

Beat: News

## European Culture Investor 2015

### Cultural Brands Award

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**USPA NEWS** - Theaterhaus Stuttgart and Mercedes-Benz Bank can join in a dance of joy: Mercedes-Benz Bank has been named "European Culture Investor of 2015" for the two institutions' cooperation on the first "COLOURS "" International Dance Festival" in Stuttgart in 2015.

Under the artistic direction of the Canadian Eric Gauthier, a former soloist of the Stuttgart State Ballet who has headed the internationally acclaimed "Gauthier Dance // Dance Company Theaterhaus Stuttgart" since 2007, the Theaterhaus Stuttgart staged the diverse and colorful dance festival for the first time in summer 2015. The festival was supported by its main sponsor Mercedes-Benz Bank both financially and in other ways. The cooperative project was fueled by the two institutions' shared enthusiasm for dance and diversity.

The motto "Dance for Good" became visible in literal terms in the course of the festival. Some 6,000 visitors danced in a "dance box" on the Rotebühlplatz in Stuttgart, generating more than 4,200 videos and €25,355 in donations. Every dance resulted in a donation of €6 from Mercedes-Benz Bank, which doubled the generated donations and arrived at a grand total of €50,000. The proceeds are going to finance an integrative dance project for up to 60 socially disadvantaged teenagers and young refugees that will be launched at the beginning of next year. The project will have an educational component that includes language courses.

"Mercedes-Benz Bank is an extraordinarily committed partner, and we are very happy that this involvement is now being recognized with the presentation of a renowned award," says Eric Gauthier.

"Our cultural sponsoring for COLOURS has many facets. We integrated our employees, our customers and the public into our project. We used the dance festival to conduct a dialogue about the value of diversity in our company," explains Franz Reiner, Chairman and CEO of Mercedes-Benz Bank AG. In order to help its employees experience diversity at the personal level, the bank called on them to participate in an Europe-wide in-house dance contest. A total of 300 employees from 18 national subsidiaries danced in 22 self-produced videos.

Mercedes-Benz Bank has already arranged to cooperate with Theaterhaus Stuttgart on the next staging of COLOURS in 2017. Werner Schretzmeier, Director of Theaterhaus Stuttgart, commented, "We are delighted to be continuing our very successful, creative and colorful partnership with our neighbor, Mercedes-Benz Bank, and to be jointly bringing the international world of dance to Stuttgart once again in 2017."

The Cultural Brands Award was established in 2006 by the culture managers Hans-Conrad Walter and Eva Nieuweboer. This year it is being presented for the tenth time. It is the most important award in the culture business and is presented by a jury of 30 experts in seven competitive categories to culture providers, culture investors and tourism regions in Europe. The Aurica sculpture that is presented to the award winners stands for the excellence, attractiveness and openness of the European culture market. It represents the valuable intermediary work of European culture providers and the outstanding commitment of European culture investors.

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