

Ultra-red

SCHOOL OF ECHOES

Vogue'ology

How we organize history informs how we organize ourselves and our futures. In ongoing investigations and discussions, historical research, installations and collective listening sessions that are conducted as part of the *Vogue'ology* project, members of New York City's House|Ballroom scene along with artists and curators of this exhibition consider how members the scene might organize their own histories. *Vogue'ology* is a collaboration between the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project and Ultra-red's School of Echoes. The investigation begins with the question: "What is the sound of Ballroom?"

Since 1994, Ultra-red have been developing sound-based methodologies for collective reflection and analysis of lived experience. The sound investigations employ instructions - or protocols for collective listening - that guide participants through listening together to audio recordings of everyday life places, events, and speech. The experience serves as a catalyst for sharing, discussing and analyzing what people hear in the recordings themselves, and in the ways others listen.

The protocols collected in this document facilitated the recording and listening procedures used in the three previous phases of the *Vogue'ology* project: 1. The New School Encuentro, a gathering of members of the House|Ballroom scene and The New School's Gender Studies Program in May 2010; 2. Ballroom Archive Project oral history interviews conducted by and with members of the House|Ballroom scene in the summer of 2010; and 3. *Vogue'analysis*, a series of Vogue performances reviewed and discussed by some of the form's key practitioners.

Vogue'ology, the final protocol, guides the phase of the investigation that is presented at Parsons The New School for twelve days in November 2010. We invite you to follow the steps in this protocol, which asks you to listen to an encounter between archival objects and audio statements derived from recordings of the project's prior phases. As you follow the instructions you will develop your own written record of how your experience and understanding of objects and statements shift in relation to each other. In the final step, we encourage you to consider what this record of your own process might contribute to a deeper understanding of how to organize collective histories. We hope you will share your thoughts with us either by leaving a written statement in the gallery or sending us a message at info@ultra-red.org.

Vogue'ology is curated by Arbert Santana Evisu, Carin Kuoni and Ultra-red, with special guidance from Jennifer Evisu, J'Lin Evisu and Edgar Rivera-Colon. For *Vogue'ology*, Ultra-red organize themselves as Robert Sember and Dont Rhine.

Ultra-red
SCHOOL OF ECHOES
Vogue'ology

I. The New School Encuentro

8 May 2010

Vogue'ology presents four groups of documents used for organizing recent listening procedures in Ultra-red's collaboration with the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project. The first set of documents comes from *The New School Encuentro*, sponsored by the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at The New School. The event brought together key members of the House|Ballroom scene and the Gender Studies Program at The New School in New York.

Documents

Doc. I.A. The New School, "Video and Audio Recording of Conference Release Form"

Doc. I.B. Ultra-red, "Protocols for The New School Encuentro"

Doc. I.C. Ultra-red, "Protocols for Listening to Encuentro Recording"

THE NEW SCHOOL FOR GENERAL STUDIES THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH
MILANO THE NEW SCHOOL FOR MANAGEMENT AND URBAN POLICY PARSONS THE NEW SCHOOL FOR DESIGN ENGINE LANG COLLEGE THE NEW SCHOOL FOR LIBERAL ARTS
MANNES COLLEGE THE NEW SCHOOL FOR MUSIC THE NEW SCHOOL FOR DESIGN ENGINE LANG COLLEGE THE NEW SCHOOL FOR LIBERAL ARTS
THE NEW SCHOOL FOR JAZZ AND CONTEMPORARY MUSIC



RELEASE Video and Audio Recording of Conference

I, _____ (the "Conference")
am participating in _____
at The New School on _____

I understand that programs and events such as this are integral to the educational experience at The New School.
To that end, it is my understanding that the university will record and photograph the Conference for educational and promotional purposes. As part of this effort, a video/audio recording may be made available as a webcast on the New School website as well as on the website of Fora TV (www.foratv.com), with whom The New School has contracted to record and webcast the Conference. The webcast will be available to the public free of charge and is not intended for commercial purposes.

I hereby grant to The New School permission to use any still photograph or video or audio recording of me, with or without my name and information about me, either by itself or in conjunction with other photographs, for the purposes outlined above. I understand and agree that excerpts from the text of my lecture or comments may be included in future New School publications and videos.

I shall have no claim against The New School or any other person, firm, or corporation by reason of any such use of my picture, lecture, comments, name, voice or information about me as described above, whether alone or in conjunction with others. I hereby release The New School from any such claims.

I waive any right or option to inspect or approve the finished product or other copy that may be used along with my picture, lecture, comments, name or information about me as described above. I understand that The New School shall have sole discretion to decide whether to use my picture, lecture, comments, name, voice or information about me.

