

# THE DEPARTURE



## BREAKING OUT

The Brazilian-American B-Boy Neguin has danced his way to the top—by staying true to his capoeira roots.

As a dancer in demand, Neguin, 32, has toured more than 120 countries.



**T**urning a passion into a profession is something that everyone dreams of, but for some, it's a calling. After all, it takes an extraordinary person and hard work to become a world champion. Not surprisingly, the New York City-based dancer Fabiano "Neguin" Lopes has the receipts to show what it takes to get to the top. As the only person who has competed in two national Red Bull dance competitions—Dance Your Style, where he was crowned the 2019 U.S. champion, and the breaking contest BC One—Neguin, 32, has spent 16 years bringing his unique blend of martial arts dancing to more than 120 countries and touring with performers like Madonna, Jennifer Lopez and Justin Timberlake. He's now considered one of the most influential names in contemporary B-Boy battle culture.

When the music begins, Neguin doesn't just dance—he flies. Battling with the body requires being nimble like a boxer or a kung fu master; the aerodynamics

of a gymnast or parkour athlete; the quick turns and spins of a break dancer; and becoming one with the tempo and the adrenaline of the crowd. Neguin can do it all.

Hailing from Cascavel, a Brazilian city near the Paraguayan border, he began dancing at the age of 14, learning the ins and outs of capoeira, an ancient indigenous art form that blends martial arts, song and dance. With capoeira, there is a spiritual connection that involves singing while learning how to fight and respect your body at the same time.

"It's no different from hip-hop culture," Neguin says. "With hip-hop, you have to have the knowledge and then master your craft. Capoeira is obviously distinct from breaking, but they share the same philosophy in a way. They have a similar history, the same perspective of doing something magical. Representing two cultures like that is the highest thing I can do for myself. I feel honored to be able to represent my culture with capoeira and also represent

breaking here in New York. Spreading that worldwide creates a huge impact."

From his early roots in capoeira, Neguin studied the arts of freestyle and social dance before adding B-Boying to his dance vocabulary in 2000. Within a few years he began scooping up wins at battles in his native Brazil and beyond. These competitions took him on a journey—through Central and South America, Korea, France, Holland, Russia and India. Judges weren't the only ones with heads turning. In 2012 Neguin landed a major spot dancing alongside Madonna on her MDNA tour and continued to pick up spots with other world-renowned entertainers. Today, travel informs the majority of his work and current success, which is always evolving.

"I experience and live different dance styles and martial arts styles. Traveling teaches you a lot: When you're in India you learn something there; in Siberia you learn something else. My life changed and my dance style has changed, so it's about gathering information that the universe provides. I'm lucky enough to work and travel and observe these beautiful cultures from around the world. My style changes according to my lifestyle."

Being an international athlete and artist requires a certain level of stamina—not just on the dance floor but also in the run-up to the competition. Much like a UFC fighter, Neguin prepares himself mentally, physically and spiritually during this phase, which can range anywhere from three to 10 days. He says he no longer gets nerves, which he credits to the extensive martial arts training that keeps him level-headed. For him, competition isn't about winning or losing; it's all about being present in the moment and letting the music guide him.

For 2020, Neguin says he's looking forward to seeing

Neguín shows off his acrobatic dance moves in San Francisco.



a new wave of diversity, with dancers from all backgrounds represented at Dance Your Style, and he hopes to compete again in BC One, where his breaking talents can really shine. Most importantly, though, he wants to inspire others as much as they inspire him.

“What I do is not for the competition,” he says. “I do it for myself and the passion I have for the art form. Competition is just like the way I take life. Winning and losing are a part of that. I hope that it inspires other people. [But] I dance for myself.” —*Carly Fisher*

**“MY DANCE STYLE CHANGES ACCORDING TO MY LIFESTYLE.”**