

Dancer Killed in Baghdad's Suicide Bombing

Posted on [July 6, 2016](#) by [Jennifer Stahl](#)

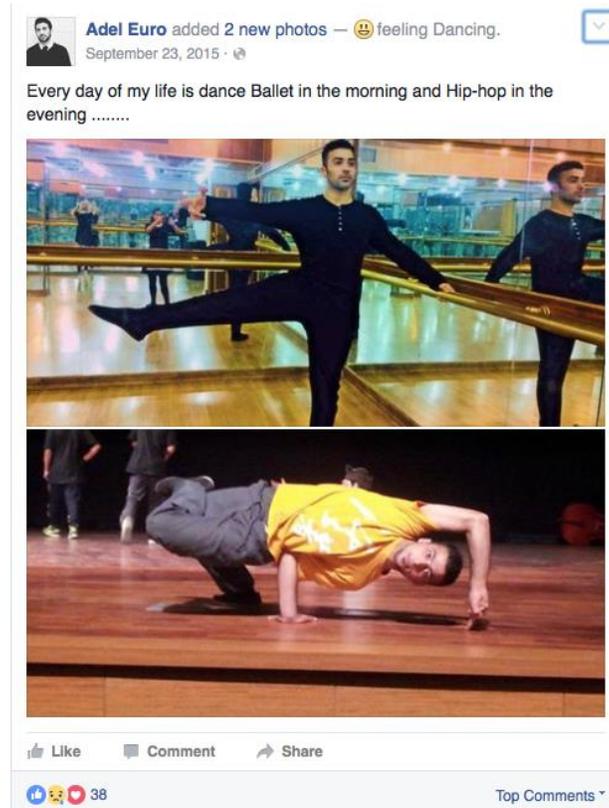
Among the 250 people who lost their lives in Sunday's suicide bombing in Baghdad—one of the deadliest in more than a decade—was 23-year-old dancer Adil Faraj, who went by the stage name Adel Euro. Although he lived in Baghdad, he had been training online with New York City's Battery Dance Company for the past two years.



From Adel's Facebook page

Euro initially caught the dance bug the same way many of us do: by watching a video of Michael Jackson, reports [the Associated Press](#). But in Iraq, dance is publicly scorned and he had nowhere to train. So he taught himself moves off of YouTube, mostly break dancing and street styles, which are seen as more acceptable than modern dance.

When neighbors and relatives found out about his dancing, they asked his father to make him give it up. "I severed ties with some of them, while some of them changed their opinions when they saw his successes and are now encouraging him," Euro's father [told the AP](#). Still, it became



increasingly dangerous to dance in public: police officers and others beat him when they saw him practicing in a park. Other times, he got away with it by claiming to be doing martial arts. In 2014, Battery Dance founder/choreographer Jonathan Hollander discovered Euro's YouTube videos, then reached out to him on Facebook. Through Battery's Dancing to Connect project, company member Sean Scantlebury began giving Euro regular lessons through Skype, teaching him everything from tendus to the importance of looking up at the audience. "You have the feeling that if you give this person opportunity, he'll set fire to the world," said Hollander in a video interview with the Wall Street Journal's Pia Catton. Last year, Hollander invited Euro to perform a solo and a piece with Scantlebury and fellow Battery dancer Mira Cook as part of the company's appearance at the Amman Contemporary Dance Festival in Jordan. It was Euro's first time on stage.

Inspired, Euro launched a dance school in Baghdad, appropriately called Battery Dance Academy. He recently completed his law degree and was planning to move to the United States to pursue further dance training. Battery Dance Company wrote on its Facebook page that he was hoping to bring what he would learn in the U.S. back to Iraq to share with others.

But on Sunday morning, Euro was shopping for clothes to celebrate the Islamic holiday Eid al-Fitr (which marks the end of Ramadan and begins at sundown today) when an ISIS suicide bomber detonated a truck packed with explosives. You can listen to an emotional interview with

Hollander about it on WNYC's *The Takeaway*. Our hearts go out to Euro's friends and dance family, and all those who lost their loved ones too soon this weekend.