FRÉDÉRIC NAUCZYCIEL

JULIE MENERET CONTEMPORARY ART

THE FIRE FLIES [BALTIMORE / PARIS]

APRIL 2 - MAY 18, 2014

JULIE MENERET CONTEMPORARY ART

ARTISTS EXHIBITIONS NEWS GALLERY



FRÉDÉRIC NAUCZYCIEL

THE FIRE FLIES [BALTIMORE / PARIS]

APRIL 2 - MAY 18

RSVP HERE FOR LIVE PERFORMANCES CO-PRESENTED WITH THE FRENCH-AMERICAN FESTIVAL OF PERFORMANCE AND IDEAS:

MAY 3 6PM(FULL) & 10PM MAY 4 7PM(FULL) & 10PM

MAY 5 6PM & 10PM

VIEW

The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2014



The Fire Flies (Solos/Portrait) From left, Diva Ivy, Honeysha Khan and Dale Blackheart at Julie Meneret Contemporary Art in a program from "Danse: A French-American Festival of Performance and Ideas."

A Merging of Movement Cultures and Subcultures

There is no chief curator, no unifying aesthetic and no central headquarters for Danse: A French-American Festival of Performance and Ideas. This citywide undertaking, led by the Cultural

SIOBHAN Burke

DANCE

Services of the French Embassy, is willfully, delightfully heterogeneous. There is, though, a com-

There is, though, a com mon objective running through the festival's three weeks of program-

ming at 13 institutions: not simply to import French dance to New York (we get that all the time), but to highlight collaboration between French and American artists.

Over the weekend, two such crosscultural projects, though both small in scale, gave the mind enough to feast on for weeks. Frédéric Nauczyciel's "The Fire Flies (Solos/Portraits)," at Julie Meneret Contemporary Art, is a multigenre installation (photography, video, live performance) inspired by voguing in Paris and Baltimore. A few blocks away at the Club at La MaMa, Edmond Russo and Shlomi Tuizer, both based in Dijon, France, performed a duet, "Embrace," incorporating the poetry of Christina Clark and the music of Oren Bloedow, both New Yorkers.

On Saturday, the Lower East Side's night life supplied an inadvertent soundtrack for "The Fire Flies": the thumping bass of the bar next door and a passer-by peering through the gallery window and shouting, "It's like a live version of 'Paris Is Burning,' right?"

At least one of the voguers in Mr. Nauczyciel's exhibition learned about

"Danse: A French-American Festival of Performance and Ideas" continues through May 18 at various New York locations; frenchculture.org. the dance form — a once underground, now global phenomenon born in Harlem — through that 1990 documentary. One of the evening's two dancers, Honeysha Khan, cites the film (and YouTube) as having piqued her interest in the style.

Voguing, with its exaggerated femininity, thwarts any straightforward use of gender pronouns. But at least in the program notes, Ms. Khan identified the brash, hypersexual persona in her "M. Against the World" as "she." (Her even wilder alter ego, Jamie LaBanji, evidently stayed home in Paris.)

The Parisian Mr. Nauczyciel started "The Fire Flies" as a photo project focusing on voguers in Baltimore. His striking portraits situate divinely decked-out dancers against dilapidated urban backdrops, acts of self-transformation juxtaposed with circumstances that are harder to change.

One of those subjects, Dale Black-

heart, was the night's more affecting soloist. In "Control — Unlimited Natural Tender," he melted through torquing, serpentine poses on a makeshift runway flanked by the audience. Strutting slowly past, he made extended, complicated eye contact, his gaze simultaneously admiring and admonishing.

In "Strange Fruit," choreographed by Andy Degroat (Mr. Nauczyciel's mentor), the languishing quality of Mr. Blackheart's violent gestures yielded a poignant paradox.

Yet there was something uncomfortably voyeuristic in all of this. You could spend a while unpacking why. The sterility of the tiny gallery? The unaddressed, historically loaded complexity of a white artist fascinated by the struggles of queer black performers?

If voguing is about assertions of self, "Embrace" (seen on Sunday, presented

in cooperation with the La MaMa Moves! Dance Festival) had more to do with two selves merging. Or were they trying to separate? The arc of the relationship between Mr. Russo and Mr. Tuizer — a superbly fluid, nimble duo — was not easy to trace. But that's what gives this work its quiet magnetism and sense of evolving flow.

Ms. Clark's poetry chronicled (sometimes too intrusively) what she called "the journey of these small bodies," as they found myriad ways to support and resist each other. The lyrics accompanying Mr. Bloedow's gruff melodies were descriptive, too ("arms encircling, encircling"). The pair donned and discarded disguises: glasses, gloves, golden sheets. At the end, side by side, they held a sheet in each hand. As they flapped their arms under dimming lights, they seemed to be taking flight, shaking off whatever had bound them.



undefined

Lby Ali Rosa-SalasMay 13 http://www.broadwayworld.com/article/BWW-Reviews-Voguing-Takes-Center-Stage-at-DANSE-20140513#.U3gnli-jn6m



The Fire Flies, presented at <u>Julia Meneret</u>
Contemporary Art as part of "DANSE: A FrenchAmerican Festival of Performance and Ideas" exists at the intersections of the Baltimore and Paris voguing scenes.

Choreographed by French photographer Frédéric Nauczyciel in collaboration with Baltimore ballroom icon Dale Blackheart and Parisian ballroom standouts Honeysha Khan and Diva Ivy, this suite of a solo, duet, and trio explores the diasporic reach and impact of voguing. For Nauczyciel, the outskirts of Paris and the city of Baltimore are kindred communities; he cites HBO's *The Wire* as the catalyst for this recent work and sees the art of voguing as "a new way to inhabit and transform the cit[ies]."

Jenni Livingston's 1990 documentary *Paris is Burning* was critical in propelling this Harlem-

founded cultural movement to the world stage. The role of television and film in dominant perceptions of the ballroom scene-and of marginalized communities in general, for that matter-is a concept that emerges through Nauczyciel's integration of video in *The Fire Flies*. In *Control-Unlimited Natural Tender*, a large projected video of Dale Blackheart staring into the camera is accompanied by a performance by Blackheart himself. He slowly walks up and down the center of gallery and looks every member of the audience in the eye. The holding of this gaze is a simple yet powerful gesture. Captivatingly stoic, Blackheart is intentional in every breath and shift of focus, so much so that some audience members chuckled or squirmed in their seats from the discomfort of being stared at.

In *M. Against the World (Floor performance)*, we witness an energetic solo by Honeysha Khan from multiple perspectives at once: live in the center of the gallery and from an aerial view projected on a wall. The aerial view projection anchors Khan as the central generative force. When she descends to the floor for a dip, we are met with her unflinching gaze as she stares into the camera above to catch her breath. It almost seems as if the audience is looking at surveillance footage in real time, and Khan is challenging judgment from all angles. Through the ritual of seeing and being seen, *The Fire Flies* engages the etiquette of voyeurism in both museum and

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ballroom culture.

