

Hannover, March 17, 2023

## **Press release: Melanie Zimmermann to become the artistic director of the new dance festival in Hannover**

Melanie Zimmermann will become the artistic director of the new dance festival in Hannover. The selection committee consisted of Anna Mülter (Artistic Director of Festival Theaterformen), Sonja Anders (Artistic Director Schauspiel Hannover), and Bettina Masuch (Artistic Director of the Festspielhaus St. Pölten). Zimmermann was previously a dramaturg for dance and a curator at Kampnagel in Hamburg. The first edition of the festival will take place at the venues of the Staatstheater Hannover from January 24 to 28, 2024.

Zimmermann will now begin with planning the artistic approach and will decide a name for the new festival. A new corporate design and a website will also be developed. These will be published together with the program presumably in November 2023.

The main sponsors of the new dance festival are the State Capital of Hannover, the Stiftung Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony Foundation), and the State of Lower Saxony. The same sponsors also most recently provided financial support for the *TANZtheater INTERNATIONAL* festival, which ended after 38 years with the 37th festival edition in autumn 2022. The new dance festival will rely on the organizational structure of the Festival Theaterformen—however, from an artistic point of view both festivals are and will be independent. The Festival Theaterformen takes place annually for ten days in June and July and alternates between Hannover and Braunschweig.

### **Melanie Zimmermann**

Melanie Zimmermann worked for film and television before studying cultural studies and dance studies in Frankfurt an der Oder and Paris. She worked with the Forsythe Company and studied dramaturgy with Hans-Thies Lehmann in Frankfurt and Brussels. She received a danceWEB scholarship in 2010. As a freelance dance and theater dramaturg, she worked for Wanda Golonka, Peeping Tom, as well as Laurent Chétouane, and was the project leader of the MAMAZA collective, among others. From 2010 on, she was dance dramaturg and curator at Kampnagel in Hamburg, where she was responsible for the local and international dance program and several major dance events, such as the Tanzplattform (Dance Platform) 2014, and the Biennale Tanzausbildung (Biennale Dance Education) 2020. Furthermore, she curated the Fokus Tanz festival and many other festivals for the Kampnagel program from 2014 on. Through her networking she has primarily supported disabled artists and representatives of black dance culture in the last few years.

**Melanie Zimmermann** says about her new job in Hannover:

“I am looking forward to my first job as a director in Hannover, the city itself, and to get to know its communities and artists. As a festival team, we follow in the footsteps of Christiane Winter and her team and we plan

to continue our work with much enthusiasm and motivation in the future. We want to show dance in all of its many facets, present its artistic and social dimensions, and demonstrate how broad the understanding of choreography can be. Our goal is for audiences to be able to identify with what happens on stage and in other spaces, while at the same time being entertained, because dance is not a universal language that is understood by everyone in the same way; rather it speaks to what is deep inside us and to our bodily as well as intellectual experiences. It is therefore important for me to create as many opportunities as possible for international and local artists and audiences to meet in many different ways.”

**Sonja Anders**, Artistic Director of the Schauspiel Hannover:

“Melanie Zimmermann convinced me through her far-reaching expertise in regard to curating dance festivals, but most of all through her nuanced view of the current developments of the dance scene. Her open approach to the society of our city and the different communities is especially refreshing. I’m looking forward to her taking over the Schauspielhaus and the Ballhof Theater with her vision and contacts and I’m certain that she will be able to establish a multifaceted network in the City of Hannover and beyond.”

**Konstanze Beckedorf**, Head of Cultural Affairs of the State Capital of Hannover:

“We are pleased that the next step toward a new dance festival for Hannover has been taken with the choice of an artistic director. In Melanie Zimmermann an expert will join the new team who can and will explore diversity and sustainability in the design of the festival in a new way. We put much stake in her experience with communicating new themes, winning over new groups of audiences, and establishing new forms of collaboration also with the local dance scene.”

**Lavinia Francke**, General Secretary of the Stiftung Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony Foundation):

“The City of Hannover, the State of Lower Saxony, the Schauspiel Hannover, and the Stiftung Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony Foundation) together managed to bring an international festival of contemporary dance to Hannover. In Melanie Zimmermann an extremely well connected person will take over as director of the new festival. The audience in Hannover can continue to look forward to international companies and celebrated dance productions and to a fresh perspective regarding what is dance and what dance can be.”

**Falko Mohrs**, Minister for Science and Culture of the State of Lower Saxony:

“I am happy that the new dance festival in Hannover is starting to take shape and that it was possible to hire a high-profile expert for contemporary dance in Melanie Zimmermann. I wish her great success for the first edition of the new dance festival.”

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Free images for the press can be found at [this link](#).

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