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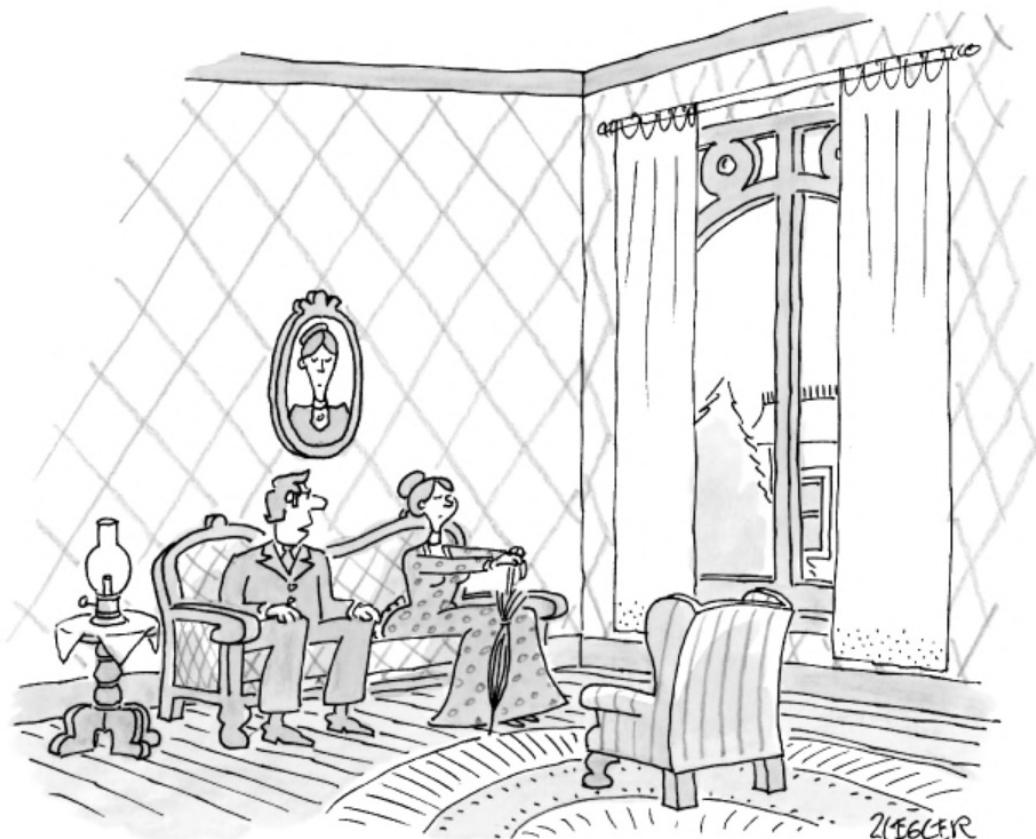
*Ana Juan*

**COVER**

"Art and Architecture"

**DRAWINGS** Jack Ziegler, Jason Patterson, Paul Noth, Mick Stevens, Michael Crawford, Charles Barsotti, Benjamin Schwartz, William Hamilton, Edward Koren, Bruce Eric Kaplan, William Haefeli, Edward Steed, Tom Toro, Emily Flake, David Sipress

**SPOTS** Mel Kadel



*"I predict that men's fashions will remain relatively stable throughout the next century and a half, whereas women's will evolve continuously, and with the speed and illogic of a juiced-up tribe of rampaging Darwinian monkeys."*



CÉLINE

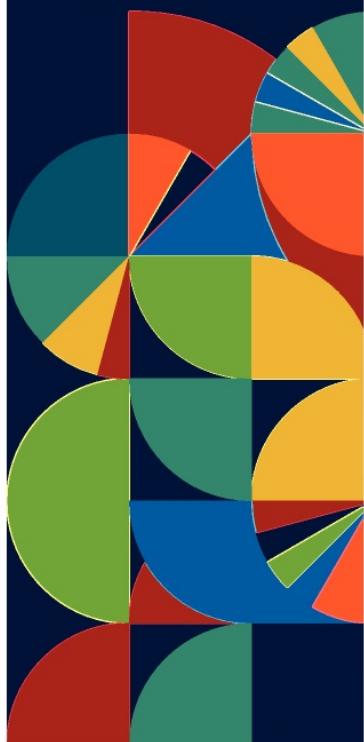
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## CONTRIBUTORS

**Kelefa Sanneh** ("Harlem Chic," p. 52) became a *New Yorker* staff writer in 2008.

**John Cassidy** (Comment, p. 39) has been a staff writer since 1995. He writes the Rational Irrationality blog on *newyorker.com*.

**Ian Frazier** (The Talk of the Town, p. 43), a longtime contributor, recently published his first novel, "The Cursing Mommy's Book of Days."

**Lena Dunham** ("A Box of Puppies," p. 46) is a writer, filmmaker, and actress from New York City.

**Teddy Wayne** (Shouts & Murmurs, p. 51) is the author of the novels "Kapitoil," for which he won a Whiting Writers' Award, and "The Love Song of Jonny Valentine."

**Alice Fulton** (Poem, p. 66), whose most recent book of poems is "Cascade Experiment," was awarded the Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry in 2002 for her collection "Felt."

**Ana Juan** (Cover) is the illustrator of the "Fairyland" series of children's books, the most recent of which is "The Girl Who Fell Beneath Fairyland and Led the Revels There."

**Calvin Tomkins** ("Anarchy Unleashed," p. 60) is a longtime staff writer and the author of several books, including "Marcel Duchamp: The Afternoon Interviews," which was published last month.

**Pari Dukovic** (Photographs, pp. 60-61, 64, 65; Portfolio, p. 70), a regular contributor, has his first solo exhibit, entitled "Burlesque," at the Giacobetti Paul Gallery, in Brooklyn, through March 30th.

**William Finnegan** ("The Miner's Daughter," p. 76) has been writing for the magazine since 1984. His books include "A Complicated War" and "Cold New World: Growing Up in a Harder Country."

**Ruth Prawer Jhabvala** (Fiction, p. 88) is a Booker Prize-winning novelist and an Academy Award-winning screenwriter. "A Lovesong for India" is her latest collection of short stories.

**Giles Harvey** (A Critic at Large, p. 96) joined the magazine's editorial staff in 2011. He is working on a novel.

**Karl Kirchwey** (Poem, p. 98) is Professor of the Arts at Bryn Mawr College. His most recent poetry collection is "Mount Lebanon."

### THIS WEEK ON **NEWYORKER.COM**

The Business Pages: Our online hub for the latest in business news. With stories and posts by James Surowiecki, John Cassidy, and many others. / The New Yorker Out Loud: Leo Carey and Kelefa Sanneh on Dapper Dan and men's fashions. / Blogs: Daily Comment by Amy Davidson, George Packer, and Steve Coll; Ian Crouch on books, at Page-Turner; Richard Brady on movies, at the Front Row; daily slide shows at Photo Booth; and more. / A daily cartoon drawn by Christopher Weyant, plus animated cartoons, the caption contest, and cover jigsaw puzzles. / Our complete archive, back to 1925.





BOTTEGA VENETA

# THE MAIL

## BALANCING INTERESTS

As is the case with the tragic death of Aaron Swartz, the suicide of any young person is an incredibly sad event, whatever the cause ("Requiem for a Dream," by Larissa MacFarquhar, March 11th). I object, however, to the effort of some of the people featured in MacFarquhar's piece to turn Swartz into a hero for facing government prosecution after hacking the JSTOR archive. Swartz was apparently familiar with laws protecting proprietary-information-management systems, so he should not have been surprised by the severity of the prosecution's response to his crime. It is a crime, and not a victimless one. I am a retired journalist; during my working years, my salary depended, and today my pension relies, on people paying for copyrighted content. In recent years, as the business that supports journalism has declined, thousands of journalists have lost pay, benefits, and, ultimately, their jobs. Some people may consider illegally downloading content from the "1942 edition of the *Journal of Botany*" to be benign, but downloading periodicals such as the *New York Times*—or *The New Yorker*, for that matter—with- out paying for them would harm the people who worked for those publications in the past and who write for them today. I find it ironic that Swartz made several million dollars selling the rights to his own copyrighted programming to Condé Nast. Swartz's is a sad story, but it's not a heroic one.

Jane Scholz  
Washington, D.C.

## ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN

As Jeffrey Toobin writes, in his Profile of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, women were certainly among the groups suffering from discrimination in the legal profession when Ginsburg sought her first job, after graduation from Columbia Law School ("Heavyweight," March 11th). But if one of her favorite professors, Gerald Gunther, "essentially extorted" Judge Edmund—not Ed-

ward—Palmieri to offer Ginsburg a clerkship, the professor did so in ignorance of Palmieri's history of employing women as clerks, and of the Judge's familiarity with professional women: in fact, he hired a female clerk from the Yale Law School class of 1955; one of the Judge's sisters was a physician; and the Judge and his wife raised their two daughters to become professional women. I was Palmieri's law clerk in 1959, when he offered the clerkship position to Ginsburg. He told me that he had just interviewed a remarkable young woman and that he thought he was fortunate to be able to offer the position to such a well-qualified student. If he was "extorted," it was not only unnecessary but inappropriate and unfair to future Columbia Law students for the professor to threaten not to refer clerks to him in the future if he did not hire Ginsburg. Palmieri was a strong advocate for professional women, and one among few judges who appointed women as law clerks in the nineteen-fifties.

Alvin H. Schulman  
New York City

## THE LINE OF DUTY

Twenty-five years ago, I was the managing editor of the *News-Times* of Danbury, a local newspaper that circulates in Newtown, Connecticut, and that has been covering the town for more than a century, alongside the *Newtown Bee* ("Local Story," by Rachel Aviv, March 4th). My wife, Jacqueline Smith, is the current managing editor, and she helped direct coverage of the massacre of twenty students and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School. She supervised the reporters writing about those who died. They composed dignified, beautifully written profiles of the children and their teachers. When a young reporter called my wife from a mourning Newtown neighborhood and shakily related how a man had yelled at her, called her names, and told her to get out, her editor reminded her of the paper's obligation to inform

tens of thousands of readers of the who, what, when, where, and why of the story. When you are the local paper, the responsibility to serve your readers is heightened, because you know—as the national and international media that must parachute in do not—that the local paper will still be here, still reporting on the community so shaken. Journalists should not harass but inquire; they seek the truth, or what is as close to the truth as they can get. If you choose to be a first responder in law enforcement or emergency services, God bless you. If you choose to be a storyteller, God bless you. Just as firefighters and E.M.T.s must, a newspaper's first responders in storytelling must hold at bay all the terrible emotions and go about their jobs as professionally as possible.

James H. Smith  
Oxford, Conn.

## PREVENTING INFECTION

David Owen's article on Purell portrays alcohol-based hand-hygiene products as better than soap and water for most hospital-acquired infections ("Hands Across America," March 4th). This is true for the most part, but *Clostridium difficile* (*C. diff*) infections—a major cause of hospital, clinic, and now community-acquired infections—are the glaring exception to this rule. *C. diff* can lead to serious morbidity and death, mostly in sick hospital patients. Only the use of gloves, in conjunction with hand washing with soap and water, and room decontamination have been shown to be effective in preventing the spread of *C. diff*. Most hospitals have strict protocols, including isolation, for treating patients who have a *C. diff* infection, but adherence to these is often inconsistent. Hand washing by all staff is hard to enforce, and is often the weak link in stopping transmission, but strict adherence to protocol has been effective in preventing spread to other patients.

Dick Fine, M.D.  
San Francisco, Calif.

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to [themail@newyorker.com](mailto:themail@newyorker.com). Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. All letters become the property of The New Yorker and will not be returned; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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## GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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### THIS WEEK

#### THE THEATRE

##### NEW YORK STORIES

Richard Greenberg, who is best known for his coming-out drama centered on baseball, "Take Me Out," has three works premiering this season. Manhattan Theatre Club presents "The Assembled Parties," a comedic drama set on the Upper West Side, while "Breakfast at Tiffany's," adapted from the Truman Capote novella, plays at the Cort. In May, Playwrights Horizons premieres "Far from Heaven," for which Greenberg wrote the book. (See page 16.)

#### NIGHT LIFE GETTING DOWN

The Minnesota-based trio Low, which creates a sparse and moving brand of indie rock, has just released its tenth studio album, "The Invisible Way," and the band is at the Society for Ethical Culture, joined by the ACME string quartet, to celebrate. (See page 20.)

#### CLASSICAL MUSIC ADAMS FAMILY

It's a banner week for America's big father-and-son composer pair: John Adams and Samuel Carl Adams. A work by the younger Adams will receive

a New York première from the San Francisco Symphony; the elder's music will be performed by the Attacca Quartet at (Le) Poisson Rouge. (See pages 30 and 31.)

#### MOVIES THE BRONX BOMBER

In anticipation of the release later this month of "Room 237," a documentary exploration of various exegetical takes on "The Shining," IFC Center offers a complete retrospective of the work of Stanley Kubrick, including the 2001 film "A.I. Artificial Intelligence," an unfinished project that Steven Spielberg took over

after Kubrick's death. (See page 35.)

#### ABOVE AND BEYOND CAJUN CONNECTION

Freetown Produce, a company based in Lafayette, Louisiana, brings the chef Toby Rodriguez to the Jalopy Theatre—along with the Louisiana sextet the Revelers, fiddling and banjo-playing twins from rural North Carolina, and other artists—for three days of food and music. (See page 36.)

*Jon Kessler's "The Web," at the Swiss Institute.*  
*Photograph by Lauren Lancaster.*

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**S**pring brings several plays centered on powerful women (albeit written by men). Bette Midler, who hasn't performed on Broadway for more than thirty years (her last show was "Bette, Divine Madness!" in 1980), returns to the Great White Way to portray the consummate Hollywood insider. In "I'll Eat You Last: A Chat with Sue Mengers," a one-woman show written by John Logan and directed by Joe Mantello, Midler plays the outspoken super-agent, who started as a receptionist and went on to represent top stars of the seventies such as Barbra Streisand and Steve McQueen (previews begin April 5, at the Booth). Imelda Marcos, the profligate wife of the Philippine President whose fame derived from her extraordinary collections of art and shoes, is the subject of a new musical, "Here Lies Love," which builds on a 2010 album-length collaboration between David Byrne and Fatboy Slim. Alex Timbers directs at the Public (April 2). Deborah Warner directs her frequent collaborator Fiona Shaw in "The Testament of Mary." Shaw portrays an impassioned Virgin Mary, who ruminates on her son's death twenty years after the fact. The provocative one-woman play, by the Irish writer Colm Tóibín, premières at the Walter Kerr (March 26).



Something of an anti-ingénue, **CONDOLA RASHAD** commands the stage—notably in "Ruined" (2009) and "Stick Fly" (2012)—with a steely gaze that gives way to a fierce undertow of emotion. (What else would you expect from Mrs. Huxtable's daughter?) She returns to Broadway in Horton Foote's "The Trip to Bountiful," with Cicely Tyson, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Vanessa Williams, and Tom Wopat, at the Stephen Sondheim. Previews begin March 30.



The Off-Broadway theatre **PLAYWRIGHTS HORIZONS** wraps up its season—which has included Lisa D'Amour's "Detroit" and Annie Baker's "The Flick"—with "Far from Heaven," a musical based on the 2002 film by Todd Haynes (which was itself inspired by the fifties melodramas of Douglas Sirk). The new show has music by Scott Frankel and Michael Korie and a book by Richard Greenberg. Kelli O'Hara stars, and Michael Greif directs. Previews begin May 8.



Christopher Lloyd's performance as Doc Brown, the time-travelling mad-genius inventor in "Back to the Future," was both iconic and prophetic: Lloyd, now seventy-four and looking pretty much the same, steps into Bertolt Brecht's "THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE." Duncan Sheik, who composed the addictive score for "Spring Awakening," wrote new music for the play. Brian Kulick directs, at Classic Stage Company. Previews begin May 2.

## THE THEATRE OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

### THE ASSEMBLED PARTIES

Lynne Meadow directs this play by Richard Greenberg ("Take Me Out"), for Manhattan Theatre Club, about a Jewish family living on the Upper West Side, set in 1980 and 2000. Starring Jessica Hecht, Judith Light, Jeremy Shamos, and Mark Blum. Previews begin March 21. (Samuel J. Friedman, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

### THE BIG KNIFE

Roundabout Theatre Company presents Clifford Odets's 1949 play, set during the golden age of Hollywood cinema, starring Bobby Cannavale, Richard Kind, Marin Ireland, and Ana Reeder. Doug Hughes directs. Previews begin March 22. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

### BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S

Sean Mathias directs Richard Greenberg's new play, adapted from the Truman Capote novella, about a capricious young woman in New York in the nineteen-forties. Opens March 20. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.)

### THE CALL

Playwrights Horizons, in a co-production with Primary Stages, presents the world première of a new play by Tanya Barfield, directed by Leigh Silverman, about a couple trying to adopt a child from Africa. The cast includes Kerry Butler, Eisa Davis, and Crystal A. Dickinson. Previews begin March 22. (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

### A DREAM PLAY

NAATCO presents the surreal play by August Strindberg, adapted by Sung Rno and Andrew Pang, who also directs. Previews begin March 22. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-352-3101.)

### HANDS ON A HARD BODY

This new musical, with book by Doug Wright and music by Trey Anastasio and Amanda Green, tells the story of ten Texans who compete to win a truck. The cast includes Keith Carradine, Allison Case, Hunter Foster, and Jay Armstrong Johnson; Neil Pepe directs. In previews. Opens March 21. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 877-250-2929.)

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

TACT presents the 1946 play by Anita Loos, about an introverted librarian who, in an attempt to attract a bank teller, becomes inebriated for the first time in her life. Scott Alan Evans directs. In previews. Opens March 21. (Beckett, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

### KINKY BOOTS

This musical, based on the film, has a book by Harvey Fierstein and music and lyrics by Cyndi Lauper. Jerry Mitchell directs. In previews. (Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

### THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Second Stage revives Jason Robert Brown's 2002 musical, which follows the impulsive marriage of a young New York City couple. Brown directs. In previews. (305 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

### LUCKY GUY

Tom Hanks makes his Broadway début in a new play by Nora Ephron, about the tabloid columnist Mike McAlary. Also starring Maura Tierney and Courtney B. Vance. George C. Wolfe directs. In previews. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

### MATILDA THE MUSICAL

Matthew Warchus directs a musical based on Roald Dahl's children's novel, with a book by Dennis Kelly and music and lyrics by Tim Minchin. In previews. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

### MOTOWN: THE MUSICAL

Charles Randolph-Wright directs a show about the life of Berry Gordy, the founder of Motown, with a book by Gordy and featuring music from the Motown catalogue. In previews. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 877-250-2929.)

### THE NANCE

Lincoln Center Theatre presents a new play by Douglas Carter Beane, set in nineteen-thirties

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New York, about a gay man who performs in a burlesque show as a "nance," a stereotypical homosexual character. Nathan Lane stars; Jack O'Brien directs. Previews begin March 21. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

### PIPPIN

The coming-of-age story of Charlemagne's son returns to Broadway for its fortieth anniversary, directed by Diane Paulus. With a book by Roger Hirsch and music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz. Previews begin March 23. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

### THREE TREES

Pan Asian Rep presents a play by Alvin Eng, about the artist Alberto Giacometti and his muse, the Japanese philosophy professor Isaku Yanaïhara. Ernest Abuba directs. Previews begin March 23. (West End Theatre, 263 W. 86th St. 212-352-3101.)

## NOW PLAYING

### ANN

"I am as strong as mustard gas," Ann Richards (Holland Taylor) barks on the phone to President Clinton. As the governor of Texas from 1991 to 1995, Richards was a trailblazer (she was a Democrat and a woman), but she's best remembered for her salty down-home wit, including her famous comment that George H. W. Bush was "born with a silver foot in his mouth." The seventy-year-old Taylor wrote this one-woman show out of obsessive admiration for Richards, who died in 2006, and her characterization has the glow of an actress portraying a kindred spirit. If the script glosses over Richards's flaws—her alcoholism, for instance—it spills over with her indelible gumption, as Texan and tangy as barbecue sauce. (Vivian Beaumont, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

### BELLEVILLE

Another tiresome work by the inexplicably lauded young playwright Amy Herzog, directed by Anne Kauffman. In a frayed apartment in Paris's multiethnic Belleville neighborhood, Abby (the fine Maria Dizzia) lives with her husband, Zack (Greg Keller), who has brought the couple to Paris because of a job with Doctors Without Borders. After Abby, a needy and sometimes nervy daddy's girl, returns home unexpectedly to find Zack watching porn, we find out he's behind in the rent, and jumpy in ways that indicate that disaster is not far off. Herzog's high-quality pastiche portrays the con as an extension of the lies that privileged "mixed-up" kids tell themselves in order to live up to familial expectations. Given that the suspense Herzog builds with a capital "S" is boring enough, why should we wait for her characters' predictable revelations as well? (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-279-4200.)

### THE FLICK

When Beckett's first work was produced in the U.S., in the nineteen-fifties, it was clear that he had what relatively few contemporary dramatists have mastered: new ideas about how to put thinking over in dramatic forms. Annie Baker has a similar gift. Her main idea so far seems to be that plays can describe the everyday in something approximating the real time it takes for ordinary citizens to make up their minds about anything. Her current piece—about three young people who work at a small-town cinema that still shows 35-mm. prints—is three hours long (including intermission), and the tremendous architecture behind it lets you know that Baker's ambitions are some-

thing to look forward to. But it's a play in need of a conclusion, especially as Baker gets weighed down by her various race cards. They're not her characters' issues, really, but her own, grafted onto her clerks with movie dreams, who are played by Matthew Maher, Louisa Krause, and the incredible Aaron Clifton Moten—performers who, as directed by Sam Gold, give the show more than everything they've got. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

### HIT THE WALL

Ike Holter's play, staged just blocks away from the Stonewall Inn, is set during the two scorching-hot days in June, 1969, that led up to the historic riots



"Engelberg" (1972), by Luigi Ghirri, at the Matthew Marks gallery.

there. We follow a motley assortment of street types, all fictional—a butch lesbian, a sassy Latino, a wide-eyed blond newbie—who start out as drifters and end up as gay-rights pioneers. They are stock characters, and their dialogue, which includes plenty of "far out"s to indicate that we're in the sixties, is riddled with clichés. Nathan Lee Graham, as a black drag queen who is brutalized by a policeman, manages to cut through the pageantry of Eric Hoff's production. The rest is more high-school history lesson than drama. (Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. 212-868-4444.)

### JACKIE

The Austrian writer Elfriede Jelinek, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2004, suffers from agoraphobia (she was criticized for not appearing at the Nobel ceremony to accept her prize), and so it's not surprising that she'd choose to write a monologue from the point of view of the very public figure Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Jelinek's Jackie—a fun, funny, catty, paranoid nut job, as played by Tina Benko—riffs for eighty minutes on the pleasures and horrors of being that particular icon, and also on death, which follows her everywhere (she drags around dummies emblazoned with the names Jack, Bobby, and Ari). Benko's nuanced performance, under the direc-

tion of Tea Alagic, is hilarious, inspired, and fabulous, though she could just as easily be playing a wild secretary from "Mad Men." The writing, translated by Gitta Honegger, is beautiful and sometimes profound, if occasionally abstruse. (City Center Stage II, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

### THE LYING LESSON

Bette Davis (Carol Kane)—seventy-three, imperious, grand, and alone—arrives at a cabin in coastal Maine. A thunderstorm is raging, and the power goes out; soon, she's stumbling around in the dark, cigarette in one hand, long sharp knife in the other. Kane finds her way through Craig Lucas's script with similar dotty aplomb: when a naive local named Minnie (Mickey Sumner) arrives—lifesaver? interloper?—Davis susses her out with prickly relish, and Kane is in her element. She was born to deliver lines like this one, about a missing wallet: it's "like me—worn plain leather, with a snap." Lucas writes intelligent dialogue with a fan's ardor and a touch of camp, but the relationship between his two outsiders never resonates enough to make the plot's twists matter. Sumner's distracting accent (think Julianne Moore on "30 Rock") and the slow pacing, under Pam MacKinnon's direction, don't help; the play never fully emerges from its long, dull, dark beginning. (Atlantic Theatre Company, 336 W. 20th St. 212-279-4200.)

### NEVA

The Chilean-born writer and director Guillermo Calderón is an authentic genius of the theatre. In this short, hard, and passionate work, set in 1905, we meet Olga Knipper (Bianca Amato), Anton Chekhov's widow, as she is trying to remember her closing monologue in "The Cherry Orchard." Two fictional characters (who could have been created by the master himself) enter the small stage that the self-dramatizing Knipper would occupy alone if she could. But every actress needs a director: will that be Aleko (Luke Robertson), who, at one point, helps to act out the varying stories that make a fiction out of Chekhov's final moments, or the bespectacled Masha (Quincy Tyler Bernstine), who believes politics, not theatre, have something to do with the truth? In Bernstine's final all-consuming and Genet-inspired

monologue—it's the richest part of the show—these various themes come together in something you may not even like, but you can't say you've heard or seen any of it before, which may make you want to hear and see it again. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-967-7555.)

### THE NORTH POOL

In a cinder-block office in a public high school, Khadim (the stirring Babak Tafti), a truculent Middle Eastern student, has been called in to see the vice-principal. Is he connected to a recent spate of vandalism? What about the mysterious suicide of a female classmate? Dr. Danielson (Stephen Barker Turner, a bit too buffoonish) has his theories, some of them tinged with racial innendo. The early scenes of Rajiv Joseph's tense two-hander resemble a C.I.A. interrogation, suggesting a political allegory. But, as the plot twists and power plays accumulate, the script goes slightly off the rails, with ever more baroque revelations. Still, the two actors are so committed, and Giovanna Sardelli's direction so taut, that the drama retains its harrowing emotional truth. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303. Through March 24.)

### PATTI ISSUES

Ben Rimalower, unquestionably the world's No. 1 Patti LuPone fan, tells his story in this endearing



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solo show, juxtaposing his estrangement from his absentee father against his love for—and, eventually, friendship with—the indomitable Broadway star. Diva worship, a gay coming-of-age: the elements are well worn, but the whole, drollly written and performed with heaps of charisma, is a show queen's delight. Wednesday nights. (Duplex, 61 Christopher St. 212-255-5438.)

#### TALLEY'S FOLLY

Landford Wilson's 1979 work will do you no harm if you don't push it to be deeper than it is: what the play's narrator, Matt Friedman (Danny Burstein), calls a waltz. We watch the actors glide across the dance floor of their various fears and their longing pleasantly enough, even when certain predictable facts are revealed, such as what makes Friedman's love interest, an upper-middle-class Missouri-based girl, Sally Tally (Sarah Paulson), so uncomfortable under the light of Friedman's love. The director, Michael Wilson, creates an overwhelming set in a small space, which at first distracts from Paulson and Friedman's fine work. But we get over it, and get down to the business of checking out Paulson's intelligence and Burstein's big, openhearted energy, which can get a little upstage-y at times. But that's less Burstein's fault than the playwright's; Friedman's Jewish schmaltz and irony is a little stereotypical. He only gets to be a real character when the actor drops the cultural

Stages, 340 W. 50th St. 212-239-6200. **REALLY REALLY:** Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-352-3101. **THE REVISIONIST:** Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 866-811-4111. **RODGERS + HAMMERSTEIN'S CINDERELLA:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.

## NIGHT LIFE ROCK AND POP

*Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to check in advance to confirm engagements.*

#### B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL

237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—March 22: The blues-harmonica giant James Cotton. March 23-24: Helen Reddy, the Australian songbird who took over the American charts in the seventies, belting out the No. 1 hits "Delta Dawn," "Angie Baby," and the era-defining "I Am Woman," returned to the concert stage last year after a decade-long hiatus.

#### THE BELL HOUSE

149 7th St., Brooklyn (718-643-6510)—March 22: Among those hit by Hurricane Sandy were the

for everyone, but those who are unmoved have her major-motion picture débüt to look forward to: by all accounts she'll be devoured by Peruvian cannibals in Eli Roth's new horror film, "The Green Inferno," which will be released later this year. Ferreira performs here with Tom Krell's experimental R. & B. solo project How to Dress Well.

#### BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC

30 Lafayette Ave. (718-636-4100)—March 21-24: **"Planetarium."** The singer-songwriter Sufjan Stevens, the National's Bryce Dessner, and the composer Nico Muhly present the U.S. première of their program of songs inspired by the solar system.

#### THE CONCERT HALL AT THE NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE

2 W. 64th St. (800-745-3000)—March 20: The Duluth, Minnesota-based trio Low's new album, "The Invisible Way," is a magnificent contribution to the group's slow and transfixing body of work. The spacious record, produced by Wilco's front man, Jeff Tweedy, in Chicago, highlights Low's longstanding embrace of sparseness over density and the yearning vocal harmonies of the bandleader and guitarist, Alan Sparhawk, and his drum-playing wife, Mimi. The songs feature more piano than usual and cover a wider lyrical terrain (the drug war, archeology), but at their core, as is the case with all the group's work, is a search for musical transcendence. Opening will be the ACME string quartet, an adventuresome new-music ensemble that will also back the band for several songs.

#### GLASSLANDS GALLERY

289 Kent Ave., between S. 1st and S. 2nd Sts., Brooklyn (No phone)—March 25: Zac Pennington is the lead singer of Parenthetical Girls, and, while you may not have heard of his band, it's possible you caught his cameo in the first episode of "Portlandia," IFC's hipster-baiting sketch-comedy show. Pennington was featured as a member of the Sherlock Holmes, an adult hide-and-go-seek team. His band started off in 2003 as the Swastika Girls (after a Brian Eno composition), but they've since changed the name, and recently released their fourth album, "Privilege," a collection of EPs the group started issuing in February of 2010. The gorgeous music ranges from propulsive synth pop to macabre dirges, all adorned by Zac Pennington's fragile, warbling vocals. They perform here with the Scandinavian indie rockers This Is Head and the offbeat Philly folk act Norwegian Arms.

#### "LET'S ZYDECO!"

March 24: The singer, songwriter, and accordionist Rosie Ledet, fronting the Zydeco Playboys, is one of the genre's rare female leaders, almost as rare as somebody standing around with his hands in his pockets when her band begins to play. (Connolly's, 121 W. 45th St. For more information, call 212-685-7597 or visit letszydeco.com.)

#### MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

Seventh Ave. at 33rd St. (800-745-3000)—March 22: The singer-songwriter, actress, and maven of pissed-off girl power Pink is also an extreme acrobat. Her concert tour The Truth About Love, which supports her album of the same name, features the artist performing gymnastics, accompanied by high-tech visuals, busy choreography, and rigorous costume changes, that are so intense, it's a marvel she is actually (maybe) singing live throughout them. The Swedish rockers the Hives get the party started with their high-voltage power pop. March 25: The soaring Icelandic post-rock group Sigur Rós, which came together in 1994, hits this iconic local arena for the first time, a fitting tribute to the growth of its musical ambitions (and epilepsy-inducing light show). This concert features an eleven-piece ensemble that includes a string quartet and a horn section.

#### MUSIC HALL OF WILLIAMSBURG

66 N. 6th St., Brooklyn (718-486-5400)—March 23: Tyler, the Creator, rap provocateur par excellence and the spinal column of the hip-hop collective Odd Future, returns in support of his third solo release, "Wolf," due out in April. Success has not softened Tyler's aggressive lyrical delivery nor his dark humor and imagery, though he mixes his fare (which has been criticized as misogynistic and homophobic) with gentler material, such as

## TV NOTES MUTUALLY ASSURED DEVOTION



"*The Americans*," on FX, is this year's liveliest new TV drama. Set in the nineteen-eighties, the series follows Elizabeth and Philip Jennings (Keri Russell and Matthew Rhys), a couple who live in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., with two kids and a seemingly dull life. In fact, they are Soviet spies. Paired by their K.G.B. bosses in their early twenties, they've built a sort of Potemkin marriage, workmanlike but non-intimate, particularly on her side. In the pilot, they capture a Soviet defector, who turns out to be an agent who raped Elizabeth during her training. She had never told Philip about the incident. When he realizes what is fueling her rage, he kills the man in front of her.

This crisis explodes their marriage. It turns their relationship from a fake one into a real one, and painful secrets tumble out, both ideological and emotional. Some of this is a struggle over identity: what does loyalty mean in a marriage in which both people are seducers, manipulating "assets" with sex? What kind of parents raise children in a culture they regard as the enemy? They have other differences, too: Philip is tempted to defect, while Elizabeth is a true believer. In one sense, this is the story of a midlife crisis (like HBO's "Tell Me You Love Me" on amphetamines). But because the show's couched as a political thriller their marriage mimics many other half-

real intimacies, including those built by their F.B.I.-agent neighbor (the terrific Noah Emmerich), who has just emerged from his own years-long undercover mission, has his own marital issues, and is becoming friends (or maybe "friends") with Philip.

These stylized spy-versus-spy shenanigans have some parallels with Showtime's "Homeland," whose brilliant first season was followed by a disastrous second one. As with that series, many scenes in "The Americans" are meditations on espionage, which requires its disciples to sublimate human decency to larger moral imperatives. Yet despite the sleek surface and fun retro aspects (Jordache jeans, VCRs, landlines), setting the show in the Reagan era is more than a gimmick. With historical distance, "The Americans" has the freedom to sympathetically portray characters who, on a different show, would be hissing terrorists. Elizabeth, cold and damaged, is a fascinating heroine whose trauma may have cemented her ideology. (It makes her suffering mean something.) But Rhys gives the show's standout performance, both as a skilled con man who is nonetheless strangely vulnerable and as a rather traditional family man, furiously in love with a wife who insists he's not her husband.

—Emily Nussbaum

signifiers and plays what Friedman really is behind the Borscht Belt speech: a middle-aged man looking for love, and a home. (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

#### Also Playing

**ALL IN THE TIMING:** 59E59, at 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200. **THE BOOK OF MORMON:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 800-745-3000. **KATIE ROCHE:** Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 866-811-4111. **OLD HATS:** Pershing Square Signature Center, 480 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529. **PETER AND THE STARCATCHER:** New World

Folks at the Brooklyn label Norton Records, champions and caretakers of garage rock both vintage and new. Virtually all of their stock was damaged, and their Red Hook warehouse is currently undergoing a huge salvage operation. Two of the label's local heroes, Reigning Sound and the Swingin' Neckbreakers, headline this benefit show, with support from Daddy Long Legs and the Piggies.

#### BOWERY BALLROOM

6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—March 20: The captivating twenty-year-old vocalist and model Sky Ferreira is known for her breakout 2012 hit, "Everything Is Embarrassing," an eighties-inflected gem that stood out from the four other songs—all clunkers—on her debut EP, "Ghost." Her music is not



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a beautiful near-slow jam collaboration with the megastar and Odd Future member Frank Ocean.

#### SANTOS PARTY HOUSE

96 Lafayette St. (212-584-5492)—March 20: The Nashville concept rockers the Protomen perform their theatrical fare at the House That Andrew W.K. Built with a heap of near-perfect Queen covers in support of their latest release, “The Protomen Present: A Night of Queen.” Dressing the part and with stage names galore, the band members carry the torch for seventies-style monster rock in an imitable way: their previous two releases, “Act I (The Protomen)” and “Act II (The Father of Death),” were high-energy (chiptune

of Bad Religion, a punk-rock band he started in high school back in 1979.

## JAZZ AND STANDARDS

#### BIRDLAND

315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—March 19-23: Tierney Sutton’s most recent album, “American Road,” features songs ranging from “Wayfaring Stranger” and “Amazing Grace” to “Tenderly” and “On Broadway,” revealing through her creative interpretations, new dimensions in familiar material.

have studied with him, the drummer Michael Carvin steps beyond his pedagogical role to lead a small group that will feature the acclaimed saxophonist Sonny Fortune on the final three nights of the run.

#### DROM

85 Avenue A, between 5th and 6th Sts. (212-777-1157)—March 23-24: The Generations of the Beat Festival brings together the veterans Jimmy Cobb, Billy Hart, and Andrew Cyrille—players who can list working with Miles Davis, Stan Getz, and Cecil Taylor on their C.V.s—alongside such younger masters as Lenny White, Jeff “Tain” Watts, and E. J. Strickland.



A photograph from Mike Brodie's series "A Period of Juvenile Prosperity (2006-2009)," at the Yossi Milo gallery.

meets hard rock) concept albums based on Nintendo’s Mega Man video-game series.

#### TERMINAL 5

610 W. 56th St. (212-582-6600)—March 22: When the alternative-rock act Garbage released their greatest-hits compilation, “Absolute Garbage,” in 2007, they must not have foreseen that some of their best material was yet to come. Their fifth LP, “Not Your Kind of People,” which came out last year, is a treasure of the guitar-spiked synth pop that the band began crafting in the early nineties. And Shirley Manson, the fire-haired, man-eating vocalist, still reigns as one of the strongest front women around.

#### TERRA BLUES

149 Bleecker St. (212-777-7776)—March 23: Jessy Carolina & the Hot Mess are New York sextet with a distinct, languid New Orleans feel. Specializing in early-twentieth-century material, the band puts vintage American tunes in evocative jazz and blues settings that showcase Carolina’s winning vocals. The group also features the Terra stalwart Jerron (Blind Boy) Paxton on piano and banjo.

#### THE WELLMONT THEATRE

5 Seymour St., Montclair, N.J. (973-783-9500)—March 23: Gregory Walter Graffin is a scientist and academic interested in paleontology, evolutionary biology, and theology. He’s also the singer

#### BLUE NOTE

131 W. 3rd St. (212-475-8592)—March 21-24: The bassist Stanley Clarke and the keyboardist George Duke have had a funk-fortified, on-again-off-again musical relationship for some three decades now.

#### CAFÉ CARLYLE

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—March 19-30: Laying waste to F. Scott Fitzgerald’s admonition about second acts in American life, Debby Boone, who has left “You Light Up My Life” long behind her, is now singing jazz standards.

#### “CI AT 40”

In 1972, Gunther Schuller and Ran Blake founded the New England Conservatory’s innovative Contemporary Improvisation program, and a celebration of its fortieth anniversary is taking place this week with various events around the city. The festivities conclude on March 23 with a show at Symphony Space featuring Blake, Dominique Eade, the Claudia Quintet, Christine Correa, Sarah Jarosz, John Medeski, Anthony Coleman, and Eden MacAdam-Somer. (For more information, visit necmusic.edu/ci40.)

#### DIZZY’S CLUB COCA-COLA

Broadway at 60th St. (212-258-9595)—March 21-24: A jazz-percussion avatar to those who

#### 54 BELOW

254 W. 54th St. (646-476-3551)—March 18-23: Bebe Neuwirth, a Jill of all theatrical trades, takes to the cabaret stage with “Stories with Piano #4,” a program that will touch on the droll narratives of such diverse but sympathetically inclined songsmiths as Kurt Weill and Tom Waits.

#### GREENWICH HOUSE MUSIC SCHOOL

46 Barrow St. (212-242-4770)—March 20: For his New York début as a leader, the Italian drummer Ananda Gari calls on some serious new-jazz associates, including the saxophonist Tim Berne, the guitarist Rez Abassi, and the bassist Michael Formanek.

#### IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—March 21-24: Contemporary fusion from the guitarist Oz Noy, the drummer Dave Weckl, and the bassist Will Lee.

#### JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER

Broadway at 60th St. (212-721-6500)—March 22-23, in the Allen Room: Madeleine Peyroux. On her latest album, “The Blue Room,” the singer applies her Billie Holiday-esque vocals to an unlikely but winning combination of country-music classics and singer-songwriter anthems.

#### JAZZ STANDARD

116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—New Orleans is both the home town and the spiritual source



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that sustains the pianist and singer Henry Butler; Big Easy echoes will permeate his music whether he plays solo (March 21–22) or is joined by a supportive rhythm team (March 23–24).

#### SHAPESHIFTER LAB

18 Whitwell Pl., Brooklyn (646-820-9452)—March 19: The trombonist Joe Bowie, a downtown music fixture of the eighties, keeps the funk in the new-jazz equation.

#### SYMPHONY SPACE

Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—March 22: A tribute to Paul Motian, the well loved genius of contemporary jazz drumming, who died in November of 2011, brings out an extraordinary assemblage of former bandmates and acolytes, including Joe Lovano, Bill Frisell, Ravi Coltrane, Greg Osby, Petra Haden, Gary Peacock, Masabumi Kikuchi, and Ethan Iverson.

#### VILLAGE VANGUARD

178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—March 19–24: Kurt Rosenwinkle, a post-Metheny jazz-guitar hero of increasing stature, unveils a new quartet.

#### ZANKEL HALL

Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800)—March 23: The violinist and singer Jenny Scheinman has two illustrious and perfectly attuned musical partners here—the guitarist Bill Frisell and the drummer Brian Blade—to present a night she's dubbed "Songs with and Without Words." The three musicians never let a roots-music sensibility stray too far from the heart of the matter.

## ART MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

#### METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—"Impressionism, Fashion, and Modernity." Through May 27. ♦ "African Art, New York, and the Avant-Garde." Through Sept. 2. ♦ "The Path of Nature: French Paintings from the Wheelock Whitney Collection." Through April 21. ♦ "Sleeping Eros." Through June 23. ♦ "At War with the Obvious: Photographs by William Eggleston." Through July 28. ♦ "Cambodian Rattan: The Sculptures of Sophéap Pich." Born in 1971, the Cambodian sculptor spent his childhood living under the brutal regime of Pol Pot, helping his parents make fish traps in order to survive. Using the same materials—rattan and bamboo—he now makes sinuous mesh sculptures. The serpentine "Morning Glory" culminates in a trumpeting blossom, paying tribute to the flower that was a staple of many diets during the famine of the Khmer Rouge years. The works are seen to their best advantage when juxtaposed with ancient artifacts, like the ethereal floating Buddha, suspended from the ceiling by two thin wires, its body unravelling into slender strips of rattan as if caught mid-reincarnation, surrounded by bronze and stone deities from the Angkor period. Through July 7. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30; and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

#### MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—"Inventing Abstraction, 1910–1925." Through April 15. ♦ "Bill Brandt: Shadows and Light." Through Aug. 12. ♦ "Artist's Choice: Trisha Donnelly." Through April 8. ♦ "Wait, Later This Will Be Nothing: Editions by Dieter Roth." Through June 24. ♦ "Henri Labrouste: Structure Brought to Light." Through Aug. 12. ♦ "Projects 99: Meiro Koizumi." Through May 6. ♦ "A Trip from Here to There." Through July 30. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30; and Friday evenings until 8.)

