

LUTSF Covering Letter

My application was for a trip to the U.S to train and compete in Breaking. The aims were to grow as a dancer, experience different dance scenes, connect and battle with those more experienced than myself and come back with new information to pass on to my own students.

My trip took place from the 24th May – 30th June. I was in New York from May 24th-8th June, and then flew to Los Angeles, with a brief trip to compete in San Diego, and a San Francisco trip at the very end of my journey to connect with Heartbreakerz leader Beta.

I feel my aims have definitely been achieved. I have grown in confidence as a dancer, connected with many beautiful people, learned new ways of training and battling and got to put those methods into practice whilst out there. Just being in the environment of New York was fulfilling and plentiful.

Being in Los Angeles I was extremely fortunate to have been mentored by Bboy Fantum who supported my journey and we trained together most days. From eating together to training together to mentally preparing it was a very invaluable time. Unfortunately Ken Swift was not available when I was in Los Angeles but I feel like it made space for who I ended up meeting when I was over there.

Particular highlights:

Making the final of a 1 on 1 breaking event in Brooklyn.

Making the semi finals of an allstyles dance event at EXPG in a 2on2 with a Waacker.

Learning from legendary Bboy Megs in a workshop outside on concrete.

Battling at the Freestyle Session Qualifier 3v3.

Battling in San Diego with Bboy Fantum and making Top 16.

Learning from Rokafella: an older generation well respected Bgirl who not only can still do everything but also is an incredible teacher. Learning from her was very inspiring as she knew how to cater to another woman and her information was very accurate for my growth. I also was privileged enough to be around her when she was teaching two of her younger students which helped give me information on new approaches to take back and input into my own teaching practice.

If I had any advice to give future awardees it would be to dive fully into this opportunity, even if it seems too ambitious initially. This fund is incredible because it gives YOU the freedom to choose what it is you want to go explore and grow in, and that's rare. I have already been sharing information about the Lisa Ullman Travelling Scholarship Fund with a lot of dancers here in the UK that I know would benefit from this opportunity. As I documented my battles on social media there has been a keen interest from the dance community here inquiring about how I got the support.

Lisa Ullman Report

Emma Houston



The purpose of my trip was to go to the birthplace of Hip Hop and experience the culture first hand from its city of origin: New York. I then travelled to Los Angeles to experience a different reality for dancers, taking both experiences and learning as much as possible whilst there. My aim was to meet people in the scene and learn from and build with them, as well as learning new ways to share my own knowledge of Breaking and Hip Hop Culture with my own students I teach in London. I feel like I've grown personally and professionally as a mover and have moved closer to my goals in Breaking both physically and mentally through battling, training, meeting new people and being around different scenes. I am also pleased that I went to New York first and then carried that knowledge onto L.A., implementing those lessons and realisations in a completely different setting.



Firstly I would like to thank the Lisa Ullman Fund for supporting my application and giving me this incredible opportunity. This trip has been enlightening in so many ways. I think whenever we travel we learn so much about ourselves and others, and what really stood out to me was the kindness I experienced throughout my journey. My first stop was New York, and I was staying in Queens, put up by a friend of a friend who is also a Bgirl. Bgirls from Japan, New York and UK all under one roof: connected by Hip Hop. Considering I spent two weeks in New York, it flew. Every day I danced. In fact, I remember one night I just wanted to watch the ciphers because they were so raw, and I think my body needed a rest, but even then I was itching to dance. I feel that experiencing the energy of New York was essential to my growth as a Bgirl, and I almost instantly got better just by being in that environment. A highlight to me was making the final of a 1v1 Breaking event held by Breakfresh NYC

in Brooklyn within a couple days of my arrival. Legend of the breaking scene Megas was over from Canada judging alongside his crewmate; the battle was inside but on concrete and the energy was electric. What I loved about this battle was the freedom I felt and having the pleasure of just diving into the unknown and getting to exchange with dancers I didn't know. It wasn't clear how many rounds we were to do or when we were to start battling, which made the exchanges very organic and more personal. I feel these battles were very essential to my growth as I got to really test myself that night by being able to do more rounds than I've ever done previously in a competition. Aside from immersing myself in the battling scene, I also connected with many dancers at different training spots. I went to the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, Long Island and many other places around NY to train and meet new people. I met different crews like the Dynamic Rockers and Full Circle and got to train with them. Each training spot had its own vibe and history which made it even more magical. This trip really opened my eyes to a scene I'd never experienced and I think helped my view of Breaking evolve as a result. My perspective has definitely changed and I can already feel my style and individuality starting to develop and progress. My confidence has definitely been boosted from this trip, and that feeling will encourage me to keep following my goals as I am already on the right path.



In Los Angeles I spent a lot of my time at a training facility called Juice. This allowed me to train and create in an environment less saturated with dancers: there was more diversity in the facility as it attracted many stunt artists and martial artists. Being in L.A. it was clear that the focus was much more on the commercial industry, and any Breakers out there definitely have to be versatile. The time for me in L.A. definitely resulted in learning about the industry and the dancers way of life getting by, as opposed to New York which stood out as an overwhelmingly cultural experience (in a good way). Having had time back in London to reflect on my trip it's really began to sink in just how life changing it was. It's hard to put it into words as it feels as though I've made a spiritual shift that has heightened my awareness of the world and given me a greater perspective in general life. It has taught me that it's always better to dream big and follow it, and that when you take great risk you earn great reward. This trip has definitely been the highlight of my year so far and I have made many incredible memories!



As a result of this trip I feel my focus has increased as well as my self-discipline. It's definitely given me a glimpse of the heights I can reach when I allow myself expression without restriction: and that feeling was achieved due to my surroundings being supportive and positive. This trip definitely gave me that freedom of expression I was yearning to feel again. My lesson here now is to implement that freedom into my structure here in the UK, or wherever I choose to go. If you are reading this I would encourage you to apply and go for something you have always dreamed of doing. If it comes from the right place with a clear intention you will definitely not regret going into the unknown with a dream and a positive attitude.

This is a link to a video shot of me in Los Angeles by friends Robert Bell and John Jeffery.

Enjoy! ☺

<https://vimeo.com/177823812>



