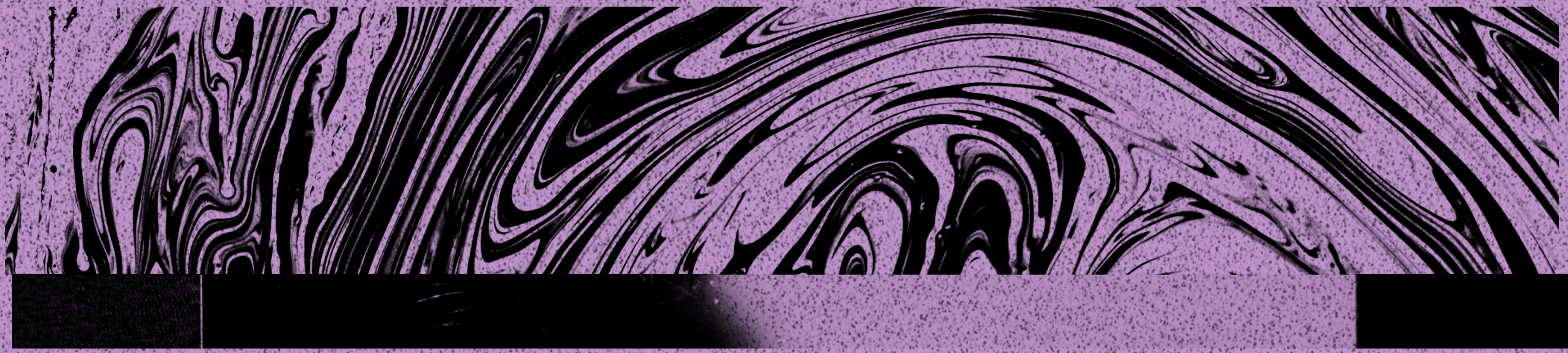


FIELD NOTES



Community Response

led by Gabriela Quinsacara

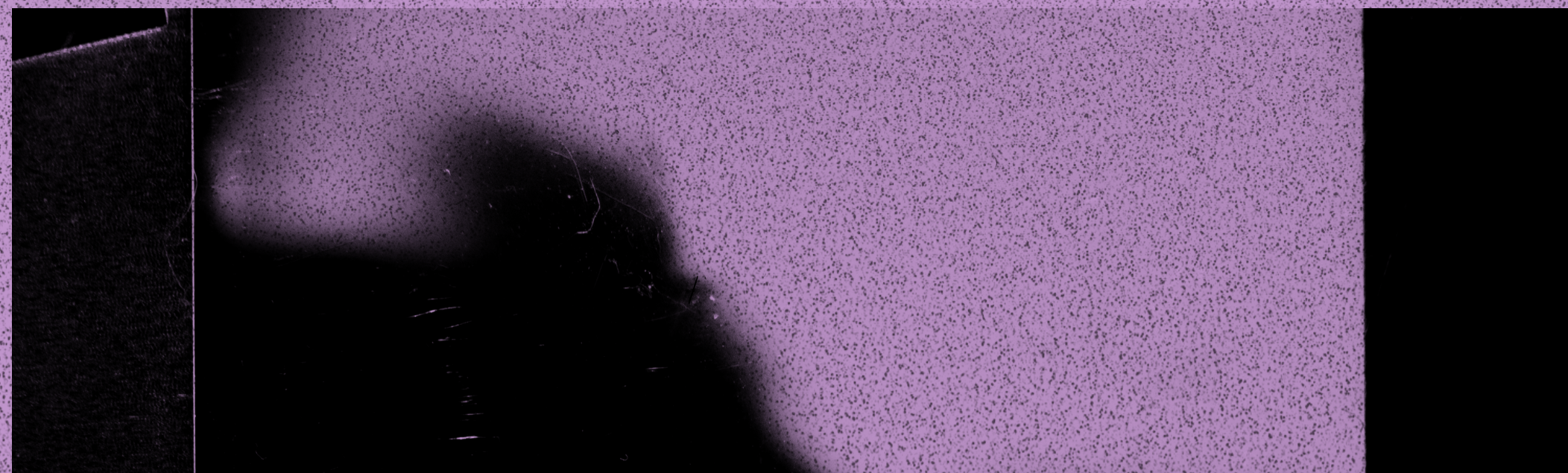
reflecting on

OVER9000

by The Unguided

Presented as part of Dancehouse

Season 2, 4–22 Aug, 2026



Field Notes is a Dancehouse initiative that commissions writers, academics, and artists to produce in-depth reflections on works within the Dancehouse program. Moving beyond conventional reviews, these texts aim to extend the life of each performance and contribute to a broader conversation about contemporary dance and choreographic practice.

