

POSTURE

THE CREATIVE EXPLORATION OF IDENTITY



THE ORNAMENTATION ISSUE

FEATURING RASHAAD NEWSOME

SD \$20 / CAN \$28

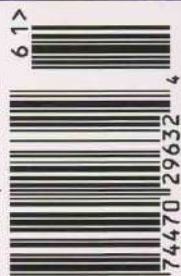


PHOTO CREDITS

Rashaad Newsome:
Skirt (worn as cloak):
MaryMe - JimmyPaul
Crown: King of Arms Crown
Jalabiya: Kings of Arms Jalabiya

Jamane Ebony:
Top: Whatever 21
Bottom: Whatever 21

Justin Monster LaBeija:
Jumper: Jahnkoy Maria
Kassandra:
Top: Jahnkoy Maria
Bottom: Whatever 21

Kia LaBeija:
Top: Whatever 21
Robe: Whatever 21
Bottom: Jahnkoy Maria
Hat: Coogi
Belt: Sext Pixels

LeGGO LaBeija:
Top: Whatever 21
Bottom: Jahnkoy Maria

Ventiko:
Pants: Telfar



honoring the winners of **THE KING OF ARMS BALL III**



TEXT: DARNELL MOORE • STYLIST: JEROME WILLIAMS • MAKEUP: RAISA DOMINQUE THOMAS
PHOTOGRAPHY: M. SHARKEY @MSHARKEYSTUDIO

“If voguing is popular it is because some black and/or Latina/o slayed the form in a club, on the streets, or on a stage. And that is the point of Newsome’s work.”

Rashaad Newsome’s third annual King of Arms Ball in 2015 could not have been staged at a more critical time in the U.S. This installment was curated amid collective demonstrations of black discontent — during a moment when the mattering of black people’s lives is offered as a declarative statement and not a hyperbolic question.

In many ways, Newsome’s King of the Arms Ball functions as a performative metaphor signifying the current movement for Black lives. It is queer — not because queer, trans and gender nonconforming people are visibly leading many contingents of the movement and are central figures in the Ball — but because both the movement and the runway are populated by people who seek to queer, or destabilize and fuck with, the status quo and redistribute material forms of power.

Some of the same movement leaders chanting “Whose streets? Our streets?” can also be found demanding that high-browed cultural producers — like Jennie Livingston, Madonna or Beyonce — acknowledge the creative genius of the black and brown ballroom community that brought voguing and other cultural expressions to mainstream acclaim. It was the contorting of their arms, the magical flips of their hands, the unearthly acts of their acrobatic falls to the ground, their fanciful catwalks, their lyrical commentating, their costumes, their bravery, their black and/or Latina/o cultural productions that have reshaped current forms of expressive and visual arts. If voguing is popular it is because some black and/or Latina/o slayed the form in a club, on the streets, or on a stage. And that is the point of Newsome’s work.

Newsome initially set out to “subversively teach art history to the ballroom scene community” through the artistic installation of the King of Arms Ball, but it seems his plan has been foiled, and gratefully so. Newsome’s installation was itself a lesson in the power of interrogation. The questions “whose museums?” and “whose art history?” are just as political and relevant as the question “whose streets?” The King of the Arms Ball was a response. Ballroom community members are cultural workers

who deserve more than cursory nods from capital rich cultural institutions. The ballroom community doesn’t need the parochial tutelage often found in art history. Their lives and expressive forms ought to matter enough to be centered as sites of critique and celebration based on their own merits. The King of Arms Ball achieves this aim by demonstrating the ballroom community as only a “subculture” because it is largely marginalized by the arts industry. In fact, it was a direct repudiation of the claim that out of the ballroom scene come inferior cultural productions.


“Ballroom community members are cultural workers who deserve more than cursory nods from capital rich cultural institutions.”