I represent that I am free to enter into this agreement. I have read the foregoing and fully and completely understand the contents thereof.

Signature _____

Name (Please Print) _____

Address _____

Date _____

Ultra-red
SCHOOL OF ECHOES
The New School Encuentro

The New School
66 West 12th Street, 7th floor, New York, NY
Orocco Room

Saturday, May 8, 2010 — 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

SETTING — Two tables covered in white paper, are arranged parallel to each other in the Conference Room of The New School. The tables are also laid out longwise between the north wall, adorned with the mural "The Homecoming of the Worker of the New Day" on the north wall (see image above) and the mural "The Fraternity of All Men at the Table of Brotherhood and Ultimate Universality" on the south wall. The frescos on all four walls of the Conference room were painted by the Mexican muralist José Clemente Orocco between November 1931 and January 1932. On each of the tables are placed one microphone for a facilitator and two microphones for the speakers. The audio monitors are located in opposite corners of the room. Three rows of chairs stretch across the length of both the east and west sides of the Conference Room. As the guests enter the room, the perimeter lights are illuminated to highlight the Orocco frescos. As the Encuentro begins, the perimeter lights are dimmed and the center spots are raised to highlight the white paper covering the two tables.

§

VOGUEOLOGY TABLE FACILITATOR — [Seated at the west end of the table closest to the mural titled "The Homecoming of the Worker of the New Day."] The protocol we will follow today offers a procedure for listening. Each member of the investigative teams seated at the tables has prepared two contributions for our consideration: the first a sound that responds either to the foundational question, "what is the sound of community organizing?" or related questions. The second contribution is a brief statement.

Alternating from table to table, the facilitators, Edgar Rivera Colon and I, will ask that we hear the sound recording or live sound prepared by the participant. After listening to that sound, we will have one minute of silence in which we are all invited to respond to that question, "What did you hear?" You may record your responses in writing on the paper provided. Your writing may be in any form you wish.

The participant who contributed the sound will then make her and/or his statement. The statement will be followed by two minutes of silence during which we will be asked to respond to the question, "What did you hear?" Again, you may record your responses in writing.

Once we have heard from all eight people seated at the tables we will call time. There will be a fifteen-minute break so we can refresh ourselves. When we resume we will welcome general comments, questions and other engagements. It will be important during this discussion that all comments be spoken into the microphones so that we can have an accurate recording of this encounter. I urge us to continue with the discipline of listening during this discussion and to attend to the statements of all speakers so that we can listen for themes and propositions that may guide the Vogue'ology and Gender Studies investigations after this day. At 5:00 pm, we will call time and the event will conclude.

We will now begin.

BOTH FACILITATORS — [In unison.] My name is [name] and I will be the facilitator for this table in the *School Of Echoes: The New School Encuentro*. The time is now [time].

1

Father Michael Roberson Garcon (Vogue'ology Table)

VOGUEOLOGY TABLE FACILITATOR — I invite the first speaker to begin. Please state your name and, if you wish, an organizational affiliation.

FIRST VOGUEOLOGY SPEAKER — [Says name and organizational affiliation.]

VOGUEOLOGY FACILITATOR — Do you have a sound object you wish to contribute for listening?

FIRST VOGUEOLOGY SPEAKER — Yes.

VOGUEOLOGY FACILITATOR — May we please hear the sound object.

[Play first sound recording.]

VOGUEOLOGY FACILITATOR — [Addressing both tables.] What did you hear? I invite you to respond to this question by writing on the paper covering the tables. You have one minute. What did you hear? Please begin. [Time one minute.] Time.

The time is now [time] Will the first speaker please share a statement?

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SCHOOL OF POLITICS
The New School Encuentro

The New School
66 West 12th Street, 7th floor, New York, NY
Orozo Room

Saturday, May 8, 2010 -- 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

SETTING — Two tables, covered in white paper, are arranged parallel to each other in the Conference Room of The New School. The tables are also laid out longwise between the north wall, adorned with the mural "The Homecoming of the Worker of the New Day" on the north wall (see image above) and the mural "The Fraternity of All Men at the Table of Brotherhood and Ultimate Universality" on the south wall. The frescos on all four walls of the Conference room were painted by the Mexican muralist Jose Clemente Orozo between November 1931 and January 1932. On each of the tables are placed one microphone for a facilitator and two microphones for the speakers. The audio monitors are located in opposite corners of the room. Three rows of chairs stretch across the length of both the east and west sides of the Conference Room. As the guests enter the room, the perimeter lights are illuminated to highlight the Orozo frescos. As the Encuentro begins, the perimeter lights are dimmed and the center spots are raised to highlight the white paper covering the two tables.

