

**BEHIND  
THE DECISION**

**KRUMP JUDGING RESEARCH BY FREEDOM CITY**

BEHIND THE DECISION

# KRUMP INFO SHEET

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Foreword  | 3  |
| 2. Research Introduction   | 4  |
| 3. Krump basics  | 5  |
| 3.1. What is K.R.U.M.P.?   | 5  |
| 3.2. Krump tournaments and competitions                                      | 8  |
| 3.3. What does it mean to judge Krump?                                       | 9  |
| 3.4. From street culture to fair competition:<br>defining a good Krump judge | 10 |
| 4. Core elements of Krump  | 11 |
| 5. The qualities of Krump  | 12 |
| 6. Navigating controversial elements   | 15 |
| 7. Conclusion  | 18 |
| 8. Appendix: Krump Vocabulary Reference                                      | 19 |

# FOREWORD

## 1. FOREWORD



Free-DOM foundation is the organization behind the development of the International Freedom City Festival.

This international hip-hop celebration ( Freedom City Festival ) has turned Utrecht into a global hub for street dance over the past eight years. The annual festival represents a commitment to raising awareness of hip-hop culture within and beyond the dance community, encouraging and addressing the broader hip-hop community. Given Krump's growth within the Utrecht community, researchers were interested in delving deeper into the style to provide educational insights into a form that serves as a catalyst within the hip-hop community.

As event organizers in this competitive space, developing qualitative research on Krump judgment aids in promoting fairness in tournament judging. Over the years, researchers have learned that, due to misinterpretation, street dances such as Krump are stripped of their cultural context, which can be confusing when translated into academic spaces. As a result, it requires decoding the language dancers in this community use to tell their stories and the traditions they carry through movement of raw expression.

Therefore, this research represents Free-DOM foundation's effort towards cultural competency, in ensuring that when Krump is spoken of within the community, it is honored and viewed as freedom within motion and expression.

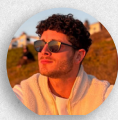
# INTRODUCTION

## 2. INTRODUCTION



Led by

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developed by

Alessandro  
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In conjunction  
with

Orville 'Tchozn'  
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and

Mark 'Brui5er'  
Sheats

The goal of this research is to collect, summarize, and display the definitions and meanings of Krump terminologies that are used when talking about judging. To connect, a global understanding of qualities and skills is essential for experiencing Krump's mastery. Doing so allows for healthier measures when approaching the judgment of Krump in a competitive setting.

### In this document, you'll read

- **Definitions of Krump qualities** as the result of conversations and discussions with krumpers worldwide
- **Various perspectives on Krump judging**, focusing on similarities while respecting the differences
- **Food for thought** on the most controversial elements of the judging process
- **An appendix list of terms** commonly used within the Krump community

In conducting this research, highly skilled krumpers provided input on the breakdown and specialization of the dance. These dancers are instructors and innovators in the dance style, specializing in a wide range of skills, making them a credible source. We call them Krump masters. The information was gathered through 1:1 conversations with Krump masters and panel discussions with dancers from around the world during Behind The Decision programs at four European events and one event hosted in the United States.

For their highly valuable input, we thank: **Tight Eyex, Big Mijo, Daisy, Rapture, Crush, Theory, Brui5er, Tchozn, Ques, Claerence Person, Grichka, Sniper, Konkrete, Lady C4, MainEvent, Girl MainEvent, Beast, AndEver, Slam, Braze, Queen Buckhype & OneShot.**

Moreover, this research would not have been possible without eight dancers who stepped forward to join the program and grow their knowledge in Krump to expand and understand Krump judgment. For their exceptional contribution we thank: **Skeyenno 'Kiddy' Talany, Brandon 'Twin Brui5er' Gravenberch, Erwin 'Dynamite' Kiene, Giorgio 'Jr AndEver' Cairo, Esmeralda 'Lil AndEver' Gasmi, Evan 'Navy' Blaaser, Lenny 'Lone Wolf' Avantageggiato, and Anastasiia 'Nomad' Pronchuk.**

Outside of krumpers, researchers also spoke with and learned from dancers who contributed significantly to developing judging systems in Hip-Hop Culture. For this we thank: **Jur Bouterse & Raymond den Uijl.**

This document is a work in progress and will continue to develop in the upcoming years. If there is any input, disagreement, or feedback on this document, please reach out to [info@freedomcity.nl](mailto:info@freedomcity.nl).

