

Education Resource Pack

Image: Sinead McBrien

# BETWIXT

Presented by Metro Arts & Pink Matter

**Metro Arts**

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# About Pink Matter

Pink Matter is a street dance collective committed to gender empowerment through music, dance and style. Led by Wanida Serce (Commonwealth Games; Special Olympics; Australia's Got Talent), the ultimate girl gang includes some of the most in demand performance artists and internationally renowned choreographers.

Between running community events and training the next generation of krumpers, voguers and hip-hoppers, Pink Matter has found their groove in bridging the worlds of theatre and street dance. Their debut work, *The Type*, was part of Brisbane Festival and premiered in a sellout season at Metro Arts in 2020.

Back in a rallying cry for the street-dancing scene, *Betwixt* was developed as part of Metro Arts' 'Company In Residence' program and premiered to sold-out audiences at Mad Dance Festival in June 2022.



Image: Jade Ellis

# OVERVIEW OF BETWIXT

## CURRENT SEASONS

Adelaide Fringe Season: 21 – 25 February 2023

Metro Arts Return Season: 1 – 4 March 2023

Additional dates throughout 2023 and 2024 to be confirmed

## PAST SEASONS

Metro Arts Premiere Season: Mad Dance Festival 8 - 11 June 2022

RUN TIME 60 mins; no interval.

## SYNOPSIS

Inspirative, energetic and thought provoking, Betwixt by Pink Matter highlights the stories of five top street dancers. From intricate choreography to Voguing, Krump, and Freestyle, Betwixt brings street dance into a new realm of theatre by collaborating movement with Spoken Word.

Age Recommended for audiences 15+

## Creatives

Director/Performer: Wanida Serce

Writer/Performer: Huda Fadlelmawla

Lighting Designer: Christine Felmingham

Performer: Amy Zhang

Performer: Joshua Taliani.

Performer: Jazi Othman.

Betwixt is produced by Metro Arts.

## WARNINGS

References to trauma and death.

Technical effects such as loud music and sound effects, bright lights, flashing, and haze.

# QUEENSLAND CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

## FOR DANCE AND DRAMA

### DRAMA

#### UNIT 1: Share

##### **Purpose, Context and Text**

To celebrate, to entertain, to educate, to document.

Dramatic, philosophical, sociological, historical, cultural, and political contexts.

Hybridity of storytelling through monologue, movement, and non-linear form.

##### **Inquiry Questions**

- How can we use drama to celebrate, document, empower and share understandings of the human experience?
- How can people's stories be shared through making and responding to drama as ensemble and audience?

##### **Dramatic Forms and Styles**

- Verbatim

Using monologue to deliver the performer's stories of her family, history, trauma, and healing.

##### **Elements of Drama**

- Symbol

The Elements (Earth, Air, Wind, Fire) feature to represent various parts of the performers' story, as well as the connection to self – "You [The Audience] are water, earth, wind and fire."

- Place and Space

As the performer moves through various stories, place and space are depicted through sound and lighting design, directorial choices, and the skills of the performer.

- Movement

Choreographed using a variety of styles of dance, locomotive, playful movement is also employed throughout the whole production to communicate meaning by using the whole body and performing various movements with varying levels of energy to convey symbol, tension, time, and place.

# DANCE

## UNIT 3: Moving Statements

## UNIT 4: Moving My Way

### Context and Purpose

Sociological, cultural, environmental, and personal contexts.

To celebrate, inform, and document.

### Inquiry Questions

How do purpose and context influence the manipulation of movement through selection of the elements of dance, structure and production elements to communicate meaning?

How does a choreographer's cultural background affect the communication of their viewpoint in dance?

Genres of dance included are Voguing, Freestyle, and Krump.

### Elements of Dance

- Space

Using level, size, shape, personal space, positive and negative space to explore the performer's stories.

- Time

Manipulation of tempo, stillness, beat, duration, and rhythmic pattern.

- Dynamic

With energy, weight and force to accent various movement qualities.

- Relationships

The five performers use connection to one another to create shape and place.