§

VOGUEOLOGY TABLE FACILITATOR — [Seated at the west end of the table, closest to the mural titled "The Homecoming of the Worker of the New Day."] The protocol we will follow today offers a procedure for listening. Each member of the investigative teams seated at the tables has prepared two contributions for our consideration: the first a sound that responds either to the foundational question, "what is the sound of community organizing?" or related questions. The second contribution is a brief statement.

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The participant who contributed the sound will then make her and/or his statement. The statement will be followed by two minutes of silence during which we will be asked to respond to the question, "What did you hear?" Again, you may record your responses in writing.

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We will now begin.

BOTH FACILITATORS — [In unison.] My name is [named] and I will be the facilitator for this table in the *School Of Echoes: The New School Encuentro*. The time is now [time].

I

Father Michael Robertson Garcon (Vogueology Table)

VOGUEOLOGY TABLE FACILITATOR — I invite the first speaker to begin. Please state your name and, if you wish, an organizational affiliation.

FIRST VOGUEOLOGY SPEAKER — [Says name and organizational affiliation.]

VOGUEOLOGY FACILITATOR — Do you have a sound object you wish to contribute for listening?

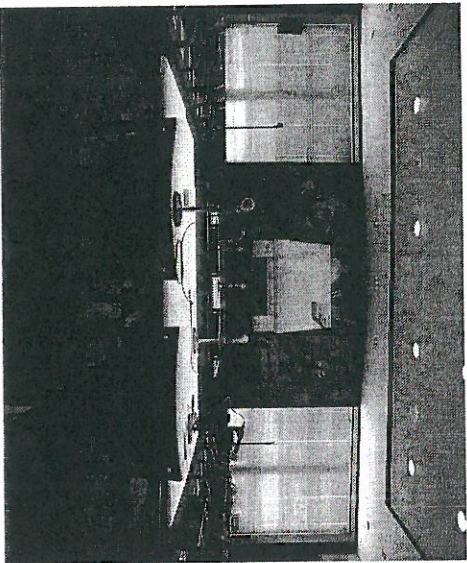
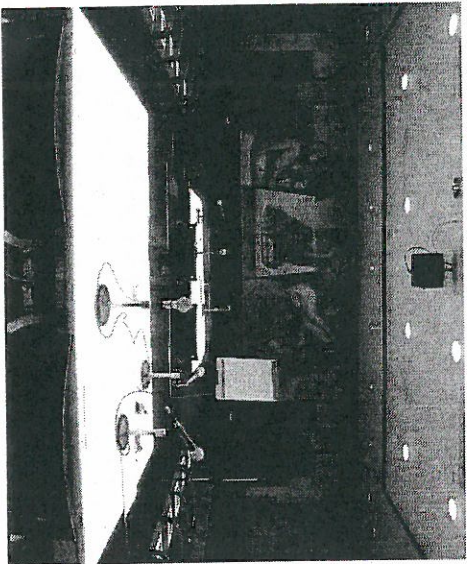
FIRST VOGUEOLOGY SPEAKER — Yes.

VOGUEOLOGY FACILITATOR — May we please hear the sound object.

[Play first sound recording.]

VOGUEOLOGY FACILITATOR — [Addressing both tables.] What did you hear? I invite you to respond to this question by writing on the paper covering the tables. You have one minute. What did you hear? Please begin. [Time one minute.] Time

The time is now [time]. Will the first speaker please share a statement?



"The New School Entrance," with the frescos (top) "The Homecoming of the Worker of the New Day" and (bottom) "The Fraternity of All Men at the Table of Brotherhood and Ultimate Universality" (1931-32) by Jose Clemente Orozco in the background.

FIRST VOCUEOLOGY SPEAKER — [Delivers statement.]

VOCUEOLOGY FACILITATOR — Thank you for your contribution. [Addressing both tables.] What did you hear? I invite you to respond to this question in writing. You may write on the paper covering the tables. You have two minutes. What did you hear? Please begin. [Time two minutes.] Time.

II

Chelsea Estep Armstrong (Gender Studies Table)

GENDER STUDIES TABLE FACILITATOR — I invite the second speaker to begin. Please state your name and, if you wish, an organizational affiliation.

FIRST GENDER STUDIES SPEAKER — [Says name and organizational affiliation.]

GENDER STUDIES FACILITATOR — Do you have a sound object you wish to contribute for listening?

FIRST GENDER STUDIES SPEAKER — Yes.

GENDER STUDIES FACILITATOR — May we please hear the sound object.

[Play first sound recording.]

GENDER STUDIES FACILITATOR — [Addressing both tables.] What did you hear? I invite you to respond to this question by writing on the paper covering the tables. You have one minute. What did you hear? Please begin. [Time one minute.] Time.

The time is now [time]. Will the first speaker please share a statement?

