

SUI GENERIS

MOTION REFLECTOR

Stephen Galloway has carved out a singular niche in the world of high fashion by coaching models (and the occasional rock legend) in the art of physical expression.

BY CHRISTOPHER ROSS



IN A DARK STUDIO inside New York's Chelsea Piers, model Edita Vilkeviciute, clad in lacy black lingerie, strikes a pose and aims a sultry look at the camera. "Chin up!" instructs photographer Daniel Jackson, who is shooting a holiday fashion campaign. She shifts her hips from side to side and drops her left shoulder. Out of the corner of her eye, she watches the edge of the shadows where the slinky, six-foot-four figure of choreographer Stephen Galloway, 47, mirrors her every move. When she brings one foot over the other, he brings one

foot over the other. When she leans forward, he leans forward. When her arm drifts languidly at her side, fingers pinching a small decorative gift box, his arm does exactly the same.

"More down here," Galloway tells her in an urbane drawl, accentuating the bend at the hips even more, his hand delicately grasping an invisible box. "Hold it like it's this really precious thing."

When Jackson signals that he's got the shot, Vilkeviciute turns to Galloway and giggles, sidling up next to him in her towering heels. With arms

around each other's shoulders, they walk off set like two performers who have just completed a successful pas de deux.

Galloway, a self-described "creative movement director" who has worked with top brands like Yves Saint Laurent and Gucci and photographers such as Juergen Teller and Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin, occupies a unique place in the fashion world. Drawing on two decades of experience as the principal dancer for Germany's Ballet Frankfurt, he imbues the physical tableaux of glossy ads and fashion editorials with a stylized language of movement—a turn of a wrist, a cocked head, an extended leg—that's equal parts Balanchine and voguing.

While he sometimes dictates specific actions, usually the process is subtler: Triangulating between photographer, model and himself, he creates a physical feedback loop that is informed by the brand's vision for the campaign. He shadows the

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—RAQUEL ZIMMERMANN

model, who in turn shadows him as he introduces new motions, amplifications and alterations—an operation that can sometimes seem to verge on reflexive telepathy. Once, while working with Christy Turlington for YSL, Galloway wanted her index finger to move down a few inches on a frame she was holding. They caught eyes and made a connection, and Turlington winked at him as her index finger dropped, just as he'd desired.

For non-fashion insiders, his vocation might seem to strain credibility—a job so nuanced and specific to the world of appearances that it seems like something dreamed up by a *Zoolander* character. Yet he is in constant demand from the top names in the business. "Stephen is a pioneer in his field," emails model Raquel Zimmermann. "He works like a magic mirror, seeing how the clothes will move best for me. He makes the process delightful."

Though he's best known for his unique dance-meets-fashion synthesis, Galloway has found countless applications for his theatrical and balletic expertise: He has designed iconic costumes for numerous ballet houses, done art direction for the discerning Issey Miyake, recorded two music albums and served as the choreographer on multiple Rolling Stones tours, which may make him the only man to quite literally have moves like Jagger.

Whether he's massaging Kate Moss's stance or blocking steps for a new performance, Galloway defines his mission as one of locating and elevating instances of true expression in motion. Tattooed on the inside of his left arm are the words *Stay Focused*. "You're trying to capture that magical moment of

elegance," he says. "When it's there, you know it. When they get it, you can feel it. And when you see it, you have to catch it. Because when that works, it sells everything—the hair, the makeup, the dream."

That aspirational dream was one he voraciously pursued as a child. Raised in Erie, Pennsylvania, by his mother, he was studying copies of *Vogue* by the sixth grade. At age 10 he discovered the arts at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center, a local cultural institution, and fell into dance mostly by accident, when a production needed boys with the strength to lift young female dancers. ("I was always the tallest," he says. "I was like, I'm built for this.") Seduced by the stage and the physicality of the medium, he thrived on the rigorous discipline required by classical ballet training and soaked in trips to Pittsburgh and Chicago to see the New York City Ballet troupe and Merce Cunningham shows.

By the time he was a teenager, Galloway was an accomplished dancer. With the help of a National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts grant, he traveled to Europe and auditioned at the Ballet Frankfurt, where he was accepted at the age of 17. Under the tutelage of the company's new director, William Forsythe, one of the most influential figures in modern ballet, Galloway became the principal dancer and developed the improvisational, flowing style that has become his trademark in a variety of fields.

"Even at a young age, the refinement of his épaulement—a complex set of coordinations that high-end ballet dancers have to know—was very sophisticated," says Forsythe. "It was clear that he was a star. He was daring and fearless. Anyone who saw him on stage could not deny it."

Van Lamsweerde and Matadin, who were also starting their careers in Germany at the time, took note of Galloway. The photographers invited him to join them on shoots to consult on the framing of the models' bodies. "We started out working with Stephen on developing a body language with the model Jessica Miller for a Calvin Klein ad campaign," van Lamsweerde says. "To this day, when other people work with [Miller], they say, 'Give me a Galloway.' We call him the third brain on shoots—he really understands what it takes to make a great fashion image, and he has an incredible ability to connect with whomever he meets."

Between his burgeoning career in the fashion world and his duties at the Ballet Frankfurt, Galloway had his hands full. But then came a call during rehearsal one day that he couldn't ignore: Would he be interested in coming to London to meet Mick Jagger? Recommended to the Rolling Stones by a friend, he was eventually invited to help choreograph steps for Jagger to perform along to the music. "I set up a whole series of movements which I felt were, essentially, him doing him: a vocabulary of movement which he could then use at any point he wanted," says Galloway. "I took what was already Mick and turned it up 500 percent." For "Bridges to Babylon," their first tour together in 1996, he and



LIVE-ACTION PLAY
Clockwise from above left: Dree Hemingway aims high for *French Vogue*, 2009; Mick Jagger on stage in 1998; Galloway and Gisele Bündchen.



BODY POSTURE
Galloway instructs many of the world's top models on set. Clockwise from above: Raquel Zimmermann strikes a pose for *French Vogue*, 2011; Daria Werbowy in *French Vogue*, 2009; an acrobatic 2009 Jean Paul Gaultier ad featuring Lara Stone; Zimmermann strides along a balcony for Nina Ricci, 2012.



Jagger holed up in a tiny dance studio in Amboise, France, freestyling as they listened to everything from Prince to the Egyptian singer Oum Kalsoum. "His enthusiasm was so infectious," Jagger emails. "I would always go out on stage and have fun when we were working together. We spent weeks trying out different moves. I hope some of his great style rubbed off on me."

This year, for the first time, Galloway opted not to go on tour with the Stones as he retrains his attention on other projects. He resides primarily in

Frankfurt, but like a good dancer, he doesn't keep his feet on the ground for long. Romantically unattached, he jet-sets between Los Angeles and New York for shoots. He is also working with his old mentor, William Forsythe, at the Boston Ballet and with a theater in São Paulo, and is helping to design productions for opera houses in Paris and Zurich. Galloway is hoping to break into film, too, where he sees an opening for the same kind of physical choreography that he's plied in fashion. "I feel like it's the beginning of my second act," he says. ●

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: REDEFERRS; COURTESY OF GISELE BÜNDCHEN; COURTESY OF INEZ VAN LAMSWERDE & VINOODH MATADIN (6)

PAUL WETHERELL/TRUNK ARCHIVE