



A Dramaturgical Casebook

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**PLAYHOUSE**  
**ON PARK** 

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# A Cozy History of the Ugly Christmas Sweater

By Marianna Cerini, CNN

Move over twinkling fir trees and wreaths, eggnog, stockings and the office secret Santa — there's a new kid in town. Over the last decade the ugly Christmas sweater has firmly embedded itself in yuletide culture.

You know the one. It's a woolly pullover, usually in different shades of red, white and green, often of questionable fabric, and with at least one Christmas-inspired motif on it — a snowman, tinsel, a reindeer or candy canes. Extra points if it features 3D pom-pom or jingle bells.

The garment has quickly become an essential part of the holidays, ubiquitous as Christmas lights and wrapping paper. It's obnoxious and tacky, but also fuzzy and kind of wholesome — the fashion equivalent of a Hallmark Christmas movie (with a healthy dose of tongue-in-cheek).

It took some time for the UCS to find its place in the pantheon of Christmas fundamentals, however.

Christmas-themed pullovers started making an appearance in the 1950s, a nod perhaps to the holiday's growing commercialization. Initially referred to as "Jingle Bell Sweaters," they weren't as garish as today's iterations, and found little popularity in the market, although some TV personalities — notably crooners Val Doonican and Andy Williams — really embraced the ugly side of the festive topper.



*Val Doonican performing in a festive sweater on an episode of his ABC series "The Val Doonican Show" in 1971.*

It wasn't until the 1980s that the item hit the mainstream. The shift came thanks to pop culture and comedies, with goofball dad characters like Chevy Chase's Clark Griswold in "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" turning the holiday sweater into an uncomely but endearing expression of cheer. Snowflake-emblazoned sweaters weren't considered cool, but they radiated yule, and were sported at office parties and on Christmas Day.

The resurgence didn't last long. In the 1990s the Christmas sweater faded in popularity; it was something only your unfashionable older relatives would ever think of wearing or gifting. By the turn of the new millennium, the item was widely considered an eyebrow-raising sartorial mishap.

Think of 2001's "Bridget Jones's Diary," in which Colin Firth's Mark Darcy turns to greet Bridget (Renée Zellweger) at a family party wearing an unattractive knitted garment featuring a giant red-nosed reindeer. Bridget is horrified. So were you, probably, if you watched it in the cinema. But you probably also smiled. Such is the heartwarming power of the UCS.

The early 2000s also saw new life breathed into this now holiday staple. According to the "Ugly Christmas Sweater Party Book: The Definitive Guide to Getting Your Ugly On," Christmas sweater parties started kicking off just around the time Bridget was recoiling at Darcy's outfit.

The first so themed get-together took place in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 2002, said Brian Miller, one of the book's authors and founder of online shop [UglyChristmasSweaterParty.com](http://UglyChristmasSweaterParty.com), in a phone interview. "It's hard to say what triggered the change in perspective, but I think that the moment someone wore the

garment in a humorous way, people started seeing the comic side of it, and thinking 'this thing at the back of the closet could be fun, instead of something awful that nobody wants'," he said.

The popularity of the ugly sweater snowballed from there. Over the following decade, the festive knit evolved into "a new holiday tradition," as Miller described it. "It became our generation's mistletoe," he added. "Which is pretty remarkable, when you think about it."

Fast-fashion giants like Topshop and high-end retailers like Nordstrom began filling their shelves and sites with gaudy designs each holiday season. Vintage stores and the Salvation Army capitalized on the trend by upping their stocks of fuzzy snowmen and dancing Santa pullovers. Even the fashion pack came around. In 2007, Stella McCartney released a polar bear-themed alpine sweater. Givenchy followed in 2010, and Dolce & Gabbana the following year.

2012 was a turning point for the ugly sweater craze. UK charity Save the Children launched Christmas Jumper Day, a fundraising event encouraging people to don their most cringeworthy sweaters. British newspaper The Telegraph described the item as "this



*Colin Firth sports a fine example of the ugly Christmas sweater in 2001 hit movie "Bridget Jones's Diary."*





*A festive look from Stella McCartney's Fall-Winter 2008 collection.*

season's must-have," while the New York Times reported on ugly Christmas sweater-themed runs, pub crawls and specialized e-tailers booming across the States. Concurrently, the knits began showing more tinsel, bells and wacky details, reaching peak kitsch.

Celebrities, from Taylor Swift to Kanye West embraced the trend, too. Late night talk show host Jimmy Fallon even started running a regular segment called "12 Days of Christmas Sweaters," which still airs today.

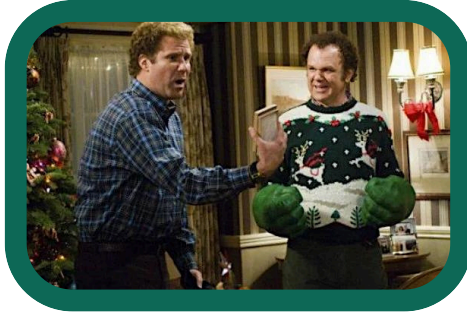
If anything, the rise of social media has only heightened the "It" status of the ugly sweater. Today, we compete to show off our Christmas-sweater love on Instagram, while anyone from mass retailer Target to fast food chain Red Lobster (whose UCS features a pocket to keep food warm), and more fashion houses offer their own versions of the garment.

"When I attended my first Ugly Sweater Party in the early 2000s, I would have never anticipated the garment would take off like this," Miller said. "Although it's easy to see why: ugly knits can be worn by anyone — from my daughter at her school's ugly sweater contest to office workers at their end of year party. They're democratic. And they're a lot of fun. Christmas can be quite stressful — wearing something ridiculous can help take the pressure off."



