

the
eye

COLUMBIA'S NEW OPEN SPACES

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD WHEN
THE UNIVERSITY EXPANDS TO MANHATTANVILLE

ALL WINE COMING UP
ROSE • FRESHMAN
ORIENTATION • VAMPIRE
WEEKEND MAKES OUR
DAY • A FOREWORD TO
FASHION WEEK •
MUMBLECORE SPEAKS
VOLUMES

VOL. 3, ISSUE 1
SEPTEMBER 6, 2007
EYE.COLUMBIASPECTATOR.COM

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WIDE OPEN SPACES 07-09

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EDITOR’S NOTE:

As it is Back to School time, it’s my honor to address an entirely new audience. First-time readers of the Homeric epics, brace yourselves for *The Eye*, imagine yourselves having gone off to war for the summer. You’re work weary. While you were gone, *The Eye* honed its craft and kept vigilant. Sure, we had our suitors: publications that pay; weekends on Fire Island; etc. But we’ve kept them at bay, and we’re ready for your return.

This issue, *The Eye’s* 25th, inaugurates our publication’s third semester. That’s a lot of tabloid-sized paper, and a lot of puns in our headlines. It’s a lot of long nights, and a lot of the *Spectator’s* pizza uneaten by our svelte staff.

Never, sadly to say, has campus needed *The Eye* more. A new flock of first-years

have arrived, and with them infestations of flip-flops and standard-issue Ikea furniture. *The Eye*, its focus on art, culture, and lifestyle, will teach you fantasy and penury. Is there any other way to live in New York?

New wine, old bottles, or so goes the saying. *The Eye’s* staff has seen a remarkable blink in the past month. We have a new lead story editor in former senior writer Alison Bumke, BC ’10. Medaya Ocher, CC ’08, strikes a coup as Urbanities editor, fresh from working at the International Herald Tribune (“International Herald Tribune!” She yelled on the Rue du Rivoli).

In our lead story, Ben Reneinga, CC ’09, contributes his first article to *The Eye*. Reneinga writes of the potential for and significance of open spaces in anticipation

of Columbia’s planned expansion into Manhattanville.

Speaking (incessantly) of wine, in this issue Anders Axel Wallace extols the virtues of rosé. We look at changes in the music scene through the lens of Bowery Presents, the concert production company whose business moves mirror economic changes in New York.

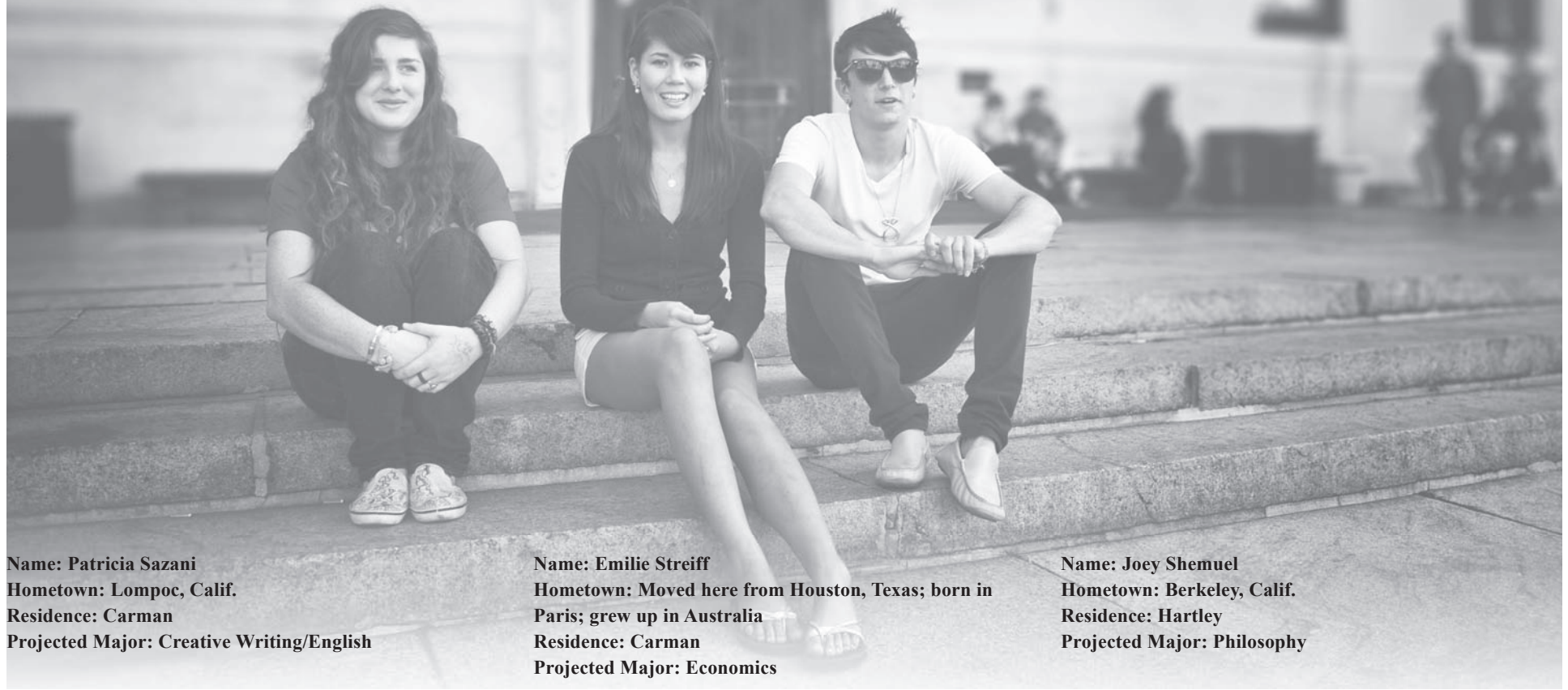
What’s more, *The Eye* has shined its proverbial bottle. Note our re-design—the Times New Roman font, the non-justified columns, the careful consideration of page number.

Read *The Eye*. Attend loyally the next week.

Alex Gartenfeld

EYE TO EYE: SARA DAVIS INTERVIEWS THREE FIRST YEARS

PHOTO BY TINA GAO



Name: Patricia Sazani
Hometown: Lompoc, Calif.
Residence: Carman
Projected Major: Creative Writing/English

Name: Emilie Streiff
Hometown: Moved here from Houston, Texas; born in Paris; grew up in Australia
Residence: Carman
Projected Major: Economics

Name: Joey Shemuel
Hometown: Berkeley, Calif.
Residence: Hartley
Projected Major: Philosophy

WHAT’S LOMPOC LIKE?

It’s a small town, kind of rural. We used to be the flower seed capital of the world.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE FLOWER?

Probably daffodils—even though they’re not seeds, they’re bulbs.

WHY’D YOU PICK COLUMBIA?

It was between Berkeley and Columbia and in the end Columbia is just a better school. And it offered me a lot more, like it made me a John Jay Scholar—even though I still don’t really know what that means. There’s an orientation in a week. I guess I’ll find out then.

YEAH ... WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

They say that you have to go to certain events to welcome people.

REALLY? TO WELCOME PEOPLE?

Yeah, like a kind of banquet thing it seemed like.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING ABOUT COLUMBIA?

Well, I kind of feel like no one has anything to focus on except making friends, and I’m just really excited for classes to start. Also I feel like the only social events happening are frat parties.

WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR FAVORITE AND LEAST FAVORITE ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES?

I really liked the concert even though I only stayed for half. And my least favorite was probably just the orientation group. We just didn’t have a really enthusiastic group. It felt like it was kind of a waste of time.

DID YOU PLAY SOME GAMES ABOUT YOUR NAME?

No, but we did an icebreaker.

OH YEAH WHICH ONE?

Two truths and a lie?

OH, WHAT WERE YOUR TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE?

I’m allergic to peanut butter, I’m afraid of planes, and I speak French.

UMM ... I THINK YOU ... DON’T SPEAK FRENCH?

Yeah! I don’t speak French.

WAS IT HARD FOR YOU TO FLY HERE?

Yeah, my ears get really horrible pressure and are plugged for two or three days after. It’s really painful.

WHY’D YOU PICK COLUMBIA?

Well, I went to an art school in Brooklyn for a month last year and it was my first time in New York City and I fell in love with it. And obviously I just wanted a really good education. And I wanted to get away from Texas.

YOU DIDN’T LIKE TEXAS?

I’m pretty liberal and everyone there loves George Bush.

HOW DO YOU LIKE CARMAN?

I love it! I’m on floor seven and we already have a reputation...

OH REALLY? WHAT’S YOUR REPUTATION?

Like ... the party floor.

WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR FAVORITE AND LEAST FAVORITE ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES?

Umm ... I liked going to the Metropolitan because I’m a bit of an art nerd so that was really cool, and I guess least favorite was the Under 1 Roof thing.

WHAT’S THAT?

It’s like some big workshop against racism.

HAVE YOU EATEN IN JOHN JAY YET?

Yeah. There’s been times when the food is awful but also times when it’s been amazing.

IT WAS AMAZING? I DID HEAR IT WAS “RENOVATED.”

Yeah, I mean I don’t know I heard some weird rumors...

WHAT KIND OF RUMORS?

Like that they put laxatives in the food. Obviously it sounds really made up but that’s what someone told me. But the waffles there are really good.

WHAT CLASS ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?

Probably my basic drawing class.

ARE YOU MEETING ANY LOVE INTERESTS?

Umm ... yeah ... kind of awkward story about that—but I don’t really want to mention it in the newspaper!

ARE YOU APPREHENSIVE ABOUT ANYTHING?

