FINNISH DANCE FOCUS
DANCE CHANGES THE WORLD, AND CHANGES PEOPLE

“I believe in dance as an archetype of empathy and connectedness, something we need to see and experience in times of social and political extremism,” Pia Krämer says in this issue. She has been chosen for the future Dance House programming team, which you can read more about on page 8.

The physicality of dance, its bodily expression, isn’t separate from a person’s mental state and emotions, or from our political or social environment. Dance professionals know this intuitively, but there is now an attempt to find scientific evidence for it as well. Neuroscience research has shown that people’s brains become tuned to each other’s frequency when they watch a dance performance. It is thought that this may increase empathy in a broader sense and improve people’s ability to cooperate – just the things the world needs more of!

Also in this issue, artists who work in inclusive dance tell us what is meant by everyone’s cultural right to art – including dance. At the individual level people are empowered when they have an opportunity to be equal members of society regardless of their age, abilities, or other variables – to experience dance, to express themselves, and to create something meaningful through dance if they wish – to become visible.

As artist and writer Teemu Mäki says in this issue, “The physical, sensory medium of dance can be extremely powerful. It can cause such great internal upheaval that our minds, our existence, and our behavior is changed.”

Or put another way: The purpose of art is not to entertain elites, but to change the world.

Helsinki, August 2019
Sanna Kangasluoma
Editor
How should we watch contemporary dance, and how should we think about it?

“First and foremost, I’m interested in people.”

What is so attractive about Monteverdi?

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SPACE COMES FIRST, THEN MOVEMENT

WHEN CHOREOGRAPHER Petri Kekoni embarks on a new work, he initially views it from a distance.

“At first, I see the stage from the outside. Movement follows at the next plunge, but these two worlds aren’t separate but closely connected.”

He shows drawings for his forthcoming work from a sketch book and says that he often designs the sets himself. When he was twenty, fine arts and architecture were possible career choices but dance won.

Kekoni says that he’s still dedicated to dance and still capable of being intoxicated by movement.

“I prepare a lot in advance for the dancers, but not everything is pre-designed – I also improvise together with them. The situation is collective and rationality then
NEWS

DANCERS ON TO A PEDESTAL

Erratic block (2018), a solo work reminiscent of an installation, was a kind of watershed because it relied heavily on improvisation. “The work incorporated the aesthetics of getting wrapped up and hiding. All of a sudden, there was no need to fix the movements with such precision, though the themes were crystal clear. The costume resembled a big, elastic train which I had wrapped round myself and which I had to get out of. I wanted to commodify myself on one hand and to humanise a commodity on the other.”

Kekoni’s works often present technical challenges. For example, the slow lifting of the gigantic costume was achieved by a traditional theatrical technique: by means of sandbags. Opening them was like watching an hourglass.

Erratic block is suited to different spaces and continues to be performed in a new environment. Kekoni’s design won the environmental art competition of the city of Helsinki. In the outdoor version, the figure glides in from the sea on a ferry and the challenge is to provide a large sphere of light at a height of ten metres. Kekoni smiles and compares it to a full moon in August.

The next group work, 369˚, will have its premier in November and continues with the concept of “a stage within a stage”, something that has been present in Kekoni’s earlier works. “It will feature some kind of a boxing ring, an altar or a construct by the Aztecs for five dancers. The audience will be able to walk freely round it from all directions. The focus is in the middle; the aim is a shared, intensive vortex.

Kekoni perceives his work as a continuum and wants to combat the disposable culture surrounding art. He has organised mini festivals at which earlier works can be seen again. ‘The Glimmer of Twilight (2005) is a work that I’d like to do now. It incorporated texts written by Sjón from Iceland about the melting of icebergs. What would it look like now when climate change has become a shared concern?’”

IT’S A BRILLIANT MOMENT WHEN A DANCER PUTS ON HIS OR HER COSTUME FOR THE FIRST TIME

The Erratic block impresses with its statuesque and layered visual approach, which was born together with dance, one feeding the other.

Kekoni and Joanna Weckman, a costume designer and researcher, have cooperated on six works so far. When the advance photos were taken on the frozen sea in March, Kekoni moved around wearing the prototype of the costume. The magical, surprising images inspired the choreographer towards a certain direction.

“I attended the rehearsals right from the start. It was splendid and exciting, not knowing what the end result would be. We shared a firm belief that solutions would emerge,” says Weckman.

She has consciously favoured recycling: partly for budgetary reasons, partly as an artistic choice because costumes carry their history with them. For example, Kekoni’s work Storm-03 utilised costumes obtained from National Ballet.

For Erratic block, they bought a large number of knitted garments in certain colours from recycling centres. Pieces of the items were sewn together while the old shapes remained recognisable.

“It’s the biggest and heaviest costume I’ve ever designed. It was essential for the material to be elastic and to breathe, and you also had to see through it.

Contemporary dancers are open to experimentation and they have a close relationship with their bodies and outfits. They also appreciate their costumes. It’s always a brilliant moment when a dancer puts on his or her costume for the first time,” says Weckman.

Erratic block @ Performing HEL
Friday August 30, 2019.
www.kekonico.fi
NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF MOVING IN NOVEMBER IS KERSTIN SCHROTH

PERFORMING HEL – CONNECT WITH THE FINNISH PERFORMING ARTS

PERFORMING HEL is a biennial showcase for the performing arts, held most recently in August 2019. The program includes full-length circus, dance and theatre performances as well as demos and production pitches.

The showcase is organized by Dance Info Finland and Circus Info Finland, together with the Helsinki Festival, Helsinki's Swedish Theatre, the Espoo City Theatre, Theatre Info Finland TINFO, and the Finnish National Theatre.

HANOVER-BORN and Paris-based arts manager and curator Kerstin Schroth has been appointed as the artistic director of the Moving in November festival for a three-year fixed term.

Until July 2019 she worked as company manager for the Danish choreographer Mette Ingvartsen. In 2006 she founded the SommerBar event – part of the Tanz im August festival – which she curated and was in charge of for six years. She has also lectured on production management, curation, and communication at several universities.

“In times when our society is struggling to take responsibility for a common future, Kerstin’s belief in the potential of contemporary dance and performing arts is inspiring,” explain Liisa Pentti, president of the board, and Isabel Gonzalez, executive producer of the festival.

“She has strong strategic skills and an extensive knowledge of the international performing arts scene. We believe that with Kerstin as its artistic director, the Moving in November festival will continue to develop locally and to strengthen its position internationally.”

Founded in 1986, the Moving in November festival has played a pivotal role in developing the contemporary dance scene in Finland. In the position of artistic director, Kerstin Schroth succeeds Mikael Aaltonen, who has curated the festival for more than a decade together with Ari Tenhula. The first Moving in November festival curated by Schroth will be take place in 2020.

The 2019 Moving in November takes place in Helsinki from 1 to 10 November.

27 performing arts professionals and groups from all around Finland were chosen for the 2019 Performing HEL program. The showcase received great interest among both Finnish and international presenters and programmers, and nearly 70 professionals all over the world attended the four days event.

The showcase is planned to take place every other year, with the next Performing HEL happening in fall of 2021.
WAUHAUS’S “SAPIENS” IS ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE HUMAN RACE, IN THE SPIRIT OF YUVAL NOAH HARARI’S BEST-SELLER

TEXT Sanna Kangasluoma PHOTO Katri Naukkarinen

HUMANS ARE the only species with the ability to make up stories and to make them come true. That’s how humans have made progress, but also caused a lot of destruction. The Wauhaus collective subtitled their recent performance piece “The story of a storytelling species”.

“Our original idea was to use the methods of nature documentaries to tell a story about a species called humans. Jarmo Heikkinen is the narrative voice of Sapiens, what you might call the David Attenborough of the piece,” say Anni Klein and Jarkko Partanen, who directed and choreographed the work.

Sapiens, written by dramaturg Minna Leino based on Harari’s book, will debut at the Finnish National Theater. The main character of the story is the human as a species. Both dancers and actors appear on the stage. “The piece is not a play but a performance, and the mode of expression is very choreographic,” Anni Klein explains.

It is typical for Wauhaus to explore how materials of various kinds such as dyed buttermilk, a gigantic black trash bag, or even light and space can play a large role in a work, like another performer on the stage (see, for example their piece Flashdance, from 2016). Sapiens continues and broadens the experiment considerably, into the world of sound.

“In this anthropocene era, we feel it’s appropriate to undercut the role of the human on the stage,” says Klein.

The collaborators call the style they’ve created playback aesthetics. The figures on stage wear masks. They don’t have any lines, but they are not mute. Their voices come from a background recording. This serves to emphasize the bodily expression of the performers.

“Sound is also incorporated as a protagonist,” sound designer Jussi Matikainen says. “You can’t see the squashing of a fly ten rows from the stage, but with sound you can zoom in on it.”

This new aesthetic couldn’t have been developed without the contribution of lighting designer Jani-Matti Salo, costume designer Laura Haapakangas, and actor Iida Kuningas.

The piece depicts the story of humanity by offering its own variations on the history of familiar events and rearranging them in thematic summaries. Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Katherine the Great, Hamlet, and the Emperor with new clothes encounter one another on stage.

The piece also lets you laugh at humanity.