FIRST GENDER STUDIES SPEAKER — [Delivers statement.]

GENDER STUDIES FACILITATOR — Thank you for your contribution. [Addressing both tables.] What did you hear? I invite you to respond to this question by writing on the paper covering the tables. You have two minutes. What did you hear? Please begin. [Time two minutes.] Time.

[The procedure repeats, alternating between speakers at the Vogue ology table and those at the Gender Studies table.]

III

Founder, Arbert Santana Evisa (Vogue'ology)

IV

Ricky Price (Gender Studies)

V

Vivka Mugler Westwood (Vogue'ology)

VI

Kate Detwiler (Gender Studies)

VII

Ann Snitow (Gender Studies)

[After the eighth speaker has delivered her sound and contribution, and time has been allowed for the recording of reflections.]

BOTH FACILITATORS — [In unison.] The time is now [time]. Thank you all for your contributions.

We will now have a fifteen-minute break. Please use some of this time to approach the tables and read the written responses to the sound objects and statement. We will reconvene at [15 minutes time]. Thank you.

[Fifteen-minute break.]

5

[During the fifteen-minute break, the microphones are removed from the table and placed on microphone stands between the two tables. At the conclusion of the break, the Vogue'ology Facilitator issues a general invitation for anyone to comment on what they have heard. Speakers and audience members alike are asked to reflect on terms or themes that may have been raised during the statements that could be useful for further investigation. Notes from statements spoken into the microphones are kept on flip-chart paper by members of Ultra-red. The period of open commentary is left open for thirty-minutes.]

[At the conclusion of the thirty-minutes the time is called and the event concluded.]

Protocols for listening to *The New School Encuentro* recordings begins with two or more members of the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project listening to the recording of testimonies and discussions presented during the event and selecting statements to be used in the *Vogueology* procedure. The *Vogueology* procedure investigates the collective investments in telling the history of the House|Ballroom scene.

1.

Review the three testimonies and subsequent discussions featuring members of the House|Ballroom scene, maintaining a written log of selected statements.

Working individually, select statements whose words, syntax or melody will best address the themes of a) learning and teaching gender-related concerns within the House|Ballroom scene, b) convergent and divergent approaches to gender within the scene, c) House|Ballroom gender auto/biographies, or d) the relationship between the city and gender.

Additionally, select statements whose words, syntax or melody a) articulate a contradiction, b) articulate a commonly held perspective within the scene, or c) feature a particular richness of expression.

2.

Review the written logs of statements from the recordings of the New School Encuentro.

Working together, select as many as four statements per testimony and subsequent discussions that will best amplify a) a predominate theme, b) a thematic contradiction, or c) a significant anomaly or new theme.

Return to the original recording and extract the audio recording of each statement. Assemble these audio statements into an index.

3.

Review the index of statements with other members of the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project.

Working together, select four statements total that will best assist the *Vogueology* procedure.

Return to the index of audio fragments and locate the statements selected by the Ballroom Archive organizers. Loop each statement for either a minute or for four repetitions. Each loop should fade in for thirty-seconds and, in the final thirty-seconds, fade to silence.

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Vogue'ology

II. Ballroom Archive Oral Histories

29 June 2010 to Present

The oral history interviews of the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project serve as the basis for the second group of documents used for listening procedures. In late June 2010, the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project organizers began conducting in-depth interviews lasting from one to three hours with members of the scene. Interviewees come from various Houses and from different generations, including Legends and Icons, the most highly honored members of the community, as well as people of various gender identities and performances.

Documents

Doc. II.A. Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project, "Informed Consent Form"

Doc. II.B. Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project, "Interview Guide"

Doc. II.C. Ultra-red, "Protocols for Listening to Oral History Recordings"

Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project
Informed Consent Form

1. You are being asked to participate in an interview in connection with the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project. You are being asked to participate because you have a connection with the House/Ballroom scene as a participant and/or spectator. You will be asked about your opinion of the House/Ballroom scene, what your history on the scene is and what has changed in the ballroom, how has the ballroom impacted your life and many more questions like this.

2. The interview will be audiotape and/or videotaped (whatever is more convenient and desired by participant), transcribed, and made available for public and scholarly use art exhibits. The recordings and transcriptions will be under the possession of the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project and housed with Albert Santana. Any member of the general public will have access to this interview and your words may be quoted in scholarly and popular publications.

3. The interview will take approximately 2 hours. There are no anticipated risks to participation in this interview. However, you can withdraw from the interview at any time without prejudice prior to the completion. You will also have the opportunity to make special provisions or restrictions after the interview. During the interview you may request to stop the recording at any time to discuss or clarify how you wish to respond to a question or topic before proceeding.

