

Poetry in Motion

With COMPANION, Berlin-based Syrian dancer and choreographer Medhat Aldaabal shares the story of departing and arriving through the art of movement.



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Zurich by Chance

Forget social media's toplist and conventional city guides—and let chance become the heart of your trip. At least that's how we explored the Swiss city.



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The Atlantic Row

We met with RowHHome, four brave women from Hamburg who are the first German team to take part in the world's toughest ocean-rowing race.



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Tomatoes on Tour

There is one element of touring that Alisa Tsybinas, singer of Shi Offline, finds challenging: food. For us, the vegan shares her recipe for a vegan stage sandwich.



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Companion 18



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INSPIRED BY ICELAND



Fire and ice, darkness and light: Iceland is a country of extremes. And it seems that it is exactly the erratic nature that inspires its locals to innovations, whether it is food, music, architecture or design. COMPANION went hunting for the island's creativity.

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A Reader's Digest

There are lots of ways to explore the world. By flying somewhere, for example. Or by reading. Literature has always attempted to broaden horizons and take readers on journeys to the farthest corners of the earth. Even our cities can be brought to life in books, as our literary tour reveals.

↳ [Activity Map, p.24](#)

Frankfurt is, without question, a misunderstood city. Whenever I travel the world, I tell people how beautiful it is here.

↳ [Column, p.30](#)

Travel and Leisure

Upgrade your journeys or your everyday life at home with our selections from the best of the material world—and this time even beyond.

↳ [Products, p.15](#)

Paris Sound Heroes

The French capital isn't all just postcard-perfection. Multicultural neighbourhoods like the area around Gare du Nord are filled with verve. And music.

↳ [Music Page, p.8](#)

Future Hospitality

COMPANION speaks to Elisabeth Johansen and Vanessa Borkmann, two hospitality innovators in the fields of research and design, about the future of the sector.

↳ [Talking Business, p.12](#)

A Culinary Journey

For gourmets and gourmands: We explored the Austrian region of Burgenland which is worth visiting for its excellent wines and superb regional cuisine.

↳ [Food & Drink, p.20](#)

The Sounds of Gare du Nord

Listen to the Paris Heroes playlist on the 25hours Hotels website:
25hours-hotels.com/en/companion/journal/paris-heroes

TEXT ROOKSANA HOSSENALLY
 PHOTOS JULIETTE ABITBOL, ÉDOUARD SANVILLE

With its palatial stone buildings that catch the light of the sun and its unrivalled savoir-faire when it comes to eating, dressing, and loving well, Paris has plenty of reasons to be proud. Look a little closer, however, and you'll find that the French capital isn't all just postcard-perfection. Multicultural neighbourhoods like the area around Gare du Nord are filled with verve, giving Paris an edge that only travellers who veer off the tourist trail can truly discover.

'Marlboro—marlboro—marlboro!' Cigarette vendors cling to railings, their rhythmic chatter flowing in tune with the metallic 'whoosh' of the station gates as they swipe open and close to release the throng of disembarking metro passengers. The French national railway's jingle, a ubiquitous chime, pours out from invisible speakers, competing with the steady rumble of traffic outside as the sun rises. Metal shutters roll up, revealing displays of seductively lacy wedding dresses and shiny red three-piece suits. Radios are flicked on, pushing out songs of sunshine that slice through the clattering city.

As she makes her way from the station to Montmartre, Clotilde Floret absorbs it all, keeping the sounds tucked away somewhere in her mind's repertoire. An electronic music producer and singer with a penchant for female-led electro-punk, Clotilde has lived close to Gare du Nord since she moved to Paris. The station's sounds are woven into the fabric of her life and her music. Originally from Lille, she made the move to the big city years ago, stepping off the train right here. The sounds captured her imagination, as they would every time she caught a train back to Lille, or elsewhere.

With Gare du Nord being the gateway to Europe, she found herself here often when she began touring the world with her band, We are Enfant Terrible. 'It's a place that I love to stroll through because of its unique rhythm,' she says. 'It's a cultural crossroads with travellers arriving at the station and rubbing shoulders with the various communities that live in the area. And its sounds are a culmination of all that energy.'

As Europe's busiest train station with over 700,000 daily passengers, Gare du Nord bears an impressive and yet often overlooked stone façade built around a triumphal arch that dates back to 1864. The figures along its cornice represent the various destinations in France and abroad. The station owes its grandeur to the days when the bourgeoisie flocked here to escape the city in favour of fresh sea air, like Deauville or Le Touquet.

To the untrained eye seeking gold and marble, the area might seem overwhelmingly chaotic. However, on closer consideration, you'll find that Gare du Nord and its surrounding areas are among the richest in the city—in terms of culture. Around the corner is Little India and its plethora of restaurants, closer to Chateau Rouge you'll find Congolese fabric shops, while a mix of communities originally hailing from North Africa and Sub-Saharan countries have turned whole areas like Barbès into vibrant pockets of multiculturalism.