DANCEHOUSE D/

"OVER9000, by The Unguided, explores Bounce and Rock — foundational Hip Hop movement that acts as a starting point for collective exploration, play and freestyle. Drawing from their experiences in cyphers, battles and jams, the work brings this formidable crew's knowledge and relationships into the theatre space.

My response to their work is a collection of fragmented thoughts. These are thoughts that asked more questions than it did generate conclusions. It's scattered, excited, inspired; it's feeling all the damn things in the way one does after watching their friends go IN."

— Gabi





Jimmy, Adib, Oli, David

One thing that makes The Unguided so bewitching to watch, is how they let their personalities shine in transitional moments. I'm not just talking about in between sections of the work, but that of their individual dances.

Jimmy's soulful weaving of intensity and conviction that bring you into his world as he speaks with the sharp angles of his arms.

The trickery of the stealthy and unassuming presence of Adib, whose flow rivals water.

Oli's mastery of jokes and quick level changes that leave you breathless, capturing you somewhere between laughter and complete awe.

David's all encompassing presence, domain-like, where every jab, stomp, and groove land exactly as intended.

Foundation is its own form of history

Foundation is often the starting point in a street dancer's learning journey: it's a collection of movements that create parameters around timing, angles, postures, rhythms, acting as a gate into the language and expression of a style.

I like to imagine foundation as a form of living history that gets passed on, body to body. Each time we dance, a bridge is created between past and present.

To be presented with a 45 minute work that dives deep into two Hip Hop foundations – the Bounce and the Rock – is an epic feat. One that really echoes the values that The Unguided models for the Hip Hop community in Naarm.



Oli's Trick List

Dab

6'7

Scuba

Dougie

Olympic reference (I refuse to say her name)

Circle game 🤏

Lolly offerings

Paper pulling prank

Soulja boi

Woah

Sprinkler

Nae Nae





More questions

What does a street dance performance offer that is different to attending a battle? A jam?

And what is the same between those things? What feels familiar?

What makes a crew different to a cast of dancers?



Creating a street dance work at this time is a risk in itself.

What The Unguided has put together are these incredible narratives of crew culture; it's a celebration of dancers exploring together, paying homage to their own learning journeys as both individuals and a collective.

The act of diving into a shared foundation feels like a direct rejection of the violence that comes from white choreographers' practice of extraction as a form of work-making.

The work presented pushes back against the type of ignorance, theft – and at times, racism – that can allow cultural movement to be treated as material to be claimed, rather than something with lineage, history, and meaning.



Creating a street dance work at this time is a risk in itself.

Exhibit A:

Choreographer: Show me what you can do

Dancer: *Demonstrates movement that was born out of black / brown / queer struggles. Movements that are informed by their own cultural lineage, movement that has been built over years of sharing and participating in community with (mostly) people of colour*

Choreographer: Okay I like this one move. I'm going to use it in this context I have created, therefore it is my property and you will not be credited as collaborator or co-choreographer. What you do will be presented under my name.

Creating a street dance work at this time is a risk in itself.

As street dancers we don't hold the same level of power and access to facilities, to regular funding, to opportunity, to safety and protection in the same way that our commercial and/or classically trained counterparts do. And thus it is so much easier for our work to be co-opted, our offerings can be exchanged for clout, the dances we do can be reduced to a sponsorship of a caffeinated can of sugar.



OVER9000 (2026) by The Unguided. Photo by Joshua Faleatua.



Repetition: An Invitation

Oli kickstarts a new section with a box step that travels across the floor. Committing to the same four steps on the same four counts, the crew starts taking risks by seeing how much they can add on top, without missing a beat; shoulder isolations suddenly become a gateway into solo freestyle moments.

It's repetitive, and I love that.

Not repetitive in a way that merely fills time, but one that challenges it. Repetition as a means of invitation. We as the audience are invited to see the differences – the shifting of weight, the draping of clothing, the subtle hand gestures – that can only be discovered amongst the illusion of sameness.

And just as they make way for a person to solo, The Unguided are also in this constant loop of inviting each other back into a groove, challenging each other's patience, timing, stamina, and creativity through the constraints of a 4 count step.

ASMaRio

To everyone's surprise, Mario literally breaks through a 4th wall (one of the black-out curtains) with a clothing rack that holds a slick collection of jackets. He models a few for us which earns him a few ooohs and aaahs. Finally finding a microphone in the pocket of one, he turns it on and begins tracing the fabrics with it, summoning a curious Adib to his side. Quick sweeps, long drags, choppy and abrupt pops from the zips and buttons become something akin to the sounds produced by a scratch DJ.

The mic, which first appeared toy-like in Mario's hands, suddenly became a paintbrush in Adib's as he begins an artful solo.

I don't have words for that level of magic.