In the event that you choose to withdraw during the interview, any tape made of the interview will given to be either you or destroyed, and no transcript will be made of the interview. With your permission, a photograph of you will be taken or borrowed for duplication. If you withdraw from the project, all copies of the photograph will be given to you. Any negative or digital images will be destroyed.

4. Subject to the provisions of paragraph five below, upon completion of the interview, the tape and content of the interview belong to Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project, Albert Santana, and the information in the interview can be used by Ballroom Archive & Oral History, Albert Santana in any manner it will determine, including, but not limited to, future use by researchers in presentations and publications.

5. The Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project, Albert Santana agrees that:

A. It will not use or exercise any of its rights to the information in the interview prior to the signing of the informed consent form.

B. The informed consent form will be submitted to you for your signature before the interview or, if you choose, after the interview after you review the tape and transcript.

C. Restrictions on the use of the interview can be placed in the deed of gift by you and will be accepted as amending the Federation of Houses, Albert Santana rights to the content of the interview.

D. Any other specific restriction such as use of pseudonym, handling or personally identifiable information that might be a threat to one's employability, financial standing, reputation, criminal or civil liability, etc.

6. Any restrictions as to use of portions of the interview indicated by you will be handled by editing those portions out of the final copy of the transcript. The state of the original recording will be kept and only copies will be edited.

7. Upon signing the deed of gift, the tape, photograph, and one copy of the transcript will be kept in the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project's Library which will be in the possession of Albert Santana, 862-252-6700, and abertsantana1@gmail.com.

8. If you have questions about the Ballroom Archive & Oral History project or procedures, you can contact Albert Santana at the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project, 862-252-6700, and abertsantana1@gmail.com.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, you can contact The Ballroom Archive Oral & History Project at 862-252-6700, and abertsantana1@gmail.com.

Interviewer signature _____

I agree to participate in this interview.

Interviewee Printed Name _____

Interviewee signature _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

Date ____/____/____

Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project
Interview Guide

Name of Participant: _____

Start time: _____ End Time: _____

A. PREPARATION CHECKLIST:

- _____ Is the digital recorder ready for the interview (power, memory, correct microphone levels)?
- _____ Is the interview location secure and secluded?
- _____ Is your cell phone turned off?
- _____ Do you have pen and paper to make notes if necessary?
- _____ Review and sign consent form and other documents. Provide participant with a copies.

B. CONSENT:

Turn on recorder.

This is (state your name) and the date and time is (state the date and time).

_____ Review of project background and goals.

The Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project is documenting the experiences of Ballroom participants, spectators, and others who have contributed to the life of the Ballroom scene in recent decades. Collecting oral histories of key participants is a central component of this effort. These histories document the experiences of participants and spectators over a number of decades and provide a record of how individuals and the Ballroom scene have changed over time. You have agreed to be interviewed as part of this project. Is that correct?

If yes, continue:

Before beginning the interview I need to remind that you sign some forms that provide the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project the permission to be interviewed, but at anytime that you wish to stop you may do so. If you continue you are fully aware that with your permission, this material will and can be used in publications, exhibitions and related materials; the final documents and any donations of photographs and other items you are making to the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project could be used as directed by the Ballroom Archive. You are fully aware and agree with these forms and project. Is that correct?

If yes continue:

C. PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

I would like to begin by asking you a few general questions about your life.

1. _____ Let's start with your name and Ballroom name.
(Prompt: Where did the name come from?)
2. _____ Where were you born and raised?
3. _____ Please tell me a little about your childhood.
(Prompts: What was your family like? What were the key events in your childhood? What is your fondest childhood memory?)
4. _____ Where were you raised?
(Prompt: Ask what neighborhood did they grow up in?)
5. _____ What is your education and work history?
(Prompt: Where do you go to school?)
6. _____ When did you know you were LGBT?
7. _____ What has being LGBT been like over the different situations and periods of your life?
(Prompts: Childhood? Before and after encountering the Ballroom scene? In your family? At school? With friends? At work?)

D. BALLROOM HISTORY:

I would now like to hear about your history with the Ballroom scene.

1. _____ How did you first learn about the Ballroom scene?
2. _____ How long have you been in the Ballroom scene?
3. _____ Who taught you the history of the Ballroom scene?
4. _____ How did you learn about the history of the Ballroom scene?
5. _____ Were you ever a part of the Elks' Lodge, the Marc Ballroom or the YWCA or all three?
6. _____ If you were a member of more than one, which era did you prefer, why?
7. _____ Please tell me the story of the history of the Ballroom scene as you know it.

E. HOUSES AND WALKING:

Let's turn now to a discussion of the house or houses you have been a part of and your history of walking the balls.