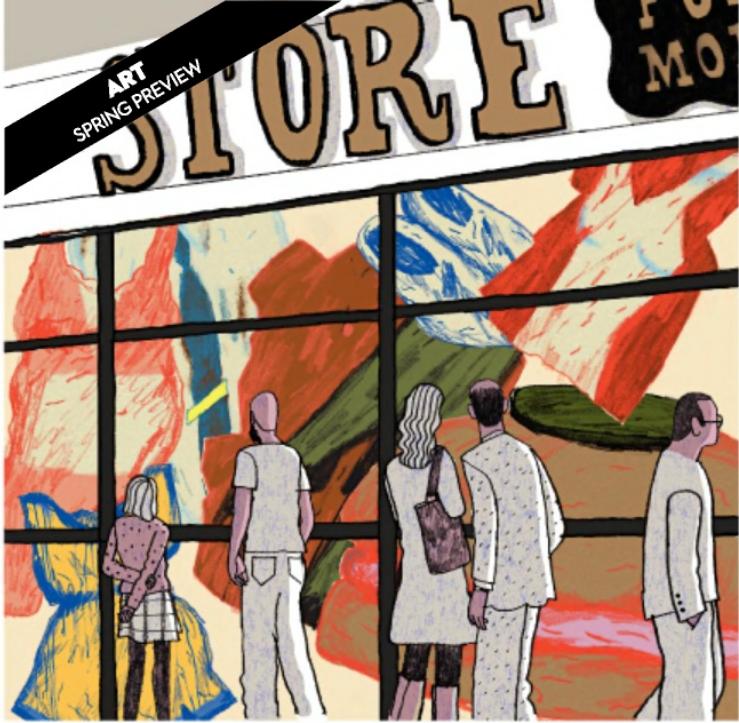
#### MOMA PS1

22–25 Jackson Ave., Queens (718-784-2084)—"Huma Bhabha: Unnatural Histories." Through April 1. ♦ "Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt: Tender Love Among the Junk." Through April 1. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

#### GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 88th St. (212-423-3500)—"Zarina: Paper Like Skin." Through April 21. ♦ "Gutai: Splendid Playground." Through May 8. ♦ "No Country: Contemporary Art for South and Southeast Asia." Through May 22. ♦ "The Hugo Boss

ART  
SPRING PREVIEW



"I am for an art that is political-erotic-mystical, that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum," wrote Claes Oldenburg in his 1961 manifesto, "I Am for an Art." The statement will come as no surprise to anyone

who has seen the Pop artist's most famous works, big public sculptures of everyday objects, made in collaboration with his late wife, Coosje Van Bruggen, that lighten the mood of landscapes from Minneapolis (home to a fifty-two-foot-long spoon topped off with a cherry) to Barcelona (the site of a sixty-eight-foot-tall book of red-tipped yellow matches). But years before turning to steel and aluminum, the eighty-four-year-old artist was breaking sculptural ground with softer materials, creating elaborate installations based on real environments, from crumpled cardboard, plaster-soaked canvas, and paint. MOMA brings together two early watershed projects in the exhibition "Claes Oldenburg: The Street and the Store" (opens April 14). In the atrium, the museum will also display a pair of collections amassed by the artist in the sixties and seventies: the "Mouse Museum," a selection of readymades, along with two hundred and fifty-eight ray-gun-shaped objects, a reminder that Oldenburg is also "for an art that grows up not knowing it is art at all."



Given that DAVID HOCKNEY has whipped up a few covers for this magazine on his iPad, he clearly isn't a Luddite. In fact, the British artist is so interested in the interplay of art and technology that he co-authored the Hockney-Falco thesis, which contends that Renaissance painters relied on cameras (*obscura* and *lucida*) when creating their work. The Whitney exhibits Hockney's first foray into video, "The Jugglers," an eighteen-screen installation made in 2012. Opens May 22.



In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, MOMA PS1, in collaboration with MOMA's department of architecture and design, solicited three-minute video proposals for a sustainable waterfront in the Rockaways. Twenty-five submissions will be screened as part of a series of exhibitions, lectures, and performances held in a geodesic dome near the former boardwalk, erected by the museum as a temporary cultural and community center. Opens in April.



There's more to John Singer Sargent than his notorious portrait of Madame X. In "JOHN SINGER SARGENT WATERCOLORS," the Brooklyn Museum exhibits paintings made during sojourns in Venice, the Italian Alps, and the Middle East, ranging from architectural scenes observed from gondolas to portraits of Bedouins. Many of the pieces on view were acquired from Sargent's first show in New York, in 1909, and have rarely been seen since. Opens April 5.

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#### WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3600)—"Blues for Smoke." Through April 28. ♦ "American Legends: From Calder to O'Keeffe." Through Dec. 1. ♦ "Jay DeFeo: A Retrospective." Through June 2. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

#### BROOKLYN MUSEUM

200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Gravity and Grace: Monumental Works by El Anatsui." Through

**Drawings and Prints from the Clark.**" Through June 16. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

#### JEWISH MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—"As It Were . . . So to Speak: A Museum Collection in Dialogue with Barbara Bloom." Through Aug. 4. ♦ "Six Things: Sagmeister & Walsh." Through Aug. 4. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 5:45, Thursdays, 11 to 8, and Fridays, 11 to 4.)

#### MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM

225 Madison Ave., at 36th St. (212-685-0008)—"Drawing Surrealism." Through April 21. ♦ "Degas,



## TABLES FOR TWO THE ARLINGTON CLUB

1032 Lexington Ave., near 74th St. (212-249-5700)—To have a good time at the Arlington Club, a new steak house from Laurent Tourondel, the BLT restaurateur, you must succumb entirely to the experience. You must accept the fact that if your dinner companion is running a few minutes late, the topknotted, crisp-blazered, spike-heeled hostess may ask that you "please keep in mind your reservation is for five-forty-five" (as if you could forget). You must cheerfully agree to take a picture of the group of middle-aged bankers sitting next to you on a dad's night out and chuckle appreciatively while they, discussing sashimi, exchange one-liners ("Cool Hand Fluke?" "You gotta be flukin' kiddin' me!"). You must delight in the moment when your waiter, who is wearing a custom tiepin and has been speaking with a formal, studied air, breaks character by leaning in to tell you that the rock-shrimp sushi is "bangin'".

What are sashimi and sushi doing on the menu at a steak house? The question won't be answered by ordering the latter—the shrimp, perched atop slices of an avocado-jalapeño roll, are tasty enough, but indistinguishable from what you'd get at any neighborhood joint. Cubes of rice fried golden brown and daubed with chopped kobe beef, truffle aioli, and snips of scallion fare a bit better, but it's probably best to skip anything vaguely Japanese-sounding. Try, instead, ordering dishes that begin with "P"; they seem, for some reason, to

be the superior things on offer. Two arrive at the beginning of the meal, free of charge: crisp, briny half-sour pickles and piping-hot, peppery three-cheese popovers, which look like inflated muffins and taste like Heaven, especially slathered in butter. These could comprise a satisfying meal on their own, washed down with an excellent New Dirty martini (vodka, Lillet, sea salt, orange bitters), but then you'd miss out on the many varieties of potato: the baked is monstrous and burrito-like, crammed with stringy Fontina, bacon, and sour cream, while potatoes Arlington are thinly sliced silver dollars with crunchy perimeters and creamy white centers.

There is, of course, plenty of steak at this steak house, whose lavish décor evokes a Paris train station, but with Peter Luger just across the river, why bother? A juicy twelve-ounce skirt is made less palatable by its thirty-six-dollar price tag, and though the bone-in rib-eye's charred crust has a complex, interesting flavor, similar to that of an aged-cheese rind, the meat itself is just average. Fortunately there are several desserts that begin with "P": a peanut-butter-chocolate bar, for example, served with a scoop of popcorn ice cream, or piña (a buoyant banana crème), drizzled in Nutella. Bangin'. (Open daily for dinner and weekends for brunch and dinner. Entrées \$26-\$64.)

—Hannah Goldfield

Aug. 4. ♦ "Raw/Cooked: Morela Zácaras." Through April 28. ♦ "Work by Hand: Hidden Labor and Historical Quilts." Through Sept. 15. ♦ "LaToya Ruby Frazier: A Haunted Capital." Open March 22. ♦ "Fine Lines: American Drawings from the Brooklyn Museum." Through May 26. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 10.)

**AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**  
Central Park W. at 79th St. (212-769-5100)—"Our Global Kitchen: Food, Nature, Culture." Through Aug. 11. ♦ "The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter." Through May 28. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45.)

#### ASIA SOCIETY

Park Ave. at 70th St. (212-288-6400)—"The Artful Recluse: Painting, Poetry, and Politics in Seventeenth-Century China." Through June 2. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 9.)

#### BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS

1040 Grand Concourse (718-681-6000)—"Joan Semmel: A Lucid Eye." Through June 9. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8.)

#### FRICK COLLECTION

1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—"Piero della Francesca in America." Through May 19. ♦ "The Impressionist Line from Degas to Toulouse-Lautrec:

**Miss La La, and the Cirque Fernando.**" Through May 12. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10:30 to 5, Fridays, 10:30 to 9, Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

#### NEW MUSEUM

235 Bowery, at Prince St. (212-219-1222)—"NYC 1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash, and No Star." Through May 26. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

#### VALÉRIE BELIN

The French photographer's past series include pictures of models, mannequins, bodybuilders, Baroque mirrors, and Michael Jackson impersonators; her subject is artifice, usually depicted head-on and with a level of detail that's almost alarming. Belin's new work continues this deadpan documentary style but adds a layer of confusion. Each of the big black-and-white images here is a double exposure of two clashing elements. Brides holding bouquets are overlaid with the façades of fast-food restaurants and porn shops; a nude burlesque performer is partially obscured by a TV studio and a furniture showroom. The effect is not unlike that of a David Salle painting, but with a sour pessimism in place of his elegance and wit. Through March 30. (Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-750-7070.)

**"SELECTIONS FROM THE LIGHT WORK COLLECTION"**

Founded in Syracuse in 1973, Light Work supports photographers with a residency program and through exhibitions, publishing, and grants. Judging by this intelligent survey, the organization favors socially engaged photography, but not exclusively. Among the artists who found early support are Cindy Sherman, James Welling, James Casebere, Dawoud Bey, Carrie Mae Weems, and Jim Goldberg. Their work is joined here by that of many others, both well known and not. Look for Willie Middlebrook's graffiti-like study of a young black man, Deanna Lawson's erotically charged portrait of a young family at home, and Lucas Foglia's shot of a bare-chested man brandishing a skillet of possum stew. Through April 11. (Palitz Gallery, Lubin House, 11 E. 61st St. 212-826-1449.)

## Short List

**ROCHELLE FEINSTEIN:** Higher Pictures, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 212-249-6100. Through April 27. **PHILIP GUSTON:** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-688-5951. Through April 20. **NEIL JENNEY:** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 212-744-2313. Through April 27. **ROSY KEYSER:** Blum, 20 W. 57th St. 212-244-6055. Through April 20.

## GALLERIES—CHELSEA

#### JÁN MANČUŠKA

The ingenious Czech artist's conceptually taut installation, "The Missing Room" (2008), is a rectangular space-within-the-space, its "walls" formed by horizontal rows of steel cable. Aluminum letters are strung on the wires, making words that are legible from inside the enclosure. The lines cohere into open-ended sentences, whether you read them from left to right or from top to bottom—a Borgesian hypertext about a person trying to make sense of the unknown. Mančuška died in 2011, at the age of thirty-nine, and this is his first posthumous show in New York. As you read a passage like "I spot a flicker of a shadow through the gap in the doors I hear something fall there is a moment of silence the light goes out in the room," the experience assumes the inevitable air of an elegy. Through March 23. (Kreps, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-741-8849.)

#### VIRGINIA OVERTON

Entering the New York sculptor's spare but strong installation, the smell hits you first—the sylvan aroma of the cedar planks that line the back wall. Then you hear gurgling. It sounds a bit like a brook, but it's an electric coffeemaker, siphoning hot water from a glass pot into an old bathtub. Overton nimbly updates a range of sculptural strategies, from the truth-to-materials ethos of minimalism to the life-into-art spirit of Arte Povera, with a down-home authenticity: the wood and the tub were salvaged from her family's farm in Tennessee. Think of Overton as the eco-feminist kindred spirit of Bruce Nauman, splitting logs and setting fence posts. Through April 6. (Mitchell-Innes & Nash, 534 W. 26th St. 212-744-7400.)

#### "EVERYDAY AMERICA"

Most of the photographs in the Berman collection have been donated to museums or sold at auction, but the hundred-plus pictures here are far too choice to be thought of as leftovers. The show includes works by photographers who defined America for the world in the mid-twentieth century: Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Robert Frank, Helen Levitt. But just as arresting are images by later masters, from William Eggleston to Mitch Epstein, and some less familiar names, many of whom work in color, notably John Humble, with views of streets in L.A., and Birney Imes, with stellar scenes of Southern juke joints. Through March 23. (Kasher, 521 W. 23rd St. 212-966-3978.)

## Short List

**JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT:** Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111. Through April 6. **SVERRE BJERTNES**

**AND BJARNE MELGAARD:** White Columns, 320 W. 13th St. 212-924-4212. Through April 20. **MIKE BRODIE:** Milo, 245 Tenth Ave., at 24th St. 212-414-0370. Through April 6. **GIANNI COLOMBO:** Greene Naftali, 508 W. 26th St. 212-463-7770. Through March 30. **DAN FLAVIN / DONALD JUDD:** Zwirner, 537 W. 20th St. 212-517-8677. Through March 21. **LUIGI GHIRRI:** Marks, 526 W. 22nd St. 212-243-0200. Through April 20. **WILHELM SASNAL:** Kern, 532 W. 20th St. 212-367-9663. Through April 6. **SERGEI TCHEREPNIN:** Murray Guy, 453 W. 17th St. 212-463-7372. Through April 20.

## GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

### THOMAS HOEPKER

The Munich-born, New York-based Magnum photographer shows nearly seventy black-and-white photographs from his new book, "Heartland: An American Road Trip in 1963." Souvenirs of his first visit to the States, the pictures cover a broad range of mostly predictable subjects: road signs, shop windows, cowboys, cops, Las Vegas, the New York subway. The work isn't subtle, but his observations can be cutting, and he's especially alert to issues of race and class, as seen in a fraught exchange of glances on a street in Montgomery. Hoepker's America is full of contradictions; it's suspicious and welcoming, crass and unpretentious, self-satisfied and deeply anxious. Through April 13. (Leica Gallery, 670 Broadway, at Bond St. 212-777-3051.)

### LINDA MATALON

Zen brush paintings and the calligraphic gestures of Cy Twombly both come to mind in the presence of Matalon's drawings. The artist laboriously works her surfaces with layers of beeswax, resulting in luminous fields interrupted by irregular marks (circles, ellipses) ground into the surface with graphite. A lone, hazy black-and-white photograph captures fog rolling over mountains topped by a snow-covered plateau. The reigning mood is one of peaceful solitude rather than bleak isolation. Through April 14. (Blackston, 29C Ludlow St. 212-695-8201.)

### WALTER ROBINSON

New realist works by the cranky and beloved painter (and art-world journalist) enchant, as usual. Suavely brushy and bright, they iconize a recovering debauchee's nostalgic wants: a dieter's dreams of junk food (McDonald's French fries as tenderly ravishing as Titian nudes), a teetotaller's booze reveries (Heineken bottles delicately sweating like maidens in a mist), and a devoted husband's honest lust (hot babes in old-B-movie-poster guise). At some point in this long career, a Pictures Generation retro style toppled into downright painting. Robinson is a good-luck charm in pants. Through March 31. (Dorian Grey, 437 E. 9th St. 516-244-4126.)

## Short List

**ROCHELLE FEINSTEIN:** On Stellar Rays, 133 Orchard St. 212-598-3012. Through April 28. **JON KESSLER:** Swiss Institute, 18 Wooster St. 212-925-2035. Through April 28. **SARA LUDY:** Von Nichtssagend, 54 Ludlow St. 212-777-7756. Through March 24. **CATHERINE MURPHY:** Freeman, 140 Grand St. 212-966-5154. Through April 27. **GERT AND UWE TOBIAS:** Team, 83 Grand St and 47 Wooster St. 212-279-9219. Both shows through March 30.

## DANCE

### "RHYTHM IS OUR BUSINESS"/ "RHYTHM IN MOTION"

Two events produced by the American Tap Dance Foundation offer looks at tap past and tap present. During the week, "Rhythm Is Our Business" pairs a talented cast of young dynamos and old pros with a big band for a swing-era-style nightclub show. On the weekend, "Rhythm in Motion" showcases new choreography by Michelle Dorrance, Derick K. Grant, Max Pollak, Brenda Bufalino, and others—some of the best in the rhythm business. (Theatre at the 14th Street Y,

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**H**ousing Works' "Live from Home" benefit concert series is celebrating its tenth anniversary, which in night-life years is an eternity. The shows take place at the organization's used-book store on Crosby Street, a cozy, well-lit space that, yes, feels like someone's house, so long as that someone likes to read quite a bit. Alan Light, a music journalist who used to live around the corner from the store, coordinates the acts for the series, and the first show, back in 2003, featured a stirring appearance by Ryan Adams, who set the bar high by playing atop tables and picking audience requests out of a hat. The opening act that night was a last-minute replacement, a young unknown named Regina Spektor; she has since performed at the White House. Other acts over the years have included the Black Keys, John Mellencamp, Björk, John Mayer, the Civil Wars, Darius Rucker, Chrissie Hynde, and Jason Mraz. This season, Light has booked Keaton Henson, a reclusive singer-songwriter from the suburbs of London, to play on April 8; he releases his second album, "Birthdays," the following day. "Henson's agent thought the store would be the perfect place for his first U.S. performance," Light said, "which is a pretty nice compliment."



The Yeah Yeah Yeahs front woman, **KAREN O**, who brought outrageous fashion and high art to the garage-rock revival of the early years of this century, became famous for her self-destructive stage antics, but she's matured over the years, as has her band. Their new album, "Mosquito" (out April 16), includes a catchy lead single, "Sacrilege," whose chorus is driven forward by a gospel choir, and Dr. Octagon (Kool Keith) even joins them for a track.



The sleek new Greenpoint bar **TØRST** (which is Danish for "thirst") has twenty-one rare and exotic beers on tap, but what has beer enthusiasts excited is what's coming shortly to its back room—a twenty-six-seat restaurant helmed by Daniel Burns, a chef who has worked at the Fat Duck, Noma, and Momofuku, which offers visitors a chance to pair fine drafts with fine food. The Danish dj, Martin Fernando Jakobsen has curated an eclectic mix to help it all go down easy.



Daughter, an English folk-rock trio fronted by the singer and guitarist Elena Tonra, releases "**IF YOU LEAVE**," its début LP, on April 30, but the group has been making music for more than a few years, first as a duo (Tonra and her boyfriend, the guitarist Igor Haefeli), now with a drummer, too. Their intoxicating, moody sound echoes PJ Harvey and the xx, and they kick off a North American tour with a show at the Bowery Ballroom on May 1.

344 E. 14th St. 866-811-4111. March 19-23 at 7:30 and 9:30 and March 24 at 3.)

#### PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY

The final week of the Lincoln Center season offers last chances to catch the company's new pieces: "To Make Crops Grow," which exposes the dark side of village life, and "Perpetual Dawn," in which young love awakens. "Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rehearsal)," a comedy from 1980 in the style of a silent movie, sends up "The Rite of Spring" once more for the score's centennial, amid programs highlighted by the recent gem "Beloved Renegade" and the perennial joy "Esplanade." ♦ March 20 at 7: "Junction," "3 Epitaphs," "Last Look," and "Beloved Renegade." ♦ March 21 at 7: "Speaking in Tongues" and "Esplanade." ♦ March 22 at 8: "Le Sacre du Printemps (The Rehearsal)," "The Uncommitted," and "Promethean Fire." ♦ March 23 at 3: "Kith and Kin," "The Uncommitted," and "Promethean Fire." ♦ March 23 at 8: "Musical Offering," "Perpetual Dawn," and "Offenbach Overtures." ♦ March 24 at 3: "Beloved Renegade," "To Make Crops Grow," and "Esplanade." (David H. Koch, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570.)

#### DANCEBRAZIL

Bare-chested capoeiristas crouch low and upend themselves, earning approving whistles with their acrobatics and rhythmic smarts. The new work "Fé do Sertão" re-creates a harvest ritual from an arid zone; the score, by the Brazilian composer Marco de Carvalho, draws on the rural *baiao* music of the Sertão region. "Banguela," from 2010, zeroes in on a detail of capoeira practice, a cool interlude of subtle evasions, balances, and fake-outs. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. March 20 at 7:30, March 21-22 at 8, March 23 at 2 and 8, and March 24 at 2.)

#### CIRCA

In "Wunderkammer," the seven members of this contemporary circus troupe from Australia don't wear much more than underwear. That wardrobe choice is a sensual display of flesh, but it's also a mark of up-front informality for a company that slips casually between astonishing feats, jokey stunts, and sudden sparks of beauty. Where else can you see a woman cross the stage by stepping on the heads of standing men? (NYU Skirball Center, 566 LaGuardia Pl. 212-998-4941. March 20-23 at 8 and March 24 at 3.)

#### MARJANI FORTE

In "Being Here," the young choreographer, best known as a dancer with Urban Bush Women, tackles the ravages of mental illness and addiction, staging the kinds of traumatic scenes you might turn away from on the subway. Finding the source of the problem in oppression, her dance seeks to discover remedies through art. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's Church In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 866-811-4111. March 21-23 at 8.)

#### NEW YORK THEATRE BALLET

The pocket-size ballet troupe presents an ambitious program that includes a twentieth-century masterpiece, Antony Tudor's "Dark Elegies" (1937). This small, intense work, set to Mahler's poignant "Kindertotenlieder," is a study in grief expressed through Tudor's anguished, Graham-influenced ballet vocabulary. "A Rugged Flourish" is a vivid new ballet created for the company by the British modern-dance choreographer Richard Alston. Set to Copland's emphatic "Piano Variations," it's a showcase for the troupe's most striking dancer, Steven Melendez. Two eccentric miniatures by the witty James Waring and a new ballet by Gemma Bond, a young British dancer with American Ballet Theatre, fill out the program. In the early afternoon, the troupe presents its short, kid-friendly "Sleeping Beauty." (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 800-982-2787. Mixed bill: March 22-23 at 7. "Sleeping Beauty": March 23 at 1 and March 24 at 11 A.M., 1, and 3:30.)

#### ULTIMA VEZ / "WHAT THE BODY DOES NOT REMEMBER"

When this dance was first performed in New York, in 1987, it made an enormous impact. There is nothing stylized about Wim Vandekeybus's choreography: the dancers crash, roll, engage in vigorous, almost violent partnering, and, in the piece's greatest coup de théâtre, hurl large bricks across the stage, seemingly courting disaster. Vandekeybus's Brussels-based company revives the piece. (Michael



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Schimmel Center for the Arts, Pace University, 3 Spruce St. 866-811-4111. March 22-23 at 7:30.)

#### ITALIAN INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL

This new initiative, organized by an Italian-born dance instructor and choreographer who has performed for years with a local company (Michael Mao Dance), brings together a handful of Italian ensembles and a smattering of local troupes with Italian connections. The focus is on middle-of-the-road modern dance, with an emphasis on personal expression and multicultural exchange. Atzwei Dance, from the northern Italian city of Modena, specializes in technically virtuosic, stylish works, often accompanied by electronic scores; Aconcil Dance, from Milan, has a strong Martha Graham base; the choreographer Alessandra Corona, born in Sardinia, was a longtime dancer with Ballet Hispanico. The American component includes the New York-based Mare Nostrum and students from the Talent Unlimited High School, performing a tarantella. (Julia Richman, 317 E. 67th St. 646-387-8979. March 22 at 7:30.)

#### "UNDER THE INFLUENCE"

The series, held in a tiny theatre tucked beneath the Museum of Arts and Design, hosts an evening of dance that covers a wide range of styles. Young dancers from American Ballet Theatre's studio ensemble ABT II—a stepping stone between school and company—perform an excerpt from Alexei Ratmansky's "Carnaval des Animaux," made for San Francisco Ballet in 2003. Basil Twist—a puppeteer-magician—will do a duet with one of his creations, a twenty-inch puppet named Stickman. The all-female hip-hop crew Decadance and the modern dancer David Neumann also perform. (2 Columbus Circle. 212-299-7740. March 22-23 at 7:30.)

#### KATE WEARE / "GARDEN"

Audiences are increasingly drawn to examining the nuts and bolts of artistic creation, and the Harkness Dance Festival obliges with its "Stripped/Dressed" series. This week, Weare discusses the origins of her 2011 work "Garden," focussing on how the quartet developed from solo experimentation in the studio. Afterward, the dance is allowed to speak for itself. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. March 22-23 at 8 and March 24 at 3.)

#### BILL T. JONES / ARNIE ZANE DANCE COMPANY

Jones's company marks its thirtieth season with a two-week season at the Joyce, where it last performed in 2009. The two programs contain a wide range of works, spanning three decades. Both are filled with classical music—including Mendelssohn's Octet and Schubert's "Death and the Maiden"—played live by the Orion String Quartet. The oldest piece, "Continuous Replay" (Program A), is a reworking of "Hand Dance," choreographed in 1977 by Jones's late partner, Arnie Zane; it uses forty-five discrete hand gestures. The newest composition, "Story" (Program B), is a continuation of the rigorous time-based methods Jones explored in last year's "Story/Time." (In that work, Jones told one-minute stories as his dancers noodled around him for predetermined periods of time.) "D-Man in the Waters" (Program A) is a rapturous pure-dance piece, last seen in 2002. ♦ March 26 at 7:30: "D-Man in the Waters," "Continuous Replay," and "Spent Days Out Yonder." (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. March 26 at 7:30. Through April 7.)

## CLASSICAL MUSIC OPERA

#### METROPOLITAN OPERA

March 20 at 7:30 and March 23 at 8: Elijah Moshinsky's noble production of "Otello" returns, with Krassimira Stoyanova and José Cura, each too rarely heard at the Met, as Desdemona and Otello, and with Thomas Hampson and Alexey Dolgov singing the roles of Iago and Cassio, respectively; Alain Altinoglu conducts. ♦ March 21 at 7:30 and March 25 at 8: Gounod's "Faust" began the inaugural season of the Metropolitan Opera in 1883, but recent attempts to revivify it have been problematic—including Des McAnuff's 2011 production, which pos-

ited a Faust who, for some reason, shuttles from a modern atom-bomb lab to First World War-era France. It was a victory, however, for Marina Poplavskaya, who returns to the role of Marguerite, joining her esteemed new colleagues Piotr Beczala (in the title role), John Relyea, and Julia Boulianne; Altinoglu. ♦ March 22 at 7:30: Few tears will be shed when Riccardo Zandonai's 1914 opera, "Francesca da Rimini," closes out its run this week; despite some fine singing from Mark Delavan (who will take up Wotan the house this spring) and Robert Brubaker, in supporting roles, this revival of the very grand 1984 production lacks the complete commitment the sophisticated, post-verismo work requires. With Eva-Maria Westbroek and Marcello Giordani in the leading roles; Marco Armiliato. ♦ March 23 at 12:30: In 2010, Willy Decker brought a bit of (well-turned) Regietheater to the house with this thrilling production of "La Traviata," which has entered Met lore as one of the company's most brilliant efforts. It should suit the propulsive conducting style of Yannick Nézet-Séguin, the music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra, to a T; his promising cast includes Diana Damrau, Saimir Pirgu, and, in a generational shift, Plácido Domingo, transferring his distinctive style to the fatherly baritone role of Germont. (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

#### LITTLE OPERA THEATRE OF NY: "THE REFORMED DRUNKARD"

City Opera is in a lull between the two halves of its season, but mid-March has still been opera-heavy in New York, with a host of smaller productions adding to the Met's rich hoard. Adding to the festivities is a presentation by this up-and-coming chamber-opera company, an English-language adaptation of a charming comic opera (based on a La Fontaine fable) by Gluck, which premiered at Vienna's Burgtheater in 1760. The production is by Philip Shneidman; Richard Owen conducts. (59E59 Theatres, 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200. March 20-21 at 7:15, March 22-23 at 8:15, and March 24 at 3:15.)

#### GOTHAM CHAMBER OPERA: "ELIOGBALO"

Neal Goreen's company really pushes the envelope this time, offering the New York première of Cavalli's 1668 opera—concerning the decadent life of the notorious Roman emperor Heliogabalus—at the Box, the famed Lower East Side burlesque spot. Staged by James Marvel, the cast includes Christopher Ainslie, Micaëla Oeste, and Maeve Höglund; Grant Herreid is the music director. (189 Chrystie St. 212-279-4200. March 21, March 23, March 26, and March 29 at 8. These are the final performances.)

## ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

#### NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC: "THE BACH VARIATIONS"

The orchestra is saturating the Lenten season with Bach, combining performances of his sacred and secular masterworks. Instrumental music gets the spotlight this week: Bernard Labadie, a Canadian conductor known not only for his Baroque expertise but for his lyrically inspired style, teams up with the violinist Isabelle Faust (making a somewhat belated Philharmonic début) in a program that features the Violin Concertos in A Minor and E Major and the Third and Fourth Orchestral Suites. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. March 21 at 7:30, March 22 at 2, and March 23 at 8.)

#### SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

Michael Tilson Thomas, and the orchestra from which he draws a gloriously radiant timbre, are always welcome at Carnegie Hall. Their first concert offers not only Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto (with Yuja Wang) and Brahms's Symphony No. 1 in C Minor but a new work by Samuel Carl Adams (son of John), who sits in on electronics; the second is devoted entirely to Mahler's Ninth Symphony, which should bring out some of the conductor's finest inspirations. (212-247-7800. March 20-21 at 8.)

#### ST. THOMAS CHOIR

John Scott leads the men and boys of America's foremost Anglican choir in a work they will perform with eloquence and poise—Bach's St. Mat-

thew Passion. The roles of Jesus and the Evangelist are taken by two impressive soloists, Douglas Williams and Rufus Müller. (Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. saintthomaschurch.org. March 21 at 7:30.)

#### OPHEUS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Richard Goode, the quintessential New York pianist and an old friend, joins the nimble conductorless chamber orchestra for a concert that features just two big works from the Romantic repertory: Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony and Schumann's Piano Concerto. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. March 23 at 7.)

## RECITALS

#### JOSHUA ROMAN: THE BACH CELLO SUITES

Bach is all over town this week: in addition to the Philharmonic and St. Thomas Choir performances, there is the dynamic young cellist (the former principal of the Seattle Symphony), who offers a much more intimate experience, performing the First, Second, and Fourth Suites, each a marvellous expressive world of its own. (Park Avenue Christian Church, Park Ave. at 85th St. 212-868-4444. March 20 at 8.)

#### PARK AVENUE ARMORY:

#### STOCKHAUSEN'S "OKTOPHONIE"

The Armory has become New York's leading venue for large-scale avant-garde attractions, but its latest event would make even Barnum swoon. A mere part of one act of the grandioso German composer's operatic cycle "Licht," this work requires that the audience—clad in white cloaks—be surrounded by eight groups of speakers pulsing out electronic sounds. The visual artist Rirkrit Tiravanija has been engaged to provide a simulated "lunar experience"; Kathinka Pasveer, a close collaborator of the composer, is at the controls. (Park Ave. at 66th St. armoryonpark.org. March 20, March 22, and March 24-27 at 8 and March 23 at 4 and 8.)

#### NEW YORK WOODWIND QUINTET

Until at least the next ice age, the late Milton Babbit—who was not only a brilliant composer of extraordinarily complex works but also a prominent innovator in the field of music theory—will merit major entry in the Grove Dictionary. But will his music last? America's foremost wind ensemble begins history's acid test this week, performing Babbitt's Woodwind Quartet in a program at Paul Hall that also features two of the composer's favorite wind quintets, by Schoenberg (Op. 26) and Reicha (No. 4 in E Minor). (Juilliard School, Lincoln Center. March 21 at 8. Free tickets are available at the Juilliard box office.)

#### "MUSIC BEFORE 1800" SERIES:

#### "MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE"

New York's most distinguished historical-performance series, long based at Corpus Christi Church in Morningside Heights, has expanded into Hell's Kitchen, offering a schedule of informal one-hour performances at the DiMenna Center. The next is given by the instrumentalists of PHOENIXtafel, recently out of Juilliard, who will perform Italian music by composers both Italian (Sammartini, Corelli) and French (Couperin, Leclair). (450 W. 37th St. 212-666-9266. March 21 at 8.)

#### JEREMY DENK

This pianist's Carnegie Hall solo début came in 2011, when he substituted for Maurizio Pollini; now a star in his own right, he returns to offer a recital of music by Bartók, Liszt (including the "Dante Sonata"), Bach, and Beethoven (the towering Sonata in C Minor, Op. 111). (212-247-7800. March 22 at 7:30.)

#### CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

#### OF LINCOLN CENTER

The Society's presentation of the complete string quartets of Shostakovich this season makes a fine companion to its centennial concerts of music by Britten, the Russian master's great friend and colleague. Selecting the charismatic young Jerusalem Quartet to play them should also be a wise choice; in the final two concerts, it performs, respectively, an incisive evening program featuring the Third, Seventh, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Quartets and a less frenetic afternoon recital that offers the Second, Ninth, and Fifteenth Quartets. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-875-5788. March 22 at 7:30 and March 24 at 5.)

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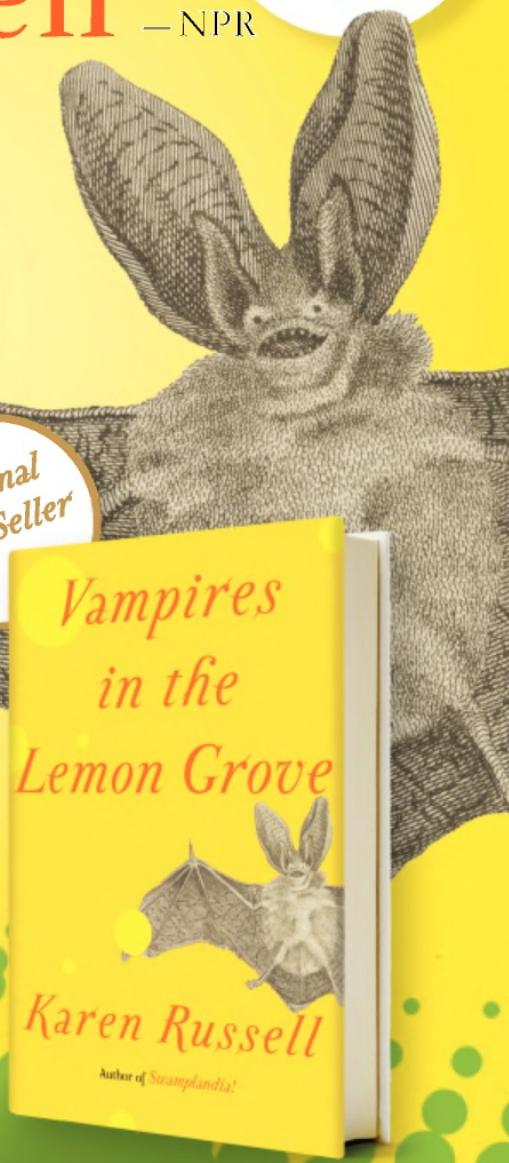
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VINTAGE



**B**y now, classical connoisseurs know that, for the most part, the core Classical and Romantic repertory is not the conductor Alan Gilbert's strong suit. But Gilbert more than compensates for that as a perceptive advocate for works from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and his spring season at the New York Philharmonic is an explosion of new and unusual music. The Juilliard magus Christopher Rouse is the orchestra's composer-in-residence, and the world première of "Prospero's Rooms" is but one attraction in a program that also features Bernstein's "Serenade" (with the violinist Joshua Bell) and Ives's Fourth Symphony (April 17-20); a one-off concert offers the world première of "The Strand Settings," by the admired Swedish composer Anders Hillborg, sung by no less than the glamorous Renée Fleming as part of her "Perspectives" series, at Carnegie Hall (April 26). The final concerts of the season, grouped under the heading "Gilbert's Playlist," include such temptations as Dallapiccola's searing one-act opera "Il Prigioniero" (1949) in a concert performance starring Patricia Racette, Gerald Finley, and Peter Hoare; the program begins with Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1, performed by Lisa Batiashvili (June 6, June 8, and June 11).



Lincoln Center presents a concert by Thomas Dausgaard and the Swedish Chamber Orchestra, featuring the thrilling soprano **NINA STEMME**, that interweaves vocal and instrumental works by Brahms, Wagner, Elgar, and Weill, among others (April 25), and the long-awaited New York première of John Adams's oratorio "The Gospel According to the Other Mary," offered by Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic (March 27).



More orchestral excitement can be found at **CARNEGIE HALL**, whether you prefer the homegrown glory of the "Spring for Music" festival, which presents concerts by the symphony orchestras of Albany, Baltimore, Buffalo, Detroit, and Washington, D.C. (May 6-11), or the European polish of the Staatskapelle Dresden, which performs music by Brahms and Bruckner, respectively, under the baton of Christian Thielemann (April 17 and April 19).



New York City Opera, which has faced recent financial troubles, began its second season outside of Lincoln Center with successful stagings of "Powder Her Face" and "The Turn of the Screw," each given at BAM. The company moves back to Manhattan for its final two shows: Michael Counts's production of Rossini's "MOSES IN EGYPT" (April 14-20) and Christopher Alden's take on Offenbach's "LA PÉRICHOLE" (April 21-27), both staged at City Center.

## ZS AND MIVOS QUARTET

Two dynamic young ensembles—the experimental free-jazz band and the cutting-edge string quartet—come together at Brooklyn's Issue Project Room to play music by Mario Diaz de León ("Moonlight") and Tristan Perich ("Salt," which uses the composer's radically simplified one-bit technology), as well as a new, collaborative composition. (22 Boerum Pl., issueprojectroom.org. March 23 at 8.)

## MUSIC AT THE FRICK COLLECTION:

### JANINA FIAŁKOWSKA

This poetic Canadian pianist, a protégée of Arthur Rubinstein, is seldom heard here. The Frick's elegant auditorium will be a fine venue in which to appreciate her interpretations of works by Grieg, Schubert, and her specialty, Chopin (two mazurkas, two waltzes, and the Scherzo No. 1 in B Minor). (1 E. 70th St. 212-547-0715. March 24 at 5.)

### WEBERN WIND QUINTET

Just the name brings up a wealth of associations: this superb young group, performing at the Austrian Cultural Forum (which houses one of Gotham's finest and most intimate chamber-music halls), sticks mostly to music of the Hapsburg realm, playing core repertoire by Haydn, Reicha, Pavel Haas, and Ligeti (the Six Bagatelles), in addition to an American masterwork by Barber ("Summer Music"). (11 E. 52nd St. March 25 at 7:30. To reserve free tickets, which are required, visit acfny.org.)

### ATTACCA QUARTET:

#### MUSIC BY JOHN ADAMS

This exciting young ensemble, with the great composer's blessing, has just recorded all of his music for strings, including the String Quartet (from 2008) and "John's Book of Alleged Dances." It plays music from the album in a concert at (Le) Poisson Rouge, which Adams himself will attend. (158 Bleecker St. lpmnyc.com. March 26 at 7:30.)

## MOVIES

### OPENING

#### ADMISSION

Tina Fey stars in this comedy as a college admissions officer whose ex-boyfriend (Paul Rudd), a teacher, suspects that his student (Nat Wolff) is the child she gave up for adoption. Directed by Paul Weitz. Opening March 22. (In wide release.)

#### THE CROODS

An animated comedy about a prehistoric family, directed by Kirk De Micco and Chris Sanders. Opening March 22. (In wide release.)

#### EVERYBODY HAS A PLAN

Viggo Mortensen stars in this drama, as a man who adopts his late twin brother's identity and gets caught up in his criminal schemes. Directed by Ana Piterberg. In Spanish. Opening March 22. (In limited release.)

#### GIMME THE LOOT

Adam Leon directed this drama, about two Bronx teen-agers (Tashiana Washington and Ty Hickson) who seek fame as graffiti artists. Opening March 22. (In limited release.)

#### OLYMPUS HAS FALLEN

An action thriller, directed by Antoine Fuqua, about a Secret Service agent (Gerard Butler) seeking to rescue the President (Aaron Eckhart), who has been kidnapped. Co-starring Morgan Freeman, as the Speaker of the House. Opening March 22. (In wide release.)

## NOW PLAYING

### BABY THE RAIN MUST FALL

Thanks to Robert Mulligan's raw yet silky direction—and the offhand eloquence of his performers—this story of an overgrown crazy mixed-up kid proves to be the rare Horton Foote-scripted movie that offers seductive rhythms and textures. Steve McQueen is both fierce and affecting as an Elvis Presley wannabe in a small Texas town—an abused boy turned damaged man. The quicksilver changes in his performance, and our knowledge that his antihero just served a stint in prison for a stabbing, lend this slice of Lone Star life a sting.



**S**ince he became artist-in-residence at American Ballet Theatre, Alexei Ratmansky has given the company three new story ballets—including a “Firebird” set in a fantastical neo-gothic landscape—and various other works. This spring, the company unveils his latest project: a full evening of ballets set to Shostakovich symphonies (No. 1, No. 9, and the “Chamber Symphony”). Ratmansky has a deep affinity for the composer’s sound world and wild, acerbic imagination. He grew up in the Brezhnev years and studied ballet at the Bolshoi when politically correct ballets were the norm. Like Shostakovich, he is a master of irony and hidden meanings. These ballets don’t have explicit stories, but with Ratmansky nothing is ever truly abstract. Dramatic situations rise to the surface; relationships form and dissolve. In the first of the three pieces, which premiered last fall (“Symphony No. 9”), there were hints of war, of triumph and peril; an angel-like figure seemed to lead a couple away from danger. The palette was black-and-white. The trilogy opens on May 31 at the Metropolitan Opera House. It’s an ambitious project. Will it be too much Shostakovich for one evening?



In 2011, a YouTube clip of Yo-Yo Ma accompanying a dancer in a take on the ballet chestnut “The Dying Swan” went viral. The dancer was **LIL BUCK**, a master of jookin, the Memphis street style of toe-tip flash and subtle emotional expressivity. At Le Poisson Rouge (April 2), the pair team up again, joined by the Brooklyn Rider string quartet, the Galician bagpiper Cristina Pato, and the jazz trumpeter Marcus Printup. A première by Philip Glass completes the score.



**MARK MORRIS DANCE GROUP'S** spring season at its Brooklyn headquarters (April 3-14) has much to recommend it besides Mikhail Baryshnikov; the troupe’s smart, appealing dancers tackle new pieces set to music by Carl Maria von Weber and Henry Cowell, which is performed live. But seeing Baryshnikov try to blend in with the ensemble for “A Wooden Tree,” a curious piece set to the eccentric recordings of the Scottish poet Ivor Cutler, should be a treat.



New York lovers of Indian dance have become accustomed to regular visits by the exquisite **NRITYAGRAM DANCE ENSEMBLE**, whose members live in a village near Bangalore devoted to the study of the Odissi style. The performances of Bijayini Satpathy and the troupe’s choreographer, Surupa Sen, are the core of such visits. At the NYU Skirball Center (April 6-7), the two women present a program of solos and duets ravishing enough to make new converts.

ing sort of suspense. We root for him to gain fame and fortune with his string band, though his music keeps him from enrolling in night school, which is the only way he can stay free on parole. In his rockabilly scenes, McQueen exhibits kinetic instincts that triumph over awkward dubbing, and he was rarely as frank or sensitive as he is here with Lee Remick, who is heartbreakingly hopeful as the wife he barely knew before he did his time. When she turns up with the disarming, resilient little daughter he’s never seen (played by Kimberly Block, whose spontaneity with Remick borders on the miraculous), the movie evokes the burden and romance of family for a loner who’s never known a real one. Released in 1965.—Michael Sragow (Anthology Film Archives; March 23 and March 26.)