### Structure

Choreographic devices

- Repetition, Canon, Call and Response, Unison

### Form

- Narrative, Episodic
- Production Elements
  - Aural Elements: Spoken Word, SFX (water trickling, flames burning, wind, sounds of the elements)
  - Costumes: All performers have same outfit, including symbolic pictures of the elements.
  - Lighting states assist with the shifts between each of the elements.

### Themes

- Identity
- Inclusivity and Exclusivity
- Connections to cultural backgrounds
- Finding community
- Personal healing through storytelling and artistic expression.

# OVERVIEWS OF THE STYLES OF DANCE

## VOGUING

Voguing rose to prominence in the mid-1980s which evolved from the Harlem ballroom scene of the 1960s. This style was danced by African-American and Latinx gay and trans people which explored the notions of race, gender, and sexuality as fluid and intersecting.

There are three distinct styles of vogue: Old Way (pre-1990), New Way (post-1990) and Vogue Fem (circa 1995)

This style of highly presentational dance is seen in competitions which involve throwing “shade” or subtle insults directed at one another. Over the years, the dance evolved into the more intricate and acrobatic form that is now called “vogue”.



Image: Jade Ellis

## OLD WAY

Inspired by Egyptian hieroglyphs and fashion posing, old way vogue is a duel between two rivals. The dance is characterized by formation of lines, symmetry and precision.

## NEW WAY

Described as a modified form of mime involving incredible flexibility. New Way is characterised by rigid movement, including limb contortions, hand and wrist illusions, also known as "clicks" and "arms control."

## VOGUE FEM

Extremely exaggerated feminine movements influenced by ballet, jazz, and modern dance. Fem performances range from Dramatics (which emphasizes stunts, tricks, and speed) to Soft (which emphasizes a graceful, beautiful, and easy flow continuation between the five elements). There are currently five elements of Vogue Fem:

### **Duckwalk:**

Involves squatting on your heels and kicking your feet out as you move forward on the beat.

### **Catwalk:**

An exaggerated feminine walk where the legs are crossed over each other, the hips are thrust from side to side, and the hands are thrown forward in opposition to the legs.

### **Hands:**

In performance, the hands of the performer often told a story (demonstrated in the category Hand Performance/Arms Control). This is the component of performance used to throw shade. For example, miming an expression of horror at the way the opponent's face looks.

### **Floor Performance:**

This component demonstrates the competitors' sensuality as they roll, twist, and otherwise move on the ground in such a way as to capture the attention of the judges.

### **Spins and Dips:**

Can be described as a ground-level stunt. This can be executed by spiralling down to the floor and tucking one leg, while the other is extended and creating the illusion that one's head has touched the floor. This is to be executed on what is called the HA! (a loud metallic crash in the music or verbal "HA!" heard).



# KRUMP

A street dance characterised by energy, sharp movements, expressive character, and aggressive in presentation. It has sharpness and speed, Krump is a peaceful dance that expresses raw emotion in a powerful but non-violent way.

Krump music is an integral part of the dance as those that krump based their moves on the mood, rhythm, and tempo of the music. This style of music is almost always upbeat and extremely fast-paced.

Some refer to the acronym K.R.U.M.P (Kingdom Radically Uplifted Mighty Praise) which presents the dance as a faith-based artform. This style was popularized in the United States in the 1990s.

There are five basic moves in krumping: stomps, jabs, chest pops, jumps, and arm swings. Krumping is rarely choreographed; it is almost entirely improvised to a song and is danced most frequently in battles or sessions rather than on a stage. Krump is stylistically different from other hip-hop dance styles such as breaking and turfing.



# FREESTYLE

Freestyle is an inventive, creative dance style. It is unique artistic form of self-expression that allows the dancer to react to their feelings and the tone of the music in an organic way.

This style of dance is solely improvised movement by a dancer. Dancers do not plan or choreograph their motions beforehand. This style is intuitive and, in the moment, creating an original dance experience.