1. ___ How many houses have you been a part of?
2. ___ How did you join your first house?
3. ___ What category/categories do/did u walk in?
4. ___ Why do/did you walked that category/those categories?
5. ___ What or who gave you the drive to start walking?
6. ___ What was or is your motivation when walking?
7. ___ What do you enjoy about walking?
8. ___ How did or do you prepare to walk a ball?
9. ___ What was your most memorable ball and why?
10. ___ Who was your toughest battle and why?
11. ___ Did you stop participating in the Ballroom scene? If yes, why?

F. GENDER IDENTITY IN THE BALLROOM:

The Ballroom scene is known for its highly creative and dramatic exploration of gender identity, gender expression and gender performance.

1. ___ How would you describe your Ballroom gender?
(Prompts: Fem Queen, Butch Queen, etc.)
2. ___ How do you express and perform your gender? Is it different? Why?
3. ___ How, if at all, has the House/Ballroom scene influenced your decisions regarding your gender?
4. ___ Overall do you feel that the House/Ballroom scene has a positive influence on gender?
5. ___ Are there negative elements to how the Ballroom scene deals with gender issues?

G. IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS ON BALLROOM:

The Ballroom scene has had to struggle with some difficult issues in its history. The HIV/AIDS crisis has had an enormous impact on the scene. It would be helpful if you would talk about this impact. I know this may be a difficult topic to discuss so please let me know at any time if you'd prefer to move on to another topic or would prefer not to discuss certain aspects of the topic.

1. ___ How has HIV/AIDS affected the Ballroom scene?
(Prompts: How is the scene different as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic? How has the scene responded to the challenges of the epidemic?)
2. ___ Can you talk some about the people we have lost as a result of HIV/AIDS?
3. ___ If you are comfortable talking about it, would you share some reflections on how you have been personally affected by HIV/AIDS?
(Prompts: Have you lost friends? Have you lost house mother, father, and/or children?)
4. ___ Has HIV/AIDS changed how you and/or others participate in the Ballroom scene?

H. IMPRESSIONS OF BALLROOM SCENE:

You have had a long and close relationship with the Ballroom scene. I would appreciate hearing your thoughts on the benefits of the scene as well as your assessment of its past and future, particular what you hope remains the same and what you think it would be good to change.

1. ___ What did/do you get from being in the Ballroom scene?
2. ___ Have these benefits/pleasures/satisfactions changed from when you first encountered the scene?
3. ___ Tell me who have you most looked up to in the Ballroom scene and why?
4. ___ You've talked about what you get from the Ballroom scene and you motivation for walking. Are there things about the Ballroom scene you don't like?
5. ___ Do you think that the Ballroom scene needs to change and why?

(Continued next page.)

6. ____ What are the characteristics and qualities of the scene that you think we should hold onto/try to keep going?

7. ____ Is there something you miss about the Ballroom scene?
If yes, why?

8. ____ Do you think we, as a Ballroom community, can do something to make positive changes to the scene and the lives of its members?
If so, what changes can we make.
If not, why not?

9. ____ With all your experience, what advice would you give to someone who wants to be a part of the Ballroom scene now?

1. MUSIC:

I am going to ask you the last questions and it's about music. Music plays an important role in the Ballroom scene.

1. ____ What is the most recognizable song of the Ballroom scene and why?

2. ____ Before we rap this up any last thoughts you want to add?

Completed by _____

Date ___/___/___

Ultra-red
SCHOOL OF ECHOES
Vogue'ology

III. Vogue'analysis

15 and 22 August 2010

To analyze the grammar of Vogue, the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project asked four Legends in the House|Ballroom scene to perform choreographed statements in the language of Old Way and New Way Vogue. The performers included Leiomy, Derrick Xtravaganza, Dawan Milan, and Deshaun Wesley Evisu. After videotaping the performances, the four Legends analyzed the tape, reading the performances according to the culture, history and politics of the House|Ballroom scene. Also participating in the analyses were members of the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project team and other scene members in the room.

Documents

- Doc. III.A.** Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project, "Consent and Photo / Video / Audio Recording Release"
- Doc. III.B.** Ultra-red, "Moving Toward An Archive Of Vogue"
- Doc. III.C.** Ultra-red, "Protocols for Listening to Vogue'analysis Recordings"

Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project
Consent and Photo / Video / Audio Recording Release

The Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project, a non-profit organization, operates and maintains the property at the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project, currently located at 862-252-6700, and arbertsantana1@gmail.com.

The Vogue/ology Session on August 15, 2010, involves photo, video and audio recording of vogue performances and discussions of vogue history and techniques. The session is a collaboration between the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project and the sound art collective, Ultra-red. Copies of materials from the session will be archived in the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project archives and extracts will be used in exhibitions and other works produced collaboratively by the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project and Ultra-red.