Khan, Blackheart and Ivy give stunning performances that according to an audience member at the post-show talkbalk, "highlight the artfulness of voguing." This statement, though, reveals the issue that is in need of constant pushback. Voguing is not more artful or contemporary when presented in institutional art spaces. The ballroom scene has been at this for decades. The galleries are just now catching up.

Photo Credit: Frédéric Nauczyciel

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où est le cool?

par Géraldine Sarratia et Dafne Boggeri

sur ce pendentif à l'œil surréaliste

Basée à Londres et créée par l'illustratrice Kaye Blegvad, la marque Datter Industries propose à des prix abordables des bijoux imaginatifs et faits à la main, qui puisent leur inspiration tant dans le surréalisme que dans une culture visuelle plus pop et internet. datterindustries.com



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à toutes les pages de Garagisme

Fondé par le directeur artistique et photographe Gilles Uzan, le très beau Garagisme continue d'explorer en anglais les collisions entre voiture et pop culture. Au sommaire : un texte de Will Self sur la vitesse, un article sur la mort de Camus, une story sur les designers utopistes qui ont monté United Micro Kingdom, et des séries photo de CG Watkins, Osma Harvilahti, en sélection au Festival de Hyères. garagisme.com



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marie claire TRENDS, NEWSMAKERS, CONVERSATION STARTERS



mainsteam with her hit song Vogue. Now French artist Frédéric Nauczyciel explores an LGBT1 African-American community turning it into performance art

MC: Who do you represent in your images?

I work with those who steer clear of the light of sufero.





MC: Who are the Fire Flies?

The Fire Flies are the voguers of Baltimore. They are my metaphor for the flamboyance of their fast and furious performance when they battle. They change the city they live in by their secret existence.

MC: Explain the creative journey.

The first shoot was aimed at deconstructing the poses that go back to the covers of Vogue. These first photographs were studies before I took their poses to their back yards and neighbourhoods. Vogueing is vivid and contemporary, bringing together all its influences and bringing new behaviours to contemporary urban culture. It is flamboyant, savant, and baroque all at once. I convinced them to show their flamboyance and fierceness in the middle of the city that made them who they are. I wanted to gather all those layers in photographs that would look like academic portraits.

MC: Where can we see more of your work?

The series is a part of a larger project called The Fire Flies [Baltimore/Paris], which is shot like a documentary and will bring an understanding of a post-gender and post-racial way to inhabit the city.

APRIL 1, 2014, 6:30 PM

On View | A French Artist's Vision of Voguing

By ANN BINLOT

Frédéric Nauczyciel can't remember when he learned about voguing, the dance form characterized by the poses that emulate those in the pages of Vogue, or the first time he saw "Paris Is Burning," the iconic 1990 documentary on New York's ball dance culture that touched on the city's vogue scene. "It's like it's always been there for me," he says. But three years ago, contemporary voguers in two cities an ocean apart began to captivate Nauczyciel so much that they are now the subject of his first New York exhibition, "The Fire Flies (Baltimore / Paris)," which opens tomorrow at Julie Meneret Contemporary Art.

As the son of middle-class Jewish parents who grew up in the Paris suburbs, Nauczyciel had no direct connection to the genre. It was an interest in "Banjee Realness," the term used to describe the style of a homosexual African-American from the inner city who passes as a straight person — as well as in the gay character Omar from the HBO series "The Wire," who Nauczyciel felt embodied the term — that led to his fascination with Baltimore. In 2011, he had the opportunity to travel to the United States on a fellowship. "I'm saying to myself instead of going to New York," he explains, "or going to Atlanta or going to Los Angeles or Chicago, I will go to Baltimore and I will write a project where I will try to understand and find how Omar could only be invented in a city like Baltimore, and why Baltimore."

Nauczyciel planned to be in Charm City for only two months, but ended up staying more than twice as long after encountering a group of vogue dancers at Club Bunns. "It's performing the attitude of a man in the ghetto," he says. "I could recognize Omar in each of them." He immersed himself in their scene, photographing and filming them throughout the city.

Ironically, the voguers from Nauczyciel's native France weren't as welcoming, until the summer of 2012 when the Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val de Marne in Vitry-sur-Seine screened his footage and hosted a workshop featuring Baltimore voguers, including the legendary Marquis "Revlon" Clanton. "Suddenly all the little vogue scene of Paris came out," says Nauczyciel, who went on to explore the performative aspect of the dance last year with the help of the House of HMU, a conceptual voguing laboratory hosted by the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

"The Fire Flies (Baltimore / Paris)" consists of two sections: "It's All About Omar" and "Paris Brûle." The exhibition spans photography, video and performance, featuring poetic portraits of the Baltimore dancers striking poses with the city's rough exterior as the

backdrop, as well as "Solos," a piece co-written by the performers, and videos from Centre Pompidou. For Nauczyciel, the exhibition is an opportunity for the dance form to come home. "I'm very happy for the work to come back to the origins of voguing," he says.

"The Fire Flies (Baltimore / Paris)" will be on display at Julie Meneret Contemporary Art, 133 Orchard Street in New York City through May 18; juliemeneret.com.

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18 Questions for Ballroom Culture Chronicler Frédéric Nauczyciel

by Ashton Cooper 07/04/14 7:03 AM EDT



View Slideshow

Frédéric Nauczyciel in his studio, pictured above, is currently exhibiting "The Fire Flies" at Julie Meneret in New York.

(Courtesy of the artist)

Name: Frédéric Nauczyciel

Age: 45

Occupation: Artist City: Paris

Your new show at Julie Meneret Contemporary Art, "The Fire Flies [Baltimore / Paris]," looks at voguing, especially with the House of Revlon in Baltimore. Did your art come out of an interest in voguing or were you already an artist when you got into ballroom culture?

It's not about voguing; it's more with voguers. I'm more working with the people themselves. It all started when I met Marquis Revlon and Dale Blackheart in Baltimore. I was actually trying to go to the States and I went to Baltimore because of the Omar character from "The Wire." I was trying to find keys to understand why in France it is so difficult to talk about gender and minorities. So we began work in the studio with Marquis Revlon and Dale Blackheart and some others. It was important for me to bring them in a studio, for them to understand that I was not just doing a "Paris is Burning" documentary.

And then, I was doing all these little iPhone movies and suddenly I realized I could be doing something out of it. My first thing was to keep in mind not to film what seemed interesting and not to make things exotic. It was very important for me not to make all these voguing scenes and these people from Baltimore exotic. That was the first mark of respect. The second mark of respect was also not to document their lives but to create fictions together. I was telling them that we shouldn't give everything to everybody. Like, you see "Paris is Burning" and you think you know everything about voguing and I think that's not fair. If people really want to know what voguing is like in Baltimore they should come to Baltimore and go to the ghettos and have the guts to discover this culture.

