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the eye

Questioning Manhattanville

inside the fight over eminent domain

by Amanda Cormier

making history books history ∞ new york's southern food renaissance ∞ dorm room beats

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QUESTIONING M'VILLE

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cover photo by Angela Radulescu

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I sit down to write this letter—my last as editor of The Eye—surrounded by a controlled chaos that's become familiar over the past two semesters. We've published 23 issues of the magazine since the beginning of the spring, and the production of each one sets in motion a frenetic ritual we've been honing for a year. Our design associates groan over page layouts that don't quite fit, our copy editors wince at sentences that don't sound quite right, our photo staff squints at pixels, and the rest of us scramble around making last-minute edits and thinking of punny headlines and wondering how on earth it's already 3 o'clock in the morning. It's a ritual that's physically and academically taxing, but one I expect many of us are loath to give up. I know I am.

It's people that make these nights enjoyable and the magazine possible. We couldn't operate without our talented team of associate editors and staffers. Our copy editors, Tess Rankin and Wesley Birdsall, have been fastidious gatekeepers of accuracy and clarity. Kristina

Budelis, our visuals editor, has done a fantastic job populating each of our issues with beautiful photographs and illustrations. Senior design editor Haley Vecchiarelli has worked into the wee hours of many a morning assembling our pages and making them look sharp. Raphael Pope-Sussman, our deputy features editor, put together and meticulously edited a compelling piece of long-form journalism week after week. And Melanie Jones and Hillary Busis, The Eye's managing editors, made the magazine's features and arts pages shine. Write these names down, you employers out there. When these people graduate in a semester or three, you should hire them before someone else does.

The Eye is still a young magazine, and next year's editors, who will be selected this weekend, will be in a position not only to continue the work we've done this semester but to reshape the magazine as they see fit. I wish them only the best of luck. It's a challenging and chaotic job, but that's what makes it fun.

—Thomas Rhiel

DOS AND DON'TS FOR BUTLER FINALS PERIOD

BY EVAN OMI

Just in case you don't follow Maggie's advice and get out of Butler, here are some tips for survival during the coming weeks.

Do develop a Butler crush. Despite the fact that they will most likely not reciprocate your longing glances, they will motivate you to study harder so perhaps one day you can show them your intellectual worth. Your teacher will be confused when your seven page art hum paper has a dedication page.

Do secure a spot in 209. Whether it's the malfunctioning heating units, spotty Wi-Fi, glimpses of James Franco, or the Chromeo-bro, you've got to go where the action is, and it's definitely in 209.

Do get it on in the stacks, preferably in a section where there is a book you're looking for. During finals weeks it's all about time management, and what's a more efficient use of time than preventing sexual frustration while also browsing through

those confusing call numbers. Save the romance for winter break.

Don't think just having a laptop and a couple of library books on the desk will save your spot. Especially when it gets close to crunch time and people get desperate. You need something a little more permanent, like wet socks or a mannequin body double.

Don't think just because you aren't sitting in your room you'll procrastinate less. If you are sitting with even one minor acquaintance in Butler you can expect at least eight lengthy Gchat convos, two food runs to Hamdel, and three stops at Blue Java. That leaves you about 15 minutes to write that paper.

Don't leave your ring tone on. There is nothing worse than having "Party in the U.S.A." go off in a big room in Butler. You're bound to get one of those bizarre Butler laughs where everyone stops what they are doing, looks up, and breaks the Butler silence for the sole purpose of laughing at your horribly mainstream taste in music.

URBAN PLANNING

HOPE FOR M'VILLE

BY EVAN OMI

Last week, Columbia lost its eminent domain case, which went to court because the University failed to work out a deal with the owners of four Tuck-It-Away Self-Storage buildings and two gas stations. If the University can't get the ruling overturned, they may have to build around the businesses, meaning we might have some storage facilities close to campus grounds (suck it, Collegeboxes). We'll also have gas stations. Below are several more reasons to be optimistic about the decision:

1. Columbia dining spots have the tendency to carry over-priced pita chips and protein smoothies. Sometimes when you've been doing medical research for eight straight hours you just want a couple of Twinkies and nachos with pour-your-own cheese.

2. If Columbia goes through with the smoking ban, the gas stations could represent valuable pockets of smoking freedom. They could be the Carman benches of Manhattanville. Just don't let any of those lit butts touch the gasoline.

3. At the current rate of construction, Manhattanville probably won't be completed until sometime in the 2030s. At that point students will desperately need gas for their segway-jetpacks devices to take them up to their sky dorms.

4. Does it really matter who owns them, as long as they accept flex?

EYE GUIDE

'TIS THE SEASON

BY MAGGIE PENMAN

It's that time of the year again (and no, we don't mean Christmas). Finals season is upon us, but have no fear! The Eye is here with some tips to help you cope.

1. Get out of the library! Suffering from Butler blues? A change of location can do wonders for your state of mind. Try an alternative study spot, such as the Hungarian Pastry Shop, or, if you're up for a bit of an adventure, French Roast, a cafe on 85th and Broadway. It stays open all night and they keep the coffee coming.

2. Refuel. Ollie's, Pinnacle, and Tom's: the holy trinity of late night grub. Though junk food may not actually help you study, sometimes a little burger grease is just the thing to get those wheels turning.

3. Get some sleep. As it turns out, your mom was right (again)—a good night's sleep and a clear mind is probably going to help you a lot more than the extra hours of cramming. And, if all else fails...

4. Just pull the fire alarm. Apparently it worked for one lucky physics class last May, whose final was interrupted due to the antics of one merry prankster. Cheers!

EDITORS' TEN

WHAT WE'RE INTO THIS WEEK

Our favorite moments of the semester:

1. Spec dinner: It hasn't happened yet, and I probably won't remember any of it, but it will still be THAT amazing.

—Peter Labuza, film editor

2. My kitchen in Watt: Technically it's a room (well, an alcove), not a moment, but it's been excellent. I've learned a bunch of simple recipes, broiled some solid steaks, and perfected the art of the egg cream. A good way to end the semester, year, and decade.

—Raphael Pope-Sussman, deputy editor, features

3. Dos Toros Taqueria in Union Square: The opening of Dos Toros comforts me with the knowledge that, while New York City may not be a Mexican-food mecca, a half-decent burrito is never far away.

—Rebecca Pattiz, music editor

4. Seeing Rihanna at Fashion's Night Out: I'm so happy that I finally had an honest-to-God celebrity encounter this semester. I could also tell you about the time I saw the back of Alec Baldwin's head, if you'd like.

—Hillary Busis, managing editor, a & e

5. Discovering the Reference Room: Something about the long communal tables and tall ceilings makes me productive for hours, sans Red Bull.

—Helen Werbe, style editor

6. Writing my Editors' Ten pick: The most incandescent feeling in the world is when words come to you—they write themselves. Which happens every single time I receive Evan's e-mail. Even this time.

—Yin Yin Lu, books editor

7. P.E. basketball: I was finally able to get exercise on a regular basis, while also improving my long-dormant basketball abilities.

—Evan Omi, Eyesites editor

8. Christmas: Unhindered by plebeian constraints of time, my suite extemporaneously celebrated last weekend. We dressed in flamboyant Christmas sweaters, decorated a tree, sang carols, made a fireplace complete with roaring (construction-paper) fire, and drank spiked eggnog. Our "Christmas" made crunch time considerably cheerier.

—Kristina Budelis, visuals editor

9. Hand-written mail: Getting a letter from my friend Carrie, who is studying at Cambridge, was great. A notice in your inbox is nowhere near as cool as something tucked into a battered envelope.

—Melanie Jones, managing editor, features

10. Academic celebrity encounters: I literally ran into Judith Butler and Gayatri Spivak this fall. Only embarrassed apologies were exchanged (or, rather, offered on my part), but it was still pretty exciting.