For Julie David, who in 2014 opened Walrus, a record-store-slash-café-and-bar just a few streets away, the area still achieves the right balance of trendy and authentic. 'I

wouldn't have opened Walrus anywhere else,' says Julie, for whom the area is a real hub for music from all over the globe. 'Being near the station, we're close to the United Kingdom and its incredible music scene, as well as lots of music labels and venues.'

However, what makes her feel most at home is the area's locals. 'I love the cultural diversity here—it's like no other place in Paris. It's great to be able to get a curry down the road, or a *steak frites*, have a look at all the African wedding dress shops, and pop into places where you can buy all sorts of fun colourful knick-knacks. It's important to keep some areas where things are still accessible to most, price-wise, which is becoming a rare occurrence in the city.'

A ten-minute walk away, close to some of the city's best music venues like La Cigale, Le Trianon, La Boule Noire, and Elysée Montmartre, is where cross-cultural music maestro Saïd Assad is setting up Le 360.

In a nutshell, it's the music venue Paris has been waiting for. Steeped in the city's fabric of many cultures, Le 360 is a powerhouse for creative collaborations hailing from near and far. For the Teheran-born music producer of the record label Accords Croisés—which has focused on bringing together artists from all over the world since the nineties, including the Indian sitar player Ravi Shankar—his objective is clear. 'What we need is to go beyond multiculturalism.' Transculturalism is asking artists not just to sing or play side by side, but rather it's asking them to really fuse their styles together to create a new sound.'

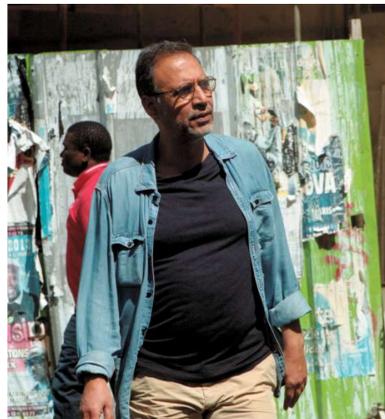
Set among Afro-hairdressers, Moroccan bakeries, independent fashion labels and art associations fighting to keep independent creation alive, Le 360 is a one-stop shop for artists with its own ecosystem that isn't reliant on mass industry channels. And Saïd and his team have thought of everything. From the niches in the building's façade for street art exhibitions, to a state-of-the-art concert hall, apartments adjoining a rooftop terrace with jaw-dropping views of the Sacré-Cœur, recording studios and a light-filled restaurant, Le 360 is Paris's independent music spot to have on your radar.

Gare du Nord and its surroundings might be far from the golden-hued representations of Paris on social media, but digging around here reaps the kind of reward that can't be measured in likes and shares.

Learn more about the neighborhood through *Portraits of the Gare du Nord* by Alex Toledano. The book is also on display at the 25hours Hotel Gare du Nord in Paris.

Paris Heroes' Playlists

Saïd



- 1 **Quand on a que l'amour**
by Jacques Brel
- 2 **Talkin' bout a Revolution**
by Tracy Chapman
- 3 **Nterini**
by Fatoumata Diawara
- 4 **Al Bint El Chalabeya**
by Dorsaf Hamdani
- 5 **Dia Barani**
by Arat Kilo ft. Mamani Keita and Mike Ladd