*Chevy Chase in "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation."*

# More Famous Xmas Sweaters!



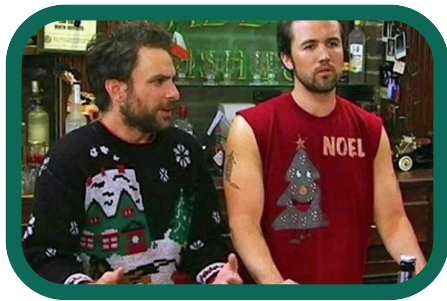
*Stepbrothers*



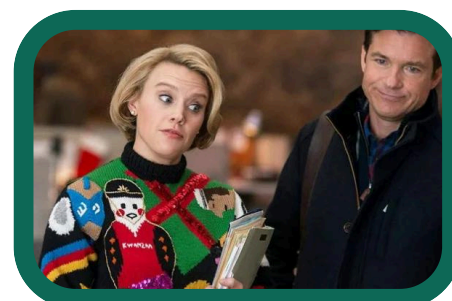
*The Santa Claus 3*



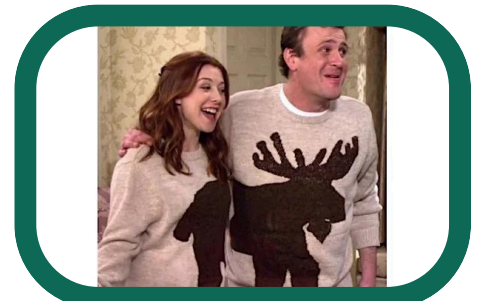
*Community*



*It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*



*Office Christmas Party*



*How I Met Your Mother*



*The Muppets*



# Striking a 'Pose': A Brief History of Ball Culture

By Lester Fabian Brathwaite



For decades, ballroom, ball or house culture has been a way for queer blacks and Latinos to live their best lives – that is, to figure out how to respond to a society that devalued their lives and attempted to erase their presence. Through elaborate performances incorporating and commenting on race, class and gender, the ball community has historically reflected the American Dream and one’s exclusion from it.

With their groundbreaking musical drama *Pose*, FX and Ryan Murphy attempt to explore what life was like for gay, trans, and gender non-conforming individuals in New York’s ballroom community in the mid-1980s, before the culture crossed over into the mainstream, as facilitated and appropriated by, among others, Madonna’s “Vogue” and Jennie Livingston’s *Paris Is Burning*.

Between “Vogue” and *Pose*, RuPaul’s *Drag Race* has managed to fill the generational gap, bringing the ballroom to television’s main stage, and piling up ratings and awards in the process. What emerged from, in the words of Langston Hughes, the “strangest and gaudiest of all Harlem spectacles in the ’20s” is no longer a reflection of the ever-declining American Dream, but rather a more fabulous alternative to it.

But how does everyone and their grandmother know what throwing shade is? How come little white girls in Europe are voguing the house down? And how did a show starring predominantly black and brown queer and trans people become one of the most anticipated television events of the year? Because at a time when the rights and freedoms of queer people of color are increasingly at risk, the history of ball and house culture is more vital than ever.

### **“A Keeness for Blond Wigs”**

The Hamilton Lodge No. 710, a club for well-to-do African-Americans, started throwing a charity masquerade gala, the Annual Odd Fellows Ball, around 1867–69. Featuring men in female drag and women in male drag, the event was later known as the “Faggots Ball” or the “Fairies Ball.” Prizes would be given out for most beautiful gown and “most perfect feminine body displayed by an impersonator.”

Though held in Harlem, often at the Rockland Palace, the ball attracted people from all over the country. An 1886 article in the black newspaper *The New York Freeman*, later known as the *New York Age*, called it “the event of the season.” The 1929 ball reportedly had to turn away some 2,000 would-be spectators and the 1936 ball had 8,000 attendees.

Although the Hamilton Lodge was a “colored organization, there were many white people present and they danced with and among the colored people,” wrote the *New York Age* in 1926. The paper went on to describe the “fairies” and “Bohemians from the Greenwich Village” who “took the occasion to mask as women for the affair....in their gorgeous evening gowns, wigs and powdered faces [they] were hard to distinguish from many of the women.” In a sign of every time, a 1932 article from *The Afro-American* noted that “our members of the third sex are showing a keenness for blond wigs.”

A 1927 *New York Age* article describes the judging process and a “grand march” which led to “several eliminations” and six prizes being awarded, adding “the police did not find it necessary to raid.” The 1938 soiree wasn’t so lucky, as a *New York Age* headline yelled: “Fifteen Arrested By Police as ‘Fairies’ Turn ‘Em On.” They were charged with “offering to commit lewd acts.”

Though members of the Lodge sought “a racially and economically diverse audience,” and lowered the price of admission so black Harlem residents could attend, the balls still exploited racial and class divisions. Langston Hughes, in his autobiography *The Big Sea*, calls the ball the “strangest and gaudiest of Harlem spectacles,” and describes how the city’s “intelligentsia and social leaders” would “look down from above at the queerly assorted throng on the dancefloor, males in flowing gowns and feathered headdresses and females in tuxedos [sic] and box-back suits.”

George Chauncey calls this the codification of “the differences between the public styles of middle-class and working-class gay men” in his book, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World*.





Nylon chiffon stole, metallic, curve-hugging gown and matching handbag made this "matron" a big hit at New York ball.

“Middle-class men passing as straight sat in the balcony with other members of Harlem’s social elite looking down on the spectacle of working men in drag.”

Black queens were expected to whiten their faces if they expected to win prizes, as is implied in the 1968 documentary, *The Queen*, by Frank Simon, which follows the 1967 All-American Camp Beauty Contest. In its most famous scene, Crystal LaBeija accuses the contest of being rigged by Flawless Sabrina, who serves as the contest emcee and the doc’s narrator, in favor of her “protégé” Harlow.

“It was our goal then to look like white women,” Pepper LaBeija told Michael Cunningham. “They

used to tell me, ‘You have negroid features,’ and I’d say, ‘That’s all right, I have white eyes.’ That’s how it was back then.”

## **A House Is a Home**

Due to increasing racial tension, both in the ball community and in America as a whole, black queens began seeking out their own spaces. Marcel Christian (LaBeija) is credited with staging the first black drag ball in 1962. This splintering of the community led to the formation of “houses.”

The House of LaBeija may have been the very first house, founded in either 1970 or 1972, though accounts differ. As legend has it, a Harlem drag queen named Lottie asked Crystal LaBeija to co-promote a ball. Lottie convinced Crystal, always a stickler for self-promotion, to do the ball by suggesting she start her own group, the House of LaBeija, wherein Crystal would be the “Mother.” The house then became a surrogate family for young queer black and Latino kids, who were often estranged from their biological families, living on the street, turning tricks, or otherwise struggling to get by.

Soon, other houses followed: the House of Corey, the House of Dior, the House of Wong, the House of Dupree, the House of Xtravaganza, etc. The founding years of these houses vary by source, but the majority sprung up throughout the ’70s and ’80s. The houses, in an attempt to outdo one another, would throw their own balls. Paris Dupree, Mother of the House of Dupree, threw the first Paris Is Burning ball around 1981. This, according to Kevin Omni, Mother of the House of Omni, was the first time the categories took precedence at the balls.