—Jia Ahmad, Ideas editor

COMPILED BY EVAN OMI

Dangerously Democratic

scholarship in the digital age

BY SARAH NGU

PHOTO COURTESY OF DANGEROUS CITIZENS ONLINE

Great books have always been an interactive conversation between the author and reader. But Columbia anthropology professor Neni Panourgia's new project takes the concept of an "interactive conversation" a step further. The recent online release of "Dangerous Citizens: The Greek Left and the Terror of the State" by far exceeds the publication of the book by the same name (published this September) in being revolutionary. Instead of being your average Kindle e-book or online PDF, the new Web site is a freely accessed interactive, multimedia text that exemplifies an exciting but problematic pathway for published scholarship.

Diana Price, communications officer of the Center for Digital Research and Scholarship, explains that the online adaptation of "Dangerous Citizens" is not a replacement but an "enhancement" of the published book. Panourgia set out to tell the stories and history of Greek Leftists who were tortured in the 20th century but found that she could not include all the material she wanted in the print version. A collaboration with CDRS, an organization dedicated to enhancing scholarly communication with new media, allowed Panourgia infinite room to include additional archival material, unpublished memoirs, and conversational side notes. For example, readers seeking more information about events referenced

online can follow hypertext links explaining various events or leading them to videos. Other media features include interviews, songs, interactive maps (a Google map that allows users to upload pictures), and chronologies, all of which heighten the interaction between text and reader. The last two features—the interactive map and chronology—will be completed a month after the online book is launched.

The ability to work on the book after it is launched is another advantage the Internet offers. It's an advantage for the author but also for the audience; contributions and comments can be added to the Web site (that is, after being vetted by Panourgia). This collaborative interface embraces and concretizes the potential the Internet offers for collaboration across disciplines and innovation of the research process.

In the traditional publishing model, academics submit articles for free to a subscription-based journal, which, after editing and peer-reviewing the articles, publishes them online or in print. This limits the size of the audience and speed of dissemination due to the associated fee. Although the creative features of "Dangerous Citizens" are powerful, the fact that it's freely accessible is perhaps even more remarkable. Open-access scholarship, due to its low distribution costs, increases readership and publicity, both of which are needed in the highly specialized field of academia. Publicity through free, online versions has empirically translated into higher sales of the printed work, which is why more and more publishers like National Academies Press are releasing their publi-

cations online for free. This is the business model that Panourgia is following, one of the many models that are being debated in the world of publishing, especially among academic journals who store the bulk of academic knowledge.

But who'll pay? According to Kathryn Pope, head of the Scholarly Communication Program at CDRS, while distribution costs of digital scholarship remain low, production costs are still rather high. The most successful model is the author-pay model, in which the author pays a processing fee with his submission. In another model, a university subsidizes the production costs of an article that one of its own faculty members publishes, which Columbia University did for "Dangerous Citizens."

PANOURGIA SET OUT TO TELL THE STORIES AND HISTORY OF GREEK LEFTISTS BUT FOUND SHE COULD NOT INCLUDE ALL THE MATERIAL IN THE PRINT VERSION.

The bottom-line is also important for faculty members who worry that underfunding would eliminate the peer-review service that journals provide, a process that establishes the respect and credibility that professors need for tenure. This is especially true in the humanities, in contrast to the sciences in which the drive to be the first to claim a discovery is integral for future funding, according to Pope, who has talked to Columbia professors about publishing their articles online for free.

"Columbia is definitely not ahead of the curve [in open-access scholarship]," Pope comments. Faculty members elsewhere, such as at Harvard and MIT, have already voted in favor of open-access policies. However, she states that Columbia is planning to sign an open-access compact within a few weeks and set aside funds to subsidize fee-based, open-access publications.

The bottom line, Pope says, is that scholarly publishing is currently not sustainable. Partly because of a fear journals have that their articles will be released online and partly because there are fewer and fewer journals, subscription fees are rising and universities are complaining. Just like every other business, the academic publishing industry must keep up with the changing media landscape not only to increase access to information but also to survive. ●



Revolutionary Rooms

the eye interviews miranda elliot

BY ZACH DYER

PHOTO COURTESY OF MIRANDA ELLIOT

Over the past week, Columbia has received an overwhelming amount of media attention due to a gender-neutral housing policy that was recently proposed and approved by the Columbia College Student Council. The four students behind the policy, Sarah Weiss, CC '10, Sean Udell, CC '11, Avi Edelman, CC '11, and Miranda Elliot, CC '10, have worked on this policy for a long time. Yet just as it seems to be gaining ground, negative media coverage is threatening to undercut the policy's noble goals. The Eye sits down with Elliot, president of GendeRevolution to discuss the policy, living in sin, and the closest bathroom in Hamilton.

From what I understand, this policy has been in the works for a while now, and I know you were part of the group to propose the idea to CCSC—how did you get involved in that?

It's kind of the result of years of discussion about it. It was thrown out at a GendeRevolution meeting a few years ago as something we could potentially work on, and I know EAAH had thought about working on it as well. So it's definitely something that's been up in the air, and people had been thinking about it for a while. It was proposed in CCSC and heavily worked on by Sarah Weiss and a bunch of other people, and I was brought on toward the end when we were developing the actual concrete policy, and my role was to make sure that it was inclusive of trans people. Our part as GendeRevolution was to make sure that it was inclusive of transgender people and gender-nonconforming people and making sure the language was not that of simply male and female—you know, binary language—but that it encompassed our entire community.

GendeRevolution is an advocacy group, right?

GendeRevolution is a group that was started three years ago, and we got official recognition two years ago. And yes, we are dedicated to advocating transgender rights on campus.

And what exactly does your group do on campus?

In addition to this gender-neutral housing campaign right now, we are in the process of developing a gender-neutral bathroom campaign as well. So up until now, we have mapped out bathrooms in campus—which is taking a while—but after that, we are looking to advocate for more gender-neutral bathrooms—obviously, not turning every bathroom into gender-neutral—but at least having one or two in a building. We're also working to make it clear where there are gendered bathrooms on campus. Say, if you are on the fifth floor of Hamilton and need to know where the nearest bathroom is—gendered or non-gendered—it can be confusing.

The big issue that the media is having a field day with, that we keep hearing all these funny quotes about, is that they are making it out to seem like your policy is not advocating safety but rather... sex.

I found the whole thing—I don't know if funny is the right word—but definitely strange. Because obviously, our intention was not to form a policy to help straight people have sex more easily—we didn't propose this to CCSC for that reason. And it seems like a pretty skewed view of the issue to focus so heavily on that, when that doesn't seem to be based on any sort of statistic, or logic, based on other instances of the policy implemented—it just seems like our critics have all these fears that are being played out.

And in general they don't seem to be reporting on what you guys designed the policy for.

The reporter from the Post actually contacted me and had me on the phone, but didn't ask any questions, but rather wanted me to find her other sources, so I feel like it was poor journalism and research on her part. A lot of the media attention is—in general—is poorly researched as to what the policy is designed for. Obviously, I'm not

OBVIOUSLY OUR INTENTION WAS NOT TO FORM A POLICY TO HELP STRAIGHT PEOPLE HAVE SEX MORE EASILY.

saying it shouldn't be for straight people to live together, that's not my place, and I don't really care about that aspect, but our focus is the safety and comfort of trans people.

Are you at all concerned that all the media attention will hurt the policy's chances of being put into place?

Honestly, yes. I am kind of worried that the administrators that are considering the policy right now would be skewed negatively by this media coverage and get the wrong idea about what we're trying to do. I actually sent an e-mail to the reporter from the Post to that effect, because I do feel that this is an important issue of safety for LGBTQ people and I think it's essential for these options to be here for people. And to have it be so sensationalized really is a disservice to making sure there are safe living spaces for trans people and queer people and all people in our community.

You'd think that Columbia was the first school to put such a policy in place, due to the backlash. Are there other schools that are considering or already have a similar gender-neutral housing policy?

I'm pretty sure the University of Chicago is doing a pilot program right now, and there are several other Ivy League schools that also have this policy. I don't know why we're getting so much press versus other schools, but I guess that's just part of living in New York.