# KRUMP BASICS

## 3. KRUMP BASICS

Before providing input on a dance style, it is vital to understand its origin, culture, and codes. By examining the structure of tournaments and exhibition battles, researchers gain a perspective shaped by the environment where organizers, judges, participants, and audiences congregate

### 3.1 WHAT IS K.R.U.M.P.?

Krump is a raw, expressive street dance born out of South Central Los Angeles in the early 2000s. This style, evolving from clowning, was created by dancers seeking an alternative to gang life through energetic emotional release. Over the past 25 years, Krump exploded onto the global stage, demonstrating intense physicality, power, and authenticity in its movement. The global spread began with the 2005 documentary RIZE by Dave LaChapelle. This documentary spotlighted the Clowning & Krump movement in Los Angeles, not only giving insight into their cultures but also highlighting the main actors of this movie: Tommy the Clown, the Originator of Clowning, and Tight Eyez and Mijo, Originators of Krump.\*

K.R.U.M.P. is an acronym for Kingdom Radically Uplifted Mighty Praise. In its early days, Krump's expression was shaped by life's hardships, with dance serving as a way to build brotherhood, express resilience, and rise above difficult circumstances, alongside the praise of God. As Krump evolved and spread across the world, these foundational values became less central in some contexts, while the quality, intention, and impact of movement gained greater emphasis. Depending on cultural and geographic settings, the original motivations do not always apply in the same way. For many people today, Krump is embraced simply as a dance, valued for its expression, energy, and power in movement.

The culture of Krump goes hand in hand with its community spirit. Dancers gather in sessions and form fams (families) or crews, working as outlets for emotional expression, support, and storytelling. krumpers showcase their vulnerability through channeling raw emotion and transforming it into movement. The crowd plays a big role in the whole experience, serving as witnesses while exchanging energy with the dancers.

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\*The origins of Krump and who played which roles in its creation, has become an important topic of discussion within the community, especially in 2025. While the narrative was once broadly accepted, recent perspectives have challenged this understanding and called for a re-examination of the established story. This research does not seek to intervene in that debate, take a position, or claim authority over the truth. Instead, it aims to present a global perspective on Krump in which multiple narratives coexist. Shared and overlapping elements will be identified as common ground, while differing interpretations will be acknowledged as points of controversy.

Here is a list of several habits and cultural codes that make Krump the art form it is currently:

## Hype or hype up

Is the exchange of energy between dancer and audience; “hying up” amplifies both performance and community presence. Crowd reactions are often extreme, validating and intensifying the round. As part of the Hype; cheers, screams, and shouts of encouragement release emotion and excite the crowd, acting as another instrumen to keep the dancer motivated.

*“ Hype up isn’t only for the cool moves. We all go through hardships, the hype up is the encouragement towards the dancer to give their best. If you’re next to the dancer and you’re not hying up, that’s offending in Krump. It might result in people battling you. Krump saved a lot of our lives, do not remove the encouragement part. Hying up means saying to the dancer ‘I want you to get it off your chest’ ”*

*~ Solow*

## Physicality

Krump is marked by both upright and ground movements that are highly energetic. Stomps, jabs, chest pops, focal points and arm swings are the base of Krump language. Dancers use space dynamically, often getting close to dancers and audiences, even engage physically, as part of building presence and connection.

## Mutual Respect

Despite raw expression, Krump doesn’t promote fighting or real aggression. Disrespect is a taboo, however Krump is often used as a way to settle negativity between two individuals, fams or crews. Rules of respect and mutual upliftment, loyalty to the fam and the big homies and supporting younger dancers are emphasized as much as possible.

## Kill-offs

Achieving a “kill-off” is the pinnacle of Krump. It means creating a moment so insane that your opponent can’t top what you did. This moment is based on one move (killer move) or the entirety of a round that triggers the kill off. Various tournament organizers allow judges to ring a bell to signal that a kill-off took place, by that moment the round is over and the dancer has won the battle.

## Community Spirit

Krump is deeply rooted in friendship and family. From its origins, the culture aimed to keep people on a positive path, making community a central pillar of the dance. This value was already present in Clowning, where discipline and responsibility were encouraged, for example, children who did not commit to their schoolwork were sometimes not allowed to dance on weekends, using dance as motivation to stay focused and accountable.