I was kind of worried because I got in off the wait list, but hopefully it will be fine.

WHY’D YOU PICK COLUMBIA?

It was actually very easy because I didn’t get into any of my other upper echelon schools. My second choice was McGill University in Montreal.

HOW ARE YOU FINDING ORIENTATION?

Well, I don’t feel very oriented because I don’t go to most of the activities.

DID YOU PLAY TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE?

No, it was like we had to say our favorite food and what our middle name could be if we could choose it.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

Sushi and Ace.

ACE? COOL. WHAT IS YOUR MIDDLE NAME?

Keller. It’s my mom’s last name. But yeah, I’m kind of the self-orienting type.

DID YOU GO TO THE CLIPSE CONCERT?

No, I was at the Hell’s Kitchen flea market.

HOW IS YOUR LIVING SITUATION?

My dorm is great. I have a very large double.

HOW’S YOUR ROOMMATE?

He’s cool. We actually chose to live together—we met on Facebook. We have very similar intellectual interests.

LIKE WHAT?

Human rights, philosophy, political science ... and their intersections.

HAVE YOU EATEN AT JOHN JAY YET?

Yeah. It’s pretty much what I expected. I’m not super picky. It’s more gourmet than I was expecting though—they have the staples like pizza and hamburgers, but then you look to your left and there’s a pesto salad with sun-dried tomatoes and kalamata olives!

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE ORIENTATION ACTIVITY?

The first Lit Hum lecture was fantastic. I was just blown away.

ARE YOU SINGLE?

I—I was in a fantastic relationship when I left.

OH NO! ARE YOU DOING THE LONG DISTANCE THING?

We were together until like 45 minutes before my flight.

URBANITIES

WHERE EVERYBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY MEDAYA OCHER



IT'S ALWAYS A LITTLE HARD TO

make out the faces of the ladies at Max Café and Hungarian Pastry Shop. Both places are notoriously dark—bizarrely more so when it's sunny outside—and chances are you're there to study and things are beginning to look darker still. You're out to get some coffee, get a seat, and read. Who cares who's serving it?

But think about it. Without these women, there would be no mug on your table. And without a mug on your table there would be no light (metaphorical or otherwise).

Ironically, it was at the Hungarian that almost all of the waitresses were very reluctant to share anything, especially names. Woiny, (pronounced like Winney) who works as a waitress and occasionally as the manager, was behind the counter with Xhoda and Fanna on the day we set out to discover the identities and personalities of these women.

Woiny has worked at the Hungarian for the past six years—which is nothing compared to Fanna, who has worked there for 13!

Woiny moved here from Ethiopia in 2001, and although she spoke English fluently, she is a little embarrassed of her accent. She explains that most of the girls she worked with (and as she put it, it's "all girls" at the Hungarian) were also from different countries. "Xhoda, she's from Albania ... So many girls [are] from other countries, different countries." Like Woiny, who is studying liberal arts at Bronx Community College, most of the other girls are also students, so it's easy to understand why they get along so well with their customers. Although Woiny does admit, with a wide smile and without skipping a beat, that there are "a lot" of annoying customer quirks.

"Sometimes ... they know what they want to order but they change it several times," she says. Or, for example, when people forget to ask for things beforehand "like if they want water, [and then] you bring them water and then they ask you for Sweet'N Low and then for other things. That's annoying sometimes. But I'm patient."

Woiny is also protective of her customers. She points out that they don't play music because most of her regulars are students, "it's usually a quiet place. [But] some people ... speak loudly, or they're laughing too much and other people complain. That kind of stuff is annoying." But she smiles, noting that there are plenty of people who come in and "open their books and they talk

or go on the phone."

If the environment is not conducive to studying at the Hungarian, maybe there will be some inspiration at Max Café, the other, perhaps more graduate-friendly, coffee-and-reading spot on 122nd Street. Although the place is unbelievably busy, the only waitress there is Maria, who seems to be the exact opposite of Woiny. She is tall and blonde and not at all shy in front of a tape recorder.

But there are some definite parallels.

Maria explains that she moved from Yugoslavia four years ago and is a student at Fordham University, studying accounting.

Regarding her job at Max, she says, "I love it ... I would say this is the least annoying job I've had in my life. I used to be a volleyball coach ... I used to work as an intern in an accounting company. This is the most laid-back." She no longer plays volleyball but doesn't seem too upset about it. She mentions that another one of the perks at Max Café is that they also have a pretty international staff, "or at least people from different backgrounds—and that's nice."

A different Maria is the manager and originally from Argentina, while another waitress has roots in Colombia. (There is, it should be said, a third Maria, also working at Max.) The original Maria mentions with a laugh, "Pretty much everybody speaks Spanish. [I'm] learning a little."

The Max Café soundtrack is appropriate for the international flavor of its employees. Unlike Hungarian, Max Café has a distinct sound and it's common for reading to be interrupted by Italian house or a Julio Iglesias love ballad pounding away in the background. Maria explained while reaching for her mini red iPod that the music is usually picked by "the owner. Sometimes I bring my iPod, sometimes the other girls. It's usually the same—Italian, Portuguese, classical sometimes." Left to her own devices Maria says that her favorites are "Crazy" by Gnarlz Barkley and Ryan Adams.

Despite the music, her regulars, like at the Hungarian, are "usually people studying, maybe teachers." These repeat customers are "pretty much on a first-name basis" with Maria, although she doesn't necessarily "get into what they're doing."

Maybe it's better that way. But at least now we know who's helping us out on those days when the world is bleak, the library is cold, and there are so many pages ahead of us.

A GOAT'S BEST FRIEND

BY LUCY TANG

BEN DOLNICK IS THE 24-YEAR-OLD wunderkind that English majors and creative writing M.F.A. students love to hate. Few authors complete a novel in fewer than three years, and even fewer debut novels that garner a mention in *The New Yorker*.

That first novel, *Zoology*, concerns a man-boy teetering on the edge of the real world. Henry, the novel's protagonist, flunks out of college to find himself in New York, working at the zoo. He is alienated from the people around him and manages to befriend only a Nubian goat named Newman.

While the specifics might sound a little strange, the novel follows a familiar template, and Dolnick is aware that his debut is not an "unusual first novel undertaking." After all, he's only a few years older than Henry. "I really like having one foot in familiar stuff," he says. "I'm not the kind of writer who reads everything there is to read about 17th century Europe and then writes a novel about it. I like taking advantage of the few things I do know."

Dolnick's writing style also falls into that category. "I had earlier in my imaginary writing career thought about writing gigantic complicated epic kind of things, but I wasn't very emotionally invested in the David Foster Wallace complications," he says. Citing influences from Philip Roth's *Goodbye, Columbus* to Salinger's coming-of-age staple *Catcher In The Rye*, Dolnick explains that he gradually realized that he is better suited for "much more simple, pared down, character-based stuff."

Although his writing style matured through the years, Dolnick was certain of his career aspirations from a young age. "There's no question that I'd always be writing, regardless of what I was doing," he says. Unlike many other students who spend their summers itching to establish connections and opportunities for future employment, Dolnick strived to avoid the nine-to-five monotony. He held a variety of odd jobs, ranging from an immunology research assistant to a zookeeper.

Dolnick was so certain of his future as a writer that he feared a summer job that would develop into something further. "I didn't want to do anything that would risk me getting a promotion," he says. During the summer of his junior year, he landed a gig at the children's zoo in Central Park.

While Dolnick envisioned the zoo to

be "exotic and exciting," it was actually "boring, a little hard, and kind of depressing" to be constantly scooping up feces and raking. But somewhere in between the physical exertion and exhaustion, *Zoology* began to take shape. With no creative writing classes the second semester of his senior year, Dolnick devoted time to his novel.

The parallels between Henry and his author—the age, the odd jobs, the goat—might suggest that the novel is as much a memoir as it is a work of fiction. Dolnick admits that although the events and characters of *Zoology* are fictional, much of Henry's character stems from personal experience. He pulls from autobiography to create Henry's state of mind: "If I was writing a scene about pathetic longing, I'd have plenty of pathetic longing to draw on."

Dolnick remembers Columbia fondly and vividly recounts some of his favorite classes and professors, ticking off esteemed figures of the Columbia English department. He raves about professor James Shapiro and one of his favorite classes, a senior seminar called The Book Review, in which students subscribed to various book reviews and then wrote their own.

To detractors, Dolnick's rise to fame seems too easy: beginning a novel senior year, published three years later. Though Dolnick explains that he had bouts of doubt that *Zoology* would ever see an end, "writing can be so dispiriting and hard and you would do anything in the world to distract yourself."

Just three months ago, he was still a tutor and slaving for hours over *Romeo and Juliet* papers with high school students. Now he's mentioned on media blog Gawker and in a blurb by Jonathan Safran Foer. Dolnick remains unassuming—he appears uncomfortable when discussing his newfound fame, pausing for a good half a minute before deeming reception as "arbitrary and fleeting." Writing, he claims, is of the utmost importance, emphasizing that reviews only hinder his writing process.

"While I'm still relatively close to it, I'd like to write more about childhood." Dipping his chocolate chip cookie in his espresso, the baby-faced 25-year-old could easily belong in a Lit Hum class. Now that Dolnick has passed from childhood to adulthood, he's eager to dive back in.

