



A DANCEHALL QUEEN DOCUMENTARY

# BRUK OUT



## LOGLINE

*Bruk Out!* follows six outspoken and unique female dancers from around the globe as they overcome adversity to compete in the world's biggest Dancehall Queen competition. Their obsession with the vibrant underbelly of Jamaican dance leads the women to conquer body issues, poverty, domestic abuse and the struggles of being a single mother, all while keeping their eyes on winning the biggest prize in Dancehall.

## SPECIFICATIONS

Running Time: 69 minutes | Year of Release: 2017

Production Company: Video Disco | Country of Origin: USA

Shooting Locations: Jamaica, USA, Spain, Italy, Poland | Shooting Format: HD 1920 x 1080

Delivery Formats: DCP, Blu-Ray | Sales/Screening Inquiries: [info@video-disco.com](mailto:info@video-disco.com)

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Website: [brukoutmovie.com](http://brukoutmovie.com) | Facebook: [facebook.com/brukoutmovie](https://facebook.com/brukoutmovie)

Instagram: [@brukout\\_movie](https://instagram.com/@brukout_movie) | Twitter: [@BrukOutMovie](https://twitter.com/@BrukOutMovie)

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## SYNOPSIS

*Bruk Out!* looks deep inside the raw, energetic world of Jamaican Dancehall culture through the eyes of the powerful women at its heart – Dancehall Queens. Often criticized as lewd and aggressively sexual, these daring performers turned Jamaican street dance into a massive global phenomenon.

*Bruk Out!* follows six of the boldest and bravest Dancehall Queens from around the world—Japan, Italy, America, Poland, Spain, and of course, Jamaica—as they prepare to battle for the biggest trophy (and cash prize) in all of Dancehall. Combining explosive underground dance visuals with emotionally intimate vérité scenes, the film is a never-before-seen window into the life of the Dancehall Queen. Filmmaker Cori Wapnowska spent two years uncovering the struggles the Queens face but rarely show their audience: body issues, poverty, family problems, and domestic abuse.

The dancers bare their skin and their souls to dispel myths about this hyper-sexual dance, explaining why it brings them pure joy, sense of self, and the strength to overcome. With determination, humor and hope, the six resilient dancers converge at the biggest Dancehall Queen competition in the world, where some dreams come to an end, and one woman is crowned the Queen.



## FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

### CORI WAPNOWSKA, DIRECTOR

A Peabody Award-winner and former editor of HBO's *Last Week Tonight*, Cori has gone on to direct Refinery 29's new documentary series *What We Teach Girls*, and act as Supervising Story Producer on VICE's *Hamilton's Pharmacopeia*. She has edited dozens of TV shows and documentaries, including *One Direction - This is Us* (Sony), *Morgan Spurlock: Inside Man* (CNN), *The Whitest Kids U'Know* (IFC), and *The Night of Too Many Stars* (Comedy Central). Her passion is connecting people and cultures through documentary storytelling.

### JAY WILL, CO-PRODUCER

Jamaican-born Jay Will is regarded as the most sought-after Caribbean Director, bringing to the screen the saturated hues of the Jamaican experience. He has helmed numerous commercials, documentaries and music videos with artists like: Kanye West, Elephant Man, Shaggy, M.I.A, Mr. Vegas, Beenie Man, Sean Paul, Lil Ric, Tami Chynn, Lee Scratch Perry and many more. Named one of "The 20 Most Influential Persons in Reggae and Dancehall Music" in 2008 by The Jamaican Observer, Jay is always hustling to create films that depict true Caribbean lifestyles and cultures.

### JANET GINSBURG, CO-PRODUCER

Janet Ginsburg is an award-winning writer and producer. Among other shows, her work has appeared on *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart (Comedy Central) and *Morgan Spurlock: Inside Man* (CNN). She has also written and/or produced for NBC, BBC, Discovery, CNN and Comedy Central. She has also worked as a journalist, and is a former staff writer for the landmark satirical publication, *The Onion*.

