

**MANHATTAN
WEST**



A GUIDE TO GATHER ROUND

Learn more about the performances
presented at Manhattan West
by Works & Process at
Gather Round: Street and Club Dance Battles

On the heels of break dancing's debut at the 2024 Olympics, Works & Process brings its captivating dance and music series originally commissioned for the Guggenheim Museum's rotunda back to the Manhattan West event circle, where top street and club dancers battle for glory and prizes! Presented by Brookfield Properties Arts & Culture in partnership with Works & Process.

SCHEDULE OF PERFORMANCES:

- + 9.4: Behind The Groove: CeleBreak Outside! with Kwikstep and Rokafella
- + 9.11: Gather Round Kiki Ball
- + 9.18: Fabulous Waacking Festival Fall Edition with Princess Lockeroo
- + 9.25: Manhattan West Beatbox Battle with The Beatbox House

ABOUT BROOKFIELD PROPERTIES ARTS & CULTURE

Brookfield Properties Arts & Culture enlivens unique public spaces globally and brings together communities through meaningful free experiences across music, dance, film, theater, visual arts, recreation, and food.

ABOUT WORKS & PROCESS:

Championing performing artists and their creative process from studio to stage, Works & Process features artists from the world's largest organizations and amplifies underrecognized performing arts cultures.

GENERAL TERMS TO KNOW

- **Battle:**
A battle is a competitive performance between two individuals or groups.
- **Club Dance:**
Club dance often refers to the style of dance performed in nightclubs or social dance environments. It includes various dance styles, including freestyle, partnered dancing, and group dancing. Club dance styles can vary depending on the music being played and the atmosphere of the setting.
- **Street Dance:**
Street Dance refers to dance styles that evolved outside of the traditional dance studio environment and are often associated with hip-hop culture. Characterized by their improvisational nature, these dance styles evolved alongside their musical counterparts: hip-hop, funk, and R&B.

SEPTEMBER 4

Behind The Groove: CeleBreak Outside! with Kwikstep and Rokafella

Since 2009, hip-hop legends Kwikstep and Rokafella have curated *Behind the Groove*, a party that invites the break-dancing community to freestyle to classic dance music, while providing a space for them to jump into the dance cipher and show the skills they've honed. Regularly held at the Nuyorican Poets Café and now at Brooklyn's Bogart House, this outdoor version will include four break dancing teams, battling it out. Move to the sounds of DJ KS360 and DJ DP One, emceed by Rokafella.

ARTIST BIOS

Kwikstep:

Gabriel "Kwikstep" Dionisio, AKA DJ KS 360 started dancing at the age of 6, influenced by Soul Train and block parties in NYC. Kwikstep has performed in PBS's Peabody Award-winning *Everybody Dance Now*, the Great Performances 20th Anniversary Special, as well as Kurt Weill's *September Songs*, which was nominated for an Emmy Award. Kwikstep is a Bessie award recipient for choreography and founded his crew known as Full Circle in 1992. Later, in 1996, he and his wife Rokafella took the company further, establishing it as an internationally acclaimed non-profit hip-hop collective under the name Full Circle Productions Inc. Today Kwikstep is an international icon in breaking and is best known for his smooth style, versatility and signature head spins. Most recently Kwikstep performed as a featured dancer in the Netflix Series *The Get Down*, directed by Baz Lerhman.

ARTIST BIOS CONT'D

Rokafella:

