Tanzhaus Zürich

STATEMENT ABOUT GAGA CLASSES AT TANZHAUS ZÜRICH

October 2026

Should we boycott Gaga technique at Tanzhaus Zürich in light of the genocide in Palestine? It's a fair question, and one we've been asked directly. This is our attempt to answer it in full.

Gaga is a movement language developed by the Israeli choreographer Ohad Naharin. It has been part of our professional training programme for some time, and it also exists outside that programme, in classes open to people without any dance background, organized by the same teachers who rent our studios. We value Gaga as an independent and compelling form of physical research. It sharpens bodily awareness, offers a rich form of physical preparation, and opens up ways of moving that can be meaningful whether you're a professional dancer or have never trained before. Gaga's accessibility to people of all backgrounds is itself one of the reasons we've kept it in our programme.

And yet we know where it comes from. Gaga was developed by Naharin in close connection with his artistic work and with Batsheva Dance Company, which receives financial support from Israeli public funds, among others. It is taught, among other places, at the Suzanne Dellal Center in Tel Aviv. The teachers who bring Gaga to Tanzhaus trained there, and each year they undertake further online training to deepen and update their practice. They pay a fee for this continuing education themselves; there is no fee for a Gaga licence. Tanzhaus pays these teachers for the classes they give here but we provide no direct financial support to Gaga structures in Israel.

Given the war, the occupation, the destruction in Palestine, the extensive documentation of grave human rights violations, including the characterisation of the situation as genocide, and the way Israeli culture can function as soft power abroad, it makes sense that people are asking whether hosting Gaga is compatible with standing against all of that.

After much thought, we have chosen not to boycott the practice. Part of our reasoning is a matter of principle we'd want to apply consistently: similar questions could be asked of the cultural activities connected to other governments destabilizing global peace and in our assessment, boycotting a practice or its artists tends to hurt the artists

before it touches the government it's aimed at. We don't think that serves the cause it means to serve.

But we want to be clear about what this decision is not. It is not neutrality. We condemn the violence and the genocide in Gaza. We stand for peace, for human rights, and for the freedom of artistic expression and movement. We're also aware of the broader debate about the role cultural institutions, including Batsheva, play in extending the international visibility of Israeli culture. At the same time, it's worth holding onto the fact that Naharin himself has repeatedly spoken out publicly against violence and against the policies of the Israeli government, and that his collaborators and dancers represent a real current of opposition within Israel. More could be done, but this is part of the picture too, even where it sits uneasily alongside everything else we've named.

This is consistent with how we try to work more broadly: we host and co-produce artists who bring sharp political statements to the stage and who campaign for a fairer world. We believe dance can bring people together without making the political and historical conflicts around it disappear. We want Tanzhaus to stay a place where different bodies, perspectives, and experiences can coexist, encounter each other, and also disagree.

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For questions or further dialogue, please contact the co-directors of Tanzhaus Zürich at

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