

Yilin “Kingston” Liu

Project Title: Training and Research on Funk-style Dance

Project Description

Popularized by TV shows like *So You Think You Can Dance* and competitions like World of Dance tour, Urban Dance¹ choreography style is replacing the Hip Hop dance scene which has been popular since the 80's. However, due to a lack of recognition of cultural knowledge, neither Hip Hop nor Urban Dance is being correctly identified by the public or the mainstream media, which results in the loss of culture for both dance forms and an increasing misunderstanding for both dance styles. As a Hip Hop dancer, my area of interest focuses on examining the similarities and differences in techniques, ideologies, and cultural knowledge between these two dance styles. In order to establish a more comprehensive view of both dance forms, I will investigate some of the causes behind the rise in Urban Dance's popularity the resulting push of Hip Hop to the verge of disappearance.

In this project, I will focus on honing my Hip Hop dance techniques and interview professional Hip Hop dancers in Beijing, China. While I have been deeply involved in the Urban Dance crews and community in my time at the University of Virginia, I haven't had much exposure to the Hip Hop dance scene due to diminishing popularity of Hip Hop dance in America. However, the Hip Hop presence in Beijing is still strong, and the fact that various world-renown Hip Hop dancers live in Beijing makes it an ideal place for me to hone my skills and accumulate knowledge about Hip Hop.

I plan to attend a two-month workshop at ZAHA Club, one of the best Hip Hop dance institutions in Beijing, to expand upon my present skills and knowledge by engaging in a deeper training in the basics and communicating with experts currently active in the form. Since my specialty is funk styles of Hip Hop dance, which is collectively known as popping and locking, my training and research will mainly focus on funk style dancing. Through my study of these funk style dances, I will accumulate knowledge and gain more insights about the broader form of Hip Hop dance.

In the meantime, I will be travelling within and outside Beijing to talk with the professional Chinese Hip Hop dancers, perhaps including world champions like Super Dino (黄景行) and Viho (杨文昊), to gain more insights into the knowledge of Hip Hop and current state of Hip Hop dancers in China. The quest to understanding the cultural knowledge and lives of Hip Hop dancers is essential for me to conduct any further study in my investigation of the relationship between Urban Dance styles and Hip Hop. Since the travel fees will not be a significant amount, I will cover them myself.

For the outcome presentation next April, I will present my findings from my research and training on funk-style Hip Hop dances from the summer. The presentation will consist of two parts: a verbal presentation with Power Point, and a demo solo showcasing different styles.

¹ Named after “Urban Dance Camp,” an international educational dance institution in Germany, the term Urban Dance specifically refers to a choreography-centered dance form that emphasizes rapid and precise movements.

Project Timeline

Summer 2015	
May 10:	Arrive in Beijing, China
May or June	Compete in Rock n' Roll, the biggest Hip Hop competition for college students in Beijing (waiting the for specific date to be announced)
June and July	Workshop at ZAHA Club
May-July	Talk with first-generation Hip Hop dancers in Beijing and gather primary source information
Fall 2015	Continue training in Urban Dance choreography style with AKAdEMiX dance crew
Spring 2015	
January 30	Deadline for the first draft of the written portion of the report for my project to my mentor for feedback
February 16	Deadline for the final draft of the written report
March 20	Deadline for my completed choreographic piece inspired as a result of my training in summer
March 25	Deadline for my presentation PPT
April	Presentation

Proposed Budget

Two-months of Workshops at ZAHA Club	\$1062 (3298 RMB/month)
Airfare	At my own expense (\$1576)
Travel (between and within cities)	<u>At my own expense (\$100-150)</u>
Total	\$1060

Since the expense will exceed the budget maximum if I include airfare, and travel between cities, I will pay for these two expense items myself. The award amount is sufficient so far.