#### BACHELOR FLAT

This latter-day screwball comedy, from 1962, is the director Frank Tashlin’s daring, uproarious reworking of Howard Hawks’s 1938 classic of the genre, “Bringing Up Baby.” Terry-Thomas stars as Bruce Patterson, a suave middle-aged British archeologist at a California university who is about to marry the high-flying fashion designer Helen Bushmill (Celeste Holm). But Helen has a secret—a prior marriage and a teen-age daughter, Libby (Tuesday Weld), who, while her mother is out of town, turns up unbidden at Bruce’s house and conceals her identity, passing herself off as a tough runaway. Meanwhile, the professor’s inquisitive friend Michael (Richard Beymer), a law student, sparks erotic misunderstandings and pushes Bruce into ever-wilder schemes to hide the girl. Tashlin plays cartoonishly expert high-speed games with opening and closing doors, and he gleefully piles on ribald jokes involving a priapically huge dinosaur bone, a pair of breastplates, a vibrating bed, recalcitrant pants, upright umbrellas, and Jessica, a dachshund who’s a real hound dog. With winks and nods at science fiction and Hitchcock’s “Vertigo,” a dream sequence, and a film-within-a-film, Tashlin celebrates the mind-expanding, Freudian truth serum that is pop culture; with striking seaside scenes, he exalts the raw natural splendor that lured the civilized and the discontented to Hollywood in the first place.—Richard Brody (Anthology Film Archives; March 24.)

#### BEYOND THE HILLS

Another endurance test from Cristian Mungiu, who made the formidable “4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days” (2007). This time we find ourselves in a remote Romanian monastery; one is tempted to call it godforsaken, although, with its shoddy buildings, barking dogs, and drifting snow, the place feels forsaken by everyone but God. The meek Voichita (Cosmina Stratan) lives here, together with other nuns, under the auspices of a priest whom they call Papa (Valeriu Andruță). The circle of faith is snapped by the arrival of Alina (Cristina Flutur), who used to be close to Voichita and who remains wretchedly numb without her; somehow, Alina goes from being an annoyance to a threat to a repository of unclean spirits who need to be expelled. Melodramatic though this sounds, it seems to unfold without any conscious planning, let alone malicious intent, and such is Mungiu’s skill that we, too, are swept along in the wintry madness. The result, however timely, is neither an anti-religious invective nor a political parable; rather, we are made aware, throughout the story’s long haul, of a world not simply passing from ancient to modern but blundering inescapably into trouble. In Romania—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 3/11/13.) (In limited release.)

#### GINGER & ROSA

This well-meaning but complacent coming-of-age story, set in London in 1962 against the backdrop of the Cuban Missile Crisis, stars Elle Fanning and Alice Englert as the teen-agers of the title, lifelong best friends whose mothers, Natalie (Christina Hendricks) and Anoushka (Jodhi May), met in the maternity ward in 1945. Natalie’s domestic misery—an artistic career abandoned for motherhood, a philandering intellectual-activist husband, Roland (Alessandro Nivola), who rejects the trappings of domesticity—gives Ginger a strong sense of worldly purpose, which she channels into poetry and anti-nuclear protests. But Rosa’s emotional spontaneity and sexual curiosity—which she gratifies with the dashing, seductive Roland—challenge Ginger’s value

system and sense of identity. Meanwhile, Ginger's two godfathers—a gay couple (Timothy Spall and Oliver Platt)—and their proto-feminist friend (Annette Bening) give her a glimpse of the personal as political. The actors are appealing and uniformly skillful, but the overly literal script and the sluggishly methodical direction don't give them a chance to dig deep or deliver surprises; even a rolling dénouement is sentimentalized as a prepackaged lesson. Directed by Sally Potter.—R.B. (In limited release.)

#### JACK THE GIANT SLAYER

The movie lists, among the credits, a "data wrangler," which conjures up an image of a rangy guy in jeans lassoing clouds of digits from the back of a spotted Appaloosa. In any case, in this surprisingly sturdy children's entertainment, the data has been trained, but its spirit hasn't been broken. The writers, Darren Lemke, Christopher McQuarrie, and Dan Studney, have combined the old English legends "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Jack the Giant Killer," and the director, Bryan Singer ("The Usual Suspects" and several films in the "X-Men" series), has produced a square but vigorous 3-D show that combines digital fantasia with something like "Ivanhoe," complete with busy court life, townspeople, and boiling oil. Take your kids: it's rousing good fun. With Nicholas Hoult, as a good-looking commoner; Eleanor Tomlinson, as the rebellious princess he falls in love with; and Stanley Tucci, amusing himself as a snuffy court schemer.—David Denby (3/18/13) (In wide release.)

#### LIKE SOMEONE IN LOVE

The latest from the Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami, now working outside his home country, is set in Tokyo and is devoted to the mysterious and chaste friendship of an eighty-year-old retired professor, Takashi (Tadashi Okuno), and a twenty-year-old student, Akiko (Rin Takanashi), a young beauty with cherry-red lips, who earns money as an escort

and fends off the demands of an anarchic boyfriend. Not much happens: the relationship is built around loneliness and mutual need, which we understand in oblique hints. But the movie is luminously beautiful, especially a magical sequence in which Akiko falls asleep in the back of a taxi and the city's glowing, candied lights play as reflections on the window next to her. It's one of those cinematic sequences whose emotions can't be quite pinned down, because they depend on waiting, suspension, dreaminess. This exquisitely made, rather elusive film has a smooth, lulling rhythm—which makes the abrupt ending that Kiarostami throws at us that much more of a shock. In Japanese.—D.D. (3/4/13) (In limited release and as video on demand.)

#### NO

The final section of a loosely linked trilogy, directed by Pablo Larrain. The first two films, "Tony Manero" (2008) and "Post Mortem" (2010), delved into the years of the Pinochet regime, in Chile; now we find ourselves at its demise. In 1988, after a referendum is called, inviting all citizens to decide whether the General should stay in power or step down. He is expected, even by his fiercest opponents, to win with ease, which leaves René (Gael García Bernal), the young advertising hot shot who takes charge of the "No" campaign, with a hopeless cause. Yet René turns it around; by serving up a fluffy blend of slogans, songs, and friendly merriment—the same recipe that he used to sell a new soda, and a source of horror to his ideological clients—he commandeers the TV commercials and persuades even the scared and the skeptical to turn out and vote. The background to Larrain's story is a solemn one, replete with violent oppression and threat, but so surprising is the trouncing of Pinochet that the movie, which was shot on video equipment from the period (and looks it), has a reviving comic buoyancy that seems well earned. Nobody is more stunned, at the end,

than René, who has stumbled into beliefs that he hardly knew he possessed; the allure of Bernal, who can project a virtuous perplexity without looking earnest, has seldom been on more delectable view. In Spanish.—A.L. (2/25/13) (In limited release.)

#### OZ THE GREAT AND POWERFUL

The flying monkeys and wicked witches and yellow bricks are back, but do we really need them? This cold, charmless digital monstrosity presumes to be a prequel to the 1939 M-G-M classic. James Franco, with a thin mustache and a nervous grin, plays Oscar Diggs, a hustling carnival magician in Kansas who styles himself the great Oz. In trouble, he takes off in a balloon, runs into a tornado, and winds up in the magic land of Oz, where he is greeted as a savior and fought over by a variety of witches (Mila Kunis, Rachel Weisz, and Michelle Williams). After the opening Kansas scenes, the narrative moves at a stately pace through redundant plot points, featuring such original lines as "If you can make them believe, that's wizard enough" and "You're here. There must be a reason." (Well, we know the reason: the worldwide box-office gross of the similarly stupefying family entertainment "Alice in Wonderland" was more than a billion dollars.) Written by Mitchell Kapner and David Lindsay-Abaire, and directed by Sam Raimi. A politically correct, multiethnic crowd of Munchkins appear for a quick and meaningless gag.—D.D. (3/18/13) (In wide release.)

#### LE PONT DU NORD

This nearly lost film by Jacques Rivette, from 1981, captures the visions and moods of a nearly lost Paris—and of a mode of thought that was also on its way out. Like many of Rivette's films, it starts as a whimsical urban riff on the theme of chance connections: Marie (Bulle Ogier), a toughened woman of a certain age, heads to Paris after getting out of prison and is joined by Baptiste (Pascale Ogier, her real-life



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# David et Jonathas

APR 17—21



Photo: Anne Quirion and Pascal Chalumeau, by Antoninot/R. Vialle

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daughter), a long-limbed and fiercely determined dark angel who travels by scooter. Marie reunites with her boyfriend, Julien (Pierre Clémenti), a pathological gambler whose mysterious briefcase entangles him in big trouble that Baptiste decides to unravel. The woman's poetic excursions through the ruins of industrial sites and Impressionist landscapes morph into a spy-versus-spy caper involving left-wing terrorist plots and government infiltration. In Rivette's rhapsodically probing view, the labyrinthine city of recondite romanticism and the bloody ideals of revolutionary heroism appear fated to vanish together, even as the chill of rational order reveals another shimmery layer of ingrained authority. Pascale Ogier brings an exhilarating feral passion to her role, starting with her pugnacious confrontation with a suave motorcyclist (Jean-François Stévenin); she died in 1984, at the age of

with Bong Joon-ho's "Snowpiercer" in the offing, it is the turn of Park Chan-wook, famed for "Oldboy" (which Spike Lee is remaking) to make his English-language débüt. In a gracious and ominously quiet mansion, India Stoker (Mia Wasikowska) lives with her mother, Evelyn (Nicole Kidman), each vying to be more willful and warped than the other. Into this unhealthy setup, trailing clouds of Hitchcock, comes Charlie (Matthew Goode), the silver-tongued brother of India's late father. What follows is correspondingly strange and lightly spiced with incest, lunacy, and belt-flexing sadomasochism—ideal terrain for Park, or so his many admirers might think. The less convinced will find the film, written by Wentworth Miller, a touch too rich and ridiculous for its own good, and may await the day when Park's unmistakable style, so ravishing to the eye, finally lands

## ON AND OFF THE AVENUE PATAGONIA



414 W. 14th St., (212) 929-6512—Hey, Spider-Man: It's time to ditch the jumpsuit! Patagonia, the environmentally mindful retailer of outdoor apparel, has just opened its first new outlet dedicated to climbers and those who want to look like climbers. Housed in a thirty-five-hundred-square-foot loft in the meatpacking district, the store, with its pine-planked floor (salvaged from Upper East Side town houses) and its towering ceiling joists (from warehouses under the High Line), feels like a huge ski chalet—that is, one in which O.C.D.-afflicted skiers have color-sorted their parkas and fleeces before hanging them on display racks suspended from custom-made meat hooks. There are sleek quilted down "sweaters" perfect for an anorexic Michelin Man (\$200-\$329), waterproof Gore-Tex pants not unlike leggings worn by nursery-school kids (\$399), and a small assortment of spring-loaded climbing devices that you anchor in rocks so as to avoid undesirable downward motion (\$26).

On a chilly night not long ago, David Roeske, a hedge-fund analyst, browsed through some stretchy polyester undershirts and vests, mulling over the

wardrobe for his imminent trip to Mt. Everest. How would he stay toasty thousands of feet up in the sky? "By layering the heck out of this stuff," he said, gesturing to the brightly colored underwear. For the top layer, Roeske was thinking about the Encaps down belay parka (\$699), an extremely warm and light jacket five years in the making. It is based on Patagonia's proprietary technique for treating goose down to give it not only water-repellency but also the highest degree of insulation ever achieved (a thousand fill power, if you must know). "This is an absolute game changer," Jenna Johnson, who oversees the Alpine line, said. "An invention that promises to push climbing through the roof," Fitz Cahall, a writer who used to blog on the company's Web site, said. Patagonia produced only a thousand of these puffy orange numbers, so if you want to scale the heights in comfort, pick one up now—or wait a while until global warming makes the Fogbank trench coat a smarter purchase (\$249).

—Patricia Marx

twenty-five, and this movie may be her greatest showcase. In French.—R.B. (BAM; March 22-28.)

### SIDE EFFECTS

Martin (Channing Tatum), a slick financial guy, comes out of prison after serving four years for insider trading, and his wife, Emily (Rooney Mara), throws her arms around him. Yet Emily has been in a funk for a long time, and, to our surprise, she quickly sinks lower. She runs her car into a garage wall; she has stone-faced sex with Martin; she can't hold it together at a cocktail party where her husband is trying to reintroduce himself to the New York financial world. Steven Soderbergh's new movie—which he says is his last—begins as a drama about depression and, possibly, about the fecklessness of the drug industry, which hands out antidepressants too easily. But then, after a crime is committed, it becomes something else—a kind of sombre Hitchcockian thriller featuring the Master's favorite theme, the transference of guilt. Jude Law, whose golden youth is now a memory, plays Emily's psychiatrist; when his practice falls apart, he turns into a ferocious detective, reconstructing everything that has happened to him and to her. Soderbergh works with precision and force, and the movie holds you, but he can't—or won't—liberate the material visually. It's a sober-sided piece of work. New York is photographed in gray colors—it seems to be depressed, too. Written by Scott Z. Burns. With Catherine Zeta-Jones as a fellow-shrink.—D.D. (2/11 & 18/13) (In wide release.)

### STOKER

The steady infusion of South Korean directors continues. After Kim Jee-woon's "The Last Stand" and

on a subject, or in a place, more worthy of its probing panache. With Jacki Weaver.—A.L. (3/11/18) (In wide release.)

### 21 AND OVER

This rowdy, raunchy collegiate comedy, written and directed by Jon Lucas and Scott Moore, makes drunken disorder its very premise: the pre-med student Jeff Chang (Justin Chon) turns twenty-one the day before his big medical-school admission interview, and two old friends from high school—Casey (Skylar Astin), a buttoned-down Stanford student and future investment banker, and Miller (Miles Teller), a wild stoner—turn up and pressure him into a bar crawl. When Jeff passes out, Casey and Miller end up doing a wild "Odyssey" parody in their ever-riskier exploits as they try to find his address and get him home in time. Along the way, Casey falls in love with the adventuresome Nicole (Sarah Wright), whose boyfriend, Randy (Jonathan Keltz), keeps turning up at the wrong times and places. The gross-out gags and the genital jokes are rarely funny; the comic tone and timing don't click; but the hectic movie nonetheless carries a surprising emotional weight. With its emphasis on the search for identity, the burden of family, sexual fears, and the ever-present dangers of reckless fun, the film depicts the college years with a peculiarly poignant turbulence. With François Chau as Jeff's "scary dad."—R.B. (In wide release.)

### VIRIDIANA

In Luis Buñuel's perverse comedy from 1961, the title character, a young blond nun (Silvia Pinal, a prototype for Catherine Deneuve), comes to ruin

through the double bind of others' evil plans and her own good works. Taken from a convent one last time to visit a wealthy uncle, a pious lecher (Fernando Rey), she is snared in his lascivious scheme to install her in the place of her late aunt—who died in his arms on their wedding day. As penance, she converts his estate to a shelter for beggars, exposing herself to a brazen carnality no less destructive than his insidious kind. As ever with Buñuel, religion and lust are one (Bach and rock inflame desire equally, and a habit is as arousing as a buster), and the devil is in the details: the bare feet of a girl jumping rope, a burning crown of thorns, and a pocketknife concealed in a cross join with the anarchic doings to convey his sardonic world view. In Spanish.—R.B. (Museum of the Moving Image; March 23-24.)

## Also Playing

**THE CALL:** In wide release. **THE INCREDIBLE BURT WONDERSTONE:** In wide release. **UPSIDE DOWN:** In limited release. **WELCOME TO PINE HILL:** IFC Center.

## REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

*Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.*

### ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES

32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—Films and videos by Stephen Dwoskin. March 21 at 7 and March 24 at 6:45; “Age Is . . .” (2011). ♦ March 23 at 3:45; “The Sun and the Moon” (2007). ♦ March 23 at 9:15; “Behindert” (1974). ♦ “Andrew Sarris: Expressive Esoterica.” March 22 at 7 and March 25 at 9: “The Brothers Rico” (1957, Phil Karlson). ♦ March 22 at 9: “My Name Is Julia Ross” (1945, Joseph H. Lewis). ♦ March 23 at 5 and March 26 at 9: “Baby the Rain Must Fall” (†). ♦ March 23 at 7:15: “Fury at Showdown” (1957, Gerd Oswald). ♦ March 23 at 9: “Morning Glory” (1933, Lowell Sherman). ♦ March 24 at 7: “Bachelor Flat” (†). ♦ March 24 at 9 and March 26 at 7: “Wichita” (1955, Jacques Tourneur).

### BAM CINEMATEK

30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—The films of Isabelle Adjani. March 20 at 4:30 and 9:30; “All Fired Up” (1982, Jean-Paul Rappeneau). ♦ March 20 at 7: “Ishtar” (1987, Elaine May). ♦ March 21 at 7: “Queen Margot” (1994, Patrice Chéreau). ♦ In revival. March 22-24 at 1:30, 4, 6:45, and 9:30 and March 25-28 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30; “Le Pont du Nord” (†).

### FILM FORUM

W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—In revival. March 20-21 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30 and March 22-26 at 5:30; “M” (1931, Fritz Lang; in German). ♦ March 22-26 at 1:20 and 8: “Heaven’s Gate” (1980, Michael Cimino).

### FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (212-875-5610)—“Family Films.” March 23-24 at 2: “Mon Oncle” (1958, Jacques Tati; in French).

### FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE

55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—“The Man Makes the Clothes: Pierre Cardin in Film.” March 26 at 12:30, 4, and 7:30: “The Princess of Clèves” (1961, Jean Delannoy).

### IFC CENTER

323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—The films of Stanley Kubrick. March 20 at 1:30 and 9, March 22 at 1:25, and March 23 at 10:40 A.M., 4:15, and 10: “The Shining” (1980). ♦ March 21 at 2:20 and March 24 at 8:55: “Eyes Wide Shut” (1999). ♦ March 21 at 5:30 and March 24 at 1:45: “The Killing” (1956). ♦ March 21 at 9:45 and March 24 at 11 A.M. and 5:50: “Lolita” (1962). ♦ March 22 at 10:50 A.M., 6:05, and 9 and March 23 at 1:20: “2001: A Space Odyssey” (1968). ♦ March 26 at 11:30 A.M., 3, and 8:20: “Barry Lyndon” (1975).

### MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—“An Auteurist History of Film.” March 20-22 at 1:30: “Suddenly, Last Summer” (1959, Joseph L. Mankiewicz).

### MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—The films of Harmony Korine. March 22 at 7: “Trash Humberts” (2009). ♦ A tribute to Amos Vogel and “Film as a Subversive Art.” March 23 at 3 and March 24 at 6: “Viridiana” (†) ♦ March 23 at 6: Short films, including “The Fly” (1970, Yoko Ono). ♦ March 24 at 3: “Titicut Follies” (1967, Frederick Wiseman).

### NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS

Films screen at Film Society of Lincoln Center and the Museum of Modern Art (for complete program information, visit newdirectors.org)—March 21 at 7, 8, and 9:30: “Blue Caprice” (2012, Alexandre Moors). ♦ March 21 at 8:30 and March 23 at 6: “Küf” (2012, Ali Aydin; in Turkish). ♦ March 22 at 9 and March 24 at 6: “Burn It Up Djassa” (2012, Lonesome Solo; in French and Nushi). ♦ March 23 at 6 and March 24 at 2: “The Act of Killing” (2012, Joshua Oppenheimer; in Indonesian). ♦ March 25 at 6:15 and March 26 at 9: “Les Coquellettes” (2012, Sophie Letourneau; in French).

### NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

170 Central Park W., at 77th St. (212-873-3400)—“World War II and Its Legacy in Film.” March 22 at 7: “The Gang’s All Here” (1943, Busby Berkeley), introduced by Will Friedwald and Richard Brody (of this magazine).

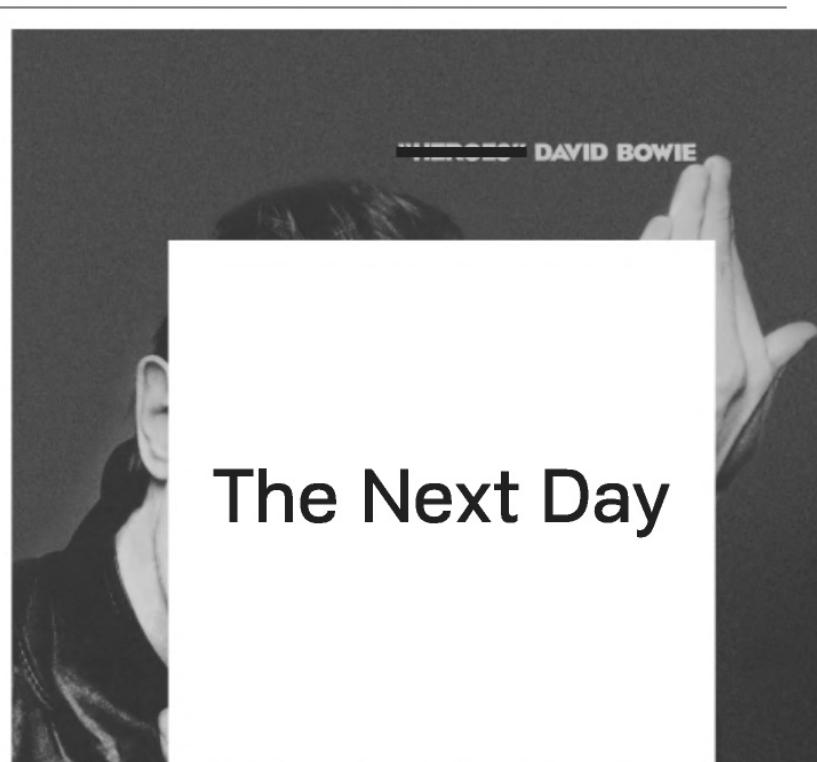
### 92Y TRIBECA

200 Hudson St., at Canal St. (212-601-1000)—Special screening. March 22 at 7: “Songs (As Canções)” (2011, Eduardo Coutinho; in Portuguese).

## READINGS AND TALKS

### GOLDMAN LECTURES

The history professor and *New Yorker* staff writer Jill Lepore presents two illustrated lectures on secrecy, organized by the Cullman Center for Scholars & Writers. The first, on March 19 at 7, ranges from the medieval church to Facebook in an exploration of what is considered mysterious and what is considered private. The second, on March 26 at 7,



# The Next Day

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With his distinctive visual devotion to the transcendent aspects of daily life, Terrence Malick is one of the great American filmmakers of the last forty years, but, with only six features to his credit, not one of the most prolific. He seems to be picking up the pace, however, with "To the Wonder" (April 12) coming less than two years after "The Tree of Life." The very first wonder of the new movie is its timely casting: Ben Affleck, fresh off the success of "Argo," stars as an engineer who brings a Franco-Russian woman (Olga Kurylenko) home with him to Oklahoma but then reconnects with an ex-girlfriend (Rachel McAdams). The classic romantic triangle may never have been so ethereal; Malick's balletic camera conjures love's rhapsodic heights and bottomless depths and turns the glowing light of the American landscape into a spiritual bounty. Visionary metaphysics also arise in Shane Carruth's inside-out science-fiction thriller "Upstream Color" (April 5), which locates the source of colossal mysteries in the infinitesimal. Amy Seimetz stars as a young woman whose identity is distorted by a strange new drug-like parasite. As the woman's personal drama builds to a furious quest for self-rediscovery, Carruth (who also co-stars as a fellow-victim) infiltrates a world of deceptive appearances with a microscope-like camera.



The prizes given out in awards season don't factor in the full year's range of achievements by each artist. If they did, MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY would have likely been high on the list of 2012 honorees—his roles in "Magic Mike," "Killer Joe," and "Bernie" made for a year of thorough artistic self-reinvention. He returns to star in Jeff Nichols's "Mud" (April 26), as an outlaw in hiding on a lonely island in the South, who recruits two children to help in his getaway.



In 2010-11, the MUSEUM OF MODERN ART paid tribute to the cinematic treasures of Weimar Germany. Now a new series at the same venue, "The Weimar Touch" (April 3-May 6), offers a probing look at the influence of German filmmakers in the thirties and beyond—including those who emigrated and made their mark elsewhere, such as Fritz Lang, whose first Hollywood feature, "Fury," is shown alongside Joseph Losey's remake (from 1951) of Lang's 1931 classic, "M."



The TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL, which runs April 18-28, features the brothers Josh and Benny Safdie's documentary about a New York character: "Lenny Cooke" tells the story of a Brooklyn basketball phenom who in 2001 was one of the country's best high-school players; he bypassed college but never made it to the N.B.A. The Safdies trace Cooke's trajectory and show his recent encounters with friends from the past who became pros.

addresses a paradox of contemporary life: "The only thing more cherished than privacy is publicity." (New York Public Library, South Court Auditorium, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 212-930-0084. For more information, visit nypl.org/conversations.)

#### STRAND BOOK STORE

The biographer Blake Bailey ("Cheever: A Life") talks about his new book, "Farther & Wilder," an account of the life of the writer Charles Jackson, best known for his novel "The Lost Weekend." Bailey will be in discussion with D. T. Max, a writer for this magazine. (Broadway at 12th St. 212-473-1452. March 21 at 7.)

#### 92Y TRIBECA

David Misch, a television and film writer whose credits include "Mork and Mindy," "The Muppets Take Manhattan," and "Saturday Night Live," presents "The History of Ha," a performance purporting to be a "some-holds-barred survey of absolutely everything funny that's ever happened, in 45 minutes." (200 Hudson St. 212-601-1000. March 22 at noon.)

### ABOVE AND BEYOND

#### FREETOWN PRODUCE FESTIVAL

Freetown Produce, a Lafayette, Louisiana-based company that promotes the culture and food of its home state and other distinct American regions, like Appalachia, is hosting a three-day festival. It features the Anthony Bourdain-approved Cajun artist and chef Toby Rodriguez, who, during the day, will be teaching hands-on cooking classes and guiding his students in the preparation of the evening's "blackpot supper" of gumbo and other one-pot regional delicacies. The festival includes classes in Cajun accordion, guitar, fiddle, and dance, as well as a performance by the unstoppable Lafayette-based sextet the Revelers. There is also a square dance, accompanied by the violin-and-banjo music of Travis and Trevor Stuart. These twins from rural Haywood County, North Carolina, perform moving and authentic Appalachian Mountain tunes. (Jalopy Theatre, 315 Columbia St., Red Hook, Brooklyn. 718-395-3214. For more information, visit jalopy.biz. March 22-24.)

#### AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

It's Asia Week in New York. Christie's morning sale of South Asian modern and contemporary art on March 20 is dominated by vibrant paintings by a group of prominent Indian modernists, among them S. H. Raza, M. F. Husain, and V. S. Gaitonde. The Meiji period is particularly well represented in the day's afternoon sale of Japanese and Korean art, as are eighteenth-century Korean ceramics. Chinese huanghuai furniture has its own sale on March 21, sandwiched between an offering of carved jade objects (scepters, bowls, figurines, and the like) and one of whimsical snuff bottles. The final sale of the week, on March 21-22, is a two-day blowout of Chinese ceramics, bronzes, textiles, and jades spanning the Neolithic period to the twentieth century. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.) ♦ Two big Asian sales are left at Sotheby's; the first, on March 20, has paintings, sculptures and bronzes from India and Southeast Asia and is especially strong in Indian bronzes and Buddhist tanka paintings—two of which stand out for their vibrant colors and the relaxed, sunny dispositions of their central figures. Among the Indian pieces, the miniatures, depicting everyday scenes as well as passages from sacred texts, are delightful; featured among the star lots is an eleventh-century copper-alloy figure of Parvati, smiling serenely as she stands in a graceful contrapposto pose. The March 21 sale is devoted to five centuries of classical Chinese painting and calligraphic works, including a large hand scroll with mountains and rivers rendered in ink by the fifteenth-century painter Dai Jin. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

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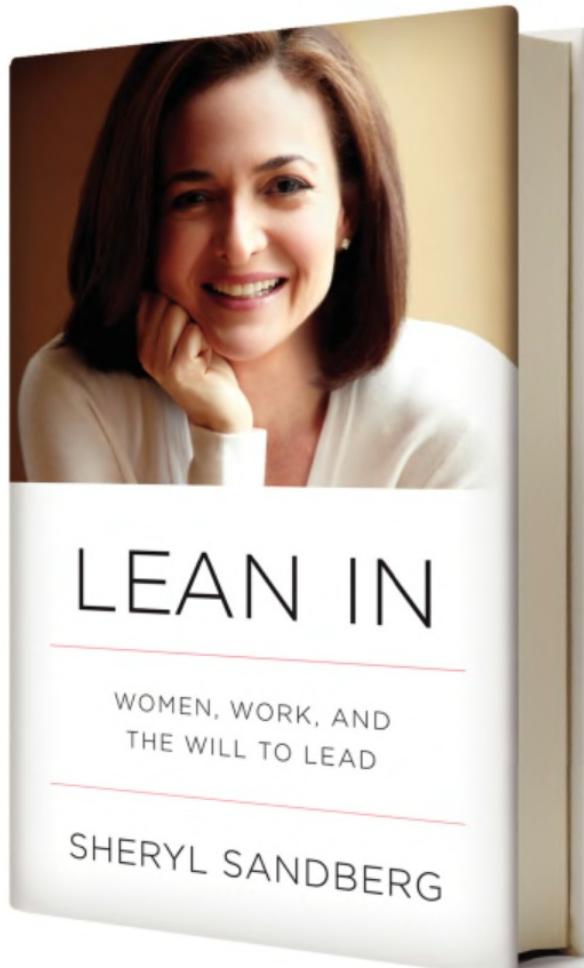
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## THE TALK OF THE TOWN

### COMMENT SMOKE SIGNALS



Since the Second Vatican Council, of the early nineteen-sixties, some of Catholicism's ancient rituals—Masses said exclusively in Latin, priests facing away from the congregation, meatless Fridays—have been revised. Others, such as how a new Pope is chosen, remain true to traditions that emerged in the Middle Ages. Last Wednesday in Rome, shortly after 7 P.M., white smoke rose from a chimney atop the Sistine Chapel, indicating that the hundred and fifteen cardinals within had picked a successor to Benedict XVI. An hour and a quarter later, the former Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the seventy-six-year-old longtime Archbishop of Buenos Aires, stepped out onto a balcony of St. Peter's Basilica to address the assembled throng as Pope Francis. It was a quick choice, made after just five rounds of voting, and it wasn't wholly unexpected—at the 2005 papal conclave, Bergoglio was the runner-up to Joseph Ratzinger. Still, for the more than a billion Catholics around the world, it was a momentous occasion: for the first time, a priest from the Americas had succeeded St. Peter. "It seems that my brother cardinals have gone nearly to the ends of the earth" to

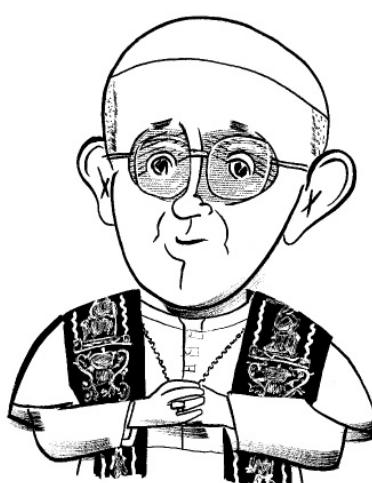
find a bishop for Rome, Francis said. "But here we are."

Compared with some Christian denominations, such as Anglicanism, the Catholic faith remains in robust shape. But with church attendance falling in many countries, and with the ramifications of the sex-abuse scandal still being felt from Los Angeles to Rome, the key issue for many Catholics (and lapsed Catholics) is whether Francis will move the Church in a more progressive direction than his conservative predecessors Benedict and John Paul II. In the past twenty-five years, Catholicism has been through a counter-revolution, which halted and in some cases reversed the tentative moves toward modernity that the Second Vatican Council ushered in. On issue after issue, the last two Popes reaffirmed the Church's absolutist posi-

tion and quashed any efforts to question it. Will Francis prove any different?

Given his nationality, the fact that he has never held high office in the Vatican, and his decision to adopt the name of St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan order, whose members renounce material possessions and try to live their lives as Jesus lived his, there will be great hope invested in him. He himself has led a simple life: he lived in a modest apartment in downtown Buenos Aires, cooked his own meals, and rode the bus to work. He reads Dostoyevsky and Borges. He has a history of speaking up for the downtrodden—during a debt crisis a decade ago, he criticized austerity measures that hurt the poor.

But in other matters relating to Catholic theology he is conservative. A recent profile in the *National Catholic Reporter* noted, "Bergoglio is seen as unwaveringly orthodox on matters of sexual morality, staunchly opposing abortion, same-sex marriage, and contraception." He has asserted that gay adoption is a form of discrimination against children, which earned a public rebuke from Argentina's President, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. During the nineteen-seventies, as the head of the Jesuit order in Argentina, he opposed the rise of liberation theology, which many conservatives dismissed as a Marxist version of Christianity. Some critics even accuse him of being complicit with the military junta that kidnapped and killed progressive priests



during the Dirty War, a charge that he denies. (In an authorized biography, published in 2010, he said that he sheltered many people targeted by the regime.)

Another strike against the notion of Francis as a reformer is the manner in which he was chosen. Every one of the cardinals who took part in his election was appointed by either John Paul II or Benedict. There was never any real prospect of such a carefully screened electorate picking somebody who could lead the “Vatican Spring” that Hans Küng, the dissident Swiss theologian, recently called for in the *Times*. In picking Bergoglio, the cardinals went for someone who epitomized the increasingly global nature of the Church but who could also be relied on to uphold traditionalist views.

Perhaps the best that can be hoped for is that the cardinals were wrong and Francis will turn out to be more forward-looking in office than expected—a sort of Catholic version of Earl Warren, whom Dwight D. Eisenhower picked as Supreme Court Justice, in 1953. Eisenhower believed that he was appointing a moderate conservative, but under Warren’s leadership the Court issued a series of landmark decisions, expanding civil rights in areas such as education, voting, and criminal justice. If Pope Francis were to strike out in a new direction, he would theoretically have plenty of leeway. Whereas a Supreme Court Justice has to persuade a majority of his colleagues to go along with his views, the doctrine of papal infallibility allows the Pope to declare his interpretations of dogma beyond challenge. In practice, however, a

Pope is less unencumbered. To get anything done, he has to bring along the Curia, the powerful and entrenched Vatican bureaucracy. After losing out to Ratzinger in 2005, Bergoglio expressed relief, telling an Italian reporter, “In the Curia I would die.” At seventy-six, does he now have the will and the strength to confront the forces of stasis?

There is a precedent for an elderly new Pope’s surprising his electors. In 1958, when John XXIII was chosen, at the age of seventy-six, to succeed Pius XII, the long-serving Pontiff who had incited controversy by failing to confront the Fascist powers during the Second World War, most observers thought that he would be a mere placeholder. But, just three months into his office, it was John who announced that, after a gap of almost a hundred years, he was convening a second Vatican Council to reconsider the Church’s doctrines and practices. He didn’t live to see the results; he died in 1963, and the Council didn’t conclude until 1965. But he started the process that culminated in a series of reforms that invited lay people and the congregation as a whole to play a more participatory role in the Church.

If Francis can find it in himself to follow John’s example, there will be plenty for him to do, beginning with being more open about the sex-abuse scandal and taking more concrete action to rectify it. It is probably too much to hope that Francis will change the Vatican’s stance on issues like gay rights, the ordination of women, and celibacy in the priesthood. Yet, in turning the Church to the teachings of St. Francis, in demonstrating that it is more interested in alleviating poverty and helping

the afflicted than in staking out doctrinaire positions on things like contraception, he would at least be shifting it in the right direction.

—John Cassidy

## THE PICTURES GUY'S GUY



In Derek Cianfrance’s films, men get punched by men and scorned by women, but they hurt women only inadvertently. With “Blue Valentine” and “The Place Beyond the Pines,” which opens this month, the director says that he’s exploring “a new American male persona”—one with the body of Ryan Gosling and the values of Derek Cianfrance. Or, perhaps, vice versa.

At Smooch, an organic café near Cianfrance’s house in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, the thirty-nine-year-old filmmaker scrunched in his chair with his nose up, tackling questions with discursive candor. This encouraged the kind of atmosphere he strives for on set, where he tells the actors to junk the script and discover the movie for themselves. As he explained, “It’s the opposite approach to that of a James Cameron, whose job is to hammer his vision into the world—the director as God.” He’s more the director as Salvation Army store. In “Blue Valentine” (2010), a meditation on how love drives Ryan Gosling and Michelle Williams apart, Gosling adopted Cianfrance’s look—his beard and his receding hairline—for the film’s check-in on the couple’s foundering marriage, six years after the joyous scenes of their courtship. “Compromising his attractiveness like that affected Ryan’s confidence, and that fit who his character was—the guy who wins a fight, then exits in defeat.”

After a barista brought him a soy cappuccino, Cianfrance observed, “She wrote a note on her hand that says ‘Quit smoking.’” Cianfrance, a sometime smoker, has also turned his body into a to-do list. He got “a-m-i-g-o” tattooed across the knuckles of his right hand, a decade ago, as a reminder of the night he was in a parking lot, changing camera



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tapes, and a Hispanic man with an oozing stomach wound asked for help, saying, “Hey, amigo?” Cianfrance thrust some pocket change at him. Then, on second thought, he turned back to offer actual help, but the man had disappeared among the cars. Farther up the director’s right arm is a blue oak leaf, a symbol of patience that he vowed to stamp on himself if “Blue Valentine” was ever made. When he finally got the green light, after twelve years, he no longer wanted the blue leaf, but the new American male keeps his promises.

“Ryan would *like* to have a lot of tattoos, but because he’s an actor he can’t,” Cianfrance said. So, in both films, Gosling skim-coated himself with temporary tats. In “The Place Beyond the Pines”—a brooding story of a motorcycle bandit (Gosling), the cop who confronts him (Bradley Cooper), and the violent friendship of their sons, years later—“there’s a moment where Ryan holds his baby, who’s clean, and you can see that he feels dirty,” Cianfrance said. “That is the essence of the moment I had five years ago when I held my second boy: How can I hold this child? How can I keep him from being infected by the fire that burns in me? Passion can be great for art, but it’s very destructive.” Having finished his cappuccino, he poured glass after glass of water into the remaining foam and drank them off until the cup was clean.

“I never understood why people had all these smiling family photographs in their houses,” he said. “One of the first pictures I took as a kid was my brother in his underwear and my mom in curlers, and they’re screaming at each other. I like arguing—it feels natural. Love is bigger than being satiated by happiness.”

Staring into his cup, he continued, “I stopped drinking for eight years as a discipline to make ‘Blue Valentine.’ We shot the beforehand stuff first, and my idea was that I’d have a drink when I started shooting the present-day stuff, that it would put me in the right frame of mind. But during that period of drinking I almost got into a fight with my neighbor while I was holding my baby, and I almost divorced my wife at dinner. So I decided: If I can stop for a movie, I can stop for my life. Because anger is my go-to emotion, and drink sure doesn’t help.”

Cianfrance now hopes that his “amigo” tattoo makes him look tough but friendly. “Sometimes, when I’m gone, working,” he said, “I feel like my family can have a peace they don’t have when I’m there. I had a dream last night that we all lived in a houseboat on a lake, and I was spraying a hose on the lake, and the lake water gradually became crystal-clear. I could see all these fish with their rainbow shimmers, and then there were dolphins around them, the lake becoming flush with life—and all of a sudden a giant shark came underneath everything, this huge dark shape, and I knew my family could never swim in the lake again.”

—Tad Friend

## O PIONEERS DEPT. FEMINISM 101



The night before Holly Spinelli, an energetic high-school English teacher, was due to attend a seminar with Gloria Steinem, she had a nightmare in which she arrived at the event only to discover that her name wasn’t on the list. The following day, Spinelli, who teaches at City-As-School, a public school in the West Village, showed up early at the New-York Historical Society to discover that she was, in fact, expected, as were fifteen other teachers from public and private schools around the city. From Dalton came Catherine Edwards, a history teacher, whose eager students had shown her how she might take a surreptitious photo of Steinem on her phone by pretending to make a call. From Wings Academy High School, in the Bronx, came Matthew Foglino, a social-studies teacher. Two-thirds of the students in his school qualify for free lunch, and it has a nearly twenty-per-cent truancy rate. “A lot of my kids hate my guts, because when they see they have me as a teacher they know I am going to make them work their butts off,” Foglino said. “I’m grateful to be here—and so are my kids, I should say.”

“I’m Gloria Steinem, and I wish I were in every one of your classrooms,” Steinem said by way of introducing herself to the

group, whose members sat at tables arranged in an egalitarian square shape in the society’s imposing library. The seminar, which was organized by the Academy for Teachers, a not-for-profit dedicated to educating educators, was devoted to the question of how best to address feminism in the classroom. Edwards, the Dalton teacher, said that her students were well informed about issues of injustice overseas—“They know where Matt Damon is on a daily basis”—but were reluctant to look at inequities in their own country. Steinem pointed out that upper-class women don’t always have it easy, even in the United States. “Women in families of inherited wealth are often in deep, deep shit,” she said. “We need to acknowledge that women are not always in the same class as their fathers and husbands. They never get the confidence of a paycheck.” Alexa Encarnacion, who teaches history at the Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics, in East Harlem, said that her female students had a hard time relating to feminism, too. “As soon as you bring out the word ‘vagina,’ it’s like, ‘Ugh,’ ” Encarnacion said. “I’m like, ‘What’s wrong with you? You all have a vagina.’ ”

Arnie Mansdorf, who teaches at the High School of American Studies, at Lehman College, in the Bronx, asked whether there was a role for men in the ongoing pursuit of women’s equality. Steinem said warmly that there was. “First, we were dependent, and we rebelled against that; and then we became independent, and we presented ourselves—‘Here we are,’ ” she said. “Only then were we able to be connected. We had our declaration of independence, and now we need a declaration of interdependence.” Steinem, who will turn seventy-nine this month, demonstrated a familiarity with evolutions in gender-related liberation struggles after Emily Schorr Lesnick, a drama instructor in her first year of teaching at Riverdale Country School, described herself as a cisgender woman. “At first, I thought, Oh, no, give me a break,” Steinem said. “And then I thought, Maybe I should have an adjective if everyone else does.”