Culture is fashioned by artists. Artists’ works are political. There are no high or low cultures — or the destruction of such categories that position European white cultural expressions above those of the black and brown — without the crafty genius of the artist. And we need black artists too bold to be afraid, too queer to not deviate conventional lines, too black to not mark time with a touch of luminous black folk wonder. Newsome is a pioneering creative whose work makes visible the bodies of those who are used by the market for their expressive art even as they are plundered and denied credit for having created art in the first place.

This featured editorial showcases some of the winners of the most recent King of Arms Ball III that took place in Bushwick, Brooklyn in Fall 2015. Please note that not all of the winners were available for this feature.

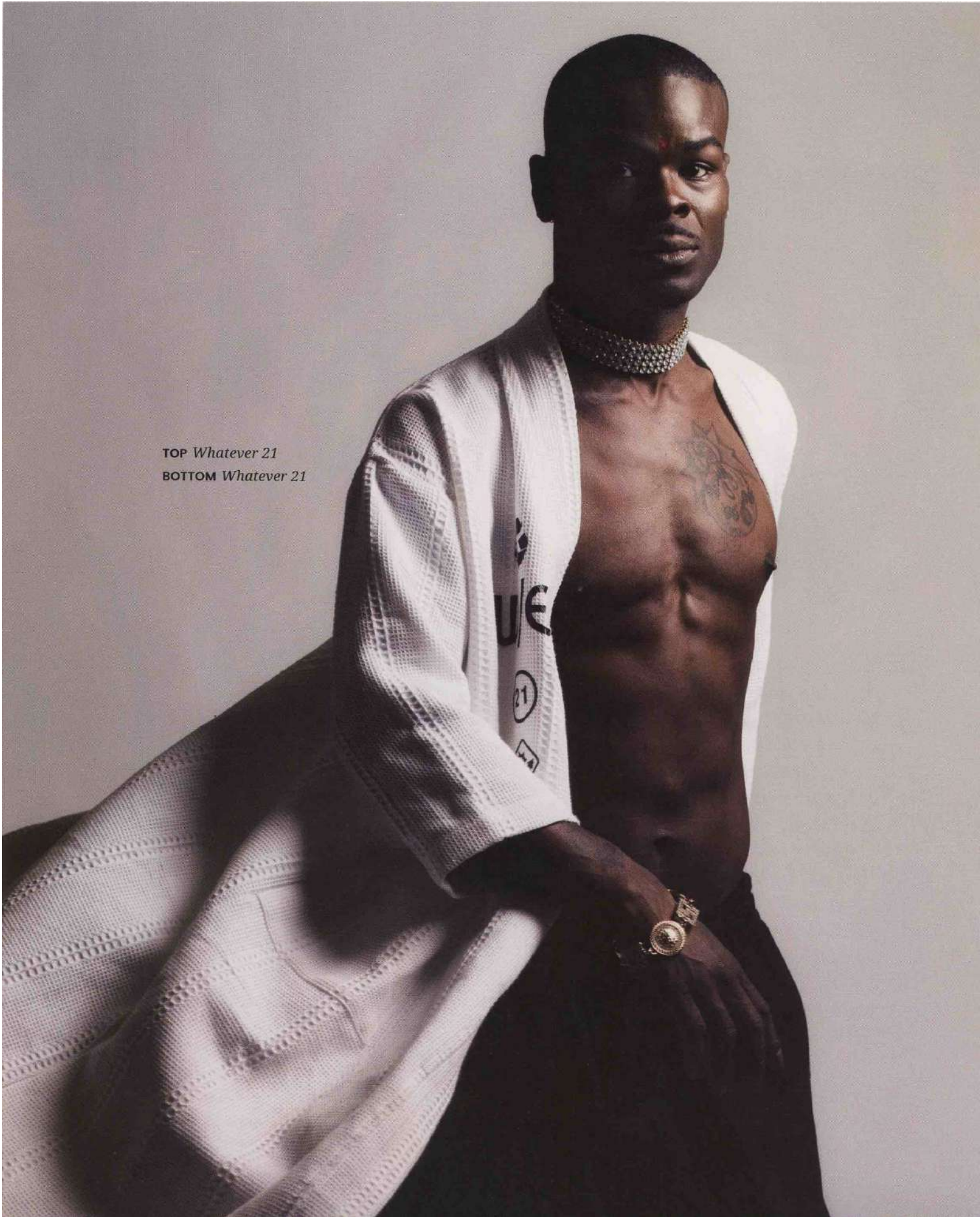
TOP *Whatever 21*
ROBE *Whatever 21*
BOTTOM *Jahnkoy Maria*
HAT *Coogi*
BELT *Sext Pixels*