Ana *Rokafella* Garcia is a NYC native who has represented women in hip-hop dance professionally over the past three decades. She co-founded Full Circle Productions Inc., NYC's only nonprofit hip-hop dance theater company, with her husband Kwikstep generating theater pieces, dance training programs and NYC-based dance events. She directed a documentary highlighting the B-girl lifestyle entitled *All the Ladies Say* with support from Third World Newsreel and Bronx Council of the Arts. She is hired internationally to judge break dance competitions and to offer her unique workshops aimed at evolving and preserving its technique and cultural aspects. She has worked within the NYC public school system and various NYC-based community centers setting up programs that help expose young students to the possibility of a career in dance. She has been featured in pivotal rap music videos, tours, film, fashion shows, and commercials including the NetFlix Series *The Get Down*. Rokafella has choreographed for diverse festivals and concerts such as The NY Philharmonic Orchestra's *Firebird* in 2022, The Kennedy Center, Momma's Hip-hop Kitchen and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Branching out of her dance lane, she has also recorded original songs and poetry and performed at NJPAC's Alternate Routes in Newark and Lincoln Center's Out of Doors. She received the Joyce award to collaborate with True Skool in Milwaukee and received the American Dance Festival's National Dance Teacher Award. Presently, she is an adjunct professor at The New School and a content creator for Bronx Net TV producing her own TV series entitled *Kwik2Rok*" Rokafella is a multi faceted Afro Latin hip-hop artist who references Nuyorican culture as her foundation.

HISTORY

Breaking, also known as break dancing, is a style of dance closely linked with the subculture of hip-hop, originating from the African American and Latino neighborhoods of New York. The term "break" refers to a song's acoustic section, when all vocals and instruments stop playing, leaving only the percussion section to play. It is during this "break" that dancers often perform breaking. Breaking is one of four elements of hip hop, along with MCing, DJing, and Writing (Graffiti), and became a global phenomenon thanks to films like *Wild Style*, *Beat Street* and *Breakin'*. Competitive Breaking was an Olympic sport for the first time this summer in Paris.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Breaking/Break Dance:**
A dynamic style of dance linked with the subculture of hip-hop, originating from the Black and Latino neighborhoods of New York. The term “break” refers to a song’s acoustic section, when all vocals and instruments stop playing, leaving only the percussion section. It is during this “break” that breakers dance. Breaking is one of the four elements of hip hop, along with MCing, DJing, and Writing (Graffiti), and became a global phenomenon thanks to films like *Wild Style*, *Style Wars*, *Beat Street* and *Breakin’*. Competitive Breaking was an Olympic sport for the first time this summer in Paris.
- **B-boy/B-girl/Breaker.:**
Anyone who practices breaking/break dancing.
- **Cypher:**
A circle where b-boys and b-girls gather, each dancer taking turns entering the center to break.
- **Footwork:**
The shuffle or patterns the dancer performs once they have transitioned from the top part to the floor. Some shuffles are fundamental and dancers are encouraged to embellish and create new steps to the music.
- **Freestyle:**
A form of dance characterized by improvised movement on the spot as a form of self-expression. There is not any choreography practiced ahead of time. Freestyle includes several styles, such as breaking, popping, waacking, and locking.
- **Freeze:**
A static pose that the dancer holds for a few seconds to accentuate the music or end their turn to dance. Freezes can be on the floor or in the air.
- **Powermoves:**
The spins or aerial movements that defy gravity including headspins, hollowback, inverts, back spins, Flares 1990’s, and more.
- **Top Rock:**
The upright introductory movements performed at the beginning of the dancer’s tur

SEPTEMBER 11

Gather Round Kiki Ball

The community and competitive spirit of Ballroom Culture may be most known from the film *Paris is Burning*, this summer's hit musical *Cats: The Jellicle Ball*, or the TV series *Pose* and *Legendary*. Join us in celebrating LGBTQ+ pride and the skills and style that have made Ballroom the cultural force it is today at the Gather Round Kiki Ball! Featuring commentator Snookie Juicy West, DJ Byrell The Great, and legendary judges Omari "Oricci" Wiles, Courtney "Balenciaga" Washington and more. Categories for this demo ball will be Runway, Face, and Vogue, featuring some of NYC's best ball walkers.

Gather Round Kiki Ball is organized by Hype Kitty.

ARTIST BIOS

Shireen Rahimi (Hype Kitty)

Shireen Rahimi (Hype Kitty) is an Iranian-American dancer, event producer, and mental health advocate based in Oakland, CA. She began her ballroom journey in 2011 when she moved to Brooklyn, NY, and by 2012 became a member of the Iconic House of Mizrahi (mainstream) and Kiki House of Unbothered Cartier (Kiki Scene). Shireen is one of the founding team members of Open To All Entertainment (@opentoall.ent), the largest ballroom entertainment company, and Oakland To All (@oaklandtoall), the first ballroom entertainment company based in the Bay Area. Shireen is also the overall founding godmother of the Kiki House of FuBu @houseoffubu.

