

MOVING THE FUTURE *with Dance*

STRENGTHENING *Dance* POLITICALLY

Cultural-political Forums 2022

A cooperation of the German Dance Association with the Deutsche Tanzplattform 2022 (German Dance Platform), Tanzkongress 2022 (Dance Congress) and the internationale tanzmesse nrw 2022 (international dance fair).

German Dance
Association



Dance and Society

Dance – in artistic works and as a cultural activity – is an essential part of our social life. Dance brings together people from all generations, irrespective of origin and social status, cultural or religious background – in both urban and rural areas. Dance thrives on physi-

cal-aesthetical diversity, creates encounters.

There are around 60 ballet and dance-theatre ensembles working at municipal and state theatres; approximately 1.000 ensembles, artistic collectives and projects produce works in the independent sector. Over 2.000 choreographic productions with more than 10.000 dancers are developed every year reaching an audience of millions. Enormous strength and creativity combine with these artists, ensembles and production venues to bring the issues of our society to the stage. Dancers reflect the here and now of our coexistence and develop emotional and cognitive levels of reflection in movement. Dance enables experiences that transcend language. At the same time, dance is not only present in theatres and venues, as there are artists and ensembles working in schools, cultural venues, churches and public space.

Moving the Future with Dance

In 2022, the German Dance Association invited guests to three cultural-political forums in cooperation with Germany's three big events linking the national and international dance scene. At the German Dance Platform 2022, the Dance Congress 2022 and the internationale tanzmesse nrw 2022, people from dance, politics and funding practice discussed challenges and the steps needed to strengthen the dance scene. With a clear conclusion: specific and sustainable measures in cooperation with municipalities, federal states and the federal government are urgently needed after the past two years.

With an eye on the upcoming transformation processes of the future, a radical rethink will be needed in the sense of unbureaucratic opening-up processes at institutions and the creation of funding instruments providing cross-discipline support processes. The wish of collectives, companies and artists is for funding to be adapted to the production process as it is in practice, which not only means strengthening the exchange between institutions and artists on discourses, needs and working methods, both nationally, internationally and within and beyond project work, but also between artists, institutions and administrations, and among the various budget departments to facilitate knowledge transfer and cross-disciplinary funding (economy, education, social affairs, culture, innovation, digital).

The objectives formulated were the standardisation of funding structures at federal government, federal state and municipal level as well as the simplification and digitalisation of application procedures for funding programme. There is a tense relationship between the latter and the state's need to check the eligibility of the funding used. A Dance Funding Round Table involving all federal states in cooperation with the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, the German Federal Cultural Foundation, the Performing Arts Fund and representatives of the dance scene could be a suitable format for entering into a dialogue on this. There was also a call for the funding of art and culture to become an obligation embedded at the federal state and municipal level. Internationally, the need was cited to develop and expand a strong European dance network in order to formulate joint future visions through and beyond hierarchies and considerations in the national context.

As you see, there's a lot to do. We have summarised the most important points of the cultural-political forums for you on the following pages – including a QR code to stream a recording of the respective forum. The key demands and suggestions are provided in a condensed form on the last page.

We look forward to continuing to work with you on the central issues facing dance!



Michael Freundt
Managing Director of the German Dance Association

Forum I

Dance: Move the Future

German Dance Platform 2022 HAU Hebbel am Ufer Berlin, 16 March 2022

The first panel in the cultural-political forums, “Dance: Move the Future”, took place at the HAU Hebbel am Ufer theatre in Berlin during the German Dance Platform 2022 in March. Among other things, Prasanna Oommen spoke with Katrin Budde (Chair of the German Bundestag’s Culture and Media Committee), Sabine Köhncke (Head of Division in the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin), Carena Schlewitt (Director of the Hellerau – European Centre for the Arts) and Matthias Quabbe (dramaturg, Dance Platform jury member) about the role that dance can and should play locally, nationally and globally in the future, its special potential for a changing society and how cultural policy can best support these interrelationships.

Has politics recognised and responded to dance’s special potentials for social cohesion?

- Dance is non-verbal, low threshold, links different milieus and facilitates other forms of communication beyond language barriers.
- Fundamental problem: art and culture are seen as a voluntary task of the state, but they should be embedded as an obligation, not just at federal government level but also in federal states and municipalities, as only then will financial resources be made available in a binding way.
- Programmes such as TANZPAKT Stadt-Land-Bund (DANCE PACT Local-Regional-National) or the NPN (National Performance Network) are structures that could be built on.
- It should be less about the potentials of dance than the needs of dance artists. In addition to social added value, it is about understanding the art as its own value in and of itself.

What steps are needed to develop production structures and the funding system – also in light of a possible debt ceiling in 2023?