Clotilde

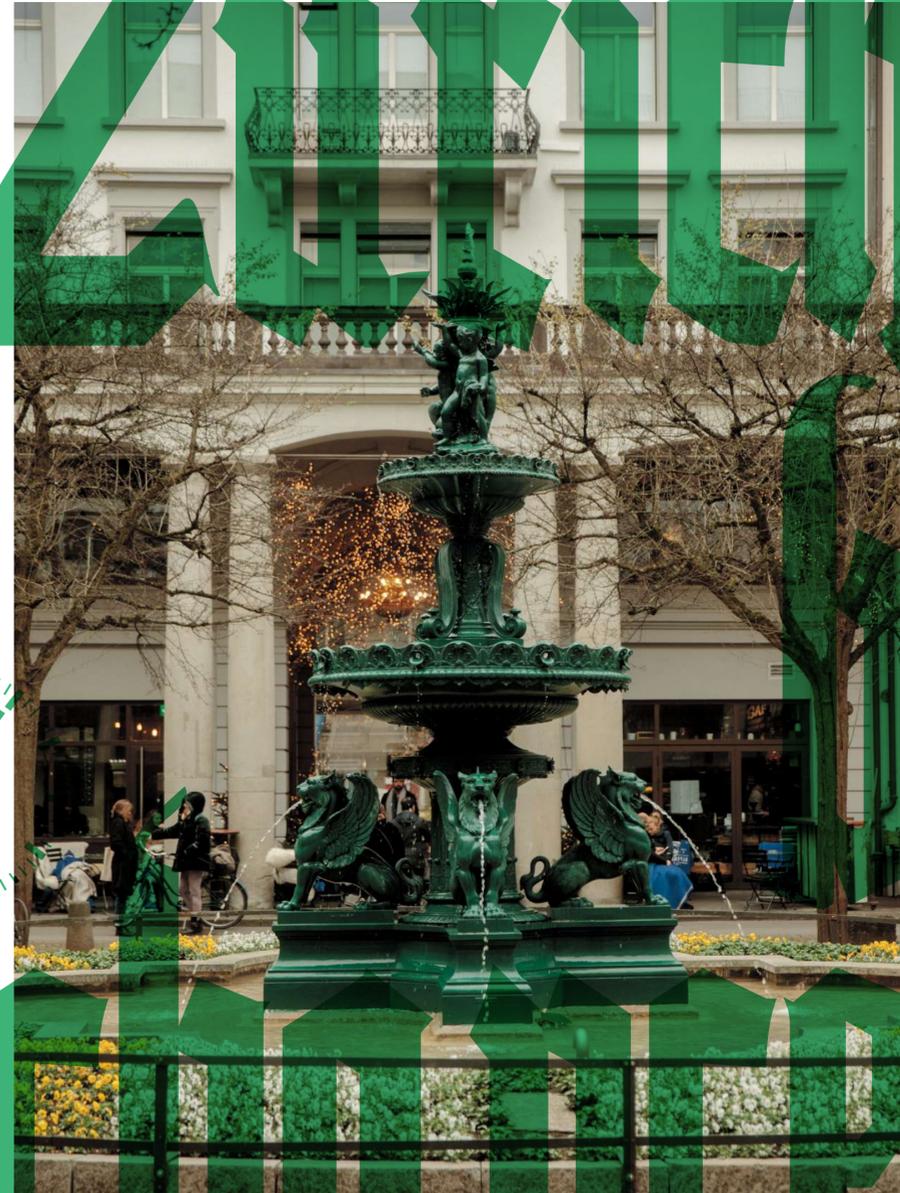


- 1 **Mathématiques Modernes**
by Disco Rough
- 2 **Butterfly**
by Léonie Pernet
- 3 **Go**
by Théodora
- 4 **Couleur menthe à l'eau**
by Isaac Delusion
- 5 **Filthy love**
by We Are Enfant Terrible

Julie



- 1 **Jam Hot**
by Johnny Dynell and New York 88
- 2 **Busting out**
by Material
- 3 **Game And Performance**
by Deux
- 4 **Imperial Motors**
by Lives of Angels
- 5 **Move your body**
by Bramsam



TEXT CELINA PLAG – PHOTOS YVES BACHMANN

The beach bar on the small island that looked so great online but unfortunately not in real life; the secluded natural setting that's considered a real insider tip, but has already served as a backdrop for the selfies of a million Instagram users; the hand-carved artwork, which, when unpacked at home, turns out to be mass-produced: thanks to social media anyone who travels the world today sets out with a clear idea of what and where they want to eat, buy or do upon arrival—and is often disappointed. In the context of a consistently growing tourism sector and relentless globalisation, the search for something like 'authenticity'—which is what travel is often about at its core—has become a difficult and sometimes even impossible undertaking in many places around the world.

So how do you get to know a place you have never been to in all its specificity without falling into tourist traps? This is what I asked myself before embarking on this District Tour of Zurich. As a journalist, I spend a quarter of the year traveling around the world—but somehow I hadn't yet made it to the Swiss city which, despite its relatively small population of around 430,000 is considered one of the most important financial centres in Europe, and also boasts a lively creative scene. I set out to explore the German-speaking metropolis on the Limmat—taking a different approach to the usual: by chance.

It was Lena Grossmüller's *Reiseführer des Zufalls* (travel guide of chance) that gave us the idea. The travel guide can be universally transferred to anywhere in the world, and is intended as an 'attack on

the comfort zone,' as the author promises. The idea came to Lena, who, as chance would have it, is a resident of Zurich herself, for the reasons mentioned above: she was looking for a way to break out of repetitive travel patterns—and at the same time found an excellent topic for her master's thesis in design with this book project, published by Kommod Verlag. Laden with all kinds of unusual tasks, short essays and philosophical questions, the strikingly well-designed booklet, for which Lena is also working on an English version in 2020, serves as a guide for travellers willing to take fate into their own hands.

Everything is possible, nothing a must: Together with photographer Yves Bachmann, I embarked on the chance tour, which felt a bit like a scavenger hunt. Yves, who has lived in Zurich for many years, was, by the way, particularly fired up: He got to know his hometown from a completely different perspective—and even discovered something new along the way.

↳ dscvr-guide.com