

POV

A PIECE BY

JUSTINE THEIZEN



hip hop no homo

REPRESENTATION



ABOUT

ORIGINE

Initially titled Seasons, pov: was born during the 1000 Pieces Puzzle training in April 2019, coached by Cindy Claes. This training is aimed at young artists seeking professionalism. Artists learn to manage a stage, choreograph, produce, and use the right tools to market a piece. We also had the opportunity to travel to Portugal to exchange artistically. Throughout this training, we participated in workshops with artists such as Benji Reid and Ricardo Ambrozio. Once trained, we had to create our own piece as choreographers and present a project before a jury panel at Zinnema. During the closing night, each participant presented their 6-minute work in progress. The project was then presented as a duo and won the grant provided by Zinnema. Since then, the piece has evolved, and a version was notably presented during the 2023 edition of WIPCOOP at KVS.



NOTE D'INTENTION

THE PIECE

DURÉE : 20 MIN

How can lesbianism be represented in a hip hop dance performance? What representations do we have access to? What is its impact on individual identity exploration and our relationships?

The project aims to show, expose, and represent a relationship between two queer lesbians in the form of a tutorial by addressing these questions: How to be a good lesbian? What types of lesbians are we?

It seeks to denounce the social pressure that can be felt within one's own community, but also to demonstrate the importance of its existence due to a lack of representation. They will attempt to immerse us in lesbian culture while undergoing an involuntary introspection. All of this will be expressed through the unique language of hip hop dance and comedy



INTENTION NOTE

THE PIECE

Hip hop is not only a style of dance but also a community and a culture that was created and has been primarily dominated by cisgender heterosexual men. Consequently, there is still very little visibility for women, and even less for LGBTQIA+ communities.

Moreover, having grown up within this hip hop culture while being queer, Justine Theizen has managed to find her place. This culture has allowed her, through its codes, languages, and types of movements, to express herself and thrive in her gender expression. She realized that these two communities, queer and hip hop, although different in their origins and foundations, converge in their values: the advocacy for a marginalized group.

Nevertheless, certain questions arise: What are the codes of these two communities and how can they coexist? Should we validate or challenge these stereotypes?



INTENTION NOTE

The starting point of the piece comes from her own story. Personal emancipation through a dance community and virtual platform, TikTok, formerly known as Musical.ly. Created by Alex Zhu and Luyu Yang in Shanghai in 2014, the app aims to create a platform for sharing short videos and music that acts as a social network.

Justine has been using this platform for 8 years, consuming its content as well as contributing to it. Initially, she used it to share her passion and dance techniques. Everything changed in 2020. This app is known for its highly developed algorithm and for offering the most interesting content to its users. It is therefore no surprise that several videos from people identifying as lesbian, bisexual, and pansexual appeared on her "For You" page.

Having come out a few years ago, her only queer representations were through films or TV series. Most of them depict relationships with brutal breakups, betrayal, or infidelity. Additionally, the identity searches of these characters were quite dark; coming out in homophobic families, suicides, self-harm, or psychological disorders. After cataloging 74 films and 64 series, all address at least one of these topics.

It was thus a breath of fresh air to discover real lesbian individuals sharing their experiences and embracing trends like "POV:" an English acronym for Point Of View, translated into French as Point de Vue. In the context of TikTok, it refers to a technique used by creators to make the viewer feel directly involved in the story told in the video. The principle is to recreate everyday situations with which one can identify.

INTENTION NOTE

The lesbian community on the app has thus reclaimed this trend by crossing out the acronym to denounce situations of oppression, homophobia, discrimination, sexism, and misogyny.

A movement was born; lesbian individuals are speaking out and asserting themselves on the platform. Their voices are gaining prominence, and several articles even discuss a genuine lesbian culture. The testimonials help and bring people together, making them feel less alone. However, new codes have emerged: sexual preferences, gender expressions, and even personality traits.

Lesbian individuals are speaking out and asserting themselves on the platform. Their voices are gaining prominence, and several articles even discuss a genuine lesbian culture. The testimonials help and bring people together, making them feel less alone. However, new codes are appearing: sexual preferences, gender expressions, and even personality traits. Everything becomes identifiable and categorized.

Categories of lesbians are emerging. A new vocabulary is being created:

- Top: sexually dominant.
- Bottom: sexually submissive.
- Switch: a person who is versatile in their sexual dominance.
- Masc or Masculine: a person with a masculine gender expression.
- Fem: a person with a feminine gender expression.
- Stem: a person with a fluid gender expression.

Queer theory, which fights against stereotypes, clashes with lesbian culture and creates an intense and guilt-inducing identity search.

CHOREOGRAPHIC NOTE

POV: thus appeared to her. The reflection here is: how to find one's identity when everything is normalized? The simple act of being then becomes a constant justification, a mold one must fit into.

"I constantly feel like I have to perform my sexual orientation to make it legitimate."

"What I want to defend with this performance is positive representation. I want to be free to explore my identity through my sexuality. I want to bring people together around these questions of queer legitimacy by staging a relationship with someone from the same community. I want to emancipate myself from these norms through humor and love. Through this performance, I want to offer a perspective and engage the audience in a way that makes them less, or not at all, strangers to this new lesbian culture."

The central themes of this developing piece are: identity search, humor, and queer representation. Through the drag king discipline, practiced by Justine, and comedy by Greta, the artists will create characters traveling in a virtual world of TikTok. But not just any TikTok, rather the queer TikTok with its specific codes. From this practice arises a unique physicality, a starting point for my choreographic research.

Drag king is a form of performance that highlights and represents queer values. It challenges patriarchy and toxic masculinity through humor, irony, and sarcasm, as seen in my performance. Combining drag and hip hop dance is the project's specificity.