Krump sessions follow cultural codes, including how dancers hype one another and how rounds are entered and exited. Battles take many forms, such as call-outs, pack-outs, and family put-ons, and serve as spaces of both competition and belonging. Dancers represent their crews, neighborhoods, and mentors, while rites of passage, lineage, and rank, such as big and lil’ homie relationships, shape identity and status within the culture.

## Expression and character

Krump evolved from Clowning, a dance style created by Tommy the Clown. In Clowning, dancers painted their faces to shape character and identity within their movement. The style was defined by high energy, exaggerated facial expressions, dramatic gestures, and large, explosive motions, the same elements that formed the foundation of early Krump. This origin firmly established identity and personal expression as core elements of Krump, which continue to play a central role in the dance today.

## Storytelling

Before making a single move, dancers would first reflect on their character, expressed through choices such as paint colors, shapes, and overall identity. Concepts, invisible props, and movement vocabulary all emerge from this constructed character. Through a combination of material elements, real or imagined props, and narrative ideas, dancers tell stories within their rounds. These practices and shared codes are universal within the Krump community. To judge or participate in Krump authentically, one must honor this framework, where technical skill, personal story, and collective hype come together to define the essence of the art form



# KRUMP TOURNAMENTS AND COMPETITIONS

## 3.2 KRUMP TOURNAMENTS AND COMPETITIONS

Krump events that conduct tournaments open with preselections or qualifiers, where all participating dancers enter for a chance to reach a battle bracket. Judges select the most convincing contenders to form their selection for the battle bracket. Once in the bracket, the qualified dancers face off in battles that progress from the initial selection to quarterfinals, semifinals, and then final. A professional panel of judges decides the winner of each tournament. Globally, preselection events across multiple countries feed into other high-level events (e.g. EBS, The Illest, Desert Storm, and Freedom City).

**Tournaments** can take all kinds of different shapes. Some organizers define their battle categories to a single aspect of the culture such as get off, hat tricks, character etc. Some popular formats include 1vs1, 2vs2, crew, team or country, etc. Other formats are SevenToSmoke, 8Bucks, Last Man Standing and more. Rules and naming can vary by different events and some choose to create battle concepts with assignments or other special rules.

**Call outs** remain a core cultural practice. Dancers challenge each other in sessions or during designated event slots where organizers determine when and how callouts occur. As discussed recently during a Freedom City event, the norm is to “read the room” by respecting ongoing sessions, avoiding hijacking peak sessions, and using the windows provided by the organizers to work within the event’s structure.

Finally, FCD Krump, a significant media platform based in Paris, introduced the ‘**HeavyWeightSession**’ to anchor the street aspect of Krump alongside formal competition. These sessions gather top dancers, OGs, veterans, new gen, and international guests in raw exchanges with no judges or time limit. They function as moments that take the art beyond brackets, sustaining Krump’s identity as a street dance.



# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO JUDGE KRUMP

## 3.3 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO JUDGE KRUMP?

In tournaments, and specifically in Krump, judges have to understand and compare dancers who differ from one another and make a decision in seconds. Unlike in sports, in Krump, there is no 'perfect' way to dance, and originality is highly valued. It's like comparing apples to oranges, and still having to decide which one is the best quality fruit, at that moment. However, before comparing things that do not look the same, judges must first agree on what aspects make one better than the other. So with Krump we should ask ourselves: what defines Krump and makes it what it is? What are the commonalities and qualities that we can use to compare krumpers?

*"If we want to judge Krump, we inevitably compare the qualities of one Krumper to another. But comparison is only possible when we share a common understanding of what Krump is. Without that shared definition, a different conversation is needed, one that first explores the norms, terminology, and foundations of the dance. It's like trying to compare two phones when someone insists one of them is a television: before any comparison can happen, we must first agree on what a phone is."*

~ Raymond Ramdihal

In Free-DOM foundation's vision, the job of event and tournament organizers is to create a fair environment for all competitors. Since many variables come into play when judging Krump, we first look at the fixed elements that are the same for all competitors in tournaments.