They like to pick on us.

Yeah, they do. They definitely do. ●



These Big City Dreams

size is all relative

BY CAITLIN BROWN

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHEN R. BROWN

As we pulled off the highway, I yanked the pearly buds from my ears and the Dire Straits gave way to the stuffy silence of the bus. The quiet would explain the glares from the frumpy woman to my right—my music must have been loud. The move to local roads meant we were a mere half hour away, and my overwhelming excitement for my first trip home from college took over, usurping the place of any embarrassment I might have felt at the fact that everyone around me now knew I had the music taste of a 60-year-old man.

EVERYONE AROUND ME NOW KNEW I HAD THE MUSIC TASTE OF A 60-YEAR-OLD MAN.

We huffed along past the park, past the decrepit exterior of the high school and of the bank and of my favorite little burrito place. It was familiar territory, but something had changed. Not as though I were seeing it for the first time, but as though I were wearing my grandfather's bifocals—the scale was off. The past couple of months had conditioned me to a landscape of towering apartments and dizzying extravagance, and my hometown now felt quaint than I ever could have imagined it would. Nearing downtown, we passed the colorful houses in rows and the bakery with rickety metal tables outside even though it was much too cold; we drove by couples walking their dogs by the river and parents taking their kids to the White House.

And it was not until I saw the Secret Service milling around the gates and the snipers on the roof that I reminded myself that I do not actually live in a rural, farming town tucked away in the depths of middle America and removed from the hustle of the urbane.

In fact, I live in Washington, DC, about five minutes from the president.

And the high school is only decrepit in comparison to the Gothic cathedral looming over it. And the bank is one of five PNCs on the same block.

The fact that a mere three months in New York City have made the nation's capital feel like a farm makes you wonder about either, 1) the overpowering influence of the Big Apple or, 2) my sanity.

One of my most distinct memories from Columbia so far is that of reading Georg Simmel's "The Metropolis and Mental Life" in the first week of an urban sociology course. I remember vividly the dread that crept through my veins as this man told me, with irritating objectivity, the deteriorating effect that the next four years of city life would have on my psyche. "From these two dangers of metropolitan life," writes Simmel, "we are saved by antipathy which is the latent adumbration of actual antagonism." A little extreme, I thought, but I could buy it—a few trips on the 1-line have made me well aware of the value New Yorkers place on silence, stony glances, and pretending no one else exists. As I read on, though, my scoffs turned to worry and my worry to horror. Simmel actually argues that this coldness is central to the functioning of city life, that it forms the "distantiation and deflection without which this type of life could not be carried on at all." Alright first of all, distantiation is not a real word. And second of all, get me the hell out of here.

I dropped that class shortly thereafter, mostly because I had overscheduled myself like every other frantic first-year, but partially because I didn't want to be disillusioned any further. I had already signed up for this college thing, and I wanted to continue operating in blissful ignorance. Those few weeks of reading and self-reflection, however, stayed with me, and I found myself stopping to think about my developing urbanism as I established roots in

my new home. I performed mental checks every now and then—as I poured over books in Butler, as I relaxed on the steps in the quad, as I went running in Riverside—and determined that I did not feel any more of a city girl than I had before. Were the projections about the high-strung life of a New Yorker exaggerated? Or had I always been adjusted to city life, with years of living in another metropolitan area under my belt?

My return to "the farm" of DC put things into perspective and helped answer that question. Though the skyline is not as tall, the city I call home feels no smaller than New York City; the people are just as frosty on public transport, tourists seem to be as pulled to the National Mall as to Times Square. Emphasizing the fierce independence and antipathy necessary for the survival of urbanites, sociologists evidently assume a complete lack of community within cities. While, of course, it is impossible to claim that the entirety of New York City or the District of Columbia constitutes a community, both of these cities are composed of a patchwork of thriving bodies of people whose foci are largely inward. It is this patchwork that gives me a certain immunity from the purported feeling of isolation in city life; in DC, I am part of a smaller residential community not unlike Morningside Heights. After all, I was only struck by the landscape of my hometown after I took a step back, after I removed myself from the narrow world of my childhood, and approached the city—literally—as an outsider looking in.

Oh, and the burrito place is a Chipotle. ●





Questioning Manhattanville

inside the fight over eminent domain

by Amanda Cormier



IS COLUMBIA'S DREAM OF EXPANSION OVER? That's the question everyone has been asking in the wake of Thursday's ruling by the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court that the Empire State Development Corporation cannot use eminent domain to seize private property in Manhattanville for market rate compensation. The decision, which shocked many who have been following the case, threatens to disrupt Columbia's \$6.28 billion plan to build a new campus in the neighborhood. While the University owns 91 percent of the land on which it currently plans to build the new campus, it has been unable to purchase the six properties—four locations of Tuck-it-Away Self-Storage and two gas stations—that comprise the remaining 9 percent of the proposed building area. The underground space that would reach seven stories below the campus is also at stake, since the below-grade area is owned by the city and legally can only be obtained by Columbia through eminent domain, according to the December 2008 General Project Plan.

Columbia must now look to the Court of Appeals—the highest court in the state—with the hope that the court will uphold the use of eminent domain in Manhattanville. If not, the future of the project is uncertain. In 2004, University President Lee Bollinger said that if the University “cannot really have the opportunity to develop the entire site, then we won't do it at all. It's really that important.”

This week, The Eye sat down with Tuck-it-Away owner Nick Sprayregen and Law School professor Michael Heller to discuss the significance of Thursday's ruling.

NICK SPRAYREGEN

Represented by former New York Civil Liberties Union Executive Director Norman Siegel, Sprayregen has been the most visible figure in the ongoing legal battle against Columbia's expansion.

So how are you feeling right now?

I am feeling very relieved that the majority of the court ruled in our favor, because what that means is that it buttresses the arguments that we have been making in the press for these last few years that there has been numerous illegal and unconstitutional actions by the state and Columbia. So I applaud the judges that ruled in our favor in making this decision because although our allegations have been very clear to Norman Siegel and me, we were always concerned about how they would play out in the courts, basically because New York courts have traditionally allowed virtually all eminent domain cases to proceed forward. The legal definition is they always provided a high level of deference to the decision-making processes. And that was largely our stumbling block, but fortunately and courageously this court realized that because of how egregious the actions have been on the part of the state and the various players here, that they could not allow this condemnation to continue, and they had to step in and put a stop to it.

Can you describe the public response to the court ruling?

I've probably received, since Thursday, hundreds and hundreds of e-mails from people that I haven't been in contact with for years and years, and perhaps a hundred e-mails from people who don't know me. And the overwhelming feeling from these people has basically been a big “thank you” that finally someone is doing something.

They're saying thank you to you, thank you to the court for finally making a difference here. It was repeated instances of David versus Goliath, so it's been very satisfying that they were able to get these e-mails to me. And I have attempted these last few days to respond to everyone. I'm still in the process of doing that, but I think it's important that everyone who's taken the time to write to me, for me to respond.

Do you feel comfortable in that role of David?

[Chuckles.] I wasn't comfortable at the beginning, but I've grown accustomed and comfortable to it now because I understand, especially now that the decision has been rendered, how this is so much more than just a matter of my family or even the people of West Harlem and Columbia, but how this case has been and hopefully will continue to take on a far larger context of importance to people from across the state as well as across the country—in terms of it being a test case or it being the opportunity to roll back the eminent-domain abuse that people know about and for it to really stand out as a beacon of how a court can get it right.

You have said Columbia believes its mission is to “tame” Manhattanville and likened Bollinger to a “religious figure.” What gave you that impression?