Steinem said she was encouraged by the wide front of contemporary feminist activism. “Part of the reason you know me and Bella Abzug and Shirley Chisholm is that we were twelve crazy people. Now

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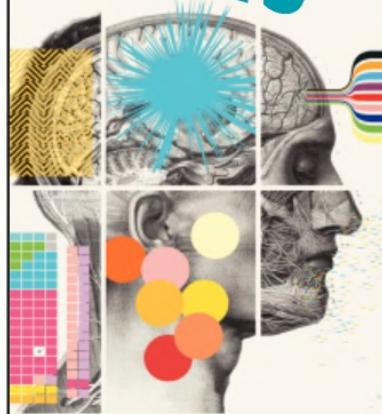
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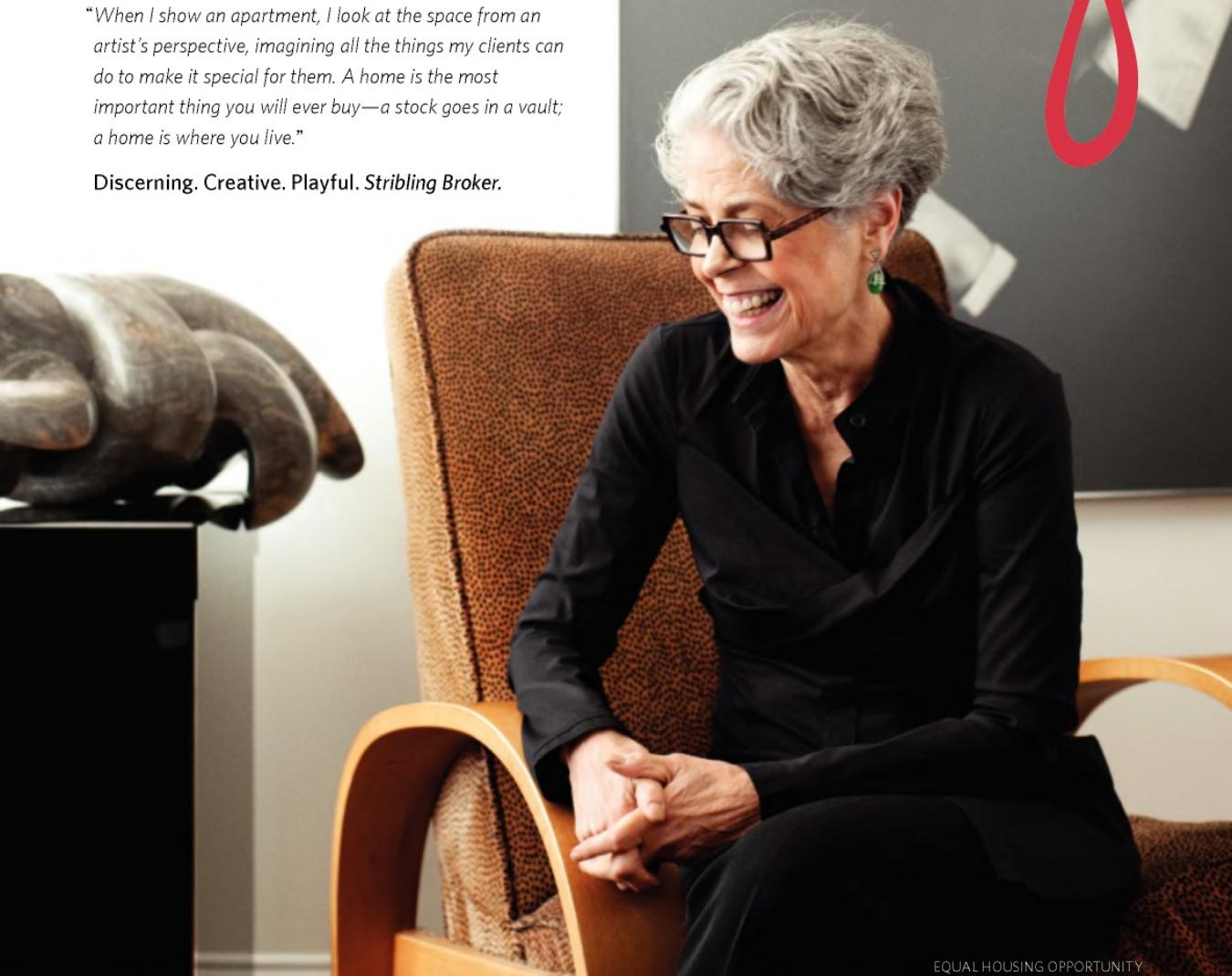
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there are so many." She defended Sheryl Sandberg's "Lean In" project. "I think it's positive, and she's had such a backlash," Steinem said. "Only in a woman would success be seen as a barrier to giving advice. Meanwhile, Trump, whose brain is deteriorating under the heat of his toupee, is *fine* giving advice." She played a clip from "MAKERS," the recent PBS documentary about the history of the women's movement in the United States, which showed Ruth Simmons, the first African-American president of an Ivy League school, Brown University, who grew up in



Gloria Steinem

the segregated South as the twelfth child of sharecroppers. "Don't you think she should be President?" Steinem said.

Holly Spinelli, the nightmare-suffering teacher, asked Steinem for suggestions on how to persuade her students to embrace the very word "feminism," which many resisted. "I do think you need to send people to a dictionary to see what that means," Steinem replied. "When I get really frustrated, I say you're either a feminist or a masochist—those are the only two choices. But I don't recommend that." After Steinem left—with promises to send all the teachers bracelets like the one she was wearing, made with beads that spelled out "We are linked not ranked"—Spinelli declared herself inspired and energized. "Are there words for these feelings?" she said, with a sigh of relief that the list had included her after all.

—Rebecca Mead

## LAST RITES BARE EARTH



On Thursday, March 7th, at about eight-fifteen in the morning, a man jumped from the roof of 290 Ninth Avenue, a twenty-four-story apartment building next to the Church of the Holy Apostles, in Manhattan. He landed a few feet from the base of the building on a patch of bare earth between some leafless bushes and a sidewalk that curves through the building's courtyard. James Justich, the building's chief maintenance man, who was out on his morning trash-pickup rounds, found him a minute or two later. At first, he thought the man was a drunk, but then he noticed the way one of the legs was bent. The man lay on his back with his arms stretched out. His baseball cap and his glasses had been taped to his head with Postal Service packing tape, which also wound around his face and his jaw.

On the third floor of the church offices, in a small conference room, the deacon, the Reverend Robert A. Jacobs, was preparing to lead a service of Morning Prayer for early arrivals at the church's soup kitchen, the largest in the city. He heard sirens converging outside, went to a window, and saw police cars and a fire truck pull up. Two firemen jumped out with a stretcher and carried it along the side of the church and out of sight. In a minute they brought it back empty. Reverend Jacobs thought that was strange, so he went to another window, one that faced the apartment building. From there he could see the man lying on the ground. He did not wonder what he was seeing. On the morning of January 31, 2012, a man had jumped off the same roof and landed in almost the same spot.

Reverend Jacobs is a slim, young-looking black man in his late sixties, with short graying hair and a neatly trimmed mustache. Deacons in the Episcopal Church serve without pay. Since his ordination, in 1992, he has been a deacon at several churches and a chaplain at a hospital in the city, meanwhile earning his living as the branch manager of a series of banks in midtown. He came to Holy Apostles in

2010 and retired from banking in 2011. He still has a bit of a banker's style: under his gray suit coat and rabat (the plain black front with the white clerical collar), he sometimes wears a blue-and-white striped oxford shirt. After seeing the man on the ground, Reverend Jacobs held the Morning Prayer service, which lasts about half an hour. Then he put on his coat and took his prayer book and went next door. "One of the cops there recognized me," Reverend Jacobs told a visitor recently. "This cop happened to be on duty last year when the other man jumped. I gave that man last rites, too. The cop and I looked at each other and shook our heads and said, 'Another one.' In fact, I knew that cop from years before that, when I managed the Commerce Bank at Twenty-sixth Street and Seventh Avenue. That branch got held up eight times, and he was one of the cops who came when the precinct responded to the robberies."

"So the police let me through the crime-scene barrier without questions, and I went to the body. By now, it was covered with a sheet. The man was a white male, in his fifties. The police told me he lived in a nearby building and that he was supposed to turn himself in that morning. Not for any major crime—they said he had slapped his sister around. The building's security cameras had showed him just before he jumped, walking back and forth on the roof and holding a banana in his hand. I wondered, if security saw him walking around and acting like that, couldn't they send somebody up and stop him? Laying there on the ground, next to the sheet, was a banana peel. I said prayers from the Rites of the Dead, and I asked God to accept this man to His heavenly gates, and that his sins, if any, be forgiven. The cops stood quietly, and they stayed with the body for a long time after, until the medical examiner came."

"Did this man feel bad about what he had done? Was he afraid? Did he just snap? Why did he put that tape on himself? This is one of those ends without any closure. But I believe we have a loving God who forgives us if we can't take the pressures. The man's name was Walter Friedenwald. We have put him on the prayer list in our church bulletin, and we'll be praying for him for the next two weeks."

—Ian Frazier

## THE FINANCIAL PAGE

### THE TURNAROUND TRAP

In January of 2012, Ron Johnson, the new C.E.O. of J. C. Penney, gave a speech unveiling his ambitious strategy for reinventing the hoary old retailer. It was a much anticipated event. Penney was directionless and barely profitable, and Johnson was a retail superstar. He had helped make Target hip, pioneering partnerships with big-name designers like Michael Graves, and had then moved to Apple, where he orchestrated the creation of the Apple Store. Johnson's presentation did not disappoint. He made it clear that he wasn't going to just stabilize Penney; he was going to revolutionize it. Coupons and sales, which had become ubiquitous, were going to be replaced by what he called "fair and square pricing." The stores themselves would be radically redesigned, becoming curated showcases of mini shops, arranged by brand. J. C. Penney, Johnson said, would become "America's favorite store."

Fourteen months later, J. C. Penney is America's favorite cautionary tale. Customers have abandoned the store en masse: over the past year, revenues have fallen by twenty-five per cent, and Penney lost almost a billion dollars, half a billion of it in the final quarter alone. The company's stock price, which jumped twenty-four per cent after Johnson announced his plans, has since fallen almost sixty per cent. Twenty-one thousand employees have lost their jobs. And Johnson has become the target of unrelenting criticism. "There is nothing good to say about what he's done," Mark Cohen, a former C.E.O. of Sears Canada, who is now a professor at Columbia, told me. "Penney had been run into a ditch when he took it over. But, rather than getting it back on the road, he's essentially set it on fire." Johnson is scrapping his pricing strategy but is sticking by the mini-shop concept: last week, Joe Fresh boutiques débuted in stores across the country. Meanwhile, rumors of Johnson's imminent departure are everywhere, and last year's pronouncement is starting to look like the business equivalent of George Bush's "Mission Accomplished" speech.

The biggest problem with Johnson's strategy is simple: he misread what

Penney's customers wanted. Doing away with constant markdowns was, on the face of it, sensible: instead of starting with a high price and quickly marking it down, start with a lower price. But Johnson failed to see how attached customers were to markdowns. "In most of the retail universe, price is the most powerful motivator," Cohen said. "This game of cat and mouse with regular, ever-changing discounts is illogical, but it's one that lots of consumers like to play. Johnson just ignored all that."

The way Penney implemented its plan also hurt. For one thing, Johnson didn't test his pricing strategy—perhaps because of his experience at Apple, where market research has always been anath-

ma. In addition, he rolled it out before the stores had been remodelled or filled with new merchandise. This drove old customers away without giving new ones a reason to come in. Offering pain and no gain is no way to remake a company. "Anytime you're trying to change the way you do things, small wins are important," Michael Roberto, a management professor at Bryant University, told me. "Small wins help you build support both internally and externally, and they make it easier for people to buy in."



Given Johnson's track record, plenty of people are shocked by what's happened. Yet hiring him was always a huge gamble. As Cohen put it, "He had never been a C.E.O., never mounted or managed a turnaround, had limited fashion-

apparel experience, and had no experience in the middle-market space." Johnson's champions assumed that, because he had done great work elsewhere, he would do great work at Penney. But the circumstances at Johnson's previous companies were radically different from those at Penney. Target was a thriving company that had already positioned itself as a trend-aware, fashionable store, so Johnson had plenty of support in the effort to make it cooler. And, while the Apple Store is a brilliant retail concept, its success was surely helped by the fact that it has been home to three of the best-selling consumer products ever.

At Target and at Apple, Johnson was running with the wind, not against it. At Penney, he's trying to do something very different: remake a company's DNA. Penney's board no doubt believed that Johnson's record guaranteed that he'd succeed. But this perception probably reflects what psychologists call "the fundamental attribution error"—our tendency to ignore context and attribute an individual's success or failure solely to inherent qualities. (People who watch one basketball player shoot free throws in a poorly lighted gym and another shoot in a well-lighted gym attribute the latter's greater success to ability rather than to conditions.) Skill is important, but so is context: being great at selling cheap fashion or cool technology products doesn't mean you'll be great at turning around a middle-market retailer.

Of course, this cuts both ways. Right now, Johnson looks like a complete fool. But turnarounds are hard to pull off, especially in retail. One study found that efforts at merely getting a money-losing retailer back to profitability succeed only thirty per cent of the time. Radically remaking a major company, as Johnson is trying to do, is even harder. So, if Johnson isn't as good as he looked at Apple, he's probably not as bad as he looks at Penney. Indeed, his biggest mistake may simply have been taking the job in the first place. He's become a living example of one of Warren Buffett's keenest observations: "When a manager with a reputation for brilliance tackles a business with a reputation for poor fundamental economics, it is the reputation of the business that remains intact."

—James Surowiecki



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# A BOX OF PUPPIES

*Canine cravings.*

BY LENA DUNHAM



When I was a child, my greatest dream was to find a box full of puppies. And every shoebox, every discarded Manhattan Mini Storage vessel had the potential to change my life. I knew just what I'd do with the puppies I found: take them home, place them in a corner of my loft bed, give them names like Anastasia and Kristy, and feed them the parts of my dinner I didn't want. I'd throw them in with my stuffed animals, so you couldn't tell the plush from the living. I'd keep them in my backpack at school and in my skirts at home. By the time they were fully grown, they would follow me down the streets of SoHo, off-leash. They'd bark at shady characters, and even at my parents when they

asked me to do something I didn't like.

In reality, I was deeply dog-less. Until I was six, I had no pets at all, despite trying to catch rabbits in a net at the park and lure turtles with Sun Chips at other people's country houses. My first (and worst) pet was a newt that choked to death on a bad worm. Next came a hairless cat my mother bought on Greene Street. Both were poor substitutes for the dog I wanted but couldn't have. We didn't have a proper home. We lived in what was essentially one big room, on Broadway. And all my promises to care for the dog were futile: I wasn't even allowed to go outside alone.

My parents' childhood dogs loomed large in our family mythology. My mother had been the proud owner of Cindy, a

shepherd-collie mix with serious aggression issues and a pathological obsession with Ritz crackers. She was tied to a tree all day on the lawn outside my mother's neo-Tudor house. At the age of six, my mother was both her captor and her protector. One of the first sentences I learned was "Cindy was a bad dog."

A few states away, my father had General George Armstrong Custer (General for short), a runt dachshund whose claim to fame was that he'd once eaten an entire eighteen-pound ham. For days thereafter, General's gut dragged along the ground. When it was really hot, he liked to run to the riverbank and roll in dead eels. He survived a German-shepherd attack in which he lost part of an ear. He died at eighteen, curled beneath my grandfather's desk.

Both these dogs seemed to me like outcasts, kooks, pains in the ass who the adults secretly wished would just succumb to their own vices already. And so I concluded that dogs were not man's best friend but, rather, the mischievous sidekicks of misunderstood children.

When I was fifteen, I took the box-of-puppies fantasy into my own hands. Walking down the main drag of Brooklyn Heights, where we now lived, I stopped to pet a tan mutt, the mascot of an animal-rescue group that had set up a booth at the corner of Montague and Hicks. As I scratched the scarred head of a sleepy "chow mix," the group explained its mission: to end animal homelessness in our borough.

"My parents won't let me have a dog," I said.

"Well, maybe you can foster."

I don't remember exactly who the person in charge of the booth was. There were several girls and a man. The situation was so oddly traumatic that in my mind the man is played by the character actor Elias Koteas, of "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" fame. I do remember, though, that what came next was a very bad afternoon. It involved my dreams coming true and the empty dread that often follows that experience. I climbed into a van with Elias Koteas, who told me that there was a pit-bull mother dead (in a box!) in a parking lot near the Gowanus Canal and three puppies that desperately needed a foster home. As he drove me out of my neighborhood, away from the

*Lamby, the author's dog, is a mutt who came from a rescue shelter in Brooklyn.*

bagel shops and the squash players, and into industrial Brooklyn, I suddenly recalled my mother's countless warnings about "climbing into vans with strangers." Somehow, this situation seemed outside the bounds of her edict. Just think of the puppies—three of them, he had said, their bodies cold, starving. In the van, one of his colleagues, a silent frizzy-haired woman, filled dog bowls with dirty water. I could hear it sloshing as we rumbled down Atlantic Avenue.

It was dusk by the time we reached the parking lot. It had started to drizzle. Elias Koteas told me to follow him, and I did, to a shipping crate in the corner of the lot. I peered in. The mother wasn't dead. She lifted her head with tremendous effort, sad-eyed and gaunt, like Fantine, in "*Les Misérables*." A mother in a desperate situation. Maybe that's why she didn't even growl when I reached in and took her babies, one by one.

They were barely puppies. More like kidney beans, slick and cool, eyes still sealed shut. They whimpered, but quietly, no louder than baby birds. Elias Koteas urged me back to the van. He told me to buy bottles and a heating pad and "make sure they're warm all night." I was dropped off near a subway stop.

But I didn't take the train. I wandered for blocks, the puppies hidden in my orange parka. I saw a laundromat and went inside to get warm. Someone noticed the puppies and suggested that I stuff them into the socks without mates sitting atop a dryer, which I did. (It was cute in the vein of an Anne Geddes calendar, but didn't seem totally safe.) Back out on the street, I spotted a veterinarian's office in the distance; it was like one of those cartoons in which someone starving in the wilderness hallucinates a hot-dog stand. The office was just closing, but I opened my coat and flashed the receptionist my puppies, like a freelance salesman on Canal Street, and she quickly ushered me in. The vet was a young, sweet man. Definitely Jewish, which is something I care about only in times of crisis. He checked each dog for a cleft palate and explained that I had to feed them every two hours, and that I should rub their anuses with a hot cloth to express their bowels. It never occurred to me to ask whether the vet might keep them there, at the office, where the staff was better equipped for transient pit-

bull infants than a fifteen-year-old girl might be. After all, my parents were on a trip to California and my sister, Grace, was only nine.

On the walk home, I named them—Uno, Bruno, and Devo. Imagine how lively our house would be when we had three grown pit bulls! I presented them to the babysitter, who reacted with the only appropriate emotion: horror. I didn't care, since technically she wasn't in charge of me. (I was too old for a babysitter but still too young to be trusted alone with Grace.)

The first night, I woke up every hour on the hour, heated the bottles, rubbed the anuses. Every so often, the puppies cried and I'd reach down into their box, letting whoever got there first suckle my index finger. It was the weekend, so I had all the time in the world to spend with them. But by the end of the second afternoon I was an Octomom-style mess. They weren't eating enough. They weren't pooping enough. Once, I left the room for too long and when I came back they were sucking each other's tiny dicks, in a circle, like crazed swingers, blind to the fact that those things weren't nipples.

Over the phone, my father reacted to the news of my triple adoption with the warning that he was, officially, "livid." He said that if the puppies were not gone by the time he and my mother got back from California he would get rid of them himself. My mother was more sympathetic ("Are they eating?"), but she also appealed to my good sense: "You know we can't keep them."

I did recognize that the joy/work ratio was out of whack. This wasn't "*Charlotte's Web*"; it was "*The Panic in Needle Park*." I called the rescue group's number, which they had given me, "for updates," and reached the director. She lived in Bay Ridge and was agoraphobic, she explained, so there was no way she could meet me to collect the puppies. Besides, she said, she had no room at all. I had never heard the word "agoraphobic" before, and the accompanying visual I generated was of someone throwing a tantrum as she walked across the Brooklyn Bridge amid a throng of tourists. Apparently, I displayed a level of confrontational tenacity (or desperation) that I haven't shown since, because she finally agreed to take them off my hands if I could get them to her house. I

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# READY

to write environmental wrongs

Ithaca College has been my gateway to the experiences of a lifetime. Sitting in on an international climate conference, hiking to a shrinking American glacier, writing for a progressive magazine. Now I'm on to my next adventure—defending the planet.

- Kacey Deamer '13  
Environmental Studies & Journalism



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waited until my father got home, then made him do it, but I refused to join my family in the car, claiming that it was too painful a goodbye. "I've raised them since birth!" I cried.

While they were gone, I holed up with a boy I vaguely liked who had a very chapped lower lip. I sat on his lap while he used my father's cardio-rowing machine, but we never kissed. In the car, I'm told, adorable little Bruno released a torrent of diarrhea down my sister's chest.

We did, eventually, get a family dog. It was only a year later, and he wasn't a rescue but an old-fashioned terrier with a sheaf of official papers that came with him on a plane from Indiana. I was very invested in him for a short while, until I started watching Criterion Collection movies and eating meat and getting generally more excited about human company. The misfit child no longer needed a companion, and the terrier was ignored, like the Velveteen Rabbit. (He eventually became my mother's confidant. Although he now has a condition called degenerative myelopathy that causes him to drag his back legs around, like a mermaid, I once overheard my father sing "In-a-Gadda-Da-Vida" to him, and he seems very happy.)

**N**othing about my life these days makes me an especially good candidate for having a dog. For starters, I'm never home. I work all the time, and when I'm not working I'm asleep in a pile on my couch.

I have issues waking up. I understand the title of President Obama's book "The Audacity of Hope," because it perfectly describes my relationship to setting my alarm clock for 7 A.M.

I haven't been grocery shopping in more than a year. Currently, my refrigerator contains old yogurt, old vinegar, and whatever kind of medicines you're told to keep cold (usually prescribed for your vagina). I am one step away from doing that awful rom-com thing where a New York City working woman with limited space but unlimited pluck fills her oven with sweaters and shoes.

I also realize that writing about dogs is a very tricky business. It's nearly impossible to do without some simpering

sentimentality. In a dream world, you write about your dog and you're J. R. Ackerley. Or perhaps your words will have the droopy intelligence of a Thurber dog. Jo Ann Beard's essay "The Fourth State of Matter," a stunning account of a mass shooting in an academic community and its surreal aftermath, describes a dying dog with such eloquent precision that you can see every heartbreak curve of his body, feel every labored breath, and you reflect on



how we all fit together as a mesh of messy creation. But, more often, you're writing "Beethoven." "Marley and Me" if you're lucky.

The same caveats apply to conversation about dogs. Just discussing your dog can be as tiresome and offensive as talking about the weather, your own dreams, or the newest wrinkle in your married sex life. At least when people talk about their children, there is a chance that the kid will grow up to be President.

But the main reason I shouldn't even have been thinking about dogs is that I finally have a boyfriend. After what feels like decades of making ill-advised forays into Spartan Chinatown living rooms and pretending to enjoy wine, I have met someone I love and respect, and I want to make decisions that honor and consider him. It would be a mistake to create a situation that compromised his comfort or made him less likely to squeeze me all night long.

My boyfriend is allergic to dogs.

Nevertheless, the itch returned last year, when, during an extended existentialist spin-out, the same family dog I had abandoned so many years ago dragged himself to my side and refused to leave. Suddenly, I find myself Googling dogs, looking into their dumb dog faces, reading about which foods will poison them (grapes, chocolate, some sugarless gums) and which

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celebrities love them (Glenn Close).

I imagine how much better everything would be with a dog. Walks to get the paper or a bagel. Long car trips, a wild head of Einstein-y fur in my lap. Sitting on the couch, reading a book, and occasionally flicking his ear with my toe. I'd be permanently rid of the whiff of self-involvement. ("She can't be that much of a narcissist—she adopted a dog!?)

I promise everyone I won't do it. I tell my boyfriend, "We have our whole lives for dogs." Then, one morning, I sneak off to another rescue group in industrial Brooklyn and I take him home.

**H**e's gorgeous. He's a mutt, it's true, but if you told me he was Marie Antoinette's breed of choice I'd believe you: a golden sausage with the most human eyes I've ever seen on a non-human. Lamby will be his name, like some French kid's favorite soft toy. He's had three other homes, three other names, but now he's mine mine mine. First, I make sure my boyfriend doesn't break out in hives, ask whether he's "a good dog," then sign on the dotted line. He's a hundred and fifty dollars, and I use my credit card. The rescue people dump his tags and toys into a plastic evidence bag, as if he were leaving prison. It should be noted that this place is an entirely professional operation. Seasoned, systematic, these people don't seem as if they'd ever kidnap a minor and place three canine infants in her care.

The first few nights I have him, it's just us two, and he's perfect. Quiet, limp as a sack of laundry, he kisses me softly whenever he has the chance. I bring him to a bookstore, and he's passed around among my friends like the town bicycle. Everyone tells me how lucky I am.

Friday, I drop him at day care. My boyfriend is coming home that day, and I'm excited about our first night as a family. My boyfriend, on the other hand, doesn't seem particularly excited when I offer to give Lamby a hyphenated last name.

That afternoon, my sister breaks up with her girlfriend. I tell her she should sleep over, and she agrees. We all go to dinner and then pick up Lamby, who bounds out of day care and into the sub-zero night to greet us. I am lucky.

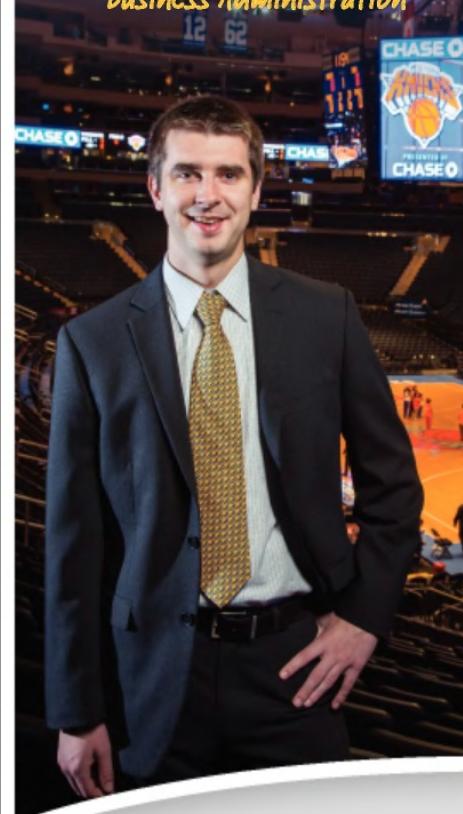
But the minute we arrive home it gets

# READY

*to court success*

I've spent most of my life in the game or on the sidelines—playing, watching, and loving sports. Ithaca College helped me land marketing and management internships with sports powerhouses like Madison Square Garden. I may not be making the shots, but I'll be calling them.

*—Drew Steedman '13  
Business Administration*



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weird: Lamby picks up a stuffed toy in his mouth and shakes it hard, as if to break its neck. He's growling. My boyfriend reaches his hand out to calm him and Lamby lunges, biting him. Whether it's aggression or play is unclear, but we back out of the room all the same.

In the bathroom a little while later, we are brushing our teeth when Lamby saunters in, calm, like your college roommate the day after an acid trip, acting like everything is normal. My boyfriend tenses and, ever the Lady Macbeth, I encourage him to reengage:

"Pick Lamby up! He'll be sweet now. I promise."

He picks the dog up awkwardly, so that his feet flail. I know this wouldn't feel good if it were me, but I keep quiet. Lamby tries, desperately, to bite at any part of my boyfriend's body he can reach, then hurls himself onto the tile floor. He bounces slightly, shocked, then curls his tail around one crooked leg and heads for the front door, where he barks loudly at no one.

My boyfriend looks pained; Lamby seems utterly alone; and I feel torn—after all, what's it feel like when you are one foot tall and a guy in a Green Day shirt hoists you up as if it's nothing and waggles one of your paws and calls you "bro"?

At bedtime, I shut Lamby in the living room with my sister, who needs the comfort, but, a moment later, it starts: the sound. Something between a sob and a siren, it is how Lamby expresses a doleful emotion that he experiences roughly twice a day.

"I think he needs to sleep in here," I say.

My boyfriend nods, a good sport with a long red scratch on his forearm.

Lamby trots in, does several laps around the room, then stretches across the foot of the bed.

"Are you O.K.?" I ask my boyfriend.

"Sure," he says, a little too quickly. "You?"

"Definitely," I assure him. "Definitely."

He pauses. "I mean, I have to get used to having someone else in the bed with us. . . . You know, a creature. That might bite my feet." Tears stream down my face. What have I done? We had such a nice life. The first real comfort I've known in so long. Nights were

quiet and sweet, and we slept until whatever o'clock we wanted, then sat on the couch in our underwear and planned the day. I cling to my boyfriend and pull my feet up close the way I did when I was a little girl and thought alligators lived at the bottom of the bed, waiting to snap.

Finally, everything settles. We're breathing in tandem and Lamby is passed out down there. It seems as though we could sleep this way every night and even come to love it. What was I so anxious about?

A siren wakes me at 3 A.M. Lamby stands, ready to fight. My first thought is how much my boyfriend values his sleep, and my second thought is a reprise of "What have I done?" I get up and open the door to the living room, where my sister is sobbing. I kneel over her and she shows me the offending text message. Lamby makes himself busy, circling her, placing a spitty chew toy on any exposed skin he can find. Once she calms down, he does, too. On the arm of the couch. This is where we will stay.

Lamby's fine if it's just him and me, working or eating or listening to music. But any attempt on my part to be alone—meditating, showering, walking out into the hallway to dump trash down the chute—results in that same siren sound. Sometimes he takes a break to flash his erection at me, red as a sunburn and made even more vulgar by the jaunty bandanna the groomer has tied around his neck.

At night, he conks out around ten. He's at his best when he's sleeping, snoring softly, one ear flopped over his eyes like a sleep mask. But, once the light goes out, he's on edge, using the siren to fend off imagined intruders.

My building skews old. Let's just say that four neighbors passed away last year, and none of the deaths were tragedies. So when an ambulance pulls up to our door I never panic.

Lamby does. One night, an ambulance is parked outside from 3 A.M. to 5 A.M., and for those two hours he sounds a rival siren. I try shutting the blinds. Covering his ears. Pushing him out of my bedroom. But he's despondent.

The classic reasons that people have dogs—to feel loved unconditionally,

and not for our appearance or net worth; to escape the knowledge of death for a moment with a creature who doesn't know about its existence; to have access to utterly present joy—are only intellectual concepts in the face of this squealing lunatic. The ambulance leaves, but Lamby starts again when the woman below me coughs, a deep weak rumble that I often mistake for male sounds of sexual pleasure or the evening news.

At 5:07 A.M., I crawl to the end of the bed to meet him. I ruffle his ears, whisper, "It's O.K., I'm here. I've been waiting for you for so long. Before I even knew about you, I was waiting for you. When you were born, I was only twenty-five years old. I had a boyfriend I didn't love, but I told him that I did and he made me a pencil case, so I didn't even know I needed you. But I needed you." Lamby is growling, but more softly now. He still doesn't like the scene downstairs, the coughing and the woman's frustrated, tired caretaker rising to check on her.

"And the rest of the months I waited for you, and now here you are."

Once, in a friend's office, I saw a childhood picture of her husband on which he'd drawn a thought bubble saying, "I can't wait to meet you, it's going to take a long time, and there will be a lot of trouble along the way, but this is how it must be." It struck me as impossibly romantic, the nicest thing you could say to someone, really. "I'm not going anywhere," I tell Lamby.

He wakes up only one more time in the night, with a single bark that trails into silence.

I kiss his little mouth, his ears that smell like corn chips and old water. "Sh-h-h . . . I love you. I love you. I love you so much." There is no one to call for help. We don't need any help. He is mine, and I am old enough to have him. We are all adults here. ♦

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#### BLOCK THAT METAPHOR!

*From the Ontario National Post.*

So, Toronto Mayor Rob Ford has been given the boot from office because an opportunistic citizen hired a smart and politically savvy lawyer who found a club of an arcane statute with which to tie the hands of a judge who was willing to play ball.

That's the short and dirty version of the bombshell that has dropped.

# I WORK HARD AND I PLAY SOFT

BY TEDDY WAYNE



**S**hut your idiot trap for a minute and maybe you'll learn something. I'm a broker at the top hedge fund in New York fucking City. I kick ass and I don't even take names, because I could give a shit about other people's identities. I made more money during my lunch hour than you'll earn in a decade. Slothful national holidays observe *me*.

But, come the weekend, I turn into a goddam room-temperature-green-tea-sipping, crafts-show-watching, hardcore online-mah-jongg enthusiast.

When I'm in that office, boy, watch out: I will tear your new one its own new one. I'm not a shark; I'm a motherfucking orca. I crunch numbers like they're granola and spit them out in your face, because I don't eat anything except raw red meat. Sometimes I donate money to charity during the day, not out of altruism but just to challenge myself to earn it back twofold by sundown.

And after a hard day of work I love nothing more than winding down with some hatha yoga, "The Very Best of

Enya" on low volume, and a tall, ice-cold O'Doul's in a commemorative glass from a trip I took to a Barbie convention with my nieces.

Hey, Poindexter, feast your corrective-lens-adjusted eyes on this power suit: pinstripes, peak lapels, Italian silk imported from a seven-hundred-year-old family business in Como. I sewed it myself in eight months, in a Wednesday-night class at the community center. Edith's a really patient teacher.

Yesterday, this Young Turk in the office comes up to me, boasting about a major deal he's got cooking. Serious egg on his face two hours later when it falls through. He's slumped over his desk, feeling sorry for himself. "Sack up, junior!" I boom. "When life hands you a lemon, you sink your fangs into that citric acid and smile, because lemonade is for children and humanities majors."

I collect vintage night-lights that I buy on Etsy.

Hold on, I'm closing on something the size of an inferior country's G.D.P.,

and the S.E.C.'s been on my ass like John Wayne on a stallion. . . . Stacy, be a doll and clear my evening and order up a couple pounds of steak, 'cause Daddy's gonna be taking care of business and working overtime. And do me a favor: make sure you correctly set my DVR for the rerun marathon on Oxygen of "Grace Under Fire."

My Delta brothers and I get together once a month—we can't do it more than that, given how much time we spend molding the financial world in our images, and also most of them have newborns in Scarsdale, so the commute's a bitch. We'll hang in someone's feng-shui-appointed salon, read third-wave-feminist blogs on Sheryl Sandberg, and discuss our insecurities stemming from childhood bullying. This is what real men do, and if you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen, 'cause Pete's probably grilling up some of his famous rosemary-flecked tofu, except not for Jim, because of his soy allergy.

Don't even think about crossing me. I can buy and sell you a thousand times over. And I'll be laughing all the way to my daily cognitive-behavioral-therapist appointment, punk, where Dr. Tessler and I work on using laughter as a means of assuaging social anxiety.

You got a problem with what I'm saying? Well, you know what we do with little pissants like you where I come from? We sit down and have ourselves an old-fashioned conflict-mediation session in which we start every sentence with "I feel." I come from Darien, Connecticut.

See that chick there, the one with the centerfold rack? Spent a week with her in Vegas, dominating investors at a conference. We were together every waking minute, working on PowerPoints and pitches, and then, the last night, you guessed it—went back to her hotel room, where we stayed up till the break of dawn, talking through her boyfriend issues. If her relationship status ever changes on Facebook, I might shoot her an e-mail to see if she wants to maybe grab coffee or something sometime after work or whatever. Decaf, obviously.

When you're ready to learn how to be a master of the universe, call me. But if it's a Friday night, after I close down the office, don't bother. That's my time for scrapbooking. ♦

# PORT

Issue 9, Spring 2013

## THE FILM ISSUE

Guest Edited by

DANIEL DAY-LEWIS

Featuring

Paul Thomas Anderson

Lynn Hirschberg

Ray Winstone

Thelma Schoonmaker

Graham King

Rebecca Miller

Walter Murch

Adam Somner

and

Michel Faber



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ANNALS OF STYLE

## HARLEM CHIC

*How a hip-hop legend remixed name-brand fashion.*

BY KELEFA SANNEH

In 1987, a streetwise d.j. from Queens named Eric Barrier released an album with an eerily mature teen-age rapper from Long Island named William Griffin. They called themselves Eric B. & Rakim (Griffin had adopted an Arabic name after joining an offshoot of the Nation of Islam), and they called the album "Paid in Full." Its cover was meant to provide proof of the boast: the two men are photographed holding fans of cash, superimposed on a green-tinted image of giant bills. Their fingers are covered in gold rings; around each man's neck is a gold chain that looks thick enough to suspend a bridge.

Even so, most people who see the cover will find their eyes drawn to the matching leather outfits that the two are wearing. The jackets dominate the frame, and, on the back cover, one of them serves as a backdrop for an impressive still-life composed of jewelry, money, and a personal check signed by Ronald Reagan. The sleeves and torso are black, but the collar and shoulders and wrists and pockets are white leather, decorated with a tiny logo print: a series of double "G"s, the second one inverted, each pair separated from its diagonal neighbor by a black dot. If you look closely at the black leather, you can see the same pattern there, black on black. It's a Gucci logo, and on the chest is another one: a pair of fist-size interlocking "G"s.

"Paid in Full" was a hit, and a turning point: its imaginative samples inspired hip-hop producers to broaden their palettes, its sinuous rhymes inspired rappers to stretch out their verses, and its audacious cover helped convince rivals and fans that hip-hop fashion might mean something more luxurious than a T-shirt or a track suit. Of course, fans hoping to buy their own logo-print Gucci jackets wouldn't have met with much success at the company's Manhattan boutique, at Fifth Avenue and Fifty-fourth Street, which sold mostly handbags and wallets.

But within the emerging hip-hop industry the source of those outfits was an open secret: they came from a bustling shop seventy blocks north, in Harlem, called Dapper Dan's Boutique.

By the time "Paid in Full" was released, the boutique was already a success. Its storefront, on 125th Street, was open twenty-four hours a day, providing custom tailoring and name-brand cachet—Gucci, Fendi, Louis Vuitton—to anyone who could afford the prices, which ranged from a few hundred dollars to a few thousand. At Dapper Dan's, "made to order" didn't always mean "one of a kind": customers often requested copies of other customers' clothes, causing the best-loved pieces to replicate and spread outward from celebrities to regular folks—albeit regular folks willing to spend an irregular amount on luxury clothing of dubious provenance. Many of the celebrities were rappers and athletes: LL Cool J, Big Daddy Kane, and KRS-One were regular clients, and so were Mike Tyson and the basketball star Walter Berry. Major drug dealers counted as celebrities, too, like Alberto Martinez, known as Alpo, whose purchases included a beautiful tan-and-brown Louis Vuitton logo-print snorkel parka with a fox-fur hood. (It had cleverly designed double pockets in the front, just in case the wearer had something he might want to store separately or discard quickly.) Martinez was arrested in 1991 and convicted on multiple charges of homicide, but the parka, commonly known as the Alpo Coat, became one of the boutique's signature creations—a crack-era classic.

It seems possible that, in the nineteen-eighties, Dapper Dan was the most influential haberdasher in the city. His work presaged both the rise of the hip-hop fashion industry and the reinvention of Europe's luxury design houses. June Ambrose, a stylist who made her name by bridging hip-hop and high fashion, grew up in the Bronx, and she remembers



Clockwise from top left: Eric B. & Rakim; customers from New Haven, with Dapper Dan at right; the drug dealer Alberto (Alpo) Martinez; the Olympic gold medallist Diane Dixon; Mike Tyson; the storefront in 1983.

marvelling at Dapper Dan's rogue creations, which allowed his new-money clients to festoon themselves in old-money symbols. "It was like wearing a Rolls-Royce on your back—it was so cocky," she says. "It was luxury on steroids. You didn't have to say this jacket was ten thousand dollars. It just looked like it was ten thousand dollars."

In the convivial atmosphere of the shop, Dapper Dan was a friendly but serious presence. He took measurements and drew up designs, leaving most of the sewing and cutting to African tailors, mostly Senegalese, who worked in shifts upstairs from the shop, sometimes a dozen at a time. Dapper Dan wielded several different kinds of authority, depending on whom he was talking to: he could be a self-taught philosopher, a refined couturier, a gruff salesman (no discounts, no matter what), or a local guy who found subtle ways to remind people that he knew lots of other local guys, not all of them quite so refined as him. He cultivated a sense of mystery about the trademarked materials he used, and

about himself. Mike Tyson remembers him as "a beautiful guy," with a slightly anomalous sense of propriety. "He conducted himself real dignified," Tyson says. "You know, them African guys are dignified and shit—I thought Dapper Dan was African."

Dapper Dan's Boutique closed in 1992—its demise hastened, indirectly, by Tyson's patronage. In the two decades since then, Dapper Dan has lived on mainly in the mythology of hip-hop: through old album covers and magazine snapshots, as well as occasional acknowledgment on rap records. Fat Joe, a long-time customer, once declared, in a song, "You can ask Dapper Dan, Who was the man?" Jay-Z, who largely missed out on the Dapper Dan era, offered a more equivocal salute to those famous Gucci jackets: "Wear a G on my chest—I don't need Dapper Dan."

It was doubly startling, then, when Dapper Dan reappeared, a few months ago, in a five-minute biographical video that was posted on Life + Times, Jay-Z's

life-style Web site. He is sixty-eight now, though he looks at least ten years younger: he is skinny and bald and dark—it's not hard to see why Tyson thought he was an African immigrant. In fact, he was born in Harlem, the son of a homemaker and her husband, a civil servant who had moved north from Virginia in 1910. Dapper Dan's real name is Daniel Day, and he still lives in Harlem, in a brownstone a few blocks from 125th Street. He still dresses, too, like an uptown dandy. One day, not long after the video surfaced, he answered the door wearing a slim-fitting black shirt with small red polka dots and a white collar and cuffs; gold cufflinks matched the gold clip that held down his red tie. In person, his natural exuberance often seems to be doing battle with his learned wariness, both of which have served him well. He has a tendency to tell even the most benign story in a near-whisper, which makes the sudden explosions of laughter more dramatic.

Day grew up poor, the youngest of four brothers, and poverty magnified his innate interest in clothes; he used pieces

of linoleum to cover the holes in the soles of his shoes. He still remembers a friend's casual but devastating response the day his mother bought him a new pair: "Oh, look, they must have hit the number." The friend was right—the Day boys got new clothes only when their mother's lucky number, 150, came up in the local lottery. As a teen-ager, he became an accomplished shoplifter (pillaging department stores like Alexander's and Hearns), and therefore a stylish dresser, but it never occurred to him to study fashion—instead, he dropped out of school. He was once a budding kingpin, the president of the Sportsmen Tots, the youth division of a fearsome gang. But by the time he reached his late teens he had become something of an idealist, a believer in the virtues of total sobriety, even though most of his friends were confirmed skeptics. Eventually, Day found his way to the Urban League, which offered a program to instill pride and discipline in wayward young black and Latino men by sending them to Africa for the summer. Day still has a copy of a test he took as a prerequisite, which reflects the political vision of the trip's sponsors. One question asked candidates to imagine themselves as leaders of a small African country battling starvation: would they accept a loan from a larger country if it came with conditions? Day's answer, written in soft pencil, is firm: "I would reject it because African unity means more than the lives of thousands it mean the lives of 10 of millions." Underneath, one of the instructors wrote, in red ballpoint, "Excellent!!"

The trip began in Ghana, where Day and his fellow New Yorkers were sometimes shocked to see black Africans behave deferentially around their white counterparts. The leader of the expedition was a white man named Bill Stirling, a teacher and advocate who went on to become a real-estate developer in Colorado. (In the eighties, he was the mayor of Aspen.) Stirling remembers Day as a charismatic young man and a great dancer—and, like the rest of the group, a conspicuous American. "They could wear a dashiki and indigenous sandals, and walk into a market," Stirling recalls. "And these Ghanaian guys would walk up to them and say, 'Where are you from in the States?' Just completely blow their cover."

The tour also touched down in Nige-

ria, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Tanzania, where Day was struck by President Julius Nyerere's efforts at black economic empowerment. In America, he had been reading authors ranging from Elijah Muhammad, the Nation of Islam leader, to Jethro Kloss, the pioneering herbalist. Africa, with its old traditions and new politics, seemed to be full of the kind of secret knowledge he was seeking. Six years later, in 1974, Day went back to Africa, for the Rumble in

for the chance to humiliate him. "They want to win *me*—I want to win money," he says. "That's the difference."

The idea for Dapper Dan's Boutique formed slowly, as Day studied what people in Harlem were wearing and where they were getting it. Selling clothes, like gambling, was a way for him to liquefy his social capital. If people in the neighborhood wanted to dress like him, why not profit by helping them? For a time, he sold imported dress shirts on the street, but soon he found himself drawn to the fur trade, an insular market with high margins, and one that seemed to be ill serving neighborhoods like his. As far as he was concerned, furriers had long exploited African-American customers, because they could. "Diamonds and furs, black people don't know nothing about," Day says. "You can sell 'em anything."

