



A DIRTY WORK MEDIA  
PRODUCTION

# The Fundamentals of VOGUE

Get to know  
“the community that doesn’t exist”  
and learn *The Fundamentals of Vogue*

This limited series educates & inspires the ballroom spirit within all of us. Don’t just learn how to vogue – walk the catwalk by journeying through queer history alongside ballroom leaders, legends, and activists. Travel through the world, one ball at a time.

We’re here – we’re queer – get used to it.

Living queer in 2022 is easier than we remember in previous times – but persecution & travails in the queer community remain. Being queer means finding family in community, and there’s never been a better community than ballroom.

The ballroom scene is growing and has crossed borders into Latin America and Europe. Currently, over 100 kiki (youth) houses and around 40 mainstream houses are in the U.S., while Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Panama host about 50 kiki & 25 mainstream houses. In Europe, there are around 20 mainstream houses, many of which originated in the U.S., and hundreds of kiki houses. Adoption rates in the scene are giving the U.S. scene a run for its money.

Ballroom has been in mainstream cultural conversations for over 30 years; documentary film *Paris is Burning* made over \$4 million in its 1991 debut.

More recently, FX and a mega-profile showrunner Ryan Murphy greenlit *Pose*, a narrative TV series based on NYC ballroom culture. *Pose* received extensive critical & viewer acclaim and saw live viewership figures of over 600,000 for season premieres & over 500,000 throughout its three seasons.

Riding the sequined coattails of *Pose*, HBO Max developed a competition show based around ballroom performance. Boasting a Certified Fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes, “ballroom extravaganza for die-hards and newcomers” *Legendary* has drawn critical & viewer acclaim alike. *Legendary* has a 1.9% higher demand rate from its audience than other shows in the reality TV genre.

Recent estimates suggest at least 27 million queer people reside in Brazil, 20 million in Mexico, and 6 million in Colombia. According to recent surveys, in the USA & Europe around 10% of the population identifies as queer.

The LGBTQ+ community’s collective purchasing power was valued at \$3.7 trillion worldwide in 2019 – and is steadily growing.

# A QUICK HISTORY OF BALLROOM

The rich history of ballroom culture began in the 1920s, when African-American fraternal societies held racially integrated “Fairies’ Balls” in venues like the Hamilton Lodge. Participants in drag competed on the quality of their costumes and performances.

Marcel Christian LaBeija threw the first ball specifically for black queens in 1962 to combat racism present at drag events. Lottie LaBeija and House Mother Crystal LaBeija created the house system in the 1970s; Junior & Tommie LaBeija can still be seen attending and speaking at balls across America today.

Ballroom pioneer Paris Dupree threw her first annual ball with categories such as “Executive Realness” in New York in 1981. Ballroom culture became as much socio political conversation as pageant. The Vogue dance style was created & refined by African-American and Latinx dancers, particularly Grandfather of Vogue Willi Ninja. By 1986, Dupree’s annual ball became the namesake for the legendary documentary *Paris is Burning*.

*Paris is Burning* and Madonna’s hit single “Vogue” made some parts of ballroom culture a mainstream fad in 1990. Some persons featured in *Paris is Burning* felt undercompensated and blamed the film for short-lived mainstream response at the time. After the hype, ballroom culture continued to thrive in the queer underground of major cities like New York, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and Baltimore.

The creation of kiki houses provided surrogate families for queer youth to participate in age-appropriate “kiki balls”. The kiki scene also provided training for youth aspiring to walk the balls.

Early ballroom houses named themselves after the fashion houses of Europe, while kiki houses often took the names of streetwear fashion brands like Old Navy & Juicy Couture.

The kiki scene came to celebrate its own history of legends, statements, and stars. Several entertainment success stories speak fondly of their kiki origins. Kiki House of Juicy Mother Courtney Juicy has housed many successes such as Rihanna choreographer Alex Miyake-Mugler. TV series *Pose* producers Jonovia Chase, Twiggy Pucci Garcon, and *Legendary* contestants Omari Or Ricci & Kalik Balenciaga are still seen regularly at kiki events across the U.S.

