

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo: Carlos Avendano

Voguing Your Way to Yourself

by Kristi Yeung

An hour and a half of voguing transformed the Come As You Are: Sublime Movement Workshop attendees. At the start of class, we were still and silent, barely answering the instructor's questions: "what do you know about voguing?" and "what made you come to class today?" At the end of class, we were bouncing, clapping, and cheering as our peers volunteered to perform solos, taking what they had just learned and boldly making the moves entirely their own.

The workshop was an introductory [voguing](#) class hosted by the [Fabric Workshop and Museum \(FWM\)](#) in collaboration with [BalletX](#). [Stanley Glover](#), a BalletX dancer and former *So You Think You Can Dance* contestant, led the workshop, which blurred the lines between visual and performing art. In learning the [five elements of voguing](#)—hands, cat walk, duck walk, floor performance, and spins and dips—we explored texture and shape through our bodies.

Participants were directed to imagine our hands painting colors as we moved them in luxurious circles and waves or daintily tapped them against our bodies. We then twisted our torsos to maximize our curvature in cat walk and bounced on our heels in duck walk. While learning floor performance and dips, we faced the challenge of creating new lines with our backs on the floor and our toes in the air.

The Sublime Movement Workshop was one of many public programs sponsored by FWM as part of *Jacolby Satterwhite: Room for Living*. This ongoing exhibit is an entertaining mixed media showcase featuring videos, sculptures, and an imaginative virtual reality experience. Many of these works prominently reference voguing. In one piece, a sculpture of five women in exaggerated feminine poses appears below a screen showing the artist performing the well-known vogue dip.

Attending the Sublime Movement Workshop primed me to appreciate the dance styles displayed in Satterwhite's work. In the workshop,

Glover was smooth, majestic, and at times, delicate. In contrast, Satterwhite was angular, abrupt, and powerful. This difference enabled me to recognize Satterwhite's personal dance style as an extension of his bold visual aesthetic.

Glover emphasized individual expression and originality above all else while guiding us through voguing technique. Grounding the lesson in the history of voguing, he told us that the style grew out of Harlem ball culture in the 60s. [During a difficult and dangerous time in LGBTQ history](#), ballrooms provided an outlet for safe, honest expression. These values remain at the core of voguing today. Throughout class, Glover encouraged us to discover our own dancing personas. As he helped us loosen up, new personalities appeared, ranging from regal to sassy. Though the workshop was called "come as you are," I'd say that we were more ourselves at the end of class than at the beginning.

[The Jacolby Satterwhite: Room for Living](#) exhibit at the Fabric Workshop and Museum runs September 13-January 19.

[Come as You Are: Sublime Movement Workshop with BalletX Instructor Stanley Glover](#), Fabric Workshop and Museum and BalletX, BalletX Center for World Premiere Choreography, November 6.

By Kristi Yeung

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