In 1982, he opened his shop, at 43 East 125th Street, near Madison Avenue, where the Harlem Children's Zone school now stands. Day's landlord was a furrier, who hoped that his new tenant would help him unload patchy, inferior garments—"chitlin' coats," Day calls them, because they were made from scraps. Instead, Day offered high-quality furs, at prices that were slightly less extortionate than the competition's. If A. J. Lester, the mini-chain down the street, was selling a leather jacket with opossum lining for twelve hundred dollars, at a two-hundred-per-cent markup, Day would offer the same jacket for eight hundred dollars, content merely to double his money. When the wholesaler objected to this arrangement, Day resolved to become his own supplier. Thinking back to the tailor in Liberia, he gave his business card to a Senegalese vender in midtown and told him, "If you know any Africans that can sew, tell them to come to my store." Within a week, the boutique was beginning its transformation into a full-service factory.

Unlike the department stores, Day had a keen sense of what his customers wanted. He started lining his leather jackets with fox, which was more vivid than opossum, and pretty soon he began to wonder why the fur had to be hidden in the lining. "That was, like, a white-boy thing, that fur inside," he says. "I started putting it outside—inside and outside, so



the Jungle, and when George Foreman was cut during training, postponing the fight for more than a month, Day bought an unlimited plane ticket and took another tour of Africa. In Zaire, he traded most of his belongings for local carvings and oil paintings, which now line the walls of his brownstone. And in Liberia he befriended a tailor who sewed him outfits that no one had back in New York: a few dashikis, but mainly leisure suits, fitted and flared, and cut from vivid local fabrics—a West African take on American style.

Throughout the nineteen-seventies, Day was a professional gambler, devoted to the lucrative art of educating amateurs. He took this vocation seriously, mastering all the odds, tips, and tricks for winning craps and cee-lo, and he made pilgrimages downtown to meet with one of the men who taught John Scarne, the legendary author of "Scarne's Complete Guide to Gambling." Day was brought up among hustlers—his father was the only man in his family with a legitimate job—and he had three older brothers and two older cousins with reputations fearsome enough to keep him safe, despite his suspiciously good luck with dice. "I had that salesman's personality," he says. "I knew how to generate excitement. Plus I could dance, and dress." Dressing fly was part of his strategy: fellow-players would get angry and stay in the game just

you could reverse it." Soon his customers started to compete with one another, forcing Day to find ways to make his coats increasingly luxurious. One of his favorite tricks was to use designer-leather trim to turn a generic garment—even a generic mink coat—into a name-brand one. His quest for the right material sometimes took him to the Gucci boutique, where he would puzzle the clerks by buying every garment bag in the shop. The long leather panels, printed with the Gucci logo, were perfect for the jackets he wanted to make. "You could get a complete yoke, front and back," he says. "But it was costly."

Harvesting garment bags worked well enough for yokes and trim, but to make the all-over print jackets and long coats that his clients wanted Day needed to create his own raw materials. The solution he hit upon was so obvious that it never occurred to many of his best customers: he turned the high-fashion logos into huge silk screens, and then, through trial and error, found a paint tenacious enough to adhere to the soft plonge leather he liked to use. Day and his assistants screened leather right in the shop, working on skins that were about three feet wide and six feet long. (They tried to schedule their silk-screen sessions for odd hours, so that customers wouldn't smell the paint fumes.) If they pushed paint evenly through the screen, and if the screen didn't smudge when they pulled it off the skin, the result was an unlimited supply of logo-print leather, which could be used for just about anything.

The Louis Vuitton logo pattern, which looked sensible on a valise, seemed surreal on a knee-length coat. For Day, that was part of the excitement—he wanted to improve venerable brands by hijacking them. "I Africanized it," he says. "Took it away from that, like, Madison Avenue look." Of course, Day's boutique was just a few steps away from Madison Avenue's northern end, and only a few miles from the shopping districts of midtown. But in Harlem he created his own world of luxury. He expanded from jackets and suits to hats and automobile upholstery; over by the Harlem River, he had a garage, where cars could get a Gucci or a Fendi makeover, complete with a custom-logo wheel cover. Day wasn't oblivious of the possi-

bility that, eventually, one of the European companies whose logo was being "Africanized" would notice and object. "I knew that from Day One," he says. "But I'm a gambler."

**L**ike a lot of people who made good money in Harlem in the eighties, Day talks about crack cocaine with a mixture of disgust and nostalgia. He opened his shop just as crack was revolutionizing the cocaine trade, and this turned out to be a lucky coincidence. "The timing was beautiful," he says. "New York guys were spreading that demon everywhere, bringing in demon money." He had given up gambling, because he found it hard to take pleasure in seeing people lose their money, even if they were losing it to him. At the boutique, people were happy to give him their money, even though the stories of how they got it weren't always so happy.

It's fair to say that Dapper Dan's Boutique wouldn't have survived without the crack boom, which created a new generation of kingpins and mini-kingpins. One of them was Azie Faison, a dominant force in the uptown crack trade and a former partner of Alpo Martinez. Faison, who is now a rapper and motivational speaker, remembers the dilemma of having too much money and nothing sensible to do with it. "Trying to invest can hurt you, because the people that you invest with know where you're getting it from, so they become crooks, too," he says. "Then, when you try to stash the money in your house, the police might come by—or the crooked police." For someone like Faison, Day's high prices were part of the appeal. "I'm not the type that's gon' come in your business and ask for a bargain—I might pay extra to get my shit quicker," he says. "Who I am in the game, I don't care about money. I'm throwing money up in the street." For the right price, Day was known to make a great show of telling all the tailors to stop whatever they were doing and work on their new No. 1 priority. The prices also protected Day against any suggestion that he was a mere bootlegger. "You had to pay on the same level as if it was from Gucci," Faison says. "So it is Gucci, to us."

Day learned that it wasn't wise to have men on the sales floor, because male customers might be tempted to haggle with them, out of pride. (About

## Fine Estate Brooches

(Platinum, sapphire and diamonds, c. 1955)



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eighty per cent of the shop's clientele was male—it was, by and large, a place for rich men to show off.) Instead, he staffed the shop with young women, whom the hustlers could try to impress. When announcing a price to a persnickety customer, Day would sometimes affect contempt—"Just give me a punk five hundred dollars," he might say—to imply that any further discussion would be beneath both of them.

Many gangsters of the seventies, like Leroy (Nicky) Barnes, were veteran criminals who styled themselves as smooth businessmen, or as scions of some imaginary dynasty. In 1977, when Barnes posed for the cover of the *Times Magazine*, beside the headline "MISTER UNTOUCHABLE," he wore a gray sport coat with patch pockets, a light-blue shirt, and a striped tie. (This was a provocation, and it may have helped inspire the government to arrest him, in order to disprove the headline.) A lot of the old-time gangsters got their natty suits from Orie Walls, a renowned Harlem tailor who had a storefront next to the Apollo Theatre. The eighties upstarts, like Faison and Martinez, were just as brash, but in a different way: instead of impersonating powerful executives, they presented themselves as boyish heartthrobs, resplendent in bright and sometimes whimsical outfits. In addition to the Alpo coat, Day made Martinez a white-black-and-red leather Gucci windbreaker with a hood that unzipped down the middle, so that its two halves lay flat across his shoulders. Like their rapper counterparts, these gangsters saw no reason to dress like old men if they didn't have to.

In some ways, the gangsters made even better customers than the rappers, who tended to have less money and less faith in their own fashion instincts. "That's what I like about the gangster clientele," Day says. "Nobody's telling them what's right. You know? *Might* make right, in the street." Day began adding a Kevlar lining to the coat of any customer who thought he might need it, though he wouldn't vouch for its effectiveness—buyers were encouraged to conduct their own research by taking the Kevlar up to the roof and shooting it. (Some also requested Kevlar hats, which Day produced, though never without first warning that a Kevlar hat is both heavy and useless.) Whenever vio-

lence flared in Harlem, he learned, he could expect an uptick in customers looking for armored jackets.

On 125th Street, "gangster" and "rapper" weren't mutually exclusive. Fat Joe, long before he got a record deal, would drive down from the Bronx to shop at Dapper Dan's, where he was afforded the respect due an established "street hustler," as he describes himself. "I remember going to a club in Manhattan and walking in with my Dapper Dan suit, the red-and-white Gucci, with my jewelry," he says. "They were looking at me, like, 'Who is this? He *gotta* be somebody.' And I wasn't famous—I was just a nigga with a Dapper Dan suit. The suit made me famous." At its height, Dapper Dan's Boutique was bringing in more than ten thousand dollars a day, boosted by out-of-towners. Young men with ready cash and flexible schedules would converge on the shop from around the country, eager for a custom car interior, or five thousand dollars' worth of jackets and shorts sets. They might stay all day and night, waiting for a job to be finished. The cheapest custom item in the shop was a velour sweatshirt, which sold for three hundred and seventy-five dollars, but customers who wanted one were sometimes sent to shops in the outer boroughs; when the boutique was full of leather and fur customers, Day couldn't afford to waste time selling velour.

There's no denying that Day's logo-print leathers were central to his business. "They was just killing," he says—and he was the only designer who had them. "People just kept asking for them, and asking for them." But part of his success had to do with the way his clothes fit. Because he knew his customers' bodies and preferences, he could create jackets and trousers that were baggy without being oversized, even though his own taste ran to trimmer, neater silhouettes. And, by creating flamboyant pieces that were both glamorous and streetwise, Day helped lay the groundwork for the modern hip-hop aesthetic, in which the distinction between onstage and offstage is always blurred.

On August 23, 1988, Mike Tyson was having an unhappy night. "I was drinking a lot, and I was having a lot of marital problems," he says. "I ain't want to go home." So he went, instead, to Dapper

Dan's, sometime around four-thirty in the morning, to check on the progress of an item he had ordered, for eight hundred and fifty dollars: a white leather jacket, with "Don't Believe the Hype" written in black across the back. The jacket wasn't ready yet, and as Tyson chatted with the tailors he was waylaid by Mitch (Blood) Green, another heavyweight boxer, who had apparently heard a rumor that Tyson was in the shop. They had fought two years earlier, when Green became just the second boxer to last ten rounds against Tyson. Green was hungry for a rematch, and for a payday, and his encounter with Tyson turned unfriendly when the two men moved outside. According to some reports, Green broke the side mirror off Tyson's Rolls-Royce; according to all reports, Tyson punched Green in the nose, giving him a nasty cut and a swollen-shut eye, both of which Green exhibited at a press conference the next day. Day wasn't in the shop during the altercation, but it scarcely mattered: suddenly, he was famous, besieged by reporters and fans curious about the incident—and curious, too, about a clothing store that welcomes prizefighters at four-thirty in the morning.

Not long afterward, this curiosity spread to lawyers at the Manhattan firm of Pavia & Harcourt. They came across a picture of Tyson wearing an odd Fendi jacket—odd because the firm represented Fendi, and yet no one there had ever seen a jacket like that. Tyson's shopping habits had become notorious, so it didn't take long to figure out where the jacket came from. One of the lawyers assigned to Fendi was Sonia Sotomayor, the current Supreme Court Justice. In her autobiography, "My Beloved World," Sotomayor explains that the firm's primary target was the growing wave of "cheap knockoffs of Fendi handbags." Although there were federal and state laws against trademark violations, prosecutions were rare, and so companies like Fendi often used civil actions. Lawyers would get a sealed order from a judge, allowing them to seize suspected counterfeit goods and hold them until trial; when the suspected counterfeitors failed to appear, as they generally did, the goods were destroyed.

In researching these cases, Sotomayor often relied on Dempster Leech, a private investigator with a thoughtful manner who had emerged as perhaps the city's foremost expert on luxury counterfeiting.

His raids frequently took him into the tunnels beneath Canal Street, where Asian gangs dominated the profitable knockoff market. He didn't know what he might find at Dapper Dan's Boutique, so he prepared for the worst: he added extra security, and he made sure to schedule the raid for daylight hours, in case it got chaotic. Sotomayor, Leech, and half a dozen private security guards rushed into the shop, where they found no violent resistance but lots to look at. The racks were full of name-brand clothing, and the walls were lined with celebrity photographs; in the window hung the most impressive custom jackets, waiting for their buyers to come up with the final payment.

Leech, who is now retired and living in Vermont, remembers a moment of excitement in the attic. "It smelled like somebody was buried in the walls," he says. In fact, the stench came from racks of old fur coats, waiting to be repurposed. Leech was accustomed to grim back rooms full of assembly-line knockoffs, so he was impressed by Day's quirky, do-it-yourself enterprise. "It was a much more artisanal process—a high-fashion place," he says. He was especially struck by the hand-operated silk-screen table, and by a Jeep with a Fendi-logo roof, which was among the goods seized. Day was unhappy, of course, but he stayed calm; the raid was, by all accounts, a polite affair, especially compared to the tense, sometimes violent raids on Canal Street. Leech says, "I recall, Sonia was—I can't say that she didn't mind it. Obviously, she was representing the Italian designers. But she thought it was kind of funny. And kind of fun, too."

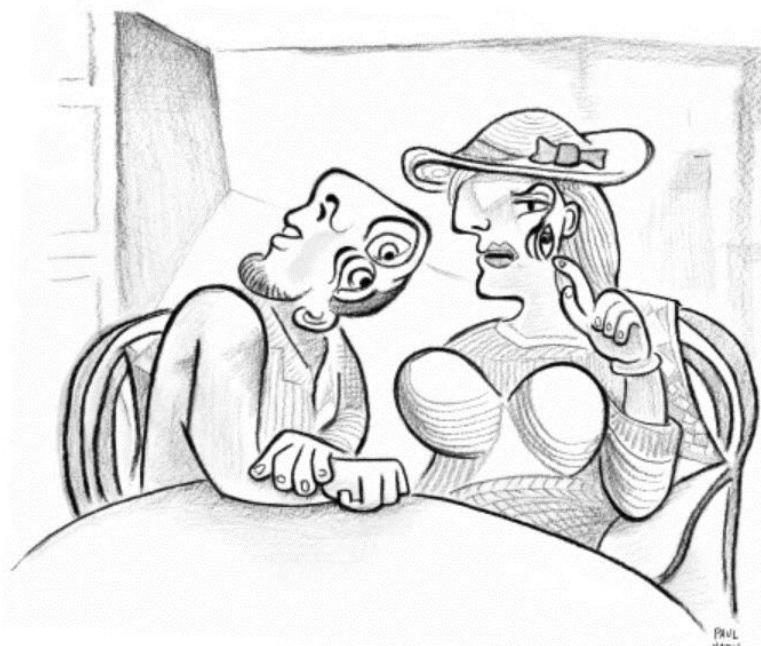
From the perspective of a trademark owner, a counterfeiter gets no points for creativity or quirkiness. The law doesn't distinguish between a knockoff purse and a one-of-a-kind Gucci-logo jacket. Even Day's early creations, accented with leather from Gucci's own garment bags, might well have been considered counterfeit, under the theory that they were likely to mislead consumers. One of the lawyers involved in subsequent Fendi raids, Anthony Cannatella, who still represents Fendi in counterfeit cases in New York, was taken aback by Day's brazenness. "I remember a coat that had one fashion trademark as its lining, another fashion trademark as its outer portion, a third trademark as its lapel, and pocket squares as

its fourth trademark," he says. To a company looking to protect its brand, a jolly mishmash like that might seem more threatening than a mere knockoff. "He sometimes made a mockery out of some of the fashions," Cannatella says. "Notwithstanding that his customers thought it was cool, and they looked great in it—but the actual designers took offense."

In Day's view, of course, he wasn't parodying these brands; he was paying tribute to them, and so were his customers. Another Fendi lawyer remembers being amused to see, on Day's walls, photographs of young African-American men with Fendi logos shaved into their heads. Like many customers, Tito Dones, from the early hip-hop group the Fearless Four, often paired Day's creations with genuine articles. "If I was wearing a white Gucci outfit from Dapper Dan," he says, "I'd go to the Gucci store and cop some white Gucci shoes—because that made it super official." A customer might want his car upholstery to match his girlfriend's name-brand purse, or shoes. Tyson says he had a hard time finding designer clothes that fit. "I'm a big nigga," he says. "They don't carry clothes for big black men like me—at least, back then they didn't." Sometimes he would buy a too snug designer jacket, commission a bigger version from Dapper Dan, and give the original away.

Day, no less than any multinational fashion conglomerate, is a great believer in the power of icons and symbols. When he discovered that Bally, another of his favorite brands, didn't have a sufficiently regal crest, he went to the New York Public Library to research the families of its owners, so he could supply one. Still, Cannatella isn't wrong to see something slightly irreverent in Day's approach, which reflected two contradictory impulses, both essential to hip-hop: a desire to claim traditional status symbols, and a desire to remake and redefine those symbols—to "Africanize" them, perhaps, or to sample them, the way hip-hop producers sampled their favorite records. Companies like Fendi and Gucci weren't necessarily wrong, either, to worry about brand dilution. Part of the appeal of those European fashion houses was that, from the vantage point of 125th Street, they were impossibly exotic and impossibly rarefied. Without that sense of exclusivity—maintained with the help of lawyers like Cannatella—no one would have been interested in wearing Gucci jackets on a hip-hop album cover in the first place.

Day was raided and sometimes sued by virtually all the companies whose logos he used. Most times, the fine amounted to the loss of whatever inventory and equipment the lawyers



"Uh, hello? My eyes are over here."

PAUL  
NORTH



*"So long, boys. I'm off to the big city to try my hand at chainsaw sculpture."*

happened to find. By 1992, Day was ready to admit defeat. For a time, he became a travelling salesman, peddling luxury suits and jackets to gangsters and hustlers in bleak neighborhoods up and down the East Coast, and as far west as Chicago. (Once, in Richmond, Virginia, he was about to be robbed in an alley when one of the assailants recognized him from an old "Yo! MTV Raps" episode, and brought him to the local kingpin, who promptly became a customer.) Back in New York, as the crack trade slowed down and hip-hop fashion moved on, he found himself doing things he hadn't done in decades, like riding the subway, and selling cheap T-shirts on the sidewalk. Soon enough, though, he found new ways to prosper, some of which entailed moving down-market. When he noticed that local shops were undersupplied with Timberland jackets, he hit upon a solution that didn't require him to trouble the executives at Timberland. And one summer, when the Guess brand was hot, he became one of Harlem's leading suppliers of triangle-and-question-mark denim.

By the end of the nineties, Day was ready to resume being Dapper Dan, if quietly. He maintains a secret produc-

tion facility, and attentive hip-hop fans have surely seen his handiwork. In 2001, at the Grammy Awards, Nelly turned up wearing a baggy brown Louis Vuitton-logo leather sports coat with matching leather pants. And in "Let's Get It," a music video that popularized the original "Harlem Shake" dance, Sean (Diddy) Combs and the other rappers can be seen wearing Fendi suits that have the distinct look of 125th Street. These days, though, many of Day's clothes are the sort that even Anthony Cannatella might appreciate—outlandish but unfringing creations that bear no logo at all. Before every fight, Floyd Mayweather, Jr., commissions a pair of boxing trunks from Day, who calls Mayweather his favorite client. The two collaborate on designs, and Mayweather shares Day's commitment to seemingly athlete-unfriendly materials like mink fur and ostrich leather.

One afternoon, at Day's brownstone, his mobile phone rang; it was a prominent local hustler, for whom he had recently performed a jacket upgrade, adding a new white zipper and a light-blue mink collar. Day switched his phone to speaker to broadcast his customer's satisfaction. "At first, I was kinda"—the customer left an unimpressed silence. "But, as I wore it, it

looked so rich," he said. "Oh, man, that motherfucker *mean*, man!"

By the time Day closed his boutique, he had helped inspire a generation of younger designers, and hip-hop fashion was emerging as a profitable industry. One of the early success stories was Shabazz Brothers Urbanwear, which was co-founded by Haussan Bakr, Day's former shop manager. For a time, hip-hop fashion labels like Phat Farm, Sean John, and Roc-a-Wear seemed poised to establish themselves as dominant brands, but each has struggled with the tension between its business plan, which was to sell modestly priced clothes, and hip-hop's central aspiration, which is to get rich enough not to have to buy modestly priced clothes.

Day's influence was felt, too, at some of the same fashion houses that had helped to shut him down. Many luxury brands found ways to acknowledge—and, to a limited extent, return—the affection of hip-hop, increasing sales without sacrificing exclusivity. Formerly sedate houses grew willing to flaunt their logos in ways they might once have considered vulgar, creating clothes for consumers who weren't inclined to pretend that they didn't care about name brands. In 1996, Helmut Lang designed a limited edition, logo-print record case for Louis Vuitton, which advertised the case with a picture of Grandmaster Flash, squatting on top of it in Timberland boots. At Gucci, Tom Ford created loose-fitting logo-print trousers and jackets that probably would have sold swiftly at Dapper Dan's Boutique in the nineteen-eighties. At the same time, luxury brands have grown more assiduous about defending their trademarks, just as record companies have cracked down on unauthorized sampling. In 2008, Louis Vuitton won a hundred-and-fifty-four-thousand-euro judgment from Sony BMG in recognition of a number of infringements, including a Britney Spears video set partially inside a hot-pink Hummer with Louis Vuitton-pattern upholstery.

Back when Day was creating his parkas and wheel covers, though, his unauthorized methods seemed startling. Pharrell Williams, the music producer and designer, grew up admiring Day's work—he still fondly recalls an MCM-branded trenchcoat that Day made for

the rapper Big Daddy Kane. He sees Day as a kind of fashion "folk artist," influencing the mainstream from outside. Williams's many projects include a collaboration with Marc Jacobs, the creative director at Louis Vuitton, and he says that he and Jacobs have talked about Day's mutant version of haute couture. The photographer David LaChapelle, a longtime admirer of Day, paid tribute to his work with a photograph of the rapper Lil' Kim. In the image, which appeared on the cover of *Interview*, she is naked, with the Louis Vuitton logo airbrushed on her body.

Sometimes, when Day talks, he sounds a bit like the fiery young man he must have been in 1968. He likes to describe himself as "militant," by which he also means independent. In all his years on 125th Street, he never developed relationships with the fashion world a few miles downtown, and he stayed away from industry events, although his position may now be softening. With help and prodding from his youngest son, Jelani, Day is starting to emerge from the shadows. Jelani arranged the Life + Times video, and he has been turning his father's bins of photographs and scraps into a digital archive. He is also tracking down some of his best-loved creations, starting with the Alpo coat, which now resides in a plastic garment bag in Day's brownstone—unfaded, Day is quick to point out, after nearly thirty years.

Earlier this year, Day and his son ventured out to some of the city's trade and fashion shows, where Day was an ambiguous presence—half interloper, half undercover celebrity. (One of the people who recognized him was the hip-hop producer Clark Kent, who pumped his hand excitedly while reminiscing about Day's greatest hits: "Making coats with pockets to hide the heat? Ooh!") At Capsule, a casual-fashion exposition held in a gymnasium on the East River, Day seemed to see every garment as a collection of possibilities, not as a finished product. He paused in front of an overcoat trimmed in what was purported to be pony hide, and did a quick thumb-and-forefinger inspection. "I ain't never seen that treatment before," he murmured, skeptically, once the attendant was out of earshot. One aisle

over, he spied some men's espadrilles. "I used to take those, take 'em apart, and put 'em back together with Louis Vuitton fabric," he said. "Alpo was the one who made that popular." Just then, a tall white man walked by wearing a brown leather varsity jacket that barely reached his belt. "You see how he's wearing his jacket," Day said. "In Harlem, they would tell you that's too small—it looks like your little brother's joint."

Day has been taking meetings, too, in the hope of figuring out what an above-ground Dapper Dan operation might look like. One afternoon in January, he stopped by the offices of Billionaire Boys Club, Pharrell Williams's fashion label, to meet with Phillip Leeds, a brand manager. Like virtually everyone at the company, Leeds is a longtime fan, and he didn't seem to mind that Day kept stepping away to field a series of unexplained and increasingly urgent phone calls. Day was dressed in his version of business casual: neatly tailored black trousers, a black shirt, and a white snakeskin jacket with a high collar. The meeting took place at a conference table half-piled with clothing samples and surrounded by racks. Day had brought a few props, including a white paper shopping bag that held a heavily distressed Louis Vuitton satchel with one broken strap. He was talking about making a logo-free version of one of his old Louis Vuitton jackets—the bag was strictly for reference.

"These are treatments I've been working on," Day said. He produced some small leather samples and passed them to Leeds—even if there were to be a collaboration, Day insisted, he would do all the leather printing himself. The idea was to start with two custom jackets: one for Williams, and one for Jay-Z. If they appeared together, each wearing a new—and legal—Dapper Dan creation, then the venture would have all the publicity and credibility it needed. Day liked the idea, but he also thought it would be important to get some of the guys he knew—local hustlers—in involved, so that this wouldn't be viewed as merely a celebrity project. Most important, he wanted to make sure that people in his neighborhood would approve. "Jay and Pharrell, outside of New York, they can sanction stuff," he said. "But Harlem got a mind of its own." ♦

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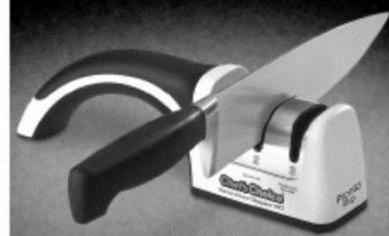


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# ANARCHY UNLEASHED

*A curator brings punk to the Met.*

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

The Metropolitan Museum of Art shows what its seigneurial former director, Philippe de Montebello, liked to call “every category of art in every known medium from every part of the world during every epoch of recorded time.” Some categories there are more prominent than others, of course, and until quite recently the art of clothing design, which arrived with the formation of the Costume Institute, in 1946, had ranked rather low in the curatorial hierarchy. For three decades, housed in a ground-floor space under the Egyptian galleries, the Costume Institute served mainly as a resource to other departments, and its exhibitions attracted a core audience of society matrons and the Seventh Avenue retailers who had agreed to raise the money for the institute’s operating costs. Things changed dramatically in 1972, when Diana Vreeland took over. Her exhibitions of “Romantic and Glamorous Hollywood Design,” “The Glory of Russian Costume,” and other pizzazz-generating subjects drew big crowds, and the Costume Institute’s annual benefit began living up to its hopeful title as the “Party of the Year.” Vreeland’s successors, Richard Martin and Harold Koda, took a more scholarly approach. Their rigorously focussed exhibitions were admired both inside and outside the museum, leading curators in other departments to view the Costume Institute in a more collegial light. (Before that, Koda says, “we were like a benign tumor.”) For a diminishing number of aesthetic purists, though, questions lingered: Was clothing design really art? Did the department’s close connections to the fashion trade undermine its curatorial integrity, and, if so, did it belong at the Met?

The questions were put to rest in 2011 by an astonishing exhibition called “Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty.” For three months, as the Internet word-of-pixel spread and the waiting lines grew

longer and longer, viewers marvelled at the theatre of cruelty, surrealist romanticism, and virtuoso craftsmanship bequeathed by a young British designer who had committed suicide the year before, at age forty. The McQueen show drew 661,509 visitors, making it one of the most highly attended exhibitions in the Met’s history. (Some of Vreeland’s extravaganzas had higher attendance totals, but they were up for nine months or longer; the McQueen show, like other temporary exhibitions, had a three-month run.) Thomas Campbell, who succeeded de Montebello as the Met’s director in 2009, describes the McQueen phenomenon as “absolutely groundbreaking for us, because it was so immersive an experience.” The show was widely reviewed, and not just by the fashion press. Holland Cotter, the *Times* art critic, described it as “ethereal and gross, graceful and utterly manipulative, and poised on a line where fashion turns into something else.”

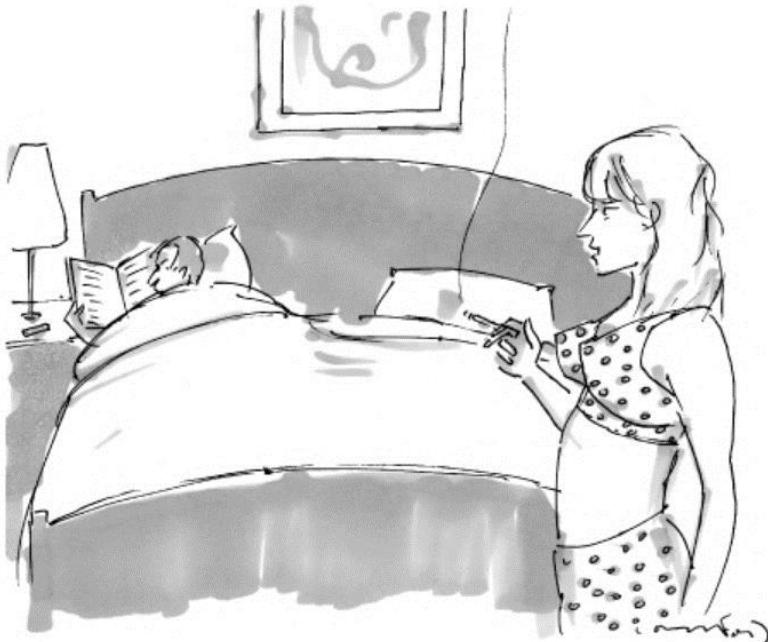
Andrew Bolton, the Met curator who conceived and organized the exhibition, found the public response thrilling, and a little tragic. “Every time I went past that long queue,” he told me, “it broke my heart, because I knew McQueen would have been so happy to see it.” For Bolton, a forty-six-year-old British-born curator who joined the Met a little more than ten years ago, McQueen had become an obsession. They had met only twice, but Bolton had worked intensively with McQueen’s closest associates in preparing the exhibition, and he had read everything he could find on the man. “His voice was so consistent, so brave and honest and frank, that I lost a lot of objectivity,” he told me. Cotter, in his highly positive *Times* review, had taken issue with the McQueen show’s catalogue, which he found lacking in curatorial rigor. “If you’re going to deal with fashion as art, treat it as art, bring to



*Andrew Bolton came to the Met’s Costume Institute in 2002. Of his forthcoming punk exhibition he says, “I don’t want this to be a trip down memory lane.”*



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PARI DUKOVIC



*"Guess who's wearing her anniversary funjams, Freddy?"*

it the distanced evaluative thinking . . . that scholars routinely apply to art," he had written. "I think the criticism is valid," Bolton said, when I asked him about this. "But the show was never meant to be a retrospective. It was important for me to engage with him as a man, who had so many lives and so many demons, and whose work was always very autobiographical. If that meant I wasn't distant and objective, then that was the price I was willing to pay. I wanted people to experience my show as an audience would experience a McQueen runway show, and I think we achieved that." On the show's final day, the museum stayed open until midnight. Around 9 P.M., the line outside the building still stretched down Fifth Avenue beyond Seventy-ninth Street.

The Costume Institute is committed to doing a major show every year, and what Bolton and Koda came up with in 2012 was "Schiaparelli and Prada: Impossible Conversations," a clever pairing of highly influential Italian designers from different periods, past and present. The show was intelligent and well attended—a palate cleanser after a feast. Last June, Bolton went to work on something much riskier. The title of his new exhibition, which opens to the public on May 9th, is "Punk:

Chaos to Couture," and its subject is the revolutionary and continuing influence on fashion designers of a youth-culture movement that some of us (me, for example) could have sworn was safely in its grave. It's amazing how little some of us know. In the world of haute couture, punk is the undead.

Bolton had been thinking about a punk show for several years, he told me one day last December. We were having coffee in the Patrons Lounge at the Met, at a midmorning hour when nobody else was there. Bolton looks like the perennial English schoolboy. He is reed-thin, with neatly parted brown hair, and he was dressed that day in a narrow-cut gray suit, a white button-down shirt with the collar points unbuttoned, no socks, and trousers that stopped well above the ankle. His shoes had taps on the toes and heels, which clattered irreverently against the museum's marble floor. Open, friendly, alert, and quick to laugh, Bolton speaks in a surprisingly resonant baritone. "Punk was the first subculture that I engaged with personally, when I was a kid," he said. "I was nine or younger, growing up in a small village in Lancashire, in the north of England—too young to experience it, but I was aware of the music, the Sex Pistols

and the Clash, and I'd follow the fashions through the music magazines and also style magazines from London. In small towns like Blackburn, where I lived, punk was very much about customization, going to thrift stores and army-surplus stores and mixing things together."

Born in 1966, the youngest of three children in a middle-class Catholic family, Bolton harbored no punk-like grudges against the world. His father worked for a newspaper, "on the production side"; his mother was a housewife. He had a sister who was good at art and a brother who cared deeply about sports. "We all had our comfort zones, and mine was school and the academic side. I went through a punky stage where I would spike my hair, but I was too clean-cut to pull it off. Whatever I did, I looked preppy. Eventually, I just embraced that style. In England you called them Sloaney clothes, after Sloane Rangers—tweed jacket with cords, the Young Fogey look. I don't like standing out. I'd much rather blend in with the crowd."

He majored in anthropology at the University of East Anglia, in Norwich. "What interested me was the similarity between cultures, how people from different cultures had similar behavior patterns," he said. After getting his undergraduate degree, in 1987, he spent his savings and most of the next year travelling in the Far East—Thailand, Indonesia—and in Australia, and this made him decide to get a master's degree in non-Western art. He went back to the University of East Anglia, on a full scholarship. When he graduated, a year later, there was a job waiting for him at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge, which he left after six months to become a curatorial assistant at the Victoria and Albert, in London, the world's largest museum of decorative arts and design. Bolton spent eight years in the V.&A.'s East Asian department. He had always been fascinated with clothes and the psychology of clothes—what they reveal about human evolution and social behavior—and he managed to bring in clothes by Anna Sui, Vivienne Tam, and other Chinese-American contemporary designers. The V.&A. has a very large costume collection, and when an opening came up in 1999 for a research associate in contemporary fashion, he applied for and got it. In his new position, he was able to do exhibitions. He put on a number of the "Fashion in Motion" shows that had

become very popular at the museum, including one by the New York designer Yeohlee Teng, whose live models paraded through the galleries preceded by a flutist and a drummer. Bolton loved the democracy of fashion. "People are not afraid of fashion, I think, because it's so accessible," he said. "Haute couture is an ideal, but fashion itself is democratic. We all wear it." In another exhibition, called "Men in Skirts," he demonstrated that the Western world was unique in restricting such a sensible garment almost exclusively to women. The subject was so well received that he returned to it for one of his early shows at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Bolton's move to the Met, in 2002, happened quite suddenly. He was in New York on a visit, having dinner with Yeohlee. "She mentioned that she was having lunch the next day with Harold Koda, and I said, 'Gosh, I'd really like to meet him.' Yeohlee arranged for the three of us to have lunch on my next visit. I don't think I said a word the whole time, I was so shy and so intimidated. The Met was the Holy Grail to me, and Harold and Richard Martin, the former curator in charge, had shaped my approach to fashion. They were among the first costume curators who used the present to enliven the past, and the past to inform the present. Anyway, Harold called me a couple of weeks later, and said he was looking for an associate curator, and was I interested? I remember thinking that this was my dream job, but it's come too soon—do I have enough experience? Am I ready for it?" (He was thirty-five at the time.) "But, of course, I didn't think twice, it was such an amazing opportunity."

The Costume Institute's comprehensive inventory of clothes, from the seventeenth century to the present, is the largest of its kind anywhere. When Bolton arrived, the department was just emerging from a leadership crisis. Harold Koda had left in 1997, to study landscape architecture at Harvard, and two years later Richard Martin died, of cancer, at the age of fifty-two. Koda came back in 2000, as curator in charge, but he needed help, and he wanted somebody who didn't think the way he did. "Since there are only two curators in the department, I felt it was important for us to have different approaches," Koda told me. He was impressed by Bolton's ethnographic background, openness, and understated intelligence—apparently, he had not been

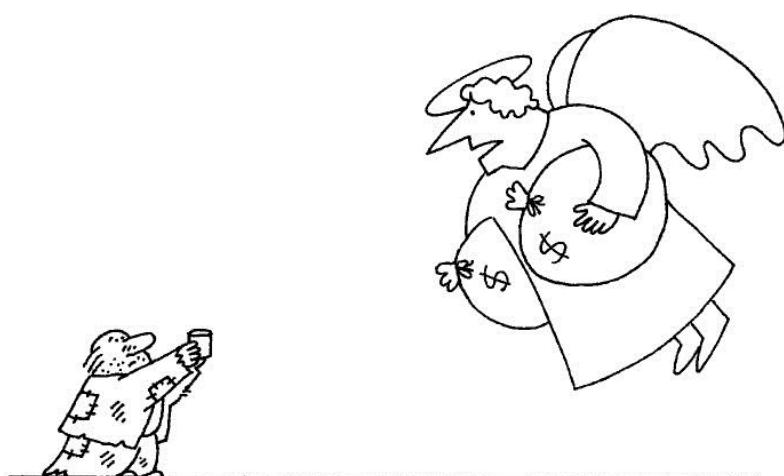
totally inarticulate at that first meeting. Koda, who can be alarmingly frank, said, "If I'm really honest, I am someone who is very much a dilettante, who likes a superficial engagement with things. I don't like to go deep. Andrew is a scholar, and he loves getting in deep. What I bring to the Costume Institute is a real interest in how to put exhibitions together. As a young intern, I'd worked on exhibitions with Diana Vreeland, who had this idea that if you've devoted so much time and money and labor to the effort you'd better get people to come and see it. That part Andrew got very quickly. What I think he didn't understand at first is that we have a different audience from the one he had in Europe. There, people stand around reading labels; here, if there's someone in the way, they move on. Andrew had to get used to this."

Koda immediately put him in charge of an exhibition called "Blithe Spirit," about the elegant and extravagant clothes worn by the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and their set in the nineteen-thirties. What struck Bolton was that the clothes of that period were so out of step with the times. "Fashion in the thirties was historicist, romantic, and fantastical—surrealist," he said. "It was a complete negation of what was going on in the world. I began the show with the Windsors on the Riviera, and the sybaritic life style of that era, and ended it with footage of the war, and Churchill's great speech, and the Nazis on the Champs-Élysées." He was learning to think more visually about exhibitions. At the V.&A., he said, "fashion is seen as something social and political, while here

at the Met the emphasis is more aesthetic and intellectual. Working with Harold taught me to be more rigorous in terms of one object's relationship to another."

He did twelve shows in ten years, some in collaboration with Koda. They worked together on the highly popular "Dangerous Liaisons," in 2004, the Costume Institute's first exhibition in recent times in the galleries of another department; male and female mannequins in eighteenth-century dress were brought into the French period rooms of the Wrightsman Galleries, where inlaid Sèvres porcelain furniture and delicate boiseries became settings for a variety of erotic tableaux. Two years later, without Koda, Bolton attempted a similar but bolder experiment in the English period rooms, called "AngloMania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion." This one took on a number of social and historical issues, mashing together two hundred years of significant and undeniably British dress styles, from Beau Brummell's understated elegance to punks in ripped jeans and T-shirts climbing drunkenly over Chippendale furniture. The show got a lot of attention, some of it highly critical. The *Times*' art critic Roberta Smith found it "light-years ahead of . . . 'Dangerous Liaisons,'" but also "a fabulous confusing romp" with "more ideas than it knows what to do with." Costume Institute exhibitions were now being reviewed regularly by art critics, as well as by fashion and feature writers.

The year before, Koda and Bolton's big "Chanel" exhibition had been heavily criticized. The main complaint was about



"Sorry, I'm meeting a guy, but you're not the guy."



the inclusion of clothes by Karl Lagerfeld, Coco Chanel's successor. The Met almost never does retrospectives of living dress designers, and a previously scheduled Chanel exhibition, five years earlier, had been cancelled after a public dispute between Lagerfeld and Philippe de Montebello, the director at the time, over curatorial control. Some people assumed that Lagerfeld had prevailed this time around, pushing his way into the mix and depriving Chanel of the full-dress retrospective that her work and her colossal influence deserved. But that, according to Koda and Bolton, was definitely not the case. "We wanted the show to be about the House of Chanel," Bolton said, "and we wanted to compare Chanel's modernity with Lagerfeld's post-modernity. Karl is always about the here and now and the future, and he made the house relevant to a younger audience. The biggest obstacle at first was persuading him to be included." Both curators told me that Lagerfeld's here-and-now ambitions made him reluctant to have his own work in what he sometimes calls the "Necropolitan" mu-

seum of art, and that, once he agreed to be in the show, he had no interest in being consulted about the clothes they selected.

The main funding for the Costume Institute exhibitions has always come from the fashion industry, and Koda and Bolton have had to deal with the perception in some quarters that the sponsor must be calling at least some of the shots. They are both acutely aware of the criticism that engulfed the Guggenheim Museum in 1999, when it was announced that Giorgio Armani, who had pledged a reported fifteen-million-dollar gift to the institution, would be given a retrospective exhibition there. "In the years I've been at the Met," Bolton said, "it's been absolutely clear that the sponsor cannot have any curatorial voice. But the problem is that people see fashion as a commercial enterprise, not an art form." This perception may be changing. A complete renovation of the Costume Institute's ground-floor space is under way. Scheduled for completion next year, the space will provide a forty-two-hundred-square-foot gallery for rotating exhibitions (funded by a gift from Lizzie and Jonathan

Tisch), as well as a new conservation center, a library, and expanded storage facilities. All the Costume Institute's annual exhibitions now take place in the museum's special-exhibition galleries upstairs, and the question of sponsor influence rarely comes up anymore. It was never raised about the McQueen show, which was funded mainly by the firm of Alexander McQueen.

On an unseasonably warm day last December, Bolton showed me the scale model for "Punk: Chaos to Couture," which was scheduled to open in less than five months. The model was on a table in a large, cluttered room in the temporary quarters that the Costume Institute is currently using during the renovation. File cabinets lined two walls, along with boxes and crates and paraphernalia of all sorts, including a life-size mannequin of the late Diana Vreeland, peering out sardonically from behind a step-ladder. The Styrofoam mockup was divided into seven spaces, where miniature images of mannequins in authentic punk clothing—torn T-shirts and jeans held



*Three items from the Met's exhibition "Punk: Chaos to Couture," which will run from May to August. Left to right: a dress by Miguel Adrover, from 2000; a Christian Louboutin shoe made for Rodarte, from 2008; and a dress and veil designed by Zandra Rhodes in 1977.*

together with safety pins, bondage-wear, deconstructed garments accessorized with chains, zippers, spiked collars, razor blades, and Dr. Martens boots—were juxtaposed with riffs on them by Zandra Rhodes, Gianni Versace, John Galliano, Rei Kawakubo, Karl Lagerfeld, and other paladins of advanced couture.

A few days earlier, Bolton had presented the model and discussed his plans for the show with Thomas Campbell, the museum's director, and Jennifer Russell, the associate director for exhibitions. He had also shown it to Anna Wintour, the editor-in-chief of *Vogue*, who is a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum, and who, as co-chair and prime mover of the Costume Institute's Party of the Year benefit, has seen its annual take rise from \$1.3 million in 1995, when she took over, to last year's record of more than \$11.5 million. "Dangerous Liaisons' really changed the way people looked at Costume Institute exhibitions," Wintour told me. "Once we got upstairs and started to involve the museum more, and to put clothes into a context, the exhibitions became more

popular and got much more recognition. I think a lot of that had to do with Andrew. What's interesting is that museums all over the world now want to do fashion shows. They all see this as a way to bring in the audience, and to make money."