These are:

- **The venue** (lights, sound system, the size of the stage or dancefloor)
- **The judges**
- **The DJ and the music played**
- **The host**
- **Amount of rounds and duration** (time)
- **The time that judges have to make a decision**

These elements provide a uniform battlefield and changing any of these could raise questions about fairness. What's missing in this list is:

- **A clear definition** of which qualities are important when dancing Krump
- **What makes trained and certified judges**

# DEFINING A GOOD KRUMP JUDGE

## 3.4 FROM STREET CULTURE TO FAIR COMPETITION: DEFINING A GOOD KRUMP JUDGE

In tournaments, an art form is placed within a competitive structure rooted in sports. This framework can conflict with some of the core artistic values of Krump and directly influence how the dance is performed. Free-DOM foundation views Krump as an art form in which emotion and spirituality fundamentally shape both expression and perception. In its purest state, this dance exists in the streets, where there are no imposed limitations. At the same time, we recognize that efforts to refine and professionalize tournaments may affect this sense of purity. Our aim is therefore to strike a careful balance: preserving the essence of Krump while creating competition formats that are as fair, transparent, and respectful to the culture as possible.

Free-DOM foundation believes that good judges:

- **Evaluate and rate competitors** based on the quality and impact of their rounds
- **Based their rating** on agreed-upon values within the worldwide Krump scene
- **Have the ability** to look at a battle, understand the qualities, compare the dancers, and rate them within seconds
- **Can elaborate** on the reasons why one round was more qualitative than the other under pressure
- **Can look beyond** their personal preferences and give unbiased opinions



# CORE ELEMENTS

## 4. CORE ELEMENTS OF KRUMP

# OF KRUMP



During Krump tournaments, many factors can affect a dancer's performance. Some of these aspects are not supposed to influence the decision of the judge, but they belong to the culture and the competition. These are:

**Environment:** the environment where the round takes place can influence the rounds, how it's perceived and what elements of Krump make a bigger impact. Consider how different the following situations are: Krump on a big stage (EBS), Krump in a cypher (Illest back in the day), Krump in an open style tournament (Beyond Doubt) resulting in cultural codes like hype being taken away from the stage.

**Hype:** the exchange of energy between the dancer and the audience. Hype is of essence and it's closely embedded in Krump culture and dance. When a dancer is able to activate the audience's hype, crowd control also comes into play. Being able to use the energy from the hyped in your advantage can make or break your Krump round.

Now, let's get into the qualities of Krump dance, which the judges should have a thorough understanding of.

# THE QUALITIES OF

## 5. THE QUALITIES OF KRUMP

# KRUMP

### 1. WHO HAD BETTER STYLE AND CHARACTER?

If the Style is how the movement is done, then the character is the entity conducting the action. The style is father to specific characters. In other words, style and character define the dancer's personality and unique approach to the dance, reflecting personal narratives. It is their (stage) presence (the force of you being in the moment), their energy or aura, and their intentions.

The original styles within Krump are Grimey, Rugged, Beasty, Technical, Goofy, Caddy (sarcastic, confident), Groovy (sexy), Flashy (clean), and Bully.

*“ Character pours personality in the empty shell of moves. It’s the difference between doing the sport or the art ”*

~ Brui5er

*“ I’m not here to get dressed for you. I’m not your model. I’m here to get off. But showing up, looking like something, that plays a part in me liking you. Like, you look dope ”*

~ Big Mijo

### 2. WHO HAD BETTER MUSICALITY?

The ability to interpret and express within different elements and layers of the music through movements, hitting specific parts of the beat, rhythms and lyrics. Musicality can be embedded within every aspect of dancing, yet the basic elements to utilize are: bounces, grooves and rocks.

**Example:** A dancer can display musicality in different ways. They could focus on choosing and displaying one layer of the music, adapting to the mood of the track being played, or doing what the lyrics say at the right timing. They could even showcase polyrhythms by moving different parts of their body to different layers of the music. Finally, they can show great musicality with pockets. A pocket can be a layer of the music which repetitively is danced to or a sustained movement idea that a dancer can return to throughout a round, allowing them to explore musical layers with depth and intention.

*“ Musicality is not just about moves; it’s about how you can tell a story with the beats. It’s feeling the music beyond just dancing to it ”*

~ Sniper

### 3. WHO HAD BETTER TIMING?

Timing refers to the ability to maximize the moment of impact. The strategic execution of moves in sync with the musical and emotional highlights of the performance. Good timing is mainly created by changing the texture of moves - the quality of movement - to make it fit the music. Texture is everything that has to do with dragging, slowing down, or speeding up movements, making them look or feel heavy, light, dragged, sharp, slimy, or explosive.

**Example:** A Krumper who links their movements to a specific beat drop, striking a pose or stopping for a hard transition – to maximize the performance impact on the audience. Or when the dancer slows down, or speeds up a move, to create the biggest impact on the music.

