

#BATTLEFIELD

Breakdancing is heading to the Olympics

Breaking is burgeoning in popularity across the globe and will soon be an Olympic sport. But as it crosses over into the mainstream, the practice risks losing its subcultural edge.



Breakdancing (or breaking, as its practitioners prefer) is standing at a crossroads. Considered part of the "four elements" of hip-hop, alongside rapping, graffiti and DJing, it first emerged in the 1970s on the streets of the Bronx. The first B-boys and B-girls were typically Black and Puerto Rican youth, who lived on the margins of New York City. Requiring no expensive equipment or technical training, it was an art form that emerged out of poverty and oppression - people often got into breaking because there was nothing else to do. Today, it's a global industry and, as of 2024, will be an Olympic sport.

The dance itself has evolved, too, becoming more athletic and elaborate - at the top level, it now resembles gymnastics more than anything. While most breakers welcome this mainstream recognition represented by the Olympics, some fear that the practice risks losing its countercultural edge and becoming divorced from its hip-hop roots.

While hip-hop culture and breaking have always been entwined, the first breakers weren't dancing to hip-hop - simply because it didn't exist yet. To begin with, it was mostly carried on to funk music; the name derives from the "break" in, say, a James Brown song, when all the instruments cut out except for the beat.

While breaking developed within Black culture, the dance itself drew on a wide range of influences. It was heavily inspired by 'uprocking', a 1960s style of dance built around foot shuffles, body drops and hand gestures, known as 'burns', which were intended to convey a kind of metaphorical aggression. While uprocking was a multiracial and city-wide phenomenon, it was associated with Latin Americans as well as the Black community.

In the early days of breaking, moves from 1970s Kung-Fu films were another source of inspiration.

It wasn't until the early 1980s that breaking, alongside hip-hop music, fully exploded in popularity in New York. At the time, people from outside of the scene often misinterpreted it as being literally violent. On one occasion, a newspaper photographer was called out to shoot a "riot" that

had broken out in Washington Heights, only to arrive and discover a group of Black teenage boys who had been arrested for dancing.

Writing in the Village Voice in 1981, dance critic Sally Banes argued that, "Breaking is a way of using your body to inscribe your identity on streets and trains, in parks and high school gyms, it is a physical version of two favour-ite modes of street rhetoric, the taunt and the boast. It is a public arena for the flamboyant triumph of virility in wit, and skill. In short, of style."

The early 1980s were a furtive time for queer nightlife in New York, and breaking played a generative role in this subculture too. Today, the role that breaking played in queer culture is typically under-acknowledged, which perhaps reflects a bias towards the histories of white gay men.

Breaking began to spread out from the Bronx and became popular in the nightlife scene of downtown New York, where B-Boys and B-Girls would perform at the coolest parties and gallery openings by artists like Jean-

Michel Basquiat. It came to be viewed as a symbol of irrepressible urban vitality.

From its subcultural roots in New York, breaking eventually became a nationwide craze. One of the first big crossover events was when B-Boy Richard "Crazy Legs" Colon starred in Flashdance, a wildly successful film that helped to turn breaking into a fully-fledged cultural phenomenon.

Throughout the 80s, the increasing commercial success of hip-hop music and the rise of MTV took breaking from inner-city New York to the suburbs of white America. Since then, even if it's less a common fixture in hip-hop videos, it has maintained a place within the culture, whether that's reality TV shows across the world.



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Making Of The National Scouts Jamboree in Raj



Prakash Bhandari
The writer is a senior journalist



A 1956 picture of the National Jamboree when it was held in Jaipur.

Eight months ago when the decision to hold the 18th National Scouts & Guides national jamboree at the Nimbil Brahaman village, 220 hectares of land belonging to the RICO, there was nothing except the barren land, dunes, and uneven surface where unhappy cattle grazed looking for some green grass. The village comes under Rohat tehsil, so the jamboree's venue is described as Rohat.

This was the place which has to be turned into a national jamboree venue with all the facilities that one expects to see during Olympiads where the Olympic village is specially created for athletes of the world. In modern days, an Olympic village is created with buildings that have apartments, which after the completion of the Olympics are sold as dwellings, normally they fall in urban areas.

But, for the national jamboree all structures like tents, toilets, bathrooms, kitchens, dining areas, office spaces, recreational centres, the arena, stage, and the area for various scouting activities like adventure etc have to be created from scratch. Various agencies providing the tenting and other facilities and also creating seating stands were to be hired.