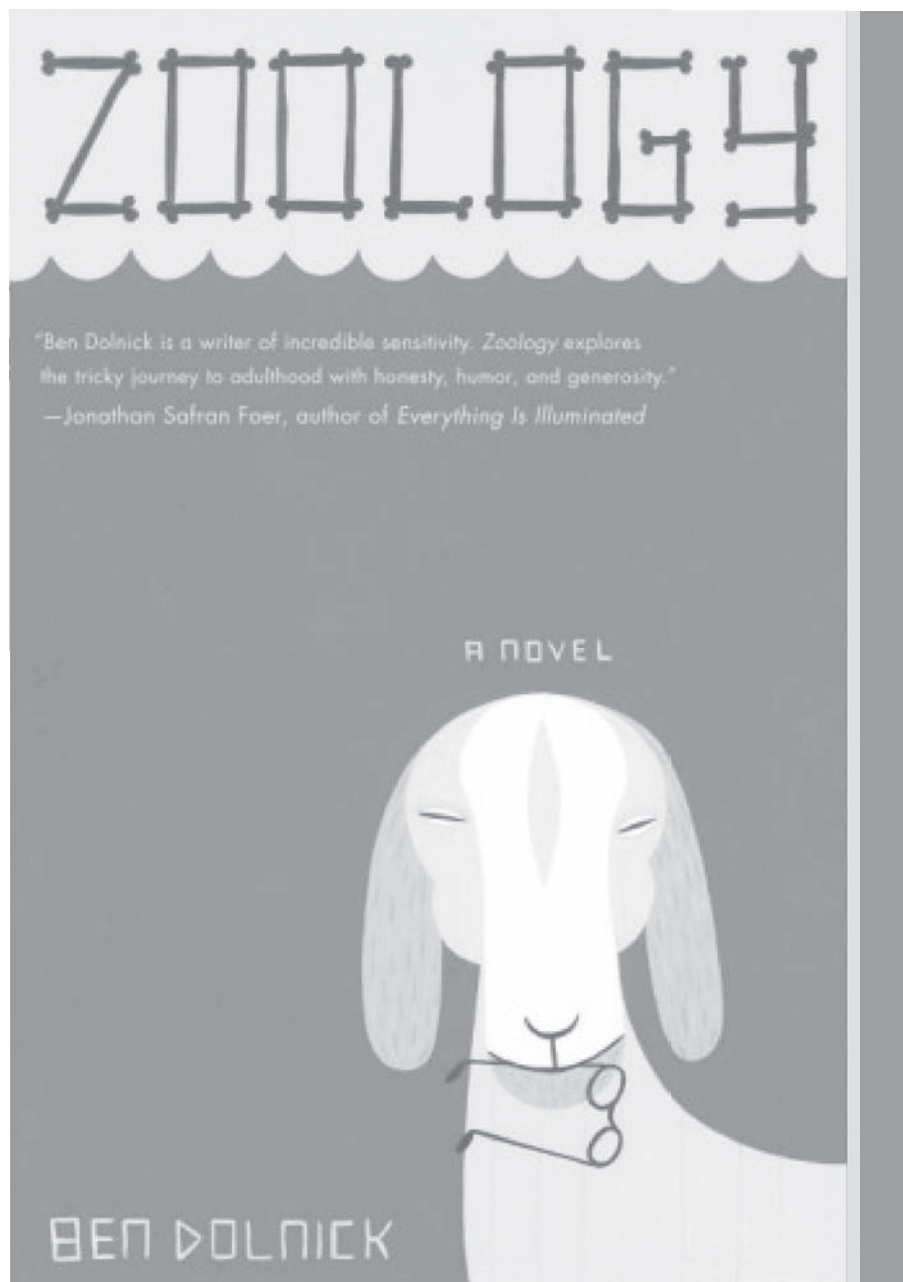


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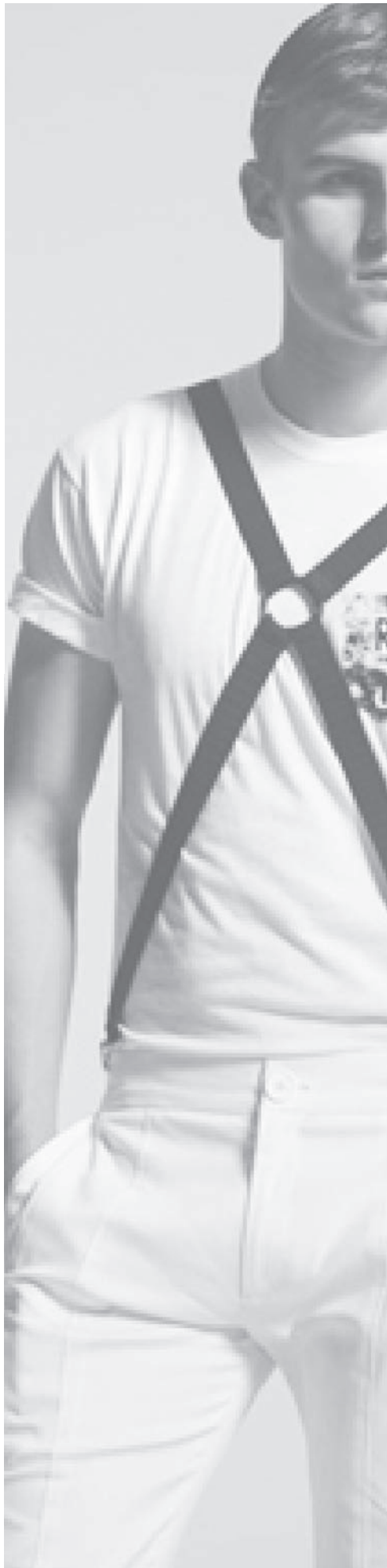
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STYLE

FW PREVIEW: PATRIK RZEPSKI

BY SARA ZIFF



NEW YORK FASHION WEEK IS ALL ABOUT THE big names: Oscar de La Renta, Diane von Furstenberg, Anna Sui and Vera Wang. But what about all the designers who don't have million-dollar empires and endless manpower behind the helm?

Breaking into the womenswear market is a tough business for any young, fledgling designer—especially when that designer still runs his business single-handedly out of his East Village apartment. With a minimal color palette reminiscent of a young Helmut Lang or Jil Sander, 25-year-old Connecticut transplant Patrik Rzepski has already garnered press from the *New York Times*, *Nylon*, and *Women's Wear Daily*, yet still has his mom, dad and sister helping out, doing everything from laying down the runway to catering backstage. I recently stopped by the budding designer's 14th Street studio before his big day to ask him about his new collection, the process of putting on a show, and how he plans to take on the competition.

"I'm trying to break into the rap-video market," Rzepski says drolly as I shimmy up and down the room in one of his latest creations, an itty-bitty silk jersey dress that my mother would likely deem to be a tank top rather than an outfit. This season's collection, *Auto Neurotica*, was inspired by John Chamberlain—best known for creating sculptures from wrecked automobiles—and eternal American muse, Grace Kelly, who fatefully drove over the cliffs of Monaco.

Rzepski's collections tend toward the macabre, although he notes that his presentation this season is slightly more subtle. "you have to lift the skirt to see it," he says.

One standout accessory that will quite literally be under some of the skirts on the runway are Rzepski's clinical, zip-up thigh-highs—"like anti-clotting hose"—that he calls "very Mad Max."

Perusing other items on the hangers, which vary in color between black, white, pumice, and electric-blue, I also linger over a very chic, short trench coat in black tech taffeta, inspired by a vintage sailor shirt from the Spanish armada.

But smart planning for Fashion Week involves much more than just the right clothes. According to Rzepski, the first step to navigating the crowded Fashion Week calendar is choosing a time slot, which he books about two months in advance. "The problem with signing up too early is a big designer will take over your slot," he says.

Wisely, Rzepski has chosen to show his collection on Sept. 4th, the day before shows begin in the Bryant Park

tents. "You want to find a slot where you'll lose the least," Rzepski says, in terms of casting models and having the right buyers and editors fill the seats. "It would make sense for me to show at the same time as Bill Blass, but not VPL." For while Blass markets to a wealthy, older clientele, VPL is a label closer in price point to Rzepski's and appeals to the same trendy, twenty-something female crowd. Rzepski also strategically tries to show at the beginning of the week, when buyers and editors are less fatigued and more likely to risk time on a young designer. "When people have been running to 10 shows a day for a week," he says. "They don't want to make the extra effort."

Renting a tent for just a few hours at Bryant Park can cost as much as \$40,000, so finding an alternate venue that is both convenient and affordable is an extra challenge that emerging designers like Rzepski face.

"Usually the coolest places are the biggest nightmare in terms of logistics," he says. "I'd love to show in an abandoned warehouse, but then you have to think about insurance, lighting..." he says, trailing off as he bobs his head from side to side. "I wouldn't have time for other things," he says, referring to the meticulous construction and engineering of garments that he—like many other young, emerging designers—must do in the studio as opposed to in a factory. "I do everything in the studio. My interns and I drape and pattern with our own hands. It's not like we're going to a tailor or anything."

There is, of course, the dream of finding a backer for the show, a dream which Rzepski likens to "winning the fashion lottery."

"As consuming as it gets, I can't grow that much because I don't have backing," he says, coughing "LVMH" into his sleeve, a reference to the world's largest luxury goods conglomerate. More seriously, Rzepski says, "The hope is that you broaden your horizons and create new relationships with a stylist or editor. Some people become overnight successes with a show, but I try to be realistic." But with his clothes already sold at boutiques in London, New York, and Tokyo, it looks like the road from East Village to Bryant Park might only be a few itty-bitty silk jersey dresses away.