- Retention of the differentiation of funding that came with the Neustart Kultur (New Start For Culture) programme: acknowledge as work not only product and presentation but also the before, during and afterwards. The art of collectives, companies and artists must be funded so that it correlates with the actual production process.
- Evaluation of funding programmes with actors who have gathered their individual funding experiences through the respective funding programme.
- After the NEUSTART KULTUR programme has ended, it must be discussed in the Plenum for Culture how financial resources can be bundled so that funding remains stable.
- There are very different perceptions in federal states and municipalities about what is called “independent dance”; there are sometimes major discrepancies among individual actors in municipalities, federal states and the federal government in this respect.
- Federal government allocations for independent performing arts under the NEUSTART KULTUR programme are low compared to those for municipal and state theatres. Germany needs more production houses, as existing theatres and production venues no longer illustrate the scene’s breadth; impetus is needed here in cities and federal states.

What does the dance scene need to do to renew accesses to the public and provide more arguments in favour of funding?

- On the artistic side, there’s a need to understand art also as imposition; this forms a contradiction with creating access and removing thresholds. The artistic side is working with this contradiction.
- Beginning with art and aesthetics: dealing with reality material differently artistically rather than producing something specific to reach certain people.
- Give thought to dance at an early stage: a different resonance in society if more people come into contact with dance as a form of expression at an early age.



*“For dance to be able to move the future,
we need well-coordinated funding instruments
between municipalities, federal states and
the federal government.”*

Sabine Köhncke,
Head of Division in the Senate Department
for Culture and Europe of the State of Berlin

*“We need dance everywhere, including
in the so-called provinces.”*

Katrin Budde,
Chair of the German Bundestag’s Culture and Media Committee



Forum II

Dance: Establishing Relationships

Dance Congress 2022 – Sharing Potentials Mainz, Mainz State Theatre, 17 June 2022

At the Dance Congress 2022, the second cultural-political forum “Dance: Establishing Relationships” focused on the connecting lines between so-called permanent structures and independent scene, audience and art, transfer and cultural education. A keynote speech from the field of participation research was followed by a discussion involving Katherine Heid (Managing Director of the Cultural-Political Society), Markus Müller (Director of Mainz State Theatre), Antje Pfundtner (choreographer) and Adrienne Goehler (author and curator). The central question was how arts can influence society in times of pandemic and the war in Europe with a focus on the world that younger generations are living in.

What is needed for good and on-going relationships?

- Continuous dialogue with institutions but also among artists should facilitate the exchange on discourses, needs and working methods, both nationally and internationally and through and beyond project work. Unlike employees at institutions, artists are unable to participate regularly in industry meetings as they do not have on-going support.
- With an eye on the upcoming transformation processes, a radical rethink is needed in the sense of unbureaucratic opening-up processes at institutions and the creation of funding instruments that support processes across disciplines.
- Flexibility is required on both the artist side and the funding-body side in order to reach a wide audience.

How can the young target group and art be linked? What needs to happen in terms of cultural policy?

- School pupils should experience local theatre in order to establish a long-term connection with art. Good examples are the “Theaterstarter” and “enter” projects in Mainz, ensuring that an entire generation has visited a state theatre at least once.
- In order to be an engine of social transformation, institutions have to change from within so that young people can identify with those working there on and behind the stage. It is also about diversity.
- What’s needed in purely practical terms is to work actively with families, also services such as a shuttle to rehearsals and homework supervision. An example of good practice is the Flagey Academy, a choir project in Brussels where children and young people go to different districts to sing there and thereby develop a different sense of belonging to their city’s living environment.

What is needed from the point of view of interest groups?

- Longer funding periods, also for research, are needed as well as a departure from overproduction and the funding of sustainable revival processes.
- It requires theatre to be a basic cultural provider covering social topics using several disciplines and many productions, in this way reaching different age groups, plus changing structures, as is practised in the independent dance scene, that break up and transform existing systems through evaluation and renewal.
- Dancers should have more of a say; seek joint paths in order to leave dependency relationships and be responsible for one another.
- Dance networks should position themselves more strongly, particularly at the European level, to formulate joint future visions through and beyond hierarchies and considerations in the national context, at the same time focusing on the healing potential of dance.



“What for me constitutes art, an aesthetic access to the world – and aesthetics is not beauty but perception with all the senses –, this is what our métier ought to be and this is what we must assert against increasing fear.”

Adrienne Goehler,
author and curator



<https://vimeo.com/727275060>

Forum III

Dance: Transnational Collaboration

internationale tanzmesse nrw 2022
FFT Düsseldorf, 2 September 2022

At the internationale tanzmesse nrw 2022 in Düsseldorf, the third cultural-political forum “Dance: Transnational Collaboration” was dedicated to the challenges and potentials of transnational networking, discussed by Susanne Düwel (Head of the International Affairs Unit, Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia), Barbara Gessler (Head of Unit of Creative Europe), Israel Aloni (Artistic Director of ilDance) and Elisabetta Bisaro (Artistic Co-director of Aerowaves).

What are the challenges currently facing transnational collaboration and how can they be met?