There had always been categories – “most perfect feminine body displayed by an impersonator” is basically just “Cheesecake” today – but then they really started to take on nuance in the early 1980s.



“So there was a category called butch realness and another called models effect and another called face,” Omni explained in [an article](#) by Tim Lawrence. “Then we created all these other categories, like executive, town and country, ethnic, and they continued to develop through the eighties.”

These categories measured “realness,” the best approximation of an archetype, which in itself was a reflection of society and a world to which they couldn’t gain entry. As Dorian Corey, Mother of the House of Corey, observes in Livingston’s *Paris Is Burning*:

“In real life you can’t get a job as an executive unless you have the educational background and the opportunity. Now, the fact that you are not an executive is merely because of the social standing of life. Black people have a hard time getting anywhere and those that do are usually straight. In a ballroom you can be anything you want. You’re not really an executive but you’re looking like an executive. You’re showing the straight world that I can be an executive if I had the opportunity because can look like one, and that is like a fulfillment.”

### **“What Are You Looking At?”**

Voguing was a nonviolent way of fighting during the balls, and is generally divided into three phases. Old Way emerged in the 1960s and was basically posing, emulating movements from the fashion magazine from which the dance takes its name. New Way, developed in the 1980s and was more dynamic, acrobatic, and athletic, often involving contortions and martial arts influences – it is perhaps best exemplified by Willi Ninja, known as the Grandfather of Vogue, whose House of Ninja has become synonymous with voguing; the third and most recent form, developed in the mid-90s, is Vogue Fem, which involves hyper-effeminate posturing along with intricate hand and arm movements and dips, often known as deathdrops, The evolution of voguing also coincided with the shifting aesthetics of ballroom culture, away from pageantry and movie stars to high fashion.

The underground scene in Harlem began finding its way to the mainstream in the late-1980s, when the action of Pose takes place. In 1987, fashion designer Patricia Field established the House of Field, the first white downtown house to walk the uptown balls. In 1989, Willi Ninja appeared on the Malcolm McClaren song “Deep in Vogue” and in its accompanying music video. Ninja would go on to teach runway walking, counting among his students catwalker extraordinaire Naomi Campbell. In March 1990, after being introduced to voguing by Jose Gutierrez Xtravaganza and Luis Camacho Xtravaganza at New York’s Sound Factory dance club, Madonna came out with the song and video “Vogue” in 1990, which became one of the biggest and most defining hits of her career. The following year, Jennie Livingston’s Paris Is Burning duck-walked into U.S. theaters and won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival.

Though the film has been subject to any number of criticisms – for reinforcing gender, racial, and social stereotypes, for being shot exclusively from a perspective of white privilege, for not properly compensating its participants – Paris Is Burning remains the encyclopedia for modern ball culture. At least, it was until RuPaul’s Drag Race, which introduced a new generation, one that may have never seen Paris Is Burning, to the vocabulary and references the doc had, unbeknownst to them, popularized.

To paraphrase one of those famous quotes: They brought it to you at every ball – why y’all gagging so?

### **“You Own Everything”**

The most tragic irony of the proliferation of ballroom culture is that many of its founders and stars – who sought fortune and fame or at least the next best thing, a trophy – never got to see it. It’s therefore impossible to talk about the ball and house community and not discuss sexual violence and the AIDS epidemic.

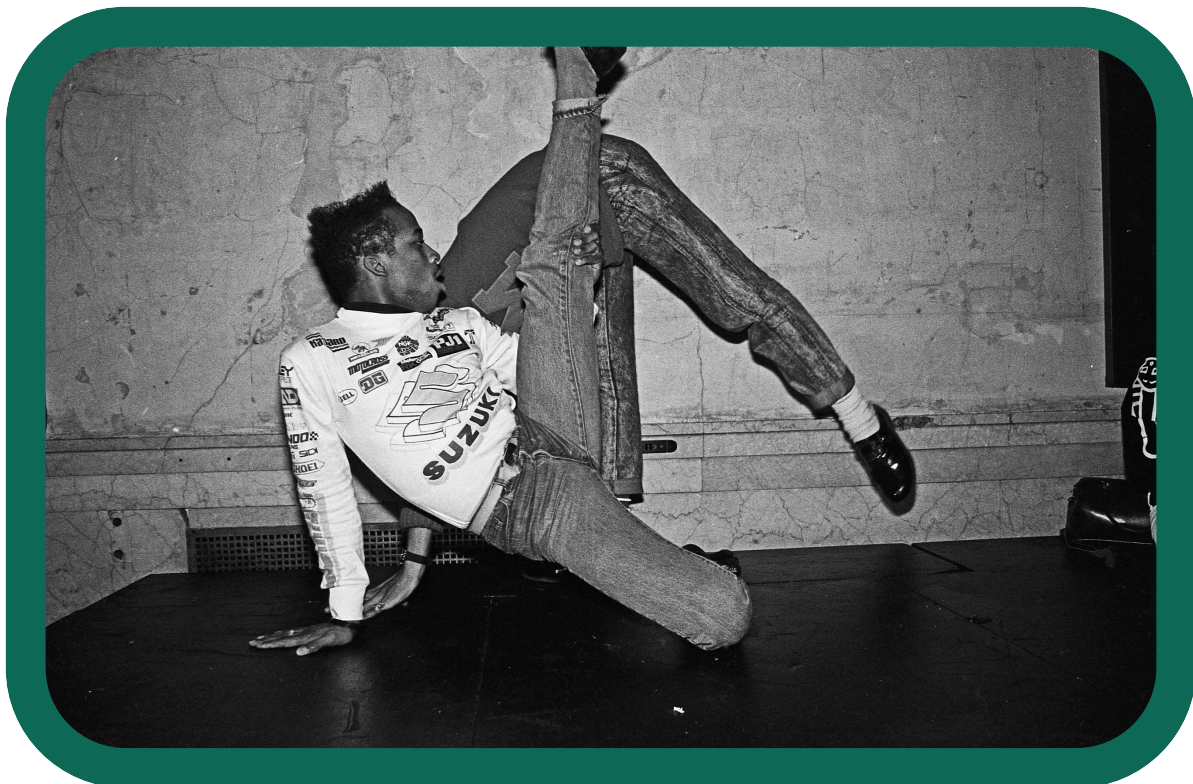
After meeting young Venus Xtravaganza in Paris Is Burning, we learn from her mother Angie, near the film’s end, that she was murdered by a john. Angie, herself, died from AIDS-related complications, as did Dorian Corey, Willi Ninja and too many others. In 1990, GMHC launched the Latex Ball in order to distribute health information to the ball community; celebrating its 28th year this month, the Latex Ball is the world’s largest, attracting thousands of people from around the world, and offering, in addition to competitions in various categories, free HIV testing and prevention materials.

