

# THE DANCE ENTHUSIAST

Features > [The Dance Enthusiast Asks](#)

## Battery Dance's Jonathan Hollander on The Adel Euro Campaign For Dancers Seeking Refuge



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### And Relocating Dancers From Conflict Zones To NYC

#### About the Adel Euro Campaign:

Last August, **Battery Dance** announced the Adel Euro Campaign for Dancers Seeking Refuge – a tribute to Iraqi dancer **Adel Faraj** (also known by his stage name - Adel Euro) who lost his life in the **Baghdad bombing** on July 3, 2016. Battery Dance's crusade aims to relocate six dancers from conflict zones to NYC and to receive tutelage from the company. An ensemble encompassing the new students and Battery Dance members will tour U.S. schools, colleges and universities to introduce local students to dancers from Iraq and other countries in the region.

For more info, visit: [batterydance.org/remembering-adel-euro/](http://batterydance.org/remembering-adel-euro/)

**Sammi Lim for The Dance Enthusiast: Condolences on the loss of your dear friend and student. It's a wonderful thing that Battery Dance provided Adel with a home to be his creative self.**

<http://www.dance-enthusiast.com/features/view/Jonathan-Hollander-Adel-Euro-Campaign-Dancers-Seeking-Refuge>

**Despite the heartbreaking news, Battery Dance marched on with the annual Battery Dance Festival on August 14th, one of the biggest events in the company calendar. How did the news affect morale?**

**Jonathan Hollander, Founder of Battery Dance:** We were in a emotionally fragile state for weeks after Adil's death on July 3rd, but our resolve to honor him at the festival and beyond gave us strength and motivation to carry on.



Battery Dance Festival. Photo by Darial Sneed.

**Dance Enthusiast: We were humbled to learn of Battery Dance's campaign, which might very well change the lives of six individuals. Is the audition process for the Middle Eastern dancers underway or has the selection already been determined?**

**JH:** The campaign is moving forward. We have raised approximately half of our initial goal of \$30,000 from 37 donors. When we reach this goal, we will sponsor the first Iraqi dancer, Hussein Smko Khudhur, by relocating him to New York City and setting his training and artistic development in motion. Hussein was a friend of Adil's, they had danced together in Iraq and met as recently as January 2016 just before Hussein moved to the U.S. We are investigating other candidates via long-distance, but no formal audition process has been instituted yet. We will activate this phase of the program when we have raised funds sufficient to cover the costs of visas, transportation and living expenses for the next cohort of dancers.

**Dance Enthusiast: Senior dancer Sean Scantlebury will lead the performing unit and US tours. What made him the right choice?**

**JH:** He is the natural choice for this assignment. It is his time to ascend to the position of artistic director, mentor and choreographer of the new unit. He has been with Battery Dance for 13 years - first as a dancer, then gradually developing his skills as a choreographer and a teaching artist. He has an awareness of the challenges that dancers from the Middle East face, having worked in Jordan and Algeria three times, as well as Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey and Israel (with Jewish, Arab

and Palestinian dancers). He has also choreographed for North African dancers in addition to being Adil's direct teacher, mentor and performing partner from 2014-2016.

**Dance Enthusiast : An important initiative of the campaign is to combat Islamophobia. I'm picturing round table talks and sharing sessions?**

**JH:** Very much so, yes. But also, simply by virtue of the fact that Americans will witness performances by dancers from Iraq – dancers who have been raised in Baghdad and other parts of the conflict-ridden region. They will be exposed to the passion for art, for communication, for expression that is so evident in these young dancers from Islamic countries. This experience is bound to leave Americans with an impression of their similarities with young Muslims – shared humanity, hopes and dreams – and to erase any preconceived notions that permit the painting of an entire race of people as terrorists.



Adel Euro and Jonathan Hollander. Photo courtesy of Battery Dance Company.

**Dance Enthusiast: In the best case scenario, what will the Adel Euro Campaign achieve?**

**JH:** We will memorialize the life of a radiant human being who was also a creative genius, and in his name, save others who are living in danger, allowing them to realize their capacity as dancers and creative beings. Compelling choreography will be created by Sean in teamwork with the dancers that will move and inspire audiences in schools, colleges, theaters and festivals, causing them to reevaluate their impressions of Muslims and igniting compassion for the innocent lives that are either stalled or snuffed out in the violent conflagrations that hold the Middle East hostage.

**Dance Enthusiast: Thank you, sir. We look forward to following the campaign and giving it the publicity it deserves.**

**JH:** Thank you for caring and helping us alert the public of our cause.

**Important Links:**

CAMPAIGN: The Adel Euro Campaign for Dancers Seeking Refuge is soliciting private donations and foundation grants.

GOAL: Raise \$30,000 to ease the efforts of providing safe-harbor and opportunities for refugee dancers.

DONATE: <https://www.generosity.com/emergencies-fundraising/adel-euro-campaign-for-dancers-seeking-refuge>