PHOTO COURTESY: PATRIKRZEPSKI.COM



WIDE OPEN SPACES BY BEN REININGA

ON A HOT AFTERNOON IN AUGUST, I met with La-Verna Fountain and Victoria Benitez at Floridita, a diner and tapas bar on the corner of 125th Street and Broadway. The women, both of whom work for Columbia's Office of Public Affairs, walked up to give me a tour of the neighborhood, the site that the University hopes will one day house its new campus. When they arrived, our greetings were briefly interrupted by the din of the 1 train rumbling overhead.

We began by walking west down 125th Street from Broadway to 12th Avenue and then turned uptown. The buildings that line the street are, for the most part, unremarkable: flat brick walls interspersed with graffitied gates and chain link fences. In the middle of the afternoon, the street was relatively free from traffic, and I was struck by the area's quiet industrial feel.

When my guides arrived, Victoria Benitez gave me a promotional packet from Public Affairs. The sleek blue folder was filled with press clippings and informational sheets about the Manhattanville expansion project. It also contained a card that paired photographs of the area as it looks now with computer-generated renderings that project how the neighborhood will look if Columbia has its way.

The contrast is sharp: in the packet, the street I'm looking at is edged by a boxy academic building with a coruscated glass façade; the ground floor, set back from the sidewalk,

houses a future shop. Bright green cones of proposed trees complete the picture. A computer-generated black man in a tie walks in front of a pair of trendy Asian teenagers.

In truth, it looks remarkably inviting. In other images, digital groups of people congregate in open quads and the public sits out on tables lining the widened sidewalk in front of a ground floor cafe. The pamphlet promises an invigorated set of spaces, complete with parks and shopping centers, intended to function as public realms for the entire community.


The possibility that these new spaces might serve the non-Columbia community as well as its students and faculty should be an alluring one, a potential benefit from a plan that's more often accused of destroying community than enhancing it. Effective public spaces can fundamentally alter the character of a neighborhood by providing a democratic theater for the activities of daily life. In addition to benefits for individuals—a new place to shop or go for a walk—vibrant public spaces tie together neighborhoods, interrupting clusters of isolated apartments to pull life onto the streets. Columbia's ability to navigate the obstacles of design, perception, and community opposition to create truly public spaces will partially determine how beneficial the site will be for West Harlem.

Fountain was eager to point out various aspects of the campus that align with the University's goal of providing areas that integrate

the surrounding neighborhood. "It's going to be entirely gateless," she tells me. "Open, open, open." She was referring to one of the features that distinguishes the expansion site from the Morningside campus: the perimeter of the space is designed to be undifferentiated from the city beyond. The plans promise a campus that preserves the integrity of the city grid and widens sidewalks, as well as providing ground level real estate for a variety of shops and restaurants. A new pedestrian walkway will run from north to south between Broadway and Amsterdam.

At 130th Street, we passed the future access point to the campus's central open space. In the plans, the acre of space is an imperfect rectangle of green buttressed on the east by the footpath and on the west by a sliver of academic buildings. "It was moved west, closer to 12th Avenue," Fountain tells me. "We moved it from smack in the middle closer to the edge to make it more accessible to the community." The space, peppered with trees and a small crescent-shaped body of water, does look like a public park, albeit a park in the middle of a university campus.

The space is one of three open spaces planned for the site, nicknamed "the square, the little square, and the grove." The grove is a small clump of trees that sits in the triangle between 125th and 129th Streets (a much smaller distance than it seems, if one recalls that 126th, 127th, and 128th Streets don't



exist). Along with the grove, there is a smaller square of green space on the north side of 129th Street. A lack of level changes and fences will prevent these areas from becoming blocked off from the community.

Columbia settled on Manhattanville as the site for its new expansion in 2001 after looking at a number of spaces in and out of the city. In 2003, the University hired the Renzo Piano Building Workshop as the architect of design for the expansion and the New York-based Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill as urban planners. The former head of SOM, Marilyn Taylor, says that both the architects and urban planners have prioritized accessible public spaces in their planning. “We all agreed on a premise, that in order for Manhattanville to be successful it had to be a real urban setting, with the same commitment to the public realm as all great urban spaces.”

Since the early 1970s, the résumé of RPBW has come to include a host of large-scale projects around the world, including the Pompidou Center in Paris and Potsdamer Platz in Berlin. RPBW’s recent New York credits include the *New York Times*’ new headquarters and the Morgan Library & Museum.

The work of RPBW’s director, Italian architect Renzo Piano, has a reputation for creatively merging private and public spaces. In 1998, he won the Pritzker Prize, architecture’s highest honor, for his work on the the Pompidou Center. The Pritzker committee lauded the Center for “transforming what had once been elite monuments into popular places of social and cultural exchange, woven into the heart of the city”—good news for Columbia’s efforts to blend the “elite monument” of an Ivy League university into its surrounding community.

The buildings planned for the site include the Jerome L. Greene Science Center, a new center for the business school, arts buildings, and a new conference center. The plan will take place in two phases over the next quarter century; the first phase slated for completion in 2015 and the second in 2030.

The buildings’ proposed architectural program is relatively consistent. The exterior is a parade of glass towers, at odds with the neighborhood’s prevailing brick. At around 200 feet, they are closer in scale to the elevated 1-train station than to the area’s current buildings, few of which are more than a couple stories high.

Creating a truly inclusive public space is a challenge for the designers of any expansion, especially one as drastic and large-scale as Columbia’s. Transforming the storage garages and warehouses above 125th Street into a haven of higher education without creating an internalized space, cut off from the community, is particularly tricky.

David Smiley, assistant professor of architecture and urban planning at Barnard and Columbia College, believes that the new campus will fundamentally change the way the neighborhood looks and feels. “It’s clearly going to be Columbia territory. It’ll feel like a new and completely separate place, like crossing the street and finding yourself in Vancouver. It will have that sense of

dramatic difference.”

Neither the sites’ planners nor the architects have announced as their intention a dramatic sense of difference, however. Designers have explicitly stated their intention to integrate the site into its neighborhood.

Robert Kasdin, Columbia University’s senior executive vice president, says of the plan’s aims: “We want to create precinct where neither physical walls nor perceived barriers exist between us and the community.”

How well the campus achieves this goal may be the first indicator of how well it will function as a vibrant public space. Although the campus will maintain the city grid throughout, a lack of iron gates does not ensure that the space won’t erect less tangible barriers for those not affiliated with the school.

The tall brick and limestone buildings at Columbia’s current campus, facing an enclosed square shielded by imposing gates, form a more tangible example of these barriers. When it was built in 1897 by the prestigious firm McKim, Mead and White, the campus was often referred to as an American Acropolis—a reference to the university on a hill as a temple within a city.

Art history professor Hilary Ballon believes the enclosed environment benefits the student body. She says the Morningside campus creates “a very special sense of space,” especially when compared to NYU’s more disparate Greenwich Village campus. Joseph Daniels, CC ’09, agrees, citing Columbia’s architecture as one of the main reasons he chose to attend. “We definitely have our ivory towers—and our gates, for that matter—and I would venture that this engenders an atmosphere more conducive to study than at NYU or a similar school.”

Nonetheless, the enclosed campus strives to maintain a connection to the surrounding community. The two main gates at 116th Street close only once a year—at commencement—and at least in theory, the campus’ lawns are open to all. A recent article in *The Village Voice* lauded the 116th Street campus as a beautiful, open space, fully utilized by students and neighbors alike. The article cited examples of picnics and gatherings, even a “Sweet 16” party for a neighborhood girl. Columbia considers the article such good press that it includes a photocopy of the article in its promotional packets for the expansion.

However, the praise for the accessibility of Columbia’s Morningside campus is not unanimous. Carolyn Birden is a member of the Coalition to Preserve Community, a neighborhood group whose Web site, stopcolumbia.org, succinctly expresses its opinion on the Manhattanville expansion. She’s quick to point out that if she hadn’t attended Teachers College, she wouldn’t have felt welcome bringing her children to play on campus in the 1970s and 1980s.

“I can see how community members wouldn’t feel comfortable in the presence of an institution that size—it’s intimidating. I’d bet if you interview people [on the Morningside campus], you’ll see that they’re all affiliated with Columbia.” From my observations, she’s right. While certainly the occasional non-affiliated neighbor

walks through the campus or sits on the lawn, most afternoons the demographic is clearly composed of students and faculty members.

The scarcity on campus of people not affiliated with the University suggests that the intangible edges of a space can be just as influential as its tangible ones. Will the residents of Grant Houses, a low-income housing development bordering the project zone, feel inclined to walk across the street and sit on Columbia’s grass?

The number of on-site pull-factors—specifically shops and services—will largely influence who walks onto the campus and why. Fairway Supermarket on 12th Avenue is a neighborhood institution, and provides a big, inexpensive alternative to the pricier markets lining Broadway south of the site. Professor Smiley thinks it might lure local residents through the planned campus. He predicts, “People walking from Harlem to Fairway might be the most likely way to create a dynamic and diverse street culture.” His observation calls into question the shops and restaurants that will populate the ground level of the campus itself.

SOM’s Marilyn Taylor stresses the importance of what planners call “the urban layer or the public layer,” which she describes as “a set of activities programmed into the space which include the normal things you do every day.” While the upper floors of the buildings will contain classrooms and administrative offices, the street-level rooms in many buildings will be reserved for shops, restaurants, and galleries. In theory, this ground-level programming distinguishes again the new space from Morningside Heights, whose cafes and dining halls are clearly geared towards college students with meal plans.