A full-page photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a short-sleeved shirt with a bold, colorful geometric pattern in shades of yellow, blue, green, and red. She is also wearing black boots. She is captured in a dynamic pose, looking upwards and to the right, with her right hand holding a hairbrush to her hair. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

"I am Kia LaBeija of the Royal House of LaBeija NYC. Voguing is not just a dance, but a lifestyle. Voguing is my artistic practice, my community based work, my self expression and my story. Through my movement I have the ability to captivate people. I feel the best when I am on the floor. It is the only place where I feel free."

TOP *Whatever 21*
BOTTOM *Whatever 21*






"I am the Legendary Jamane Ebony of the Iconic house of Ebony NYC. My category is European Runway, among several others. I have been participating in the ballroom scene and walking runway for 19+ years. Runway to me is freedom of expression and design through CREATIVITY and ATTITUDE. IMPRESSYASELF."

VEST *Jahnkoy Maria*
JUMPER *Jahnkoy Maria*



A photograph of Justin Monster, a member of the LaBeija House in NYC. He is wearing a black and white patterned headwrap and a gold, intricate lace outfit. He is posing with his hands raised in a dramatic gesture, looking directly at the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

*"I am Justin Monster
LaBeija of the Royal
House of LaBeija
NYC. Voguing is
my expression of
individuality, it is not
just a dance form.
Voguing is how I freely
express myself as a
creative artist."*






"I am LeGGO LaBeija of the Royal House of LaBeija NYC. Vogue is what makes sense to me every time I hear a beat. It is what I made it and I made it CUNTTUHDOO. It's my common go-to place when a void is present. From the house of royal sunshine, my vogue shines bright."