I was struck by his speech when he first came on board in 2002, by how insulting it was to those of us who lived here, to those of us who worked here, to those of us who owned property here, that he would speak about his intentions from a perspective as if it was Manifest Destiny, that it was a religious right to take over the entire area. There wasn't any nuance. There wasn't any ability to compromise from the very start. It's like Saddam Hussein drawing a line in the sand, where they drew the boundaries of this irregular shaped campus, but never explained why it had to be just like that. The reality is if the decision is upheld and they're not able to build over everything, and they build a large percentage of that, the campus will be fine. It's disingenuous for Mr. Bollinger all this time to be saying, “We need everything.” There's no reason for that. The fact is, the campus will still be built. And it will do everything that they want to it do, albeit perhaps now with not quite as much square footage.

Back to the lawsuit, what's next?

We're going to have to start preparing for the appeal that the state says it will take. The appeal will be very quick—probably by March or April it will all be done. There will be some very quick legal documents that go back and forth in January and February, the Court of Appeals will set a hearing date for probably some time in March or April, and they will make a decision probably within a week thereafter. I think it's important that we don't let our guard down and rest on our laurels because we still have work to do. It's important to do what we've apparently done here, which is to explain appropriately to the next court why they need to take a very acute look at the actions of the state and Columbia and hopefully rule like the appellate division did that what was going on was improper and unethical and illegal.

How would you describe your relationship with this community?

I think it's very, very positive. Within an hour or two, some of the first people I told about this were members of the community, and throughout this week I've gotten lots of e-mails of appreciation and thanks and what a wonderful thing it is. The real unfortunate thing, however, is that even if we prevail, the fact remains that the mere threat of eminent domain has largely



Nick Sprayregen,
owner of Tuck-it-
Away Self-Storage

Kristina Budelis

been completely effective in terms of meeting Columbia's goal, which is to take over the entire area. So unfortunately there doesn't seem to be any mechanism to roll back what has already been done.

Has the legal fight changed that relationship?

I think it's gotten stronger since this fight has started. I would say that prior to this struggle I probably did not have enough of a connection to the community. But one positive that has come about from this is getting to know people who live here, people who work here, other property owners much more than I had prior to this. The fact is, I spend an awful lot of my time here. This is my main office, this is where I probably am 80 percent of my time when I'm working, so this is all very important, and I take the role that I played in terms of basically being the leader of this legal fight very seriously. So that's why I look at this as much more than just Nick versus the state and Nick versus Columbia. It's not just that we won, but the decision shows how corrupt and wrong the process was.

Is there anything you don't like about this neighborhood?

I don't think anyone's ever asked me that. I think that there should be more development. I think there should be more activity. I think that what has gone on these last bunch of years with Columbia taking over properties and draining them of all life has been very detrimental to the community, and I think that all you have to do is take a look at how this community has been moving forward despite all that to see how much more it could have been, by virtue of, say, the Fairway supermarket, the Dinosaur [Bar-B-Q] restaurant, some of the other ones, to see that there's tremendous potential here. So I wouldn't say I have any dislikes, but I would just say that there needs to be more activity. And I largely blame Columbia for that.

Are you feeling confident?

I've always been cautiously optimistic that we would prevail. I am elated that the majority has agreed with what we've been saying and has pulled the cover over this elusive atmosphere between Columbia and the state and has denounced it in the strongest manner. I know we still have a struggle ahead of us, and I can only hope that there are enough members in the Court of Appeals that will take the time, like the judges did in this court, to really review the record, really review the legal documents and our arguments. If they do, I think that we will prevail. If instead they merely defer to the decisions by the ESDC, then I think that unfortunately they will do what lots of courts across the whole country have been doing these past years, of merely deferring to condemnations without really looking appropriately and accurately enough at what the facts are.

MICHAEL HELLER

Lawrence A. Wien Professor of Real Estate Law and author of "The Gridlock Economy: How Too Much Ownership Wrecks Markets, Stops



Michael Heller, Lawrence A. Wien Professor of Real Estate Law, Columbia University

Innovation, and Costs Lives," Heller is an expert in property law and one of the foremost scholars of eminent domain issues.

A lot of people have framed the recent case as a struggle between David and Goliath. Is this victory of "the little guy" surprising from a legal standpoint?

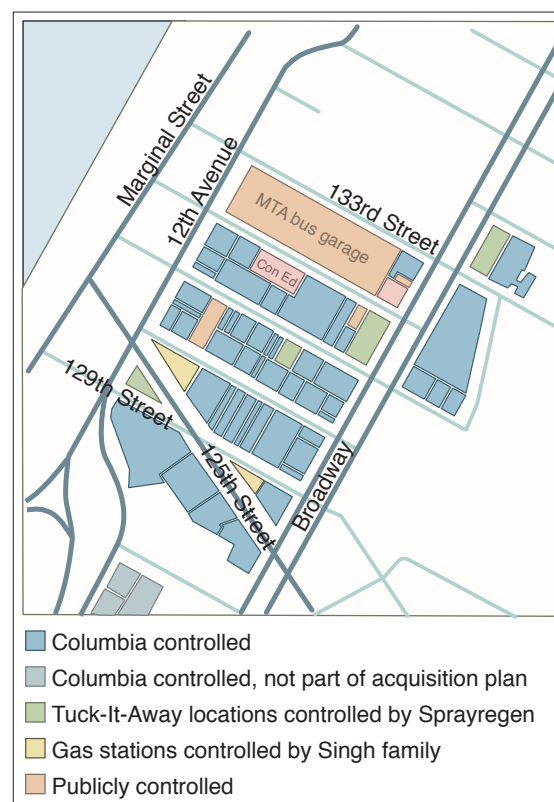
The important thing to remember is that this is an intermediate decision, which means that this is just one step in a much longer process. And for him [Sprayregen] to ultimately win the case, he has to win at the next level of the New York courts. And he may win, but that would be surprising to me because the law and the history of this area of law have tended to go very much in the other direction. Intermediate trials courts do all sorts of things, but they often are overturned when it gets to the highest court.

How does Manhattanville fit within the general trend of major developments?

Under current American law there are two ways to acquire property. You either buy it from someone who is willing to sell it to you at a price you both agree on or you condemn it—you seize it for some public use and pay just compensation at a fair market value. But those are the only two approaches. So if Columbia can't work out a deal with the six lots that aren't part of the Columbia parcel that they want, people have a right to hold onto their property, except if the government takes it for public use, which is the proposition. So right now there are no other options. There are proposals floating around in the academic literature to create mechanisms that would create more options. Under current law there are only two options—voluntary assembly or eminent domain for public use and just compensation.

The point is that this is a very general problem in the American economy, which is that more and more today, the really valuable forms

of economic development—job creation, job growth, cultural creation—require assembly of large parcels of land. It used to be the case that you'd buy a piece of land, subdivide it, build houses, and that would be the path to creating economic growth. Today, more and more, the path for jobs and growth is that you put pieces together and you create the kinds of economic development that require large parcels. Historically we've had very good tools for breaking that up into small pieces and subdividing land, and historically we've had poor tools for putting them back together. The only tools that exist historically have been that you cut out a deal, or if it's sufficiently publicly spirited, the government



graphic by Yipeng Huang

steps in and takes it from you and gives it to you for this larger project.

These aren't very good solutions because often you can't work out a deal, which is the case with Manhattanville, and often with eminent domain people perceive it as being unfair, capricious, or inefficient. So the two solutions we have—voluntary and seizure—neither of those are very good. There are other countries that have better solutions. It is a general problem in an economy where more and more value comes from assembly, that the legal tools we have are all related to fragmentation.

What options would Columbia have if it doesn't ultimately prevail here? What do developers traditionally do when they aren't able to get land through eminent domain?

It is often the case that projects are amended or modified to account for holdouts, a holdout being someone who won't sell as a part of a larger assembly. There are many examples in New York of a building that builds around and above, or sort of circles the building that's the holdout. That's a fairly common problem in a world where you don't have good tools for assembly. If you can't use eminent domain and all you have is voluntary sales, and someone won't sell for whatever reason, you have to change the project. It depends on the location of the holdout in respect to the larger parcel. If Columbia controls most of the parcels, they'll have to rethink the engineering or design to see what the project would look like without the parcel they wouldn't be able to control.