While few neighborhood residents currently do their weekly shopping at JJ’s Place, it’s debatable whether the new campus will be any different. Several restaurants in Columbia-owned buildings, including Floridita and Dinosaur Barbeque on 12th Avenue, will remain open for business, although they’ll likely be moved to other on-site locations. These businesses may continue to draw their longtime clientele onto the new campus. However, a plethora of new shops that might have more to gain catering to the student population than to the neighboring one. It’s impossible to say today what those businesses will be, but the image painted by David Smiley above—that of area residents leaving their neighborhoods to pass through Columbia to get to Fairway on the other side—suggests less of a vibrant community street life than a short cut from one section of Harlem to another.

The new campus, with its open perimeter and shop-lined city streets, also raises the question of security. Any public place has to navigate between creating a welcoming and accessible space and restricting access and monitoring activity for the purpose of maintaining security. The extreme at one end is a gated community and at the other is a city park generally considered too dangerous to visit after dark.

Columbia Public Safety oversees both the Morningside campus and the medical school and it’s good at its job; Columbia is currently ranked among the safest



institutions in the country. James McShane, associate director of public safety at Columbia, described the Public Safety methods of keeping the University safe as a familiar mix of uniformed guards on foot and in cars, fixed post security like the guard booths at campus entrances as well as at the doors of residence halls. Public Safety also uses the blue box emergency telephones, video cameras, and an investigation squad for more serious crimes.

According to McShane, the new campus will probably not be much different. In governing the new campus, he said the University will likely stick to “the tried and true techniques that are successful,” pointing out that security for the expanded campus will not be much different than that at its current Columbia buildings outside the core campuses, like Prentiss Hall on 125th Street.

Assuming that Public Safety will be as effective with the new campus as it is with the current ones, the effect the presence of uniformed security officers will have on the space’s perceived accessibility remains in question. McShane thinks the effect will be positive. “I don’t want to speculate what anyone would think. I personally like to see uniformed officers, they make me feel safe.” Their presence might also act as a deterrent, giving the impression of a guarded space exclusive to the campus’s neighbors. Occasionally, people are actively denied entry to the campus. McShane suggests that the University mostly restricts access only to those who have engaged in criminal activity on campus. When I try to get him to elaborate, he says, “It’s private space.”

The University already owns roughly 70 percent of the expansion area, and its application for rezoning is currently under Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, the city’s rezoning process, which is anticipated to conclude by January. On Aug. 6, Columbia announced its purchase of Despatch Moving and Storage, leaving only two of the once six area businesses that promised never to settle with the University. The mayor and state officials also support the plan. In this light, the plan seems destined to move ahead.

Community opposition to the plan has been fierce. On Monday, Aug. 20, Community Board 9, which represents an area that includes both the Morningside campus and the vicinity of the proposed expansion, overwhelmingly voted down Columbia’s development plan for the area (197c). The board, which has created its own plan for the area (197a), countered by creating a list of complaints against the development and demands for 10 concessions, without which the board will not give its support. The list demands that Columbia avoid evicting local businesses and residents, and requests that it create jobs, take environmental precautions, and preserve historic buildings.

Columbia is determined not to begin construction until it owns the entirety of the expansion site. Many fear Columbia will forcefully attain that ownership.

The head of Community Board 9, Jordi Reyes-Montblanc, is a resident of Hamilton Heights and an unabashed critic of the University’s wish to control the entire site. Reyes-Montblanc argues that as long as the space is owned privately by the University, it will always be private space. “Something that’s private is private, no matter how you disguise the idea. If you own the streets, then they’re not public, they’re private.”

Full control of the site would enable the University to construct a 70-foot deep underground space often referred to as “the bathtub.” The underground structure would be used mostly for parking, central loading, and maintenance. Because it would stretch beneath a large portion of the area, the existence of sporadic, non-University-owned buildings on the site would hinder if not prevent its construction.

Proponents of the plan argue that the underground bathtub would make the street level of the campus more accessible and pedestrian friendly. Still, CB9 specifically bans the underground space’s construction. The board is particularly opposed to the University acquiring land beneath city streets, which for many is equivalent to ownership of the streets themselves. The University maintains that only the area below ground would be Colum-

bia-owned, and that the streets would continue to be fully integrated parts of the city grid. The board meets the University’s claims with a characteristic lack of trust. “It’s the same thing with a park,” Reyes-Montblanc says, “If it’s privately owned, the minute you want to close it, you can close it.”

This argument finds justification in the fate of College Walk, the Columbia-controlled pathway between Broadway and Amsterdam that was once 116th Street. At the time it was built, the campus perimeter was open and 116th Street remained a part of the city grid. An early photograph taken from Low Library’s steps shows lines of black Model Ts driving on the street between Broadway and Amsterdam.

Professor Ballon says that Low Library was intended to function as “a sort of urban piazza.” She explains that 116th Street “was an open street and the steps were a private space that backed directly onto a public one.” She compares it to the steps of the New York Public Library on 42nd Street, which are covered with groups of people on warm afternoons. Her language is strikingly similar to that which the planners use to describe the site’s public spaces. In 1954, at the University’s bicentennial, 116th Street was acquired from the city and became what is now College Walk, undeniably changing the way that the Low Library steps function as a space for the neighborhood.

For Tom DeMott, a member of CPC’s Steering Committee, the disruption that the site would bring to the neighborhood renders null any discussion of how a campus like Columbia’s might serve the neighborhood after it’s built.

“How the heck can that be the issue that’s being looked at?” he asks. “It’s an eviction plan. ... When you’re facing what we’re facing, that’s a luxury issue.”

As my tour with Fountain and Benitez concluded, we passed by 3251 Broadway walking south from 133rd Street. In front of the building’s gates, pulled down and locked on a Monday afternoon, sat the bench from the back of an old sedan, seat belts dangling onto

the sidewalk. The only other person present was Luis, a middle-aged Hispanic man who once worked at 3251 Auto Repair. Two repair shops, which once occupied the ground floor and the four floors above it, were evicted by the University in March with claims of an unsafe elevator and \$100,000 in unpaid rent.

DeMott, who lives on Broadway and Tiemann Place, is a Columbia graduate and longtime resident of the neighborhood. When we spoke, he reminisced about 3251 Broadway the way it was a few years ago. “There was a lively culture outside that mechanics shop. Ten or 15 workers or socializers would be hanging out on that block, talking, and having an animated life. ... Now that’s what I call a public space.”

Those sorts of public spaces, informal, organic neighborhood gathering spots, will likely be replaced in the coming years by those that Columbia has in mind. How they will function for everyone who lives here is, in the end, a question that will only be answered in time. Urban planner Marilyn Taylor spoke to me about the power of design and the inevitable dynamic of change, even for urban spaces everyone loves.

“If Columbia doesn’t expand into Manhattanville, it may not have been much time before the mechanic left for other reasons. It is the price we pay for, well, I say moving forward ... I know that some people say we’re moving backwards. The question really becomes how can we provide spaces that evolve over time. You can point to places on a map and say, this is where people will hang out, but in the end people will hang out where it’s fun ... if we give them a set of active, open spaces ... I think that that sort of activity will recur.”

COURTESY OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

FILM INFECTING AN AUDIENCE THROUGH ADS

BY JENNIFER MAYER



THE HEADLESS STATUE OF LIBERTY MAY BE THE ONLY KNOWN STAR OF J.J. ABRAM'S AS-YET-UNTITLED PROJECT (LEFT), BUT THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT'S NON-ACTORS MADE HEADLINES YEARS EARLIER.

THE TYPICAL QUESTION IN THE minds of trailer-watching moviegoers this summer was not, “What exactly does a Spiderpig do?” or “Just how old is that Zac Efron again?” It was probably closer to, “What the hell did that mean?”

While comic timing and plastic-looking teenage boys might ultimately rock the box office, few things generate more discussion than a strategically uncommunicative ad. Forget the old-fashioned concept of the teaser trailer—the new advertising strategies are revealing even less and bringing the buzz into the streets and into your homes.

These viral marketing campaigns rely on intrigued viewers to spread news of the film via word of mouth and, increasingly, through the Internet. Because these campaigns often utilize free, user-friendly Web sites like YouTube and MySpace, it's an easy mistake to assume that they are low-budget or unprofessional. However, these campaigns are the result of careful planning and research, created to best capitalize on our instincts to share and discuss that which interests us.

Ian Schafer, CEO of Deep Focus Entertainment Marketing and Promotions, the firm that manages the social media components for films like *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Live Free or Die Hard*, knows the importance of these subversive campaigns.

“What is seen as key to the success of

many high-concept films is bringing in the right audiences early,” he says. “These ‘right audiences’ tend to be influencers—or in the cases of sci-fi and fantasy, otherwise referred to as ‘fanboys’—and make up a tiny portion of the film’s actual audience, but wield a large sphere of influence in both the physical and digital communities that they inhabit.”

The growth of the digital community has caused a revival of sorts in the viral marketing business. Movie fans will remember the advanced trailer and the mysterious Web site that snowballed interest in the year leading up to 1999’s *The Blair Witch Project*. They were so well done that many believed that the film documented a true story. Similarly, the Mooninite light boxes positioned around Boston to promote the *Aqua Teen Hunger Force* movie caused a minor panic when they were thought to have been bombs placed by terrorists. The difference here is that while *Blair Witch* relied more heavily on strict word of mouth advertising, *Aqua Teen Hunger Force* benefited from endless blog posts and soft news stories about the Boston police’s seemingly hilarious over-reaction.

J.J. Abrams’ new production is the latest and most spectacularly tight-lipped campaign currently puzzling moviegoers. While the name of the film has not been officially revealed, intrigued fans often refer to it as *Cloverfield* or *1-18-08*, after the movie’s

scheduled release date. An enigmatic movie trailer premiered along with *Transformers*, and subsequently made a large splash on the Internet. The official site for the film, www.1-18-08.com, features only five candid photographs. A fan blog called One Eighteen Oh Eight is much more extensive, analyzing snippets of audio from the trailer, examining the site’s code, and decoding the packaging of promotional products.

