

# *VOGUE WITH ME*

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Department: Dance

# WHAT IS VOGUE?

- Vogue (also known as Performance) is a dance form based in the Black and Latinx, Queer and Transgender House Ballroom Scene.
- Voguing is based in posing, runway walking, and dramatic or theatrical movements.
- Voguing has three main styles:
  - Old Way Vogue
    - defined by hard lines, stoic poses, and confident presentations.
  - New Way Vogue
    - like, old way, but with quick movements, and extreme stretches.
  - Vogue Femme
    - a softer or crazier feminized version of the dance.



Image: Icon Dashaun Wesley xLanvin: <https://www.nowness.com/series/just-dance/lil-buck-aria>

# HISTORY

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- While the House Ballroom Scene was started by the Pioneer Crystal LaBeija, as rejection of Drag Balls in the late 1960's that favored white Drag Queens instead of Queens of color, voguing had a different start.
- Voguing was started as a dance called "Poses, Poses, & More Poses" by Pioneer Paris Dupree in 1969 at the first House Balls.
- Voguers had to reenact model poses from fashion magazines, to the music of disco remix, in a beautiful flow of improvised choreography.
- Today, 'vogue femme' is the more popular form of voguing, which was created by transgender women (Femme Queens) after 1991. These women infuse their dancing with extreme feminine sensuality, in order to define, and concretize their style in the House Ballroom Scene.



Images: Crystal LaBeija, from Frank Simon's *The Queen*, 1968. Paris Dupree, from Jenny Livingston's *Paris is Burning*, 1991.

# HOUSES: CREATING FAMILIES

- Houses are chosen families, first created for LGBTQ+ children or young adults who were rejected by their biological families.
  - Houses are collectives of people with similar interests, often attached to the House Ballroom Scene, or urban LGBTQ+ arts.
  - Houses are not necessarily bound to a specific location, home or building.
  - Houses are led by a “Father” or “Mother” with “children” to follow and grow.
- For example, the Legendary House of Lauren, International, is based in Chicago, with chapters of the House in California, Australia, Florida, Brazil, Texas, Italy, Nevada, New York, Florida, and Atlanta...



Photo Credit: Wingz Lauren, House of Lauren, Intl.

# MADONNA'S VOGUE

- While Madonna is often the first name people think of when referring to Vogue, she did not invent it.
- Instead, she took the dance form, to the world entertainment stage, from the underground Drag Balls, House Ballroom Scene, and nightlife clubbing of New York City,
- It is important to note, that the voguing in Madonna's 1990 Vogue Music video was choreographed by Legendary Icons Jose and Luis Xtravaganza, of the Royal House of Xtravaganza.
- The two choreographers remain active members of the House Ballroom Scene today.



Image Source: <http://inmagazine.ca/2020/03/30-years-later-why-madonnas-vogue-is-the-anthem-we-need-today/>

# VOGUE IN POP CULTURE

Pop stars such as Fergie, Lady Gaga, Beyoncé, Ariana Grande, and Megan Thee Stallion continue to use voguing and voguers to create, build, direct, dance in, and choreograph their performances.

Unfortunately, many voguers and other artists of the House Ballroom Scene are not credited for their artwork, creativity or culture that contribute to popular culture.

So, while major cultural influences come from the House Ballroom Scene, the voguers themselves tend to stay *underground and secret*, in their own community, to safeguard their efforts.

# BALLS TODAY

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- Today, Balls take place all over the world—primarily in cosmopolitan areas.
- While anyone can walk (compete/participate in) a Ball, their location and details are mostly shared through word of mouth, with some level of secrecy. And, walking requires training...
- The best way to see and understand a Ball is to watch the now televised version Ball culture via HBO Max's LEGENDARY.