### STACY FRANKEL, CO-PRODUCER

Stacy Frankel started her 15-year career as a Development Executive on hit TV shows *NY Ink* (TLC), *Swamp People* (History) and *Dual Survival* (Discovery Channel), and continued as an Associate Producer on many feature films including *Universal Soldier: A New Dimension* (Magnolia Pictures), *Enemies Closer* (Lionsgate) & *Getaway* (Warner Bros. Pictures). More recently, Stacy has returned to her documentary roots with her work on *Morgan Spurlock: Inside Man* (CNN), *American Takedown* (A&E) and *Dark Horse Nation* (History Channel). She is thrilled to be a part of the *Bruk Out!* team.







## FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

### DAVID HERR, EDITOR

David Herr has over 15 years experience working in television and film, primarily as a non-fiction visual editor. He has edited content for a wide variety of networks, including National Geographic, Viceland, Nickelodeon, ESPN, Sundance, and many more. He has also worked on a variety of independent film and video projects, and for brands including Nike and Google. Herr continues to further his passion of telling interesting stories through visual mediums, and expand his creative process by working with smart and talented individuals.

### JOSHUA MAYES, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY (USA/EUROPE)

Joshua Mayes is a New York City based director and director of photography with 20 years of experience in film and television. After studying film and television at Boston University, he started working as a camera operator on *The Real World*. Throughout his career, Josh has worked with some of the highest profile names in television, film and politics, and in diverse environments from large multi-national production companies to small non-profits. Josh is highly sought after for his intuitive ability to understand and connect with story, his artistry and vision, the passion he brings to every project.

### JEREMY ROGERS, DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY (JAMAICA)

With over 30 years in the Jamaican film industry, Jeremy currently works as a Director of Photography, Camera Operator and Director. Highly sought-out in the Caribbean community for his technical skill and professional demeanor, his work spans the mediums of feature films, documentaries, commercials, music videos, and television programs.



## Q & A WITH /LOVE DANCEHALL AND DIRECTOR CORI WAPNOWSKA

### Q: HOW DID YOU COME ACROSS THE DANCEHALL QUEEN STORY?

A: I live in a Caribbean neighborhood in Brooklyn, and every summer I see the dancing at the West Indies Day Parade. I got fascinated and started to do research on where the dances came from and the meaning behind them.

### Q: WHAT WAS IT THAT ATTRACTED YOU TO MAKING A DOCUMENTARY ABOUT GLOBAL DANCEHALL QUEENS?

A: I think people always assume that women dancing provocatively has one particular meaning, and the women often become objects. I wanted to give these women a voice to explain why they love dancehall, in hopes that they could bring a new perspective to the dance most people don't get to see. Mainly, the body positivity and community it cultivates, not just the daggering and the madness of it.

### Q: WHY DID YOU CALL THE FILM *BRUK OUT* (FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW WHAT BRUK OUT MEANS)?

A: To me, this movie is all about women finding their freedom. I used *Bruk Out!* - meaning to break free or get crazy on the dance floor - as a way to remind people that at the end of the day, these women need those moments of pure self-expression to find their freedom.

### Q: WAS THERE ANYTHING YOU WERE SURPRISED TO DISCOVER WHILE MAKING THE FILM?

A: I always assumed that there would be a lot of infighting among the queens, but this wasn't the case. The women are generally very supportive and loving with one another - it was more of a positive global community than I expected.

### Q: I FIND THAT DANCEHALL AS A GENRE, BUT ESPECIALLY DANCEHALL QUEEN, IS QUITE MISUNDERSTOOD. FROM WHAT YOU EXPERIENCED HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WHAT DANCEHALL QUEEN MEANS TO JAMAICANS? AND TO THE WOMEN FROM AROUND THE WORLD WHO PARTAKE IN THE COMPETITION AND THE CULTURE?







