

Sophie Sabar

Dancer | Anthropologist | Artist | Choreographer | Performer | Lecturer |
Teacher | Coach | Travel Guide to Senegal | Researcher



Sophie Sabar is a dancing anthropologist whose heart beats for sabar. Her approach on sabar as a complex cultural phenomenon from the perspective as both an anthropologist and a sabar dancer reflects in her transmission. Sophie aims bringing to you the integrality of sabar culture, and not just dance steps. From the heart of sabar in Senegal, Sophie and her drummers bring sabar lovers together around and in the sabar circles.

METHOD

Her method in the transmission of sabar is clear and simple: **sing it, play it, dance it**. What we sing, what we drum and what we dance is all the same. You have to know the rhythms, how else can you dance with certainty and confidence? Sophie's work is all about the magic of the sabar circles, in which the connection between dance(rs) and drum(mers) is essential. Her goal: accompanying each individual thoughtfully and lovingly towards his or her own free dance (expression) in the sabar circle. Join the party!

TRACK RECORD | CURRICULUM

Sophie **studied cultural anthropology and sociology of non-western societies at the University of Amsterdam** and graduated in 2006 with a master thesis on sabar : "*Kaaj-lén fecc, sabar and gender in a globalizing world*". After launching her own company *Sophie Sabar* she started teaching sabar dance in 2007 and grew to be a both locally and internationally recognized teacher throughout the world, transmitting her love for sabar all around the globe. Her work aims at bringing people together in her sabar circles, through an inclusive approach to accommodate dancers of all ages, colors, shapes and sizes to share the joys of sabar. As a **dance teacher** Sophie does this through **weekly classes twice a week in Amsterdam**, one focusing on styling, technique and choreographing Mbalax music, Sophie's

first love. The second class is with live sabar drumming and provides dancers with a steady base in all sabar rhythms to enter confidently the circle we open at every end of the class. **Internationally** Sophie teaches weekend workshops throughout Europe, where she works with local sabar drummers in every different town she is invited to. She and her team offer a sabar summer week where dancers and drummers indulge in a week full of sabar drumming, dancing, sabar talks, sabar lectures and conferences. Sophie travels to Senegal every winter to deepen knowledge and continue her ongoing sabar research for a yet to be published book on sabar. **Every year she and her local team in Dakar host international students in a two week sabar camp in the sand in Yoff**, home to Sophie and her Lébou family in law.

Every year she brings **sabar culture in schools through an culture Culture& Dance from Senegal**” aiming to not only change images and mindsets European youth tend to have on life in “Africa” but to bring music and dance education into the curriculum of the Dutch educational system, always in collaboration with sabar drummers from Senegal and the conservatory of Amsterdam (highlighting also informal (griot household) versus formal learning of an orally transmitted culture as sabar).

As a **sabar coach** she coaches dancers in gaining confidence to enter the circle, crack the sabar codes and communicate to the drummers and the wider audience.

As a **choreographer and performer**, both solo and as a collective of sabar performers, she initiated, coordinated and choreographed many performances. For example at the **Dutch embassy in Dakar on the occasion of King’s day, linking and embodying Dutch and Senegalese culture through a performance dedicated to the Thiossane, culture, of the Lébou (fishermen) people of Senegal**; at **Festival La Nuit de la Danse at Centre Culturel Francais (Dakar)**; **City Bum Bum in Lodz (Poland)** sharing the stage with artists from Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Guinee; in the Netherlands at the **Melkweg in Amsterdam** in a tribute to Senegal concert, at SeptemberMe Festival in Amersfoort; at several percussion festivals, and occasionally as a **guest performer for artists** such as **Youssou Ndour (Bercy and in Dakar)**; Salam Diallo, Pape Diouf, Jeri Jeri (Ndagga) at Muziekgebouw aan het IJ en Haarlemmer Hout festival; Ebou Gaye Mada & Boka de Banjul in Paradiso (Amsterdam); in videoclips from a variety of artists from both Senegal and Europe just to name a few of the performances over the last couple of years.

As a **lecturer** she is invited on a regular basis at renowned institutes and festivals such as the conservatory of Amsterdam, in Marseille on the occasion of the Sabar Moo Ma Nior festival, the Music Meeting in Nijmegen (Netherlands), Africolor Festival in Paris to lecture (and demonstrate together with her drummers) on the history and specifics of sabar drum and dance.

As an **artist** she was approached by various media channels for a news item about her love for sabar and Senegal.

CREDENTIALS

In 2016 she received the **award for African image maker** by the voice magazine. In 2018 Sophie was invited to participate as a panel member in a **symposium** organized by the Dance Hall and L'Unité de Recherche en Ingénierie Culturelle et en Anthropologie (URICA) as part of **the University Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar to exchange on the codification and safeguarding of dances from the African continent**.

In 2020 she was invited by **AfroForYou**, a Swiss initiative to ease the difficulties of not being able to dance physically in corona times, to join the collective of artists to bring dances of the African continent online. "Study sabar at home": Sophie developed a methodology to study sabar, its rhythms and dances by focusing and highlighting on particular sabar rhythm every month that includes a coaching module.

SOCIALS | GET IN TOUCH

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/SophieSabarPage>
Instagram : <https://www.instagram.com/sophie.sabar>
Website : www.sophie-sabar.nl
Youtube : <https://www.youtube.com/c/SophieSabar/videos>
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LINKS

Link reportage Married to Africa:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnsQG7BVCW8>

Link WDR Lokalzeit aus Düsseldorf for the AfroLatinDanceDays Düsseldorf

<https://www.facebook.com/tanzhausnrw/posts/10154712632958819>

Introduction & accompanying video to master thesis:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RTDC7hJEqT4&hd=1>

In coproduction with The Dance Hall in Dakar "A-Z of Senegalese dances":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjrqWgRtWBU>

Impression of our sabar camp in Yoff, Senegal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxn900cHErA>

On stage with Jeri Jeri (Ndagga):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gNA1Jwza40>

Sabar Summer Camp in France:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qX80flXkCn4&t=73s>

Invitation for the morning show Yewuleen for Senegalese television channel TFM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vo7zgvT3S7o&t=15s>

Africolor Festival Paris | Journée rencontre Mali-Senegal:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KO6M_pmbAf8