In 2017, 28 transgender people were reported murdered, the majority of whom were trans women of color. As with Venus Xtravaganza, their murders often go unsolved. In addition to suffering higher rates of violence and murder, the trans community also faces discrimination in employment, health care, housing, immigration, and most recently military service, as well as disproportionate rates of imprisonment which leads to further violence and abuse behind bars.

That is not to say, however, that nothing has changed for the better. Groups like the National Center for Transgender Equality – as well as GLAAD, GMHC and HRC, among others – continue to fight on behalf of queer, trans and gender non-conforming people. And despite an increasingly hostile administration, LGBTQ people have far more agency and visibility than in any time in history. The 2016 documentary *Kiki – a 21st century Paris Is Burning* co-written by ballroom performer and LGBTQ homeless youth advocate Twiggy Pucci Garçon – earned raves for its inspiring take on the state of ball and house culture and the inclusion of Garçon in shaping the film.

*Pose* – which counts writer and activist **Janet Mock as a producer**, writer and a director – employs more than 140 LGBTQ actors and crew members and features the largest cast of transgender actors in series regular roles ever. Not content with just making history, Murphy announced last month that he will donate all of his *Pose* profits to trans and LGBTQ charities.

*Pose*, much like *Paris Is Burning* before it and *The Queen* before it, is a watershed moment in the representation of ball and house culture. But it's also an evolution. Where those films were small documentaries that found niche audiences – and eventual cult followings – *Pose* is about as mainstream as you can get. This is a culture, a community, and a history that deserves the prestige television treatment. Unequivocally, that's a good thing. And it is also a fulfillment of those defiantly opulent Harlem balls of the 19th and 20th centuries, proving once and for all, that they did, in fact, own everything.





# Why do some people love cringe comedy while others can't stand it?

by Jonny Thomson

Some people really don't enjoy cringe comedy. Others just don't get it. When shows like *The Office* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm* first came out, the jokes were lost on many people – or the awkwardness was just too much to bear. After all, what's so funny about socially awkward, publicly embarrassing situations?

Clearly something. The success of cringe comedy in TV, film, and countless social media channels proves that many of us find delight in other people's awkwardness. But what's less clear is how cringe comedy works, and why some people relish in the secondhand embarrassment of watching Michael Scott or Nathan Fielder while others find it excruciating or boring.

## **The history of cringe comedy**

As a genre of comedy, cringe is very old. It could be argued that cringe is present in certain elements of slapstick humor, in that we laugh at someone's humiliation or misfortune. Indeed, there's a large element of *schadenfreude* to cringe comedy, where we take pleasure in witnessing the discomfort of others.

But there's something noticeably different between laughing at Mr. Bean or Laurel and Hardy and the cringe comedy of today. The ever-resourceful German language provides a still better word: *fremdschämen*, which is the feeling of embarrassment you get when watching someone behave in an embarrassing way (it's a combination of the words "external" and "to be embarrassed").

The difference between slapstick or *schadenfreude* and cringe is that the former feels much more detached, where we're laughing at someone. Meanwhile, the latter feels personal – sometimes empathetic. It's as if we're embodying the cringeworthy character (or at least feel as if we're in the same room) and living through their embarrassment.

While "mockumentaries" like *This is Spinal Tap* paved the way, it wasn't until the 2000s that cringe comedy really took flight. Comics like Ricky Gervais (*The Office*), Sasha Baron Cohen (*Ali G* and *Borat*), Larry David (*Curb Your Enthusiasm*), and Steve Coogan (*Alan Partridge*) led the vanguard in social awkwardness. Their successes spawned the next generation of programs like *Girls*, *Peep Show*, and *Nathan For You*. Today, cringe comedy is everywhere. But what makes it work?

## **The science of cringe comedy**

Humans are social animals, wired to live in packs and function in societies. We are, as developmental psychologist Michael Tomasello puts it, an "ultra-social animal" that's highly sensitive to emotions like shame, embarrassment, and cringe. We have

developed complex forms of social etiquette that help us interact with each other. To follow social etiquette, we have evolved a finely tuned sense of social awareness.

Cringe comedy seems to exploit that awareness. We may enjoy it because it allows us to simulate unusual social situations and witness their consequences without actually having to experience them in the real world. In this way, cringe comedy may help us strengthen a kind of defense mechanism, as media researcher Marc Hye-Knudsen wrote in a 2018 paper:

“By immersively simulating social worst-case scenarios, they prepare us for the cringe of our own lives, better equip us to avoid it, and even provide us with strategies to pursue once it occurs. If, as Gervais supposes, we all like [David Brent, the boss character in the British version of *The Office*] want to be loved, respected, and thought interesting, then watching *The Office* provides us with salient examples of how not to achieve this. By violating all the unspoken social norms of the office environment, David makes them salient and allows us to vicariously experience the intense embarrassment that comes with disregarding them.”

But what accounts for the differences in people’s degree of *fremdschämen*, or empathetic embarrassment? One argument is that we feel embarrassed for those people we feel a “social closeness” with. There’s research to show that we only find cringeworthy those contexts or people we can empathize with or relate to. We experience cringe when someone sings loudly in public, tells an inappropriate joke, or brags about their sexual exploits because we all know people like that. It’s relatable.

The psychologist and author Oliver Burkeman coined the term “easily empathetically embarrassed” people. Burkeman cites a 2011 study, and offers the idea that people who are not EEE are simply wired that way. As he writes: “...there’s a significant correlation between what the researchers labeled “vicarious embarrassment” and a generally high capacity for involvement in the emotional lives of others.” The corollary of this argument is that those who experience greater degrees of cringe are more receptive to others. They’re more empathetic.

### **Venting social anxiety**

In any case, there’s a difference between experiencing cringe and finding it funny. One of the most likely reasons why people find cringe comedy funny is known as the “benign violation hypothesis.” According to this theory, we laugh at moral or social violations which are also benign (no real person is hurt, for instance) and safe (they’re not happening to me!). Of course, as noted above, for cringe humor to work we must have a degree of “social closeness” to the cringe comedy – it has to relate to our everyday lives in some way.