TOP *Whatever 21*

BOTTOM *Jahnkoy Maria*



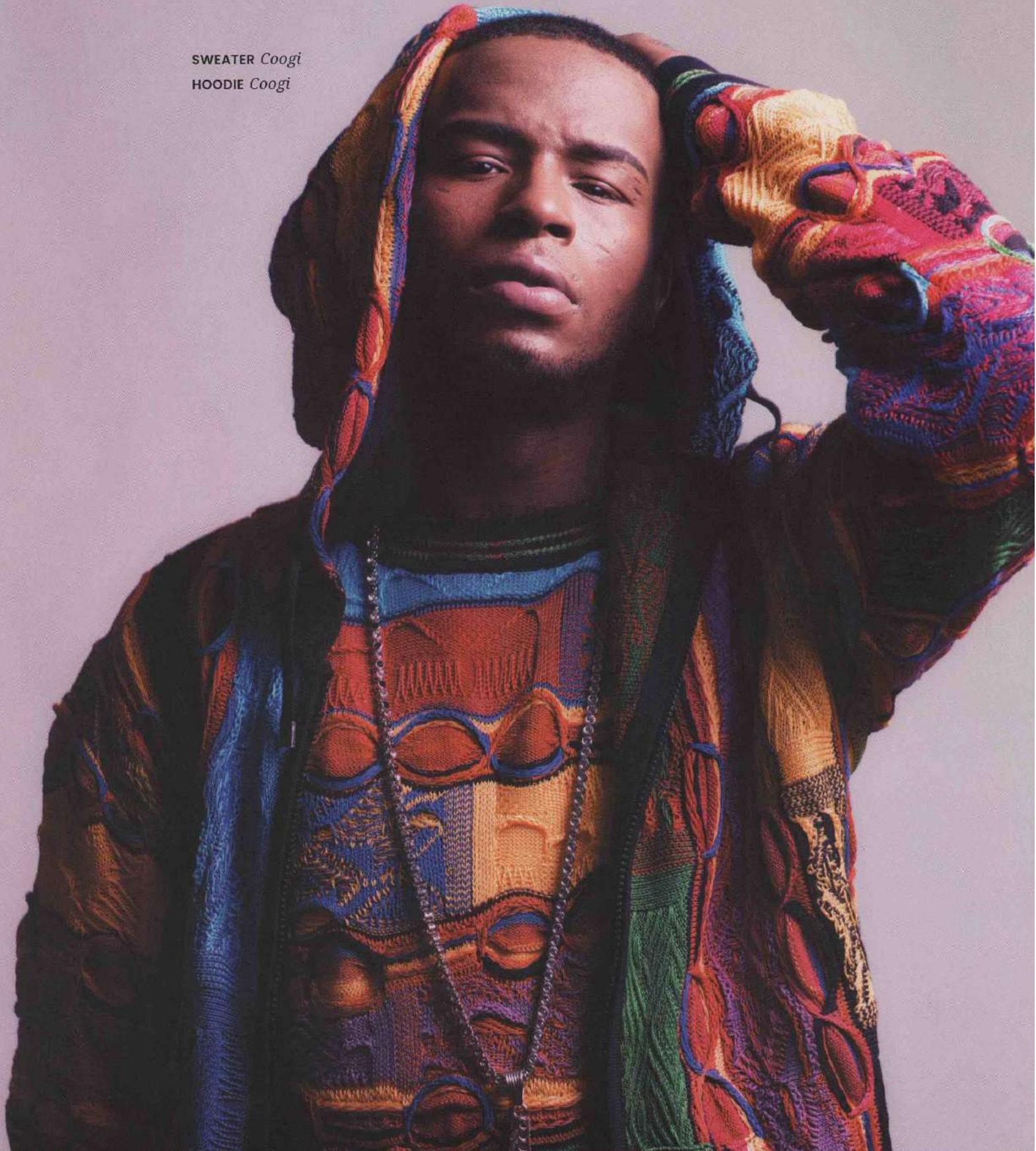
A full-page photograph of a woman with dark, messy hair and a blue-painted mustache. She is wearing a black jacket over a black top and a large, sparkly, silver sequined hat. A peacock is perched on her right shoulder, its wings spread. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

"I am Ventiko, a Brooklyn based photographic and performance artist. First introduced to vogue as a teenager, I became an admirer of the performers, culture, movement and defiance of expected gender roles. When Rashaad asked me to participate, I was quite nervous to be on the floor with such legends for fear of looking like a fool. But then he said I could bring Dexter (my pet peacock) and be myself, and I was on board!"

A full-page photograph of a man with short dark hair, looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a vibrant, multi-colored hoodie with a complex geometric and abstract pattern in shades of red, blue, yellow, green, and purple. Underneath, a t-shirt with a similar pattern is visible. He is also wearing a long, thin silver chain necklace with a small pendant. His arms are raised, and he appears to be adjusting the hood of his hoodie. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

*"I am the legendary
Kassandra from
the Iconic house
of Ebony. I've been
in the ballroom
scene for about ten
years now. I started
out voguing and
mastered it so well
that I began to want
to make music as a
commentator. It's
important for me
to make people feel
what I felt every time
I would vogue. I draw
inspiration from
my mentors in the
scene such as Kevin
Jz, Jack Mizrahi, and
Dashaun Evisu."*

SWEATER *Coogi*
HOODIE *Coogi*





NO

NAZI
POLICE

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER

NO
RACISM





"I am Pat Kearns, a Brooklyn based actor and writer. Voguing is important to me because of the opportunity it allows for self expression and freedom of movement. The creative agency it offers is a huge part of the life of our community. It's important to watch my friends up there. I'm standing in all that wonder. I bask in their glory. It brings us together. It's so generous in that way. I just can't do it."