



**Press release “Next Steps”
Berlin, 22 December 2025**

Next Steps boosts Hesse’s dance scene with 175,000 euros

With the support of the Crespo Foundation, the non-profit cultural organisation Bureau Ritter is implementing the funding programme Next Steps from 2024 to 2026. The initiative strengthens the relevance and visibility of contemporary dance in Hesse.

In the second call for applications under Funding Line A (grants between €5,000 and €25,000), professional dance practitioners were invited to apply with their project ideas. By the submission deadline, a total of 72 applications had been received.

The applicants ranged from newly graduated alumni to established choreographers, dancers and independent ensembles, as well as theatres, production venues and festivals. A total of €175,000 was available for this round of funding.

Following their meeting on 19 December 2025, the jury – comprising Sofie Luckhardt, Raphael Moussa Hillebrand, Melanie Suchy and Heike Wrede – recommended eight projects for funding.

Statement by the Jury:

‘With the current funding round of Next Steps, the jury acknowledges the impressive diversity of dance in Hesse – its breadth, boldness and adaptability. The applications submitted demonstrate innovation, urgency and a politically aware sense of identity within the scene, together with the ability to get things done. Dance emerges here as both a mirror of, and a resonant space for, social issues, driven by committed dance professionals, a rich and varied artistic vocabulary, and an ambition to reach genuinely diverse audiences. Particularly striking is the strong commitment to networking and to structural development that extends beyond individual projects. The exceptionally high number of strong applications made the selection process especially challenging. Next Steps supports the next phase of artistic development – and offers a glimpse of where the scene is heading.’

Christiane Riedel, Member of the Executive Board of the Crespo Foundation:

‘The projects funded in the first round of Next Steps explored the programme in all its possibilities and used it in a wide variety of ways for their next career steps. This individualised funding approach has already proven its worth, and we are delighted to now be able to strengthen even more dance practitioners in Hesse through Next Steps.’

Riccarda Herre, Isabel Niederhagen (Programme Management) and Madeline Ritter (Managing and Artistic Director) of Bureau Ritter emphasise:

‘The second application round of Next Steps once again impressively demonstrates how vital and committed the dance scene in Hesse is. Yet artistic practice requires more than passion: it demands secure working conditions, spaces to test new ideas and reliable structures that

enable professionalism and growth. Thanks to the support of the Crespo Foundation, we are able to strengthen the foundations for artistic development and open up new perspectives for dance practitioners – deliberately low-threshold and without the obligation to raise additional third-party funding.'

The Next Steps programme was initiated by Bureau Ritter in autumn 2024 and is made possible through the support of the Crespo Foundation. Further information: www.next-steps-hessen.de.

Funded projects of the second call for applications:

Applicant: Andelos Berber, Linden

Project: "SHIFT"

Popping is a dance style that emerged in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, characterised by the rhythmic contraction and release of the dancer's muscles in time with the beat. Drawing on an in-depth engagement with this distinctive movement language, the Hesse-based collective SHIFT will realise a decentralised programme to feature it in 2026. With a strong emphasis on supporting emerging artists and fostering international knowledge exchange, the programme will comprise a residency with public showing, a summit, artistic documentation and laboratory formats. These activities will take place both in Frankfurt and in smaller towns such as Friedberg, Bad Nauheim and Giessen. A solidarity-based ticketing model will ensure access for those who need it.

Applicant: Eslam Elnebishy, Frankfurt a. M.

Project: "Yet to Come"

"Yet to Come" is a choreographic exploration of grief, voice and political defeat. Drawing on memories of the 2011 Egyptian revolution, Frankfurt-based choreographer Eslam Elnebishy explores how political loss is inscribed in the body, and how grief might be transformed into resilience. The project addresses unfulfilled hopes for change and their reverberations in today's global rise of far-right politics. The research centres on experiments with movement, sound and voice, supported by dramaturgical mentoring and formats for public exchange. The process culminates in a work-in-progress presentation and lays the groundwork for the premiere of a full-length piece in 2027.

Applicant: Kevin Antronne Glenn / HOUSEaHOLICS, Frankfurt a. M.