I hereby grant the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project and Ultra-red permission to make photographic, video and audio recordings of me voguing and discussing the history and style of vogue. I authorize the use and reproduction of these photographs and video and audio recordings for all legitimate purposes, such as advertising, display, exhibition and art works. I also consent to the use of my name in connection with such uses.

I further consent to the use of the video or audio recordings by any designee of the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project including any publisher or agency, and such video and audio recordings and may be used for all of the aforesaid purposes without any limitation or reservation.

Thank you.

Name [signature]: _____

Name (printed): _____

Date: ____/____/____

Ultra-red

SCHOOL OF ECHOS

Moving Toward an Archive of Vogue

Sunday, August 15 and 22, 2010 — 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.

BACKGROUND — Building an Archive

Vogueing is a crucial element of the House/Ballroom scene and is, therefore, one of the focal areas of the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project. At this point in the development of the Archive, we are addressing fundamental questions concerning what we archive, the process we will use to build the Archive, and the purpose or aim of the Archive. Vogue presents a number of challenges for the Archive.

1. How do we archive movement?
2. Is archiving movement the same as or different from archiving a performance?
3. How do we archive a movement history that is deeply connected to many other complex processes, including:
 - shifting fashions and styles of clothing, music and expression
 - constantly shifting gender identities
 - the search for recognition and admiration
 - personal expression
 - the pleasure of performing for and with each other

First, we must determine what constitutes vogue. Vogueing is many things: a dance form; a set of choreographic procedures; a movement vocabulary; a means to share tradition and inspire creativity; a social sign indicating who is part of a scene, where they fit in the scene, and who is not part of a scene; and, a history in its own right that generations have practiced and influenced.

Second, we must determine how best to document the history of vogue. This history has many dimensions: movements and performance styles change (e.g. old way versus new way); identity and style are connected and alterable (e.g. fem queen vs. butch queen); there are many legendary

performers who perfected the form and created signature moves; and, there is the impact vogue has had on artists, musicians and dancers across the world.

Today is a small step toward answering the questions we have raised above concerning how to archive vogue. The materials we produce today will enable us to organize discussions with fellow Ballroom members concerning the history of vogue. Using these materials we will be able to discuss what of this history we should archive, how we should archive it, and what purposes such an archive might serve.

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PROCEDURE

The procedure for today is simple. First we will make video recordings of vogue performances and then we will watch those video recordings and together discuss what it is we see.

STEP A

Performance

1. You will perform alone.

The performance will illustrate a particular style or form of vogue (e.g. old way, new way, hand performance, fem queen performance). The performance will be video and audio recorded. The camera will face you straight on and will neither move nor zoom in on you. There will be no musical accompaniment to the performance. Rather, we will make an audio recording of the sound of your movements.

2. You will perform three times.

The first will be a full-figure performance facing the camera. The second will be a full-figure performance in profile. The third will be a standing performance, facing the camera with the camera focused on the upper part of your body.

STEP 8
Reviewing the Performance

1. We will view the videotape.

We will all watch together the video recordings of the performances. We will probably screen each performance 3 – 4 times. As we watch we will describe what it is we see. This discussion will be audio recorded.

2. We will hear the statement.

Each time we shift from one performance to another, the performer depicted in the video will be asked to talk briefly about the performance, including the style of vogue she or he is using and the decisions she or he made during the performance.

3. We will analyze the performance.

Once the performer has provided background comments, we are all free to comment on the movement and style. The comments can go in multiple directions, ranging from a close description of particular qualities of the movements in the video to a discussion of the history of specific gestures and movements to accounts of legendary vogue performers and memorable vogue battles. Everyone is free to request that we stop the video at particular moments or that we replay the entire performance or sections of the performance.

5

Thank you for your help in taking this first step toward developing an archive of vogue!

- The Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project Team

Protocols for listening to the vogue analysis recordings begins with two or more members of the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project listening to or viewing each of the recorded vogue analysis interviews and selecting statements to be used in the vogueology procedure. The vogueology procedure investigates the collective investments in telling the history of the House/Ballroom scene.

1.

Review all of the vogue analysis recordings, maintaining a written log of selected statements from each interview.

Working individually, select statements whose words, syntax or melody will best address the themes of a) learning and teaching vogue within the House/Ballroom scene, b) life inside/outside the scene, c) the AIDS crisis, or d) vogue's relationship to the city.

Additionally, select statements whose words, syntax or melody a) articulate a contradiction, b) articulate a commonly held perspective within the scene, or c) feature a particular richness of expression.

2.

Review the written logs of statements from the recordings of the vogue analysis sessions.

Working together, select as many as four statements per interview that will best amplify a) a predominant theme, b) a thematic contradiction, or c) a significant anomaly or new theme.