How will the recent Atlantic Yards decision affect the appeal?

The Atlantic Yards decision was by this higher court. It came out just recently and was essentially the same issue, and it went the other way, in a 6-1 vote. What that suggests to me—the intermediate decision going the other way, although it has very similar facts and very similar legal issues—is that it doesn't have the deepest legal grounding. It seems to run against New York law, which is the Atlantic Yards decision, and federal law, which is the Kilo case of a few years ago.

What are the odds the Supreme Court would rule on this case?

You can never know the odds of the outcome of a particular case. If you look at the Atlantic Yards decision, it suggests that the highest New York court reads New York law consistent with federal law in this area, which would tend toward allowing use of eminent domain in this very ordinary example of it. But that said, you never know if they'll want to change their understanding of the law. All eminent-domain cases are very fact-specific. They depend so much on the context of the particular user, the particular holdouts, and the process that the city went through to authorize eminent domain. Because the case is so fact-specific, it is easy to find differences between cases that otherwise seem similar. But it's also easy for courts to say these pieces are the same. It really depends on the direction that the court's going in this area of law.

One part that I haven't seen written up yet in the intermediate ruling that just came down is that it was a decision that was five judges. Two of them struck down eminent domain on substantive grounds—that the city's eminent domain procedure wasn't a public use as they understood. Two of the judges said that there was. One of the judges who agreed with the outcome—that is, to send the case back and not authorize eminent domain—disagreed on the reason. That third judge said the reason they sent it back was for a procedural request, rather than for a substantive question.

It wasn't that the eminent domain wasn't for public use, but a procedural point: that the process of closing the record and handing over documents wasn't done correctly. That's an alternative ground for deciding the case, which is much harder to predict the outcome of how the next court will handle that. The decision had three different opinions—a plurality opinion with two judges, a dissent also with two judges, and a concurrence with one judge, who was agreeing with the outcome but not with the reasoning. So what does the intermediate appellate case stand for? It's not clear that it stands for the proposition that this was a bad use of eminent domain, because there weren't three judges who said that, there were two judges who said that. Also, it isn't that this is a good use of eminent domain because there were two judges that said that. But there were three judges that said the procedure that was followed wasn't exactly right—it had to do with the Freedom of Information Act requests and compliance with that. That issue is one that the highest court hasn't really dealt with. It's possible the case can be upheld on that ground instead of on the substantive grounds. If that were the case, the case would then go back to fix the procedural mistakes, and you would make more and more rounds.

How does an institution like Columbia—which has these vast resources—make such critical procedural mistakes?

I'm not saying that there were procedural mistakes. I think that's one of the issues in the case—is were there procedural mistakes that were relevant and material? The process takes years and is extremely complicated, lots of hearings, and there's potential challenges to every

little tiny thing that goes on along the way. Potentially, there are a million different things that you can raise. The judges in this case picked out one and said it was important. That may or may not be a reasonable position. There is only one other factor, which is who is concerned about that. It's hard to know how that will survive also at the next level. Litigation is complicated, and there's always the possibility that someone will say at some point that something procedurally was done incorrectly. That may or may not be credible to a judge.

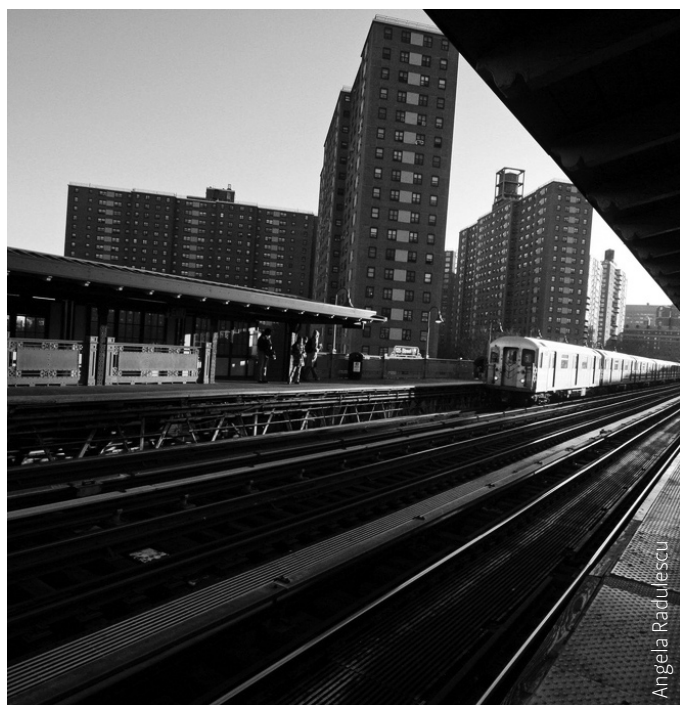
IF COLUMBIA CAN'T WORK OUT A DEAL, PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO HOLD ONTO THEIR PROPERTY, EXCEPT IF THE GOVERNMENT TAKES IT FOR PUBLIC USE—RIGHT NOW THERE ARE NO OTHER OPTIONS.

Do you think it would have been easier for a public university—whose mission might be more closely associated with the notion of public use—to move into Manhattanville?

That's an interesting question. There's some discussion in the opinion about state law as to what constitutes a civic project, but I don't know the details of how that's been interpreted in the past. My general read of Kilo and other public-use cases is that the courts in this country have historically given very broad and appropriate deference to legislative decisions that are used as a public use, especially because if land is taken there is just compensation. So against that backdrop of the very high level of deference to a legislative determination of use as a public use, the determination of use by a school as a public use normally would be given a lot of deference. Whether the school is public or private, I'm not sure would be an issue, given the backdrop of deference historically in this country.

What is the definition of "public use"?

Under American law the decision of whether a use is a public use, the decision is afforded enormous and appropriate deference by the courts. The language is often whether there is any conceivable public use—it doesn't depend so much on the content of the specifics of the building, as it does on the determination that the use of eminent domain will lead to some public use. And that public use might be a new shopping center. It might be a new stadium. It might be some other form of economic development that leads to job creation. In this context it leads to research and more educational benefit. What the legislature decides is public use historically has been given a lot of deference by the courts. What's surprising about this decision is how little deference it gives. ●



Angela Radulescu

NORTHERN COMFORT

city slickers discover fried chicken

BY NATASSIA MILLER

PHOTO BY TALIA KORI

Though it's often been overlooked or dismissed as unrefined and unhealthy, Southern food is gaining unprecedented popularity on this side of the Mason-Dixon line. Harlem has historically been soul food's Yankee outpost—but a recent upswing in restaurants serving Southern cuisine shows that the gastronomic tradition has begun to travel downtown.

Students from the South give different possible reasons for the recent emergence of Southern food. Alex Kirk, a Columbia College junior and a native Texan, believes that it's the result of a nostalgic call for comforting, American fare. Alabaman Sam Frank, another Columbia College junior, credits the recent surge on several Southern chefs, notably Frank Stitt. "I think Southern food is generally growing to be considered more gourmet than it has been," he says. George Weld, owner of Southern brunch hot spot Egg, provides a more historical insight: "The South has the most substantial and uninterrupted food trend than anywhere else in the country ... [it's] a goldmine for authentic American food."

On the whole, Southern food has remained true to its identity despite health trends: heavy dishes like country fried steak and biscuits and gravy continue to be an inherent aspect of Southern culture. Yet up in Harlem, it seems as if the immunity to change is not as strong. Soul food, a cuisine distinct from its more general "Southern" counterpart, has deep roots. "Soul food traditionally belongs to

Black culture," explains Kirk. "It emerged out of slavery." Slaves learned how to cook using the pig's discarded body parts, such as the feet, ham hock and hog jowls, which add flavor to soul food classics like collard greens and black-eyed peas.

SOUTHERN FOOD IS GETTING MORE GOURMET.