Your new show also looks at voguers in Paris. In what ways is Paris ballroom culture different from Baltimore?

The first difference is that the Paris scene is very young. It's like a few years compared to the States, where it has existed since the '50s or the '60s. I'm still not working on voguing in Paris

and this is sometimes a misunderstanding that I try to avoid. I am trying to understand what the French culture could bring to voguing, because voguing has this quality of taking influences. When I arrived in Baltimore in May 2011, there was "Black Swan" with Natalie Portman on the screens. And all the ball was about "Black Swan." They take influences from everywhere. That is why I am trying to bring other influences into the voguing, especially coming to France.

Since France is so much about the court, so much about the Louis XIV, so much about center and periphery that I had this idea about dealing with Baroque music and French Baroque dance because the French Baroque dance is also an expression of the white power. Historically speaking, Baroque dance was a popular dance. It became more minimal, more savant. And it began to be at the court, but it comes from a very popular background. And even in the courts, people who were not from the court — they were dancers, could attend a Baroque ball if they were good enough. I think voguing since the '60s is codifying, getting more and more complicated, more and more codified and it's, for me, there is something very Baroque in it: all the outfits, the gender questions, the fact that femininity is endorsed by men. And through Baroque I also can work with the Paris voguers on the idea that they are not American, but that they are French.

Not only French but they are also French from the Caribbean. Very few of them are French-African, most of them are French-Caribbeans. This means a story that is very parallel to the African-American in the States because they are actually all French for a long time ago but still black and still not considered fully part of the politics and society of France. So I try to bring all this French-Caribbean culture mixing with the art of voguing.

This is your first solo show in New York? How does that feel?

I am super excited. It's crazy because everything began in New York for me. The American culture is really my childhood. You know, "New York, New York" the musical and "I want to be a part of it," blah blah blah, stuff like that. It is super important for me but I never realized that I would one day exhibit something in New York. Never occurred to me. And I have been working for 10 years with an American choreographer from the House of Modern Dance, he was very close to Robert Wilson. So Andy Degroat is really my mentor. I didn't study in art school. I learned everything I know working with Andy as an illustrator and personal assistant.

So going to New York was super important for me of course. And when I was working for Andy as an administrator I went to New York and I saw, in MoMA, the first film that MoMA acquired from Steve McQueen. It was such a huge breakthrough for me that three or four years later I dropped everything to begin work of my own. So Steve McQueen was the origin of it — it was in New York at MoMA. So coming to New York and having this show is super exciting for me.

What is working in Paris like?

Paris in the '80s was heaven on earth. It was not racist, it was post-gender, it was the place that every artist in the world would go to if they were suffering of anything in their own country. I don't know what happened after the '80s, but it became so conservative. That's why I am working on these issues because I need my work to be more and more political because Europe is getting very old — and we need to go further and trust youth and trust the future. That's why I am also working on these questions.

What's the last show that you saw?

The last show I saw was Pierre Huyghe, the French artist, at the Centre Pompidou, which was really a great show because it was maybe like 20 or 30 of his pieces that he brought together in some kind of an exhibition that is so non-conventional and has so many layers and levels of understandings that it was one of the most popular exhibitions in Paris in a long time. You could see children from age 5 to people of 75. You could see a lot of very different people, not only people comfortable with museums and the arts. And yet, his work is very conceptual and very minimal. For me it was beautiful to see that.

Describe a typical day in your life as an artist.

It changes all the time. It is super weird right now, because since beginning of the year I woke up every morning at exactly 7:50. Don't ask me why. I don't go to the workshop before what I call "the workshop before 11." So all the time before 11 is for me not to be lost in emails. I hate emails more and more. Morning is the best time when your mind is very clear. That is the moment when I watch a movie or get inspiration doing research, stuff like that. And then I work after 11. I am trying to resist production and emails and to get into the real work. I don't go out so much. I don't go much to openings. When I see a show, I don't go to an opening, because I really want to

see the show. I am going a lot to movies. My first inspiration is cinema because I was living in the suburbs. I couldn't go out and I was not in Paris so Saturday night when I was 13 or 14, it was movies and television. And my first window on art was really through cinema.

What is the best movie you've seen lately?

"12 Years a Slave." I think it is beautiful and beautifully done. The idea of showing the story of a man who was not a slave and became a slave for 12 years is super interesting because it can tell people that from one day to another you can lose your freedom. It's more about that.

What's the most indispensable item in your studio?

It's my window.

Do you collect anything?

The only thing that I collect as art is drawings, actually. But I don't collect, I'm not a collector at all. I am more into encounters with people than objects and having my stuff. It came from when I decided to be an artist, I had to give up on my flat and for two or three years, I did not have a flat. I learned how to be very light and not have anything with me. So when I came back to having a flat and having a studio, I decided I would not collect things.

What is your karaoke song?

"I Just Don't Know What to Do With Myself" by Dusty Springfield. It's a very good karaoke song.

What artwork would you like to own?

I would like to purchase the work of a Belgian artist called Arie Mandelbaum. It is absolutely beautiful. He is 75 years old and he is doing drawings and paintings. I was really astonished when I saw the first one. He deals a lot with questions of Shoah for example, which is very close to my own family history. And the next work I'm going to do also is how my family deals with the memory of the Shoah. So I really want to buy a piece of Arie Mandelbaum.

What's the first artwork you ever sold?

It was a photograph. It's very interesting because it was bought by a foundation in Paris but anonymously by someone I don't know. It is a photograph that I did in Istanbul. It is a tribute to Edward Hopper. It was the first silver chrome that I printed and it's been bought by the Cannes Foundation in 2005 and I don't know for whom.

What's the weirdest thing you ever saw happen in a museum or gallery?

I loved the performance of an Italian living in Paris — Alberto Sorbelli. He is doing a lot of performances and he was prostituting himself in front of the Louvre as an art piece. And he was proposing his services to the public of the museum. And it was in the same room as the "La Joconde," I think.

What's your favorite post-gallery watering hole or restaurant?

In Paris, what I like to do is go to Le Marais in the older, Jewish neighborhood — which is also the neighborhood for the galleries now — to have a falafel in the street. In spring and summer you sit on the stairs of a church and eat your sandwich and talk to people.

What's the last great book you read?

There are several of them, but of course the book by Georges Didi-Huberman, "The Survival of the Fireflies." I brought it with me when I went to Baltimore. It is actually exactly what I was doing in Baltimore with the voguers. Fireflies means the culture of resistance against the mainstream culture. It's the little faint light of fireflies against a tremendous light of politics, of fascism, of everything like that. So this book is very powerful for me. It led me to take all this subculture in the best way I could. It's talking also about dance and choreography. He's a philosopher of the image so he is always dealing with the question of image. So with this work and book, I opened up my practice from photography to video and dance. I consider dance to be creation of images also. It is living images. It is also about always being close to the body and to dance as a political instrument. So the book is very powerful of course.

