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...Should I shoot his bitch, or make the nigga rich? Don't wanna commit murder, but damn they got me trapped...

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Breakdance: Krumping



Krumping (also clown dancing or clowning) is a fast growing style of hip hop dance. It originated in the African-American community of South Central Los Angeles, California and is the newest form of the "Urban" Black dance movement. It is free, expressive and highly energetic.

History

The making of Krumping can be traced back to traditional African dances. In the movie Rize David LaChapelle uses footage of dancers in an African village intercut with Krumpers battling each other to illustrate the similarities. "Krump" or "Krumping" is an evolution of the "Clowning" or "Clown-dancing" style or manifestation of the Black Dance movement. Clown Dancing was created in the early nineties by Thomas Johnson aka Tommy the Clown, who was a hip-hop dancer and spokesperson for then Governor Gray Davis. In 1992 Johnson began fusing different

local dance elements and created a unique, appealing, universal style that also aided him in promoting his own career as a clown for children's parties.

Johnson had been in trouble with the law since his youth and living in a gang-ridden area. He saw dance as a positive outlet. Johnson believed one could avoid gang involvement and gang violence through involvement with dance. In developing Clowning, he fused local elements of Black Dance such as "G dance" or "Gangsta(er) boogie" and stripper dancing (alluding to the sexual and highly active performance style of black strippers). Clowning also employs certain elements of Jamaican Dancehall moves such as the "butterfly" or the "rodeo", as well as elements from popping and locking, two older and more established forms of black dance usually associated with breakdancing. Clowning also involves painting the face - a direct result of the dance's origin for use in Tommy's clown performances.

Using the dance to enhance birthday party clown acts and to advertise his business, Tommy the Clown gained notoriety in the area. Soon significant numbers of the area's youth grew interested in the dances he performed and he was able to focus on teaching dance solely. Johnson began teaching parts of his style to local youth and gained many followers who were dubbed the Hip Hop Clowns. He would perform publicly with the most adept children or dancers (the age span ranged from 6 into the 20's) and eventually was able to use profits from this to open a school/academy in South Central Los Angeles. This underground movement soon spread beyond South-Central L.A. and Compton to the rest of California and beyond.

About 50 clown dancing groups exist currently and krumping has entered mainstream hip hop culture through its performance in various music videos.

Emergence of Krump

The inception of Krump occurred when a number of the original hip hop clowns and youth during that generation of clowning became older, drifted away from Tommy, and moved on from the child-oriented nature of clowning.

Individuals such as Tight Eyes, Big Mijo, Jay Smooth are the originators of krumping while Lil'C, though contributed a lot to krumping, is one of the godfathers Kings of Krump. More specifically it is necessary to address these individuals variously as the "First Generation", "Big Homey" or "Kings of Krump" because, as the originators, these are the only individuals that can hold all of these titles, however other Krumpers may be known by one of the three terms. And it did.

Styles

A highly volatile, expressive and versatile form of black dance which was developed and is constantly evolving, Krumping is now a structured form of dance, with a variety of styles (currently numbering around 4-6). There are set moves and sections across the different styles of krumping and it is quickly growing and building a tradition and ceremony all of its own. It is an outlet for anger and is a nonviolent alternative to the street violence that is widespread in many of the areas where it is performed.

Its dancing style is necessarily fast and aggressive, the least aggressive or violent style being the funny style pioneered by Krump practitioner "Goofy" himself. Krumping usually involves physical contact between dancers, which can often look like a fight to outsiders, and in few cases can develop into a fight, or include violent physical contact. However, the participants understand this to be part of the dance and do not condone nor advocate assault and/or violence. In this respect, there is a certain parallel with the mosh pit in punk rock (at least the kind of more good natured pits that don't get excessively violent). While some may observe (incorrectly) that Krump is reminiscent of sped-up breakdancing, it transcends that genre, bringing in influences from diverse sources and is ultimately its own unique form.

Organization

Krumping has developed into a structured and organized society. The dancers are grouped into cliques (or tribes) called "families", these structures being reminiscent of B-boy breakdancing crews or (some have argued) Voguing Houses. Each of the families are organized around a mentor, or the style of a mentor, King, or marquis Krump dancer. Families such as the Filipino Rice Track, Eyes, Slayer, Rude, and others, are organized with hierarchies that defer in battle or representation to a more expert or respected Krump dancer. Such an individual is known as a "Big Homey" and they take "Lil' Homies", or younger, less experienced and/or beginner practitioners of Krump under their wing, allowing them to learn from them, and represent them in battle. Both titles are terms of respect. These sort of relationships may be interpreted as mentor/apprentice arrangements, similar to those in the middle ages, and the renaissance arts periods.