To find elements of intersection between movement, acting, and the evolution of the performers' relationship in the piece, the company needs space and time for research. Scenic research is also necessary, and Justine is in discussions with various set designers to contribute to the project.

ARTISTIC TEAM

Justine Theizen

(choreographer and performer)
she/them

@justinetheizen

Initially trained in Hip Hop, Justine began performing with the Brussels-based collective "Ronin." She then trained in Krump and opened herself to the world of creation three years ago. She participated in the Groundwork and 1000 Pieces Puzzle training programs. She trained in storytelling and Hip Hop Theater with Cindy Claes. As a graduate of this training, her styles blended, and she began to develop her dance and create her own style. Having studied image techniques, emotion, truth, and cinematography shape her vision of dance. She is also a winner of the Brussels Bijou competition organized in collaboration with BOZAR. Following this, she joined the company We Are Not People led by Yves Ruth and worked as a dancer in Nina Munoz's piece, LA Ave. Justine created her Drag King character, @Zack. In early 2023, she organized a Queer Battle during the Rendez-Vous Get Down. She is currently in residence for Lorena Spindler's project I'll Be There for You (For Me). Her art allows her to represent her community; Justine is a queer hip-hop artist.



ARTISTIC TEAM

Greta Fjellman

(performer)
they/him

Greta Fjellman is originally from Brussels, the barycenter of their two countries of origin: Sweden and Italy. She was admitted to Bernard Cogniaux's class in Dramatic Arts at the Royal Conservatory of Mons (ARTS²) and graduated with high honors in June 2019. During their studies, Greta Fjellman worked under the direction of Maya Bösch, Karine Ponties, Virginie Strüb, and Pascal Crochet, among others. Beyond acting, Greta Fjellman practices various forms of expression: "uncreative writing," movement, video, and directing. They collaborates with Maïa Blondeau on their first multidisciplinary creation, QuickMix40°, which premiered at the Festival Trajectoires (BE), and co-founded Jampoetik, an evening dedicated to art blends held at the Local Autogéré du Borinage (L.A.B) in Mons and at Zinnema in Brussels. Their latest project is Wireless People, produced by Le Rideau Theater, which is touring across Wallonia and at the Avignon Festival 2024.



ARTISTIC TEAM

Maïa Blondeau

(Music production)

Maïa Blondeau is a saxophonist and composer of electronic and instrumental music. In June 2021, she obtained her master's degree in composition for applied and interactive music from ARTS² – School of Arts in Mons.

She composes and performs on stage for several theater and dance companies in Belgium, France, and Switzerland (e.g., Manuel d'exil by Maya Bösch, winner of the Swiss Performing Arts Prize 2022; Mérydes by Léa Vayrou; Bocas de Oro by Marcela Santander Corvalán; Raide d'équerre by Pauline Brun...) and has created several soundtracks for short films (by Côme Chatelain, Camille Béglin).

She co-writes with Greta Fjellman Wireless People, the first show by their company Wireless People cie. Maïa is a solo saxophonist with various philharmonic orchestras (China, United States, France) and is a member/co-founder of the electronic music collective état_zero. In her artistic work, she is particularly interested in the relationships between movement (sound/image/gestures). She was selected by Transcultures for the Emergent Sounds program. Since 2022, Maïa has been collaborating as a beatmaker with the rap collective gender panik, which focuses on chosen gender diversity.

Mercedes Dassy

(Dramaturgy)

performer and choreographer based in Brussels, trained at SEAD (Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance) and subsequently collaborated with several choreographers.

She quickly began creating her own work, including *i – c l i t* (2018), *B4 Summer* (2020, Jury Prize at the PODIUM competition), *Deepstaria Bienvenue*, a commission from the Opéra de Lyon for dancer Maeva Lassère (2020), and *RUUPTUUR* (2022).

She is an associate artist at Charleroi danse for three seasons (2023-2025) and is preparing her next creation, *Spongebabe* in L.A. (4 Love & Anxiety).

PLANNING

2024- 2025

Residencies :

(Residencies for 2024 postponed to 2025 due to budgetary reasons)

- March 2024 : 2 weeks of research, La Bellone
- 3rd to 7th june 2024 : 1 week, Le Flow, Lille
- and 15th - 18th july 2025 / 2nd - 5th september 2025 and 9th to 11th september 2025 : 2 weeks, CC Le Jacques Franck
- July 2024 : 3 semaines, Zinnema (postponed, dates to be confirmed)
- Septembre 2024 : 3 semaines, BUDA (postponed, dates to be confirmed)
- Octobre 2025 (before the premiere) : 3 days of setting + 1 week of residency / technical rehearsals, Atelier 210

Shows :

- Automne 2025 : Premiere of ~~pov~~ - Atelier 210 - **7 shows (dates to be confirmed)**

Saison 2025-2026 : 1 représentation, Le CC Jacques Franck - **(date to be confirmed)**

Delegated production

Atelier 210

Executive production and distribution

Get Down-Dancers Management

Coproductions

Lezarts Urbains

WIPCOOP - Mestizo Arts Platform

Charleroi Danse

With the support of

La Bellone

LE FLOW, Centre Eurorégional des
Cultures Urbaines (Lille, FR)

CC Le Jacques Franck

Zinnema

BUDA

CONTACTS

Justine Theizen

justinescournaux@hotmail.com

+32 (0)495 93 55 18

Get Down - Dancers Management

Camille Philippot

camille.philippot@get-down.be

+32 (0484 711 699

Atelier210

Laurent Ska

laurent@atelier210.be