What international art destination do you most want to visit?

There is one where I want to work, which is South Africa. I really want to work there because I met a lot of South African artists especially in France. The exchanges and the discussions I had

with them were so subtle, interesting, deep and funny. I really want to go there also because of the post-apartheid situation of South Africa. I am super interested in how we can deal with this because it is all about reconciliation. And to be honest, I am sometimes not very optimistic about possible reconciliation between Arabic and French, between African-Americans and whites, and stuff like that. I think we should learn from South Africa. I am very interested in working with teenagers in South Africa.

Who's your favorite living artist?

I told you already I guess. One is Steve McQueen and another one that was important for me from my generation also is Apichatpong Weerasethakul. He is the Thai movie director who is also a visual artist. I think Steve McQueen was the president of the jury at Cannes when Apichatpong Weerasethakul got the golden palm.

What are your hobbies?

I draw as a hobby and I play ${\rm Go-it}$'s a Japanese strategy game.

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BEHOLD | THE PHOTO BLOG | APRIL 15 2014 11:04 AM

Portraits of Baltimore's Voguers

By Jordan G. Teicher



Frederic Nauczyciel phosing its birth in the New York ballropm scene of the 1960s. Wooding has condend gw notable 2014 494/1050 medians earne cult mesmerizing portraits of Baltimore's Voguer and the 1990 documentary Paris Is Burning. But French artist Frédéric Nauczyciel's portraits of modern and the 1990 documentary Paris Is Burning.

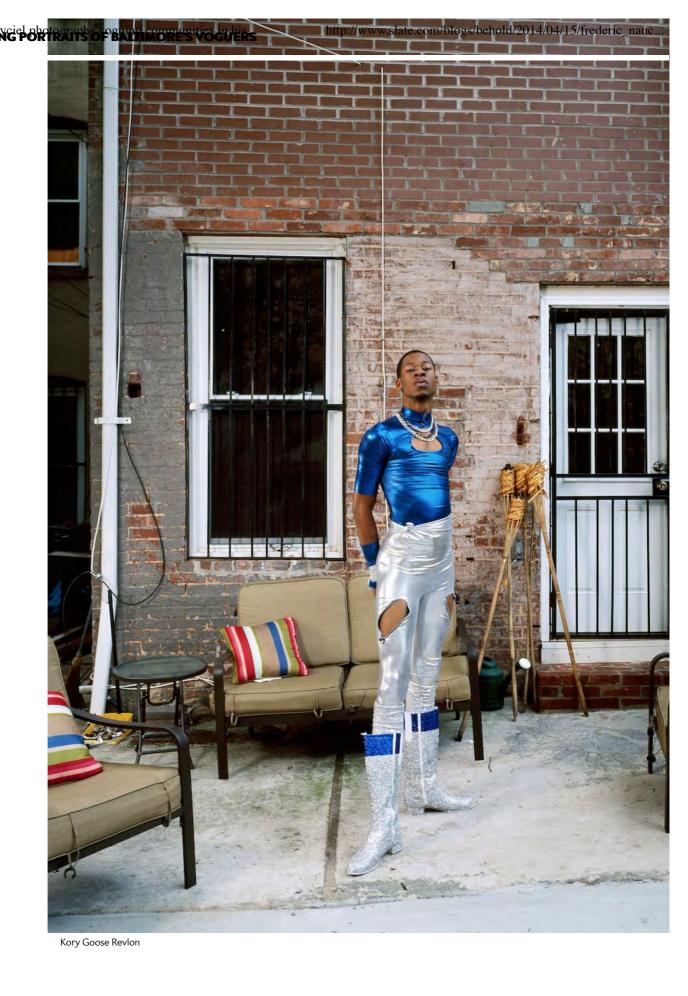
the ballroom scene's continued relevance as an underground culture, one that serves as a platform for self-expression for color in urban communities across the globe.

Nauczyciel was in Baltimore on a grant from the French government in 2011 when he stumbled across some voguers performent. He posted photos of the event to Facebook and quickly found himself flooded with new connections in the ballroom s had maybe 50 friends on Facebook. Suddenly I ended up having 200 friends—voguers from Baltimore and New York," he :

Nauczyciel stayed five months in the city, intrigued by the themes of race, gender, and performance that are embedded in "They invent themselves. They decide who they want to be. They can twist very easily from masculine to feminine, from ni "I think it's very brave, very courageous."









Justin Winston

To get to know his subjects, Nauczyciel took some test portraits of them in a studio at the Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute a From there, he made portraits with them in urban environments, a collaborative effort he said was a combination of "my reality." For the portraits, his subjects assumed their ballroom personas and, per Nauczyciel's request, posed in their own backyards. "Their first reaction was, 'Why don't you pick a nice area?' In their minds, photography is about making things 17/04/14 17:03 it was not the type of work I was doing, that I simply wanted to talk about their reality, which is beautiful from my point of



Mother Lisa Revlon

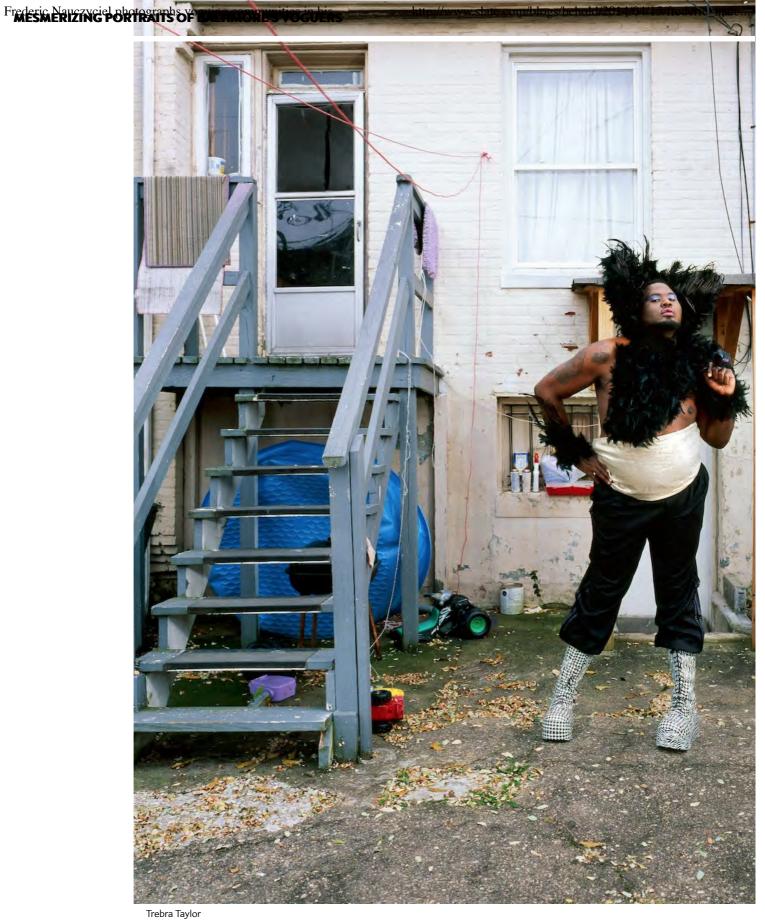


Leggo La'Beija

The title of his work, according to a release, refers to a metaphor used by Italian filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini to describe t "unique spirit of the people" by "bourgeois consumerism." "If you don't have artists in a country, if there's no space to cri invent something new, then there's no space in a country for people to invent themselves," Nauczyciel said. "If you don't where something different or new is possible, then the culture is dying."



