châtelet (Paris), Royal Festival Hall (London), KAAT & Saitama Arts Theater (Japan), and in commissions for companies such as NDT1, Batsheva, Lyon Opéra Ballet and the National Dance Company of Korea. Latest creations: Hz/HUNT

(2022, chor. Johanna Nuutinen/Tero Saarinen), Transit (2020, music: Sebastian Fagerlund), Third Practice (TSC & Hki Baroque Orchestra, 2019)

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, contemporary ballet, live music performance, dance films

**TSUUMI DANCE THEATRE**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Salla Korja-Paloniemi,  
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](mailto: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, break-dance, eclectic, hiphop, dance theatre, martial arts, visual arts, young audiences, community dance

**AS2WRISTS DANCE COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Minna Tuovinen,  
choreographer  
[www.as2wrists.fi](http://www.as2wrists.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

**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.

The work of Carl Knif Company has gained also international interest. Knif's pieces have toured in 10 countries. In 2022 the company will celebrate its 10th anniversary with three new premieres. There are also many interesting options for touring in the repertoire.

**Genre:** Contemporary dance

**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 SOL-REE 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](mailto:info@offbalance.fi)  
[www.offbalance.fi](http://www.offbalance.fi)  
 Central Finland-based company with versatile, responsive creations. The company produces 1–3 premieres/co-productions + various events per year with fantastic choreographers and artists.  
**Genres:** Contemporary dance, new dance

#### DANCE THEATRE KAIE

Kerava  
**Contact:** Anne Jouhtinen  
[www.tanssiteatterikaie.com](http://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:** [ehkatuotanto@gmail.com](mailto:ehkatuotanto@gmail.com)  
[www.ehka.net](http://www.ehka.net)  
 Performances, co-productions, residencies, 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 ran the Contemporary art space Kutomo, which consists of two bright and beautiful studios.  
**Genres:** New dance, contemporary dance, performance/live art, young audiences



#### FLOW PRODUCTIONS

Oulu  
**Contact:** Pirjo Yli-Maunula, artistic director  
[www.flowprod.fi](http://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  
**Contact:** [vapaakollektiivi.blogspot.fi/](http://vapaakollektiivi.blogspot.fi/)  
 FREEcollective // VAPAAkolektiivi 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

#### ISMO DANCE COMPANY

Helsinki  
**Contact:** Ismo-Pekka Heikinheimo, artistic director  
[www.ismodance.fi](http://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](http://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:** [salla@pragma.fi](mailto:salla@pragma.fi)  
[www.kekalainencompany.net](http://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](http://www.katjalunden.com)  
 Katja Lundén Company has made a name for itself with its groundbreaking works, including Flamencosauna, Edvard Munch – The Dance of Life, Universo, AfterMachine 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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

#### LIVE UMBRELLA

Kuopio  
**Contact:** Johanna Tuukkanen, artistic director  
[www.tuukkanen.net](http://www.tuukkanen.net)  
 Live Umbrella manages the artistic work of choreographer and curator Johanna Tuukkanen. Embracing the collaborative and multidisciplinary, Live Umbrella produces works for stages, galleries and various sites within live, performing and contemporary arts.  
**Genre:** contemporary dance

#### LOISKE ENSEMBLE / OSIRIS THEATRE

Helsinki  
**Contact:** Riikka Siirala, artistic director  
[www.osiristeatteri.fi](http://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](http://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

**MAMIA COMPANY**

Vantaa

**Contact:** Nina Mamiä Artistic Director, Kasper Nordman Executive Director  
www.mamiacompany.fi

Mamiä Company is a contemporary dance theatre. The Company's performances deal with contemporary topics, the human condition and society.

**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, audio-visual

**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, multidisciplinary, contemporary dance, theatre, physical theatre, clownery, visual arts, live music performances

**MYRSKYRYHMA' / 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

**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:** Mikko Lampinen,  
managing director  
pdc@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

**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, 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

**SAIN ESEMBLE**

Raasepori

**Contact:** Annatuuli Saine,  
artistic director  
www.saineensemble.fi

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

**Genres:** contemporary dance, contemporary flamenco, site-specific performance, audiovisual art

**SIVUUN ESEMBLE**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Ninni Perko, artistic director  
and choreographer  
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

# PRODUCTION CENTRES

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

Turku

**Contact:** Nina Renvall  
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

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

JoJo – Oulu Dance Center is a professional 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

issues, significant for individuals and communities alike.

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

**TAIKABOX**

Oulu

**Contact:** Tanja Råman, artistic director  
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

**WILLMAN DANCE COMPANY**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Marjaterstu Willman,  
artistic director  
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.

**Genre:** contemporary dance, dance theatre

**VÄKEVÄ COLLECTIVE**

Helsinki

**Contact:** Outi Markkula, Artistic Manager,  
outi@vakeva.co  
www.vakeva.co

Contemporary performance drawing from and informed by folk dance tradition. Integral to the work Väkevä are collective, temporally loose and multidisciplinary processes that move boldly in the cross section between art, research and documentation.

**Genre:** contemporary dance, folk dance

workshops for everyone. JoJo is one of the four member organizations of the Northern Dance Regional Center.

#### ZODIAK – CENTER FOR NEW DANCE

Helsinki

**Contact:** Harri Kuorelahti, artistic director  
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  
www.pirkanmaantanssikeskus.fi

An association for dance professionals. Encourages co-operation, organises various events, meetings for professionals, seminars. The center also runs the Liikelaituri venue in Tampere.

#### REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE OF FINNISH LAKELAND

Jyväskylä

**Contact:** Mari Hautala, managing director  
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

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  
www.routacompany.fi  
www.rimpparemmi.fi  
www.fullmoondance.fi

#### REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE OF OSTROBOTHNIA

Vaasa

**Contact:** Annika Sillander, manager  
www.pohjanmaantanssi.fi

Promotes dance, makes dance accessible, supports artists and creates job opportunities for professionals. Works with community activities as well as supporting the production of new dance pieces and projects in the region. Develops networks and 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

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

#### 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

#### BLACK AND WHITE THEATRE FESTIVAL

Imatra

For 16 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.

**Contact:** Katri Läht, chairwoman  
mustanjavalkoisenteatteri@gmail.com  
blackandwhitetheatre.net

#### FACTORY FESTIVAL MANIFESTI

Turku

Annual festival with wide-ranging programme from contemporary dance and new circus to exhibitions. In September.  
**Contact:** manifesti@manillantehdas.fi  
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  
www.fullmoondance.fi

#### HELSINKI FESTIVAL

Helsinki

The largest arts festival in Finland, featuring classical and world music, dance, theatre and urban events. In August.  
**Contact:** info@helsinki festival.fi  
www.helsinki festival.fi

#### HURRAA!

Helsinki metropolitan area

A national festival of performing arts for children and young people. Every second year in March, next festival 12.–20.3.2022.  
**Contact:** katariina.metsalampi@hel.fi  
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

#### 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  
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  
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. 15.–21.6.2022  
**Contact:** Johanna Rajamäki, Festival & Managing Director | Riku Lehtopolku, Artistic Director  
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  
lappenrannabalettigaala@gmail.com  
www.lappenrannabalettigaala.com

#### LONELY IN THE RAIN

Joensuu

Contemporary dance festival in November  
**Contact:** Asta Eljoki, Producer & Communications Manager  
www.itak.fi

#### 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  
Kerstin Schroth, Artistic Director, kerstin@liikkeellamarraskuussa.fi  
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

#### 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

#### 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,  
www.tanssimania.fi

#### POWER OF DANCE FESTIVAL

Helsinki

Contemporary dance, dance theatre and other genres. Biennial.  
**Contact:** marjis@willmandancecompany.fi  
www.tanssinvoimafestivaali.fi

## DIRECTORY OF FINNISH DANCE

### 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



### 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:** Harri Kuorelahti, artistic director  
www.zodiak.fi

### 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

### 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

### 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

### TANSSIN AIKA - THE JYVASKYLÄ DANCE FESTIVAL

Jyväskylä

Every year end of September

**Contact:** Janina Rajakangas, artistic director

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

### 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



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02/02/2022

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www.tanssintalo.fi

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Dance **Tanja Illukka**  
Music **Jouko Kyhälä**  
Lights **Jukka Huitila**  
Costume **Sami Korhonen**  
Set **Simon le Roux**

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*Your Cancer In Me is in fact a type of cultural achievement. It deals with a difficult and often silenced subject artistically wonderfully and succeeds to be both universal and personal.*

- Annikki Alku, Demokraatti

Award winning choreographer Ismo-Pekka Heikinheimo is known for his artistic courage and groundbreaking collaborations with the visual arts. For him, dance is a way to perceive, to describe and to be within the world.

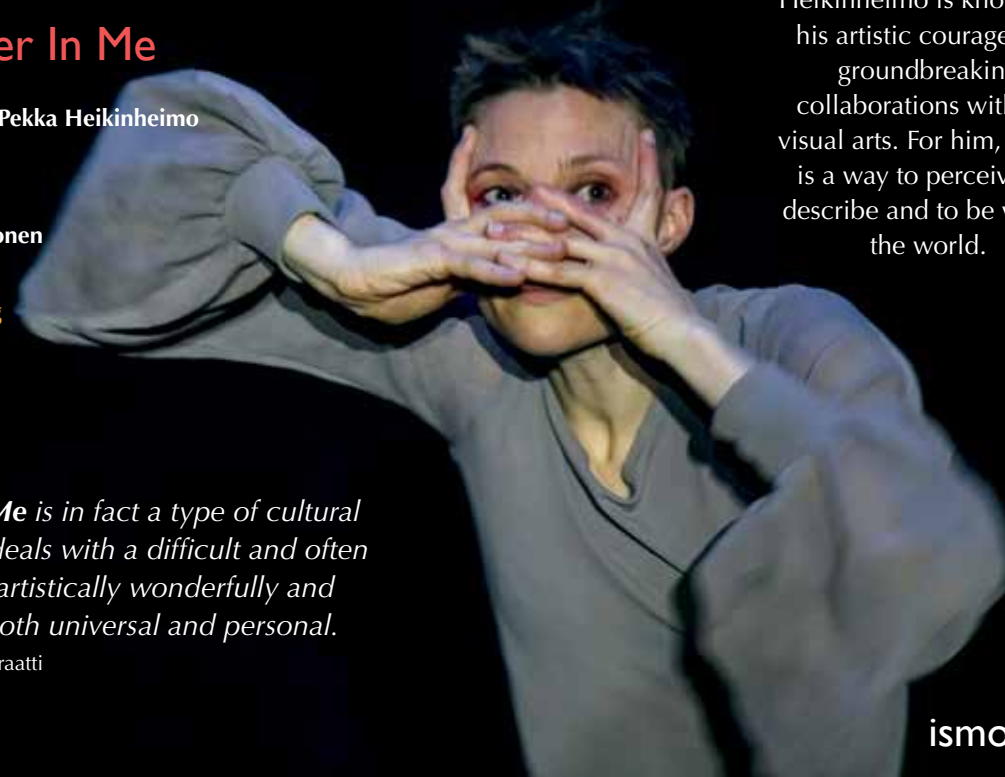


Photo Sakari Viika

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tampere  
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TANSSIN  
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