The meeting with Campbell and Russell had gone well, according to Bolton. "They loved the concept and they loved—well, most of the design. Tom was worried about visitor circulation. They're expecting the show to draw a lot of people, who might get confused about where to go." I asked about Wintour's reaction. "Another black, another black," he said, channelling Wintour's concise diction. "She likes color. But she had a smile on her face, which is a good sign." According to Koda, "Anna wants to know what we're doing, so she can integrate the party with the show. She tells people that she makes my life and Andrew's life a living hell, but she doesn't. Anna can be our most important sounding board. We don't necessarily take her direction, but we always take note. And very often she is spot-on."

The first three galleries in Bolton's ex-

hibition tell the story of punk's dual origins, in New York and in London. Malcolm McLaren, a London-born clothes designer and would-be entrepreneur, spent the winter of 1974-75 in New York, and saw something new emerging in youth culture. The word "punk," long associated with prostitutes, petty criminals, and prison inmates singled out for homosexual rape, had been applied to a few garage-rock bands in the sixties. In the mid-seventies, it attached itself to an eruption of aggressively rebellious tendencies in music, dress, and social behavior on the downtown New York scene. Disgusted by rock music's decline into sentimentality (singer-songwriters like Billy Joel) and overblown bombast (bands like Jethro Tull, Yes, and Pink Floyd), young, urban malcontents responded immediately to the stripped-down, speeded-up sound of the Ramones, a young group from Forest Hills, Queens, who played their first gig at CBGB, the red-hot music club on the Bowery, on August 16, 1974.

"In the first gallery here," Bolton pointed out, "we'll try to evoke CBGB,

with loudspeakers blasting the Ramones. Some of punk's visual codes originated in New York—the swastika armbands, the safety pins, the torn shirts. The absolute basic line for punk clothes, as established by the Ramones, is a biker jacket, a shrunken T-shirt with an infantile image on the front, skinny jeans with a tear in the knee, and sneakers." Richard Hell, born Richard Meyers, who was a member of the proto-punk band Television and went on to form Richard Hell and the Voidoids, is credited with being the first to tear his T-shirts and close the rents with safety pins; one of his shirts was interestingly stencilled "PLEASE KILL ME." "Without a doubt, though, the single most influential thing I've done was my haircut," Hell now says. Reacting against the long-haired androgyny of the despised hippie generation, he adopted a ragged, patchy crewcut that "was something you had to do yourself."

McLaren took elements of all this back to London, where he and his partner, the dress designer Vivienne Westwood, had a clothing shop on the King's Road. The designers made and sold clothes that echoed Richard Hell's ripped-clothes look, as well as loosely woven string and mohair sweaters, bondage suits, leather pants, rubber garments adapted from the gear in S.&M. outlets, and studded boots. McLaren slapped together a band called the Sex Pistols, which took the look and the sound to a louder, angrier, and much more confrontational level. Other bands, both male and female (the Clash, Buzzcocks, Siouxsie and the Banshees, the Slits), picked up on the fast tempo and the obscene, anti-establishment lyrics, which were shouted rather than sung. In remarkably short order, punk music, punk clothes, punk haircuts (spiky, multicolored), and punk attitudes caught on and spread like a virus to France, Australia, and many cities in the United States beyond New York, as well as to English towns like Blackburn, where Andrew Bolton was growing up. "Punk in London was music-based, but it quickly became a political, class-conscious thing," Bolton said. "It was a very depressed time in London, and working-class kids were acting out the realities of being on the dole. The battle cry of the Sex Pistols was 'No future—no future for you and no future for me.'"

Johnny Rotten, the Pistols' lead shouter (his civilian name is John Lydon),

rode the wave of youthful discontent like a born-again surfer. When a series of strikes by London trash collectors left towering piles of garbage on street corners, Lydon started wearing the trash bags. "That was a perfect, perfect item of clothing," he now recalls. "You'd just cut a hole for your head and your arms and put a belt on, and you looked stunning." Lydon and Sid Vicious, later the band's



bassist and its most strident provocateur, aroused and insulted their audiences with a fury that overrode their musical shortcomings. When the Pistols were at the height of their infamy, in 1976, Bolton said, "the performers and the audience just sort of merged. They were goading each other—yelling obscenities, spitting,

## THE NEXT BIG THING

I know I cannot tell it all forever and so I want to tell it all of you, a sparkscale audible from the corner of my ear, visible if I look just to the side of where you are. If I surface as I move from seclusion to seclusion, trusting the attitude

gyroscope to finesse the pitch and roll, the control-moment gyroscope to secure my hold.  
I feel free as water fangling over stone and falling with a dazzle on the next big thing, presence ribboned up in ink, instant and constant,  
all tied up in gift. Just wrap the world

around a pen and draw a cradle in a lake  
and in the cradle draw a flywheel

free from mortal rust. I saw a skunk  
just puttering around the yard

on a day like this. No bigs.  
The carriage jogs on the vintage  
Hermes with its gunked-up keys  
and done black ribbon. The escapement

allows travel. No need to fix creation

and breaking glasses. There was something dangerous and violent about it all."

The violence, the anger, and the infamy didn't last long. The Sex Pistols broke up in 1978, and Sid Vicious died of a heroin overdose in 1979—the same year that Margaret Thatcher took office as Prime Minister. Bolton makes a connection between Thatcher's ascendancy and the dwindling of punk's vital energies. Punk had made a ruling principle out of do-it-yourself—the discovery that you could design your own clothes, start your own band, publish your own magazine, and generate your own publicity. "Thatcher redefined D.I.Y. as a social virtue, a form of individualism," Bolton said. "But a lot of people think it was Zandra Rhodes who really put the nail in punk's coffin. She was the first couture designer to take up punk. She did a collection in 1977 with safety pins and black jersey and tears, which she called Conceptual Chic." Rei Kawakubo experimented with punk hardware and deconstruction in the early nineteen-eighties, incorporating rips and tears and the deliberate ruination of perfectly nice garments. Then, in the mid-nineties, Gianni Versace did a much

with wire at the base. If a cascade exists just to be

riveting, if that is why a gyroscope exists. To be  
a thing-of-beauty-toy-forever kind of  
thing. Have you seen it levitate  
on point and sideways like  
some android ballerina? While an airy armature

coddles its serenity. It must be pleasing to bow a little  
as you pivot and have your way with space.  
To roll the world around a pen  
to invent a center. Then forget the pen.

The Carriage held but just Ourselves—

its motion sprightly, tilting side to  
side, while the axle spun so fast it looked so still.

To keep the god fan going. These sketches testify  
to collapsing arrangements

whose underlying edifice is time. Mercury wings  
on our double-knotted sneakers,  
a white satin bow on the coachman's whip.

—Alice Fulton

talked-about line of safety-pin dresses, and before you knew it other designers were tearing and deconstructing their clothes, sewing on the straps and buckles associated with bondage-wear, using studs and chains and zippers instead of sequins or beading, and showing a punk-like avidity for throwaway materials. John Galliano, Dior's guiding genius until his recent anti-Semitic rants cast him into fashion purgatory, achieved a post-punk apotheosis in 2006 when he made a gown with an eighteen-foot train of black aluminum foil. Bolton was planning to give this "garbage-bag dress" a central place in his show, if it still existed, and if Dior would lend it.

"Mick Jones, of the Clash, said that punk in its pure form lasted a hundred days," Bolton said. After that, the clothes and the attitudes went public. By the late nineteen-seventies in London, torn and dirty jeans and T-shirts had given way to flamboyant, increasingly colorful outfits pieced together from junk shops, trash bins, and shops like the McLaren-Westwood boutique, where for a time the wares were called Clothes for Heroes. English punk style was more colorful and much more eclectic than the New York version,

which favored funereal black. British punks borrowed from earlier street stylists, including Teddy Boys and skinheads, and from their childhood closets—plaid pants and school blazers, accessorized with toilet chains, razor blades, tampons, slogans, and anything else they found lying around. They fetishized the Mohawk, a stiffened crest of stand-up hair, dyed toxic colors, that would have made Chingachgook run for cover. Punks on the King's Road became a tourist attraction, like London taxis or telephone boxes. Bolton was determined, in his thinking about the show, to avoid the movement's later, cliché aspects. "I don't want this to be a trip down memory lane," he said. "I know the show is going to be very controversial among people who lived through the period." Adverse reactions were already coming in. Three months before the show was set to open, the widow of Malcolm McLaren (who died in 2010) told the *London Observer* that there were misattributions in the Metropolitan's collection of punk garments, and that she had written to tell them that "pretty much everything in there is wrong." The late Pat Buckley, who ran the Costume Institute's Party of the

Year before Anna Wintour took over, could easily have felt the same way. I asked her son Christopher, the writer, what she would have made of "Punk: Chaos to Couture," and he said, "My guess is: 'It should have stayed in chaos.'"

For the next few weeks, Bolton focused on the clothes he wanted to borrow for the punk show. The Costume Institute owned some classic punk garments, acquired in 2006 when Bolton persuaded the Met's trustees to buy the collection of an English post-punk rocker known as Adam Ant. (Part of his and Koda's job is to study auction catalogues and go to the collections, looking for things they believe the Met should acquire.) Bolton's wish list now stood at about a hundred and thirty objects, which would be narrowed down further before the final selection. Among the more famous items already secured were Zandra Rhodes's 1977 black rayon dress with beaded safety pins; Gianni Versace's 1994 dress (worn by Elizabeth Hurley to the première of the film "Four Weddings and a Funeral") in which slashed openings on both sides were accented by gold-and-silver-toned safety pins; Lagerfeld's suit for Chanel's spring-summer 2011 collection with dozens of carefully crafted holes; a red parachute ensemble (canvas, with straps front and back and a metal ring in the middle) by Westwood and McLaren; and several Westwood-McLaren annotated T-shirts, including one, called "God Save the Queen," which showed Queen Elizabeth II with a safety pin through her lips. Not one of the classic punk items had to be re-made for the show, Bolton told me. The Met had bought one or two items at auction, but the rest came from private clients, from Westwood, and from the Adam Ant collection. Both Westwood and Ant had preserved and archived pieces with great care, never doubting their historical value. "Ideally, I'd like to show a hundred garments, and have the show last a hundred days," Bolton said, referring to Mick Jones's comment about the life span of "pure" punk. The final tally, as of this writing, includes a few more than a hundred garments, but the show will be up for exactly a hundred days, from May 7th to August 11th.

The next time we talked, Bolton said he was still waiting to hear from Dior about Galliano's trash-bag dress. He also reported that they might have to lose

a forty-foot-long, Styrofoam statue of Vivienne Westwood, which he and his creative consultant, Nick Knight, had planned to fabricate and install in one of their four large galleries. The idea had been to have her lying on a distressed mattress, where visitors would be able to project graffiti on her nude body by using their cell phones and the Internet. Knight, a British photographer and media artist, had worked out the technology three years earlier, with a twenty-five-foot-tall statue of the supermodel Naomi Campbell that he installed at Somerset House in London: people were encouraged to project images on her electronically, and they did so with great enthusiasm. "To my mind," Knight said, "this is a good way of getting chaos into the exhibition. Punk was essentially a movement that came from the street, so I'm trying to allow the world to participate." Both Thomas Campbell and Anna Wintour felt that the statue would take up too much exhibition space, though, and be a needless distraction—"punk lite," Campbell called it. (Campbell has revealed that he, too, as an English schoolboy, had dyed his hair platinum and "tried to make it spiky for parties.") A lot of Knight's ideas were dependent on the budget, Bolton said, and it looked as though this one might not survive.

Bolton's working hours were getting longer. He arrived at the Met by 10 A.M.,

riding his bicycle uptown from his apartment on West Twenty-fourth Street, and he rarely left before ten at night. Early-morning workouts at a gym helped to keep him energized. He had wanted me to meet his friend Thom Browne, who had recently achieved fashion nirvana by designing the coat and dress that Michelle Obama wore to her husband's inauguration, but there never seemed to be time to do that. He had been following Browne's work for a decade, and about six months ago they had become romantically involved. They wanted to rent a weekend place out of town—they were thinking about Tuxedo Park—but because Bolton spent every weekend working at the museum they never got around to that, either. "Seeing Thom's menswear show in Paris a year ago crystallized my thinking about punk," Bolton told me. "His clothes had that really narrow silhouette, tight jackets with high armholes, and they reminded me of films I'd seen of punks walking down the King's Road in very tight trousers and tight T-shirts. The connection between haute couture and punk really became clear to me when I saw Thom's show." He had adopted the Thom Browne narrow silhouette for his own use, I realized, along with shortened pants and no socks. After all those years as a Young Fogey, he had

graduated to a punk-inspired high style.

The deadline for the exhibition catalogue was bearing down. Bolton started writing his own essay in January, but he still hadn't solved the Richard Hell-Johnny Rotten problem. Hell had been ambivalent from the start about writing an essay for the catalogue. "I didn't know if I wanted to even implicitly endorse a show about rich people's expensive status symbols," he said. He was also concerned about seeming competitive with Lydon, if they both wrote essays. In the end, though, "I decided, Fuck it, it was an interesting challenge, and I can hold my own with any of those people." Both Lydon and Hell agreed to write for the catalogue, but Bolton didn't know that until late January. He had hoped to get an audio recording of Patti Smith reading a poem by Arthur Rimbaud, the teen-age ur-punk, but she was off on tour and didn't have the time. (New York punk was more literary than the British brand; "the new house god was not a rock star but Arthur Rimbaud," as Jon Savage, the author of punk's elegy, "*England's Dreaming*," writes in the show's catalogue.) Patti Smith had been the patron saint of New York punk, the oracle who once said that everything important happened in the toilet at CBGB; Robert Mapplethorpe's photograph of her for the cover of "*Horses*," her first album, wearing a man's white shirt and a skinny black ribbon at the neck, was one of the enduring punk images. "I remember my sister wearing that white shirt and black tie," Bolton said. David Byrne, who also performed at CBGB, with his band Talking Heads, in the mid-nineteen-seventies, said recently that punk, to him, "didn't connote a fashion style or even a musical style as much as a sense of empowerment and experimentation," but that, unfortunately, "it became codified in both sound and dress, and much of that was left by the wayside."

Just before Christmas, Bolton reported that the statue of Vivienne Westwood was definitely out. "I understand the reasons," he said. "We were trying to show how the D.I.Y. aesthetic was being used today, through the Internet, but I was worried about losing all that space for showing clothes, too. If it hadn't been for that, I would have argued harder." In mid-January, he heard from Dior that the Galliano trash-bag dress was not available, but he already had alternatives in mind. He said that the young, avant-garde British



BT SCHWARTZ

designer Gareth Pugh was working on a new line of skirts, dresses, and capes made from trash bags that had been shredded and then knitted back together so they looked like fur. (The trash-bag line appeared on the runway in Pugh's recent show in Paris.) "I'm going to use two or three of Gareth's pieces," Bolton said. "He's taking the idea of trash to the heights of luxury." Another possible implication, Bolton agreed, was that fashion is trash.

The punk exhibition's main sponsor is Moda Operandi, a three-year-old retail fashion outlet that describes itself as "the world's premier online luxury retailer." I asked Bolton if he'd had any contact with the two young women who run it. He said that the Met's marketing department had made a preliminary presentation of the show to them, and that was it—they signed on. Punk's appeal to the luxury trade was not only undead but irresistible.

**A**t eight-thirty on a Monday morning in mid-February, in the Great Hall of the Metropolitan Museum, Thomas Campbell introduced Bolton at a press conference for "Punk: Chaos to Couture." Standing on a low platform, flanked by five mannequins in original punk garments by Westwood and McLaren and nine more wearing high-fashion punk couture by Comme des Garçons, Chanel, Moschino, Versace, Givenchy, Zandra Rhodes, Dior, Rodarte, and McQueen, Bolton spoke for ten minutes, in a firm, confident voice, although, as he confided later, he was just getting over a bad cold and he was so nervous that his knees kept shaking the whole time. He identified each of the outfits on view, all of which would be in the show. The early ones included Westwood and McLaren's "Anarchy in the U.K." shirt, with the image of a torn Union Jack, and their other, equally famous T-shirt featuring two pant-less cowboys with dangling penises. Bolton discussed these and other garments in terms that would not have been out of place in the upstairs galleries of European painting. With regard to punk's D.I.Y. legacy, he said, "In a bizarre twist of fate, their ethos of do-it-yourself has become the future of 'no future.'"

A day or so earlier, we had talked about punk's amazingly long afterlife. (At Fendi's Milan show later that month, all the models were wearing faux Mohawks.) Much of what I'd been hearing about the movement's origins and early manifestations



*"I just wish I hadn't named her Yummy."*

sounded so puerile—an extended post-adolescent tantrum—and I wondered what had induced the fashion world to co-opt this, and then to go on feeding off it for more than three decades. "You're right, a lot of it was puerile," Bolton had said, laughing, "especially in England. The notion of cool was very much part of the New York punk scene, coming down from Warhol, but in London it was never as self-consciously cool. There was desperation, and for many people punk came as a great release. I think a lot of it was really quite infantile, about an unwillingness to grow up, or to be mediocre and unoriginal. And, of course, the irony was that punk became a uniform. In the end, everything punk tried not to be, it was. But in fashion it changed so much, and in that sense I think it was a noble movement, like dandyism. Beau Brummell, the original dandy, was defying previous sartorial codes, all that male plumage. He was the grandfather of punk, although he insisted that he wanted to be invisible." Dandyism, in other words, could be ascetic as well as ornate—Brummell and Oscar Wilde. I asked Bolton if he knew Albert Camus's comment on dandyism: "The dandy is, by occupation, always in opposition. He can only exist by defiance." Bolton said that it reminded him of the "Incroyables" in France after the Revolution's Reign of Terror, the people who re-

jected proletarian forms of dress. "They became incredibly flamboyant, wearing very tight pantaloons and high-waisted jackets with big lapels," he said. "That was a political gesture. It was very much about aristocracy and nobility."

"The psychology of clothes is so fascinating," Bolton went on. "There's nothing so immediate as fashion, in terms of an expression of one's values and one's state of mind. Even the negation of fashion is a statement. But high fashion is usually seen as an expression of femininity, which is why a lot of people don't take it seriously, or see it as an art form. It's not just that fashion can't be an art form because it's functional, but because it's feminine." Punk, in its original, rough-beast form, was both gender-neutral and transgender. Bolton talked about the girl known as Jordan, born Pamela Cooke, who grew up in a council estate in Sussex, commuted to London from Seaford, worked for McLaren and Westwood at their shop, wore their clothes, and turned herself into a living embodiment of the punk spirit. "There's a really nice quote by Jordan in a documentary called 'Punk: The Early Years,' where she says this was going to go down as the most boring decade in history, but punk had saved it. Hearing that gave me goose bumps. She was absolutely right. Punk was about making something ugly beautiful." ♦

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PORTFOLIO  
BY PARI DUKOVIC

## BURMA WAVE

Punk in nineteen-seventies New York tended to be more concerned with aesthetics than with politics. It was spare, nervy music created in reaction to the embarrassing excesses of arena rock. Often, the “establishment” it railed against was your mom, or your school principal. (The final scene of the Ramones’ movie “Rock ‘n’ Roll High School” is Vince Lombardi High exploding in flames.) Decades later, a punk diaspora thrives around the world. In Myanmar, a small punk community that stayed underground through decades of military rule is beginning to emerge. Until last October, bands had to submit their lyrics to government censors before they performed in public or released an album. Now they are free to turn up the volume on songs such as CultureShock’s “Urban Rubbish”: “Every day, everything I see is just so nauseating / Immoral, corrupted, devastated society / And we don’t wanna live in a place where everything is declining” (translated by the group’s vocalist, Scum). Meanwhile, the former site of CBGB, on the Bowery, is a John Varvatos store, where a man’s slim-fit leather jacket (with no studs) goes for \$2,298.



*Since the official dissolution of Myanmar's military junta, in 2011, members of the*



*country's punk-rock community have become more visible in downtown Yangon.*



*CultureShock, a band from a subgenre called D-Beat crust punk, in its rehearsal studio in Yangon.*



Scum, who is in his thirties, spent six years in prison after getting arrested for marijuana possession at a concert.

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*Ye Ngwe Soe, the lead singer of No U Turn, a band that has survived in Yangon, largely under the radar, since 2002. The group produced its first album, "The Latecomers," in 2009, and is now working on a third.*





# THE MINER'S DAUGHTER

*Gina Rinehart is Australia's richest—and most controversial—billionaire.*

BY WILLIAM FINNEGAN

Australia, thanks largely to the economic rise of China, has been in the throes of a mining boom. The “lucky country,” as it is called, has enormous deposits of the high-grade iron ore required by the steel mills of Asia. In Western Australia, where most of the iron ore resides, the boom has created unprecedented prosperity, along with a small tribe of billionaires. Georgina (Gina) Hope Rinehart, who owns a company called Hancock Prospecting and has recently been buying up Australian media properties, is the best known of these new tycoons. According to *BRW*, a weekly business magazine, Gina Rinehart became the richest woman in Australia in 2010, the richest person in Australia in 2011, and the richest woman in the world in 2012, with an estimated net worth of nearly thirty billion dollars. Rinehart, who lives in Perth—the state capital of Western Australia—is fifty-eight, a widow, and a mother of four. She shuns the press and rarely appears in public. She is sensitive, however, to the media treatment she receives, which is voluminous—she qualifies, by sheer quantity of ink, airtime, Web sites, pop songs, and pub conversation devoted to her, as a national obsession—and often rough. Two things seem to hurt her particularly: the stock news description of her as an heiress, and perceived failures of the press to acknowledge the achievements of her late father, Lang Hancock, whom she adored (when they were not feuding) with a rare intensity.

Lang Hancock was a piece of work. He started out as a rancher, asbestos miner, and prospector in the Pilbara, a vast sweltering wilderness in northwest Australia. (It is pronounced as two syllables: Pilbra.) In November, 1952, according to legend, he was flying in a flimsy little Auster aircraft with his wife, Hope, over the Hamersley Range, an extra-remote fastness in the Pilbara. A storm arose. Unable to climb through the

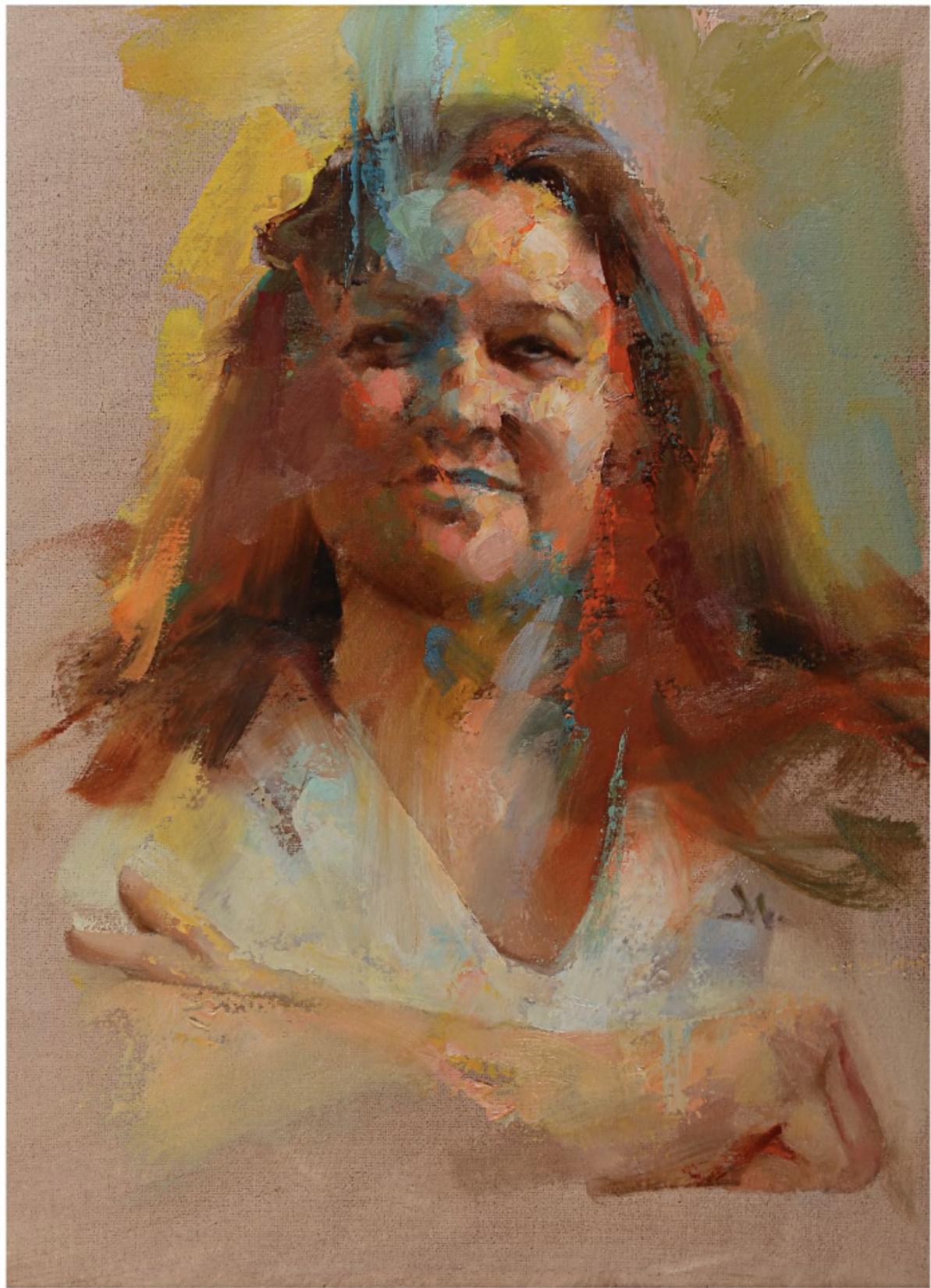
clouds, they threaded narrow gorges in lashing rain. Hancock, an expert bush pilot, managed to note the rust color, brought out by the rain, of the gorge walls, which, as he later told Australian television, “showed it to me to be oxidized iron.” He returned to the spot in better weather and started laying the foundation of a mining fortune. He did this not by mining but by prospecting, along with an associate named Ken McCamey, and by tirelessly lobbying the state and federal governments to repeal an embargo on the export of iron ore and a ban on the pegging of claims. When the repeals finally came, in the early nineteen-sixties, Hancock staked his claims and, after more rounds of badgering, persuaded mining executives from Britain and the United States to invest in the Pilbara. His royalty agreement with Rio Tinto, a London-based multinational, soon made him a multimillionaire. The big customer in those days was Japan.

Unlike his daughter, Hancock actively engaged the press. He told his story to any reporter who would listen. He even started two newspapers, as megaphones for his political views. He was an ardent Western Australia secessionist. Historically a poor, backward, isolated state—Robert Hughes described it, in “The Fatal Shore,” as “a colony with a body the size of Europe and the brain of an infant”—Western Australia could become, with its new mining wealth, Hancock believed, a paradise of free enterprise if it could only escape the stifling grasp of the eastern establishment in Sydney and Melbourne. Hancock wanted to use nuclear weapons for mining and for dredging new ports along the northwest coast, but there was no bloody chance of getting such bold ideas approved by the timid federal bureaucracy, in Canberra. He didn’t fear radioactive fallout any more than he believed asbestos exposure caused asbestosis or the cancer mesothelioma. The blue-asbestos

mine that Hancock ran in the nineteen-thirties and forties at Wittenoom is thought to have caused hundreds of asbestos-related deaths, many of them among its largely Aboriginal workforce, but Hancock never accepted the medical connection, let alone responsibility. He held an extreme version of a common attitude among white Australians of his generation toward native people. He once told a television interviewer that the “problem” of “half-castes” could be solved by luring people to a central welfare office, to “dope” their water in order to sterilize them and thus wipe out the race.

Gina was Lang and Hope Hancock’s only child. Lang had expected a boy, whom he planned to name George, for his father. He took to calling Georgina “young fella” or “my right-hand man.” He and Gina were exceptionally close. When she was small, they lived in the Pilbara, forty miles north of Wittenoom. On Saturdays, they flew six hundred miles to buy groceries. After Hope developed breast cancer, the family moved to Perth to be near a good hospital. Gina boarded at a girls’ school, where her fellow-students remember Lang sometimes coming in a Rolls-Royce to spend the afternoons talking with his daughter in his car. When the BBC made “Man of Iron,” a documentary about Lang, in 1966, a film crew went to the school to interview twelve-year-old Gina. “I think my father is nearly perfect,” she said. “I think he’s quite handsome, except a bit fat.”

Hancock’s obsession with mining and the Pilbara—for decades, he struggled, in vain, to find backers to develop his own iron-ore mine—was transferred intact to his daughter. He took her with him, even as a child, to business meetings all over the globe, to the bemusement of bankers and sheikhs. Tim Winton, the Western Australian novelist, says that Gina’s childhood seemed to be a “science experiment,” conducted inside a “regal bubble.” When she



*Rinehart believes the mining gospel that she preaches. She believes that she and her fellow-billionaires know best.*

was old enough to drive, Lang is said to have had ten new cars brought to her school for her to choose among. One of Lang's biographers, Robert Duffield, having been commissioned to write a newspaper article on Gina, then twenty-two, as the "richest girl in Australia," found her interested only in minerals. Gina "tries to be nice to everybody," Duffield wrote. But "if they disappoint her, or annoy her, or in any way seem to threaten her, the friendly filter on the opal-clear eyes drops to reveal a more steely blue." While Gina was still in her teens, her famously gruff father said, "She's a lot tougher than me." Gina went to the University of Sydney but lasted only a year. She objected to the lectures of a left-wing economics professor, found she had nothing in common with her classmates, and returned to Perth and her life's mission in what she called, with deadly earnestness, the House of Hancock.

But Gina and her father began to clash. She married twice, and had two

children with each husband. The first was a young employee of the family firm, whom Gina soon divorced. The second was an American lawyer, Frank Rinehart. He was thirty-seven years older than Gina. According to "Gina Rinehart: The Untold Story of the Richest Woman in the World," a new biography by Adele Ferguson, Frank had been convicted of tax fraud in the U.S. and disbarred. Lang thought that he had his eye on Hancock Prospecting. After Hope Hancock died, in 1983, and Gina chose to contest her mother's will, Lang saw Frank Rinehart's hand behind the effort and was enraged. Worse, from Gina's point of view, her father took up with Rose Lacson, a young housekeeper from the Philippines whom Gina had hired. The Rineharts tried to get Lacson deported. In an exchange of letters between father and daughter that later surfaced in court, Gina told Lang that he had become a laughingstock. Lang bit-

terly asked Gina to "allow me to remember you as the neat, trim, capable and attractive young lady" that she had been, rather than "the slothful, vindictive and devious baby elephant that you have become." She was "grossly overweight," he wrote. "I am glad your mother cannot see you now." Hancock married Lacson and built her a white-pillared water-view mansion called *Prix d'Amour*. They went on a round-the-world honeymoon in his Learjet. Gina saw her inheritance being frittered away. Meanwhile, her father hurled himself into a series of ill-advised business ventures, including a failed barter deal with Nicolae Ceausescu's Romania.

Frank Rinehart died in 1990, Lang Hancock in 1992. Gina and her stepmother fought in the courts over Hancock's estate for eleven years. Rinehart, alleging that Rose was somehow responsible for her father's death, eventually forced an official inquest. A coroner found, for a second time, that Lang had died of natural causes. Meanwhile, Rinehart was found to have paid, through a private investigator, up to two hundred thousand dollars each to inquest witnesses who offered testimony, much of it dubious. There were allegations of adultery, witchcraft, and attempted murder-for-hire. Rinehart denied wrongdoing, saying that the money had been for expenses and protection, and the government declined to press charges. If Rinehart had not loathed the press earlier, she surely did before her battle with her stepmother was over. The lurid charges traded back and forth made great copy. The long fight ended with Rose keeping a few assets, including *Prix d'Amour*, while Rinehart retained sole control of Hancock Prospecting and its ever-increasing royalty stream.



*"Hey—this is the quiet trail!"*

**Y**OU VS. GINA RINEHART," the banner headline reads on [howrichareyou.com.au](http://howrichareyou.com.au). The site invites you to enter your annual salary. If you enter sixty thousand dollars, it informs you that Rinehart makes that amount every 1.7 minutes. Below that, a rapidly increasing number calculates how many hundreds of thousands have "landed in Gina's pocket" since you landed on this Web site. Finally, "Guess who made \$107,703 sitting on the toilet today?" Not you. Among the things that her estimated 2011 income

could buy: three fully armed Nimitz-class nuclear aircraft carriers; "Jamaica."

The sheer distorting weight of Rinehart's wealth is perhaps best understood in relative terms. The American economy is ten times the size of Australia's, so in the United States an individual fortune equivalent to hers in relation to the national economy would be somewhere around two hundred billion dollars. That is roughly the combined net worth of the four richest Americans. Or seven Michael Bloombergs.

Australians are not known for their deference to the moneyed. I once worked as a pot washer in a casino restaurant in New South Wales. It was a big kitchen, and the pot washers were at the bottom of the job ladder, below even the dishwashers. And yet we made an excellent wage and, as employees, we had entrée to the casino's private members' bar, which was on the top floor. We would troop up there after work, tired and ripe, and throw back pints among what passed for high rollers on that part of the coast. Once or twice, my co-workers spotted the owner of the casino in the members' bar. They called him a rich bastard, and he, in turn, bought us all drinks.

That was 1979. Australia, to my enchanted eye, was a country full of wisemen, smart-mouthed diggers with no respect for wealth or authority. Jack's as good as his master, the saying went—and "probably a good deal better," Russell Ward wrote in "The Australian Legend." This skeptical, irreverent, proud self-image was rooted in the early experience of convicts transported from Britain and, later, in labor conflicts with landowners and industrialists. Australia was the land of the fair go—of equal opportunity, and a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. People used to make fun, in the nineteenth century, of the "bunyip aristocracy": nouveau-riche Australians who wanted to settle themselves on top of the colonial social heap.

All that is changing. Inequality is on the rise. The share of income going to the top one per cent in Australia has doubled since 1979. (It is still less than half the share going to the top one per cent in the United States. Sixty years ago, the two countries were, by this metric, nearly the same.) According to many critics, including leaders of the current Labor government, Gina Rinehart and her fellow-bil-

lionaires pose a direct threat to Australia's egalitarian tradition.

In 2010, the Labor government introduced a super-profits tax on minerals, hoping to capture more of the mining boom's lucre for the public purse. Rinehart and her colleagues funded a huge publicity campaign, unprecedented in Australia, against the tax. Rinehart herself, normally so press-shy, stood on a flatbed truck in Perth, wearing a string of pearls, and shouted to a crowd, "Axe the



tax!" Within weeks, Kevin Rudd, then the Prime Minister, had been deposed by the right wing of his own party. His replacement, Julia Gillard, came up with a mining tax so watered-down that two of the biggest mining companies operating in Australia have paid nothing to date.

Hancock Prospecting is actually a small company, with some forty employees at its offices in Perth. It collects royalties, looks for minerals, stakes claims, negotiates deals. It litigates, prodigiously, but uses outside counsel. It has no press office. Publicists have been retained as consultants, but never seem to last. The company's headquarters are in a modest building in a quiet neighborhood in West Perth. By contrast, BHP Billiton, the world's largest mining firm, occupies thirty-four floors of a forty-five-story building in downtown Perth, and that's just for its local operations.

Gina Rinehart's wealth has many sources, starting with her inheritance of Hancock Prospecting, which was worth about seventy-five million dollars, and the old Rio Tinto royalties, which were roughly twelve million a year when her father died and, with increased production and a soaring iron-ore price, have since grown wildly. These royalties will be paid in perpetuity. Rinehart inherited or has acquired the rights to some of the largest mineral leases in the Pilbara, believed to contain billions of tons of mineable reserves of iron ore. Hancock Pros-

pecting owns fifty per cent of an iron-ore mine at Hope Downs, in the Pilbara, which opened in 2007. It is operated by Rio Tinto and pays Rinehart's company, at current prices, around two billion dollars a year. Hancock Prospecting may be minuscule compared with the multinationals, but its value is enormous and Rinehart controls all its shares.

Calculating Rinehart's net worth is an exercise in extrapolation. When Citigroup compiled a list, in 2011, of the world's ten largest mining projects expected to come into production soon, three were Rinehart's. Two are coal in Queensland, and she has since sold stakes in those to an Indian conglomerate in a deal worth more than a billion dollars. The third, which industry analysts expect to produce an annual income of nearly three billion dollars for her, is Roy Hill, a large iron-ore mine that she is now building in the Pilbara and plans to operate herself, fulfilling her father's frustrated dream.

Is she an heiress? Inarguably. And yet she has, by hard work and guile and historic luck, multiplied the value of the business she inherited several hundred times over. The "h"-word seems to be partly a gender thing. The male scions of Australian family fortunes, such as Lachlan Murdoch (the eldest son of Rupert), are not routinely described in the press as heirs. Rinehart is the only woman among the rough lot riding the mining boom at tycoon level, and none of the others probably have to read much in the papers about how they really should be able to afford a hairdresser or a personal trainer. Neither do they see, on national television, a beloved comedian, Barry Humphries, demonstrating the alarm with which he would react to waking up next to her in a motel.

Even at 6 A.M., Perth Airport teems with sunburned miners in high-viz safety vests. They're FIFOs (fly-in, fly-out workers), all heading to the Pilbara or the gas fields off the northwest coast. They pull twelve-hour shifts seven days a week for two or three or four weeks, then go home for a week. They commute not only from Perth but from Sydney, Melbourne, New Zealand, Bali. (Bali is closer to Perth than Sydney is.) They make excellent money: a truck driver can earn more than a hundred thousand dollars a year, and an experienced welder, a

hundred and fifty thousand. Much of the work is dirty and dangerous, though, and the strain on families is severe.

A thousand miles up the coast from Perth, iron dust coats Port Hedland—a hot reddish blanket thrown over strip malls and mangroves, company-truck fleets and great dirty piles of salt. Ancient-looking, iron-stained conveyor belts lattice the badlands. Ore crushers and stockpiles the size of a respectable range of hills all swim in the tropical heat. The longest, most monotonous trains I've ever seen—three hundred-plus identical gondolas, having travelled down from distant Pilbara mines, piled high with iron ore—creep slowly into an enormous shed, where a rotary car dumper seizes and rolls them. Bulk-carrier ships hunker like squared-off stadiums beyond the evaporation ponds.

Port Hedland seems, at first glance, sleepy, stunned. But it is the largest bulk-minerals-export port in the world. Iron ore is its mainstay, and the iron-ore business is all just-in-time logistics. Those ships cannot be kept waiting for a berth. Their demurrage is around twenty thousand dollars a day. They need to be loaded as fast as possible with the precise ore blend ordered by the customer in Shandong, and they need to leave on the next tide. Rio Tinto has an operations center in Perth, with a staff of five hundred coordinating shipments in real time. It operates fourteen mines in the Pilbara, with a thousand miles of rail and a hundred and sixty locomotives, twenty-four hours a day, year-round. Its efficiency is its profit margin. This is the league that Gina Rinehart hopes to play in with Roy Hill. Her start-up costs are projected to run ten billion dollars. She has sold equity stakes totalling thirty per cent to South Korean, Japanese, and Taiwanese steelmakers, and has launched a Roy Hill subsidiary that, at its peak, will employ thirty-six hundred people. She has secured approval for two new berths at Port Hedland, finished the deepwater dredging for them, and has started construction on her own two-hundred-and-fourteen-mile railway and high-tech remote operations center near Perth Airport.

I ride up from the coast with a Roy Hill employee named Adrian Mudronja. He is a tall, quiet, squared-away ex-soldier who served in Afghanistan. He checks our vehicle's spare parts and emergency supplies before we leave, making sure that I know where the first-aid kit is and, using

a two-way radio, that his dispatcher knows where we are, and that we have plenty of water. The main road south is paved, but we won't always be on it.

The Pilbara is impressively arid, empty country. We travel for hours through broad plains of spinifex and red-earth anthills and see few other vehicles and no human settlements except, at the end of long rough dirt tracks, temporary Roy Hill rail-construction camps. By mid-afternoon, the temperature is a hundred and seven.

At a rail camp, a worker asks, "You just looking at Gina's?"

He and Mudronja exchange glances and the question is withdrawn.

This tour is the product of weeks of my banging on Hancock Prospecting's door. Two biographies of Rinehart were published in 2012. Neither author got a Roy Hill tour (let alone a Rinehart interview). In 2011, Hancock, before letting a group of reporters visit a company coal project in Queensland, asked them to sign a waiver that, among other things, gave it the right to review their stories before publication. The waiver went on:

There should not be reporting of other events which may inadvertently transpire on the day regardless of how newsworthy you may consider them—for example, critical incident, unplanned or unscheduled event, or any information on other matters not related to the project or related to the project should they be overheard in conversation.

Rinehart, through her representatives, agreed to let me visit Roy Hill, but Mudronja, I notice, studiously avoids mentioning her. He has been working, I learn, as a "heritage supervisor" on this rail corridor for at least a year, bashing through the bush with what he calls "T.O.s"—traditional owners, which is to say Aborigines. The rail-line route passes through an Aboriginal reserve called Abydos-Woodstock, and the entire footprint of the mine and railway must, by law, be cleared with T.O. groups. Indigenous land-use agreements, usually involving compensation, employment opportunities, and the preservation of designated heritage sites, have become the new standard in mining. Until about twenty years ago, the entire Australian continent was considered to have been, for legal purposes, *terra nullius*, land belonging to no one, at the moment British settlement began. In fact, people have been living in the Pilbara for at least thirty thousand years, and there are still some six

thousand Aborigines there today. Their lives, broadly speaking, are harsh—though less so than when Lang Hancock was growing up there. In "The House of Hancock," the journalist Debi Marshall notes that members of Hancock's Aboriginal workforce recall being paid in tobacco and food. It's hard to imagine Hancock, whose parents and grandparents were early Pilbara ranchers, collaborating respectfully and elaborately with T.O.s, but his daughter, through the likes of Mudronja, is evidently doing so, and she doesn't mind my seeing that. At the only shop we pass all day—a gas station and grocery at the junction with a road heading northwest to Wittenoom and the Hamersley Range—Mudronja greets a middle-aged black man in a cowboy hat.

"Any dramas?"

"Nah. All good, mate."

Victor Parker is his name, and the two men shoot the breeze like old business associates.

On the dirt road into Roy Hill, bush turkeys stalk away in haughty alarm, and wedge-tailed eagles make long, slow, lumbering takeoffs. We stop beside a gigantic monitor lizard. "Bungarra," Mudronja says. It's the lizard's Aboriginal name. "If we had T.O.s with us, they'd want to knock it on the head and make a fire right here and eat it."

The most impressive thing at Roy Hill, besides the heat, is the airport. The runway, carved from raw bush, is a mile and a half long. When I visited, house-size graders were levelling it to within a six-inch tolerance, and it was almost ready to be paved. "It will take 737s and A320s," Kevin Garden, the mine-construction manager, a Scot, said. "The terminal buildings will go over there. I imagine our chairman will be on the first plane to land. That will be a big day." (The inaugural flight took place this month.)