“The human as a species is portrayed as a foolish, lovable bungler who doesn’t understand the consequences of his or her actions. But when you look closer, a chilling spectacle of humans as ecological serial murderers emerges,” Jarkko Partanen explains. “Sapiens wiped out the mega-fauna of Australia before they invented the wheel. They didn’t comprehend what they were doing.”

“Now we know. We have knowledge of the future and we understand our global responsibility. But how could that help us change our behavior?”

SAPIENS – THE STORY OF A STORYTELLING SPECIES

Concept: Adaptation and performance script Minna Leino; Direction and choreography Anni Klein and Jarkko Partanen

Premiere September 11, 2019 @ Finnish National Theatre.

Coproduction: WAUHAUS, Zodiak – Center for New Dance, Finnish National Theatre

WAUHAUS is a Helsinki-based arts collective, active in today’s performance field.

Sapiens @ Performing HEL open rehearsal Thursday August 29, 2019.
Three Experts to Plan the Programme for Dance House Helsinki – Opening in Autumn 2021

Dance House Helsinki’s international programme team is here: Mikael Aaltonen from Finland, Faith Tan from Singapore, and Pia Krämer from Germany have been chosen to plan the venue’s programme. The construction of the house is set to start in autumn 2019.

**Head of Programme Development** Faith Tan comes to the project from Singapore, where she has been in charge of dance programming for an almost 2,000-seat hall at the Esplanade Theatres. Unsurprisingly, the 700-seat auditorium at Dance House Helsinki does not daunt Tan. She believes that through their choices, the programme team will be able to draw big audiences to Dance House Helsinki, whilst also designing a programme to draw in a whole new audience who might not previously have attended dance performances.

“I will be on sabbatical leave from Esplanade so as to spend the next year in Helsinki with the team to establish its approach and structure for programming before the venue opens its doors in 2021,” says Tan.

**Programme Manager** Mikael Aaltonen is best known as artistic director of the Moving in November contemporary dance festival and from Kiasma’s URB festival. He knows the field of dance in Finland like the back of his hand, as well as having broad-ranging experience of the international scene.

“Dance House Finland will be hugely important for increasing the visibility and impact of dance,” says Aaltonen. He hopes that the venue’s activities will also improve the production conditions for dance in Finland too.

**Senior Advisor** will be Pia Krämer’s title. She is also co-president of the European Dancehouse Network, bringing with her networks and relationships that are certain to be of great help in European projects.

“Dance House Helsinki comes right on time to foster, develop and highlight the dance sector in Finland and be the window into extraordinary international productions. I believe in dance as an archetype of empathy and connectedness, something we need to see and experience in times of social and political extremism,” says Krämer.

Dance House Helsinki is Finland’s first stage dedicated to dance, and is being constructed at Helsinki’s Cable Factory venue. The core of Dance House Helsinki consists of the new building of the Erkko Stage with 700 seats and the old Pannuhalli stage, converted to seat 250.
RESEARCH SHINES A LIGHT ON THE IMPACTS DANCE HAS ON THE BRAIN

TEXT Anni Leino TRANSLATION Claire Dickenson

DANCER AND DOCTOR of Neuroscience Hanna Poikonen is investigating the well-being impacts dance can have on the brain. Poikonen’s doctoral thesis, ‘Dance on Cortex – ERPs and Phase Synchrony in Dancers and Musicians during a Contemporary Dance Piece’, published in spring 2018, has attracted interest both in Finland and internationally. Poikonen’s research was continued in spring 2019 in Canada, at McMaster University’s LIVElab theatre, which specialises in the neuroscience of music.

“... The neuroscience of dance is still a relatively young field of research, in contrast to the more established field of the neuroscience of music. For example, it has been scientifically proven that musical interests have a positive impact on linguistic learning. I hope that in the future we’ll be able to use research data on dance when substantiating the vast variety of well-being benefits offered by dance, as both an art form and a hobby,” states Poikonen.

In the research for her doctoral thesis, Poikonen focused on investigating the impacts watching dance has on the brain. A total of 20 dance professionals and 20 music professionals, as well as a 20-person control group made up of participants with no background in dance or music, took part in the research at an EEG laboratory. During the study, the participants were shown a 15-minute video of a dance performance, filmed especially for the purposes of the study.

“In the video, dancer Mira Kautto interprets scenes from Mats Ek’s Carmen, to music composed by Bizet-Shchedrin. For the purposes of the research, I tried to choose scenes from the piece that were as varied as possible in terms of range and kinds of movement, as well as expression,” explains Poikonen.

WHAT HAPPENS IN VIEWERS’ BRAINS WHEN WATCHING A DANCE PERFORMANCE?

The results from the participants in the different test groups varied slightly from one another.

“When comparing the results, we noticed greater synchronisation at low theta frequency in professional dancers than in the other two groups. Theta frequency is linked to so-called higher brain functions, such as social interaction, spatial perception, emotions and memories,” Poikonen explains.

If it can be proved that dance helps people become more in tune with one another, it is conceivable that dance could help increase empathy and the ability to cooperate with others – both of which the world could do with much more of. The brain’s theta waves are also often associated with the flow state, imagination and intuition, which contribute to learning, creativity and regeneration. If research results demonstrate that dance activates these processes in the brain simply through watching, the well-being effects of dance will be undeniable.

The results of Poikonen’s doctoral thesis research served as the impetus for her postdoc research: would the results differ even more clearly if the research were carried out in a theatre, where the participants could watch the dance performance live, instead of in a laboratory with a video recording?

“Our brains are being shaped constantly throughout the entirety of our lives, with everyday actions and choices all having an impact. The better we understand the effects of different kinds of artistic interests on the brain, the more diversely we can utilise dance, for example in education or as a rehabilitative activity,” Poikonen explains.

“In the future, this could mean wider provision of dance as part of basic education, by taking into account different ways of learning and including physical exercises in subjects other than physical education.”

WHO?

HANNA POIKONEN

PhD from the University of Helsinki’s Faculty of Medicine (neuroscience of dance and music), postgraduate qualification in art therapy from Metàfora, Barcelona. Developed the WiseMotion method, combining dance and neuroscience – www.wisemotionco.com.

Gives WiseMotion workshops around the world, including at the Stretch 2019 Turku event in October 2019, where she will also be a panellist (read more on page 10).
The Keđja community moves forward and stretches the horizons of the dance field

**THIS REGIONAL COLLABORATION** began over 10 years ago, leading to the creation of Nordic–Baltic dance cooperation under the name Keđja. Over the years, various development projects have been carried out, involving international activities and mobility, artist residencies, etc. Strengthening sustainability in the dance sector has been shaped by all these activities into a penetrating theme – in all its four aspects: cultural, ecological, economic and social.

Keđja dance encounters and meetings since 2008 in various parts of the Nordic and Baltic countries have generated networks and many collaborations. The Keđja community has since expanded, with organisations and professionals from all over Europe and beyond invited to become part of it.

“Creating a sustainable dance field is one of our main principles – strong connections between professionals in nearby countries and a strong community help us in reaching this goal,” Katarina Lindholm from Dance Info Finland states.

In October 2019, in the host city of Turku, Finland, Keđja presents the Stretch – expanding professionalism encounter. The theme will be approached from different perspectives: personal coaching, capacity building and new skills, communication about dance and dialogue with society, producer workshops, leadership and teamwork lectures.

The keynotes speeches, panel discussions and workshops will tackle the topical question of artists’ role in working against the climate change and for a more sustainable future. What means working internationally in the age of ecological crisis is one of the questions.

Dr Kai Leikikoine from the University of Arts (FI) will speak about professional identities and discuss the development of dance professions – how we should expand our professional identities and think differently about our skill sets.

The next event, Stretch 2020 Gothenburg, will be held in Sweden. The theme for this event is Expanding the Movement. It’s an occasion to discuss the topics of participation, audience engagement, community dance, and communication in contemporary dance.

**STRETCH 2019 TURKU**
17–20 October 2019
Organised by the Regional Dance Centre of Western Finland with the main partners Dance Info Finland and the City of Turku, and with the support of the Nordic Culture Fund and the Finnish Cultural Foundation’s Regional Fund.

**STRETCH 2020 GOTHENBURG**
20–23 August 2020
Organised by Kultur i Väst in collaboration with the Gothenburg Dance and Theatre Festival, the City of Gothenburg and NorrlandsOpera, with the support of the Nordic Culture Fund.
Next year Dance Theatre Minimi, based in Kuopio, Eastern Finland – when it’s not touring the country – will enter a new phase as young contemporary dancers Mikko Makkonen and Iiro Näkki step into managing roles. The theatre’s new directors come from the freelance world, with strong roots in street dance culture, circus arts, and parkour.

Minimi was founded thirty years ago as a professional dance theatre, with its operations based on its touring repertoire. It is one of 11 dance groups who receive regular government funding, and provides employment for dozens of artists each year. The new directors, like the theatre itself, are in their thirties. Both are graduates of master’s degree programmes in dance art and work as performers, choreographers and teachers, with physicality, street styles and acrobatic skill taking centre stage in their work, alongside contemporary dance.

“We want to preserve Minimi’s tradition of open-mindedly combining performing arts across genre boundaries, and working together with theatres and different opera- tors on the field,” says Mikko Makkonen. “Minimi has always trusted in young creators and given them opportunities.”