Gentrification and an emphasis on a healthy diet has led vegetarian and raw soul food restaurants to replace landmark Harlem establishments like Louise's Family Restaurant. Frank observes the change as a sign that soul food is adapting to the demands of a modern lifestyle. "While on the one hand it's sad to see Harlem's restaurants going out of business, on the other hand it's probably a good thing that Harlem's residents are starting to make healthier choices," he says.

Luckily for Norma Darden, food preparation at her restaurant, Miss Mamie's Spoonbread Too, has been relatively healthy from the beginning. "The menu was cholesterol-free long before the law was implemented," she claims. Darden—a former model—admits to always having an eye for health. She substitutes smoked turkey for pork in the collard greens, as well as oranges, cloves and cinnamon for sugar. Nevertheless, there are those who oppose this change in menu. After eating at Miss Mamie's, Kirk was disappointed with the alternate ingredients. "It's the ham hock, the pork, that adds flavor to the collard greens. Substituting that takes out the part that makes the food good," she says.

Despite health concerns, there is one Southern staple that has unexpectedly flourished in New York: fried chicken. Students have long frequented Harlem's historic soul food restaurants, but since David Chang introduced a \$100 Korean and Southern-style fried chicken dinner at Momofuku Noodle Bar, the grease-infused bird has had a persistent presence throughout the city.

And New Yorkers aren't complaining. In fact, the demand for fried chicken has been so great that when Robert De Niro opened his new Tribeca spot, Locanda Verde, New York Magazine reported that the remaining dates for the restaurant's Monday night fried chicken dinners were all booked. As this \$41 prix fixe menu attests, the bird has clearly transcended recession specials.

While fried chicken ascends into the realm of haute cuisine, the Southern trend provides restaurants in the city with an opportunity to do the same. When Weld decided to open Egg, he wanted to create an environment that would counteract the established view of hokey Southern joints. "Some places that I went to in the city had ridiculous décor," he explains. They interpreted "Southern food" as a "synonym for too much food."

Sean Josephs has the same idea in mind when designing his Brooklyn whiskey bar, Char No. 4. He specifically tried to avoid taking a "Walt Disney approach of what the South is supposed to be," he says. Wheelbarrows and mounds of peanut skins are conspicuously absent in Josephs's restaurant. Instead, an impressive collection of 150 whiskeys, amber tones, and a more modern style add elegance to the space.

Tipsy Parson, another recently opened Southern joint in Chelsea, also provides a chic atmosphere where fried cheese curds, braised pork shank and skillet cornbread can be devoured. Frank hopes this upscale trend will bring the South the culinary respect it deserves: "People picture Southern food as casual in part because that's what tends to be sold here," he says. "Remember, rich Southerners have always had formal dinners."

No matter how delicious the food may be, economic motivations could also be a driving force behind these restaurant openings. Even when not served in a casual environment, the bulk of Southern recipes are less expensive to prepare than, say, foie gras. As Josephs explains, "With the economy, a lot of people are revamping their restaurants—and homey, comfort food fits that bill."

Though it is hard to predict how long the current interest in Southern cuisine will last, its influence has nonetheless spread throughout the city. As Southern chefs get their shot at making an impression, hopefully there will be a ripple effect that could revive Harlem's slowly disappearing soul food industry. In the meantime, New Yorkers still have the opportunity to revel in authentic Southern comfort. ●



At Miss Mamie's Spoonbread Too, soul food is tasty and healthy.

ELECTRIC FEEL

has garageband killed the garage rock star?

BY DEVIN BRISKI

PHOTOS BY KRISTINA BUDELIS
AND JOEY SHEMAUEL

"In the garage where I belong, no one hears me sing this song," Weezer (somewhat ironically) moaned to a generation of '90s Gen X-ers. Rivers Cuomo's descriptions of Ace Frehley and Peter Dinklage posters waiting for him to come home from high school and jam on his guitar depicted a classic American trope: the garage band. But now, instead of plugging in their amps and strumming on their guitars, many students turn on their browsers and click on a virtual guitar icon to load one of the many electronic production applications available.

Fittingly, today's indie idols are the digital-sounding MGMT and Crystal Castles rather than longhaired grungers from Seattle. Even classic pop seems to have gone electronic: Lady Gaga's "The Fame Monster," released on November 24th, sounds a little more like synth-filled Europop than tried-and-true bubblegum to her American devotees.

Electronic music has also surged in popularity on Columbia's campus. "Daft Punk has always been around, and now there's Justice and MSTRKRFT," says Tiffany Lee, a Columbia College sophomore. "I saw MSTRKRFT twice last year—the first time it wasn't that crowded, and the second time everyone I knew from Columbia was going."

Due to the ease of entry-level electronic music production, many student fans have also begun to

produce and build extensive music portfolios on their own. Their reasons are numerous: traditional garage bands require multiple instruments, space, and understanding neighbors, while electronic music can be produced alone, on a computer wearing headphones. Teamwork, a technical knowledge of instruments, and a significant initial financial investment are no longer necessary.

"Now you can get access to all the tools you need to produce a decent electronic song for free if you know where to look," says electronic music producer and Columbia College sophomore Simon Herzog.

"You can spontaneously work on electronic music. It doesn't require a lot of setup, a lot of planning, a space for rehearsal," says Coleman Moore, who co-produces music with his friend and fellow Columbia College senior Marcus Andersson, in a band called Feudal Soul. The two compose self-described "sensuous music for high school and college girls."

"We're all about feeling, our words don't mean anything. It's very ethereal," says Moore.

Students may be drawn to electronic music production based on the novelty and openness of this new medium. "It's an open field," says Moore. Herzog describes the appeal of producing with "entire soundscapes that were impossible up until a few decades ago."

In Lee's words, "Because electronica is so restricted to uniform beats, being able to express creativity is a lot harder. A lot of people say electronic music is all the same, but to see a lot of artists doing such different things in such a confined structure."

Herzog has already compiled and self-released a collection of his tracks and is looking to expand his Internet presence. Lee hopes to do the same with her electro-funk productions and remixes in the coming year.

Lee and Herzog are also in the process of forming the Columbia Electronic Music Society, which will serve as "a forum for exchanging music and knowledge, and even equipment, being able to jam together, learning new DJ and production techniques," explains Herzog.

In fact, Columbia is already an intellectual powerhouse for music technology innovations. Founded in the 1950s, Columbia's very own Computer Music Center was responsible for many early technological developments in digital music. SEAS alum Robert Moog conceptualized the modern synthesizer while studying at the CMC in the 1960s. The Moog is now regarded as "the Holy Grail of synthesizer technology," as Herzog puts it.