The mine itself was nowhere to be seen. A temporary construction camp sat right on the ore body, where the big hole will go. The camp was a dozen long rows of mobile homes, packed tight with air-conditioned sleeping pods. (I spent a comfortable night inside one.) Offices, cafeteria—this would all soon be gone. "Fifteen million cubic metres of earth will be moved," Garden said. Nearly eleven thousand test holes had been drilled, an unusually high number—the chairman was known for her deliberate approach, tick-

ing every box. A "drum farm" of blue barrels filled a clearing. They held core samples taken from depths of up to seventy metres. The first twenty-five metres was overburden, dirt. "The deep stuff is best," Greg Almond, a young geologist, told me. "Microplaty hematite. Up to sixty-five-per-cent iron. Every ton of high-grade yields six hundred kilos of steel."

We looked at a core-sample section—a moist log of dirt and rock. "The shine is misleading," Almond said. "That's silica, an impurity, polished by drilling. The best stuff is ochreous, earthy." He pointed out purple-gray material that he said was hematite. "Most of it was laid down about three billion years ago, when this iron formation was sea bottom. It was bacteria, producing oxygen as a waste product. Some of the oldest rocks you can still see on the earth's surface are here in the Pilbara."

Iron is among the most common minerals, but almost nowhere is it concentrated in such quantities of high-grade hematite (from "blood-like") as the Pilbara. The trick is getting it on a ship. We drove to a hilltop, where a cell-phone tower had just been installed. This, I gathered, was where Roy Hill officials brought potential investors, usually Asian officials, to show them the future. Kevin Garden described how a rail loop would circle a nearby hill. Elevated conveyor belts would carry ore from the pit across these mulga scrublands to a massive crusher. Over there would be the permanent village, with two five-hundred-man mess halls, a lap pool, a running track, a driving range. Yes, it would all be FIFO—hence the big airport. Hell, Almond himself lived in New Zealand. One of the head chefs lived in Thailand.

Mudronja mentioned that T.O.s had identified an archeological site among the red cliffs under this hilltop.

I asked how permanent "permanent" was.

"Life of the mine?" Garden and Almond shrugged. "Twenty years of high-grade, maybe. Then reprocessing."

Land reclamation was not their job. But mining iron ore isn't like mining coal or gold or uranium. It does not cause comparable levels of pollution and land-poisoning. Still, it is open-pit strip-mining. It tears up the land and can acidify groundwater.

The date for Roy Hill's first ore shipment has been sliding backward. It was



*"I'm looking for a nice basic piece of clothing  
that can fulfill every need I have."*

late 2013, then late 2014. Now it's September, 2015. Rinehart is at the mercy of the iron-ore price. It has shot as high as two hundred dollars a ton—many times the price of producing a ton in the Pilbara. But when it fell to eighty-nine dollars, last September, not only was Rinehart suddenly no longer the richest woman in the world but reports circulated that Roy Hill workers were being laid off and contracts were being deferred. Now it's back at a hundred and forty-three, and construction work is going full steam. (The latest ranking of billionaires by *Forbes*, however, lists Rinehart as the sixth richest woman in the world.) Roy Hill, assuming it gets off the ground, will be fundamentally different from any of its main competitors. They are all owned and operated by publicly traded companies. Since only Rinehart controls Hancock Prospecting, success at Roy Hill and the company's other projects would likely make her the world's richest person, full stop.

**M**any Australians are afraid to talk about the most talked-about person in Australia. "I don't want to lose my house," one former associate told me. He meant that Rinehart might sue him for defamation, a relatively easy thing to do in Australia, and that defending himself

against the sort of legal onslaught she is renowned for mounting would leave him destitute. I contacted many associates, ex-associates, employees, ex-employees, politicians who publicly support her projects, even neighbors. Most declined to speak—even the politicians. Most of the exceptions insisted on anonymity. I happened to meet, in Perth, a person who had worked at Hancock Prospecting. "Oh, Mrs. Hard Heart!" the person exclaimed, when I mentioned Rinehart. A nondisclosure agreement precluded further comment. Peter Foss, a former state attorney general and justice minister, was personally unafraid, he said, but he had seen Rinehart in action in the fight against her stepmother and, when it came to ex-employees, he told me, "She will sue them for sure, and she'll bankrupt them."

Fred Madden worked at Hancock and was the rare employee who refused to sign a nondisclosure agreement. Rinehart hired him shortly after she became chairman. He was an experienced Canadian mining executive who knew both the Pilbara and world iron markets, and she made him chief executive. He found the company chaotic. "There was no such thing as a plan, no budget," he told me. Rinehart trusted no one. "She'd have people on the switchboard and other people watching the people on the switchboard!"

Madden was optimistic even then about Hancock's long-term prospects with iron ore, and he gives Rinehart credit for hanging on long enough to ride the China boom. He thinks, as others I spoke to do, that her constant claims about her father's central role in the development of the Pilbara's iron-ore industry are "overblown." The iron ore in the Pilbara was "discovered" by a government geologist in the nineteenth century. Lang Hancock "was an individual who came along at the right time." Madden quit Hancock Prospecting after less than a year.

Rinehart's obsessive storytelling about her father has two sides, which are at odds. One is the hero tale. The other is that she inherited a shattered, debt-ridden company. She actually maneuvered successfully, during his last weeks, to have him transfer control of his personal estate's main assets and royalties to Hancock Prospecting and an associated trust, which effectively bankrupted his estate. This both helped her cause in the struggle with her stepmother and allowed Rinehart to dismiss the claims of the named beneficiaries in her father's will. The best known of this shafted group was Ken McCamey, who accompanied Hancock through decades of prospecting. Old Pilbara hands tend to credit McCamey with finding the company's most valuable claims, and Hancock himself named one of the greatest ore bodies they found McCamey's Monster. But McCamey remained a modestly salaried employee throughout his career. Hancock left him five hundred thousand dollars in his will, but not a penny of that was paid. Indeed, Rinehart fired the aging prospector shortly after her father died.

More lasting, the ruined-company story helps counter the "heiress" heresy. In accounts of Hancock Prospecting's history, the company's comatose state during the period after her arrival as chairman is routinely stressed. The Roy Hill Web site lists the precise dates on which she applied for Roy Hill exploration licenses—several months *after* her father's death—alongside a note that reads, "It is therefore incorrect to refer to them as 'inherited.'

Rinehart's thin skin about her press coverage tends to multiply her portion of ridicule. Queen Elizabeth visited Perth in 2011. Rinehart was at the garden party at Government House, wear-

ing a wide-brimmed hat. Prince Philip asked her why she was on the guest list. She was simply a loyal subject, she replied. He asked again. "But she was incredibly modest—refused to say why she was there," a politician's daughter who was standing nearby told the *Sydney Morning Herald*. "He looked a bit annoyed, in fact, because he was looking for a straight answer. So he came out with something like, 'Perhaps it's because you have the largest hat in Western Australia.' She laughed, and he laughed." According to another guest, the Prince said to Rinehart, "That hat could poke someone's eye out."

Later, a reporter writing a profile of Rinehart for a magazine owned by Fairfax Media, which also owns the *Herald*, got, after requesting an interview, the usual rejection but with an unusual e-mail lecture attached, which the reporter suspected was written not by Hancock Prospecting's "information manager" but by Rinehart:

Regarding the recent discussion with HRH at Government House in West Australia, other media who were present reported it was a very happy and relaxed discussion between HRH and Mrs Rinehart. . . . Your publication however chose to make the extraordinary and unbelievable claim that HRH told Mrs Rinehart that her non-pointy hat was pointy and may poke someone's eye out! Obviously HRH would have seen many hats over the years and would not choose to stop to speak to someone for the purpose of criticising their hat, including a hat worn in honour of his wife, the Queen. This is an insult by the SMH [the *Herald*] to not only Mrs Rinehart, but importantly HRH.

Rinehart has been expressing herself recently in a range of media. She contributes a column to a trade magazine called *Australian Resources and Investment*, writes posts on the Hancock Prospecting and Roy Hill Web sites, has a speech on YouTube, and in November self-published a book, "Northern Australia and Then Some: Changes We Need to Make Our Country Rich." Excerpts from her columns have gone viral. One much circulated riff: "If you're jealous of those with more money, don't just sit there and complain; do something to make more money yourselves—spend less time drinking, or smoking and socialising." In another column, she pointed out that African miners were willing to work for two dollars a day. "Such statistics make me worry for this country's future," she wrote. She sug-

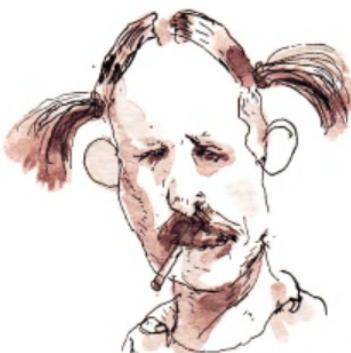
gested lowering the minimum wage in Australia. Prime Minister Gillard saw fit to publicly reject Rinehart's views. (Gillard has also described the leader of the opposition, Tony Abbott, as "Gina Rinehart's butler.")

Rinehart seems to lack any sense of just how dimly her fellow-Australians might look upon a multibillionaire arguing that their standard of living should be lowered in pursuit of tax and labor policies that will obviously benefit her. And yet she craves the admiration of her countrymen. When a magazine called *Woman's Day* announced last year that it would add seven names to the National Trust of Australia's list of "national living treasures" and invited its readers to vote, Rinehart's secretary sent an e-mail around Hancock Prospecting urging the staff to vote for their boss: "Please help Mrs Rinehart get the recognition she deserves." Employees should use their personal e-mail accounts to vote, of course. A link to *Woman's Day* was provided. Rinehart did not win a spot on the list. Worse, Clive Palmer, another mining billionaire, somehow did. Palmer is the opposite of media-averse. When Rinehart's comments about Australians being jealous wastrels came out, Palmer immediately assured the world that he enjoyed both drinking and socializing.

Rinehart is uncomfortable addressing an audience. She was scheduled to give a speech to the Sydney Mining Club in August. Instead, she sent a ten-minute-long video, in which she simply read, verbatim, one of her columns, previously published, from *Australian Resources and Investment*. By normal standards, it was a snore—a tendentious, obtuse, finger-wagging lecture, poorly delivered. And yet it was fascinating. Her performance was so odd. She spoke in a high, highly unnatural voice, with an accent more Queen Mother than Western Australian mine boss. She wore a huge pearl necklace. The video's production values did her no favors. Her face was shiny and her color unhealthy, and there were cuts so clumsy that they seemed like vintage Monty Python gags. At some points, her voice suddenly shot up so high, and became so breathy, that you half-expected an ambulance crew to rush into the frame. Rinehart's message was pro forma: Australia was doomed if it did not lower taxes, cut regulations, restrict wages, and

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Male Chauvinist  
Pigtails

The He-ManiPedi



The Beau Bow

Chick Lit  
for Fellas



The Annie Hall Look  
for Men



Guy-Necology



Taking Shit from Seth MacFarlane



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generally make things easier for business and foreign investment. Her tone was chilly, pious; there was an air of head-shaking concern. She deplored “class warfare.” Her speech, she said, was a “call for action.”

For billionaires who cannot buy good press, there is the option of buying the press. In late 2010, Rinehart bought, for a hundred and seventy million dollars, ten per cent of a national television broadcaster, Network Ten, and received a seat on its board of directors. (The chairman is Lachlan Murdoch.) She also began buying Fairfax Media shares—first fifty million dollars’ worth, then hundreds of millions more, until she was, by mid-2012, the single largest shareholder, with nearly twenty per cent of the company. Fairfax owns Australia’s oldest, most respected broadsheets, the *Herald* and the *Melbourne Age*, as well as the *Australian Financial Review*, a leading national daily, and hundreds of smaller papers and magazines. It is the country’s second-largest print-media group, after Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation. Fairfax is in poor financial shape, suffering from the industry-wide decline in print advertising. Until re-

cently, its share price was in long-term free fall. Rinehart’s investment was plainly not a short-term profit play but part of her broader move into media ownership. At Fairfax, she wanted at least two of the nine board seats. She refused, however, to sign on to the company’s charter of editorial independence. As a result, she was offered no seats. Her dispute with the Fairfax board escalated and was amplified by the natural interest of journalists in their own fate. Fairfax cut nineteen hundred jobs and announced that its two flagship papers would switch to a tabloid format. It was all more fuel for the Gina obsession, already raging across the federation.

In addition to her media acquisitions, Rinehart financially supports a number of conservative think tanks and antitax groups. “Northern Australia” is her particular hobbyhorse—a quixotic campaign to persuade the country that the hot, sparsely populated northern third of the continent should be declared a “special economic zone,” with low or no taxes or minimum wage or regulation. As she put it in a poem of her own composition, inscribed on a plaque attached to a thirty-ton boulder of iron ore outside a shop-

ping center on the north side of Perth:

Is our future threatened with massive debts run up by political hacks  
Who dig themselves out by unleashing rampant tax ...

The world's poor need our resources: do not leave them to their fate  
Our nation needs special economic zones and wiser government, before it is too late.

Another major Rinehart theme is climate-change denial. Members of a government climate commission warned this month that Australia needs to brace itself for a “climate on steroids.” January, 2013, was the hottest month in the country’s recorded history. The nation has been wracked by floods and bushfires. Rinehart is unconcerned. She wrote, in one of her columns, “I am yet to hear scientific evidence to satisfy me that if the very, very small amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere (approximately 0.83 per cent) was increased, it could lead to significant global warming. I have never met a geologist or leading scientist who believes adding more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere will have any significant effect on climate change.” She didn’t mention which leading scientists she had met, but she has helped host a series of speaking tours by Christopher Monckton, a British hereditary peer and professional climate-change denier. Monckton, in a meeting at a Rinehart-backed free-market think tank in Perth, was filmed advising the group on media strategy: “Is there an Australian version of Fox News? No.... Frankly, whatever you do at street level—which is what you are talking about here—is not going to have much of an impact compared with capturing an entire news media.”

The Murdoch papers in Australia already favor climate-change denial in their coverage, and Rinehart’s interest in media ownership seems to be following Monckton’s advice. A senior business reporter at the *Herald* told me, “I think it’s about climate coverage, in the end. There are only two shops in town, so, if she can shut down our coverage of the climate issue, it will be game over in Australia for a long time.”

Rinehart has a tumultuous personal life, which has been revealed mostly in court cases. Her long legal battle with her stepmother unearthed her grisly struggle with her father. She took to



*“I wish you wouldn’t refer to the candles as task lighting.”*

bulletproofing her car and office windows and hiring bodyguards. In 1997, one of them, an ex-policeman named Bob Thompson, filed a sexual-harassment suit against her. An article in *Woman's Day* laid out his sad story. Thompson had accompanied Rinehart and her children to Hawaii, California, Europe, and New Zealand. Rinehart, he said, wanted to marry him, even though he was engaged to someone else: "I told her over and over I wasn't interested, but she wouldn't take no for an answer." She insisted, he said, that he got an H.I.V. test and that he tell her about his sex life, past and present. He described Rinehart as "incredibly lonely." Then he dropped the suit and disappeared, reportedly after an out-of-court settlement.

Getting people to sign on the dotted line, swearing them to silence, is one of Rinehart's driving passions. Her employees must sign agreements never to talk to the press about her or Hancock Prospecting. Her children have been obliged to sign any number of secret agreements—in a 2006 deed that recently surfaced in court, they agreed to say nothing that might "disparage" Rinehart or "lower her reputation in the estimation of the public."

Family disputes have clouded the question of who will eventually succeed Rinehart. Her oldest child and only son, John Hancock, has a difficult relationship with his mother. (He changed his name as a young man, preferring to honor his grandfather rather than his stepfather, Frank Rinehart.) He joined the board of Hancock Prospecting at twenty-one and was seen as the heir apparent. He grew uncomfortable, however, with some of the things he was asked to do. His mother's fierce disputes with her lawyers, for instance, led her to dump legal work on him for which he was unqualified. He was also asked to deal with Hilda Kickett, an Aboriginal woman who had come forward, in 1992, to say that she was Lang Hancock's illegitimate daughter. There were long-standing rumors of children fathered by Lang Hancock with Aboriginal women who worked for his parents in the Pilbara. Kickett's mother was a young cook for the Hancocks. Hilda Kickett is a member of what is now known as the "stolen generation"—Aboriginal children who were seized from

their parents by the state with little or no explanation and raised in orphanages under an openly racist policy that was in place until 1969. Kickett claimed she did not want money, only family acknowledgment. She did not get it from Rinehart. Rinehart's private investigator heard that Rinehart's stepmother—this was during their epic court battle—might have contacted Kickett. Rinehart dispatched John to meet with Kickett and her husband. They got along, and a week later Rinehart sent her son back to Kickett with a statement to sign, attesting that she wasn't Lang Hancock's daughter, after all, but Lang Hancock's father's daughter. Kickett refused to sign.

Over time, John's relationship with his mother deteriorated. They quarrelled. "I had opinions," he told me. "But providing another view is not required in a yes-man company culture." She accused him of "disloyalty," and he left Hancock Prospecting.

Each of Rinehart's children has seemed, at different stages, to be in the line of succession. Bianca, the second-eldest, took John's seat on the Hancock board. She enrolled in a business course, studied Mandarin in Beijing, and spent a year as a FIFO worker for Rio Tinto in the Pilbara. But she, too, left the family business. The next child, Hope, married an American, Ryan Welker, who was brought into Hancock Prospecting, where he flourished until he didn't. He and Hope moved with their children to New York City. The favored child at the moment is the youngest, Ginia, who is twenty-six. Until recently, she lived in London, where she worked as a party planner at Fabergé. Ginia has been appointed to various Hancock Prospecting boards, and is now reportedly embarking on the same FIFO traineeship with Rio Tinto that her sister did.

John Singleton, a Sydney businessman who is friendly with Rinehart, told the *Herald* that her estrangements from her children flow naturally from her priorities. "It's because the business comes first," he said. "Being a parent is secondary. It's just 'Where do they fit into the dynasty? Are they iron or are they coal or are they uranium?' If they don't fit into the company, there's no role for them."

The details of the latest estrange-

ment exploded into the courts in 2011, after the three older children filed suit to have Rinehart removed as trustee of the Hope Margaret Hancock Trust, which Lang Hancock had created for his grandchildren. The trust owns nearly twenty-four per cent of Hancock Prospecting—a holding worth billions today. Lang stipulated that Rinehart would control it only until it vested, on the twenty-fifth birthday of her youngest child, Ginia. But Rinehart had decided to extend that vesting date, ostensibly to avoid tax consequences, to 2068—when John will be ninety-two and the others not much younger. The children learned about this alteration of their prospects only when she asked that they approve of it, shortly before Ginia's twenty-fifth birthday. She said that they faced bankruptcy if they didn't sign documents agreeing to her terms. When they objected, Rinehart argued that they were "manifestly unsuitable" to control their own trust. She suggested that they "reconsider their holidaying lifestyle and attitudes." Only Ginia sided with her mother. The three others accused Rinehart of "deceptive, manipulative and disgraceful conduct" and sued to gain access to their inheritance.

Rinehart has fought to keep news of this intrafamily legal battle suppressed. It could hurt Roy Hill's chances of attracting investors, she said, during an unsuccessful argument to keep the case secret. But the financing of Roy Hill is proceeding—with her equity partners in place, Rinehart is now seeking debt funding from a wide range of interested banks and export-import credit agencies. Rinehart also argued that the legal wrangling could expose the family, including her grandchildren, to publicity that might increase the risk of kidnapping or worse. She commissioned a set of reports on security risks faced by the very rich, which she submitted to the court. The reports, besides surveying the travails of David Beckham, David Letterman, and others, included unredacted correspondence from Rinehart's children, which had the unfortunate effect of making their home addresses, e-mails, and other personal details a matter of public record.

John Hancock was so incensed by his mother's behavior that, defying non-disclosure agreements, he vented to a

reporter, Steve Pennells, at Perth's *West Australian*, about the increased jeopardy she was creating for his wife and children. Among other things, Rinehart had threatened to cancel the ransom insurance that had been provided for her children and grandchildren. Hancock told Pennells, "What more can I do than communicate to any kidnappers out there—over my dead body and you will be wasting your time anyway. If you think you're going to get anything from my mother, good luck." Rinehart eventually went after Pennells, persuading the court to issue a subpoena for all his notes and recordings related to her case against her children. Pennells, with the support of his paper, is fighting the subpoena. Rinehart seems most interested in what he may know about how her children are paying their legal bills, which are reportedly running a hundred thousand dollars a month. Pennells did a story about meeting, through John, a nameless supporter in Hong Kong. Rinehart assures Fairfax Media, meanwhile, that she has nothing but respect for the practice of journalism.

It soon became clear, as her children tried to gain control of their trust, that Rinehart would break Hope first. Hope's e-mails to her mother, as disclosed in court, were full of painful desperation and financial panic even before the money from Mem, as she calls her, was cut off. Hope wants to stay in New York, to have a cook and a bodyguard and a housekeeper and send her children to private schools. But Rinehart wants them back in Australia, away from the family of Hope's American husband, whom she does not trust. She will apparently accept, as an alternative, Singapore, a free-market tax haven of which she approves. Early this month, it was reported that Hope and her mother had reached an agreement. Hope would withdraw from the suit. "Two down, two to go," an anonymous family insider told Adele Ferguson, Rinehart's biographer and a business writer for Fairfax Media. After Ferguson's story appeared, Rinehart hit her immediately with a subpoena, demanding to have the notes and recordings of her interviews with John Hancock going back to 2011.

Two television miniseries about Rinehart are now in preproduction in Australia. One will be based on Ferguson's bi-

ography. The other has retained Steve Pennells as a consultant. Its working title is "Mother Monster Magnate."

The main thrust of Rinehart's political tirades is that Australia is becoming "uncompetitive," that the cost of doing business there is too high. The government is running up debt to support a popular but unsustainable welfare state. The country will soon go the way of Europe—or, to be more specific, Greece (sometimes Portugal). Her prognostications, and those of her political allies, are often apocalyptic. (Lang Hancock's were, too.) And it is true that Australian wages are relatively high. The idea—a threat, really, much repeated—that the mining multinationals will soon pick up and leave for Africa in search of cheaper labor ignores basic factors such as efficiency, infrastructure, and sovereign risk. In January, Rio Tinto was forced to write off a three-billion-dollar investment in coal in Mozambique, largely because of infrastructure problems. Rio Tinto's C.E.O. was obliged to resign. Such debacles are extremely unlikely to happen in Australia. The fact that the country's minimum wage is more than sixteen dollars an hour—more than twice the federal minimum wage in the United States—does not suggest global uncompetitiveness so much as broad prosperity. *The Economist*, never a known fan of the minimum wage, re-

Many people think the mining boom was responsible for Australia's comparatively painless path through the global financial crisis. High world prices for the commodities that Australia produces in abundance—iron ore, coal, liquefied natural gas—have definitely helped. But mining still accounts for less than ten per cent of national economic output, and mining employment is surprisingly small—less than two per cent of the workforce. Moreover, mining profits tend to go overseas. In 2010, according to a study by the Australia Institute, eighty-three per cent of domestic mining production was owned by foreign companies.

And so Gina Rinehart, for all her personal wealth, is not a particularly big fish in the pond of Australian mining. She shares, however, in the extraordinary profit margins that mining companies in Australia enjoy—forty-two per cent in 2011, when business profit margins as a whole were thirteen per cent. These were the "super profits" that Kevin Rudd's Labor government tried, without success, to capture a part of. The Reserve Bank of Australia's decision to cut interest rates and a large and timely stimulus program helped the country through the Great Recession at least as much as mining did. Meanwhile, the strong demand for Australian minerals has driven up the value of the Australian dollar, hurting agriculture, manufacturing, and other "trade-exposed" sectors.

Many people worry that Australia is becoming "Asia's quarry." A creeping case of the resource curse, also known as the paradox of plenty, may even be ahead. The resource curse damages the economies of countries blessed with great exportable natural wealth, increasing volatility by an overreliance on global commodity prices, starving other sectors, distorting exchange rates, and driving painful cycles of boom and bust.

In his book "The Lucky Country" (1964), the Australian social critic Donald Horne decried the mediocrity of Australian political and business culture. The book's most famous line was "Australia is a lucky country, run mainly by second-rate people who share its luck." The phrase lost its meaning over time, however, as it was widely adopted as a kind of sunny national motto. In a



cently ran a feature, "Where to Be Born in 2013," for which its researchers put together comprehensive quality-of-life forecasts for eighty countries. Australia was ranked No. 2, after Switzerland. (The U.S. was tied for sixteenth.) While the rest of the world has suffered through the Great Recession, Australia has enjoyed twenty-one straight years of economic growth. Perhaps Rinehart is wrong about her country being on the road to socialist perdition.

recent book called "Too Much Luck: The Mining Boom and Australia's Future," the journalist and academic Paul Cleary argues that the resources boom is being classically mismanaged, indicting both federal and state governments for failing to regulate and tax properly the multinational corporations flocking to Australia to extract nonrenewable resources such as iron ore. As a counterexample, he offers Norway's management of its offshore-oil boom. Norway, with a population of five million, has taxed the major oil companies heavily and created the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world, now worth more than seven hundred billion dollars, insuring the prosperity of future generations. Australia is doing nothing comparable with a boom that Cleary describes as a "once-in-a-century opportunity." The most striking thing about Cleary's fierce, concise book, perhaps, is his day job, as a senior writer for Rupert Murdoch's national daily, the *Australian*.

Australian progressives, including Wayne Swan, the Deputy Prime Minister, believe that the country is changing for the worse. They fret about Americanization. Swan, a Bruce Springsteen fan, recently implored a Melbourne crowd, "Don't let Australia become a Down Under version of New Jersey, where the people and the communities whose skills are no longer in demand get thrown on the scrap heap of life." Swan has written, "Politicians have a choice: between . . . standing up for workers and kneeling down at the feet of the Gina Rineharts and the Clive Palmers." As I encountered the depth of the fear of Rinehart, particularly in Perth, I did wonder if the cheeky insouciance of the casino pot washers of my youth and their employer's gracious response to abuse were not bygone Aussie virtues.

But Rinehart challenges Australia's idea of itself (and thus makes herself a national obsession) not only with respect to democratic values. She's also an aesthetic affront. Down Under, a high quotient of wryness, of jokes at one's own expense, has long been mandatory, both in private and in public. People who lack that capacity are either pitied for their witlessness or, if they're too pious or aggressive, resented. Rinehart's hectoring, tin-eared public persona makes her seem as though she were



*"I love the way it blurs the boundary between inside and out."*

born without the wryness gene. She's admired in some quarters for her determination, but the iconic Aussie Battler was never a bully, let alone a billionaire. I have often heard Rinehart grumpily described as "un-Australian." Her raw, seemingly humorless veneration of money would be bad form almost anywhere. In Australia, it's both offensive and unsettling.

Many critics have pointed out the conflation, in Rinehart's political arguments, of what she insists is the national interest with her own commercial interests. Beneath that patent cynicism, though, and beneath her paranoia, her cunning, her crude self-promotion, her manipulations, both clumsy and deft, is a weird sincerity. She believes the mining gospel she preaches. She believes that she and her fellow-billionaires know best. She truly wants to own and operate an iron-ore mine, wants it more than anything. She would also like to be celebrated and thanked and hugely rewarded. And she wouldn't mind pushing around governments the way that Rupert Mur-

doch does. But she lacks the belief that she can charm people, can persuade them, can do more than bully them. That, perhaps, is why she will not consent to an interview. She's afraid of sounding foolish.

As I travelled around Australia, strangers in pubs, on airplanes, in beach parking lots would bring up Gina Rinehart, not knowing I was writing about her. Everybody had something to say, some of it thoughtful, some of it poorly informed, some of it vividly obscene. One day, in Sydney, I picked up a couple of newspapers and found five articles that mentioned her. The country is simply wall-to-wall Gina. But finally, near the end of my trip, I met someone who had not heard of her. She was a student at the same exclusive girls' school in Perth where young Gina Hancock spent many years. We were at a Sunday lunch in Fremantle, across the Swan River from Perth. The girl was with her family. I tried not to show my surprise. With furrowed brow, she racked her brain. No, the name meant nothing to her. ♦

FICTION

# THE JUDGE'S WILL

BY RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA



After his second heart attack, the judge knew that he could no longer put off informing his wife about the contents of his will. He did this for the sake of the woman he had been keeping for twenty-five years, who, ever since his first attack, had been agitating about provisions for her future. These had long been in place in his will, known only to the lawyer who had drawn it up, but it was intolerable to the judge to think that their execution would be in the hands of his family; that is, his wife and son. Not because he expected them to make trouble but because they were both too impractical, too light-minded to carry out his wishes once he was not there to enforce them.

This suspicion was confirmed for him by the way Binny received his secret. Any normal wife, he thought, would have been aghast to learn of her husband's long-standing adultery. But Binny reacted as though she had just heard some spicy piece of gossip. She was pouring his tea and, quivering with excitement, spilled some in the saucer. He turned his face from her. "Go away," he told her, and then became more exasperated by the eagerness with which she hurried off to reveal the secret to their son.

Yasi was the only person in the world with whom she could share it. As a girl growing up in Bombay, Binny had had many friends. But her marriage to the judge had shipwrecked her in Delhi, a stiffly official place that didn't suit her at all. If it hadn't been for Yasi! He was born in Delhi and in this house—a gloomy, inward-looking family property, built in the nineteen-twenties and crowded with heavy Indo-Victorian furniture inherited from earlier generations. Binny's high spirits had managed to survive the sombre atmosphere; and, when Yasi was a child, she had shared the tastes and pleasures of her Bombay days with him, teaching him dance steps and playing him the songs of Hollywood crooners on her gramophone. They lived alone there with the judge. Shortly after Yasi was born, the judge's mother had died of some form of cancer, which had also accounted for several other members of the family. It seemed to Binny that all of the family diseases—both physical and mental—were bred in the very roots of the house, and she feared that they might one day seep into Yasi's bright

temperament. The fear was confirmed by the onset of his dark moods. Before his first breakdown, Yasi had been a brilliant student at the university, and although he was over thirty now, he was expected shortly to resume his studies.

More like a brother than like a son, he had always enjoyed teasing her. When she told him the news of his father's secret, he pretended to be in no way affected by it but went on stolidly eating his breakfast.

She said, "Who is she? Where does he keep her? I don't know what's wrong with you, Yasi. Why can't you see how important this is for us? Why are you asking me why? Because of the *will*. His *will*."

"And if he's left it all to her?" Yasi asked.

"He'd never do that. Oh, no." Better than anyone, she knew the pride the judge took in himself and his ancestral possessions. "I'm sure she's a you-know-what. He must have taken her out of one of those houses—he owns half of them, anyway," she said, stifling her usual wry amusement at that sector of her husband's substantial family properties.

A day or two later, the judge had to be returned to the hospital. He stayed there for a week, and when they sent him home again he began to spend all his time in his bedroom. Apart from a few irritated instructions to Binny, he accepted her ministrations in silence; now and again, he asked for Yasi—reluctantly, as if against his own inclination. It took him some time to overcome his pride and demand a visit from his son.

Binny was so excited. It was probably to do with his will, with the woman. "You have to go! You must!" she urged Yasi. He agreed, on condition that she not listen at the door. "As if I would!" she cried indignantly, though both of them knew that she would be crouching there—and, in fact, when he emerged from his father's bedroom he found her hastily scrambling up from that position.

"What is it? What did he say?"

On the rare occasions when the judge had tried to talk alone with his son in the past, Yasi had recounted the conversations to his mother, with some embellishments: how the judge had had to clear his throat several times and had still been unable to come out with what he wanted to say, and instead had babbled

on about his student days in London and the wonderful English breakfasts he had enjoyed, bacon and eggs and some sort of fish—"kippers, I believe they are called," Yasi had repeated, in the judge's own accent, to entertain his mother.

But now it was as if he were protecting his father: he wouldn't tell her anything. It wasn't until she challenged him, "Whose side are you on?", that he said, "He wants to see her."

"He wants to bring her here?"

"He's sending the driver."

"The fool, the first-class *idiot*," Binny said. Her scorn for the judge soon turned to angry defiance: "What do I care? Let him bring her—bring all the women he's been keeping for twenty-five years." But, beneath it all, there was a sort of thrill—that at last something dramatic was happening in their lives.

There was nothing dramatic about the woman the driver brought the next day. She arrived in a plain white cotton sari and wearing no jewelry—"as if she were already a widow," Binny commented. Binny herself was a far more appealingly feminine figure: short and plump, in tight-fitting harem pants and very high heels, draped with the costume jewelry she preferred to the family jewels; at the salon they had bobbed and curled her hair and made it gleam with golden streaks. By contrast, Phul—that was her name, Phul, meaning "flower"—was as austere as a woman in constant prayer. Leaving her shoes at the threshold, she glided into the judge's bedroom; and though Binny lingered outside, no sound reached her to indicate what might be going on.

This performance, as Binny called it, was repeated the next day, and the next. After the fourth visit, she declared to Yasi, "This can't go on. You have to do something."

She had always depended on Yasi to get her out of difficult situations. In earlier years, when she still had a few woman friends, Yasi had helped her cover up some secret expenditures—such as losing at cards, which she and her friends had played for money. She appreciated the way Yasi had circumvented the judge's disapproval. She had always been proud of her son's intelligence, which he had inherited, she had to admit, from his father.

Friends had asked her why she had

married the judge, who was in every way so different from her. But that was the answer. Before meeting him, she had lived in an adolescent world of flirtations carried on in the cafés and on the beaches of Bombay. The judge, some twenty years older than she, was already a highly regarded lawyer with a private practice in Delhi when she met him. He was working on a professional assignment in Bombay with Binny's father, an industrialist, who had invited him to the family table—usually the dullest place in the world for Binny. But, with the judge there, she had sat through every course, not understanding a word but understanding very well that the guest's attention sometimes strayed in her direction. Afterward, she lingered in the vestibule to give him the opportunity to talk to her, though all he did was ask, in the weighty tones of a prosecutor in court, about her studies. A tall, heavy person, he habitually wore, even in the humid heat of Bombay, a suit, a waistcoat, and a tie, which made him stand out from everyone else, especially from her friends, who floated around in the finest, flimsiest Indian garments. She loved describing him to these friends, who exclaimed, "But he sounds *awful*!" That made her laugh. "He is awful" By which she meant that he was serious, sombre, authoritarian—everything that later oppressed her so horribly. One day, after posing his usual question about her studies, he went to her father to ask for her hand—for her hand! How she laughed with her friends. Wasn't it just like an old-fashioned novel—Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet! Or, from another book on their matriculation list, Heathcliff. In fact, she began to refer to him as Heathcliff, and to think of him as the gypsy lover who had come to steal her away.

The driver was sent to Phul every day, and every day she remained with the judge in his bedroom. Although this bedroom had meant nothing to Binny for many years, now her thoughts were concentrated on it, as they had been at the beginning of the marriage. The judge had been an overwhelming lover, and those nights with him had been a flowering and a ripening that she'd thought would go on forever. Instead, after about two years, the judge's presence in their bed was changed into a weight that oppressed her physically and in every other way. It had been a relief

to her when Yasi was born and she could move with him into her own bedroom. She never returned to the judge's, and, when he came to hers, she was impatient with his need. Mostly she used Yasi as an excuse—"Sh-h-h! The child is sleeping!"—ignoring her husband's protest that a boy that age shouldn't still be in his mother's bed. The judge's visits became less and less frequent, and finally they ceased altogether.

She hardly noticed, and, until Phul



came, thought nothing of it. On his good days, Yasi was always there for her, and she for him. He had a large group of friends and went out most nights. She would wait up for him, and, however late he came home, he would perch on the edge of her bed to tell her about the music festivals he had attended, the poetry recitals, the places where he had dined and danced. He was quite frank with his mother about the girls he slept with—she knew the sort of modern, fashionable girls who formed his social circle, and had even learned to recognize the subtle Parisian perfumes that clung to him.

Then there were his bad days, when he didn't get out of bed, and, when he did, he was silent and sombre—yes, just like his father. But whereas the judge's anger was always contained, controlled, Yasi's was explosive—sometimes he would hurl a glass, a vase, a full cup of coffee, not caring where it landed. A few times he had struck her, suddenly, sharply. Afterward she pretended that it hadn't happened, and never spoke of it to anyone, and certainly not to him. This silence between them was a mutually protective one. Living so closely together, perpetually intent on each other, each was wary of disturbing the other's balance, so precariously achieved, of anger and resignation, revolt and submission.

Alert to every sound from Yasi's room, one night she heard voices from there that made her tiptoe to his door. She

found it open and the judge standing inside, ghostlike in his long white nightshirt. He was talking to Yasi, but as soon as he saw her he shut the door in her face. She had every right to open the door, to know what her husband was saying to their son, but it was not only the judge's prohibition that prevented her, it was Yasi's, too; for there were times when he was as forbidding as his father.

The next day, she impatiently waited to question him. But he had hardly begun to speak when she interrupted him. "Probably he's left her everything. Very good! Let her have everything. Only don't think I won't get the best lawyer in the world to see that she has nothing."

"He knows how difficult it will be for you to accept the will. To accept her. He says she has no family at all."

"She doesn't? Then where did he find her? Wasn't there a whole tribe of them, in one of those rooms where they play music and people throw money?"

"He took her away before she was fifteen, and she's stayed all those years where he put her. So now he thinks she's like some tame thing in a cage—with a wild creature waiting to get her as soon as she's released. He made me promise to protect her."

"Against me?"

She shouted so violently that he shushed her. They were speaking in English but they knew the servants would be listening and, even without understanding the language, would be perfectly aware of the drift of the conversation. Now she spoke more quietly, and more bitterly. "That's what he's wanted from the day you were born. To turn you against me. To have you on his side—and now on hers, too."

Tears, rare for her, streamed from her eyes, streaking her makeup, so that she did at that moment look like a wild creature. At first, Yasi felt like smiling, but then he felt sorry for her, as he had felt sorry for his father, that proud man pleading for a promise.

Binny had never allowed her circumstances to depress her. She had been very impatient with her women friends' constant complaints about unreliable servants, bad marriages, worse divorces. By the time she was in her fifties, she had dropped all of them except one. And, finally, there came the day when this

friend, too, had to be abandoned. It happened over cocktails in their favorite hotel lounge. Binny was speaking about her close relationship with her son when the other woman interrupted her: "It's all Freud, of course."

"I see," Binny said, after a long silence. "Freud."

She got up. She took out her purse and deposited her share of the check on the table. She gave a brief, cold laugh. "Freud," she repeated. It was the last word she ever spoke to this friend.

So nowadays she comforted herself with her own amusements: shopping for new outfits and jewelry, intense sessions at a salon run by a Swiss lady. Her last stop was always Sugar & Spice, for Yasi's favorite pastries. If the judge warned her that Yasi was getting too fat, she suppressed her own observation that Yasi was getting too fat. She countered that it was the judge himself who should be careful: a man with two heart attacks, she reminded him.

But that morning when she arrived home with the pastries and said to the servant, "Call Yasi Baba," she was told that he had gone out. "In a taxi?" she asked casually, licking cream off her fingers. The servant said no, Judge Sahib had sent Yasi in the car—and by the way he said it, with lowered eyes, she realized that it was something she wasn't supposed to know. She stood fighting down a flush of anger, then suddenly she shouted, "Don't we have any light in this house?" All the shutters and curtains were closed to keep the sun out. The servant turned on the chandelier, but its lustre was absorbed by the Turkish rugs, leaving only a thin shaft of silver light. Binny alone illuminated the dark room, with her embroidered silks and the golden glints in her hair.

The judge's longtime driver was always at her disposal, and she had arranged with him that some of her destinations should be kept secret from his employer. She hadn't realized that the judge had made a similar arrangement. It didn't take her long to persuade the driver, to whom she had always been generous, to reveal the address where he had taken Yasi, as well as his instructions to take him there again the following night. She called for a taxi for the same time and went there herself.

It was across the river, in one of the first new colonies to be built in the area

some twenty-five years before, far from the judge's prestigious neighborhood of shady old trees and large villas. Binny's taxi took her into a lively bazaar—the open stalls lit up with neon strip-lighting, the barrows of fruit and nuts with Petromax lanterns. Radios played film songs; chickens hung in rows from hooks. Opposite Phul's residence was a clinic, with patients waiting inside, and next to it a shoe shop, where Binny could try on a variety of ladies' footwear. This absorbed her so much that she almost missed Yasi's arrival. She glanced up at the opposite house when she heard the downstairs tenant assuring Yasi that the upstairs tenant was at home. Then she quickly returned her gaze to her feet, which were being fitted into a pair of bright-blue sandals with silver heels, which she liked so much that she bought them there and then.

Yasi returned home very late, and as usual he perched on his mother's bed to tell her where he had been and what he had done. He had attended a music festival, he told her, and he sang her a phrase and swayed to it, his eyes closed. He loved music, which was something he'd got from Binny, though for him it was classical music, whereas she loved swing and jazz.

"So that's where you were all night?"

Alerted by her tone, he opened his eyes.

She said, "That's not what I was told."

Yasi said, "He sent me with the driver. I couldn't say no. She played her harmonium and sang. It was horrible, and I left as soon as I could."

"Then where were you until two in the morning?"

"I told you: I was at the music festival. You always think the worst of me. Oh, I'm sick of it! No, don't talk to me! My head's bursting!" And, indeed, his face had changed in a way she knew and had dreaded since the first breakdown.

The next day, he slept late, and she sat beside him in his bedroom, where he lay with the tousled, tortured look of his sickness. She blamed herself for having been angry at him. She looked at the array of medicine bottles on his bedside table—she didn't know which were his sleeping pills and which were those prescribed for his moods, or how many he had taken. Usually so particular in his personal habits, he hadn't even changed out of the shirt he had been wearing the night before. A faint smell rose from it, not the delicate scent of his girlfriends but the

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heavy bazaar perfume she smelled whenever Phul entered the house.

Her pity for him turned into rage against his father. In earlier years, whenever she had felt her life to be intolerable, she had packed her suitcase and announced her decision to return to Bombay. At first, the judge had used a defense attorney's arguments to dissuade her; later, he had said nothing but simply waved his hand dismissively over the packed suitcase. And after a while she had unpacked it again. But this time she would not do so, would not retreat from her decision; for now it was not she who had to be considered but her son.

Leaving Yasi asleep, she walked through the house, through the many unused rooms, some shrouded, others shuttered, and, before she had even closed the judge's door behind her, she announced, "I'm taking him to Bombay."

These days, she hardly ever entered the judge's bedroom. Everything was still in its place—his colonial armchair with the extended leg rest, his big bed and bigger chest of drawers, its brass handles too heavy for her to pull, and the mirror too high for her to look into—but there was a subtle change of atmosphere. Well, not so subtle! For there was Phul squatting on the floor by the judge's feet, massaging them as any devoted wife might do. He was gazing down at her with a look that Binny recognized as the expres-

sion—of father as much as of lover—that had so thrilled her in her youth.

When Binny entered, Phul turned and smiled—partly in apology but also with some pride at fulfilling a duty that she clearly felt was her right. She was a woman in her early forties, but her smile was peculiarly childlike: her teeth were as small as milk teeth and her gums showed up very pink against her complexion, which was much darker than Binny's. When she noticed that her sari had slipped off her shoulders, she tugged it back, though not before Binny had seen that she was very thin and with no breasts worth mentioning.

"Get up, child," the judge told Phul, his voice as tender as his gaze on her.

Child! Binny thought. Never since the day of their marriage had he called her anything except Bina—never Binny or Baby, as everyone had called her at home in Bombay. And now, as he shifted his eyes from Phul to her, his expression changed completely: for Binny was not at his feet but standing upright and facing him in hostility. She said, "We're taking the evening plane."

"The boy stays here," the judge pronounced.

"Here with you? And with *her*?"