“The physicality of dance will be emphasised during our time at Minimi and in our signature aesthetic,” Makkonen continues. “We will bring with us phenomena of our time, forms of expression typical of our generation and younger people, and the opportunities these kinds of expressive forms offer.”

More about Iiro Näkki on page 23.

Dance Theatre Minimi is pitching the piece Elämä (Life), directed by Cilla Back, in the Performing HEL showcase in August 2019.
THE MANY FORMS of baroque music have their roots in folk dances, which may partially explain its popularity among contemporary choreographers. All the same, it’s not just about traditional dance forms and appealing rhythms but also about the themes of the works and their spirit of improvisation.

The above applies to both Saarinen’s and Mustonen’s works based on Monteverdi’s compositions. Anna Mustonen’s and cembalist Marianna Henriksson’s Maria-vesper was performed in 2018 as part of Zodiak’s programme in the former boiler plant (Pannuhalli) of the Cable Factory. All the performances were sold out.

The premier of Tero Saarinen’s Third Practice took place at the Monteverdi Festival in Cremona in May 2019 and it was also seen at the Kuopio Dance Festival in June. Both works are accompanied by Helsinki Baroque Orchestra.

MONUMENTALITY CONTRasted WITH THEMES OF INTIMATE SENSUALITY
Anna Mustonen had earlier cooperated with cembalist Marianne Henriksson in her work Di anima et di corpo, which uses early baroque music. They wanted to follow up the project with a large-scale ecclesiastical work, choosing Monteverdi’s Maria-vesper.

The performance is a communal experience between three dancers, six singers, a group of musicians and the audience. The structure of the choreography is built on a perception of singing and playing as dance. Their natural movements form the basis of the choreography.

“Movements born out of making music have become part of the choreographic material. Dancing by the singers originates from the movements that they make to facilitate voice production and expression,” says Anna Mustonen.

The work strives to express sensuous desire and spirituality. The boundary between the two disappears in the same way as Monteverdi combines earthly love and the adoration of the Holy Virgin to create an alliance between the polyphony of the Renaissance and the sensuous individual expression of the Baroque.

Movement emphasises the expression of affects in Monteverdi’s music with its patterns, word painting and ‘stutters’. The professional dancers undertake more complex movements, which are also influenced by classical pastorals. The singers’ movements are simpler but there’s no strict demarcation...
between the roles. The movements don’t give the impression of being pre-designed; the dancers appear to derive them from experience without actual improvisation.

“We don’t tell a story but express general themes such as love, desire, reaching out for holiness,” says cembalist Marianne Henriksson.

“Monteverdi created double choirs and echo effects with the facilities of St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice in mind, and we interpret this inbuilt spatiality in our own way. Everyone moves in a high-ceilinged former factory space. The essential ingredients of the content include distance and proximity as well as monumentality contrasted with themes of intimate sensuality.”

Cembalist Marianna Henriksson and choreographer Anna Mustonen have been praised for the way they have succeeded in opening new vistas for the dialogism between dance and music. They were awarded the Finnish State Prize for Performing Arts in November 2018.

“The way we worked when making Maria-vesper seems the key. The gentleness that formed the basis of the method was reflected in what the work itself suggested. The whole process was coloured by the issue of a large-scale work which wouldn’tloom above the spectator as something big and boastful. For us this meant that the idea also had to dictate the way we directed and rehearsed. We also sold the concept to the musicians who became involved at the final stages; their background in classical music would sometimes entail a hierarchical working environment. Unity and listening seemed to prevail within the group of performers. As a result, we believe the fusing of music and dance was realised at a much deeper level.

The working method consequently related to both the politics and the content,” Mustonen and Henriksson explain.

IMPROVISATORY QUALITY OF THE MUSIC ENCOURAGES THE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Tero Saarinen has selected twelve of Monteverdi’s madrigals as the music of his latest work. Like in many of his previous works – e.g. Borrowed Light (2004), Mariage (2007), Kullervo (2015) – Saarinen makes his tenor, now Topi Lehtipuu, dance alongside the professional dancers. Nuria Rial, the other singer and a soprano, takes part as a virtual figure and as an illusion of love, and an ideal image, who is projected on to the stage in different, unexpected situations and places. Her singing has been pre-recorded.

The interpretation of Tero Saarinen involve the choreographer’s own dance group, which is fused with the singers and the orchestra to form a homogeneous entity.

“Monteverdi’s madrigals involve chasing love all the time, it’s lost and it won’t be seen when it’s available. A strange grief shadows any happiness. This is, of course, the eternal dilemma: we can’t be happy with what we’ve already got,” Saarinen says.
He was also interested in Monteverdi as a person. The title of the work, *Third Practice*, is associated with a change that took place in the composer’s style called *Seconda Pratica*. The style replaced the multiple voices of the Renaissance with a new emotional expression centred on an individual.

*Third Practice* is also a kind of reflection on a change in Saarinen’s own style.

“I now want to give the dancers more freedom than ever. This is also encouraged by the improvisatory nature of the music, associated with the possibilities afforded by the moment, unpredictability and the diversity involved in being human.”

### VARIOUS MEDIA DEPLOYED IN THE PERFORMANCE ARE MERGED

As is typical of Saarinen, lights play a major part in the visual effects of *Third Practice*. Their design is the responsibility of **Eero Auvinen**. Apart from the virtual soprano, the volume and visual image of the staging are enhanced by textiles, a sort of flags that tie things together.

“For me, these voluminous fabrics represent a continuation of both the movement and the singing, playing their part in enhancing the buoyancy, twists and turns, and malleability of the style,” the choreographer says.

Monteverdi represents bread and butter to Topi Lehtipuu, the soloist and tenor, though *Third Practice* presents him with new challenges.

“The language of movement is very similar to the one given to the dancers: the aim has been to eliminate boundaries. Tero’s choreography is still tolerant in taking into account different bodies and technical capabilities. When you move, your pulse accelerates, that’s the physical challenge in combining dance and singing. You need more breathing spaces,” says Lehtipuu.

“Monteverdi’s madrigals reflect mankind’s entire gamut of expressions and the expression is very direct. Tero’s language of movement fits in well because it preserves a certain level of abstractness and breathability and allows space for other elements and different meanings.”

Tero has deliberately sought dissonances, in the relationship between singing and movement. They are also essential in music. Electronics are deployed to disturb the creation of beauty in the singing.

Saarinen perceives Monteverdi as a composer for our times.

“I see Monteverdi as a unique individual and an innovator, who lived during a time of great upheaval. His art was characterised by an examination of humanity through the individual, and by an elevation of its voice. I feel that we’re currently preoccupied with similar considerations: What is the position of humanity and what are our values?”
FLUIDS IS A DANCE performance that happens on a floor covered with lubricant.

Once you hear the concept you can easily have a pretty good idea what the result might be and how it might be a worthwhile exploration for a contemporary work of art. After all, art doesn’t necessarily have to have any theme or subject matter other than the examination of its physical materials: “What are these things, what are their properties and relationships, and what can you do with them?”

The Wauhaus group’s pieces have often taken extreme slipperiness or some other technical peculiarity or constraint and used it to create an unusual premise for a performance. And yet their pieces are not formalistic works, or at least not in the sense that Clement Greenberg meant, but rather art that takes an activist stand concerning society. In what way, you ask? I’ll tell you.

Five performers come onto a stage covered in lubricant and begin to explore what it’s like to be and behave in such a slippery environment. They slide and spin in place, alone and together, in a variety of seated and lying positions. Then they spin each other like tops and let go, sliding each other around like curling stones. They also embrace and perform lifts and wrestling-style moves, but since both the floor and the performers are exceedingly slippery, everything is difficult; bodies can barely stand up and one dancer’s grip on another is always a weak and uncertain one.

But it is not a matter of improvisation, it is choreography manifestly founded in investigative practice: how does our corporality change when our strength, certainty and sturdy support seem to have vanished?

The results of these investigations are fun to watch in and of themselves. It’s a bit like watching Laurel and Hardy, but without those actors’ comical sadism and gloom, one of them always trying to beat, humiliate, or trick the other. The performers in FLUIDS aren’t dramatic personae and the performance isn’t built on tension or conflict between them. Instead they behave like
“It creates a world with its own laws where slipperiness reigns.”
constant, powerful feeling of recognition. “That’s exactly what I see when I look at this piece,” one of the audience members said. People were actually much more fragile, helpless, and wobbly than is generally believed or demanded or hoped for within a competitive consumer capitalist society, and you don’t need five dancers slathered with lube bought at a porn shop.

I disagree. A work of art doesn’t always have to have an especially complex message, some dazzling, never-before-heard point of view, some new vision that tests the limits of our understanding of humanity and the world. Some masterpieces have super-insights like those. But it’s much more common for a good or even masterful work of art to say something that could be said directly and concisely in one sentence or one paragraph. A sentence said through the physical, sensory medium of art, however, can be much more powerful. It can cause such great internal upheaval that our minds, our existence, and our behavior is changed.

Why lube? Fluids, slimes, and secretions have often played a peculiar role in the history of art and psychology. They remind us of our physical body, remind us that our separateness and autonomy are relative things—that the boundary between myself and my environment is a slippery one. A person can’t live in a world of pure ideas and you can’t channel or control a world of damp bodies by means of sheer pure reason.