- Geographic and social conditions for working artists are very heterogeneous. Artistic freedom is under threat in a few EU countries.
- Artists from countries that do not help to finance the EU’s Creative Europe funding programme are unable to apply for funding.
- A lack of money vs. high expectations on Europe: shockingly small budget for Creative Europe – around 2.5 billion euros for the next seven years.
- One challenge is co-financing, which is why Creative Europe requires only 20% of own financing from small projects.

What is needed to strengthen transnational collaboration in the long term and create access to it?

- “Interviduality” not “internationality”: putting the focus on the connections between people. In some countries, artists work in translational projects out of interest; in others, to survive. How can an environment be created in which artists can also feel secure between projects?
- Break up of hierarchies between artists and institutions.
- Creating access through reduced bureaucracy: simplified application procedures, digitalisation and knowledge transfer vs. the state’s obligation to provide proof for monies.
- Under the Maastricht Treaty, the EU cannot replace what is not being done at other levels (subsidiarity). It can in particular promote exchange with/among projects and institutions.
- Good foundations at the municipal and federal state level are important to enable dancers to have access to European funding instruments.

How sensible is touring in view of the climate crisis?

- Sustainability produces added costs for institutions that have to save energy.
- In the face of plummeting visitor numbers (due to the pandemic), the question arises how far touring is necessary and how networks can be kept alive digitally, e.g., through longer stays with residencies and funding for revivals and reworkings.
- Productions can also be performed more often in situ, e.g., in museums where own inventories/collections are presented rather than blockbusters.
- Exchange programmes have benefited heavily from low-costs flights; that has to change.
- More intensive artist engagement with local communities, more international collaboration among organisations operating locally.

why we do it. Once we understand why we are doing it, we will be able to think about how we are doing it. If we live in an environment, reality, that keeps pushing the artists to live under such heavy and nearly impossible conditions we keep hearing from our colleagues, for instance from Belarus, we kind of accepted. We hear it and remove and think about the next project. We look for the medal, we look forward and tell us what the right thing is.

(Prasanna Oommen) What life do we want to live? That's a beautiful question. It brings me back to cultural funding. As already said in the beginning and you mentioned, we as the EU cannot replace what others are doing, we can just supplement. We have framework conditions and cultural funding. Barbara Gessler, from the EU perspective, shouldn't Germany see cultural funding as the mandatory task so that we can discuss all these topics. Because the municipalities can decide for themselves whether they invest the 80% intercultural funding. This was discussed in the first panel ready.

(Barbara Gessler) I



“I think a network like Aerowaves needs to collaborate more closely with other networks outside the dance sector. Forming alliances in and beyond dance is a way to improving opportunities for artist careers and implement new models of mobility (...)”

Elisabetta Bisaro,
Artistic Co-director of Aerowaves



<https://vimeo.com/774744107>

What are the next tasks?

“The cultural-political forums have confirmed our work and made it clear how immensely important exchange is between the various levels. It is a mistake to think that we can return to a former normality after the past two years. New long-term and practice-oriented strategies are needed so that dance – the art and the

body knowledge – can also move society in the future. Therefore, we urgently need specific steps to take dance to all regions of Germany and to Europe, in a cooperation of cities, federal states and the federal government.”

Michael Freundt, Managing Director of the German Federal Dance Association

All three forums underlined the great need for stronger funding programmes for the national dance landscape. The following demands and suggestions were made, among others:

Federal government level

- Evaluation of the funding programmes together with the actors involved in them
- Discussion of how financial resources can be bundled so that funding remains reliable
- Longer funding periods, also for research work; departure from overproduction; funding of sustainable revival processes
- Further develop social-protection models for artists
- Standardisation of Germany's funding structures

Federal state level

- Creation of more production houses or restructuring of Germany's performance and production platforms, as the institutions depict only part of the dance and theatre landscape
- Dance Funding Round Table of all federal states with the federal government
- Best practice in North Rhine-Westphalia: funding agreements by the federal state with municipal institutions provide for surcharges if subsidies are not reduced

Municipalities and cities

- Embed art and culture as an obligation
- Establish rotation principles: facilitate research and production funding, in alternation if necessary
- Maintain and strengthen firm foundations at the municipal and federal state level to enable dancers to have access to European funding instruments

Europe

- (Further) development of a strong European dance network to formulate joint visions through and beyond hierarchies and considerations in the national context
- Co-financing challenge: reduction of own financing for small projects (Creative Europe only 20%)

Overlapping

- Make funding programmes less bureaucratic: simplified application procedures, digitalisation
- Give thought to dance at an early stage, interlink cultural education and dance mediation
- Enable continuous dialogue with institutions but also among artists, compensating independent artists for the exchange
- Continuous reflection and further development of institutions in order to be an engine of social transformation, also that (young) people can identify with them (diversity)

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DIS-TANZEN

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STADT LAND BUND
Eine gemeinsame Initiative von Kommunen,
Bundesländern und der Beauftragten der Bundesregierung
für Kultur und Medien zur Exzellenzförderung im Tanz

DANCE UPDATE GERMANY

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