Whether it’s pure curiosity or Abrams’ reputation that has audiences fascinated, it’s unclear how much of an influence these die-hard fans will wield once the film premieres. UK-based *Five News* recently aired a segment on the Abrams project and took several jabs at the people perpetuating the online sensation. “Internet movie fans are a bit lonely, and they’re gossipy,” the segment says. “You only have to get on the Internet to see how desperate people are to solve this riddle.” Desperate, yes—but somebody has succeeded in generating hype for a movie whose release date is close to six months away.

Which begs the question: how soon is too soon to promote a movie? Many frustrated *Cloverfield* fans have lamented the lack of knowledge about the much-anticipated film, and some have wondered if it will really be worth all the hype. However, advertisers must be careful to balance the amount of detail revealed to the public. It is unlikely

that consumers will choose to see a film they know nothing about, but revealing or leaking too much defeats the purpose of a secretive campaign. After an unbelievably widespread and campy online presence last summer, for example, *Snakes on a Plane* suffered at the box office—perhaps because moviegoers were already tired of the near constant online exposure and speculation.

Viral marketing campaigns have changed the face of advertising and made movie viewing in general a more involved experience. With more and more people subscribing to Netflix and TiVo, it is harder to convince consumers that a movie warrants the full theater experience. Schafer predicts that viral marketing will become an integral part of the future of movies themselves.

“If the experience of the film doesn’t just incorporate going to the theater, but includes participation in its plot, themes, or issues in both the physical and digital/virtual worlds, then the historically 2-D experience of watching a movie on the screen becomes a 3-D experience of not just passive viewing, but active participation in a real-time event,” he says. “This may very well be what lies ahead in the future of entertainment.”

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES AND ARTISAN ENTERTAINMENT

MUMBLING A MOVEMENT

BY FRANCES BODOMO

GIVEN THE MEDIA FRENZY OF THE past two weeks, “mumblecore” may barely need an introduction. Big name publications—*New York Times* big—have run articles on this newest independent genre, and the IFC Center recently devoted a two-week series, “The New Talkies: Generation DIY,” to the films.

The consensus seems to be that American independent cinema has found its next movement: a tight group of young friends who hang out at film festivals and make uber-low-budget films about the angst-ridden and directionless post-collegiate years.

The term started out as a joke by mumblecore director Andrew Bujalski’s sound mixer, and has since come to describe the realistic, unscripted, and often directionless and ineloquent feel of the films. But that doesn’t mean all its members universally embrace the term. “Ultimately, these films are really small films and they’re hard to get an audience for,” says writer-director Aaron Katz, whose most recent film, *Quiet City*—an ode to the less-filmed aspects of life in New York City—was featured in the IFC series. “By using the term ‘mumblecore,’ it makes it easier for people to wrap their heads around it,” he says.

Though the media may be in a hurry to declare the films an official movement, mumblecore’s development has been, more or less, unintentional. “This spontaneous thing happened in many different parts of the country,” says Greta Gerwig, BC ’06, who stars in Joe Swanberg’s *Hannah Takes the Stairs*, an improvised and delicate film about the romantic relationships of its unsure protagonist. “There was a void in cinema for these types of moments and stories. I think it’s more extraordinary that people, who didn’t know each other until the films were done, did this independently.”

Ry Russo-Young, who also starred in *Hannah Takes the Stairs*, suggests the explanation may be a technological one. “This group [of filmmakers] is a direct result of the digital revolution,” she says. “Many of these filmmakers didn’t go to film school. Instead they chose to make an ultra-low-budget movie on digital us-

ing all the resources they could pull together.”

With budgets that typically range in the low thousands, the informal aesthetic is largely the result of similar monetary and first-timer issues as well. *Quiet City*’s cinematographer, Andrew Reed, had to consider both the visual and practical concerns of the proudly amateurish movement, creating “a really fragile and delicate look” by using longer lenses and a shallow depth of field—keeping the camera far away also facilitated work with the non-professional actors, who “may not be used to having a camera directly in their faces.” Katz, the director, also appreciated that he could shoot unplanned scenes on the spur of the moment because of the small crew, a sentiment that is common among other filmmakers.

Gerwig also valued the small scale of the production of Swanberg’s *Hannah*.

“Having a lower budget or a small crew is sort of seen as something you have to accommodate for, but I think it’s a luxury more than anything else,” Gerwig says. “No part of the process is alien to you.”

Swanberg is possibly mumblecore’s greatest champion of improvisation and intimate sets. “The thing I like most about ‘do-it-yourself’ filmmaking is that the only goal is to make a good film,” he says. “There are no commercial considerations.”

Money is an issue, of course, as the low-budget constraints do restrict filmmakers’ original plans. “There were a lot of thoughts and feelings that we thought were great, but eventually had to be tossed aside because they just weren’t practical,” says Brendan McFadden, producer of both *Dance Party USA* and *Quiet City*. “[But] the results are more exciting than if we’d simply been replicating another filmmaker.”

Many mumblecore films reject standardization, often stressing human individuality and imperfections. “I think my biggest goal is to make the viewers of my films feel like they aren’t weird,” Swanberg says. “There are a lot of things we do every day that make us feel strange, and we feel like we must be the only person in the world to do that. I want my films to be full of



conversations and actions that confirm for the viewer that they are not alone.” Similarly, Gerwig says that for her role in *Hannah*, “the biggest thing I wanted to do was to be as open and as honest as I could be, even if that was going to be showing something that was ugly.”

The truly independent nature of the mumblecore films could mean a new system of film reception, one Swanberg suggests may resemble the indie music scene with its many smaller distributors. “There won’t be a lot of money involved, but filmmakers will be able to tour with their work through a network of smaller digital venues, even if it’s just a big-screen TV in someone’s living room,” he says, also speculating that filmmakers could tour together. “I’m really hopeful for the future. It’s an exciting time to be making video work.”

One major criticism of the movement is its dominance by young, white men. “The implication is that it’s a bunch of upper-middle-class twentysomethings whining about their pretend problems,” Katz says, though he notes that was

certainly never the intention. “I hope that it emboldens people to make films, that it will say to people, ‘You don’t need \$50,000, you don’t even need \$5,000 to make a film.’ All you need is to get a bunch of friends together and figure out what it is that you care about.”

Ultimately, Generation DIY represents a bright future for cinema: a democratized movie industry leaving room for constant innovations and diverse ideas from any would-be filmmaker. “The critics and programmers have decided which films get included in this category, not the filmmakers,” Swanberg says. “It’s not some exclusive club. We’re just a few people making movies. Everyone’s invited to the party.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF IFC FILMS



MUSIC

A HIP HOUSE IN MIDTOWN

BY JUSTIN A. GONÇALVES



MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE the Bowery Ballroom transformed from a high-end retail store to a music venue just 10 years ago. The Ballroom, considered by many to be one of, if not the, premier concert venue in New York, has blossomed in recent years. And with its perpetually increasing popularity has come the creation of Bowery Presents, a company that has a veritable monopoly over the city's alternative music scene.

In the age of Ticketmaster fees and sold-out shows at Madison Square Garden, the folks at Bowery provided a refuge for that new buzz or experimental band. Bowery's musical palette has shifted from the under-represented to the mainstream—one can find bands like the Shins and M.I.A. all over VH1—and is now booking shows at the Garden. And now with the opening of the Music Hall of Williamsburg (formerly known as Northsix) tonight, and the unveiling of Terminal 5 looming on the horizon, Bowery Presents, once lauded for breaking bands at venues like the Mercury Lounge and Webster Hall is now hitting the big time.

Terminal 5, the opening of which was announced mid-August, includes

a multi-million dollar renovation of the former Club Exit, according to the Bowery Presents press release. With, as the release describes it, "a clean, open layout for the 40,000-square-foot multilevel venue [and] a main floor with the performance space [that] will feature 40' ceilings, unobstructed sightlines, and state-of-the-art sound and lighting," Terminal 5 is throwing itself head-on against established midtown venues such as the Hammerstein Ballroom and Roseland Ballroom, referring to itself as "Largest Midtown Venue To Open In More Than a Decade." What is perhaps most fascinating about Bowery's foray uptown—the new address is expected to be 610 W. 56th St. between 11th and 12th Avenues—is the similarity between the acts it has chosen to book at Terminal 5 and those that have recently performed at much smaller venues.

Brooklyn-based band the National serves as a perfect example. Already announced as the headlining act for Terminal 5's opening night, the band recently performed at the Bowery Ballroom, selling out a five-night stand from May 28th to June 3rd.

With the fantastic critical reception to the group's latest, *Boxer*, maybe it shouldn't come as a surprise that these guys are on their way up.

However, taking a look at the other acts that have already been announced for Terminal 5's first few weekends (the politically conscious dance goddess M.I.A. and French DJs J.U.S.T.I.C.E.), it becomes clear that Bowery is beginning to profit off of the flourishing scene that it had a large hand in creating. Both M.I.A. and J.U.S.T.I.C.E., whose recent New York City performances were held at the relatively modest Studio B and Bowery's own Webster Hall, respectively, have already sold out. That's quite a feat considering each group is signed to an independent label: M.I.A. on XL Recordings and J.U.S.T.I.C.E. with Ed Banger Records.