The final act of the performance is a stylized birth. Four performers sit in a circle and hold each other by the shoulders. They form a sort of birth canal of mother nature into which the fifth performer dives, in order to be reborn. Then the circle breaks apart and reassembles, the newborn becomes part of the circle, and someone else breaks away to be born in their turn. This was, for me, fantastic, a delightful, physical way to express the circle of nature, the cycle of birth and death.

The writer is an artist, author, director, and researcher (with a doctorate in visual art), who has written numerous essays on art, philosophy, and politics. www.teemumaki.com

FLUIDS BY WAUHAUS (2018)

Directed by Anni Klein and Jarkko Partanen
Sound design by Heidi Soidinsalo
Sets and lighting by Samuli Laine

Produced by SoItumatu Tantsu Lava (STL, Estonia), WAUHAUS (Finland)
Mira Kautto, a dancer and choreographer, had two options at the beginning of her studies: in London she would either study political history or head for The Place to do dance.

“I was nervous about using English, and so ended up studying dance,” says Kautto.

These days Kautto works as a freelance dancer and choreographer in Finland and her fifth solo work, Station to Station to Station, had its premiere in early 2019.

In her work, Kautto creates spaces which enable dancing, intuition and imagination.

“I am invested in finding ways to be together, and for the working group to gather around the performance with the audience. So far I have done this by focusing less and less on considering dance as a specific set of skills and physical requirements,” says Kautto.

Kautto didn’t initially intend to return to Finland, but in 2012 she moved back to Helsinki after life in London proved to be too hectic.

However, she has kept with her elements of British culture, including its dialogic aspect, which is evident not only in Kautto’s way of working with other dancers and artists but also in projects associated with dance.

Kautto has been publishing a net publication called Deadline Talk, in which she highlights her and her colleagues’ work normally hidden from the audience: different grant applications.

She is also a contributor to a podcast called Esitysradio (Performance Radio) together with Tuomas Laitinen and Janina Rajakangas, which entails discussions with artists about their works and performances.

“Esitysradio is a wonderful project. We engage in profound and intensive discussions about works and what happens in them. It’s done through encounters.”

The versatile artist will also be heard in cinemas in autumn. Marian Paratiisi (Maria’s Paradise), the new film by the eminent Finnish director Zaida Bergroth, opens up with a piece of music written and performed jointly by Kautto and Timo Kaukolampi, a musician and composer, for Station to Station to Station.
“We created five different solo works that share the same concept. We worked independently of each other and didn’t have a joint meeting during the entire process. It was interesting to see how your own thinking was linked to the others via the concept,” explains Jenni-Elina von Bagh, a dancer and choreographer.

Von Bagh’s latest work was premiered in May 2019 at Stockholm’s Modern Dance Theatre (MDT). Living Documents consists of solo works by five different artists. The audience can enter and leave the performance as they wish.

Von Bagh’s career as dancer began when she qualified from the Stockholm School of Dance DOCH in 2000 and immediately started dancing in Kenneth Kvarnström’s company.

After that, von Bagh has worked with numerous choreographers, including Deborah Hay, Andonis Foniadakis, Jyrki Karttunen, Helena Franzen and Örjan Andersson.

Von Bagh danced almost ten years in Helsinki Dance Company, one of Finland’s most prestigious dance groups, until she went freelance in 2015 and began studies and work as a choreographer.

In her own works, von Bagh is particularly interested in making different elements collide and in transferring philosophical concepts onto the stage in a different form, something that is novel for the concept.

Her works Posthuman (2016), a life – nomadic melodrama (2017), and Posthuman Days (2018) contemplate the posthuman paradigm and the language of philosophy surrounding it. Posthumanism denotes, among other things, abandoning anthropocentrism and, instead, examining human beings as part of the rest of the nature. Some people also associate the concept with human clones and machinery.

Von Bagh is also interested in examining how to yield to the body’s layeredness and issues and taboos present in it.

“As a dancer, my body is filled with other people’s thoughts. As a choreographer, I can look at this from a distance. Next spring, I’ll launch a new solo work which combines these different authorships,” says von Bagh.
“I didn’t start dancing until I was sixteen. Before then, the small village where I lived offered no regular opportunity for dance. I was instantly captivated – dance took me over. My application for professional training hit the buffers, however, on account of the physiotherapist’s statement about my turnout. I was told I wouldn’t be able to train as a professional dancer without breaking my body,” says Tanja Råman.

But things turned out differently. Råman moved to Great Britain. She first did the degree course at Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds and subsequently gained an MSc in Dance Science at Trinity Laban.

“I was really old, twenty-one, when I left for England. I believe that it was my strength. I had a lot to catch up with and I trained like mad. Many of my fellow students were young people who didn’t know what they wanted. I did – and I did pretty well.”

Råman spent eighteen years in Great Britain – as a freelance dancer and choreographer and as a university lecturer in dance studies in Wales. That’s also where she found her husband and artistic partner John Collingswood, with whom she founded a dance company, TaikaBox, in 2010.

In 2015, the couple moved back to Northern Finland, Råman’s birthplace, with their children.

In TaikaBox, the couple creates works that combine dance and technology and they also run the Oulu Dance Hack and Warjakka Artist Residence.

In addition, Råman and Collingswood are planning a massive facility in their present locality – in a derelict area occupied by sawmill workers in the early twentieth century. The project would combine art, physical activity and virtual reality, local legends and a communal garden milieu with huge plant boxes.

“The virtual gallery would be a massive playing field for artists and a workshop space for different groups,” Råman says as she describes her vision.

Råman is enthusiastic about developing an ecological model for working by means of utilising technology.

“We also aim to develop our own international activities in a way that cuts down the number of flights from one place to another by developing choreographic systems that enable us to hire local dancers.”
The works of Iiro Näkki, a dance and circus artist, aren’t easily defined as belonging to any genre.

Näkki began dancing at the age of five. He wanted to become a magician, attended a circus school, studied acrobatics and got more familiar with parkour, which in many ways became an important channel of expression for him. Näkki’s work mixes different movement practices ranging from contact improvisation to boxing, dance, tango, partnering, the Chinese pole and acrobatics.

“I’ve got no particular message or policy. I’m not bound by any specific genre but I try to adapt myself to different environments and produce works that differ a fair amount from each other,” says Näkki.

Because of the specific influence of parkour, Näkki’s choreographies and works are often dictated by the environment instead of a particular theme or topic.

“Observing the environment is important to me. My works construct themselves and are a commentary on the place, the situation or the atmosphere in which they are created,” Näkki says.

Unusually, space and creating its proportions take priority over choreography for Näkki.

“When I was studying for an MA in choreography at Helsinki Theatre Academy I found the emptiness of the dance hall particularly difficult. It’s a space into which you build things out of nothing. In my final piece of work I began to fill and create a space which would look like me, and only after that did I start pondering what kind corporeal practices I would combine in it,” says Näkki.

“For me, choreographing the proportions of space and the boundaries it creates form a sort of strategy.”

Näkki’s latest work, Frames, was premiered in May 2019. 200 kg of textiles filled and defined the space into which the choreographer fitted his movement content.

It was also typical of Näkki that the work was based on a previous one created by him five years earlier.

“I do a lot of retrospective work and return to my previous creations. I recycle my works in subsequent ones, though it isn’t always obvious or made explicit to the audience.”

Iiro Näkki will become joint director of dance theatre Minimi with Mikko Makkonen in 2020.
People’s right to be involved in culture, regardless of age, shape or ability, is a cultural right rather than a rehabilitative activity, as it is often mistakenly portrayed. Dance artists who have included people from a diverse array of backgrounds in the creation of their pieces talk about their work in this series of articles. In their experience, such work empowers individuals and strengthens communities, as inclusive dance practice respects everyone involved as an individual with their own history. In dance, even those who are often seen only as the passive objects of activities and actions become visible, independent subjects who tell their own stories.

“Dance means so much. It saved me. It is love,” says Maria Lahti, who performed in the piece Kvartetto.
Kvartetto, a work for disabled dancers, raises questions about inclusion.

**CHALLENGING THE IMAGE OF A DANCER**

TEXT Kati Raatikainen TRANSLATION Fleur Jeremiah

Kvartetto, created by Kati Raatikainen and her working group, is a gently radical comment on the right of people defined as learning disabled to perform on stage as dancers, as social agents and human beings with sensations, desires and longings. It was premiered at Kokkola Winter Dance Festival in February 2019. In her article, Raatikainen talks about the creation of the work and the thoughts inspired by the process.

“The dancers in Kvartetto are aged 40–50 years and none of them want to be called a pensioner – their official status in society. When someone with a learning disability works, it’s usually a question of supported employment, for which the pay is nowhere near the average wage for the same job. One of the aims of our project is to be employed in dance and get paid for it. The central point of the project is practising the art of corporeal sensitivity and interaction with others.

The premier of Kvartetto took place at Kokkola Winter Dance Festival in 2019. Our coming together resulted in a contemporary performance, which moves from the relationship between people and objects, touching and being touched, affecting another person and being affected by them. The varied ways the performers perceived time, space and movement, as well as the support required to maintain the rhythm of the performance – helped by the sound designer on stage – highlighted how our existence is defined by our relationship to other people and the environment.

At the same time, it felt ethically right to project the performers as autonomous, grown-up agents – they’re not often perceived as such in our society. It was challenging to avoid the thought of an ideal performance in which all the performers would relate to the performance context in the same way and would recall perfectly an almost an hour’s worth of movement and action in the correct order.