Snookie Juicy West:

The Legendary International emcee brings a fresh vibe to Ballroom, from the Kiki scene to mainstream.

DJ Byrell The Great:

A DJ and Producer, Byrell the Great is most well-known for his contribution to the NYC Underground Dance Scene. He perfected his craft working as the main DJ for New York's Kiki Ballroom scene and has made a name for himself as one of the top Ballroom DJs, with works like the Vogue Workout series, his Chopped Cheese mixtape, and his ballroom club banger Bubble Drip. His ovah beat production has led him to have his music placed in multiple fashion ads, movies, tv shows, and more.

ARTIST BIOS CONT'D

Courtney “Balenciaga” Washington:

Courtney Washington is a legend within the ballroom community and founder of the Kiki House of Juicy Couture and leader of The House of Balenciaga. As a Black trans femme choreographer, Washington creates visual work fusing street dance, street jazz, ballroom, and hip-hop. Informed by her own experience being teased as a queer teenage person who found refuge in dance, her work conveys how her gender transition spurred transformative emotional, creative, and physical liberation. The dances she creates are a representation of resiliency and her work fosters a sense of community in areas of Brooklyn that have few resources.

Omari “Oricci” Wiles:

Ousmane “Omari” Wiles is an African American, West African, and Vogue dancer. Wiles is best known as, legendary Omari NiNa Oricci, founder of The House of Nina Oricci and Creative Director of LES BALLET AFRIK dance company, blending African, Vogue, Modern, and House as one. He has performed at the Joyce Theater, the Guggenheim, and the New York Metropolitan Museum. Most recently, Wiles choreographed *Cats: “The Jellicle Ball”* at PAC NYC with Arturo Lyons.

Born in Senegal, Wiles began his training in West African dance at the age of 6 years old, under the tutelage of his mother and father. By his teenage years, Wiles had become the assistant director of the family company, The Maimouna Keita School of African Dance. Working with master African dancers, Ousmane evolved the skills needed to teach the art of traditional African dance. Venturing further into the world of dance, Wiles found himself learning, training and falling in love with other styles such as Hip-Hop, House, Modern, Jazz, and Vogue.

Through his involvement with the ballroom scene, his love and passion for Vogue (dance) grew, and he found his notoriety growing both inside and outside of the ballroom scene. Wiles has had the opportunity to work with many renowned artists, such as Janet Jackson, Beyoncé, John Legend, and Rashaad Newsome, among others. Wiles also appeared with his house (The House of Nina Oricci) as a contestant in Season 2 of HBO’s *Legendary*.

HISTORY

The Kiki scene traces its roots to 1920s ballroom culture, an underground community that emerged in New York City during the Harlem Renaissance as a safe space for queer people of color. In the 1980s, ballroom culture gained broader national attention when the HIV/AIDS crisis led its members to start advocating for greater visibility, acceptance, and support. Today ballroom culture is best known for the voguing dance style replicated by Madonna in her 1990 music video *Vogue*. By the 2000s, activists from the ballroom scene recognized the need to create a space for LGBTQ+ millennials of color, many of whom were homeless and desperately in need of HIV-prevention services. A small group of activists—including leaders of the Gay Men’s Health Crisis as well as influential teens and young adults—helped to pioneer the Kiki scene, which borrows from the legacy of traditional ballroom culture but insists on youth-focused leadership and cultural identity.