Crewside Views

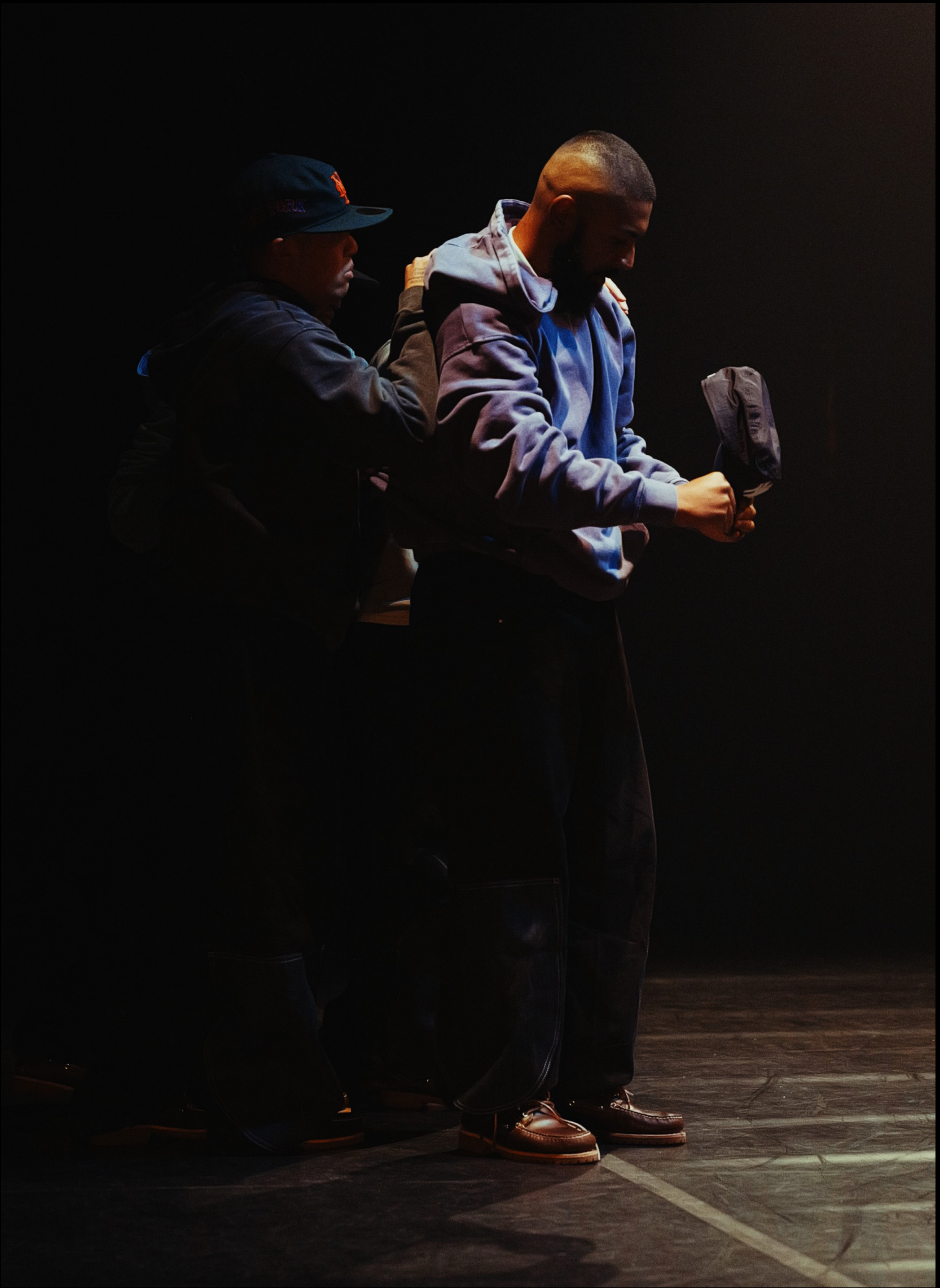
It was really special to watch *OVER9000* twice.

During the first show I sat with Fale, Long – two members of Unguided – and Kouta, a member of Cypherstate crew. All three are big hip hop heads, all three arrived into the scene at different times and through different experiences, and yet all three are connected by those invisible threads one might call community (as loaded as that term can be).

In the second performance I sat with my crewmate, Azzam. Watching him react in my peripheral vision, and hearing him cheer at all the same moments I did brought me so much joy. I wonder if he is also reminded of our own crew's hilarious rehearsals and the meals we shared after.

I wonder if The Unguided also burst into song at random moments in their development sessions. I wonder how many inside jokes were made. I wonder how many coffees / waters / energy drinks they had. I wonder which Unguided member was the bossiest, and which member was the most tangent-prone. I have a few guesses.