Ezra Swan



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CULTURE » ART & DESIGN » THE FINE ART OF VOGUING



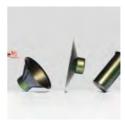
"Marquis Revlon (Jump)" by Frédéric Nauczyciel,

Courtesy Julie Meneret

Contemporary Art.



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The Fine Art of Voguing

French artist Frédéric Nauczyciel turns his lens on the ultimate posers.

April 4, 2014 12:19 PM | by Kat Herriman

"No two people can vogue the same way, because it's about expressing who you are on the inside," said veteran voguer Luna Khan on Tuesday night at a preview of French artist Frédéric Nauczyciel's first solo show, "The Fire Flies [Baltimore/Paris]." The photography exhibition, which is on view at Julie Meneret Contemporary Art until May 18th, focuses on individuals from Paris and Baltimore, where voguing—a ballroom sub-culture that gained popularity in the 1980s—is still part of a clandestine LBQT community. "At first many of them were confused as to why I wanted to shoot them in the street or in their backyards rather than in a more polished environment," says Nauczyciel. "But the story I wanted to share was their beauty standing out in the middle of the city."

In addition to the portraits, two videos provide a more in-depth look at the private rituals and styles of voguers like Marquis Revlon, the leader of Baltimore's House of Revlon. "Video is the only medium that could convey their energy and their vibrancy," explains Nauczyciel. "Video was the only way to really immerse the audience, so they could see voguing as not just a cultural phenomenon but as an art form."

Frédéric Nauczyciel's "The Fire Flies [Baltimore/Paris]" is on exhibition at Julie Meneret Contemporary Art until May 18th with special performances on May 3rd, 4th, and 5th.

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APR 22, 2014

French photographer Frédéric Nauczyciel's 'Fire Flies [Baltimore / Paris]' exhibit

Amanda Krotki 0 Comment photographer, voguers

Art, The Baltimore Sun

Baltimore, french

1 of 9 Photos

French photographer Frédéric Nauczyciel arrived on an artist's grant in Baltimore in 2011 eager to point his lens at the culture that inspired the gay stick-up character "Omar" from the famed HBO series "The Wire." Instead, he stumbled across queer ballroom voguers performing in a parking lot during Baltimore Pride, and decided he had found his muse.



"Trebra Taylor (Master of Ceremony)" by Frédéric Nauczyciel



"I was very curious because it was nothing like [what] I thought I knew about voguing," Nauczyciel said in an email to The Baltimore Sun. Since then, on repeat visits to the city, Nauczyciel, 45, has developed a rapport with the dancers, and in the process created a collection of portraits that capture them in their natural element — the gritty backyards and streets of Baltimore.

"I convinced them to show their flamboyant beauty and fierceness in the middle of the city that made them who they are," Nauczyciel said

Other images were captured in the Eubie Blake National Jazz Institute and Cultural Center in Mount Vernon, which lent Nauczyciel space to work, he said.

The portraits — which along with video, performance components and other photographs taken in Nauczyciel's native Paris make up a collection titled "The Fire Flies [Baltimore / Paris]" — are now on display through May 18 at the Julie Meneret Contemporary Art gallery in New York City.

Ballroom voguing evolved out of queer black and Latino communities in New York in the 1960s, according to the gallery, "morphing over time due to diverse influences from house, jazz, martial arts, ballet, and break dancing, as well as the dramatic, angular poses of models in Vogue magazine." The dance form and niche culture have seen some mainstream attention — in Madonna's song

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"Vogue" and the 1990 documentary "Paris is Burning," for example — but remain on the fringes of society.

The Baltimore-based portion of Nauczyciel's collection is called "It's all about Omar," in a nod to the HBO character who Nauczyciel said he sees glimpses of in all the voguers he worked with in Baltimore.

The "Fire Flies" name of the full collection is also based on how Nauczyciel sees the dancers, as a "poetical metaphor of the flamboyance of their fast and furious performance" when the Baltimore dancers compete in ballroom battles, he said. "They burn fast. They change the city they live in by their secret existence. It is very paradoxical. A gray area of understanding that makes the world real," he said.

Nauczyciel said he wanted to show the particular Baltimore reality of performers he has worked closely with for years, like Dale Blackheart and Marquis Revlon. "I wanted to gather all those layers in photographs that would look like academic portraits," he said.

The gallery is holding six live performances of voguers from Paris and Baltimore — including Baltimore's Blackheart. There are 6 and 10 p.m. performances on May 3, 4 and 5, though the 6 p.m. performances on May 3 and 4 are full. Space is limited, and those who would like to attend are asked to RSVP, with the names of the intended guests and the date and time of the show they intend to see, to info@juliemeneret.com, with "RSVP Nauczyciel's performances" in the subject line.—Kevin Rector

You can check out Nauczyciel's website here: http://seeyoutomorrow.free.fr/

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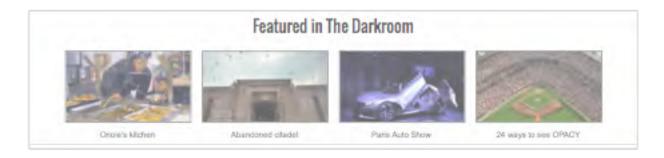
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Face Of The Day

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Frédéric Nauczyciel captures the voguers of Baltimore:

Since its birth in the New York ballroom scene of the 1960s, voguing has made a few notable entrées into mainstream

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culture, such as Madonna's song "Vogue" and the 1990 documentary *Paris Is Burning*. But French artist Frédéric Nauczyciel's portraits of modern voguers highlight the ballroom scene's continued relevance as an underground culture, one that serves as a platform for self-expression for queer people of color in urban communities across the globe. ...

Nauczyciel stayed five months in the city, intrigued by the themes of race, gender, and performance that are embedded in ballroom culture. "They invent themselves. They decide who they want to be. They can twist very easily from masculine to feminine, from nice to mean," he said. "I think it's very brave, very courageous."

See more of Nauczyciel's work here.