# INTERVIEW WITH WANIDA SERCE



## WHAT IS THE INSPIRATION FOR BETWIXT?

I wanted to bring together a cast of five street dancers and one spoken word artist to delve into stories of culture, dance and connection to others. It was important to me that these stories were from the People of Colour (POC) experience. The way I imagined this was from a different world in the in-between, the Betwixt. Somewhere that isn't exactly the past or the present or the future. Betwixt strips back the outer shells and reveals the layers of each artist.

## IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THE WORK ABOUT?

Betwixt is a world that lets the audience in on 5 different artists' true selves. Through live poetry by Huda we're able to delve into each artist's story and through movement we're able to allow the audience to visualise each concept. Each artist met and connected through street dance so that's how we choose to express and connect throughout the show.

## WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FIVE DANCERS & HOW LONG HAVE YOU DANCED TOGETHER?

The five of us are friends that connected through the dance industry at different times. Everyone has their own relationship with each other. Some are in the same 'fams' or 'house', some work together, train together but all of us have a special friendship with each other.

## WHY DO YOU USE DANCE AS YOUR PREFERRED STORYTELLING METHOD?

Dance has a very deep connection in each artist and culturally, movement is ingrained in all of us. Historically, dance has always been a way of storytelling and that's something we all carry. It's a passion each of us has a very strong pull towards. Dance is a way to express ourselves through the good and bad. It's a way to connect and share with other people.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK EVERY DANCER NEEDS TO SUCCEED?

Always be a student, open to learning, knowledgeable in the styles you specialise in, and versatility in those styles. Strength and fitness, embrace your differences and use that to your advantage, explore different ways to creatively express yourself, connect with other creatives, put yourself out there.

# BEFORE THE SHOW

ACTIVITY	WHAT TO DO	SKILLS
WARM UP / GROUP WORK		
Grandma's Footsteps	<p>One student is Grandma – this student should face a wall. The rest of the students start at one end of the room, trying to creep up on Grandma and tap her shoulder. At any moment, Grandma can turn around. If she sees anyone moving, she points to that person and they must return to the start. No one is allowed to move while she is watching them. Whoever manages to tap her on the shoulder becomes Grandma and the game starts again.</p> <p>To make it more challenging, put some hats, wigs, scarves, shoes, handbags, or other items that could be Grandma's costumes on the floor. Make it a rule that you have to put the hat on or an item of clothing before you tap Grandma on the shoulder.</p>	<p>Mime and Movement</p> <p>Concentration</p> <p>Group Dynamics</p>
Trust Falls	<p>Pick an open space with enough room for the group and a softer ground, such as grass or carpet over blacktop. Explain the exercise to your students. This exercise requires focus and strong communication. Demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faller: Feet together, legs stiff, arms folded across chest.</li> <li>Catcher: One leg back and straight, and one leg forward and bent, with both arms slightly bent in front of chest with palms facing outward.</li> </ul> <p>Form a circle (or multiple circles) of five students, standing shoulder to shoulder in the catcher ready position. Have one student in the centre in the faller ready position. The student in the centre allows their body to fall in any direction around the inside of the circle while the catchers gently support them.</p> <p>Verbal Cues Before Fall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faller says, "Spotter ready?"</li> <li>Catcher says "Ready."</li> <li>Faller says "Falling."</li> <li>Catcher says "Fall on."</li> </ol>	<p>Communication</p> <p>Trust</p>
WRITING PROMPTS / DISCUSSION		
What is your inner child?	<p>Get students to free write for 3 minutes answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is your "inner child?"</li> <li>If you could talk to your inner child, what would you say?</li> </ul>	<p>Pen</p> <p>Paper</p>
Earth, Air, Wind, Fire	<p>Choose one of the elements that you feel reflects the student's personality and answer the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which element reflects who you are?</li> <li>What part of your personality and physicality aligns with the element you chose?</li> <li>If you could adopt qualities of another element, which one would it be and why?</li> </ul>	<p>Pen</p> <p>Paper</p>

# AFTER THE SHOW

## FOR THE DRAMA STUDENTS

Choose one of the stories that you can recall from the performance:

1. Which elements of drama were manipulated to create dramatic action?
2. Describe the main performers' physicality, vocal choices, and energy. Were the performers' choices effective in conveying character and overall, dramatic meaning?
3. The definition for Betwixt: Between (two people or things), undecided, midway between two alternatives, neither here nor there.

