

# YO. Brussels Hip-Hop Generations

From the street to the red plush of the Centre for Fine Arts: BOZAR and visit.brussels celebrate hip-hop culture with this interactive project.

28.06 – 17.09.2017

Grand opening: 27.06 from 7 pm

*YO. Brussels Hip-Hop Generations* traces the origins and development of 35 years of hip-hop in Brussels: a complex, spirited and inspired story. Its four major artistic disciplines are central: breakdance, rap, DJing and graffiti. Photographs, documents, video screenings, objects and unique archive material from the pioneers of the 80s to the present generation give the visitor the experience of the typical 'flow' that is so characteristic of hip-hop. The visitor can live the hip-hop experience to the full: in the free admission areas everybody can join in.

To immerse the public in the lively hip-hop scene, throughout the summer BOZAR is organising a series of events – from DJ battles, artist talks and dance creations to graffiti workshops. A number of partners in Brussels will be participating to help make this summer an urban festival in the capital.

## Participating artists

**Rap:** Phil One, Benny B, CNN, De Puta Madre, Bigshot, Starflam, Defi J, Akro, Pitcho, James Deano, Veence Hanao, Baloji, Scylla, La Smala, Caballero & Jeanjass, Roméo Elvis, Damso, Stromae, Stikstof, ...

**Dance:** Youssef El Toufali, Dynamic Rockers, Funky Belgian'z, Tirock, The Cage, Julien Carlier, Yassin Mrabtifi, Yiphun Chiem, Bencock, Alex, Karimbo, Serge Lawson, ...

**DJing, Beatmaking & Beatboxing:** Daddy K, Grazzhoppa, Smimooz, Odilon, Lefto, Supafly Dj's, NoZa, Street Fabulous, HMD, ...

**Graffiti:** Kool Koor, Shake, Rage, Arme, RAB, CNN, Bigshot, BYZ, Sozyone Gonzalez, Narsix, Blancbec, Defo, Eyes B, Bonom, Bootlegz...



Hip-hop originated in the **70s** in Afro-American ghettos in **New York**, in the predominantly white United States. It was a cry from young people alienated from the dominant values of society. Soon this **protest movement** was embraced by young people all over the world.

In the early **80s** hip-hop took hold in Belgium, with its own informal and sometimes clandestine scene developing in Brussels. **Breakdance** was the first to come to the forefront, soon followed by a variety of disciplines: **graffiti, DJ, rap**. One generation succeeded another, adolescents became adults and the movement changed and innovated. At the same time, the artistic disciplines became increasingly professional and intertwined with other artistic movements such as electronic music, street art and even French *chanson*. Today hip-hop is no longer confined to a niche but is everywhere **branching out into the mainstream**. A change that implies a major challenge: How to remain authentic as a counter-culture and at the same time become a dominant culture? Artists such as Bonom, Stromae, James Deano and Pablo Andres started out in the underground scene but broke through and succeeded in translating the hip-hop mentality into other disciplines.

Although the codes of hip-hop have changed over time, the **spirit** remains the same: the **dynamic energy of an urban counter-culture**. *YO. Brussels Hip-Hop Generations* narrates for the first time an alternative history of Brussels, a history of the street and the various characters that inhabit it. It is therefore also a major milestone that an institution such as the Centre for Fine Arts, which in the early days was still chasing the breakdancers out of the adjacent Ravenstein Gallery, is today opening its doors to the Brussels hip-hop scene. This project celebrates this often misunderstood but complex, diverse and rich culture with its different generations and disciplines.



(c) Maïté Renson

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## YO. Brussels Hip-Hop Generations

*YO. Brussels Hip-Hop Generations* gives the visitor a **total experience** of the history of Brussels hip-hop. The exhibition is historically and thematically structured across four decades. The culture is unravelled with reference to the **four determining artistic disciplines: graffiti** (visual art), **rap** (literature), **DJing** (music) and **breakdance** (dance). Curators **Adrien Grimmeau** and **Benoît Quittelier** lead the visitor on an **exciting journey, a voyage of discovery** through forgotten big names, mysterious pioneers, world champions and today's pop stars. A number of artists have produced **new creations** especially for *YO. Brussels Hip-Hop Generations*, such as **Grazzhoppa's** sound installation, the dance video of **Alex The Cage & Tirock** and graffiti murals by **Shake** and **Rage**. The **visitor experience** is central: in the interactive areas there is free admission all summer and the chance for everybody to dance on the breakdance carpet in the Horta Hall, improvise some rap in the *rapboots* or leave a graffiti on the *golden wall*.

