DEUTSCHER TANZPREIS

Dieter Heitkamp

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
as part of the German Dance Award 2024

Jury statement

The jury has named Dieter Heitkamp as winner of the German Dance Award 2024 – Honorary award for his lifetime achievements.

Dieter Heitkamp is a Gesamtkunstwerk. He moves vigorously in several areas of artistic creation, such as: dancer, choreographer, educator, director, mentor, visual artist, advocate of young dancers, perhaps there are more to come?

A leader in dance for the past 45 years, miraculously energetic, incisive and dynamically responsible for the transformation and evolution of contemporary dance in Germany.

One of his many historic acts was to introduce contact improvisation (CI) to the German dance community. Dieter Heitkamp began his CI journey in 1977 and began teaching CI two years later in 1979 in Germany while also founding and co-directing the Tanzfabrik in Berlin. He continues today to be instrumental in the CI movement as a teacher and promoter.

For the next 19 years between 1979 to 1998 his vital dynamism spread throughout the city of Berlin and the country. Choreographing, teaching, directing, making art, mentoring, changing policy, these were and still are Dieter Heitkamp's activities.

The year 1998 marked the beginning of his Frankfurt phase at the Academy of Music and performing Arts - HfMDK, first as a substitute professor, then as of 2001 as director of the dance department. Dieter Heitkamp transformed the largely classical dance department on the brink of closure into a cutting-edge contemporary dance program where local resources and guests are inter woven, making it a highly regarded institution of contemporary dance education. In 2023, Dieter Heitkamp retired after 25 years as a professor at the HfMDK.

Dieter Heitkamp is a prolific force in German dance. He initiated countless programs, formats, performances and is a tireless artist and educator who supports and encourages young dancers, inspiring them to be flexible, creative and lifelong learners.