**"YOU CAN NEVER PRODUCE
[ELECTRONIC] MUSIC
LIVE—YOU CAN ONLY PLAY
SIMPLIFIED VERSIONS."**

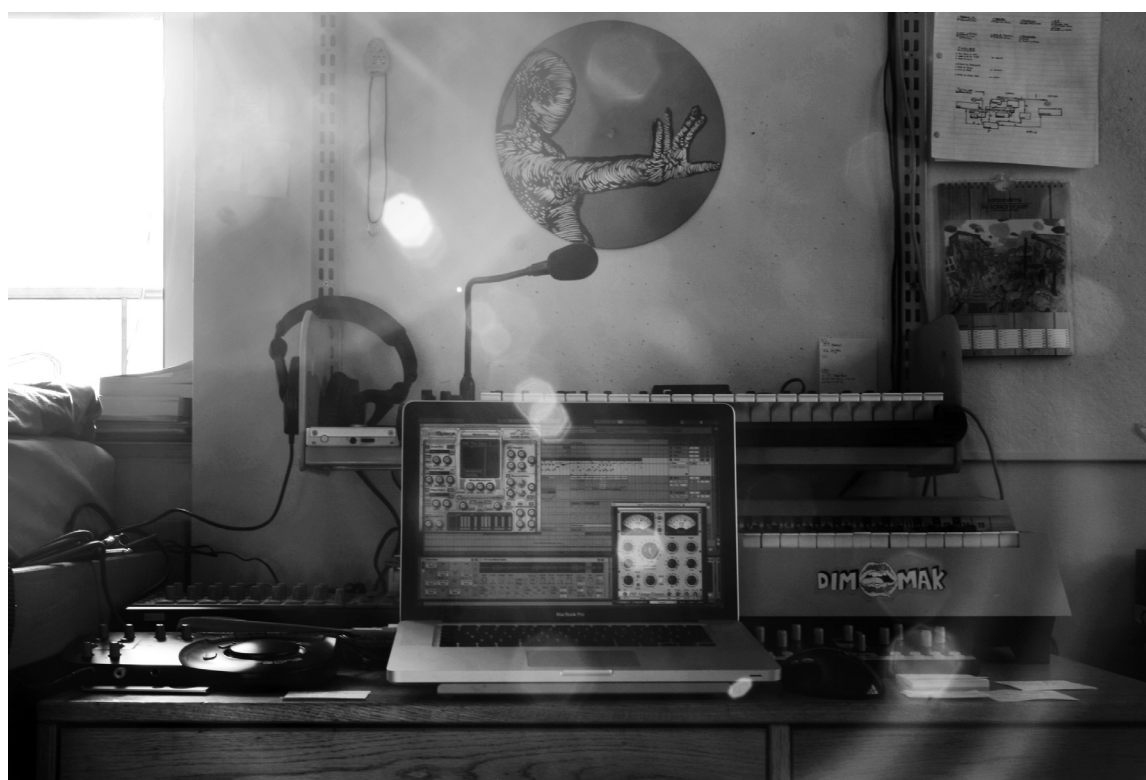
The Center itself is a trek from campus on Broadway and 125th Street, but distance is no obstacle for undergrads with a passion for digital sound. With experimental spatial music scores adorning the walls and a confusion of wires, vintage synthesizers, and half constructed instruments crowding the rooms, the CMC screams musical genius.

Many current grad students have been continuing the work of their electro forefathers at the CMC. Jeff Snyder, a doctor of music arts composition student in the music department at the School of Arts and Sciences, has been developing a new hypersensitive controller that will allow producers to have more nuanced control over their music called the Manta. He is currently running a small business—SnyderPhonics—out of CMC's offices.

Innovations like Snyder's keep electro producers coming back for more. "It's just getting more and more developed—there are new tools that come out every day," says Herzog. "The types of sounds that you can make are literally boundless."

Douglas Repetto, CMC's director of research, explains that advancements in technology are not the driving force behind the burgeoning popularity of electronica in the United States. Instead, the "electro sound" is just an aesthetic choice certain bands make. "Bands like Daft Punk use effects to sound digital and harsh. The Jonas Brothers put reverbs in their voices, but no one would ever call them electro," says Douglas.

Given the current direction of musical tastes and technologies, some producers of electronic music wonder about the consequences of using controllers rather than traditional instruments. "With a string quartet, so many nuances are available to the performer in a physical, sensual way. In electronic music, those things have to be hard-coded in," says Moore.



Simon Herzog makes electronic music in the comfort of his dorm room.



Robert Moog's eponymous synthesizer was invented at Columbia.

And despite his electronic focus, Herzog mourns the move away from the meaningful ballads of decades past: "In electronic dance music, you find no lyrics or really mundane and meaningless lyrics."

Repetto emphasizes that electronic and acoustic styles can collaborate to achieve different results, saying, "Electronic music hasn't taken the place of acoustic, it's increasing the numbers—just in the same way radio hasn't taken the place of performance."

But could electronic music take the place of performance?

Electronic music is easier and cheaper to make initially, but even students who invest time and energy into this purely digital art form have a difficult time taking it into the real world. Gone are the days of student garage bands playing shows in local bowling alleys, street fairs, and neighborhood dives. Though it's easier to produce at home, electronic music requires rethinking before performance.

"You can never produce [electronic] music live—you can only play simplified versions, or have a lot of automated loops and effects in the background," says Herzog. Herzog and Lee both DJ, which gives them a place to play their electronically produced songs. Moore's band Feudal Soul

performs with acoustic guitar, but he has yet to perform his electro set live. "That's a hurdle we haven't jumped over yet," he says.

Electronic music presents these challenges because it changes the very nature of composing. "It's as much a craft as it is an art," explains Herzog. "I spend equally as much time thinking about the technical side—I draw diagrams about how I'll connect my synthesizers and instruments and how I'll construct the sound in a physical sense—as I will about the music I'm producing."

Before the digital revolution, instrumentation evolved at a much slower rate than musical style. Electronic music allows the artist to construct both the sound and the means of creating it. Rapidly progressing technology means that the sound possibilities are theoretically limitless, but once a song has been produced utilizing this technology, it can't be reproduced on stage without sacrificing some of its original intricacies.

With the electro technology producing endless sound possibilities and acoustic instruments providing musicians with a familiar interface, some musicians envision a merging of the two methods. "A lot of students combine the two: they play on an instrument then add some effects," says Repetto, noting that a few students at the Center have been busy building hybrid electro-acoustic instruments.

Other artists attempt to modify production equipment to play and sound like familiar instruments in a movement called "controllerism." The brainchild of Brooklyn-based controllerist Moldover, this movement is paving the way for a future of electronic music performance. Herzog describes Moldover's innovations, saying, "They're more than tools, and can be actual instruments where every button, fader and knob

has a direct and predictable musical effect so that you can literally play it."

But even with creativity, can a controller ever really look as sexy as a bass guitar?

The nostalgia factor also affects the purely electronic music community. Many modern synthesizers specifically market themselves as having an "analog sound." Repetto lists students who work to configure retro synthesizers from the '60s and '70s with their laptops, giving them the power to fine tune low-quality sound.

"Some people feel electronic music got ahead of itself. What analog equipment does is give you back some of that raw feeling—the irony being that they produce that raw feeling artificially and completely digitally," says Herzog. This general feeling prompted the LoFi movement, which involves producers using "really crappy equipment and really high end digital distortions to create a more down sampled raw sound."

"I don't agree with anyone who holds up some kind of vintage thing for the sake of vintage," Moore weighs in. "I like all kinds of music still, but philosophically, I don't know why you would say, 'This music's imperfect, so it's cool.'"

Ultimately, the potential threat to live performance and acoustic rawness doesn't seem to bother Columbians who crowd Webster Hall every weekend to see DJs and live music producers.

"There's that kind of physicality in the [electronic] music that I think is stronger than in most kinds," says Herzog, summing up his thoughts. "For example, electronic dance music has such a driven feeling and it moves you—the bass, and the beat—sounds below 100 Hz that are not perceived by your ears but your solar plexus."

Music so technologically advanced that your ears can't even hear it? Now that's progress. ●

**"WE'RE ALL ABOUT
FEELING, OUR WORDS
DON'T MEAN ANYTHING.
IT'S VERY ETHEREAL."**

paintings and sculptures: not just for museums anymore

BY LIZA ELIANO AND HANNAH YUDKIN

ILLUSTRATION BY REBEKAH KIM

It's 11 PM the night before your Art Hum paper is due, and you never managed to make it to the Met to actually see the piece you're writing about. You're starting to panic when you glance at your computer—and a metaphorical lightbulb turns on.

Today, students can do everything on the Internet: research, shopping, dating, even museum-going. Every major museum in New York hosts its own comprehensive Web site with complete digital collections and descriptions of their exhibits. In other words, if you can move a mouse and click a button, you can visit a museum in as long as it takes you to connect to the Columbia University network.

The Internet has brought art to a much wider audience, giving people who don't normally visit museums the opportunity to explore the art world easily and affordably. Even for those who do have the chance to see art in the flesh, the Internet still seems like the better option—especially for Columbia students who have little time for a leisurely afternoon at the Museum of Modern Art.

But while students are staring bug-eyed at a computer screen, how are museums dealing with the stark possibility that visitors will choose the Web over their institutions? Alexander Alberro, art history professor at Barnard, says the Internet has forced the museum to do something different. Prior to the Internet, textual information was located along side each artwork and museum shows were presented in a linear fashion.