Return to the original vogue analysis recordings and extract the audio recording of each statement. Assemble these audio statements into an index.

3.

Review the index of statements with other members of the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project.

Working together, select four statements total that will best assist the vogueology procedure.

Return to the index of audio fragments and locate the statements selected by the Ballroom Archive organizers. Loop each statement for either a minute or for four repetitions. Each loop should fade in for thirty-seconds and, in the final thirty-seconds, fade to silence.

Ultra-red
SCHOOL OF ECHOES
Vogue'ology

IV. Vogue'ology

17 to 30 November 2010

Each of the tables in the *Vogue'ology* exhibition showcase single or multiple objects that have been contributed by House|Ballroom members as potential objects for the Ballroom Archive. The document "Protocols for *Vogue'ology*" guides visitors through reading these archival objects in relation to the audio recordings available in the headphones.

Document

Doc. IV. Ultra-red, "Protocols for *Vogue'ology*"

ULTRA-RED | PROTOCOLS FOR VOGUE' OLOGY

The Ballroom Archive sets the stage for formulating histories of the House|Ballroom scene. How the archive is organized will influence the kinds of histories that emerge. Those histories will, in turn, inform the community's future collective action. Mindful of this connection between past and future, the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project carefully considers how the archive is to be organized and for what purpose.

The protocols for *Vogue'ology* guide you to think about the different themes, genres, and contributions that may be possible in the archive. What is valuable in these different histories? How do they organize the past? What future organizing might they support? And, what are the political implications of one form of history versus another?

STEP I Object Selection

Select one of the objects at a table in the exhibition and study it carefully. On the back of this paper, write down the characteristics that are particularly striking to you.

STEP II Statement Selection

Put on the headphones at the table and listen to as many of the audio recorded statements as you wish. Select one. Make a note on the back of this paper of the key terms contained in that statement.

STEP III Object - Statement

Return to the object that you selected and consider it again, this time in relation to the statement you have heard. Does your understanding of the object shift in light of the statement? What does the object represent in the context of the statement? Does the object underscore or add emphasis to aspects of the statement? On the back of this paper, make a note of what the combination of object and statement produces as an understanding of both of them.

Repeat steps II and III keeping the same object but shifting to a different statement. You may do this as many times as you wish. We suggest considering an object in relation to at least two different statements.

STEP IV Reflection

Review the notes you have made on the back of this paper. Notice those instances where the object is differently illuminated by and illuminates the statements you selected. Describe or organize the differences in your responses. Considering how your encounters with the object and statements shifted, what questions, themes or propositions come to mind concerning how they contribute to the Ballroom Archive. Also, what might your encounters contribute to our understanding of the question of history?

We are interested in hearing what questions, themes or propositions you have composed by following these protocols. If you are willing to share them with us, you may either leave written comments or please e-mail us.

Thank you.

About the Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project

The House|Ballroom scene emerged in New York City in the first half of the last century and is today found in cities across the United States. Members of the scene have organized themselves into houses, such as the House of Ebony, the House of Evisu, and the House of Garçon, which function as intentional communities and artistic collectives. Houses sponsor Balls: large events at which members compete in multiple performance categories. For generations of transgender, bisexual, lesbian and gay Latino and African American men and women, the Balls have provoked radical explorations of style, identity and social inequality. As such, the Balls have inspired propositions about what might be possible if fundamental social structures were radically changed.

The scene's signature performance style is the complex mimetic dance-performance form Vogue, which developed from the careful study of the exaggerated femininity evident in fashion images. Styles and categories of voguing are constantly being influenced and restructured by individual creativity, new trends in popular culture and fashion, as well as shifts in the terms of gender, race, ethnicity and class. As a celebration and analysis of desires, Vogue signals a key political dimension to the House|Ballroom community activities.

The House|Ballroom scene also constitutes a large, multigenerational community of care and support. Through deep bonds of friendship, the scene provides a rich experience of community to its members in the midst of life-changing negotiations around sexual and gender identity. The scene is a crucial site of solidarity for those experiencing the consequences of, and organizing collective resistance to, homophobic violence, transphobia, racism, and the social injustices of homelessness and poverty. As a creative community, the scene has and continues to contribute an enormous amount of its cultural labor to the spheres of music, fashion, design, and performance often with little or no acknowledgment.

The Ballroom Archive & Oral History Project was initiated in the spring of 2010 by Arbert Santana Evisu, a prominent member of the House|Ballroom scene. The commitment to archiving House|Ballroom histories builds on the scene's established tradition of intergenerational learning and a fierce insistence on survival in the face of the AIDS crisis that continuously to disproportionately affect this community. The archive benefits from the contributions by many member of the House|Ballroom scene through donated materials and expertise, and their participation in oral history interviews.