*RuPaul’s Drag Race* premiered in 2009, bringing drag culture back into the mainstream along with catty insider lingo like “reading” and “shade”. In 2016, the Swedish-American documentary *Kiki* provided an updated look at the kiki scene’s trajectory from word-of-mouth microcommunity to an influential entity as large as mainstream ballroom. Beyonce recently raised some eyebrows and profiles by sampling Kevin Aviance’s “Cunty” and Mike Q’s “Feels Like” in her track “Renaissance” which has become a rallying cry for creation of safe spaces.

After providing the unseen backbone of the film, fashion, and music industries for decades, the ballroom community is out of the shadows & front-and-center in the cultural eye. Has ballroom become mainstream? Will queer-baiting ever end? And what exactly is “noguing”? Learn the five elements and so much more in *The Fundamentals of Vogue*.

# The Fundamentals of VOGUE

Documentary series  
Six 20-minute episodes  
Worldwide rights available for premiere

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## Ep. 1

### HANDS

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Learn the history of ballroom through the themes of violence, identity, legacy ballroom, and new blood. Meet a cast of characters who call Guadalajara, Mexico home. Follow their journey of acceptance, found family, and celebration through the lens of their vital and dramatic local ballroom scene.

Hands Performance is characterized by elegant, fluid movements producing symmetrical poses inspired by Egyptian hieroglyphics and modern fashion. One of the Five Elements of Voguing, Hands Performance requires speed, precision, and control and can be used to illustrate a narrative. In its purest form, Hands Performance category manifests as a battle between two skilled voguerx.

## Ep. 2

### CATWALK

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Discover all the queer trailblazers you should know through the themes of legacy, bravery, legends, and resistance.

Exaggerated feminine stride Catwalk is the quintessential Vogue Femme element. One’s legs are crossed, hips are thrust from side to side, and hands are thrown out in opposition to the legs.

### Ep. 3

## DUCKWALK

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Learn what ballroom is and about the rich history of queer meeting places through themes of transformation, evolution, and competition.

One of the most physically demanding moves of Vogue Femme, Duckwalk demands one squat low and kick the feet out while moving forward on the beat, producing an effect akin to the animal in its name.

### Ep. 4

## SPINS & DIPS

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Whirl through the history of the queer rights movement and queer history & religion. Traipse along themes of love & community, belonging, and found family. Understand what it means to be trans in the world of ballroom and beyond.

Spins punctuated by dips are one of the most recognizable elements of Vogue Femme. Dips are a ground-level stunt whereby one spirals down to the floor, tucks in one leg, and leans far back, creating the illusion that one's head has touched the floor – easy right? To make things even more complex, the dip must coincide with the “Ha!” in the song's vocal. Spins and Dips were developed in the Old Way category, derived from the fan favorite Pop, Dip, and Spin move.

### Ep. 5

## FLOOR

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Learn about the new generation of queer dance & performance through themes of new blood, failure, and nurturing talent. Understand what it means to come out of the closet and how queer icons influence Hollywood.

A favorite crescendo for the Sex Siren category, Floor Performance demands the dancer roll, twist, thrust, and extend limbs in a sensual demonstration of flexibility.

### Ep. 6

## RUNWAY

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Identity & Gender. Safety. Freedom. Expression. Power. Learn about the history of drag and coming out through themes of identity & gender, safety, freedom, expression, and power.

Runway is directly inspired by international fashion weeks; in fact, model scouts have often discovered new talent at balls' Runway categories. American Runway is harder, faster, and more masculine, while European Runway expresses femme high fashion. In the Runway category, the dancer is judged on the quality of the walk and ability to sell the fashion outfit on display.

*The Fundamentals of*  
**VOGUE**

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