# ELEMENTS OF VOGUE

While the dance form of voguing varies from location to location, from House to House, from country to country, from runway to theatre, there are certain movements, also known as elements, that remain the same, which are:

*Hands Performance*

*Catwalk*

*Duckwalk*

*Dips*

*Floor Performance*

*Spins*



# HANDS PERFORMANCE

- Taken from various forms of Asian dance, pantomime, and Africanist and indigenous storytelling, Hand Performance focuses on the movement and dramatic imagery of the hands, in relation to each other and the body.
- The goal is to have the hands and arms move to the music playing, while the rest of the body remains relatively still.
- Raving hand movement forms such as “the figure 8,” urban tutting, and “bone-breaking” are all forms of Hands Performance.



Image: The Legendary Javier Ninja, <https://royalnova.com/artist-spotlight-javier-ninja-street-jazz-818/>

# CATWALK



- A catwalk is similar to walking down the runway, as fashion models do, but it is much more stylized.
- One must move forward with arms moving often in counterpoint to the legs.

Credit: Icon Amazon Leiomy, New York Fashion Week, Disney's Villains by The Blonds.

# DUCKWALK

- The duckwalk is like the catwalk, in that the voguer locomotively moves forward, except the voguer must be in a tight squat position, rather than in a standing or walking position.
- While there are many versions of the duckwalk, this element is characterized by the dramatic movements of the hands with the high energy of hips and legs, as a means to taunt or demonstrate a dancer's strength.



Leondrae Frank (center) vogues with others during a voguing practice at United Black Ellument in Dallas on Aug. 10, 2018. (Rose Baca/The Dallas Morning News): <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/2018/09/24/voguing-the-most-fashionable-and-fiercest-dallas-battleground-you-likely-know-nothing-about/>

- Dips, can also be called inversion, and are any move that leads to a final pose in which one's head is low to the ground, and other parts of the body are lifted vertically.
- The most common dip leads to a position where the voguer is on their back with one leg tucked back, and the other is raised vertically.

## DIPS

# FLOOR PERFORMANCE

- *Floor performance is anything one does on the ground.*
- Often, this element is filled with poses on the ground, rolling, kneeling, and large fan kicks.
- *Moving through different positions on the ground is very important to voguing—just as much as standing poses and positions are.*



Image Source: <https://www.oxygen.com/blogs/an-interviewer-with-legendary-vogue-dancer-leiomy-maldonado>

# SPINS

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- Spins are turning one's body around 360 degrees.
- In voguing, voguers will spin multiple times as a way to escape or lead into another elements.
- Spins may not always stay in one place or keep one position, but morph and evolve as the voguer turns around.



Image Source: <https://daily.redbullmusicacademy.com/2014/07/berlin-vogue-feature>



# OVAHNESS: LOVE YOURSELF

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- The most important aspect of voguing is **fabulosity, self-fashioning, or self-creation.**
- **You must love who you are in order to vogue.**
- **Voguers put all of themselves in their movement, to express their feelings, stories, and personalities—voguing is pretty much a kinetic self-portrait.**
- **From the fashion they wear, make-up, and the movements they make, voguers are showing you, expressing to you, telling you who they are, and that they love themselves.**
- **Ovahness, is a complete feeling, presentation, and performances of oneself to a personal perfection in love.**
- **Ovahness is necessary for good voguing.**

# VOGUE WITH ME!

- Now that you have a basic understanding of voguing, it's time for you to vogue with me and follow the dance video tutorials to experience voguing in your body.
- But, before you do that, please find a piece of paper, and write down:
  1. Why you love yourself...
  2. What you value in your life... What you are grateful for...
  3. What energy you or feeling you feel today, and what energy you want to express though your dancing and voguing...



# THANK YOU

- And, here are some resources for further exploration of voguing and the House Ballroom Scene:
- House Ballroom Scene History with Icon Niambi Prodigy  
<http://www.LearnYourHistory.net/>
- Vogue Tutorials with the Star Gravity Balmain  
<https://www.youtube.com/c/GravityBalmain/featured>
- Vogue Classes with REACH LA  
<http://www.reachla.org/>