Now many exhibits are giving visitors a more interactive experience. Instead of only placing artworks chronologically, curators set up exhibitions in a random order so that museum-goers feel like they have more freedom to move about the gallery without being directed by wall texts or historical information.

"Genuinely, people like choice," says Alberro. Museums have become like a real live search engine: just as web surfers can open up any window on the Internet, museum visitors can control their experience of the exhibit. The museums are "windows of flexibility," argues Alberro. By eliminating wall text, art institutions encourage visitors to go online if they are interested in learning more about what they've seen.

Columbia's own museum—the Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Gallery—has participated in a similar

type of restructuring. Rather than guiding visitors through the exhibit, Wallach offers multiple rooms with no sequential order, allowing viewers to acquire new knowledge in a their own way. Dina Georgas, a Barnard junior, notes that the current New Acropolis Museum Exhibition at Wallach does not present the construction of the Acropolis Museum in a chronological order, but is instead "organized into 'art historical snapshots' that explain the archaeological, academic, and social significance of the Acropolis in the modern world stage."

While museums cater to the web-savvy audience, the Internet may in fact be pushing more people to go to museums in search of authenticity. "The reason people go to museums is because of the internet," says Alberro. "We don't trust the online images. People go to museums because there you have the work—it's the real thing."

"PEOPLE GO TO MUSEUMS BECAUSE OF THE INTERNET."

The Internet has not diluted the novelty of seeing masterpieces in person. Some works necessitate a visitor's physical presence if she is to truly appreciate the nuances of the artwork. Many of Jackson Pollock's drip paintings, such as "Full Fathom Five," also contain various objects—cigarette butts, nails, pennies—that cannot be detected on a computer screen no matter how hard one squints.

"When you look at things online, you're not in the right atmosphere to really appreciate them," says Elizabeth Bibi, a Barnard junior.

Even though the Internet produces somewhat faulty reproductions of the real image, a new form of art has emerged that depends solely on the Web and the public that interacts with it. Net Art, developed in the early 1990s in Eastern Europe, started as an egalitarian, communal form of art production in which the public is an active participant in its creation and dissemination.

Joachim Blank, a famous net artist, says Net Art "often deals with structural concepts: A group or an individual designs a system that can be expanded by other people." These projects then become virtual communities that rely on a "constant give and take" of members. Net Art allows web users to essentially curate their own exhibits and facilitate in the art making process.

For example, Teleportacia.org, a Net Art project, gives users the choice to click any number of sidebar options. "Bora Bora" leads users to a page with palm trees and other possible choices. From there, clicking on "Europa" results in a series of nude photographs from the turn of the century. By choosing what to click on, viewers discover the art and thereby bring it into existence. Just as museums have given over some of their authority to the public, Net Art also gives people more control over the process of creating art as well as viewing it.

Although students may choose to use the Internet in order to bypass museums, the Web proposes a whole new art experience that cannot be found in an institution. Now students can explore a part of the art world that truly belongs to them. While the museum has a limited amount of choice, the Internet offers infinite possibilities. ●



GET LOWBROW

why self-professed intellectuals love crappy tv shows

BY NOEMI SCHOR

ILLUSTRATION BY MATTEO MALINVERNO

In Barnard's Hewitt cafeteria, the Rockefeller Christmas Tree Lighting is playing on TV. As Rod Stewart begins to sing, two students can't resist providing commentary. The first undergrad grimaces, saying, "Nice flat-ironed hair, Rod." Her companion, unable to control herself, chimes in: "How very Clay Aiken of him."

After a few minutes of exchanging cracks about TV personalities, they clear their trays and resume their conversation, which seamlessly shifts to a comparison of Thomas Jefferson and his predecessors in office.

This moment provides a peek into the TV double lives that Columbia students lead. Most students who "can't" take the time to finish all their CC reading always seem to be able to find time for fifteen minutes of "I Love Money 2."

Thoughtful, high-minded students set aside time each week to intersperse their studying with viewings of significantly less intellectually stimulating television shows. What is it that makes diligent, worldly-wise Columbia students equally engrossed in their Roman History classes and "The Real Housewives of New York City"?

The general sentiment is that Columbia students delight in the utter dissonance between the two modes of culture. After spending so much time poring over the ideas of Freud, Hemingway, and Kant, students crave activities that allow them to turn off their brains and "watch celebrities in rehab falling off the wagon, getting lost, and crying," as Laura Vican, a Barnard junior, says.

Even though they have the option of tuning into critically acclaimed, plot-driven shows like "Fringe" and "The Mentalist," harried, over-worked Columbians seem to prefer series that feature cat fights and shopping sprees when choosing to take a break from homework and exams.

For Columbia College sophomore Sophie Meislin, the reason is simple. "It's just really entertaining," she said. "Not everything has to be something to think about." She justifies watching "The Biggest Loser" and "Say Yes to the Dress" as forms of mindless entertainment—in fact, she'll watch "any show having to do with weddings. It's shameful."

Gigi Clark, a Barnard sophomore, is also an adherent of "Say Yes to the Dress." She ascribes something of a fanciful element to the show: "I like to fantasize. Watching other people buy their wedding dresses gives me an outlook like I already have my wedding planned, thanks to Kleinfeld Salon."

As students are happy to admit, this type of "low-brow" TV is unsophisticated. But according to Meislin and Clark, it can reveal an underlying

penchant that we may tend to ignore in our practical-minded, work-obsessed lives. Watching these programs gives Columbia viewers a chance to indulge in their daydreams without significantly interrupting the reality of a fast-paced, grounded academic lifestyle.

Vican sees this tendency as more than just a reflection on college students' habits. It's also a possible sign of the changing trajectory of television. "You sit in classes all day, and the last thing you want to do when you come home is watch a TV show that makes you think. That's not the point of TV anymore," she said. "It's not about stimulation, it's about vegetation."

Although reality TV is arguably past its early 2000's hey-day, channels like MTV and VH1 are always airing a staggering number of mind-numbing reality shows at any given time. In the past couple of years, cable networks in particular have made an effort to intellectualize their offerings to appeal to a different class of viewership. Nonetheless, Vican's statement is representative of viewer percentages: where "The Biggest Loser" reels in an average of 10 million viewers each week, the second season finale of the Emmy-winning series "Damages" managed to capture an audience of just one million.

And while most students use lowbrow shows as breaks from their heavy workload, finding

a plethora of excuses for why that twenty-two minutes can be spent "just vegging out," some take their excuses one step further. Barnard sophomore Rachel Abady not only relaxes by watching "Tool Academy" and "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" but also sees ways that her academic interests can be applied to the shows. "Admittedly, this is not considered intellectual or edifying television, but I really like the psychology of the shows and I am amazed at how exploited some of the people on the shows are," she said. "Some people are really willing to let cameras invade their lives for fifteen minutes of fame."

The average professor might wonder, "What has the world come to when Columbia students are not only contributing to but also justifying the popularity of 'trashy' television?"

But those learned skeptics should rest assured—watching lowbrow television is not a sign of their students' deteriorating commitment to academics. Vican's thoughts emphasize that student preferences for mindless TV are not an indication of declining ambition. She explains her forays into "Rock of Love 2" marathons as a way to balance the amount of time she spends thinking through problem sets and physics formulas. "I'm taking such an intense course load that I feel the need to turn my brain off and watch something that's just plain stupid once in a while," she says.

It's easy to see why TV has become the go-to source of guilty pleasure entertainment. 99 percent of the student body has a laptop and twenty minutes to waste: the only prerequisites for engaging in "just plain stupid" TV. And if watching real people make fools of themselves makes students feel better about their own daily habits, has their time really been wasted? ●

STUDENTS WHO "CAN'T" FINISH THEIR READING CAN FIND TIME FOR "I LOVE MONEY 2."



It's been a great year. Thanks for reading.



— The Eye