

Colloque *Re-membering the Body*  
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Troisième panel | Corps & Graphie

Communication

**"You will have to watch very carefully to follow any of this at all" (Margaret Mead 1952) – Considerations and Conventions in the Transmission and Documentation of B-Boying Dance Practices through Audio-Visual Means**

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Audio-Visual documents in their many formats – including hip-hop documentaries, dance movies, music videos, popular dance shows like America's Best Dance Crew, as well as the many short clips on internet platforms and webpages and numerous instructional DVDs – are widely watched by b-boys and sometimes create first contact zones for (future) dance practitioners with b-boying dance moves and the so called hip-hop culture. These documents have been and continue to be essential to the transmission and 'glocal' spread of b-boying dance practices. As with other artistic or sport's performances, where the body and its techniques are central, audio-visual means seem most appropriate in order to preserve as well as to transmit bodily practices. In my talk I wish to reflect on the possibilities as well as dangers of learning to dance from such sources.

However, I wish not to focus on dancers as 'mere' consumers of such documents but also as producers of clips and videos, which they themselves or members of the audience place on internet platforms and websites.

I will draw on videos that b-boy Tuff Kid from Basel pointed out to me and showed me in order to emphasise his ideas on the ideals of b-boy dance videos, and the ways representational tools must attend to b-boy considerations and conventions in order to remain meaningful for dancers. I will also elaborate on the fieldwork example of a (failed) dance video shooting with b-boy Tuff Kid in Basel. During this shooting the subjective camerawork by the cameraman interfered with the nature of the project planned by Tuff Kid as well as it interfered with the general documenting conventions of b-boy dance clips. The latter documenting style is predominately dominated by long, continuous sequence of dance sets recorded without change in angle or position of the camera and no editing. A filming and editing style very close to Margaret Mead's (in-) famous proclamation to use the camera as an extension of the eye, which has been severely criticised and become highly unpopular among visual anthropologists and ethnographic filmmakers. So why is this the most popular way to document and represent dance skills and practices within b-boy circles? Have I, as an ethnographic filmmaker, not watched carefully enough? Can I follow this at all? And equally important, do I want to follow this at all?