The idea behind this is that when we laugh at cringe comedy, we are reestablishing ourselves on the “right side” of various social norms or taboos. When we laugh at an inappropriate, ignorant, or ridiculous comment, we’re actually adopting the role of policeman and gatekeeper. We know that these are the rules and can sense when someone has broken them, and we laugh to relieve our own sense of social insecurity or anxiety. It’s why the laughter from cringe comedy is of a different kind to other types of laughter. Cringe is hugely funny (for some people), but it comes laced with a slight nervous edge — a tension in the body, an increased heart rate, and the involuntary “oh no!” noises we give out.

### **The contemptuous and the empathetic**

What these various responses to cringe tell us is that there might be more than one thing going on here. Sometimes, when we enjoy cringe humor, we empathize with the events. Watching a mild social faux pas — a joke that lands badly or someone wearing the wrong clothes to party — are funny because we can relate to these moments. This sense of embodying their embarrassment (or shame), this *fremdschämen*, we could call empathetic cringe comedy.

But as Natalie Wynn, who runs the YouTube channel *ContraPoints*, argues, this kind of cringe comedy should be separated from another kind: contemptuous. As she puts it, “Contemptuous cringe, on the other hand, involves an emotional distancing from the person you’re cringing at. Just like with compassionate cringe, you perceive that the person is embarrassing themselves, but instead of feeling that embarrassment on their behalf, you feel annoyance and disgust at them, and maybe even a little *schadenfreude*.”

The affective response of empathetic cringe is different to the more sneering one of contemptuous. It also affects the scripting and setup of a show or movie. With empathetic cringe, the design is to create situations as many viewers can relate to as possible — those *Bridget Jones moments* that speak to us. With contemptuous cringe, as Wynn puts it, we are invited to feel contempt.

### **Where does cringe punch?**

There’s a lot of work and discussion in recent years about “punching up” or “punching down” in comedy. That is to say, are the laughs gained from mocking marginalized and disempowered groups or those who are decidedly better off than we are? It’s generally supposed the latter is fine, while the former is akin to bullying.

So, where does cringe fall? It might be argued that empathetic cringe — the kind where we relate with the situation — is its own thing altogether; in some way, it could be viewed as us mocking ourselves (as imagined in the situations we’re witnessing). But contemptuous cringe has a darker side. Sometimes, when a producer or comedian showcases a “cringe” moment, they are actually manufacturing or inventing contempt.

As Wynn argues, this is not always so benign. When we are invited to sneer and

laugh at “SJW Cringe Compilations” or the weakness in “Screeching Feminists,” what are the implications to that? That “social justice” is embarrassing? That feminism is shameful?

Comedy, satire, and humor have always been politically charged. When we laugh at something, we ridicule it and diminish it – that’s why it’s a great defense mechanism, and the best way to defeat boggarts. But when we laugh at those things that ought to really be important, what damage does that do to the values we want to hold?





# Red Kap: An Example Company

Our mission has always been to outfit fun in the workplace. Because as the old saying goes, work doesn't feel like work when you're having fun doing it. That's the way we like it and we're sticking to it.

We believe hard days go down easy when crews work hard, play harder, and don't take themselves too seriously – at least every now and then. And when you love what you wear as much as what you do, job site magic happens.

Red Kap workwear is here to keep you comfortable for every clock in, over-time shift, eagerly exchanged hi-five, and whatever else in between. Because we've been outfitting a fun-loving and fulfilled workforce since 1923. And we're just getting started.

## 1923

In 1923, William Wirt Harlin, Sr., Alexander F. Harlin and Claude H. Williams – two brothers and their cousin – set up shop to sell bib overalls as “Harlin Bros. & Williams.” The team built their humble operation with a few simple values in mind: great service, comfort and durability. Those values have stood the test of time for Red Kap workwear, and as the company has grown far beyond a team of three, the power of teamwork continues to drive its success.

## 1920's

The roaring twenties saw the company go from selling shirts to overalls to offering a better grade of shirts. It also went from being called Harlin Bros. & Williams to Central Overall Company

## 1930's

The first independently owned Red Kap manufacturing facility opens in Nashville and a second manufacturing plant opens in Clarksville, TN. The brand moves its corporate headquarters to Nashville's newest skyscraper as the name changes again to Central Manufacturing Company, and eventually to Red Kap Garment Company.



### 1940's

Red Kap started the decade by shifting to supplying shirts, pants, field jackets and even gas mask carriers for the U.S. Army and Navy. By the end of the decade, focus shifts to the industrial laundry market, developing the first laundry-friendly industrial pant and shirt.

### 1950's

Red Kap focuses exclusively on the industrial rental laundry business. They open a pants manufacturing plant in Cookeville, TN.

### 1960's

Red Kap opens its first testing laboratory and later goes public, while changing the name to Red Kap Inc. The company also introduces the first laundry-friendly durable press garments: Red-E-Press. Plants and distribution centers are opened, expanded and acquired, while the 65% poly/35% cotton blend becomes the industry standard. Thanks to Red Kap, of course.

### 1970's

Red Kap marks its 50th anniversary with \$50 million in sales and its 50,000,000th shirt. A new national headquarters and distribution center is built in Nashville. Business is booming with expansion around the country, and they begin manufacturing women's uniforms. ('Bout time!)

### 1980's

The decade began with three new plants and one new distribution center opening, with more to come. This was also when we partnered with General Motors to develop the first of many service technician uniforms for a major auto manufacturer. The SP14GM and SP24GM are still in the line today.



### 1990's

Red Kap acquires an arch competitor, Workwear, as well as four new plants. Red-E-Service customization which began in the 1970s comes into its own with a period of rapid growth and sophistication allowing embroidery, emblems and more. Red Kap became a brand within the VF Corporation family.

### 2000's

Red Kap makes its debut appearance at the SEMA (Specialty Equipment Market Association) Show in Las Vegas, NV. Growth accelerates in the auto manufacturer arena with exclusive uniform programs for major car companies like Ford, Honda and GM.



### 2010's

Red Kap introduces the Performance Shop Pants and Shorts made specifically for the automotive industry. Then takes flex panels in workwear to another level with MIMIX™ through scientifically proven placement to enhance performance, and revolutionizes stain resistance with the introduction of OilBlok technology.

### 2020's

A new era begins with a century down, and our Day One mentality is as strong as ever under new ownership with Workwear Outfitters. We're committed to our purpose to outfit a fun and fulfilled working world with purpose-built teamworkwear.



### THE OFFICIAL UNIFORM OF WORK DONE RIGHT

Given our roots as a uniform company, we've learned a thing or two about all kinds of industries and occupations. Without patting ourselves on our work shirt back, we know how to make a durable, comfortable uniform that stands up to the rigors of any job site. And we're committed to bring our expertise to the working world.