**A:** I think that even some women think of dancehall queen style as a “lesser” style of dance. That somehow the “male” dances are the priority or the “real” dancehall, and that dancehall queen style isn’t refined or respectable. But I think most Jamaicans respect Dancehall Queens because they are the women that represent power, individualism, and freedom. They see them as fashion icons, innovators, and general bad-asses. I think that’s why the title of DHQ is so appealing to women around the world. Every women wants to come out and say “this is me, I’m not afraid.” And for a few moments at those parties, Dancehall Queens transcend the drudgery of daily life and they’re truly empowered to “fuck up” the dance floor. They’re in control.

**Q: HOW DID YOU FIND WORKING WITHIN THE DANCEHALL COMMUNITY IN JAMAICA? YOU HAVE GOT INTERVIEWS WITH A LOT OF PROMINENT ARTISTS FROM THE DANCEHALL SCENE. WAS IT HARD TO GET ACCESS TO THESE DANCEHALL STARS?**

**A:** I was lucky enough to work with Jay Will, who was the driving force behind all of those insider connections. I would’ve been lost without the help of Jamaicans who have worked in this business for decades.

**Q: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WHAT DANCE MEANS TO DANCEHALL?**

**A:** I think the dancers and artists drive each other, because they both want to come together and celebrate their culture. They give each other respect, and that’s what cultivates and grows the community. I’m always surprised how intimate the culture is - through social media dancers can send new moves to artist, who can write off of them, and vice versa. It’s really raw and honest and immediate.



**Q: HOW DID YOU SELECT WHICH INTERNATIONAL DANCERS TO FOLLOW?**

**A:** I wanted to focus on the Jamaican dancers at the core of International Dancehall Queen, because I knew they were “the best” in terms of dancing. They also turned out to have a very typical Jamaican story, which I think is important for people to see. That is, they are just working towards helping their family have a better life, and dancehall is a way for them do that. The foreign women I chose because they had an interesting perspective on dancehall, and they are totally dedicated to being immersed in this scene. They’re also very helpful in making outsiders understand the scene, since they’re also coming in from the outside.

**Q: THE DANCERS LET YOU RIGHT INTO THEIR LIVES. SOME OF THE STORIES WERE VERY MOVING , HOW DID YOU APPROACH GOING INTO PERSONAL AND PRIVATE SPACE WITH THESE WOMEN?**

**A:** I wanted them to know that I respected their story, and that I wasn’t judging them. I told them I just wanted to show how they’re human, and complicated, and that they deserve to be more than objects. And also that telling their stories might help other women feel less alone, because they’ll be able to see that these powerful women also have pain in their lives.







## PRESS

“It is our hope that *Bruk Out!* does for dancehall what the film *Rize* did for krumping. We want the documentary to offer the uninitiated an opportunity to understand without being judgemental and not just see it as twerking or whatever. We also want to represent the ladies who enter this competition – give them a voice. It is also our hope that there can be some level of acceptance,” said McKenna [Wapnowska].”

**- JAMAICA OBSERVER**

“As seen in other documentaries highlighting dance-based subcultures (like 1990’s *Paris Is Burning* and 2005’s *Rize*), the competition narrative arc works well in terms of building up to a climax. But McKenna’s [Wapnowska’s] film, which was about 60 percent shot before its Kickstarter campaign launched on October 14, aims to tell the stories of its leading ladies outside of this competitive framework as well. As McKenna [Wapnowska] tells me, each queen has a different reason for committing herself to dancehall, ‘but the core of it is just total acceptance.’ ”

**- FLAVOR WIRE**

“In a statement by the filmmakers: Dancehall is happening now. It has incorporated itself so completely into pop culture, most of us don’t even realize it. Beyonce, Nicki Minaj, Rihanna, Miley Cyrus; their dance moves and music borrow from Dancehall roots. We can show you where it all comes from. We also want to explore how a dance borne from poverty and oppression has transformed into a vehicle of empowerment for the women who perform. Women around the world are often subjected to confusing double standards about their sexuality. Even in progressive nations, women are asked to straddle a fine line when it comes to their bodies – dress sexy, but not too sexy...be provocative but not aggressive. In the eyes of many, Dancehall Queens have crossed that line, and can be accused of objectifying themselves. But what we’ve found in making this movie is quite the opposite.”

**- HYPE LIFE MAGAZINE**