*“ Timing is everything; it’s about hitting that beat right and making sure each movement connects seamlessly into the next. ”*

~ Tight Eyex

*“ Timing is about decision making: there’s a difference between constantly going crazy and just picking and choosing your moments. Be comfortable with doing nothing because there’s a purpose behind it. For example, I might be dancing and not really moving, but it makes an impact because I’m intentionally doing nothing at that moment. ”*

~ Andever

### 4. WHO HAD BETTER TRAVELING?

Travelling within Krump means **displacing yourself from one direction (or place) to the other**. Displacing means to move something from its position. But it can also be a movement across the dancefloor. In short, travelling is how the dancers use the space around themselves.

**Example:** dancers can effectively use the entire stage by making small changes of directions - with their chest, eyes, head, or whole body - or big ones such as big steps, buck hops, rolls, running etc. By doing so, dancers add a dynamic spatial element to the performance.

*“ Using the entire space is part of the story you’re telling; your travel reflects your command over the stage and the audience. ”*

~ Tchozn

### 5. WHO HAD BETTER MATERIAL AND COMBOS?

Your material and combos are **part of your Krump vocabulary**. Material is the first step into the creative moment. The basic form of material is using verbs (pushing, pulling, dragging etc.). Material can also manifest in invisible props (example below) or in tricks that the dancer performs with real props like cap/hat, shoes, shirts, or baseball bat, skateboard, jackets, etc. Combos can be freestyle or prepared. A combo is created when stacking multiple pieces of material together. All sorts of material can be used to make a combo.

**Example 1:** You grab an invisible box, open it, pull a gun out, shoot it & slam it on the ground.

**Example 2:** The concept is ‘robber’, the materials are mask, gloves, gun, bag. By combining these pieces together, you get a combo.

*“ Creativity in Krump is about bringing your unique flair to the basics, turning them into something nobody’s seen before. ”*

*~ Sniper*

*“ For me, vocabulary is about finding ways not to repeat myself as I’m dancing. How can I find ways to add new narratives to my artistry, my character, my Krump? How do I move on to the next chapter, the next page-that’s really how I try to approach it. ”*

*~ Mubulu*

*“ In order to tell a story, you need an idea (concept). In order to explain your concept, you need words (material). And in order for your words to make sense, you need to form a sentence (combos). ”*

*~ Andever*

## 6. WHO HAD A BETTER GET OFF?

That moment of ‘get off’ is a flow of pouring everything together: a peak in the performance when everything from foundations, material and combos, emotional intention, and energy align with the music and explode. A get off can lead to moments of liveness.

**Example:** The point in a round where a dancer reaches their highest energy level, perfectly synchronized with the music, leaving a memorable impact on the audience.

*“ Krump is a get-off dance; it’s the core of the style. The get-off is a flow state where technique and emotional intention are combined. It’s a burst of raw, unfiltered energy. ”*

*~ Tight Eyex*

## 7. WHO HAD A KILL-OFF?

The kill off is the highest reward given by the spectators and perceivers during a Krump battle. A flawless round or moment where the dancer’s performance from start to finish is perceived as perfect. Elements that contribute to a kill-off are: consistent build-up, progressing without losing control, a feeling of impossibility, and exceptional movement.

**Example:** A moment during the performance, so impactful that it leaves the audience and other dancers feeling that no one could have done better. That’s why, when a kill-off happens on the first round of a battle, the Krumper usually wins that battle, regardless of what the other Krumper does.

*“ The kill off is what is thought to be a ‘perfect’ round. Where, from the beginning until the end, everything comes across as flawless. When your round is progressing without missing a moment or having a dip in any form. The only moment we dare to speak of perfectness in a round, the idea not missing any beat. The kill off is an everlasting impression. ”*

*~ Brui5er*

# CONTROVERSIAL

## 6. NAVIGATING CONTROVERSIAL ELEMENTS

# ELEMENTS

### 1. Emotional bias vs. technical precision

**Debate:** In Krump, as an artform, emotional and even spiritual expression are a big part of the performance. In this sense, many ask themselves whether emotional and spiritual expression should be part of the list of Krump qualities. And, if so, how can you judge it? Should judges prioritize raw emotional expression or technical accuracy and complexity in performances?

#### Viewpoints

Some argue that the essence of Krump lies in its spiritual expression and raw emotion. This can result in allowing your feelings to influence your judgment.