So, here we are. Modern workwear with a rich history that stands for work done right.



# Naomi Campbell's Runway Walk Tips

## from masterclass.com

As an aspiring runway model, taking the time to discover and develop a runway ramp walk that makes you feel confident will help you book modeling work. Follow these steps to create your iconic runway walk:

- 1. Familiarize yourself with the outfits.** Your runway collection outfits will dictate how much movement you can achieve. Examine the clothing you'll wear beforehand to understand its fluidity and weight. Practice walking in the outfits and shoes (especially if you'll be wearing heels) backstage to see where your ensemble limits or allows movement.
- 2. Keep your posture.** Keep your shoulders back and head straight, with your eyes level at all times. Initially, you may feel stiff, but with practice, you'll learn to walk with a tall, straight posture and eyes forward in a relaxed, confident manner.
- 3. Set your facial expression and gaze.** Fashion show choreographers may give you direction in terms of the mood they would like you to express during the show, but overall your face should express control, relaxation, and confidence. Look ahead by picking a spot at the back of the room at eye level to watch and concentrate on as you walk, keeping your chin slightly down.
- 4. Let the music be your guide.** Correct pacing on the catwalk helps the entire show flow well. Set your walking pace to the beat of the music playing. If the music doesn't match a rhythmic walking speed, use the speed of the models before you as a guide, making sure to keep enough distance between you and them.
- 5. Take long strides with feet in line.** Place each foot directly in front of the other, with toes forward. This type of walking requires practice, and you may find your ankles knock together initially. Keep your strides long, lift your knees slightly higher than usual, and keep the pace consistent.
- 6. Avoid swinging your hips.** You may feel like you need to swing your hips as you walk. When walking with long strides and good posture, your hips will naturally swing at an appropriate level.
- 7. Let your arms swing naturally.** Allow your arms to move naturally, with a slight swing, without overemphasis. Avoid moving your arms to the music or making distracting movements.
- 8. Plan where you will stop and pivot.** During your model walk, avoid guessing at the last minute where you'll stop and turn at the runway's end. Slow down as you approach the spot to keep the flow smooth, then stop, pose for two or three seconds, and smoothly pivot your body, letting your head be the last part to move.
- 9. Keep the return energy up.** As you return to the start of the catwalk, keep your energy up. You may feel a sense of relief that you've completed the initial walk and turn, causing you to relax too much or speed up. Place as much importance on the return walk as the outgoing walk, and keep your pace consistent.
- 10. Practice at home.** The more you practice your runway walk, the more confident you'll be when you have a modeling job. You can find full videos of runway models online for inspiration as you work on your style.



## Naomi Campbell's 5 Runway Walk Tips

Naomi's years of experience on the catwalk have made her an expert in how to walk on the runway under intense pressure with beauty, strength, and self-confidence. Consider these tips from Naomi as you develop your unique model walk:

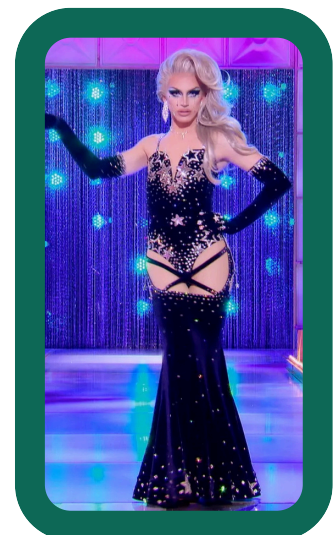
- 1. Be confident, no matter what.** If you must choose one thing to focus on, Naomi advises, make it confidence. "You have to mean every step that you take. You have to mean it," she says. "You can't do it in a timid way. You cannot do it in an 'I'm not sure' way. You have to take the step and mean it. Even if it's wrong—but there's no wrong or right anyway. You have to do it with conviction."
- 2. Don't worry about the audience.** When Naomi walks the runway, she keeps the focus on herself. "When I'm walking on the runway, what I can tell you is, I don't see the audience," she says. "I really don't. I hear the music. I hear the rhythm. I hear the bass. And I see the light. And that's it."
- 3. Make the clothes the star.** Naomi believes your walk should revolve around the clothes you wear, not you. "Let the clothes inform your walk. I truly am a believer that it's not about showing off yourself; it's about showing the clothes." She advises finding a connection with the outfit, whether you personally like it or not. "You have to vibe with that outfit, and you have to make sure that you're wearing the outfit, the outfit's not wearing you, and feel comfortable in it, even though you might have only gotten acquainted with it for just that day."
- 4. Take long strides and slow down.** Naomi encourages long strides and watching your speed when walking the runway. "It's important to take long strides because long strides make you look like you're confident," she says. "When you just walk too quickly... What's the difference [between your runway walk and] walking down the street?" She advises acting as if your walk has a destination. "It's like you're building up to something," she adds. "That's how it should be. You're walking towards something."
- 5. Practice makes perfect.** More than anything, Naomi suggests practicing as much as you can to become the best model you can be. "I encourage you to practice walking to a song that makes you feel energized whenever you hear it," she says. "Record yourself, make adjustments, and remember that at the end of the day, you want to enter a room with a stride and presence that reflects who you are."



Kim Chi



Naomi Campbell



Aquaria

# Important Things to Know When Working In Office Environments

From Indeed.com



There are many different aspects to working in an office environment, such as frequent interactions with colleagues, email communication and shared amenities. Depending on the business operation, an office may have varying management styles that can change the workplace environment. Understanding the expectations of working in an office can help you prepare for your job and complete your responsibilities efficiently. In this article, we discuss the common aspects of office environments, examine typical office etiquette and share some tips to help you adjust to an office environment.

## **Key takeaways:**

- Working in an office environment entails team collaboration, adapting to varying management styles and navigating different office layouts and shared amenities.
- Familiarising yourself with office etiquette is crucial – this includes punctuality, interacting with colleagues, being helpful, professional email practices, dressing appropriately, cleanliness and respect for shared spaces.
- Some practical tips for enhancing your office experience include maintaining good posture, treating colleagues respectfully, managing your time effectively and being patient with other team members.

# Aspects of working in office environments

## Team collaboration

One of the major aspects you can expect while working in an office environment is team collaboration. Some office spaces may encourage collaboration more than others, depending on the business' operation and industry. If you're part of a project team, you can expect to communicate and engage in team discussions regularly. It can be important to understand that most office environments may require interactions with colleagues and managers, regardless of team structures.