Project: "Beyond the Floor: House for everyone"

With renewed funding, HOUSEaHOLICS continues to consolidate its role as a driving force within the house dance scene in Frankfurt and across Hesse. By strengthening local and regional networks, the collective is addressing challenges such as the lack of suitable and affordable venues. Planned activities include jams in Frankfurt and two other cities in Hesse, an alcohol-free club night, and a house battle aimed at celebrating the community and raising its public profile. The project seeks to enhance visibility, support artistic development and professionalise local practitioners, while creating sustainable spaces for training and exchange and securing broader social recognition for urban dance culture. The establishment of a civil law partnership (GbR) is intended to underpin the long-term continuity of the work.

Applicant: Miranda Glikson, Marburg

Project: “360° Festival of Contemporary Dance and Participation Marburg”

The three-day 360° festival transforms Marburg into a vibrant hub for contemporary dance. In collaboration with Theater neben dem Turm, Waggonhalle Marburg and Philipps University, 360° showcases local and national artists. Participatory formats and workshops offer accessible entry points for a broad audience and create inclusive spaces for encounter, with a focus on community-oriented practices and collaboratively developed performances. Conceived as a pilot project, the festival’s first edition also establishes a platform designed to offer local dance professionals new perspectives and opportunities for exchange and networking.

Applicant: Fanni Schack, Frankfurt a. M.

Project: “Blätter”

“Blätter” (Leaves) is a mobile dance performance for children aged three to six, developed in local daycare centres, with a particular focus on rural and socially diverse areas around Frankfurt. This first collaborative project by Fanni Schack, Pihla Jaala and Ronja Eick brings together artistic practice and educational expertise, fostering imagination, sensory exploration and movement research. In collaboration with musician and visual artist Nicolas Gebbe, the dancers and dance educators explore the poetic world of autumn leaves – falling, rolling, catching and transforming. Each performance is followed by a workshop in which the children experiment with movement and create art using leaves. In this way, the project brings art directly into children’s everyday lives and offers a playful introduction to dance.

Applicant: Brigitta Schirdewahn, Frankfurt a. M.

Project: “lever / tomber / aller ... noch immer ... jetzt!”

“lever/ tomber/ aller....noch immer....jetzt!” is an interdisciplinary collage of dance, music, video, set and costume, dedicated to the life and work of choreographer and dancer Brigitte Schirdewahn. Now in her eighties, she enters into an intimate artistic dialogue with the young Frankfurt-based dancer Henri Klein. On stage, two bodies shaped by different dance traditions meet – and with them, two generations in conversation, reflecting on relationships, social change and identity through the lens of lived experience and biography. The duet is accompanied by musician Jacob Bussmann and a sign language interpreter, whose expressive presence opens up an additional, embodied layer of movement and meaning.

Applicant: tanz*werk kassel e. V.

Project: “Tanzwerk M O V E S (moving in – moving on – moving beyond) – ein Raum für Bewegung”

With the support of Next Steps, tanz*werk kassel will make use of the space provided by the municipal cultural office in the Hochbunker Agathof as its first dedicated production and presentation venue for the independent dance scene in Kassel, fitting it out to meet the needs of local artists. Three artistic residencies, each hosting two projects, will take place in the 80 sqm studio, including free mentoring and concluding with a public presentation. Alongside this, the well-established professional open classes will continue, rotating between Agathof, Sozo School and Kulturhaus Dock 4, ensuring they remain accessible to the wider dance community.

Applicant: Amelia Uzategui Bonilla / T.I.A. dance productions, Offenbach a. M.

Project: "T.I.A. für junges Publikum"

The project is developing a community infrastructure for creative integrated audio description in central Hesse. Guest performances and workshops will extend the practice already established in Frankfurt and Wiesbaden to Marburg and Giessen. Working with young audiences forms the foundation for accessibility in dance. Creative integrated audio description explores how people hear about a piece, how they get to the venue and how they feel within it. Young people aged 11 and over engage with movement as a form of personal expression and discover that professional dance is open to people with disabilities. The community-oriented approach enhances accessibility in theatres, while accompanying workshops teach the practice to blind, visually impaired and sighted participants alike.

If you have any further questions, please contact:

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