For me as the choreographer, the central issue of the work is the relationship between intensity, fluency and ‘stumbling.’ Why aim at the illusion of fluency, if reality is occasionally slow, halting and stumbling – even dull? The idiosyncratic way in which the performers perceive the world and react to it gives an opportunity of challenging the spectator’s established ideas of the fluency of the rhythm in the performance and his or her longing to be entertained. The rhythm of life according to the capitalistic world view requires constant movement. A so called exceptional situation, a disability or illness, imposes a pause and breaks the whirlwind in which our perception of reality is shaped.

I believe that if we set out ambitiously to create accessible performance art from its early origins to the staging, and aim to listen to the interests of the whole working party in addition to our own visions, we’ll be compelled to abandon restrictive concepts, which we use, routinely and without noticing, to practise multilevel exclusion and discrimination. Inclusion requires the right attitude and financial resources but when practised, it increases every participant’s potential for changing their automatic patterns of thought and action, and for finding themselves searching for new ways of being human in a changing world.”

\[
\text{The working party of } \text{Kvartetto: Kati Raatikainen (choreography); Maria Lahti, Jarmo Patana, Sanna Tornikoski (dancers); Markku Essel (sound design); Milla Martikainen (space and lighting); Roosa Marttiini (costume design).}
\]
HANNA BROTHERUS can be regarded as a daring choreographer. Instead of having a trusted dance company of her own, Brotherus’ passion entails inviting participants for her works from different backgrounds and age groups, often so called ordinary people with no knowledge of dance.

Huge groups of performers hold no terrors for her either. At their largest, Brotherus’ works have involved thousands of participants. For example Fellman Field (joint project with Kaisa Salmi in Lahti in 2013) was a communal work for 10,000 people about memories of a prison camp during the Finnish Civil War.

Brotherus’ latest choreographies include the 2018 work An Ode to the Forest for the opening ceremony of Oodi, the new central library at Helsinki, which received a lot of international attention. In the choreography, 207 performers ranging from small children to older people guided citizens, using dance movements, into the magnificent library made of wood.

"First and foremost, I’m interested in people,” says the choreographer, who has directed a variety of special groups.

Instead of sticking to a ready-made concept of her own, Brotherus has learned to rely on the content of a work revealing itself gradually as the rehearsals progress. It emerges from issues that are important to the participants. Brotherus builds the final artistic form of her work using these issues with their help.

HIMO (Finnish National Theatre, 2017) brought the life stories of recovering addicts to the stage, while in the work Paper Anchor (Finnish National Theatre, 2011), asylum seekers with no papers told about their realities with movement and dance.

Brotherus particularly likes working with older people. Finnish people are considered shy and reticent but her experience belies the notion. When some years ago, the chorographer was looking for elderly participants for her work I still see the past (Helsinki City Theatre, 2008), she received over a hundred applications, of which only thirty-three could be accepted.

"I had no advance notion of what was important to them.” Through practising different movement materials, the group demonstrated a painful emergence of childhood and searing memories of the war.

THE CONTENT OF THE WORKS IS CREATED ALONG WITH THE PEOPLE PERFORMING IN THEM

The process, based on trust, requires great sensitivity from the choreographer. She has to sense and extract sensations that people may try to hide, even from themselves.

Brotherus’ choreographies are in no way about social work,
about creating art for care homes, in which art would be subjugated so it becomes an aid to care work. The themes of the works may well spring from social problems but Brotherus is ambitious and keen on artistic quality. “A finished and polished result is the least I can give back to the group. Because the process entails me digging for material using the participants’ experiences, I have a responsibility to ensure that no one needs to be ashamed of the work or themselves when stepping onto the stage maybe for the first time in their lives.”

Creating a work amounts to a kind of dialogue with the performers. Brotherus compares herself to a midwife who is present at the birth and helps the process along. “Movement doesn’t lie. It gives keys to suppressed emotions, enabling the release of bad experiences encapsulated in the body.”

Brotherus draws material from everyday movements, executed by everyone in a way that suits their body. “I get close, hoping that they open up their lives to me. This creates movement motifs for me to work on. I can’t force anyone but usually people want you to be interested in them. I also think it’s important to have an atmosphere in which each and everyone feels safe all the time.”

Choreographer Brotherus acknowledges that her method of creating works without scripts with new groups is “insanely laborious”. “I’m not afraid of people or of someone feeling uncomfortable. It’s not dangerous. We can talk things through; no one is
coerced into anything,” says the mother of four children who are on the threshold of adulthood. She has lived through tough times herself. The main reward for her is the moment when she sees that the participants find a connection between their bodies and their minds and are able to meet each other through mere touch and physical presence.

Though the near-masochistic rehearsal projects haunt Brotherus, taking over her everyday life and invading her dreams, the quiet periods before the start of a new production also make her feel restless.

“If I’m honest, I’m not free of the same basic needs which I keep dealing with again and again. While I’m mining for authenticity in people, I dig out a space for myself so I can be what I truly am. I, too, have a bottomless need to be visible and to be valued, a need to get close to another person and be touched.”

Brotherus’ work doesn’t always involve creating performances. She has been training doctors and medical students during the past two years; the course, “The role of corporeality in encounters”, covers the art of encountering patients. Medical associations are enthusiastic about the project and new courses will run in autumn.

“Medical students are taught how to touch dead human beings, but the teaching barely extends to living bodies when working with patients.”

The course starts with basics such as making eye contact and learning the right kind of breathing. The subsequent physical exercises open up a new angle on working with patients.

The most memorable moment of the work An Ode to the Forest came in the final procession, which consisted of a child-adolescent-senior citizen’s chain of two hundred participants. The procession was watched by the performers’ families: children, parents, grandparents. The marching of one 88-year-old performer was witnessed by her great-great grandchildren.

“The procession beautifully demonstrated the unity of humanity, a life shared by generations and families. The moment was so heightened and so full of meaning that it’s difficult to put into words.” According to Brotherus, the best verbalisation she recalls came from an over 80-year-old participant, who said that performing in Brotherus’ work was the best thing that had happened to her during her entire long life.

“It’s never too late to acquire a new life. At their best, dance and movement may be the most direct route to it.”

HANNA BROTHERUS: I still see the past (2008)
Marko Mäkinen

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HANNA BROTHERUS: I still see the past (2008)
Marko Mäkinen
ELLI ISOKOSKI explores her full potential in her work. As an artist, she aims to bring the stories of the elderly to the big screen, but this requires more than just an artist's eye: it requires a willingness to meet new people and a receptiveness to what they want to share.

“At the heart of it all is meeting and appreciating other people. Reduced mobility or memory disorders are no obstacle—a person’s inner world doesn’t necessarily correspond with the physical changes brought about by age,” explains Isokoski. She aims to put the elderly at the forefront with her films, as individuals and active participants, rather than have them simply be the passive object of the activities taking place.

BREAKING DOWN PREJUDICES AND SPARKING CURIOSITY

Isokoski, who graduated with a BA in dance from the London Contemporary Dance School in 1998 and an MA in dance pedagogy from Uniarts Helsinki’s Theatre Academy, became interested in working with the elderly whilst she was still a student. Myrskyryhmä (a collective whose name translates as ‘the storm group’), established by Isokoski and dance artist Pauliina Laukkanen in 2002, has been bringing dance to sheltered accommodation units in the form of performances, workshops and dance films for almost 17 years.

“We wanted to create a little storm, to allow people to see everyday life just a bit differently in its wake,” explains Elli Isokoski, on the creation of the Myrskyryhmä group.

“When I was studying in the UK, I found inspiration in
groups such as the Candoco and Green Candle Dance Companies, who were working making dance more accessible,” states Isokoski.

She stumbled upon the world of dance films at Loikka Dance Film Festival in 2009: “I felt this powerful epiphany the first time I set foot in the world of dance film. With film, it is possible to convey feelings and atmospheres through even the subtest of movements.”

Isokoski and dance film maker Kati Kallio have since worked together on the short film series Faith, Hope, and Love (2018), which was filmed at Myllypuro Comprehensive Service Centre.

“Kati and I have been planning how to further develop our participatory dance film work aimed at the elderly. For example, the idea of providing cultural content to elderly people via remote devices is particularly pertinent and interesting from the perspective of dance film. Some of the key themes we’ve been contemplating are how to support the accessibility of dance films and make the elderly more visible in society,” states Isokoski.

Currently, Isokoski is working with the support of a three-year working grant awarded by the Finnish Cultural Foundation. She brings contemporary dance and dance film to the homes of the elderly: first to get to know one another, and later to watch dance films and discuss the topics. The dance films themselves are only recorded when all participants are comfortable with doing so.

“Participation has to come from the people themselves and is on their terms. There are often preconceptions when it comes to the physical changes brought about by age, and we work to break those down by watching the films. It’s a joy to see how as confidence and curiosity grow, a person’s sense of self and their own abilities can transform,” Isokoski explains.

Film projects can be planned in advance only to a certain degree. “Along the way we’ve learnt to trust in the process, as well as to tolerate incompleteness. The end result might be a finished film or it might not, but that’s not what’s most important.”