HISTORY CONT'D

Now, almost 20 years later, LGBTQ+ youth continue to seek refuge in the community. Today there are about a dozen active Kiki “houses” in New York City, each composed of a “mother,” “father,” and a gaggle of “children.” Every month, Kiki house members get together for extravagant competitions known as balls: joyous, raucous affairs where house members compete for trophies and cash prizes in a series of runway competitions and performance-art battles. They provide an alternative to high-risk behavior for troubled youth. Membership in a Kiki house is a huge responsibility - members are expected to show up for weekly rehearsals and meetings, even as they struggle with health issues and homelessness.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Kiki Ball:**
A Kiki ball generally denotes a smaller, more relaxed event within the LGBTQ+ community’s ballroom culture. These gatherings are typically less formal than larger balls, serving as practice sessions or social meetings where participants (often known as “Kikis”) can hone their voguing and other ballroom dance techniques in a supportive atmosphere. The term “Kiki” can also refer to a casual gathering or party within queer culture, where individuals come together to socialize, dance, and enjoy each other’s company.
- **Ballroom/Ball Culture/Ballroom Scene/Ballroom Community/Ballroom Culture:**
Within LGBTQ+ culture and originated in New York City, a dynamic and competitive subculture where individuals frequently from marginalized backgrounds, gather to engage and compete in events called “balls.” Serving as a form of social support and fostering community bonds, ballroom culture offers marginalized individuals a safe space and a family (known as a “house”). Essential components include competitions that feature multiple categories and themes like voguing, runway walks, fashion trends with esteemed members of the community as judges. Each participant is evaluated on their ability to embody the essence of the chosen theme.
- **Runway:**
A category featured in balls where participants strut and pose on a runway or catwalk. This category highlights fashion, attitude, and the capability to embody confidence and style.
- **Face:**
The Face category highlights a contestant’s facial appearance, and overall physical presentation. This category celebrates beauty, artistry, and the ability to exude elegance and confidence in one’s appearance.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS CONT'D

- **Performance:**

This ballroom category showcases a contestant's ability to entertain audiences through theatrical dance. This category celebrates dance, emotive expression, costuming, musicality, and physical creativity.
- **Vogue/Voguing:**

Vogue is an intricately stylized dance form and mode of self-expression prominent in ballroom culture. It originated from the poses seen in fashion magazines and the movements of fashion models. Vogue encompasses various styles such as Old Way, New Way, Vogue Femme, and Vogue Dramatics. Key elements include poses, dips, spins, and movements inspired by the runway. If one performs this dance style, they are voguing.
- **Houses:**

Houses are fundamental social units that offer support, familial connections, mentorship, and a sense of community to LGBTQ+ individuals, especially those from marginalized backgrounds.
- ***Paris is Burning*:**

A landmark film from 1990 that documented the vibrant ballroom culture of 1980s New York City, specifically within the African American and Latino LGBTQ+ communities. The film was the first of its kind, and gave a voice to drag queens, transgender individuals, and gay men whose experience often went overlooked. Providing insight into the ballroom community, *Paris is Burning* showcases participants as they prepare for a ball.
- **Mother / Father / Children:**

In the context of ballroom culture, terms like "mother," "father," and "children" refer to a familial structure that provides support, mentorship, and community for its members. A "mother" or "father" is a high-level community member who acts as a leader within a "house." The "children" are the individuals within a house who are mentored by the "mother" or "father."
- **Werk:**

"Werk" is a slang term originating from ballroom culture, within the context of voguing and balls. It is an expression used to praise someone's performance, style, or overall presentation. When someone is told to "werk it" or "werk," it implies that they are showcasing their best self with energy and charisma.

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SEPTEMBER 18

Fabulous Waacking Festival Fall Edition with Princess Lockerooo

Distinguishable by its rotational arm movements, posing, and emphasis on expressiveness, Waacking brings together the glitz and glamour of Hollywood films, the vibrant energy of disco, and the colorful underground gay club culture of the '70s. Get ready to be blown away in an event organized by Princess Lockerooo, lauded by The New York Times as the “Queen of Waacking,” with high-energy performances, dazzling costumes, theatrical choreography honoring the roots and influences of Waacking, and soundtrack by DJ Jaze-Art Remote. Top Waackers, go head-to-head in an epic showdown that’ll leave you speechless. After the show and battle, get your disco fix, twirl, and let loose—once the winner is crowned, we dance! We’ll celebrate the incredible diversity that makes our city and the world of Waacking so special. The costume theme, “Flaunt your Cultural,” invites participants and the audience to showcase their unique backgrounds and stories through their attire. Show us your cultural pride and dance the night away in style!