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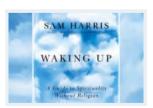
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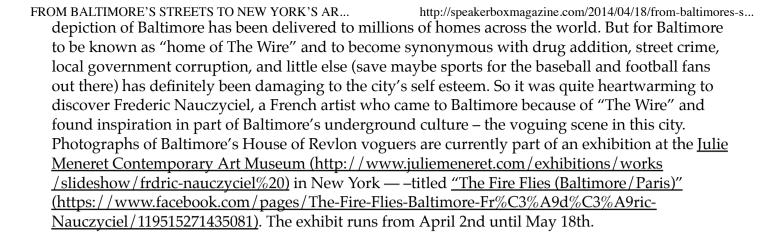
- Making It Louder -

FROM BALTIMORE'S STREETS TO NEW YORK'S ART WORLD – FRENCH PHOTOGRAPHER'S EXHIBITION FEATURES B-MORE VOGUERS

April 18, 2014 · by misstula · in Baltimore. ·

by Petula Caesar

Outsiders see the HBO television show "The Wire" as a riveting drama set in this city telling gritty and often violent tales of Baltimore's urban landscape. And thanks to the show's popularity this 17:44



For those unfamiliar with voguing, it has been a part of urban gay/queer nightlife culture in various forms since the late 1950's, but thanks to things like classic cult movie "Paris is Burning" and Madonna's 2006 hit song "Vogue" it has moved a bit more into the mainstream, and has even created its own stars like Willi Ninja.

Photo from Voguing and The House Ballroom Scene of New York City: 1989-92

Voguing was originally based upon creating combinations of very presentational steps, body movements, contortions, spins, twirls and poses similar to those fashion runway models might do. As voguing has developed, elements of street dancing, ballet, acrobatics, gymnastics, and even martial arts have been added. Now voguing is a full-fledged style of dance with signature moves, and not just a collection of interesting looking poses — but the ability to strike a devastating pose with a combination of dance skill, body movement and attitude is still crucial. Collectives of voguers get together to create crews called "houses" that tend to be named after fashion houses. Check out a quick demonstration below...

Nauczyciel admits in an article published in <u>www.blouinarinfo.com</u>

(http://www.blouinarinfo.com) that he first came to Baltimore "...because of the Omar character from "The Wire." I was actually trying to find keys to understand why in France it is so difficult to talk about gender and minorities." Nauczyciel came to Baltimore in 2011. He happened upon a group of voguers in the street, and he photographed them. When he posted his pics on social media, he discovered he had an entrée into the ballroom culture. He immersed himself in it for several months, photographing members of The House of Revlon, shooting them in a studio first and finally in their neighborhoods and homes. (I commend Nauczyciel for venturing into the parts of Baltimore you don't see in the tourist brochures, and I commend the House of Revlon members for being brave enough to allow Nauczyciel to capture their reality, which isn't always a pretty one by society's standards.) As Nauczyciel describes it in www.blouinarinfo.com (http://www.blouinarinfo.com), "...it was very important for me not to make all these voguing scenes and these people from Baltimore exotic. That was the first mark of respect. The second mark of respect was also not to document their lives but to create fictions together. I was telling them that we shouldn't give everything to everybody. Like, you see "Paris is Burning" and you think you know everything about voguing and I think that's not fair. If people really want to know what voguing is like in Baltimore they should come to Baltimore and go to the ghettos and have the guts to discover this culture."



(http://speakerboxmagazine.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/04-its all about omar without sanctuary ft ddm0.jpg)

"Without Sanctuary (Ft. Dom)" — It's all about Omar Series. Taken from <u>the gallery website</u> (http://www.juliemeneret.com/exhibitions/works/slideshow/frdric-nauczyciel).

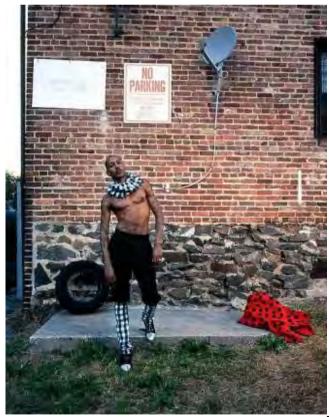
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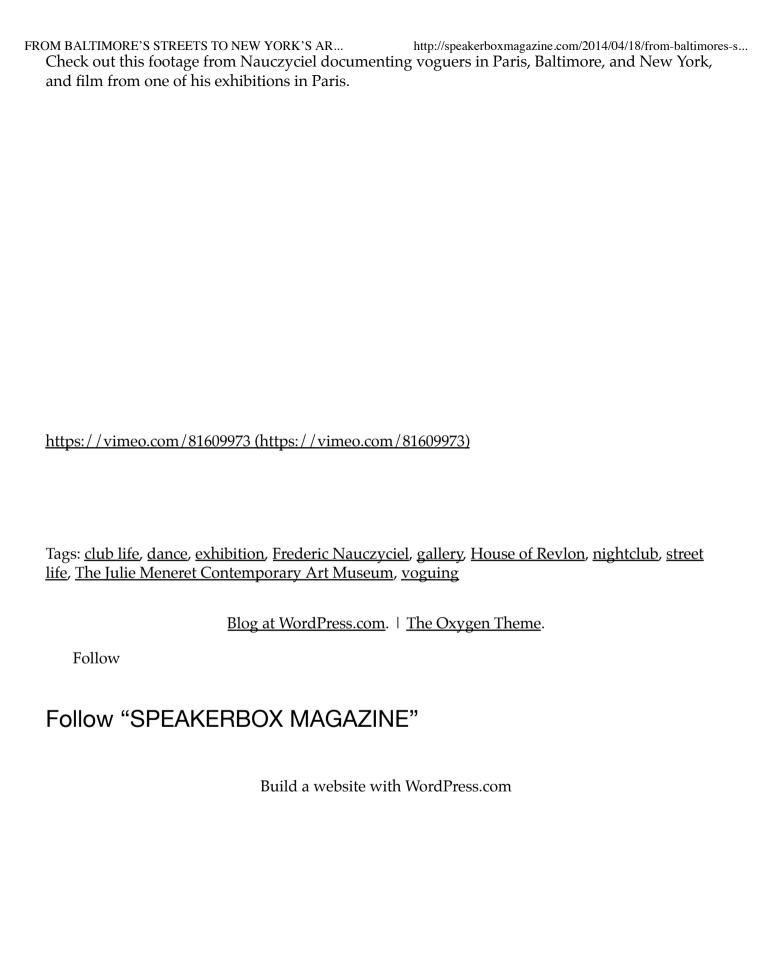
Dale Blackheart (after Nuinski). Taken from <u>the gallery website (http://www.juliemeneret.com/exhibitions/works/slideshow/frdric-nauczyciel).</u>



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/2014/04/03-firefly daryll_illuminati_all_americans0.jpg)

Daryll Illuminiati Taken from <u>the gallery website (http://www.juliemeneret.com/exhibitions/works/slideshow</u> | frdric-nauczyciel).