Some believe that dance loses its discipline and artistry without technical mastery. They rule out their feelings and make a calculated choice.

#### BTD takeaway

During researchable periods, this was a frequent topic of discussion, with krumpers often clashing. The takeaway is that while dancers need to maintain a standard of technical mastery (for example, dancers cannot win a Krump battle without bouncing or a get off), Krump dance is, in its essence, very raw and expressive. This is a side that can't be overlooked by judges. This continues being a heated topic of discussion in the community.

### 2. Showcasing hype as a judge

**Debate:** Is it fair for a judge to hype a dancer during a round? Whether hyping during a round, as a judge, acts as a way to influence the judging of others and the crowd.

#### Viewpoints

Some argue that hyping is an embedded and essential element of Krump even as a judge. Saying that they can still hype a dancer without allowing it to influence their judgment.

As a judge, your role is to assess the qualities of the dancers by observing the battle as a whole. This requires maintaining distance from the interaction itself. Once a judge becomes part of the exchange they are meant to evaluate, objectivity is compromised, making it harder to fulfill the role effectively and as intended.

## BTD takeaway

As mentioned before, judging an art form like Krump becomes especially challenging without a consistent and equal battlefield. While hyping is an essential element of Krump culture, judges stepping onto the stage to hype a dancer during a round can influence several judging factors, such as personal bias, perceived fairness, and even the decision-making of other judges. Introducing this kind of imbalance may result in, or be perceived as, unfair judging. At the same time, hyping plays a crucial role in shaping the quality, energy, and cultural meaning of the tournament. Removing it can affect not only the dancer's performance but also the overall cultural atmosphere and how the event is experienced by participants, judges and the audience. For this reason, allowing the crowd to hype is essential and should remain a standard within Krump events. Whether judges participate in hyping, however, can be determined by the organization on an event-by-event basis. This ultimately raises a key question: do we prioritize preserving the full cultural setting, or do we aim for a broader sense of fairness by limiting certain cultural elements for the judges, and accept the trade-off that comes with it?

## 3. Innovation of Krump techniques

**Debate:** The balance between maintaining foundational Krump moves and introducing innovative techniques.

### Viewpoints

Some judges view repetition of foundational moves as essential to maintain the dance's integrity.

Others push for continuous innovation to keep the dance form evolving and engaging.

## BTD takeaway

Krump has been one of the fastest-developing styles. In certain era's, each year Krump judging could have a different standard, based on the information coming from the source. In the current era, it comes closer to a worldwide truth. More influences from outside Krump are incorporated into Krump battles because there is a better understanding of how to make things fit in a "Krump" way.

## 4. Gender inclusion

**Debate:** How to ensure fairness in competitions that are separated by gender.

### Viewpoints

Most advocate for gender-neutral judging, focusing on the performance rather than physical strength differences. People say things like power & speed don't make you win a Krump battle.

Others see that Krump is like any other dance, an intense physical practice. In tournaments, stamina & recovery speed play a big role in winning them. These aspects differ biologically between the male and female bodies.

## BTD takeaway

For most professionals spoken with, separate categories were needed in the past. Since Krump was mainly male-dominated, the numbers or the level of experience weren't close to equal. Now is a time in which this separation will become outdated.

