

Overview of krump dancing drama essay

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Krumping is an urban art form, reflecting the African American expressive culture and the street culture. The regional location and its history of violence has propelled the style into the mainstream. Born in 1990s from the slumps of Los Angeles, it blends elements of spiritual and physical energy. Krumping is an emerging movement that is quite fresh on the dance scene, exploding with positive energy it comes from a torn world of poverty and oppression. As a spiritual art form it encompasses core elements of its history and religion through its powerful movements and sounds. Through its spiritually Krump transforms its African American dance form to a communal public art form while incorporating its street culture through its music as a creative outlet for the hardships of urban life. Each element in Krump excretes pure energy in a unique way that releases the pent up frustration of each performer, from its highly energetic movements, expressiveness and the physical toll on the performer's body, the art form has yet to hit its peak. The history of Krump and its spiritual energy originates from the hard streets of South Central Los Angeles, California, but can also be traced back to its African tribal culture. Born amongst the 1965 Watts riots, a large-scale riot which lasted 6 days in protest to the American Civil Rights Act leaving the African American community a feeling of injustice and despair, and the 1992 Rodney King riots, were the acquittal of LAPD officers in the trial of the beating of Rodney King sparked a further 6 days crime spree, the dance created an escape for the youth. Being brought up in a community upheaved by of violence and oppression blighted by racism, left the youths pursuing a sense of belonging and nurturance from there distressed families of substance abuse and violence. Turning to gangs for a sense of compassion,

the ongoing harassment and recruitment of gangs left a sense of hopelessness, were within a dance movement emerge, from the dissatisfaction of their daily struggles, classified as an urban hip-hop variation, Krump like Capoeira started as a way for trouble youths to express themselves, and escape their gang filled lives. Krump dancers would form structured and organised crews or families, a tight-knit group of individuals whose loyalties and commitment extends beyond dance. These dance circles of fellow Krumpers provide the support and stability many in their community don't receive from their own families at home. Thus through their oppressed urban culture a sub-culture of Krumping immersed, providing an alternative to the gang life style.

Seen as an aggressive competitive dance due to its release of the performer's personal anger, hiding beneath the rebellious exterior, lays a religious imagery of enslavement calling out for protest. " There is a spirit in the midst of krump-ness. There is a spirit there...most people think, they're just a bunch of rowdy, ghetto, heathen thugs. No, what we are is oppressed." (Julie Malnig, 2009) Krumping at its roots are connected by its history but also at its core there are traces of the African tribal culture, Dancer's would perform in a circle, as a way for them to assert their wholeness. The circle is an arena of a warrior, the ring shout of slave times, in which slaves would move in a round circle while stomping and clapping.

" The circle of the dance is a permissive circle: it protects and permits. At certain times on certain days, men and women come together at a given place, and there, under the solemn eye of the tribe, fling themselves into a seemingly unorganized pantomime, which is in reality extremely systematic,

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in which by various means—shakes of the head, bending of the spinal column, throwing of the whole body backward -may be deciphered as in an open book the huge effort of a community to exorcise itself, to liberate itself, to explain itself. There are no limits—inside the circle.” Frantz Fanon (1961)

But also a spiritual ritual; combat, competition and artistry build a world within and the circle contains elements of a spiritual energy, a holy dance and religious trances. Even as their paths in lives may seem fray and unbound Dancer’s accomplishments in krumping gain them street credibility, earning respect and absorption from a life of violence. Furthermore embodied with competitiveness and spiritual aspect krumping provides sanctuary of the urban city, a state of mind with no boundaries, lines or limitations, just a sense of freedom.

“ Rize” follows the practitioners of krumping from its origins at children’s clown parties to the popular dance form that has reached mainstream audiences. LaChapelle never explores krumping beyond its inner-city setting, enforcing the krumping as an authentic art form in the city of Los Angeles in direct opposition of the materialistic, commercialism of mainstream.