STRIKE A POSE

PHOTOS: Vintage Voguers Prove Baltimore Is Burning

Madonna may have brought voguing into the mainstream with her 1990 hit song *Vogue*, but the dance tradition had been around long before the Queen of Pop ever took notice. It dates all the way back to the 1960s when voguing first arose in ballrooms across Harlem. Over the decades it became a popular form of dance and self-expression used by queer people of color in urban communities.

French photographer Frédéric Nauczyciel's became fascinated by the voguers he met while on a trip to Baltimore in 2011. So he decided to do a photo series featuring them.

"They invent themselves. They decide who they want to be. They can twist very easily from masculine to feminine, from nice to mean," he told *Slate*. "I think it's very brave, very courageous."

Scroll down to see just a few of Nayczyciel's photographs, and check out more of his work at his website.



































BY: **GRAHAM GREMORE** APR 16, 2014 ON:

TAGGED: BALTIMORE, FRÉDÉRIC NAUCZYCIEL, PHOTOGRAPHY, VOGUE, VOGUING

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Truly think it is time to do a FULL ON BARRAGE angainst Shepard Smith,

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@TerrenM:

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The Fabulous Underground Voguers Of Baltimore and Paris

A PHOTOGRAPHER CAPTURES THE SUBCULTURE OF VOGUE DANCERS IN TWO DISPARATE CITIES.

"Strike a pose," Madonna commands in her 1990 hit single, "Vogue (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuJQSAiODql&feature=kp)." It was this David Fincher-directed video that brought voguing to the mainstream--but the dance had originated decades earlier, in the late 1960s, when the queer black and latino communities of Harlem's ballroom scene started imitating the dramatic poses of Vogue magazine models. And though it's been co-opted by many more pop stars since Madonna (Lady Gaga, Willow Smith), the voguing subculture today is alive and kicking.

In *The Fire Flies (Baltimore/Paris)*, a new solo show at New York's <u>Julie Meneret Gallery</u>, (http://www.juliemeneret.com/exhibitions/installation/slideshow/frdric-nauczyciel) Parisian photographer <u>Frederic Nauczyciel (http://seeyoutomorrow.free.fr/)</u> shines a light on the voguing communities of Baltimore and Paris ghettos. Clad in angel wings, leopard print, and iridescent spandex, these voguers strike modelesque poses, splayed hands framing faces, limbs as angled and defined as marionettes. "I was moved by the poetics of survival that I encountered, as much as the flamboyant freedom of voguing," Nauzyciel says (solosportraits-julie-meneret).

The dance's electrified glamour contrasts starkly with a backdrop of graffitied brick walls and cement lots, revealing how the theatrical dance offers a transcendent escape. For Nauzyciel's inner city subjects, who often have to hide their sexuality in their daily lives, voguing turns gender into a fantastical



performance. Unlike drag, which lends itself to cartoonishly feminine personas, voguers play at a wider range of characters, performing as thugs, business executives, schoolboys, butch queens, or angels (also known in the vogue-cabulary (http://balls.houseofenigma.com/vogcab_frames.html) as "cunts"). This physical language remixes influences as varied as Egyptian hieroglyphics, mime, martial arts, ballet, and break dancing into wild moves--like the death drop (http://www.youtube.com/ /watch?v=WDJHDdw-MOY), the duckwalk (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDfFkTGml68), and the hairpin (an acrobatic backbend in which a dancer's butt touches his head). Particularly stunt-happy voguers are called "devils."

Nauczyciel wasn't a homegrown voguer, but he developed an understandable fascination with it while exploring the outskirts of Paris, and started going to the Kiki House of LaBanji (voguing performances take place in "houses"). He wasn't interested in keeping an

developing close personal relationships with them. To accompany his photo series, he's staging a series of choreographed performances at the gallery with a number of the Baltimore dancers pictured, as well as showing an original film of the dancers.

As to why he's called the series *The Fire Flies*: The title alludes to James Baldwin's conception of African American sensuality in *The Fire Next Time--* and Nauczyciel sees these dancers as flickering sparks of light in the darkness of their surroundings, duckwalking and dipping their way through struggle.

The Fire Flies is on view at <u>Julie Meneret Contemporary</u>
Art (http://www.juliemeneret.com/exhibitions
/installation/slideshow/frdric-nauczyciel) from April 2 to
May 18.

[Photos by Julie Meneret Gallery]

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CAREY DUNNE
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"He wasn't interested in keeping an anthropologist's distance from his subjects, instead developing close personal relationships with them."

Actually, anthropologists aren't naturalists--they often are very close to the people they study. Participant-observation--one of the key methods of anthropology-necessarily involves forming bonds with people. This needs a correction!

10 時

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Brew Editors

April 17, 2014 at 11:18 am

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Gabrielle L'Bell Revlon, from "The Fire Flies [Baltimore / Paris]," at the Meneret gallery in New York City through May

Photo by: Frédéric Nauczyciel, with permission, Julie Meneret "Voguers highlight the ballroom scene's continued

Artist Frédéric Nauczyciel was in Baltimore in 2011 on a grant from the French government when he stumbled across some voguers performing in a parking lot.

That encounter turned into a months-long photographic project, a gallery showing in New York running now through May 18th and a piece in Slate this week.

The photos show the voguers not in the moody lighting of a club (the culture was born in the New York ballroom scene of the 1960s), but in their Baltimore backyards and neighborhoods in the bright light of day.

relevance as an underground culture, one that

serves as a platform for self-expression for queer people of color in urban communities across the globe," Jordan G. Teicher writes in Slate.

Nauczyciel told Teicher the title of the show comes from a metaphor used by Italian filmmaker Paolo Pasolini about the destruction of the "unique spirit of the people" by "bourgeois consumerism."

> "If you don't have artists in a country, if there's no space to

create, no place to invent something new, then there's no space in a country for people to invent themselves," Nauczyciel said.

"If you don't have grey areas where something different or new is possible, then the culture is dying."

"The Fire Flies [Baltimore / Paris]" is showing at Julie Meneret Contemporary Art (133 Orchard Street, New York, N.Y. 10002) through May 18. Hours: Wed-Sat 11-6, Sun 12-6. Gallery closed Friday through Sunday for Easter. 212-477-5269.

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Kory Goose Revlon. (Photo by Frédéric Nauczyciel, from "The Fire Flies" at Ju;lie Meneret Contemporary Art.)