## 5. Consistency in judging values and qualities

**Debate:** The lack of standardized judging criteria can lead to inconsistent scoring and perceived unfairness.

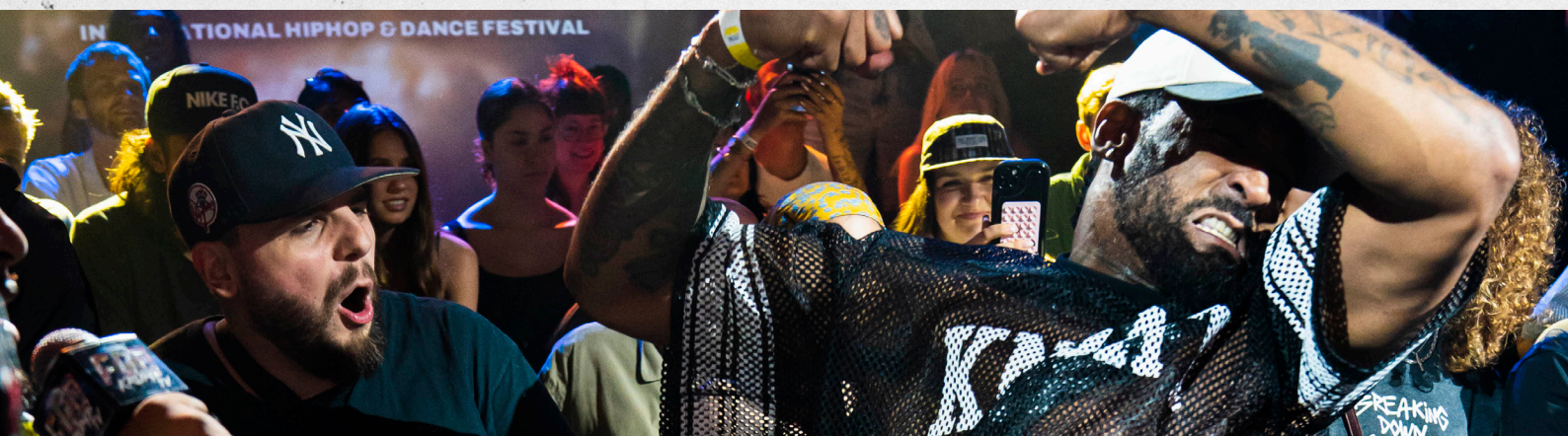
### Viewpoints

Some judges and dancers push for standardized values to minimize subjectivity and bias.

Others argue that these standards could block the creative and expressive nature of Krump. They're afraid that it could lead to the ideology of a 'perfect Krumper'.

### BTD takeaway

Researchers believe that Krump competitions are like a game, and the 'rules' should be clear. It should be transparent what qualities belong and do not belong to the judgment. The judges should be educated on these qualities & trained to make comparative decisions in seconds. Krump judging should be as fair and unbiased as possible. For the same reason, through this research, researchers wanted to define what Krump is by understanding what all krumpers around the world agree upon, while respecting and highlighting the differences. By doing so, the researchers aim to develop a systematic approach to judging Krump tournaments that serves Krump communities on a global scale.



# CONCLUSION

## 7. CONCLUSION

By researching, archiving, and contextualizing the elements outlined above, Free-DOM foundation aims to deepen the understanding of Krump's complexity and the nuances involved in judging this dance form. The goal is to support both the preservation of its traditions and its continued evolution as an art form. This framework promotes a balanced perspective that values technical skill, emotional expression, spirituality, and individual creativity equally.

Over the past 20 months, the relevance of this research has become evident. The impact has been demonstrated by the conversations it has initiated, the platforms it has created for Krump masters to share knowledge and history, and the deeper understanding gained by those closely involved. The strong interest in conversations with Krump masters, and the desire to hear multiple viewpoints, highlights a clear need within the community to hear everyone's story.

In a culture where almost nothing has been formally documented, this research offers new ways of learning about Krump beyond workshops, documentaries, or informal knowledge transfer. It introduces another method of study and serves as a topic for dialogue. One key outcome has been the realization that there actually is a broad, shared definition of what Krump is. The differences lie in details rather than in its core essence. This has emphasized the importance of developing shared terminology, as better and more meaningful conversations come out when the language is clearly and collectively understood.

Throughout these discussions, topics emerged that many had rarely considered or openly addressed; particularly in relation to fairness in competition. One example is the amount of time judges are given to make their decisions. These insights reveal that there are still overlooked factors influencing judging and underline the ongoing need for open dialogue.

The Krump judging research Behind The Decision creates opportunities to develop educational programs during events, offering insight into judges' backgrounds, perspectives, and decision-making processes. At the same time, it helps dancers understand which qualities they can develop for future competitions. By clarifying the elements that make up Krump, the research provides practical tools for dancers to analyze both their own movement and that of others, ultimately supporting more focused training and artistic growth.

# KRUMP

## 8. APPENDIX: KRUMP VOCABULARY REFERENCE

# VOCABULARY

As typical of a community, there are some terms and words that are widely used across Krump communities but might sound new to someone who's never been in contact with the sub-culture. Here's a list of widely used terms to help such external people navigate and understand Krump culture better.

### **Bells (Kill-off bells)**

Audible signal some organizers used to indicate a kill-off; proposed shift to silent judge buttons to reduce bias decisions.

### **Big/Lil homie**

Mentorship and rank structure within fams; encodes lineage, guidance, and community responsibility.

### **Bounce**

Foundational rhythmic base in Krump; anchors timing and musicality before layering other elements; "get your bounce right" precedes checking other boxes.