A further look at Terminal 5's upcoming line-up does, however, yield some clues to the path the venue plans to take, with notorious indie-crossover acts such as the Shins and the Decemberists each headlining two nights a piece for the not-so-modest price of \$40 and \$30, respectively. As every music snob's favorite band becomes everyone's favorite band,

it has become abundantly clear that we've entered a new age. Listen to J.U.S.T.I.C.E.'s new record, *Cross*, and thoughts of a downtown, drug-fueled, all-night rave come to mind—an image that couldn't be further removed from the midtown, all-ages dance party that is almost guaranteed to ensue.

One must, applaud Bowery Presents for its willingness to keep this venue all-ages, especially when it is harder than ever to sneak into a 21+ or even 18+ show (traditionally, the Bowery Ballroom stations bouncers at its door checking patron IDs, regardless of the show's age restriction or the abundance of facial hair or male-pattern baldness). But when you have 3000 people paying \$25 to see a couple of French DJs, the venue probably doesn't have to count on bar-generated revenue.

As these acts continue to garner attention from media outlets ranging from MTV to Pitchfork to mainstream radio, there needs to be a venue that can house their expanding popularity and, for Bowery, there's no reason to take themselves out of this one. The music business is still a business after all.

COURTESY OF 230 PUBLICITY

VAMPIRE WEEKEND

BY JENNIE ROSE HALPERIN
PHOTO BY DANIELLA ZALCMAN

IT SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE:

four Columbia students start a band, play infectious, African-infused, extremely danceable rock music, garner lots of enthusiastic young fans, get called “one of the year’s most impressive debuts” by the *New York Times*, and then are quickly snatched up by a major label in a year and a half.

But that is exactly what happened to the Columbia band Vampire Weekend this year. Vampire Weekend, who will release their major-label debut on XL (M.I.A., the White Stripes) this year, stick to their DIY ethic.

“The big difference is that we’re now doing this full time,” front man Ezra Koenig, CC ’06, says. “We’ve done everything ourselves up until this point.” Vampire Weekend, comprised of Koenig on guitar and vocals, Chris Tomson, CC ’06, on drums, Rostam Batmanglij, CC ’06, on keyboards, and Chris Baio, CC ’07, on bass, is the kind of band that is easy to love. With their preppy look, throwback pop songs, and lyrics about the Upper West Side and Cape Cod, the band has reintroduced Paul Simon’s *Graceland* into hipsters’ vocabularies, helping a new generation discover this classic.

Vampire Weekend tries not to get stuck into “worshipping one artist,” though. In terms of influences, Koenig says, “There are some new things that we love, but just to name them, it would probably be misleading ... There are just too many ... [though] we have been listening to a compilation of music from Madagascar.”

The band sprinkles its tunes with names of places, claiming to be experts in “Upper West Side Soweto” and “Cape Cod Kwassa Kwassa,” though fans can “determine what they want from that.”

“There is definitely a connection with the Upper West Side,” Koenig says. “I mean that’s where my parents lived for a long time. It’s where I was born.” Batmanglij elaborates, “The Upper West Side is a vibe.”

Concerned as the band is with location, Vampire Weekend is heavily influenced by Columbia. “I think already though, Columbia’s influenced our music in its own way ... It’s such a diverse school, and everyone has their

own experience there ... I’m sure that some people think [our music] is some sort of ‘Ivy League thing’ but it’s not necessarily that—it’s our personal interpretation of Columbia and New York City,” Koenig says.

Batmanglij agrees. “Just thinking about music and being around it in New York—those two things I think were pretty important in college.” In terms of how they measure up to other Columbia musical grads, “We’re better than Art Garfunkel ... He didn’t have much of a solo career.”

The band speaks often about how they always “did everything [themselves],” even after signing.

“We were still doing stuff ourselves. We released two EPs. Only now are we doing stuff with XL. We actually set a date for our single, set a date for our album, which is exciting,” Koenig says. Like their upbeat music, the band is a dynamic group, claiming that they “made an active choice to sign a label” and calling their relationship with their label “an active partnership,” shying away from the euphemism “getting signed.”

“On a lot of labels they make you put themselves into their hands,” Baio says, “but not with XL.” The band produced their own LP and recorded much of it in Columbia spaces, including Ruggles and Lerner. They do lament, though, the difficulty of getting practice space at Columbia. “Chris Tomson had to rent a room pretending it was for WKCR,” Baio says. “There’s a lot of bureaucracy in getting a room to even practice in.”

As their fame grows, Vampire Weekend tries to stay loyal to their Columbia fans. “We’ve definitely found a lot of enthusiastic fans at Columbia. I think it was definitely beneficial to go to school in New York because we had fans that would come to shows even after we graduated,” Koenig says. Also, for a band that played only at Columbia for their first year of existence, Vampire Weekend is gaining fans quickly. One glance at their MySpace page reveals fans from Barcelona, as well as all over the U.S.

On their second tour this summer with YACHT and Dirty Projectors, they continued to travel in their Honda Odys-



sey, which according to Baio has not much more than a “busted DVD player.” When asked about their connection to these and other bands in New York, Koenig says, “It’s definitely not a scene, like the punk scene was a scene—it’s an aesthetic. It’s just too big.” Batmanglij continues, “There’s a college connection. I guess we know people in common.”

So after four years of the college connection, living in the neighborhood

about which they write, and embracing the Core, what is their favorite Morningside Heights landmark? “Taqueria,” they all agree, though someone claims it’s “not in Morningside Heights.” On second try, the roof of Woodbridge—where Baio lived last year—and Ruggles come out on top. As Vampire Weekend moves further away from Columbia and toward a broader fan base, DIY success never smelled so sweet.

FOOD ROSÉ COLORED GLASSES

BY ANDERS AXEL WALLACE



SUMMER IS ON ITS WAY OUT, BUT THE streets are still as hot as the proverbial tin roof and your A.C. is on the fritz. So, what's in your glass? If you're tuned in to the tastemakers, the answer is rosé wine.

The media has seized upon rosé as the objet recherche for a U.S. audience that, more and more, seeks out wine and its connoisseurship. Food and fashion magazines alike rain mentions of rosé like carnival confetti, handily installing it as a sine qua non for your Hamptons picnic, while prominent European producers devote increasing attention to cultivating manicured, complex, and prohibitively-priced bottles of the stuff for export. But, suddenly the wine world has turned tentative and introspective. Critically, does this attractive pink fix deliver on the hype?

A treat conceived in the sun-fed lap of the Mediterranean, rosé wine finds its home in the dusty baked countryside of Spain and the Provence in southern France. A sober and thorough friend, the *Oxford Companion to Wine* serves up a neat synopsis on the fermentation of these wines. The same process that yields the famed and patriarchal reds of Bordeaux—a period of maceration in which the juice is let to cozy up with the skins and seeds of the grape—is cut short for the production of rosé. The tannins and minerals in the skins of the berry are what give weight and complexity to a wine, and of course, its color. An incubating rosé benefits from only the starkest impression of the rich purple skins, so that juice and pulp are filtered apart after eight to 12 hours (although this depends upon the variable pigment of the grape).

Simply put, rosé is a product of its environment. Merciless sunshine and the absence of rainfall along Europe's southern shore concentrate the sugars of the grape to the effect that white wines become bland, alcoholic, and overweight. The reds—built to absorb such treatment—mature as hard and acidic. Queue up rosé, then, as a breezy companion for meals under the sun whose flavor doesn't suffer from being buried in ice (you wouldn't want it any other way).

But what developed as an out-of-the-barrel indulgence, a thirst quencher made and sold on-the-cheap to locals, has evoked in the American jet set a more romantic, pastoral tableau of a quaint style to be prized and all but invited to the latest party at St. Tropez. And yet, doubt abounds from hobbyists to connoisseurs over the fated character of the new pink craze. Eric Asimov, wine critic and blogger for the *New York Times*, registers skepticism in a recent web post: "...Why am I so unhappy about rosés? I don't want to buy them. I don't want to drink them. I don't hate them. I'm just not interested ... That's what I want in a wine this summer, something delicious that keeps me coming back, and for the most

part I haven't found that in rosés."

As Eric K., one of 71 readers (another write-up on champagne attracted a modest 17) roused to arms by this post, counsels, "That's it! Rosé is 'Sunny Afternoon' by the Kinks. It's also the right wine when the food is really beer food (Thai or the like) but I'm just not in the mood for beer."

Yet top-flight vintners have disposed themselves to curating more complex, rewarding bottles of rosé with ever-growing ambition. Oak-barrel aging—which by conventional wisdom would torpedo the bright floral notes of such wine—has instead become another trick up the sleeve for producers to buck tradition for a cut of the dollars in play. Asimov's beloved estate R. Lopez de Heredia in Spain, for instance, trots out its latest bottle after an aging process of a full 10 years. Of the 1995 production just released in 2005, Asimov writes in the *Times* that "they are unlike almost any other rosé you might taste, tangy and textured, dry and delicious. It's a great wine, but it's not a carefree wine." This is not, in other words, your paesano-casket variety.

On the other hand, a 2005 Rosé d'Anjou, purveyed from the Loire valley in the northwest of France, which prides itself on its "nose and body dominated by a rich bouquet of red fruits," already felt syrupy and cloyingly overripe in my own off-the-cuff testings.

More so than ever before, rosé is basking in limelight. From California to Chile, South Africa to Australia, entrepreneurial vintners have championed the rosé in a heady bid to upend traditional wine interests in France and Italy.