MAKING A FILM WITH ALINA, 94 YEARS OLD
Clad in her dressing gown, 94-year-old Alina stands on the balcony of her home, breathing in deeply whilst pressing her hands against her chest. As she breathes out, Alina stretches out her hands to either side – a warm smile spreads across her face and her eyes spark to life.

The elderly lady’s curious and spirited nature are clear to see in the 30 seconds of raw material filmed by Isokoski. Whilst the film, with the working name Alina’s morning, was written together, it was based on Alina’s own idea. Isokoski has been visiting Alina every week since January 2019, and the duo are also at work making a second film on a much darker topic.

“Alina and I have been talking about things like how it feels when your friends start dying around you. Our process first involves a discussion between us, after which I try to record the topics on video. Then I bring the video material to Alina to watch and we discuss how we could develop it,” explains Isokoski, praising the feedback Alina gives. If all goes to plan, the joint dance film will be completed in autumn 2019.
KAARI MARTIN: *The Raven*  
© Kim Laine
KAARI MARTIN: FLAMENCO IS JUST ONE OF MY MANY TOOLS

“With our group, we do performing art that heavily incorporates a variety of different genres. The excitement and communicative power of flamenco are what I want to preserve in my work.”

WHEN KAARI MARTIN’S name is mentioned, most people think of flamenco.

And Flamenco is a powerful tool that Martin has used as a point of departure in her dance at times, a wellspring she continues to turn to. But her art is influenced just as much by her background in classical music and by growing up in a family keenly interested in literature and visual art.

“The things our group is doing now are certainly difficult to categorize into any particular genre. We do performing art that heavily incorporates a variety of different elements.”

Kaari Martin says that she is very interested in the varying paths a person can take. Martin herself only attended school through the ninth grade. Then she found flamenco, and she’s been doing it ever since, though at one point in her career she suffered from tinnitus that made her seek new paths within flamenco. Nowadays she refers to herself mainly as a dance choreographer and leaves the purely flamenco-based roles of her group to Spanish dancers.

NO BURDEN TO BEAR

Martin has thought a lot about what the development of flamenco would have been like without the Spanish Civil War and the ensuing right-wing dictatorship.

“Think of Spain’s pioneering spirit in the arts in the 1930’s: Lorca, Dali... and how it was completely crushed! Today, Spain is still a little behind the times in many areas, and the burden of tradition is very strong. We, on the other hand, have no such weight to carry; we’re completely free to do whatever we like.”

Flamenco has a powerful attraction for people from around the world.

“Aren’t we all just searching for ways to express emotions and communicate? For me, flamenco has been terribly freeing. People have always told me I’m impulsive, and through flamenco I’ve found an outlet for that energy. The excitement and communicative power of flamenco are what I want to preserve in my performances.”

Kaari originally intended to be a classical pianist, and she still feels that she’s at least 50% a musician. Music and movement are, in way, one and the same to her.
REIMAGINING THE CLASSICS
Kaari has managed her own performance group together with her husband, musician Roni Martin, since 2003. Among her works of note are the solo trilogy Two Dreams in One (2007), The Raven (2010), La Femme Rouge (2013), and On a string, a piece for Sibelius’s violin concerto created with étoile dancer Minna Tervamäki.

Many of her works are based on classics of literature, such as Anna Karenina (2018), KILL Carmen (2015) and Pippi Longstocking (2009). The poems of Pentti Saarikoski, Finland’s most significant poet of the 1960’s and 70’s, have also been intimately connected with the group over the years. The ensemble has twice won the Certamen de Coreografía de Danza Española y Flamenco competition in Madrid.

“My childhood home had thousands of books and my brother and I read constantly. My troupe’s performances are our own interpretations of the stories we use, and we try to think about them from different points of view. In the Pippi performance, we dealt with the loneliness of a child, and some parents in the audience found this distressing.”

“Anna Karenina deals with escapism. Our interpretation of Tolstoy’s message was that love won’t save us. Vronsky and Anna both try to use love to escape their own problems. In the process of creating the work we also dealt with a world that’s falling apart and sinking away from us, with climate catastrophe, with aging and the fear of death.”

One inspiration for KILL Carmen was Quentin Tarantino’s films, but the rise of fascism and inequality in Europe also served as background for the piece. The piece wasn’t designed specifically for young audiences, but when it was performed for 14-year-olds in school groups as part of the Art Testers initiative, those performances elicited a lot of discussion.

“Our works are completely open to audience interpretation. That caused a lot of consternation among young audiences because with the #meToo campaign constantly in the headlines, some of them saw it as oppressive for the woman, although it’s about the exact opposite. I myself don’t think of Carmen as a woman at all, but as a metaphor, as anarchy, as rebellion.”

AN INTERNATIONAL ENSEMBLE
The Martins have gradually gathered an impressive troupe of Finnish and international artists around them. In addition to Roni and Kaari, dramaturg Atro Kahiluoto also shares in directing the group’s pieces. Dedication, great faith in the group, and a respect for the other members shine through in everything Kaari says.

“If you have enough good artists, you don’t need a strong leader. The important thing for me is to choose the right people for the task at hand, even if you have to
trek the Himalayas to find them. It all starts with the people.”

Bringing artists from around Europe is fun, but expensive.

“For environmental reasons, we support flight taxes and higher costs for airline travel, although it increases our costs. But what’s most needed are longer performance seasons and longer-term basic funding and support to enhance the sustainability of our work.”

The group has several projects underway at the moment. Legendary dancer-choreographer Jorma Uotinen performed with them for the first time in Anna Karenina, and the collaboration with him continues, this time on the theme of Urho Kekkonen, the Finnish president from 1956 to 1982. Another piece in the works is based on Swedish director Ingmar Bergman’s film Cries and Whispers. So far the piece includes dancers Jyrki Karttunen and Heidi Lehtoranta and harpsichordist Elina Mustonen.

AN INTEREST IN PLAINNESS

Again and again when we talk about art we end up talking about everyday realities. Running their own dance group is a challenge that takes every ounce of the Martins’ strength. They do everything themselves and they want top artists participating in their works, which isn’t cheap.

Although Kaari Martin has been prominent in promoting dance in such roles as program planner for the future Dance House venue, she seems to have a somewhat ambivalent relationship to the field of dance.

“I have in a way kept one foot outside of dance. Professional dance is a very small world, and it’s important to get someone else’s perspective. I think that dance can’t be strong all by itself. There are many times when we ought to find ways to integrate with other artists.”

Kaari’s art is inspired by many things: contemporary dance, flamenco, physical theatre, visual art, and especially surrealism... Her favorite choreographer is Ohad Naharin.

“The plainness of his work speaks to me. I’m not at all romantic. Irony is key for me, too. And I want to always keep going forward! By the time opening night arrives I’m already thinking about the next thing...”

Although many of her pieces have very concrete subject matter, Martin feels it’s also important to create works that don’t have any specific themes or referents.

“Who knows, maybe in the future the political backgrounds and meanings of our pieces will be more out front, but so far, in my own art, that’s an emphasis that hasn’t spoken to me. I do sometimes wonder if the work of an artist is a strong enough way change the world, but it is one way, at least.”

KAARI MARTIN (BORN 1972)

2019 Dancemaker of the Year, Etnogala (Finland)

2014 Finnish Cultural Foundation Prize

2012 Best choreographer, for The Raven, Certamen de Coreografía de Danza Española y Flamenco, Madrid

2006 Third Prize, Certamen de Coreografía de Danza Española y Flamenco, Madrid

The writer is a music researcher, a music and dance producer, and Master of Flamencology (Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya, Barcelona, 2018).
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.

**DANCE COMPANIES**

**DANCE COMPANIES WITHIN ARTISTIC INSTITUTIONS**

**FINNISH NATIONAL BALLET**
Helsinki  
**Contact:** Sampo Kivelä, artistic administrator  
**Artistic Director:** Madeleine Onne  
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 Ratmansky and Ohad Naharin. The Ballet employs 76 dancers representing 23 nationalities, plus 12 dancers in its Youth Company.  
**Genres:** classical ballet, contemporary ballet, contemporary dance, young audiences

**HELSINKI DANCE COMPANY**
Helsinki  
**Contact:** Marinella Jaskari, producer  
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

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

**DANCE THEATER ERI**
Turku  
**Contact:** Maarit Keto-Seppälä, producer  
www.eri.fi

Dancer-choreographers Tiina Lindfors, Lassi Saijela 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  
www.hurjaruuth.fi

Hurjaruuth is a dynamic dance theatre company founded in 1981. During time it has given over 100 premieres, completed dozens of international tours from Tanzania to Taiwan, and provided work for an astonishing number of dance, circus and theatre professionals. The productions combine modern dance with visual arts and circus with music. Hurjaruuth has an own venue at Cable Factory, Helsinki.  
**Genres:** Dance Theatre, performances for young audiences, dance festival
DANCE THEATRE MD
Tampere
Contact: Anniina Kumpuniemi, managing director
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. MD's dancer-choreographers are as well frequent visitors in various theatre and opera productions.
Genres: Contemporary dance, dance theatre, dance festival, performances for children

DANCE THEATRE MINIMI
Kuopio
Contact: Riikka Puumalainen, artistic director
www.minimi.fi
Minimi performs both in Finland and abroad: on its home stage and on tour, in traditional stages and on the streets. Minimi wants to sustain and develop the mobility and availability of dance theatre and create performances in which dance and theatre merge into one.
Genres: Dance theatre, physical theatre, street theatre

DANCE THEATER RAATIKKO
Vantaa
Contact: Marja Korhola, theatre director
www.raatikko.fi
Founded in 1972, Raatikko has its own venue 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 & Sanna Viero, producer
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, young audiences

GLIMS & GLOMS DANCE THEATRE
Espoo
Contact: Heidi Yli-Yrjänäinen, production manager
www.glimsgloms.com
The Glims & Gloms dance company was founded in 1999 by Simo Heiskanen and Tuomo Railo. G&G's works are charac-
terised by stylish and inventive visuals and multi-layered themes. 