## Management styles

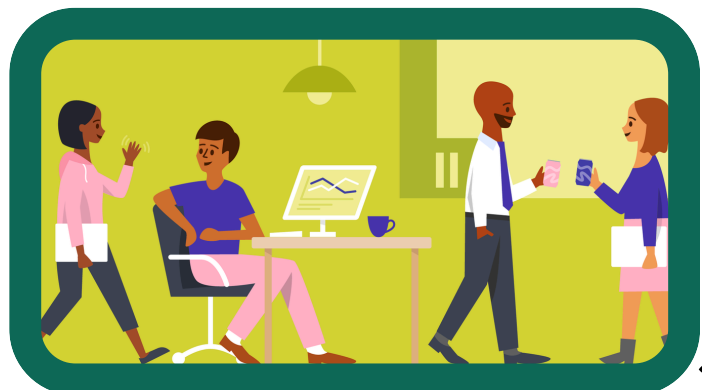
Many management styles, such as democratic, authoritative, paternalistic and autocratic styles, can influence the working environment. These management methods can determine the policies and procedures in the workplace, which typically influence the work culture and work environment. Your experience as an office employee might vary depending on the type of management your manager implements. For example, your job responsibilities and procedures may be clear and organised in an authoritative environment, but the environment may be fast-paced.

## Office layouts

Another aspect to consider is the office layout. Where you complete your responsibilities can have a major influence on your experience in an office. Some offices may have an open plan with minimal privacy, while other layouts may have individual cubicles that allow you to work independently. Depending on the management style of the business, you may have an assigned workstation or your station may change each day. There are benefits and negatives to most office layouts, so the style of office you enjoy can depend on your personality and career responsibilities.

## Amenities

Most offices have shared amenities such as kitchens, bathrooms, toilets and lounges. If you're new to office work, sharing these facilities may be a new practice for you. Your office manager typically provides a set of rules and general etiquette on the appropriate use of these amenities. To maintain your relationships with colleagues and managers, it's usually a good idea to adhere to these rules.



## Typical office environment etiquette

- Arrive on time: Arriving to work on time is usually a good idea because it can show your colleagues and manager that you care about the job.
- Interact with colleagues: Interacting with your colleagues can be an important part of building healthy relationships and ensuring you enjoy your time in the office.
- Help others when necessary: Working in an office environment usually involves teamwork and helping others can foster a positive working environment.
- Have a professional email address: If you utilise a personal email address at work, it's usually a good idea to ensure it's professional and appropriate for a working environment.
- Dress appropriately: You represent the business when you work in an office environment, so it's usually best to dress professionally and to the standards set by the business.
- Clean up after yourself: You may share several amenities and facilities, so after you utilise them, you can ensure you leave them in a clean state for your colleagues to use.
- Respect your colleagues' space: You may share the office with colleagues, but it's usually common etiquette to respect your colleagues' workstations and provide them with the privacy they require.

## Tips for working in an office space

### Monitor your posture

You may complete most of your responsibilities in an office using computer software. This can require you to sit behind a desk for prolonged periods. It can be important to be aware of how you're sitting and ensure you're sitting at your desk with a healthy posture. The type of chair you utilise at work can make a big difference to your posture. The business typically provides chairs for its employees to use, so if they're inadequate, you might use a personal chair or discuss the possibility of a new, more ergonomic chair.

### Treat colleagues with respect

You may spend most of your working hours near your colleagues in an office environment. You can regularly engage in discussions and rely on them for specific job responsibilities. For this reason, it can be important to treat your colleagues with respect and ensure you have a strong relationship with the team. If you enjoy the company of your colleagues, it can usually foster a healthy and pleasant working environment.

### **Focus on your time-management**

Depending on your employer and the management style of the office, arriving on time can be very important. Your manager is likely to appreciate your arrival to work before the working day begins. It can show that you're organised, dedicated and care about your role within the business. Job responsibilities in an office also usually have strict deadlines. You can ensure you complete your work before the day ends by managing your time effectively.

### **Bring your own lunch**

Bringing your own lunch to work is a subjective choice that won't necessarily affect your work productivity, but it can save you money. The cost of purchasing lunch every day can eventually add to a substantial expense. Another benefit of bringing your own lunch to work is that there may be situations where you have no time for a lunch break. If you have your lunch with you, you can have a quick break and complete your urgent responsibilities.

### **Ensure you have time for relaxing**

Some office environments can be fast-paced, with minimal opportunities for breaks. In these environments, it can be important to create time to relax and ensure you have breaks from your duties. Having a rest from your work responsibilities can provide you with the energy to continue your tasks productively. It can also be beneficial for your working environment, as having breaks can reduce stress and promote a healthy office culture.

### **Have patience**

Patience is an important personality trait to develop when working in an office space. You may collaborate with several team members with varying work ethics and capabilities. This means some colleagues may complete their tasks slower than you do. In some situations, you may wait for your colleague to complete their task before you can begin yours. It can be a good idea to remain patient with your team member and provide any help required to speed up the process.

### **Consider using headphones**

In open-plan offices, there may be no walls or windows separating workstations. These offices can have the potential to generate substantial noise. If you prefer working in silence, you can consider using a pair of headphones that reduce or block noise omissions. This can help you maintain your focus and complete your responsibilities efficiently. Before you use headphones, it can be a good idea to review the workspace rules because some companies might not allow the use of headphones.



### **Improve your computer skills**

If you're new to office work, you might develop your general knowledge of management systems and computer software. Most of your responsibilities in an office setting involve computer software, so having the fundamental skills to operate them can help you adapt to the new work environment. Businesses may use a variety of computer software, but they typically utilise one operating system. It can be a good idea to familiarise yourself with the shortcuts and general operation of the system. The business may provide you with training to operate the specific software they utilise.

### **Resolve interpersonal conflicts**

It's usually best to avoid workplace conflicts entirely, but sometimes they're unavoidable. Resolving interpersonal conflicts can be an important part of maintaining relationships with colleagues. Interpersonal conflicts may result from simple disagreements that you can easily resolve. By resolving a conflict, you can strengthen your relationship with the colleague, improve communication and increase the effectiveness of collaboration.

### **Plan a reliable transport arrangement**

Some offices have ample parking spaces, while others may be in the city centre with minimal parking availability. Planning how you get to work each day is an important part of managing your time. It's usually a good idea to minimise travel time between work as much as possible. This can give you more personal time and provide a relaxed environment when preparing for work.