Even New York state has been getting into the act. Vintage New York (93rd Street and Broadway), a shop that stocks only local wines, recommends its 2005 Rivendale Winery Cabernet Franc rosé, borne of Long Island vines and bottled in the Hudson river valley (\$1.99). Astor Wine and Spirits (Lafayette and 4th Street) guides curious browsers towards the Rioja Muga rosé (\$10.99), a well-heeled Spanish production, as well as the Italian Il Mimo (\$12.99). "I think rosés have always had a fan base, but as Americans have been getting more interested in wine, their taste for rosé has been growing apace—it's a great introductory wine as it is fairly simple and straightforward," Bob Ransom, the owner of Vintage, says.

For you Smirnoff and Mike's Hard fans, 'fess up and consider a batch of the stuff for your next get-together—be aware that it's a love affair that may not last. Rosé is a tarty tease that comes best dressed-down, as compared to its cousins red and white who know how to hold a conversation. Who wants to bloat with their booze?! I'll put down the yak. Just tell me it's not too late for a touch of Dionysian summer shenanigans around Morningside Heights.

HUMOR YOUR GUIDE FOR BACK TO SCHOOL

MAKING FRIENDS YOU NEVER WILL

NEW RESEARCH FROM COLUMBIA'S own sociology department confirms what counselors, administrators, and everyone but you have known for years: if you didn't make friends during orientation, you never will.

"It's not exactly a breakthrough, since everyone knew it already," researcher Michael Oleman says. "But what we conclusively demonstrate is that orientation activities—and only orientation activities—cause friend-making behaviors in cool kids."

Oleman went on to explain that the crushing loneliness you now feel has several causes which, though seemingly diverse, are all your fault. For one, your high school days really were better than college can ever be.

"Those are the kind of friends you can never make again," Oleman says. "And you just left them behind ... for what?"

Unfortunately for you, your sadness will likely be compounded by a feedback loop of despair. If you don't enjoy your time at Columbia, you will let down your family and everyone who ever believed in you. Knowing that you have saddled your parents with an immense financial burden for no good reason should make you even sadder, rendering their sacrifice all the more worthless.

"We will never forgive our son," say two parents who wished their child to remain anonymous. "What kind of a horrible person would do this?" Adds the father, "He's no son of mine."

Many people other than you find that their residence hall neighbors become some of their best friends. This is because your floor really is better than all the other floors.

Nonetheless, you have already been pegged as the boring loner.

"Sorry, but you just don't seem like much fun," your floormate Rebecca Sanders, CC '11, says. "The RA didn't even invite you to the get-to-know-you trip to Central Park. We all had a good laugh about that."

At this point you may hold out hope of meeting people through classes. Researchers have considered that angle, however, and have left you with little hope.

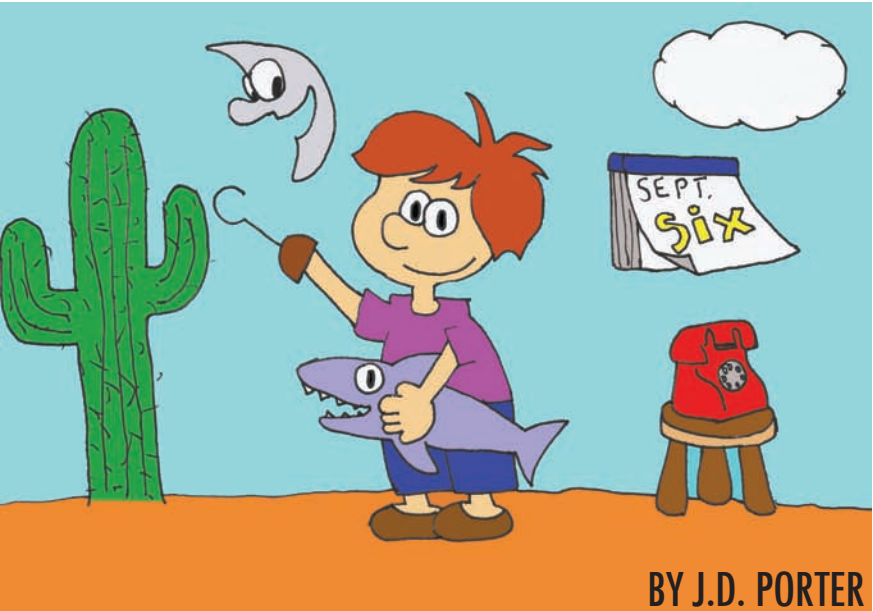
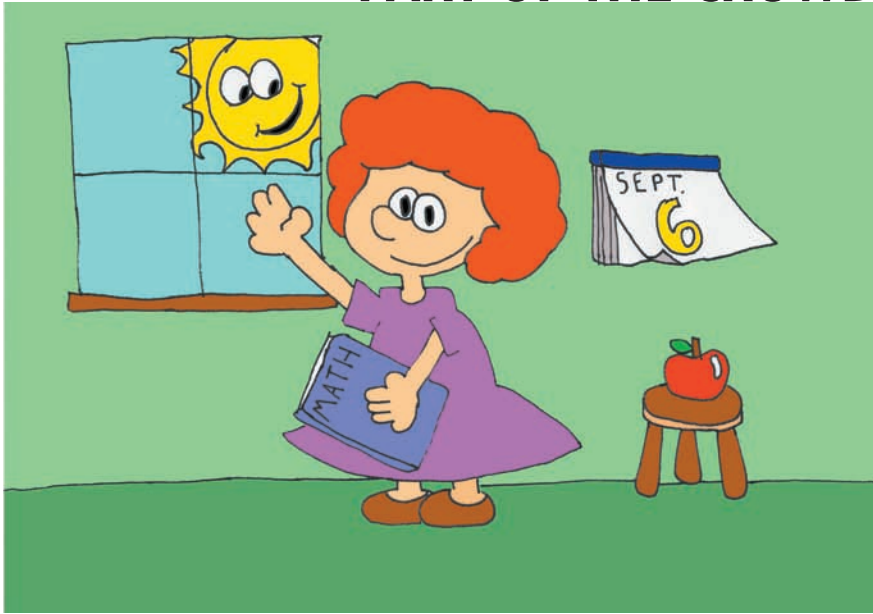
"We have literally years of research showing that people you meet in classes just don't talk to you outside of the classroom setting," Oleman says. "If anything, the intense competition for grades, combined with your intellectual unimpressiveness, will just make people hate you even more."

If you ever want to be happy again, your options include dropping out and transferring to another school. Unfortunately, you have probably already missed orientation at most other colleges, so you won't be able to make friends there either. As a drop-out, you will find that your colleagues in the food delivery industry consider your intellectual curiosity a sign of homosexuality, which they still think is hilarious. So these options actually won't make you happy either.

One source of comfort is that no one else has to suffer like you, because you are the only one who didn't make friends. You may have noticed that there are few resources for dealing with your loneliness. That's because only a few freaks have ever suffered it.

"I just—I don't even know what to tell you," Oleman says. "Good luck."

PART OF THE CROWD



BY J.D. PORTER

Can you find the six differences between these first-years?
Answer key below.

ANSWERS: 1) Girl becomes boy; 2) apple becomes rotary phone; 3) sun becomes moon; 4) classroom becomes desert; 5) hand becomes hook; 6) "6" becomes "six"

CLIFF'S NOTES* THE ENTIRE LIT HUM SYLLABUS

BY J.D. PORTER

*Not affiliated with Cliff's Notes

First Semester:

Greek People
Homer, Aeschylus, Thucydides... You can pretty much just rent *Troy* (Brad Pitt, Orlando Bloom) for this part.
The Holy Bible
Old Testament: You'd better do what God says.
New Testament: You'd better do what Jesus says God says.

Second Semester:

The Aeneid
The Romans claim descent from history's most famous losers.
St. Augustine
When young, wild sex and pear-thievery. When old, didactic repentance, recontextualized pears.
The Divine Comedy
Obscure Italian politicians warn Dante about obscure Italian politics.

Also, God.
The Decameron
The Black Plague is a great excuse for getting laid, often in ways you didn't think they knew about back then.
Hamlet
Not to be.
Don Quixote
A Spanish guy with a fat friend suffers from profound mental incompetence.
Montaigne's *Essays*
A French guy has some opinions.

Pride and Prejudice
Women can write too.
Crime and Punishment
A mopey guy kills an old lady with a axe in chapter three or something, and then does history's greatest moping for a few hundred more pages.
To the Lighthouse
Subjectivity, reality, phallocentricity, World War I, lesbianism, and dozens of pages about an empty house. Spoiler alert: she ultimately paints a line.

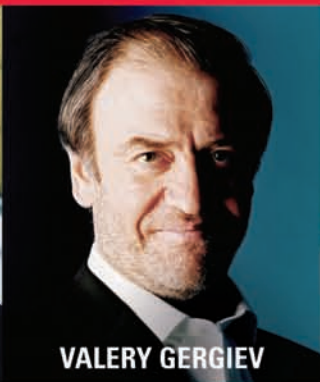
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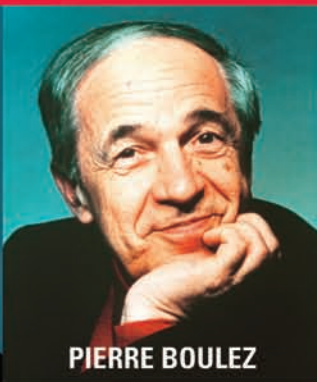
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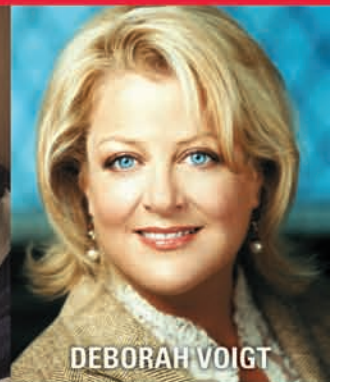
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