However they are more of a surrogate sibling arrangement. These relationships serve a necessary purpose, not only in the absorption and learning of the art and it's technique, but also in providing an unfortunately all-too-rare positive image and example for these Lil' Homies. This social dynamic also has more modern parallels in its contemporary, b-boying (more commonly known as breakdancing), which is a more developed and older facet of hip-hop culture and the black dance movement, and more loosely so, in the culture of graffiti or "writing" as it is more correctly known.

A competition structure has developed as dancers vie for status and respect in the Krump elite and this phase of the Black dance community at large. Contests like the original Tommy the Clown's Battle Zone are often organised to create viable venues for establishing a structured and defensible system of competition and recognition. Contests within the world of Krumping are also called "battles" (as they are in b-boying) and they are held at various events such as the Cages and Arenas.

Clowning vs. Krumping

Krumping (not Krunk-ing) is often confused with Clowning, the two are related by form and origin, and vaguely by style, but differences are visible. They share the same basic speed, and a similar movement pattern (which is the rapid rhythmic bobbling and jerking of the body, as well as the intermittent flex of the spine and out pressed chest, which may be called "the krump" or a "bobble bounce").

Krumping, however, is a more sinister and aggressive dance form, and is intended as an expression of anger, or a release of reservoir/"pent-up" emotion, through violent, exaggerated, and dramatic moves. High variation, individuality, and movement around the foundation of the krump or the bobble bounce is the focus of the art. It must be said that the current focal point of the dance (2006) and its differentiation from Clowning is becoming centralized around the elimination of the use of sexual or erotic movement (such as twerking, booty popping, freaking, snaking and winding), especially in the case of males. In particular the terminology used is popping cakes (cakes being the buttocks). This is currently considered "the" taboo when Krumping. It may also be heard as poppin bakes, this difference is due to the gang culture pervasive in California. In a CRIP hood b words (words beginning with or often containing the letter b) may not be said or must be altered, and in a BLOOD hood c words are taboo. So cakes becomes Bakes, and boulevard C-comes Coulevard (pronounced Soulevard).

The belief that Krump dancers engage in face-painting is also a grave misconception. This is a Clown practice and as Clowning and Krumping have been mixed and misrepresented in their introduction to the public through music videos of artists such as Missy Elliott it has been associated with Krump by default, but it is a matter of choice and is practiced only occasionally by a small percentage of the Krump community. In fact the relation between the two may be a result of the movie Rize, which documented the founders and other initial practitioners of krump in their earlier days. This was during the infancy of Krump as an art form separate from Clowning, and thus the footage was from a time when the krump kings themselves were actually evolving from clowners into krumpers as we now know them, and their modified use of face paint served as a visual indication of this. It should be noted that the style and the cultural significance of this painting primarily as it was used within the Krumping movement (especially the early period) and the subsequent adoption of that (early Krump) specific design style within Clowning itself, has moved beyond the mere circus Clown image to symbolize ceremonial African war or dance paint. This could signify the development of a third school, a school of a darker or more aggressive nature within Clowning, but still remaining Clown oriented. In Clowning itself, there are older Clowners who have Krump-similar styles but are still very Clown associated and loyal to that school.

Examples In Pop Culture

Filmmaker David LaChapelle's documentary Rize, which offers an intimate portrayal of the clown dancing subculture, was featured at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival. He says of the movement: "What Nirvana was to rock-and-roll in early '90s is what these kids are to hip hop. It's the alternative to the bling-bling, tie-in-with-a-designer corporate hip-hop thing. Krumping has also risen in popularity in cities such as Atlanta, Detroit and Houston. 'Krumpers' such as Willie the Kid, Hot-Lanta and Cray-G have propelled krumping into the dancing mainstream. "

Krumping has had an impact on pop culture and has been seen in music videos, movies and television shows. Some examples are:

Missy Elliott's I'm Really Hot

Madonna's Hung Up

Madonna's Sorry

The Black Eyed Peas's Hey Mama

The Chemical Brothers' Galvanize

Skinny Puppy's Pro-Test

Be Cool, the 2005 film

Chris Brown's "Gimme That"

Pussycat Dolls "Beep" Music Video

Date Movie, the 2006 film

Daddy Yankee "Rompe"

Krumping was featured in the second episode of the eleventh season of MadTV. However, the scene ends with the girl clown getting choked and punched. Also, Alyson Hannigan guest-starred on an episode of MADtv where she took krumping lessons from the same two clowns.