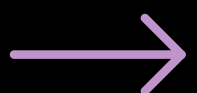




OVER9000 (2026) by The Unguided. Photo by Joshua Faleatua.

Representing Riddim Nation crew, Gabi is a Naarm based Samoan-Chilean street dancer and performer. Their work has primarily been an exploration into the fusion of Popping and Siva Samoa, an exploration that continues to colour their current practice across battles, cyphers, and stage.

Gabi's call for community reflections sparked an avalanche of creativity: handwritten confessions pinned like love letters, a photographic tapestry of moments, carefully curated soundtracks, spontaneous performances that echoed with raw energy, and video stories that tumbled in from every corner.



Kid Trip (Gino)'s written reflection

OVER9000 was an emotional Journey The Unguided boys led. Pride was something I felt seeing community members and more importantly, friends, command a stage with their passion. They were able to explore every concept to the end allowing for both a dance audience and general public to receive their own conclusion on the piece. I think doing this best represents why we do what we do. I had brought along Colleagues to show them what it is my practice can do and the boys displayed every element tremendously. The fact that everyone left with a smile and sense of inspiration on their faces is a testament to this.

Speaking of Inspiration I was filled with it as I saw a common theme of exploration and discovery be told to the audience. I personally felt an amazing narrative around what street dance and what specifically hip hop meant for each performer. The lighting and forcefulness of the group at times, felt as though there was a motion of conforming to a group or ideology which can occur in communities. The solo moments gave both moments of exploration and freedom with the ideas they received from the group or themselves. These ideas are explored in so many ways and helped me want to push my creative practice to the fullest after seeing what the group would do with one piece of material. The group moments also translate as unity when it is more flowy or when they would move in unison or nod to each other which is such a deep contrast to my previous statement about the group. Elements of comedy also best represent the group and show how human dance is to us.



OVER9000 (2026) by The Unguided. Photo by Joshua Faleatua.



The complexities lead me to love the humanity the group showed Hip Hop having. They felt constricted as a group but also free and united at times, they felt both lost and comfortable as solo artists, they used fashion to express themselves and explore dance, they used crowd interactions and comedic elements to continue to express who they are. Ultimately showing how Human and pivotal Dance can be to everyone expressing who they are at their core. For most of us it's not one trait and they demonstrate this.

Their individuality speaks to the last idea heavily. Each member has a unique style which is a fact because I could explain the style of dance to my non dancer friends and they would remember which person it was. David's character and explosiveness, JD's Flow, Oliver's details, Adib's water like movement and Mario's abstract shapes is a huge oversimplification of how incredible this group is when they combine their powers as a unit.



Seeing these guys get these opportunities means so much to the community as a whole, I felt a connection with everyone that watched OVER9000 that night. I was captivated for the whole 45 minutes even after dealing with High School students for 6 days straight! I would've loved to express this through dance but injuries will be preventing that. I hope my words can portray the feelings accurately.

Pride, Exploration, Inspiration, Human, Complexities.

Giuliano 'Gino' Hammal, aka 24 and Kid Trip, is a multidisciplinary artist of Egyptian and Sudanese heritage. A street dancer since 2021, his practice is grounded in KRUMP as a form of expression, identity and storytelling.

OVER9000 (2026) by The Unguided. Photo by Joshua Faleatua.



Through Nam Chop's lens



OVER9000 (2026) by The Unguided. Photo by Nam Chops.







Nam Nguyen (Namchops) is a Melbourne-based photographer specialising in movement, dance and portraiture, working across street dance, contemporary performance and commercial photography.

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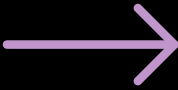


DJ SANN's curated playlist

[CLICK ME](#)



SANN has been part of the hip-hop freestyle community since 2022, with freestyle culture being a big part of her life. She stepped into DJing in 2024 and has since played for local battles and events, bringing energy and music to the community.

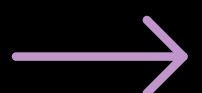


Miri's freestyle dance response



[CLICK ME](#)

Miri is a dancer and community leader who loves to (re)connect with herself and others through dance. Anchored in Hip Hop as well as exploring Krump and Dancehall, she has been able to embrace the roots of these dance forms and their culture, as well as finding release and lessons in the process of (un)learning. She believes that dance is a mirror of ourselves and is passionate about the growth and challenges that come with it.



Cypherstate crew video response



I represent Cypherstate Crew
here in Melbourne

[CLICK ME](#)

Cypherstate crew stepped into the Burncity freestyle scene together in 2025 as a new gen crew, driven by a shared love for the Hip Hop culture and the essence of the jam. To us, Cypherstate means bringing the raw energy, connection and exchange that happens in every cypher. We represent a shared passion, a drive to continually grow and a dedication to give back to the community that shapes us.

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