Beginning with Tommy the Clown, an American dancer and the inventor of “ clowning” style, it quickly spread and evolved in to dance-battles serving as an alternative to gangs. Tommy’s performances developed loyal followers, growing throughout Los Angeles. Taking it upon himself he used this opportunity to give the youth a chance by being a model living positive at all times. As dancers got older the style continued to morph into even more outrageous styles. The abrasive nature of Krump makes it difficult to locate its sacred connotations; the spiritual energy brewing within its movements

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often convey sexuality, violence and suffering, but within the circle of Krumping “ this is the only way of making ourselves feel like we belong.” (Julie Malnig, 2009)

During these moments of belonging, the dancers become a contest of physical and spiritual energy, revealing their spirit and raw emotion that Krump demands. The energy and vigor of Krumping in a spiritual sense exorcises the demons and conjure spirits, but thought Krumping look wild and out of control to the unaware, it is actually self-governing and defies claims that youths are inherently violent and disruptive. The music in Krumping is danced to hardcore, beat-heavy hip-hop tracks, sometimes with no vocals. These amorphous circles and repetitive rhythmic loops entrances dancers to a spiritual state. During “ Rize” a dancer falls under a trance which then she loses spiritual control and consciousness, collapsing into the arms of a fellow Krumper, when she is asked what has happened, she answers, “ I don’t know... I just let go.” (Rize, 2005) The circle of spiritual energy is also used as organised healing and cathartic release, Krumpers channel their anger into a positive form, making Krumping more than a dance art form; it’s a coping mechanism that reveals this sub-culture to be something another than youths engaging in criminal behaviours and mentalities.

Derived from Hip-Hop and Breaking, Krumping fires up people with its energetic enthusiasm of its powerful emotional expressiveness in certain Krump movements, it may represent elements joyful and painful emotions; in which can help the performer in alleviating anxiety and depression while also sharing emotions artistically. The movement exhibits an electric body

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shock which moulds and distortions in the body of the head, arms, face, legs and pelvis. Krump is intended as an outlet for anger or to release pent-up energy, the dance movements reflect this type of physical release, both males and females display combinations of movements similar to a blend of street fighting, moshing, spiritual possession and aerobic striptease. It is described as a volatile, warrior-like, spastic and quaking dance that involves the vigorous banding of the spine, the thrusting and popping of the chest. While the overall appearance of Krumping may look violent with battles between dancers a central component, Krumpers hit each other to get energised to dance in the radical expressive and explosive ways the dance is known for. The Physical Energy is used as an outlet for frustration this passionate dance is adapted to each performer's unique style, with the level of intensity differing by the emotions felt in that moment, giving the dance its own personality.

When performing these actions I noticed the energy involve, initially it was about the visual actions of throwing, tossing, grabbing smashing, breaking and slashing but the more I performed these movements the more I noticed the actions that require a lot of energy, momentum and physical power to execute. In power moves, the dancers relies more on upper body strength and is usually on his or her hands during moves. An arm swing entails the arm to be tense up; as they tighten into a stiff plank, and the hand is crunched into a fist. The basic arm swing motion, the arm tended to rise and fall into the body, the movement is rhythmic with each swing. There is lift upwards and outwards where the swing is grasping for contact, each swing is flung with a strong and fierce force, while tearing at the arms socket. As the

arm falls it loosens and bends, contracting into the body. The hands and arms in each one of these movements begin a chain reaction that spreads through the body, resulting in being covered with a cloak of pure powerful energy. Wavelike movements in the torso, arms and hips are descendent from the African origin. There's a sense of being, and a connection to your body but also a sense of power and strength. Each movement is skilfully controlled to the beat of the music. From the Arm swing to the power moves the movements in Krump give you a sense of being untouchable while being empowering.

Krumpers face off one-on-one and try to out-Krump one another, this fusion of sport, dancing and fighting

With a semblance of physical combat and African tribal culture in their dance movements, Krumping allows dancers to “ pop their limbs, gyrate their torsos and stomp their feet to hip hop music” (Rize, 2005) The pace and intensity of the music is so frantic that it suggests a kind of spiritual possession, dancers seemingly and often are instructed to lose control, this loss of control has been lyrically manifested allowing the dancers to slip out of their constraints and boxes and just let go. After losing control in the beats, they recognise that there are both limits and no limits within the circle. This expression of their true self runs on their remaining energy before passing out.

The Krumping dance style makes explicit claims to the importance of its regional location and history of violence as a major propellant of the style.

Spiritual Energy

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Religion

Sound

Physical Energy

Movement

Journal (in body experience)

Expression

Toll