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

**TERO SAARINEN COMPANY**  
Helsinki  
**Contact:** Iiris Autio, managing director, Johanna Rajamäki, head of international sales  
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), Saitama Arts Theater (Japan), and in commissions for companies such as NDT1, Batsheva, Lyon Opéra Ballet and the National Dance Company of Korea. New full evening creation in 2019: Third Practice with Helsinki Baroque Orchestra. Tero Saarinen’s contemporary take on Claudio Monteverdi’s revolutionary madrigals.  
**Genres:** Contemporary dance, contemporary ballet

**ARJA TIILI DANCE COMPANY**  
Helsinki  
**Contact:** Arja Tiili, choreographer, artistic director and executive director for Break the Fight! project  
www.arjatiili.fi and www.breakthefight.com  
Arja Tiili is known for breaking genre boundaries and has a knack for revealing the most intimate, secret traits of the human spirit. 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 operations against school bullying in Finland. Stage creations: Break the Fight – Breaking Borders! And Break the Fight – I was here! Available for touring, also other events on request.  
**Genres:** Contemporary dance, breakdance, eclectic, hiphop, dance theatre, martial arts, visual arts, young audiences, community dance

**AS2WRISTS DANCE COMPANY**  
Helsinki  
**Contact:** Minna Tuovinen, choreographer  
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

**BALLET FINLAND**  
Helsinki  
**Contact:** Jouka Valkama, artistic director  
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  
Dancer and choreographer Carl Knif is truly a singular artist. His art does not resemble anyone else’s. Through his pieces such as Hologram Walls or Manuscript audiences have encountered the dreamlike, humorous qualities of his works. The very personal Red was a huge success, as was his latest premiere, At once, in Helsinki a piece that was commissioned by the Kuopio Dance Festival.  
**Genre:** Contemporary dance

**COMPAÑÍA KAARI & RONI MARTIN**  
Helsinki  
**Contact:** Kaari Martin, Artistic Director  
www.compania.fi  
Compañía Kaari & Roni Martin is 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 and it is 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.
DIRECTORY OF FINNISH DANCE

DANCEBOX
Tampere
Contact: Terhi Pinomäki-Lenick
www.tanssiboxi.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
Contemporary dance combined with intelligent humour. Dance theatre and improvisation-based pieces performed in places like parks, streets and trams. Touring 2019/20 with the pieces Liian pitkät katseet, Shiranai-Hito and Long Leads (Pitkät Piuhat) by Antti Lahti.
Genres: Contemporary dance, dance theatre

DANCE COMPANY OFF/BALANCE
Jyväskylä
Contact: Elina Häyrynen and Terhi Kuokkanen, artistic directors
www.offbalance.fi
Central Finland-based company with a versatile repertoire and international recognition. The company produces 1–3 premieres/co-productions per year with top choreographers and artists.
Genres: Contemporary dance, new dance

DANCE THEATRE AURACO
Helsinki
Contact: Päivi Aura, artistic director
www.auraco.fi
Touring dance company producing 1–3 premieres per year. Auraco produces performances for all ages combining dance and mime. Auraco has many years’ experience working with and for babies and toddlers under age 3.
Genres: Dance theatre, young audiences

DANCE THEATRE KAIE
Kerava
Contact: Anne Jouhtinen
www.tanssiteatterikaie.com
Multi-artistic productions for adult and young audiences. Traditional stages as well as streets, market squares, parks, shop windows and kindergartens function as performance spaces. The Finno-Ugrian roots inspire with their mysticism.
Genres: Contemporary dance, dance theatre, multi-artistic performances

DANCETHEATRE LIIKERI
Tampere
Contact: Linda Kuha, choreographer
www.tanssiteatteriliikeri.com
Liikeri is a young contemporary dance collective producing 2–3 new creations per year. They perform both on traditional stages and in public spaces like galleries and parks. Interaction between the dancers and audience is a key concept for this company, sometimes involving spectators in devising pieces or co-operating with unusual partners.
Genres: Contemporary dance, new dance theatre, dance for young audiences

EHKÄ-PRODUCTION
Turku
Contact: ehkatuotanto@gmail.com
www.ehka.net
Dance productions, residencies, the annual XS festival and more. Artist-run Ehkä hosts the contemporary art space Kutomo, which consists of two beautiful studios. Founded in 2004.
Genres: New dance, contemporary dance, performance/live art, young audiences

FLOW PRODUCTIONS
Oulu
Contact: Pirjo Yli-Maunula, artistic director
www.flowprod.fi
Contemporary dance, -circus, music and visuality combined in multidisciplinary productions, site specific, immersive and on stage, choreographer Pirjo Yli-Maunula as the director. Also series of visiting shows through out the year with title Flow-circus.
Genres: Contemporary dance, multidisciplinary productions

FREECOLLECTIVE
Tampere
Contact: vapaakollektiivi@gmail.com
vapaakollektiivi.blogspot.fi
FREEcollective // VAPAAkollektiivi operates by inviting guest artists to collaborate. Creating diverse performances for the stage and other public venues; touring, hosting masterclasses, audience outreach programmes.
**Genres:** contemporary dance, multidisciplinary productions

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

**Genres:** Contemporary Dance, Artwork-specific choreography, performances in architectural sites

**JENNI KIVELÄ & KIND PEOPLE**
Helsinki
*Contact:* Jenni Kivelä, choreographer, producer
*www.jennikivela.com*
Creating dance performances since 2002 that combine features from dance and theatre and move between the conceptual and the concrete. Jenni Kivelä has a strong and recognisable style. Recently she worked with immersive work called Rosemary’s Room.

**Genre:** contemporary dance, dance theatre, young audiences

**K&C KEKÄLÄINEN & COMPANY**
Helsinki
*Contact:* kc@kekalainencompany.net
*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.katjalunde.com*
Katja Lundén Company has made a name for itself with its ground-breaking works, including Flamencosauna, Edvard Munch – The Dance of Life, La Máscara, AfterMachine and La Vida de Una Elefante. The group’s performances are characterised by a unique 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
*www.katveblindsport.kuvat.fi*
Katve [blind spot] produces fresh and versatile danceworks for adults and young audiences. Humanity, imagination and resilience are the core values of Katve [blind spot], led by choreographer Heidi Masalin.

**Genre:** contemporary dance, young audiences

**KINETIC ORCHESTRA**
Helsinki
*Contact:* Jarkko Mandelin, artistic director
*www.kineticorchestra.fi*
In just a short time, this group has created a strong and recognisable style to become one of the most interesting Finnish contemporary dance companies. The movement-based content and philosophy of their works bring together dance techniques, street dance attitudes and circus-like agility.

**Genre:** Contemporary dance

**LIISA PENTTI + CO**
Helsinki
*Contact:* Inari Pesonen
*www.liisapentti.com*
Lisa 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*
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
*loiske@osiristeatteri.fi*
*www.osiristeatteri.fi*
Loiske Ensemble is a touring company that produces unique dance performances for babies and children. We use various ways of communication such as movement, music, rhythm, interaction and sound. Loiske Ensemble performs in theatres, cultural centres, kindergartens,
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. The company also offers workshops, performances, community and outreach activities, especially aimed at the elderly.

**Genre:** Contemporary dance

**MAMIA COMPANY**

Vantaa  
**Contact:** Nina Mamia and Kasper Nordman, artistic directors  
[www.mamiacompany.fi](http://www.mamiacompany.fi)

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

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, contemporary theatre

**MIKKO KALLINEN & THE COMPANY**

Helsinki  
**Contact:** Mikko Kallinen, AD/choreographer  
[www.av-arkki.fi](http://www.av-arkki.fi)

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

**Genres:** Contemporary dance, audiovisual

**MYRSKYRYHMÄ / THE TEMPEST GROUP**

Helsinki  
**Contact:** Mervi Leivo, producer  
[www.myrskyryhma.fi](http://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.

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

**NOM KOLLEKTIV**

Helsinki  
**Contact:** Jaakko Nieminen, artistic director  
[www.nomkollektiv.fi](http://www.nomkollektiv.fi)

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, & Anna Peippo, producer  
[www.kekonico.fi](http://www.kekonico.fi)


**Genre:** Contemporary dance.

**PORI DANCE COMPANY**

Pori  
**Contact:** Mikko Lampinen, managing director

Pori Dance Company aims to further humane values and encourage tolerance through dance. It emphasizes a message of physicality as means of exploring the imagination. 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
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: Saku Koistinen, artistic director, choreographer
www.routacompany.fi
Founded 16 years ago, Routa (Finnish for ‘permafrost’) is an open-minded contemporary dance production company. It produces unique, strong dance performances that arise from local and global issues. Routa belongs to the Regional Dance Centre of Northern Finland and employs both dance artists and audiovisual artists.
Genres: Contemporary dance, dance theatre and applied dance

SAINE ENSEMBLE
Raasepori
Contact: Annu 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

SATU TUOMISTO PROJEKTI
Helsinki
Contact: Satu Tuomisto, choreographer
www.satutuomisto.com
Satu Tuomisto Projekti is an established dance company run by choreographer Satu Tuomisto. The company produces 1–3 new contemporary productions per year.
Genres: Contemporary dance, dance theatre, performances for young audiences

SUSANNA LEINONEN COMPANY (SLC)
Helsinki
Contact: Salla Mistola, managing director
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

Susanna Leinonen Company, Nasty © Mirka Kleemola
language has been described as highly physical, detailed and expressive. Latest creation ‘Nasty’ touring internationally on three continents in 2019/2020.

