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tanja liedtke foundation
inspiring dance

Newsletter October 2025

Tanja Liedtke Foundation Fellowship 2026 Announcement



We are pleased to announce the **Open Call for the Tanja Liedtke Foundation Fellowship 2026**, a unique opportunity for an emerging dance-theatre artist based in Europe. This fellowship takes a new form compared to previous formats, offering the recipient the freedom to design their own artistic journey, with available **funds of up to €10,000** to explore new ideas and directions in their practice. The focus is on personal exploration and creative expression, with the option to engage in mentorships, workshops, and collaborations with established artists and organisations. Applications open on **September 5th** and close on **November 14th, 2025**.

Click here for more information:

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RESONANCE at Sydney Dance Company by James Batchelor

ARTS

New production celebrates a legend

Will Cox

It was 2005 when James Batchelor first saw *Twelfth Floor* by acclaimed choreographer Tanja Liedtke. He was 13, and part of the Quantum Leap dance ensemble in Canberra.

Liedtke was a star. She worked with Australian Dance Theatre and the London-based DV8 Physical Theatre and developed several acclaimed works of her own. In 2007, at the age of 29, Liedtke was appointed artistic director of the Sydney Dance Company. She died in a road accident just a few months later.

Now, Batchelor has developed *Resonance*, a dance work responding to Liedtke's work and legacy, using her extensive archive as a basis.

Batchelor said he was hesitant when the Tanja Liedtke Foundation approached him. "I was very honoured but also surprised," he said. "I'm from a different generation. I had to really think, what can I do and what can I say about Tanja's work?"

Resonance has been in development for three years. Batchelor delved into Liedtke's archive in Berlin, watching countless hours of films of her performances and ideas.

"Her work was really different to mine," he said. "She was making these immersive theatrical worlds. I'm dealing with much more abstract energy and patterns and looping time and meditation. So it's cool to bring these two worlds into friction with each other as a material."

But the other half of the archive, as Batchelor sees it, is in the bodies of Liedtke's dancers. For *Resonance*, he has brought together some of her collaborators – Amelia McQueen, Kristina Chan and Anton – as well as Batchelor's contemporaries, and the next generation, represented by students from the Victorian College of the Arts, the Sydney Dance Company's Pre-Professional Year program and QL2 Dance's Quantum Leap Ensemble in Canberra. Rather



Dancers rehearse *Resonance* with choreographer James Batchelor and (above) the late Tanja Liedtke. Photos: Janie Barrett, Ben Symons

people together, to inspire people to go beyond what they thought was possible," he said. "A 29-year-old getting the job of artistic director of Sydney Dance Company? That's amazing. I can't see that happening today. But at that time people were optimistic."

So how does Batchelor grapple with an audience waiting to see Liedtke reflected in the show?

"It's pretty intense," he said. "But ultimately the show has to service that desire, and also look at where we are now. We're still living through the consequences of that moment that ruptured and rippled through the whole dance scene."

Many of the young dancers in *Resonance* were not born when Liedtke died.

"They may know her in a vague, abstract way, but this process is dance history education for them," Batchelor said. "Her work is not forgotten, or irrelevant. We can find inspiration in it."

Anton said: "Her legacy is in all the people she touched, and everyone we've gone on to work with. You can feel the dance ghosts. We're not separate, it just flows on and on."

Resonance by James Batchelor and Collaborators is at the Sydney Dance Company from September 25-27 and the Substation in Melbourne from October 1-4.

than a recreation of Liedtke's work, it's an intergenerational response to it.

In the 2011 documentary *Life in Movement*, Liedtke's collaborators grapple with her passing. She was a magnetic figure. Her peers describe her as "precise", "virtuosic" even. "When she asked you to do something you really went for it," one says. She was the leading light that made sense of their careers and gave them something to aspire to. After she died, an entire path closed off and a whole sense of purpose disappeared.

"She's forever going to be that embodiment of what could be," Batchelor said.

Convincing Liedtke's friends to return to her work was a challenge. Batchelor spent a year in conversation with them.

"He approached me, and I was like, 'Why?'" said Anton, a friend

and collaborator of Liedtke for seven years – and Batchelor's former teacher. "Then he explained that he didn't know what he was making yet. And I loved that."

'Her work is not forgotten, or irrelevant. We can find inspiration in it.'

James Batchelor, choreographer

Anton was convinced by Batchelor's previous work: *Shortcuts to Familiar Places* explores the work of 20th-century dance pioneer Gertrud Bodenwieser. With few film records of Bodenwieser's work,

Batchelor built a show around the body memories of those who worked with him.

"When I saw that I knew this was going to be very rich," Anton said.

Anton was part of *Twelfth Floor*, and was in the performance that left an impression on young Batchelor. He recalled his time with Liedtke as a bodily experience that had never quite left him.

"We shared a lot," he said. "The body was king. I remember being at a rehearsal once. She dragged me up to this sweaty, 35-degree room and just started guiding me. I had so much trust in her. It was one of the most intense personal moments I've ever had with a choreographer. That's in me forever."

Batchelor takes inspiration from Liedtke's boldness. "She seemed like the type of person that could naturally lead and pull

We would like to share this article in „The Age“ with you!

DanceWeb Vienna 2025 Santiago Mariño



DanceWEB cohort. Our last day at the festival.
Photo by Raja Feather Kelly

When I received the news from your support for my Stipendium in DanceWEB , a weight was lifted off my shoulders.

I appreciate the endeavor of the foundation to support dancers like me, who find themselves in an in-between place of financial complexities, career expansions and migrant backgrounds.

I am looking forward to embarking on a month in Vienna that deeply connects me to my craft and my art. Being moved from the outside and the inside... to dare to dive into new body languages. I look forward to an ecosystem of people and moments that celebrate reclaiming our right to dance, to let our bodies be what they are, to surrender to joy in collectivity as a political act, in times when the world faces gloominess and profound grief. I look forward to meeting new people, inspiring artists and minds alike, who can open doors for me in the future and with whom I can also create possibilities of making our work together, dream of utopias and stand strong in the face of adversity.

I lack words to praise the immense value of your foundation's labor honouring your daughter's memory, and I feel humbled to be offered your support.

I hope to own up to the honor

Santiago Mariño

Valentina Avila started her time as an upcoming professional at the Hessische Staatstheater in Wiesbaden in August and soon will write a little report.

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Tanja Liedtke Foundation
news@tanja-liedtke-foundation.org