ARTIST BIOS

Princess Lockerooo:

Princess Lockerooo (Samara Cohen-O’Neal) is a highly accomplished artist and leader in dance. As a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), she has received numerous accolades, including a Bessie award for breakout choreographer and a nomination for sustained achievement. This dynamic diva has been an advocate of bringing the popular and expressive 1970s disco era dance style Waacking back into the spotlight. A student of legendary Soul Train dancer Tyrone Proctor, Princess Lockerooo is a Waacking Specialist and emphasizes the freestyle element of the dance style, which encourages the development of each individual dancer to become a living embodiment of music. Princess Lockerooo has successfully spread waacking to dozens of countries utilizing it as a powerful tool to build communities, promote self-love, and invoke confidence. Her exceptional contributions to the dance world have been widely recognized, and her talents have been showcased on several leading television platforms including *So You Think You Can Dance?* and *America’s Got Talent*. Princess Lockerooo has worked with some of the entertainment industry’s top pop artists such as Madonna, Bob The Drag Queen, Jody Watley, and Icona Pop.

Her productions have been featured at prestigious venues around the world including Jacobs Pillow, The Guggenheim Museum, Lincoln Center, NYBG, Summerstage, Women’s Entrepreneurship Day, HATCH, Original Thinkers, ASAP NextGen, and the United Nations. As a philanthropist and activist for LGBTQ+ rights, she’s collaborated with and raised funds for various organizations including Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, The Omomuki Foundation, The Center, and NYC Pride.

HISTORY

Waacking originating in the gay clubs of Los Angeles in the 1970s disco era. It is a dance form that embodies rebellion and self-expression. Initially emerging within vibrant underground dance scenes celebrating diverse sexualities and identities, Waacking has grown into a global phenomenon. The style is characterized by fast-paced arm movements synchronized with the beats of classic disco tracks. Transcending mere speed and inspired by the sirens of the silver screen, waacking is renowned for its storytelling, drama, and passionate expression, making it an emotive art form that connects across generations.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Punk:** Once a derogatory term for LGBTQ+ people, the pioneers of Waacking first named the dance style Punking to reclaim the word.

SEPTEMBER 25

Manhattan West Beatbox Battle with The Beatbox House

See NYC's top beatboxers go head-to-head in preparation for the 2024 USA Beatbox Championships in Pittsburgh, PA. The Beatbox House's monthly battle arrives at Manhattan West on the heels of the music group's world tour with the US State Department's American Music Abroad program. Kenny Urban, Gene Shinozaki, Neil Meadows (aka NaPoM), Amit Bhowmick, and Chris Celiz make up The Beatbox House, a collective that refined their craft while living together in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn. From 2015-2018, they competed in Europe and won several international beatboxing championships, putting America back on the beatbox map, bringing it full circle from its roots in the Bronx!

ARTIST BIOS

The Beatbox House:

Beatboxing is a musical technique where the vocal tract is used to imitate percussion and create various sound effects. The origin of early mainstream ("old school") beatboxing began in New York, where the rising hip-hop culture of the 1970s and '80s gave a platform for artists to emulate drum machines, or "beat boxes," as accompaniment to singers and rappers. Since then, beatboxing has become more widespread in mainstream culture, a cappella singing groups, and even as a stand-alone art form.

HISTORY:

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Swissbeatbox:**
The largest YouTube channel for beatbox , organizers for the Grand Beatbox Battle.
- **USA Beatbox Championships:**
The premiere beatbox competition, which happens annually. The next edition is in November 2024 in Pittsburgh, PA.
- **Beatbox Battle:**
A combination of artistic expression and technical aural athleticism in which competitors go head-to-head in a two round vocal competition. They are then adjudicated by an esteemed judges panel and a winner is selected.
- **Grand Beatbox Battle:**
The largest global beatbox battle, having its next edition in Tokyo, Japan. Members of The Beatbox House have won titles in the solo and tag team categories. They are also selected to judge this competition year after year.