The exhibition begins with the **pioneering 80s**, when it was mainly about young people who wanted to have **fun** and who demanded their **place in the public space**. The Ravenstein Gallery, the Place de la Monnaie and the paving outside the Koekelberg basilica were the hotspots for the b-boys in these early days. This is the time of the legendary rappers such as **Benny B** or the group **BRC** (Brussels Rap Convention). The do-it-yourself mentality of hip-hop is expressed in the graffiti spray cans they concocted and the **schoolbooks covered in drawings and doodlings**. These rooms contain unique material from the **personal archives** of the pioneers as well as a number of **large graffiti murals**.

In the **90s** the unruly image of hip-hop took shape and the conflict with society became apparent. This is the period of the **protest raps** of groups such as **De Puta Madre**, **CNN** (Criminels non négligeables), **Starflam** (anagram of 'Malfrats' meaning gangsters) and **Bigshot**. Meanwhile the 'tag' made its appearance on the streets and trains, with public debate in the media about **vandalism** as a consequence.

In the **2000s** hip-hop shed its underground image and became a niche, with its own clothing brands, shops and artists. This is the period of **professionalization**. A number of artists went **solo** and began to treat personal subjects in their work, for example **Baloji** who rapped about his African roots. In these exhibition spaces pride of place is given to the production of **video clips**, which were very important at the time. Artists such as **Bonom**, who started as a street artist and today has exhibitions at art institutions, present their work.

In the rooms devoted to the **years 2010-2017** hip-hop is seen to break out of its niche as the wide variation of the current scene flourished: from the rap texts of **Scylla** to the 'punchlines' of **Damso** or the rising star **Romé Elvis**. Today's social media and digital world mean that clips and images can be shared worldwide at a click, ensuring the wide dissemination of the hip-hop phenomenon in popular culture.



*Fresco van Eyes-B, (c) Eyes-B*

## An urban festival

*YO. Brussels Hip-Hop Generations* seeks to give the lively hip-hop scene a platform. During the nocturnes on Thursday evening the exhibition remains open until 9 pm and visitors can soak up the hip-hop atmosphere thanks to numerous **free workshops, performances, battles and conferences**. The convivial **summerbar** is also open as usual. Check the BOZAR Facebook page for more news and practical information that will be available shortly.

Finally, an **urban programming** is being finalised for the whole of Brussels, in association with youth clubs, community centres, non-profit organisations such as Centre Bruxellois d'Action Interculturelle, Detours Festival, Souterrain Production and Stikstof plus a host of other organisations such as Vaartkapoen, MIMA, etc.

*YO. Brussels Hip-Hop Generations* is one of the main events of **MIXITY.brussels 2017**. A festival with an urban programming throughout the summer until October that puts the spotlight on the diversity that is so characteristic of the Brussels Capital Region.



*Cris Prolific, Defi J et Smimooz (c) Vivian Hertz*

## Practical information

YO. Brussels Hip-Hop Generations  
28.06 – 17.09.2017

BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts, Ravensteinstraat 23, 1000 Brussels  
Open: From Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am > 6 pm (Thursday: 10 am > 9 pm)  
Closed: Monday  
No nocturnes between 21 July and 18 August

### Info & tickets

+32 (0)2 507 82 00 – [info@bozar.be](mailto:info@bozar.be) - [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

Tickets: € 10

There are special discounts for young people

- 26 years: € 5

12 – 18 years: € 4

6 – 12 years: € 2

- 6 years: free

Every Wednesday for – 26 years and the unemployed: € 2

With festivalbracelet of Couleur Café or Brussels Summer Festival: € 5

Combiticket with MIMA: € 10

For full details go to [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

*Curators: Adrien Grimmeau and Benoît Quittelier*

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## Press contact

### BOZAR

Leen Daems – [leen.daems@bozar.be](mailto:leen.daems@bozar.be) – 0032 2 507 83 89

### BACK IN THE DAYZ

Martin Vachier – [martin@backinthedayz.be](mailto:martin@backinthedayz.be) - 0032 474 49 22 45

Marie Delaby – [marie@backinthedayz.be](mailto:marie@backinthedayz.be) – 0032 498 97 57 50