### **Buck**

This term is widely used across the US, displaying different meanings according to the area and context. In LA specifically it means: cool, dope and it was used as a compliment in street language even before Krump even existed. Within the culture it's used as a compliment. Example: 'That's buck' meaning 'That's cool'. In technical terminology it indicates the lowest level of energy direction, under 'Live' and 'Krump'.

### **Call-out**

Public challenge to battle, common in sessions and events; legitimacy depends on intent and "reading the room" to avoid hijacking ciphers or schedules.

### **Combo**

Stacked sequence of material (movement ideas) forming coherent sentences; can be freestyled or prepared to progress a story.

### **Crowd control**

The ability to activate and direct audience hype, feeding energy back into execution and story; part of presence and liveness.

**Fam**

Crew/family structure in Krump; central to identity, mentorship, and cultural transmission.

**Foundation**

Core movements and mechanics (bounces, grooves, rocks, stomps, jabs, chest pops) that underpin all higher-level material and timing.

**Get Off**

Peak where foundations, material/combos, musicality, timing, intention, and energy align—creating decisive impact; technical, not just hype.

**HeavyWeightSession**

Post-event or late-night high-level exchanges among top dancers/OGs; less structured, culture-first space beyond scorecards.

**Hype**

Energy exchange between dancer and audience; embedded in culture; judges must avoid letting hype alone override execution.

**Judge Clinic**

Structured training to practice real-time evaluation, shared definitions, and edge cases (e.g., near kill-off) under time pressure.

**Kill-off**

Widely recognized moment flawless round with a heavy impact that cannot be matched by opponent - often decisive; some events historically used bells.

**K.R.U.M.P.**

Acronym for Kingdom Radically Uplifting Mighty Praise. Krump is both the name of the dance, and the name for the level in the middle, between Buck and Live.

**Liveness**

Derived from the word “alive”, liveness refers to the state krumpers aim to embody while dancing. It describes a spiritual and energetic condition in which a dancer connects to their most authentic self. Liveness can be reached gradually or entered instantly. In technical terms it's defined by the duration a dancer sustains in the live energy direction: a brief duration results in a live moment, while a sustained duration creates liveness.

**Live**

The top level used in Krump when the energy is directed dancing upwards. Within the culture it's used as a compliment. Example: 'That's live' meaning 'That's cool'.

**Material**

The building blocks of action (verbs: push, pull, drag, etc.), including concepts and (invisible or real) props; forms the vocabulary for combos.

**Musicality**

Interpreting layers of the music (beats, rhythms, lyrics) through movement; may include polyrhythms, pockets, and mood adaptation.

**New Gen**

Newer generation of krumpers; often used in level categories and cultural discussions about calling out and progression.

**Pocket**

Layer of the music which repetitively is danced on or a sustained movement idea that a dancer can return to throughout a round, allowing them to explore musical layers with depth and intention.

**Preselection (Qualifier)**

Open-entry screening where judges pick the strongest contenders (often Top16) for the main bracket.

**Presense**

The force of being - aura, intention, command - that reads immediately on entry and throughout the round; informs first-impression power

**Props**

Physical (hat, jacket) or imaginary objects (a fake hand gun) used as tricks or story elements; must stay within Krump identity and timing.

**Rounds**

Discrete turns in a battle; sequencing, build, and peak placement (get off) determine competitive clarity.

**Session**

Informal practice/battle environment where culture is honed; site for callouts, mentoring, and heavyweight exchanges.

**Stage Presence**

How dancers carry themselves entering and owning space; influences early reads during short rounds and preselections.

**Storytelling**

Narrative thread through material, combos, and timing; often supported by expressiveness and crowd control.

**Style**

How a dancer executes Krump basics (e.g., grimey, rugged, beastly, technical, goofy, caddy, groovy, flashy, bully); distinct from character.

**Texture**

Quality of movement - dragging, slowing, speeding, heavy, light, slimy, explosive - used to shape timing and musical fit.

**Timing**

Strategic synchronization and pacing to maximize impact; includes purposeful pauses and build/release choices.

**Titles (New Gen/Advanced/HeavyHitter/Pioneer/Veteran/OG)**

Progression tiers used by organizers to align matchups and development; based on blended criteria (record, placements). Sometimes used to determine battle categories based on years of experience.

**Vocabulary**

The sum of material and combo options a dancer can deploy without repeating; central to originality and narrative growth.