# What 'Project Runway' Can Teach Us About the Creative Process

## by Jackie Mansky

By the time “Project Runway” premiered in December of 2004, the show seemed like just another spawn of the megahit reality competition “American Idol.” As host Heidi Klum, wearing a Jennifer Aniston haircut, explained the premise of the show—unknown designers compete in weekly challenges until the finalists face off at New York Fashion Week for a grand prize—a bevy of would-be contestants were seen going through the audition process. “Who do you see wearing this besides yourself?” the panel of judges asked one hopeful, who was dressed in what appeared to be a toga with a chunk cut out of it replaced by a swatch of tie dye cloth.

But it quickly became apparent that “Project Runway” was a show more interested in the work than the drama. As mentor Tim Gunn led the contestants past New York’s Garment District and into a grocery store to gather supplies for their first challenge—designing a glamorous and sexy look for a night out on the town—he announced everything used for the challenge would have to be purchased there on site. “You must innovate,” he told the panicked designers, as the camera zoomed in on a shrink-wrapped watermelon. “So be as unconventional as you can be in your thinking and,” he readied to deliver a variation on what would become his signature catchphrase for the show, “make it work here.”

What followed, as contestants grabbed at corn husks, beach chairs and trash bags, was a television arc of demystifying the creative process.

“I couldn’t really believe that ‘Project Runway’ would end up being a show that was really about the creative process,” Gunn later reflected in a 2013 interview. “I wanted to believe it, but fundamentally I had doubts.” When he was cast, Gunn successfully lobbied the producers that the contestants, not hired seamstresses, should sew their designs, and that the contestants’ workroom should close at night to shift more focus on the skill of the designers rather than their stamina to pull all-nighters.

Intentionally or not, the show presents creativity in the rubric laid out by English social psychologist Graham Wallas, widely credited for developing an architectural framework to explain the creative process.

Wallas, born in 1858, the year before Charles Darwin published *On Origin of Species*, was heavily influenced by the naturalist’s findings in his own work. Which is why in his 1926 book *The Art of Thought*, where he outlined his creativity rubric, he takes a somewhat Darwinian approach to the topic. His aim? To explain the title of his book through “scientific explanation.”

“More than 80 years later, Wallas’ model is still the most famous and influential proposal for understanding how creative thinking unfolds as a process,” observed researchers Glenn Griffin and Deborah Morrison in their 2010 book *The Creative Process Illustrated*. Even though nearly a century has passed since Wallas published his thoughts, the four (sometimes five) stage approach to the creative process he laid out remains entrenched in the way we discuss creativity.



The stages are easy to identify in the show:

1. Preparation requires the time and effort to acquire research and experience necessary to arrive at a new idea. This stage largely happens off-screen, although the contestant interviews often provide their respective backstories and professional resumes.
2. Incubation is often rushed on screen, as the contestants don’t have the luxury of time to stew over their thoughts before they must move on to reach...
3. Illumination, where a point of clarity and inspiration—the “Aha” moment—presents, tangibly, in the work room as a concept comes together.
4. Verification, where it’s confirmed that a new idea checks out, for better or worse, on the runway and with the judges afterward.

Seventeen seasons and multiple spinoffs later, part of the fascination around watching the creative process unfold on “Project Runway” is perhaps due to its long-perceived opaqueness. A field of scholarship has built around Wallas and his theory, starting with James Webb Young, a titan of the American advertising industry. He references the social psychologist in his popular 1940 book *A Technique for Producing Ideas*, where he, too, made the argument that creativity was something tangible that could be studied and analyzed: “The production of ideas is just as definite a process as the production of Fords; the production of ideas, too, runs an assembly line; in this production the mind follows an operative technique which can be learned and controlled, and that its effective use is just as much a matter of practice in the technique as in the effective use of any tool,” he asserted in the text.

For much of Western history, however, creativity was linked to divinity. “God the Creator,” as scholar Irina Surkova puts it, was credited with making something from nothing; the Muses of ancient Greek mythology midwived ideas. “Hence,” she writes, “up to the 20th century, it became a dominant orthodoxy that creativity had a divine origin and creative results appeared from nowhere.” The implication was that you had to be chosen to be creative, it wasn’t something that could be fostered and cultivated. Classism came into play here, too. If creativity were divine, elites could claim only they were worthy of being graced with this gift.

Where “Project Runway” excels is in democratizing the creative process and showing the human ingenuity behind the design process. On-screen interviews not only show the Wallas’ framework from idea to execution, but also capture the different contestants’ progression over the course of a season as designers hone their creative skills.

Critics picked up on “Project Runway”’s commitment to showing the work early on. “[A]rtistic talent is more tangible on this show than on most,” New York Times’ Alessandra Stanley was already observing during that first season. “Sometimes with as little as 24 hours, each designer has to come up with a sketch, buy supplies, sew, cut and adapt an outfit to a runway model who parades the creation before a panel of judge.”

Viewers also were hooked. Word-of-mouth and a smart marketing plan by Bravo, which just kept re-airing episodes, boosted viewership until the ratings from the show’s first season finale certified “Project Runway” a bonafide sleeper hit.

The show’s eagerness to look at creativity as a tangible concept might be why the franchise is still a force to be reckoned with. “Project Runway” has now been saved from impending death three times; after that first season, longtime fans will remember its fate was up in the air once more when it got caught in legal limbo after making the move from Bravo to Lifetime. Now, it’s been rescued again, plucked from the crosshairs of the fall of disgraced mogul Harvey Weinstein, and the subsequent bankruptcy of the Weinstein Company.

It returned on Bravo last week with a revamped format and new faces. Klum and Gunn are out, departing to launch their own show with Amazon; supermodel Karlie Kloss as host and Christian Siriano as the mentor are in. Veteran of the show Nina Garcia is now joined on the judging panel by magazine editor Elaine Welteroth and designer Brandon Maxwell.

For all that’s changed in reality television and the fashion industry, two episodes in the new season offers a reassuring return to form. It’s trying to communicate it’s more of the times; you can now buy the winning design and fan-favorite of many of the challenges on Bravo’s website. There’s also a pointed effort to present a more socially conscious “Project Runway” experience (the season premiere welcomed the first transgender model to walk its runway this episode).

But the fun of “Project Runway” remains in watching creativity come to fruition on screen. As a new batch of contestants tackle the challenges put before them, the audience gets a tutorial in the soup to nuts of getting to the runway walk. In essence, to quote Gunn, just what exactly it takes to “make it work.”