Apart from this, roads, electricity, water supply, water tanks sewerage facilities, etc also were needed. Niranjan Arya, the state chief commissioner of the Rajasthan Bharat Scouts & Guides was a man who had a dream like Martin Luther King. Arya is a former Chief Secretary and currently an Advisor to the Chief Minister, the man behind the show. The state government has provided budgetary support of Rs 25 crore for this event. The venue for the national jamboree was carefully chosen so that the expenditure on creating the infrastructure could be used in

the future for building the industrial area falling under the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor as its part of the Jodhpur-Pali Marwar Industrial Corridor (JPMA) project area and is located equidistant (30km) from Jodhpur City and Pali town, while it is just 60km from Marwar Junction on the Dedicated Freight Corridor

connected with Jodhpur Marwar Indian Railway line, which passes through the project site, whereas Jodhpur Railway Station is located at a distance of about 30km on the north-western side. The site is very well connected by road with NH 62 and SH 64 (Jalore Road) passing through the site and the Jodhpur International Airport (30 km) by air.

All the work was to be executed by RICO and state government departments like the PWD, PHED, and the JVNPL and a lot of coordination was required. The requirements for the national jamboree had to be executed under the

#EVENTS

norms given to the hosts by the Bharat Scouts & Guides. Govind Meena of the Rajasthan Scouts & Guides was the man, who was involved in the project from the very beginning. A well-meaning and devoted person, he coordinated with the RICO and other agencies and explaining the officials the requirement of the jamboree.

The officials were aghast when they came to know that a whole village with a dwelling capacity of 35,000 has to be created. It was something that was beyond their imagination. But they were willing people and they took up the challenge although with trepidation. The task was gigantic and the time-frame was just eight months. Prior to this, a national jamboree was held 67 years ago in Jaipur with only a few thousand participants.

Sunder Rathor, a young architect who was chosen as the project architect was taken to the spot by Govind Meena. "I was not sure whether I would be able to come up to expectations. But I gathered courage and was encouraged by Govind Meenaji and RICO officials. The land looked fearfully barren. We had to measure the place that would be needed for the project. In right earnest, the land measurements were taken and areas selected which would be developed. The land area was cleared and smoothed with the use of earth-movers and as the land was cleaned, our vision grew, and we began contemplating on where

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The Boy Scout movement had already gained momentum across undivided British India by then. After 1911, the program was opened for native Indians and started gaining prominence in Calcutta, Mysore, Jabalpur, Allahabad, Shimla, and Madras. In the province of Western Punjab, the Scouting program was introduced in the towns of Lahore and Ghor Gali. For the Jamboree Mondial de la Paix in 1947, 165 Boy Scouts were selected from all parts

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The second jamboree was held in Jaipur in 1956 and it was the second biggest event to be held in the Pink City after 1948. Indian National Congress session that was held at Gandhi Nagar where facilities were created to hold the mega event with minimal resources.

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When you go through the process of reviewing it, look at where you hit the mark and where you don't. Give yourself grace and the ability to be human. "Know that there are times when you will miss the mark," says Simon. "You won't always do exactly what you think that you will do; life intervenes sometimes and sometimes we fall short."

For those things you failed to do, say to yourself one of two things, suggests Simon: "Yes, I want to do this better, and I'm going to recommit to it," he says. "Or it turns out that this wasn't really what I needed to do. It wasn't that important to me now that I've been through the year."

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#LIFE-GOALS

A Letter To Yourself

Resolutions are overrated. Here's a better method to start the New Year off right.



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"A study from 2016 indicated that only 9% of people feel that their New Year's resolutions were successful at the end of the year," he says. "People are left feeling like they didn't hit the mark."

To encourage people to hit the core of their goals and values, Simon suggests taking time to write yourself a letter.

"This is a letter that nobody else will see," he says. "It's not about resolutions; it's about feelings and values, and it comes from your heart. Most people have probably never taken the opportunity to write a letter to themselves, but when you do it, magical things start to happen. You start to lead your life according to your own set of goals and wishes that that come from within."

How to Write Your Letter
Your letter should talk about the year you want to have ahead. Simon says the letter should answer five questions:

- What are the fears you plan to tackle, those things you believe are holding you back?
- What are adventures you will embrace in the year to come?
- How will you connect or reconnect with others in your life?
- How will you plan to grow?
- What can you do to serve others?

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When you go through the process of reviewing it, look at where you hit the mark and where you don't. Give yourself grace and the ability to be human. "Know that there are times when you will miss the mark," says Simon. "You won't always do exactly what you think that you will do; life intervenes sometimes and sometimes we fall short."

For those things you failed to do, say to yourself one of two things, suggests Simon: "Yes, I want to do this better, and I'm going to recommit to it," he says. "Or it turns out that this wasn't really what I needed to do. It wasn't that important to me now that I've been through the year."

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