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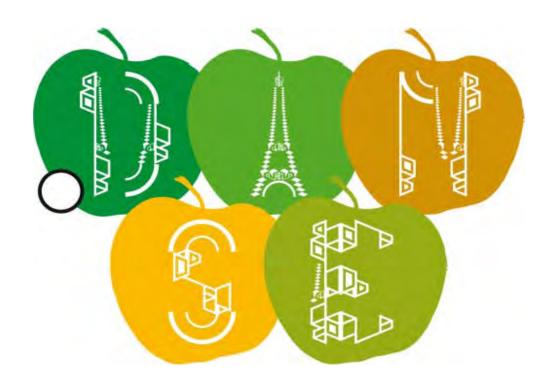
Dance

April 24-30, 2014.



Frédéric Nauczyciel

In "The Fire Flies [Baltimore/Paris]," a solo show of photography, video and performance, French artist Frédéric Nauczyciel immerses himself in voguing and ballroom culture. Along with an exhibition of his luminous photographs, three voguers—Dale Blackheart, from Baltimore; and Honeysha Khan and Diva Ivy, from Paris—bring their poses to life in the performance portion, titled *The Fire Flies [Solos/Portraits]*, which takes place May 3–5 as part of DANSE: A French-American Festival of Performances and Ideas. *Julie Meneret Contemporary Art Gallery, 133 Orchard St between Delancey and Rivington Sts (juliemeneret.com). Wed–Sat 11am–6pm, Sun noon–6pm. The exhibit runs through May 18; performances are at the gallery.*



DANSE: A FRENCH-AMERICAN FESTIVAL OF PERFORMANCE AND IDEAS

MAY 1-18, 2014

PRESS KIT

The New York Times Arts&Leisure

SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2014

Dance

A Choreographic Cross-Pollination

A festival celebrates a Franco-American bond.

By GIA KOURLAS

Sophie Claudel was living in Paris and working at the Pompidou Center when France Moves took over New York City. "I heard a lot about it," she said over coffee, referring to the 2001 dance festival of French choreography. Her eyes widened with curiosity. "I always thought, why shouldn't we try to do something?"

For Ms. Claudel, now the French Embassy's cultural attaché specializing in the visual and performing arts, France Moves, programmed by Yorgos Loukos, was clearly important. But she knew that another French-themed festival, 13 years later, would have to be different.

Danse: A French-American Festival of Performance and Ideas, which runs through May 18 at various venues, is organized by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy. Along with performances, there will be talks and two books published in conjunction with the series. Ms. Claudel is obsessed with the disparity between those who pay attention to visual art and those who focus on dance. She's hoping that the publications will leave an indelible mark.

"I wonder if one of the reasons is maybe also the fact that it's a matter of trace what is left after a festival," she said. "We know, because we are very much involved in dance, that there's an impact, but for a large audience, what is the result?'

With Danse, there is no single programmer, as when Mr. Loukos masterminded France Moves. (The company he directs, the Lyon Opera Ballet, is performing a work by Christian Rizzo Wednesday to Friday at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.)

"Yorgos, I love him," Ms. Claudel said. "He's a friend and a great guy. But it's also important that there's no artistic director coming from France. The level of the programmers here is so high. They don't need anyone. They know exactly what they are

Cultural Services organized research trips to Europe for New York programmers to become better acquainted with French artists, which is probably why it's impossible to nail down an aesthetic theme for Danse. An experienced generation of artists, including Mr. Rizzo, Emmanuelle Huynh and Alain Buffard are mixed in with younger choreographers like Maud



Revisiting a cultural exchange idea from 2001.



Sophie Claudel, above, helped organized Danse: A French-American Festival of Performance and Ideas. The festival will include, top left to right, Cédric Andrieux and Christophe Ives, and Marquis Revlon, right.

Le Pladec, the duo Cecilia Bengolea and François Chaignaud, and the collaborators Annie Vigier and Franck Apertet.

For the mysterious "Topologie," which is being produced by the Chocolate Factory in Long Island City, Ms. Vigier and Mr. Apertet question an artist's position in the world. In it, five New York dancers, including John Hoobyar and Rebecca Patek. move along different paths in that Queens neighborhood, where, in street clothes, they perform repetitive actions. Viewers will receive a map at the theater with a diagram to help find the performers.

Brian Rogers, the artistic director of the Chocolate Factory, met the artists two years ago when they invited a few people to a meeting at the Whitebox Art Center on the Lower East Side.

"It turned out that this meeting was really an art project," he said. "They made me sign a video release. I went to Paris twice after that and got to know them. I just had this strange instinct about them. They're French in this particular way where they're really secretive about their motivations - even to me. Normally that would make me run to the hills screaming, but for some reason I'm just really drawn

He laughed and added quickly, "Sometimes my instincts are very wrong.

The dance world has significantly changed since 2001. Its decentralization, for one, has been aided by international festivals, mainly in Europe, where a number of New York artists have immersed themselves, including Trajal Harrell, Maria Hassabi, DD Dorvillier and Miguel Gu-

"That also woke up the dance communi-



ty in France to be like, wow, there is also a lot going on in New York," said Cédric Andrieux, a former Merce Cunningham dancer now based in Lyon. At the moment, he is working, in France, with the American choreographer Daniel Linehan. As part of Danse, Mr. Andrieux will present a duet with Christophe Ives at La MaMa's Ellen Stewart Theater.

Younger dance artists from around the world have made crucial connections through danceWEB Europe, a scholarship program for contemporary dance based in Vienna. But that's not to imply that all choreographers of a certain age or intent are making the same sort of work. As Mr. Harrell explained, "The aesthetics now are

too diverse to say that there's one kind of movement that's grounding us all."

Starting in the 1970s, France was a major producer for American choreographers like Cunningham and Trisha Brown, That bond has continued with artists like Mr. Harrell, who presents his work in France and is the recipient of generous residencies even though he isn't based there.

"If I didn't have French co-producers and support, my work would be very, very different; so I am fully indebted to mama France," he said. "I still feel that the base for my work is New York. Maybe that will change. I also think we don't have to choose anymore. There's enough going back and forth and that's a reflection of the Internet and the mobile world we live in."

In New York, Lili Chopra's work as artistic director of the French Institute Alliance Française, where she is a curator of the annual fall Crossing the Line festival, has contributed to many cross-cultural exchanges. But essentially the relationships created between New York and French dance artists are more of an unofficial endeavor: person to person.

"Choreographers and dancers are not trying to pretend or say publicly, 'You know what? We work very much with the Americans,' or 'the Americans work very much with the French,' " Ms. Claudel said. "They don't care. What they're really trying to do is to develop their work in the best way possible and that means they talk to people who can give them something in terms of intellectual perception. I know that Emmanuelle Huynh loves the way Trajal talks about things, the way he sees the world. It's not something fake, it's something very deep."

Frédéric Nauczyciel

Liens Presse [Press links], NYC 2014 The Fire Flies, Baltimore/Paris

Exposition [Exhibition]
Julie Meneret Gallery, Avril et mai [April and May]

Performances

Dance: A French American Festival of Performances and Ideas Julie Meneret Gallery, 3/4/5 Mai [May 3/4/5]

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Luna Show, Youtube

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