



A TREND

Sista G
Photo: Little Shan

"This is not a trend. I repeat: this is not a trend," says Lil C in the documentary film *Rize*, which follows the creation of krump, an urban dance style developed by a group of teenagers in Los Angeles. Lil C was correct. Since krump's start in the early 2000s, this athletic art form, with its strong sense of culture and community, has grown to gain an international following.

Ceasare "Tight Eyez" Willis and Jo'Artis "BIG Mijo" Rami, widely considered the co-founders of krump, both started dancing through a style termed clowning, in which they performed hip-hop moves with their faces painted like circus clowns, and entertained at children's parties and public events. The two found their personal style too rugged and raw to continue clowning, and hence krump was born. Participants come to krump, with its foundation of chest pops, jabs, arm swings and stomps, to express strong emotions: anger, sadness, frustration. For many, krumping became an alternative to street violence, but though it may look aggressive, it mostly gives dancers a feeling of release and calmness.

"When you look at old krump, it is reckless, it is shaky, it looks spastic. But the dance has evolved," explains Amadeus "Primal" Marquez, owner of Toronto's Northbuck crew. Over time, krump has become more polished and structured in its foundations, creating a stronger look for the form. Dancers are able to map out what is acceptable, what isn't acceptable, where their posture is supposed to be, and even the way they should plant their feet. As Primal says, "It turned from a street style to a dance style." New krumpers carry the foundations of krump, but also add in their own personal styles and movement qualities.

Krump has travelled the world, including Japan, France, Mexico and Korea. In Canada, Northbuck started an after-school program called Krumping Out Crime that teaches at-risk youth the expressive dance form while opening up mentorship possibilities. Montreal boasts one of the only all-female krump crews, led by Valérie "Taminator" Chartier, called Buck Swans. A worldwide crew and movement titled Wonder Women Krump connects female krumpers to build a community and empower women. Since 2008, Germany has held the European Buck Session — the world's largest krump competition — in which crews battle each other to claim the title of Krump World Champion. They are invited back the following year to defend their title. Prizes for the event reach 2,000 euros. This competition has been growing quickly, doubling in its second year to more than 900 viewers and 300 battlers.

At this year's European Buck Session in Dusseldorf in September, apart from the main competition, there was a workshop from 2013 World Champion, Ruin, as well as dance workshops and history lectures from BIG Mijo and Tight Eyez. The male and female 2014 Krump World Champions were both from France's Madrootz crew. The crew holds some of the pioneers of the French krump movement, including the winners, Sista G and Grichka (who also held the men's title in 2012). Battles with teams made up of five people representing their own country also take place. This year, and for the past three years, the winner was Team Germany.

— DEANNE KEARNEY