Reflect on why you believe the performance is aptly named. Use examples from the performance as evidence. Write a monologue discussing a defining moment in your life. Consider the following:

- What element represents this moment in your life? How can you add technical/design elements to your monologue to layer in further meaning?
- What action/movement could be included to support your monologue to create further dramatic meaning?

## FOR THE DANCE STUDENTS

### PEN TO PAPER

1. Students are to free write for two minutes, writing anything that comes to mind.
2. Repeat this activity, this time using the elements (Earth, Air, Wind, Fire) as stimulus.
3. Repeat this activity, using a childhood memory as stimulus.
4. Use the results of this activity to create a concept for the work by writing down a few sentences on what the intended meaning of the work might be.

### MOOD

- Find a piece of music that suits the mood of the work.
- Find imagery using Pinterest or Google to create a mood board for the work.



## CONCEPT EXERCISES

Use the following exercises to help take the concepts created by students from the page and into their bodies.

**Alphabet** – Create every single letter of the alphabet using your body. Try to keep the movement flowing without stopping. If the alphabet is too long, use a word or a name.

**Nature** – Move how things in nature would move. Flowers, leaves and trees are a good place to start.

**Prop** – Ask students to pick a prop to use and work this into their choreography. Use the props as an extension of their bodies.

# REFERENCES & OTHER SOURCES OF INTEREST

## **Betwixt – Cambridge Dictionary:**

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/betwixt>

## **A Brief History of Voguing:**

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/brief-history-voguing>

## **Exploring the History of Voguing:**

<https://www.russh.com/exploring-the-history-of-voguing/>

## **Van Vogue Jam – 10s across the board:**

<https://www.vanvoguejam.com/ballroom-history>

## **‘Voguing’ – The Protest Dance (Madonna Didn’t Invent):**

<https://www.talentoabordo.com/en/art/voguing>

## **The Art of Krump – Steve Won:**

<http://www.steve-won.com/video/the-art-of-krump/>

## **Modern Dance – Krumping, Voguing, and Whacking:**

<https://learn.podium.school/modern-dance/krumping-voguing-whacking/>

## **What is Krump? – Dance Bibles:**

<https://dancebibles.com/what-is-krump/>

## **What is Freestyle Dance:**

<https://danceparent101.com/what-is-freestyle-in-dance/#:~:text=Freestyle%20dancing%20is%20complete%20improvisation,an%20inventive%2C%20creative%20dance%20style.>

## **Definition of Freestyle Dance:**

<https://studydance.me/lesson/freestyle-dance/>

# FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- Doors open 20 minutes before the performance
- Please brief your students about appropriate theatre etiquette before seeing the performance. Due to the nature of the theatre configuration the students can be seen and heard by both the performers and fellow audience members.
- With this in mind, students are asked **not** to use notebooks during the show as it distracts the artist and detracts from their experience.
- Photography and filming of the production is strictly prohibited due to copyright.
- Please ask your students to switch off their mobile phones inside the theatre. We also ask that all patrons refrain from taking food and drink into the theatre.
- Please do not bring school bags into the foyer and theatre.
- Audiences are encouraged to express their enthusiasm vocally throughout the performance. This is common for street dance performances. In addition to applause, audiences may wish to click fingers, raise their hands, whoop and cheer.
- Please arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the show starting. If you are running late please call Box Office on 07 3002 7100 and let them know.

# ABOUT THE VENUE

Metro Arts is developing the future of Australian contemporary arts practice, now.

Championing all contemporary art forms, the two core activities of the organisation are developing and co-presenting contemporary arts.

Within Metro Arts' multiple venues, there are artists taking risks, creating, developing, experimenting, and presenting ambitious contemporary art. In addition to the artistic program Metro Ars supports the wider artistic community with low cost short and long term venue hire for creative businesses, photo shoots, rehearsals, exhibitions, performances, auditions, forums, celebrations and more.

LOCATION: 97 Boundary Street, West End, QLD 4101.

