

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Dessau / Germany, Juni 17<sup>th</sup> 2026

### **World's First Official Breakdance Traffic Lights Unveiled in Dessau / Germany**

In June 2025, the Dessau-Roßlau City Council approved a trial phase for a special pedestrian traffic light. The light was to feature breakdance moves and pay homage to the rich tradition of breakdancing during the GDR era.

### **The movie “Beat Street” marked the beginning**

What many people are still unaware of today - and what gets lost in the broader German and global hip hop narrative - is that starting in the early 1980s, there was an independent scene in the GDR dedicated to breakdancing, graffiti, rap, and DJing. It emerged almost simultaneously with the West German scene, but without direct contact with American GIs - some of whom came from the Bronx - who could have shared stories of the historical roots and passed on their skills. This development in the GDR was further fueled by the film “Beatstreet”, which began screening in East German theaters in 1985. The breakdancing scene, in particular, developed rapidly after the film’s release and, following initial friction, received state support. “Brigitte, fundamentally we must make these fads ‘socially acceptable,’ although I do not believe they will have a long life,” reads a handwritten note from a Stasi lieutenant colonel to an official in Dresden’s cultural sector.

### **Breakdancing has a long tradition in Dessau**

Dessau was an early hub of hip hop in the GDR. After picking up their first B-boy moves from West German TV shows, Dessau’s hip hop youth would gather in the streets and squares to dance and have fun. One of the most important meeting spots was the museums intersection. Here, they practiced new moves in front of the store windows. Sometimes they drew a crowd that admired their acrobatic moves and colorful clothes; other times, the police showed up to chase them away. The intersection was considered a melting pot where different youth cultures came together, inspiring and spurring each other on. This included the punk scene, which often provided the musical equipment for the B-boys with their cassette radios. Soon, crews were formed. Among the local hip-hop “stars” in Dessau were Beatschmidt, the Automatic Freaszy Crew, the Stretch Breakers, and Grand Master Fight Machine. With their self-designed graffiti hoodies, colorful clothing, and B-boying performances

**Vorstand:** Joerg Schnurre, Alexandra Werner, Hannes Froberg | **Finanzen:** Beatrix Koch

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on the street, they were a real eye-catcher in the neighborhood and at school. The documentary “Here We Come,” released in 2006, offers an overview of the hip hop scene in the GDR with a focus on Dessau. In 2015, this led to the feature film “Dessau Dancers.”

### **The Traffic Light Figures**

Beatschmidt, the B-Boy from Dessau, is still highly regarded in the GDR breakdancing scene for his unique breakdancing performances and his artistic talent. The moving traffic light figure is dedicated to him and symbolizes the B-Boys and B-Girls in Dessau, the GDR, and East Germany.

Blasterpunk is one of the first punks in Dessau. Over the past decades, he has developed a passion for “boomboxes” - that is, cassette radios. With his extensive collection, he has a strong global network and organizes the International Boombox Meeting in Dessau at irregular intervals. He embodies the standing traffic light figure by holding a boombox demonstratively in front of him. In doing so, he symbolizes an attitude of freedom and dignity for personal individuality that stands against state coercion and social conformity.

### **Donations Welcome**

Behind the traffic light figures is the Dessau-based NEWKID Association, which offers numerous activities for young people in addition to dance events. Furthermore, the association is campaigning for “Hip Hop in East Germany” to be recognized as intangible cultural heritage. The association funded the traffic light figures with its own resources and would appreciate donations via PayPal to support its activities.

The association would like to express its sincere thanks to Jörg Bernstein and Paul Nolte for their early support and for submitting a proposal to the city council. The association also thanks all other stakeholders who were involved in the project’s implementation.

### **Unveiling of the Breakdancing Traffic Light Figures**

Friday, June 19th 2026, 1:00 p.m.

Museum intersection (<https://maps.app.goo.gl/jFb4PA1vSzA5LXTV6>)

Kavaliertstraße 82, 06844 Dessau

POC: Joerg Schnurre

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Vereinsregister Stendal: VR 6529  
Steuernummer: 114/143/00105

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**Please RSVP regarding your attendance at the inauguration ceremony by  
Thursday, June 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.**

**Press Spokesperson**

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