Genre: Contemporary dance

SIVUUN ENSEMBLE
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 issues, significant for individuals and communities alike.

Genres: Dance theatre, multidisciplinary productions, community dance

TAIKABOX
Oulu
Contact: Tanja Råman, artistic director
www.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

TSUUMI DANCE THEATRE
Helsinki
Contact: Salla Korja-Paloniemi, managing director
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

WILLMAN DANCE COMPANY
Helsinki
Contact: Marjaterttu 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

PRODUCTION CENTRES

BARKER-THEATRE, A STAGE FOR INDEPENDENT ART
Turku
Contact: Nina Renvall
www.barkerteateri.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 / DANCE HOUSE HELSINKI
Helsinki
Contact: Matti Numminen, director
www.tanssintalo.fi
Dance House Helsinki is the first international venue dedicated to dance in Finland. The first season of Dance House Helsinki will take place in autumn 2021.

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 15–20 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 REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE
Tampere
Contact: Piaa Kulin, managing director
www.sisasuomentanssi.fi/english/
An association for dance professionals. Encourages co-operation, organises vari-
ous events, training classes, workshops, meetings for professionals, seminars. The centre also runs the Liikelaituri venue in Tampere.

CENTRAL FINLAND REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE
Jyväskylä
Contact: Mari Hautala, managing director
tanssinkeskus.fi
Regional centre for dance in Central Finland. Promotes dance and creates work opportunities for professionals. Organises the Tanssin Aika festival in August.

REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE OF OSTROBOITHNIA
Vaasa
Contact: Annika Sillander, manager
http://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.

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 EASTERN FINLAND / ITAK
Kuopio
Contact: Ulrika Vilke, executive producer
www.itak.fi
Promotes dance, creates work opportunities for professionals, offers training, and supports dance production in Eastern Finland. Organises the Paikallisliike festival in June and the Lonely in the Rain? festival in November. ITAK also manages the Sotkku venue in Kuopio.

ZODIAC – CENTER FOR NEW DANCE / REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE IN HELSINKI
Helsinki
Contact: Harri Kuorelahti, artistic director
www.zodiak.fi
Zodiak – Center for New Dance functions as a regional centre for dance in Helsinki.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

ANTI – CONTEMPORARY ART FESTIVAL
Kuopio
Contact: Johanna Tuukkanen, artistic director
www.antifestival.com
International contemporary arts festival presenting site-specific works made for

ZODIAC – CENTER FOR NEW DANCE / REGIONAL DANCE CENTRE IN HELSINKI
Helsinki
Contact: Harri Kuorelahti, artistic director
www.zodiak.fi
Zodiak – Center for New Dance functions as a regional centre for dance in Helsinki.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

ANTI – CONTEMPORARY ART FESTIVAL
Kuopio
Contact: Johanna Tuukkanen, artistic director
www.antifestival.com
International contemporary arts festival presenting site-specific works made for
public spaces. In autumn and various other dates.

APINAFESTI
Helsinki
Contact: Isto Turpeinen
http://apinafest.apinatarha.fi
‘The second cousin of all festivals’ Contemporary dance festival; performances, clubs and panels. In April.

BALTIC CIRCLE FESTIVAL
Helsinki
Contact: Hanna Nyman, managing director
www.balticcircle.fi
International contemporary theatre festival & a platform for developing new trends and ideas. In November.

BLACK AND WHITE THEATRE FESTIVAL
Imatra
Contact: Katri Lätt, chairwoman
mustanjavaloisenteatteri@gmail.com
blackandwhitetheatre.net
International contemporary theatre festival & a platform for developing new trends and ideas. In November.

BRAVO!
Helsinki
Contact: riikka.siirala@assitejfi.org
www.assitej.fi/bravo-festivaali
International theatre festival for children and young audiences held every second year in the Helsinki metropolitan area. In March 2020.

FACTORY FESTIVAL MANIFESTI
Turku
Contact:
katja.lehmussaari@manillantehdas.fi
www.manillantehdas.fi
Annual festival with wide-ranging programme from contemporary dance and new circus to exhibitions. In September.

FULL MOON DANCE FESTIVAL
Pyhäjärvi
Contact: tuotanto@fullmoondance.fi
www.fullmoondance.fi
Contemporary dance from Finland and abroad; courses and discussions. In July.

HELSINKI FESTIVAL
Helsinki
Contact: Laura Gottleben, press officer
www.helsinkifestival.fi
The largest arts festival in Finland, featuring classical and world music, dance, theatre and urban events. In August.

HELSINKI FLAMENCO FESTIVAL
Helsinki
Contact: flamenco@flamenco.fi
www.flamenco.fi
The festival showcases outstanding flamenco from Spain, Finland and the Nordics. Festival week is full of courses and events. In February.

HURRAA!
Helsinki
Contact: katriina.metsalampi@hel.fi
www.hurraa.org
A national festival of performing arts for children and young people. Every second year in March (2021).

JYVÄSKYLÄ FESTIVAL
Jyväskylä
Contact: Kyösti Ylikulju, festival manager
www.jyvaskylankesa.fi
City festival for different art forms: concerts, physical theatre, dance, circus, and programme for the whole family. In July.

KAKTUS DANCE FESTIVAL
Helsinki
Contact: www.gruppenfyra.com
Kaktus dance festival is held every second year by Dance Company Gruppen Fyra.

KAUSTINEN FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL
Kaustinen
Contact: info@kaustinen.net
www.kaućinen.net
The largest folk music event in the Nordic countries – all the folk music and dance you can handle in a week! In July.

**KOKKOLAN TALVITANSSIT / WINTER DANCE IN KOKKOLA**
Kokkola
Contact: Anne Peippo, producer, anne.peippo@kokkolantalvitanssit.fi
www.kokkolantalvitanssit.fi
A four-day event, full of contemporary dance and dance theatre. In September.

**KUOPIO DANCE FESTIVAL**
Kuopio
Contact: Anna Pitkänen, festival director
anna.pitkanen@kuopiodancefestival.fi, Riku Lehtopolku, artistic director, artistic.director2020@kuopiodancefestival.fi
www.kuopiodancefestival.fi
The largest annual dance festival in the Nordic countries. The programme ranges from contemporary dance to classical ballet, folklore, workshops and a varied fringe programme. In June.

**LAPPEENRANTA INTERNATIONAL BALLET GALA**
Lappeenranta
Contact: Irma.Salomaa@nordicdance.com or Juhani Teräsvuori, artistic director
www.lappeenranta.fi/balettaigaala
A meeting place for Nordic dance and international stars. Contemporary works and classics. In August.

**LONELY IN THE RAIN?**
Joensuu
Contact: Maijariitta Karhulahti, producer & communications manager
itak@itak.fi / +358505816300
www.itak.fi
Contemporary dance festival in November.

**MOVING IN NOVEMBER**
Helsinki
Contact: Isabel Gonzalez, executive producer
www.movinginnovember.fi
International contemporary dance festival in the Helsinki capital region. In November.

**OULU DANCE HACK**
Oulu
Contact: Tanja Råman
taikabox.com/hack
Oulu Dance Hack is an annual event that brings together international dance and media artists, educational specialists and technology businesses.

**OUDANCE FESTIVAL**
Oulu
Contact: Helena Lindqvist, managing director
www.jojo.fi/festival/
International and domestic performances in North Finland from all genres of dance with a contemporary twist. In September, on week no 37.

**PAIKALLISLIIKE**
Kuopio
Contact: Maijariitta Karhulahti, producer & communications manager
www.itak.fi
Platform presenting new productions by local dance artists. In June.
LIFT is coming again!

LIFT is a new kind of event for media, arts and culture. Last year it was organized for the first time and it sold out. Get your ticket now and ensure your place!

LIFT 24th October 2019

www.lift.helsinki.fi
If poetry was motion, it would be something like this

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World premiere 22.11.2019 Cirko theatre, Suviälä, Helsinki, Finland
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Saarinen - Pohjonen

Choreographer-dancer Tero Saarinen duets with accordion revolutionist, composer-musician Kimmo Pohjonen.  
*World Premiere April 2018*

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**Zimmermann Trio**
Tero Saarinen Company with Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra

A choreography originally commissioned from Tero Saarinen by the LA Phil and Helsinki Festival. Music by Bernd Alois Zimmermann, music direction by Susanna Mälkki and featuring Cellist Oren Shevlin.  
*World Premiere January 2018*

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**Morphed**
Saarinen - Salonen

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Performed with or without live music.  
*World Premiere August 2014*

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