Since the judge's last return from the hospital, a carved Kashmiri screen had been placed around the washstand installed for his minor ablutions. Although

husband and wife were speaking in English, which she couldn't understand, Phul had quietly retreated behind this screen. Her absence made no difference to Binny, who continued, "And now you're sending him to her house at night! Shame on you—your own son! To take her off your hands and do what with her, with a woman old enough to be his mother?"

"You're an educated woman," the judge said. "You can count. You know that she would have had to be a very precocious seven-year-old to become a mother."

"Not a day longer in this house! We're going to Bombay. He has to see a doctor."

"We have very good doctors here."

"And what have they done for him, stuffing him full of drugs meant for psychos. He's nervous, high-strung, like his mother—yes, I know you think I'm strong as a horse and, yes, I've had to be, to bear almost forty years of marriage with you. But now—today, he and I . . ."

The judge was facing the door and he saw Yasi before she did. "Your mother wants to take you to Bombay," he told their son.

Binny spun around. "Tonight. The seven-thirty plane."

"Why do I always have to be caught between the two of you?" Yasi said. "Between a pair of scissor blades." He spoke in Hindi, and his parents looked warmly toward the screen. There was no sound or movement from behind it. Binny said, "Come out," but it was not until the judge repeated the command that Phul emerged.

Yasi made a sound that was not like his usual laugh but was meant to express amusement. "I think we're in the middle of an old-fashioned French farce."

"This is what your father has become, an impotent old man in a farce with his young what's-it, except this one isn't young." She smiled grimly, expecting Yasi to smile with her.

Instead he was looking at Phul, as was the judge. She stood humbly, wrapped from head to foot in her widow-like sari, and she pleaded in a low voice, "Send me home."

"Home?" Binny cried. "You *are* home. This is your home. You can move in right now with my husband—please, I beg you, the house will be empty. I'm taking my son to Bombay."

Before she had finished speaking, Yasi had sunk to a footstool, embroidered years



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ago by a great-aunt now deceased. He buried his head in his hands and sobbed.

His parents exchanged helpless looks. Binny said, "He's not well. It's his headaches. He mustn't be upset."

And the judge said, "You're right. We mustn't upset him." United in concern like any two parents, they spoke as though they were alone in the room.

Now Phul came up behind Yasi and laid her hands on his forehead, pressing it as she had done with the judge's feet. He seemed to relax into her touch, and his weeping stopped.

Binny noticed—and hoped the judge did, too—that Phul's fingers were thick and coarse, unlike Binny's own, which were adorned with several precious rings, some of them inherited from the judge's mother.

**Y**asi resumed his lively social round and soon became so preoccupied with helping one of his girlfriends with a private fashion show that he was often out all night. So he was absent the morning the driver returned alone from his daily mission with the report that Phul was sick. At once, the judge asked for his three-piece suit, but when Binny found him trembling with the effort of getting his thin legs into his trousers—how frail he had become!—she put him back into his nightshirt and forced him into bed again. He pleaded with her to ask Yasi to take a doctor and some medicine to Phul. "She's alone," he told his wife. "She has no one." Binny regarded him with angry concern, then turned away. "Yes, yes, yes," she agreed impatiently to his request.

It was almost night when she called for the car and driver. The bazaar was even more alive than on her previous visit—music and lights and announcements on megaphones, vegetables trodden into the gutters, bits of offal thrown for the overfed bazaar dogs. She took the outside staircase that Yasi had climbed as she watched him from the shoe shop. The room she entered had a very different ambience from the one in which Phul presented herself in the judge's house. Gay and gaudy, with little pictures and little gods, and hangings tinkling with tiny bells, it seemed more innately Phul's, as though arising from memories of the places and the people among whom she had lived before meeting the judge. A gar-

land of marigolds had been hung around an image of a naked saint with fleshy breasts. Amid the few bolsters scattered on the floor, there were only two pieces of furniture, both large: a colonial armchair, the twin of the one in the judge's bedroom, and a bed, on which Phul lay. She wore a sort of house gown, as crumpled as the bed and with curry stains on it. When she saw Binny, she started up, and her hand flew to her heart—yes, Binny thought, she had every reason to fear the judge's wife, after he had kept her holed up in this secret den for twenty-five years.

But it turned out that her fear was for the judge—that there was bad news about him that would leave her forever penniless, alone, unprotected. She let out a wail, which ceased the moment she was reassured. Then her first words were of regret for her inability to serve a guest. She blamed her servant boy, who regularly disappeared when needed. She spoke in a rush and in a dialect that Binny found hard to follow.

When the servant boy reappeared, Binny sent him for the doctor from the clinic next to the shoe shop. Phul lay resigned and passive on her bed, though her moaning grew louder at the doctor's arrival. He was dismissive—some sort of stomach infection, he said. It was going around the city; he saw dozens of cases every day. He scribbled a prescription, ordered a diet of rice and curds. To Binny, it seemed that the room itself was a breed-

be carried to the bed and lay there with only her lips moving. What she seemed to be saying was the English word "sorry"—Binny thought how typical it was of the judge that among the few English words he had taught her was this abject one of apology.

**B**inny was wiping the judge's face after his meal when he asked, quite shyly, "Is she better?"

"For all I know, she may be, but not well enough to come here and infect us all."

She wrung out the facecloth in the basin behind the screen. When she emerged, she saw that he was deep in thought. He made a gesture as though communicating with himself; his hand was unsteady but his voice was determined.

"Yasi must take care of her. He promised. Send him again; send him every day."

"If you go on fretting this way, you'll have another attack and kill the rest of us with having to nurse you."

But it was she herself who went every day, with specially prepared dishes of healthy food. She ascribed the slowness of Phul's recovery to the unfresh air in her room. With the one window now propped open, the incense and the bazaar perfume blended with the street smells—wilted produce, motor oil, and a nearby urinal. And what was worse were the unhealthy thoughts in Phul's mind, the despair that kept her moaning, "What will happen to me?" One day, Binny found her up and dressed and ready to go to the judge; she sank back only when Binny asked her, did she really want to expose that sick old man to her infection? Then, for the first time, Phul spoke of Yasi and begged to see him.

It was also the first time that Yasi was told about her sickness. "Oh, the poor thing," he said. "I'd go to see her, but you know as well as I do that I catch everything."

"No, no, of course you mustn't."

He promised to go once the danger was past. Binny couldn't help warning, "Only don't stay with her all night and then tell me lies about music and poetry."

"If you'd just listen for once in your life!" His exasperation lasted only a moment and he continued patiently, "I never stayed all night. I tried to get away as soon as I could, but she's very clinging. And she's also very stupid. And her singing, oh,



ing ground for fevers and infections, with sticks of smoking incense distilling their synthetic essence into the air shimmering with summer heat. There was only one window, which was stuck. Watching her visitor wrestle with it, Phul got up and tried to help her and in her weakness almost fell, before Binny caught her. Struggling then to free herself—"No, no!" she cried—she threw up in a spasm that spatulated over Binny's almost new blue-and-silver shoes. Then she allowed herself to

my God, I wanted to pay her to stop. It's his fault. It was her profession to entertain but he took her away to keep for himself before she could learn anything. Would you believe it, she can hardly read and write. I'd try to teach her, but it would be hopeless. Poor little Phul, and now's she's over forty." He had accumulated a fund of feeling, first for his mother and then for all women whom he considered to have had a raw deal.

In the early years of their marriage, the judge had taught Binny to play chess. Now, alone with him in his convalescence, she brought out the neglected chess board and set up a table in his bedroom. He was a keen player, but that day his mind was not totally on the game. Instead of deplored her wrong moves, he asked if Yasi was looking after Phul. She said, "He's done enough for you. Send someone else."

"There is no one else. I have no one."

"No one except her? And all she's thinking is: What will happen to me? That's all I ever hear from her—Yasi ever hears," she corrected. "That is what she thinks about. Not about you, about herself."

"I've told her about the will and the boy's promise, and still she's afraid."

"Of me? Tell her she can vomit all over me and still there's no need."

The judge clicked his tongue in dis-taste. He pointed at her castle, which she had just stupidly exposed. He wouldn't allow her to take the move back, but scolded her for not keeping her mind on the game. It was true: she was distracted. If she hadn't been, she wouldn't have made her next move, which put his bishop in jeopardy. She was usually more careful—she knew how much he hated losing. Intensely irritated, he reproached her, "It's as impossible to have a serious game of chess with you as it is to have a serious conversation."

She reared up. "Then let me tell you something serious. Whatever happens, God forbid, she's safe in her cage: there's no wild creature waiting for her outside. She can have everything. Tell her! Yasi and I want nothing." Without a qualm, she took his bishop.

In a voice like thunder, the judge shouted, "Call him! Call your son!" He had leaped up and with one sweep of his hand he scattered the chess pieces, so that some fell in her lap, some on the



*"Is there anything sadder than an underfunded wax museum?"*

floor. This sudden strength frightened her. She grasped his shoulders to make him sit in the chair again and, though withered, they still felt like iron under her hands. She had to match her strength against his; it didn't take her long to win, but what she felt was not triumph.

She bent down to pick up the pieces from the floor and tried to replace them on the board. He waved her away, as though waving everything away.

"You can't do this," she said. "In your condition."

"Yes, my condition," he echoed bitterly. "Because of my condition, I lose my bishop to someone with no notion of the game."

He allowed her to lead him from the chair to his bed. She brought him water, and after he had drunk it he gave the glass back to her and said, "I'm sorry."

"Oh, my goodness!" she cried in shock. He had often done this—scattered the pieces when he was losing—but he had never before apologized for it. She understood what this was about and tried again

to reassure him. "Everything will happen as you want it, the way you've written it. You have my promise, and Yasi's promise."

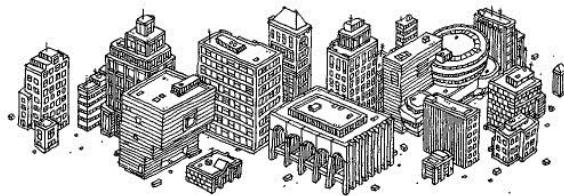
"The boy is weak. It's not his fault—no, not yours, either. You've done your best."

"Who knows what is best and what is not best," she said. Freud, she thought, bitter in her mind against her friend.

"Fortunately, you're strong enough for both of you. Sometimes too strong." He smiled, though not quite in his usual grim way.

He was looking at her, considering her, as she was now, as she had become; and though what she had become was not what she had been in her youth, he showed tolerance, even affection. It made her put her hands to her hair; she could guess what it looked like, what she looked like to him, how wild. She was overdue at the salon. She had been meaning to go for weeks—but what time did she have, between the judge and Yasi and this home and the secret one across the river, day after day, running from here to there? ♦

# THE CRITICS



A CRITIC AT LARGE

## CRY ME A RIVER

*The rise of the failure memoir.*

BY GILES HARVEY

**A** man of genius makes no mistakes,” Stephen Dedalus says in “Ulysses.” “His errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery.” Maybe so; but what about the man of mere talent? What are his mistakes the portals of? A growing batch of memoirs by literary screw-ups and also-rans suggests that mistakes—the bigger and more luridly described the better—might be a portal to the success, or, at the very least, the solvency, that eluded their authors the first time around. The formula is simple: when all else fails, write about your failure.

“It took a long time for me to admit that I had failed,” Benjamin Anastas admits in the opening sentence of his new memoir, “Too Good to Be True” (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). The delay is understandable. In 1998, at the tenderish age of twenty-eight, Anastas published his débüt novel with Dial. “An Underachiever’s Diary” didn’t electrify the culture (it has since been described as “the most underappreciated book of the 1990s”), but it was well reviewed and sold, as they say in the publishing business, “respectably” (i.e., it didn’t lose money). Three years later, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (“It was not just a publisher in my eyes; it was more like the Promised Land”) brought out his sophomore effort, “The Faithful Narrative of a Pastor’s Disappearance.” Again, the reviews were good, the sales modest. Confident that a solid career lay before him, Anastas quit his day job to write full time.

Career: the very word is like a bell. “There are secrets in publishing that no

one ever tells you when you’re young,” Anastas confides. The “biggest one” is that “most books die at their first printing.” So it proved with his own. Gaining the wrong kind of momentum, Anastas was unable to find an American publisher for his next book; the novel ended up being sold to “a boutique house in Salzburg” for a sum so diminutive that Anastas’s agent, fearing for the writer’s already brittle self-esteem, refuses to disclose it. “That was quick,” Anastas remarks when he is told the bad news. His agent stares at him blankly. “Being an author, I mean,” he says.

Only to have published two acclaimed, if commercially unsuccessful, novels might strike the reader as a decidedly First World problem. But there’s worse to come. Disraught at the rejection of his latest novel, Anastas cheats on his fiancée. His fiancée apparently forgives him and the wedding goes ahead, but within six months, and pregnant with Anastas’s child, she leaves him for another man. At the start of the book, Anastas says that he doesn’t have the time “to disguise this story for the sake of art,” and it’s a fair warning. Among other “found” texts documenting his personal disintegration featured in “Too Good to Be True” is a reconstructed transcript of a divorce-counselling session with one Dr. Mordechai. “First you abandon me,” Anastas says to his wife, both in the privacy of the consulting room and now in the public of print:

And then you take my baby away before he’s even born! I can’t watch him grow. I can’t feel him kick. I can’t read to him in the womb.

None of the things that a father gets to enjoy before a baby’s born, I get to do. You’ve stolen that whole experience from me. I can’t read to him! He doesn’t know his own father’s voice!

With a possibly too perfect unctuousness, Dr. Mordechai then turns to Anastas’s wife and says, “Respond to that. I can see you’re uncomfortable.” She’s not the only one.

Troubles never come singly for Anastas. Without a steady job—he teaches creative-writing classes, does some journalism, ghostwrites an inspirational self-help book for a “Christian oilman”—he is soon broke. Aspiring writers, take heed: a good review in the *New York Times* does not preclude the humiliation of feeding change into a Coinstar machine in order to buy your child his morning yogurt.

Anastas is a gifted writer, but “Too Good to Be True” is less an embodiment of its author’s gifts than an expression of the widespread belief that candor will do the work of talent. Orwell’s remark that “autobiography is only to be trusted when it reveals something disgraceful” now seems a commonplace. It’s not that we doubt Anastas’s sincerity when, in a hair-raising open letter, he directs a water canon of invective at his son’s stepfather. It’s that his headlong tone so clearly conditions the *kinds* of truth he is able to tell. Are our most disgraceful moments always the most revealing ones?

When Anastas describes himself leaning against a church door, “arms spread like I was being frisked from behind, head bowed and murmuring pleas for help to a divine power I wasn’t even sure that I believed in,” one starts to feel that self-analysis has been supplanted by mawkish exhibitionism. But Anastas knows what he’s doing. For those prepared to pay the cost in personal exposure, failing up has become a reliable model of literary advancement.

**O**ne reason failure is such an irresistible subject is that it scares us. In a society that worships success (the “bitch-goddess,” as William James called it), few things are more disquieting than the prospect of a blighted career and all the attendant personal, social, and financial woes. Such anxieties are, of course, one of the abiding preoccupations of the novel. A form that first achieved cultural centrality by reflecting the ambitions of a ris-



*For young novelists, writing about their own failure—the more ignominious the better—has become a new route to success.*

ing middle class, it has always kept one eye on the shadow side of worldly striv-  
ing. For every “Tom Jones” there is a  
“Père Goriot,” for every “David Copper-  
field” a “Jude the Obscure.”

If narratives of personal unravelling afford us a frisson of danger (“Look how bad things can get!”), they also reaffirm our sense of relative achievement and security (“At least I didn’t end up like *that*”). Assurances that the suffering was real can heighten the effect. That’s as true of Thomas De Quincey, whose “Confessions of an English Opium-Eater” brought him instant fame when it was published, in 1821, as it is of Cat Marnell, the oversharing blogger and former beauty editor of *Lucky*, who relayed her drug-fuelled breakdowns and crises in real time for the better part of last year (and is at work on a memoir, provisionally titled “How to Murder Your Life”). As long as the failure belongs to someone else, we are eager to read about it.

“You have a brown thumb,” Graydon Carter, the editor of *Vanity Fair*, says to Toby Young, the author of “How to Lose Friends and Alienate People” (2001), and, at the time of this particular dressing-down, Carter’s employee. “What’s that?” Young asks. “It’s the opposite of a green thumb,” Carter explains. “Everything you touch turns to shit.” That’s pretty much the size of it. Young, a self-described “balding British hack” and “Philip Seymour Hoffman look-alike” with vague artistic aspirations, moved to the States in the mid-nineties to work as a contributing editor at *Vanity Fair*. His record of his time there is a Ring cycle of bungling and mishap. In a typical chapter, he loses one colleague’s beloved Chihuahua and hires a stripper for another on what turns out to be Condé Nast’s Take Our Daughters to Work Day.

Young is not the only writer of his generation to present his worldly defeat as indicative of some deeper, incorruptible virtue: we are encouraged to see his unwitting tendency to antagonize the humorless conformists of New York’s media élite as a mark of probity. “In failing to become a somebody, did I just remain a nobody?” he wonders. “Or did I stay true to myself?” Naturally, he ends up getting fired, sinks into an alcoholic funk, and teeters on the edge of financial catastrophe. A poor student of his own experience, Young claims, “Nothing had

## TROIA

Ruined Troy lay promiscuous among  
findspot and tell, breastworks and ditches  
like nine gold bracelets at a Turkish wedding,  
in twenty-two karats, mined outside Pergamum.  
Schliemann’s trench was a wound through the whole thing:  
at the Scaean Gate he was off by twelve hundred years,  
  
where the mourning doves sang compulsively,  
vulgar-throated. In the music’s pause  
near two stone griffins, a feral tabby  
warmed herself on a broken plinth, almond blossom  
made a blizzard in the orchard nearby,  
and the spokes of wild fennel crossed with the sun’s rays.

The Scamander River was nowhere to be seen,  
having wandered off across  
the rich alluvial plain. Nothing more would happen,  
that was the spirit and the sum:  
nothing would happen here ever again—  
that, a taste of fennel, and the goat bells’ tinnitus.

—Karl Kirchwey

prepared me for the realization that I wasn’t one of life’s winners.”

Young’s book may be shallow and shticky, but its success—it became a best-seller and was made into a movie with Jeff Bridges and Megan Fox—opened the door for other local-boy-makes-bad narratives. (It is a conspicuously male genre.) In they came: David Goodwillie’s “Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time” (2006), about the author’s ill-fated post-college season of striving in literary, and sub-literary, New York; Josh Giddings’s “Failure: An Autobiography” (2007), a book whose title, to say nothing of its chapter headings (“My Failure to Get Into Harvard,” “Failure in New York,” “My Failure as a Writer”), gives you some idea of what to expect; Tom Grimes’s “Mentor” (2010), in which, after the poor showing of his first novel, Grimes suffers a nervous collapse, becoming convinced that the F.B.I. is on his trail. Refusing to let good fortune spoil his brand, Young wrote a second book, about his ragged time in Hollywood, “The Sound of No Hands Clapping” (2006).

But, then, most literary careers end ingloriously. Most of them, in fact, end before they’ve even begun, with the failure to complete what John Updike said should

be the primary goal of any writer: getting into print. For a long time, it seemed that this would be Greg Baxter’s fate. In his twenties, in Baton Rouge, Baxter spent years working on his first novel. When he failed to find a publisher, he decided to move to Europe: “I could not bear the humiliation of being an unpublished novelist in a country where bad writing, as it seemed to me, had become institutionalized.” So begins Baxter’s account of his wretched European sojourn, “A Preparation for Death” (Penguin).

Baxter and his wife end up in Dublin, but the move does not reverse the writer’s downward trajectory. Although he spends many months revising his novel, he comes to realize that the whole thing has been “a waste of time.” An attempt at a second novel fares no better. A sense of purpose is briefly restored after he begins teaching an evening class in creative writing at the Irish Writers’ Center; but then his marriage disintegrates, and so does Baxter. “A Preparation for Death” was written during this episode. “Traditional autobiography is composed after the experience has passed,” he explains in the preface. “I wrote this book in the very panic of the experiences that inspired it.”

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grim reading. Anastas at least tries to ward off disaster; Baxter launches a deliberate "campaign of personal sabotage." You often feel that he is getting into trouble just so he can write about it afterward. "I fell asleep on friends in bars," he tells us. "I began to drink in the mornings. I didn't come home some nights." He also embarks on a spree of womanizing, which he seems to have enjoyed very much. For the reader, the experience is less thrilling. "I have no capacity to write beautifully about sex," Baxter concedes, before providing us with plenty of supporting evidence. "When she is underneath me she is always squirming away," he writes of one conquest; "it is like some *National Geographic* article in which the female is only subdued if the male can penetrate her."

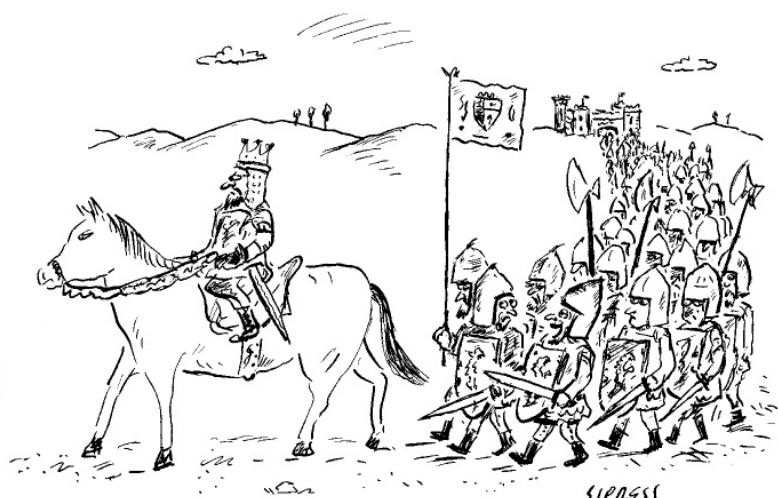
Even more emphatically than Anastas, Baxter propounds a doctrine of writing that values "honesty" and "truth" above the supposedly adulterating qualities of craft and composition. "I do not even consider myself a natural writer," he reveals. "I have an above-average mind, a good attitude toward work in isolation, an appetite for authors who humble me, and I am not afraid of my entrails: that's enough."

Is it? In one episode, during a return visit to the States, Baxter finds himself at a Vegas strip joint in the early hours of Christmas morning. When a performer gives him an especially attentive lap dance, he starts to get that special feeling: "I have a tendency—and this is an old cliché but what can you do when it's

the truth—to fall in love with strippers." Here is the main problem with Baxter's entrails-first aesthetic. He claims to have no interest in "fictions," but the most shop-soiled of fictional conventions—the writer who must suffer for his work, the writer as drunk—abound in this memoir.

There is much to dislike in "A Preparation for Death"—the see-what-sticks prose, the antisocial ranting, the whirlwind of narcissism and consumption that is our narrator—but it does one thing very well: it captures the wild presumptuousness of literary ambition. The writer is self-recruited; he goes looking for a job that isn't there. More books are the last thing that people are demanding. So give Baxter credit for having written something that people wanted to read. When it was published in Britain, in 2010, "A Preparation for Death" met with critical acclaim. Reviewers praised its "infuriating honesty," its "emotional truth," its "steely courage." Baxter had arrived. He recently published his first novel. Never let a good failure go to waste.

It may be tempting to draw a connection between the epidemic of novelists' failure memoirs and a failure of confidence in the novel itself. Hardly a week goes by without somebody, often one of its most eminent practitioners, disparaging the form. Among these skeptics, few are more full-throated than David Shields, the author of three novels and several previous works of



"I hear it's because we're right and they're wrong."

nonfiction. His new book, "How Literature Saved My Life" (Knopf), extends his critique of the fictional prose narrative. In Shields's view, the novel has failed; it is no longer up to the task of representing contemporary life.

Shields tells a story about how he reached this conclusion. In the eighties and nineties, he spent "many, many years" trying to write a novel about this country's obsession with celebrity culture through the lens of a married couple's domestic life, a kind of American version of Kundera's "Unbearable Lightness of Being." The project stalled when Shields came to find the conventional novelistic apparatus (plot, dialogue, character) cumbersome and irrelevant to his deepest concerns. He discovered that the essayistic digressions he had written and was planning to insert into his novel were themselves the book he wanted to write. This was the genesis of Shields's "Remote: Reflections on Life in the Shadow of Celebrity," which came out in 1996. Since then, he hasn't returned

to fiction: "Forms are there to serve the culture, and when they die, they die for a good reason—or so I have to believe, the novel having long since gone dark for me."

Genres may indeed have a half-life: just go ask the verse drama. But Shields's book is not an alluring advertisement for the kind of writing (a mishmash of criticism and autobiography, "possessing as thin a membrane as possible between life and art") that he hopes will take the novel's place. Like "Too Good to Be True" and "A Preparation for Death" (Shields donated an enthusiastic blurb to the latter, and his influence is palpable in both), "How Literature Saved My Life" seems to take its commitment to what Shields calls "reality-based" writing as license for a kind of slack personal chitchat. The book is all Shields, all the time. He represents a personal failure of ambition as the failure of the novel at large, but it's not an easy sell. To write a novel is tough work; to spend a few pages describing how you failed to write one, or to enu-

merate the character traits you share with George W. Bush, or simply to give lists of your favorite books (as Shields does), is the work of a moment.

Perhaps the rise of the failure memoir is the result less of an aesthetic disenchantment with the novel form than of something more mundane. Failure is timeless, but for writers there's now more of it to go around. The recent contractions and consolidations in the publishing business—layoffs, dwindling sales and advances, mergers of houses once thought unassailable—have left a widespread sense of unease about the durability of books. Reading in bed with his girlfriend, Anastas wonders if the rise of e-books "will help keep writing alive and well into the digitized future, or if my problems are an early warning that my profession is about to go extinct."

Anastas's fears are not unwarranted. He is himself a casualty of a new publishing model, whereby editors, instead of allowing novelists to evolve and build an audience in the course of several

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books, bet big on début writers and hope for an overnight success. Those who don't turn a profit are often shut out. For novelists like Anastas, who find their career stalled after a few books, or those like Baxter, who are unable to get a novel published in the first place, the memoir provides a back door into print. The publishing industry has created a generation of professional failurists whose great subject is how the publishing industry ruined their lives.

the tension between the austere, impersonal burnish of Fitzgerald's style and the roiling emotion it has been enlisted to master.

American novelists have been writing their own versions of "The Crack-Up" ever since. In 1959, Norman Mailer published "The Last Draft of *The Deer Park*," an unhinged broadside about the rejection of his third novel by seven New York publishers, and the nervous breakdown that this precipitated. Three decades later, Philip Roth wrote an autobiography, "The Facts," after complications arising from a routine surgery led to "an extreme depression that carried me right to the edge of emotional and mental dissolution." (In a brilliant postscript, Nathan Zuckerman, Roth's fictional alter ego, writes Roth a letter in which he urges him, "Don't publish.") In a 1996 essay, "Perchance to Dream," Jonathan Franzen described "the deafening silence of irrelevance" that followed the publication of his second novel, "Strong Motion," and the ensuing depression ("I could do little after dinner but flop in front of the TV") that almost led him to give up writing fiction.

There is a sadness to these memoirs and essays that goes beyond the sadness of the experiences they describe. It is the sadness of a betrayed vocation, since the novelist is someone for whom experience is always mere potential, a way, as Roth puts it in "The Facts," of "springing into fiction." For the novelist, the memoir form itself represents a kind of failure.

Anastas is clearly aware of the difference between him and Fitzgerald: Fitzgerald fell from a great height, Anastas from the first-floor window. Failure isn't what it used to be. Still, "The Crack-Up" was hardly innocent of worldly calculation. When the essay was published in *Esquire*, it attracted a blizzard of publicity. Looking back on this time, Arnold Gingrich, the magazine's editor, recalled, "Can't feel that it did him any damage." Many people had thought Fitzgerald was dead. "The Crack-Up" not only reminded the public that he was still around; it got the attention of the Hollywood executives who hired him as a screenwriter and gave him his second chance. A year later, Fitzgerald was on his way to Los Angeles—where, it turned out, success was more bitch than goddess. ♦

## BRIEFLY NOTED

**The City of Devi**, by Manil Suri (*Norton*). In Suri's third novel, terrorism has plunged the world into chaos and brought India and Pakistan to the brink of nuclear war. As Hindus and Muslims clash and Mumbai braces for a strike, Sarita searches—across factional lines—for her physicist husband, Karun. Their marriage, more than a year old, is still unconsummated, and she bears a pomegranate that she hopes may spur his libido if she finds him. Joining her in the quest is Jaz, who, unbeknownst to Sarita, is a former lover of Karun's and has secretly been trying to win him back. Suri's take on apocalypse is broadly satirical: a flashy Bollywood superhero ignites the conflict; class lines are firm, even in the dim confines of a bomb shelter; a religious zealot holds thousands in thrall to a gilded beggar girl with a birth defect. But at root this is a stirringly poignant love story, drawn with deep compassion.

**The Pretty One**, by Lucinda Rosenfeld (*Little, Brown*). "What if her sisters saw her as a failure?" Pia, the second of three daughters and the titular pretty one, wonders, but the thought might easily have occurred to any of the Hellinger sisters in this comic novel of sibling rivalry. Perri, the "perfect" one, a C.E.O. with three kids, has stopped sleeping with her husband. Rebellious Gus, a lawyer and "the family big mouth," has been left by her girlfriend. And Pia, a single mother, begins to question her decision to have her daughter by artificial insemination. With a light touch, Rosenfeld portrays the "conspiratorial, even magical" relationship among sisters that makes failure to communicate all the more painful. Though individually they try to transcend the limitations of their assigned

identities, these women cannot help holding each other captive to their common history.

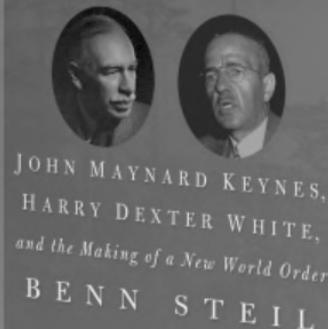
**The Force of Things**, by Alexander Stille (*Farrar, Straus & Giroux*). The author sets out to discover why his father, the Jewish-Italian journalist Ugo Stille, and his mother, a Wasp from Ithaca named Elizabeth Bogert, got married and stayed married. In almost every way, they are an odd couple: she is beautiful, tidy, calm; he is short, sloppy, irascible. Constantly fighting, they seem always on the verge of divorce, yet remain together for forty-three years. Stille uses the domestic drama as a starting point for a sweeping narrative that blends memoir, history, and psychology, and spans generations and continents. The approach yields riches, as the calamities of Ugo's early life (his family fled Italy during the Second World War) come to bear on his marriage, and as Elizabeth struggles to assert herself as an independent woman. Moving effortlessly between the intimate and the grand, Stille shows how our lives acquire meaning "because we are part of and express the times in which we live."

**Shouting Won't Help**, by Katherine Bouton (*Sarah Crichton Books*). The author was an editor at the *Times* when she lost her hearing completely, after decades of progressive decline. "When it could no longer be ignored, I spiraled into depression, came close to breaking up my marriage, isolated myself from friends, lost my job," she writes. Out of this upheaval, Bouton reports about the science behind hearing loss and the public-health dangers of an increasingly noisy world, and provides brief biographies of others who have suffered similarly. The book's greatest strength, however, is Bouton's personal narrative, which offers essential insight into the subtle but crippling ways that this "hidden disability, one often borne in secret," can upend relationships and threaten professional goals. Although Bouton has found some relief, thanks to medical and technological advances, she writes that "for the adult with late-onset hearing loss, there is no recovering the person you used to be."

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## MUSICAL EVENTS

# ILLUMINATED

*George Benjamin's long-awaited masterpiece.*

BY ALEX ROSS

The raw musical talent of the British composer George Benjamin has never been in doubt. In 1976, when he was sixteen, he went to Paris to study with the august Olivier Messiaen, who compared him to Mozart. By the age of twenty, he was receiving ovations at the Proms, in London's Royal Albert Hall. Such early acclaim might have bred arrogance in some artists, but in the case of Benjamin, a congenial and unassuming man, it seemed to have the opposite effect, engendering caution. Between the ages of twenty and fifty, he worked with conspicuous slowness, often spending years on a fifteen- or twenty-minute piece. The adjectives "exquisite," "fastidious," and "immaculate" followed him around in the press, leaving the impression that he was a miniaturist, a creator of musical jewel boxes, rather than the kind of composer who could shake you to the core.

Benjamin's first large-scale opera, "Written on Skin," which had its première last summer, at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, and is now playing at the Royal Opera House, in Covent Garden, demolishes that image. The craftsmanship remains: more than a few pages of "Written on Skin" are as immaculate as anything that Benjamin has written, or, for that matter, anything composed since the heyday of Ravel. The score is magnificently free of clichés and longueurs. Orchestration teachers will add it to the curriculum, and students will marvel at the mind that could blend oboes, muted trumpets, pizzicato strings, and bongos into one scuttling, insectoid instrument. Yet the opera smolders with darker, wilder energies. Benjamin has found a way of painting on a large canvas, indulging in grand gestures while maintaining his fabled control of detail. He has also pulled off a tremendous feat of stylistic integration, fusing the legacy of twentieth-century modernism with glimpses of a

twenty-first-century tonality. Even the composer's most committed admirers are a little shocked: "Written on Skin" feels like the work of a genius unleashed.

The libretto is by the playwright Martin Crimp, with whom Benjamin collaborated on his only previous attempt at music theatre, the 2006 chamber opera "Into the Little Hill." That piece was an oblique take on the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, and "Written on Skin," too, rings modern variations on ancient material—the legendary life of the Catalan troubadour Guillem de Cabestaing. Like "Pelleas et Melisande" and "Wozzeck," two operas that lurk behind it, "Written on Skin" is a love triangle with an unhappy outcome. In the original telling, Guillem falls in love with his patron's wife, Agnès, and sings her praises. When the lord finds out, he kills Guillem, removes his heart, cooks it, and serves it to Agnès, who, on learning what she has consumed, swears that she will never again eat or drink, so that she can preserve her lover's taste in her mouth. Fleeing her husband's wrath, she runs to a balcony and throws herself to her death.

Aware that too many operas have ended with a woman's perishing, Crimp questions the premises of the genre as he goes. The plot is framed by a trio of contemporary angels who conjure away our world—"Strip the cities of brick . . . strip out the wires and cover the land with grass"—and summon medieval times. The present keeps bleeding through, however; at one point, the Guillem figure, who here becomes a painter of illuminated manuscripts and is called the Boy, has a vision of "this wood and this light . . . cut through by eight lanes of poured concrete." At intervals, listeners are reminded that in this recovered past Jews are being stoned, that criminals are being tortured, that male bonding can mask

homoerotic desire, and, above all, that women are being confined to a status of illiterate obedience. Agnès, whose first word is a defiant "No!", pushes the Boy to depict the world as it really is and, in her final utterance, suggests that the tale of their love will help to liberate those who hear it.

Benjamin's score conveys a similar ambivalence about the conventions of operatic doom. It begins with an orchestral melee—brass, winds, and strings swirling into astringent dissonances. Such acts of harmonic aggression are commonplace in the annals of modern music: in Berg's "Lulu," a twelve-note barrage signals the murder of the title character. But Benjamin's dissonances are not just signals of horror. They have their own organic logic, and tend to resolve into simple, sustained intervals. They come across as anguished assertions of will. And in the climactic scene of the grisly meal the chords trade hands in a significant fashion. At the beginning, a series of screaming six-note sonorities frames the icily detached voice of the lord—called the Protector—as he serves his cannibal dish. By scene's end, as Agnès wends her way toward a convulsive high C, the same chords recur in clipped bursts, their ferocity converted to her cause.

An epilogue adds a dimension of cosmic mystery to an already intricate construction. The angels, observing Agnès's fall, whisk us back to the paved-over present, their eyes exhibiting "cold fascination with human disaster." In an interview, Crimp said that he had in mind Walter Benjamin's famous description of a painting by Paul Klee—the "angel of history" who surveys the wreckage of the past while being blown backward into the future. The opera ends with a similarly fraught image of progress. The lower orchestra heaves a Mahlerian sigh of grief, with a hint of D major darkening to D minor. A glass harmonica and a bass viol float eerie sonorities, suggestive of wan light. But the dominant sound comes from that twitchy ensemble of oboes, trumpets, strings, and bongos, dancing enigmati-

cally in place. The last sound you hear is a high C on the violins, echoing Agnès's final cry, with maracas rustling underneath. It feels like a question mark hanging over the future of the species.

The inaugural production of "Written on Skin" is by the restlessly inventive theatre director Katie Mitchell. At the outset, contemporary figures flit about in a fluorescent-lit laboratory,



"Written on Skin," at Covent Garden.

apparently engaged in the restoration of a medieval manuscript. So immersed are they in their labors that they begin to reenact the story. The conceit produces some gripping images—at the end, Agnès moves in slow motion up a white concrete stairwell—yet the behind-the-scenes activity periodically disrupts the ebb and flow of the music.

Between the second and third scenes, anticipating another entrance by the omniscient angels, Benjamin writes a magical transition in which triads melt into lush dissonances. Onstage, Mitchell's bustling figures seem indifferent to the gorgeous blossoming of the sound. Future stagings, and they will come, should seek a more fluid response to the opera's tricky temporal structure.

The opening-night cast at Covent Garden, which duplicates that of the première in Aix, last summer—there is a recording of those performances, on the Nimbus label—had no weak links. The soprano Barbara Hannigan gave a vivid, exacting portrait of Agnès, her voice secure up to high C. The rich-voiced baritone Christopher Purves added wily nuances to the menacing Protector. The countertenor Bejun Mehta exuded sacred passion as the Boy and as the lead angel, airily executing the Handelian ornaments that Benjamin wove into the part. The composer conducted, eliciting lustre and heat in equal measure.

Covent Garden has done Benjamin a favor by lowering ticket prices for the run: the most expensive seats are sixty-five pounds, the cheapest three pounds. The less moneyed classes are, as a rule, more open to new music, and there were no empty seats on the first night. The company used the same scheme for a January revival of Harrison Birtwistle's "The Minotaur," which had its première at the house in 2008. It is a grungy masterpiece in an unrepentant brutalist style, with a production, by Stephen Langridge, that wallows in violence and gore. Despite those elements—or, more likely, because of them—the run was essentially sold out. For coming years, Covent

Garden has announced commissions from Georg Friedrich Haas, Thomas Adès, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Unsuk Chin, and Kaija Saariaho, among others. Against all odds, London's plush old house has established itself as a global center for new opera. In comparison, the Met, for all its technological pizzazz, looks archaic. ♦

## DEEP DIVE

*The meditative beauty of Jane Campion's "Top of the Lake."*

BY EMILY NUSSBAUM



"*Top of the Lake*," a coming-of-age detective story, revisits Campion's enduring themes.

Since its early days, television has been considered a writer's medium, not a director's. Much of this comes down to structural limits: a writers' room can grind out twenty-two scripts for a season of network TV, or half as many for a cable show, but that workload is not as feasible for a director. It's also pricey to make a mini-movie, every week, for years. As a result, television genres have relied on simple, replicable vocabularies—closeups for soaps, chase scenes for cop shows, and the stagey bluntness of the multi-cam sitcom style. On network TV, with few exceptions, directors are guns for hire instead of creative forces; it's the inverse of Hollywood filmmaking, where directors dominate and writers submit.

In 1990, David Lynch made a splash

with "Twin Peaks," but nothing so visually daring emerged again until the late nineties, when HBO became a Medicilike patron to TV's Golden Age. Even then, it was the writer-showrunners who got the credit. (Does anyone remember the names of directors on "The Sopranos"?\*) In recent years, however, this hierarchy has begun to erode, with movie directors moving to cable, including writer-directors like Lena Dunham and Mike White, as well as more purely visual directors, like Martin Scorsese, on "Boardwalk Empire," Michael Mann, on "Luck," and David Fincher, on "House of Cards." Prominent indie directors also show up frequently, placing their visual stamp on the most ambitious shows, including Nicole Holofcener, Jonathan

Demme, and Todd Haynes on "Enlightened"; Claudia Weill (the director of the groundbreaking seventies movie "Girlfriends") on "Girls"; and Rian Johnson on "Breaking Bad."

Into this landscape comes "Top of the Lake," a seven-episode thriller on Sundance, directed by Jane Campion. Campion is the auteur behind such exceptional productions as "Sweetie" and "An Angel at My Table." Her major hit was the Oscar-winning "The Piano," from 1993, but, since then, her work has had a lower profile, the latest entry being "Bright Star," about John Keats and Fanny Brawne. "Top of the Lake" revisits some of Campion's enduring themes, such as coming-of-age stories and the allure of tattoo-faced men who resemble Harvey Keitel. Yet her newest project is also very TV. A crime procedural set in New Zealand, it shares plot elements with AMC's dilatory "The Killing," including a female detective (Elisabeth Moss, as Robin Griffin) who ducks phone calls from an impatient fiancé. Thankfully, unlike "The Killing," which was clotted with self-seriousness, "Top of the Lake" delivers. It does so, ironically, in ways that echo the ambitions of "The Killing"'s showrunner, Veena Sud, who, after her finale provoked an uproar, explained (rather tetchily) that not revealing the killer was part of a larger goal, that of deconstructing the puzzle-solving linearity of most TV mysteries: "Either it's a left-brain journey, where you're just connecting the dots of who the suspects are, or it's more of a holistic journey where a young girl is murdered, these are the potential suspects, and this is why."

"Holistic right-brain journey" is hardly a hot sell for any TV drama, but "Top of the Lake" is a trip worth taking—visually magnetic, but also funny, sexy, disorienting, and emotional. After seven episodes, even the loose ends (there are several) begin to feel necessary. Initially, the story seems simple. Robin, a detective who specializes in crimes against children, goes home to visit her dying mother, who lives in a rustic area surrounding an enormous lake (Moke Lake, near Queenstown). During her stay, she's asked to consult on a troubling case: a twelve-year-old half-Thai girl has walked chest high into the dark water, apparently trying to kill herself. The girl, Tui, turns out to be pregnant, and, when Robin tries to interview

her, she has to shoo away other cops, who come across as prurient and insensitive. When asked to write down who the father is, Tui writes "no one"; shortly thereafter, she disappears.

Meanwhile, a culture clash is taking place. The fantastic Peter Mullan—who dominates every scene he's in—plays Matt, a thug who, with two brutish sons, lives in a compound surrounded by barbed wire and barking dogs. A bunch of middle-aged women roll up trailing cargo containers, and they transform a lakeside tract of land—which Matt believes he owns—into a Burning Man-like encampment, run by a deadpan self-help guru, G.J. (Holly Hunter). Matt tries to get rid of these hippie chatterboxes, but they end up being more intractable than he expects.

As in every detective story, the plots soon reveal common roots—among other things, Matt appears to have laid his genetic lid on every pot in town. Robin has a painful history of her own, and, over time, the show becomes a meditation on sexual violence, as well as on the compromises that people make to maintain relationships with those who have betrayed them. Even Robin's mother has taken up with an abusive man; but, as she explains to Robin, he also takes care of her and gives her massages—for her, right now, that's a reasonable bargain. Like "Twin Peaks," "Top of the Lake" is a portrait of small-town life full of secrets that everyone knows, where the idyllic isolation conceals the nastiest crimes. Yet there's humor, too, and surrealism; as in all of Campion's films, ordinary bodies collide, with nudity that feels spontaneous and shaggily organic rather than contrived, as it is on so many cable shows.

The dialogue (which was co-written by Campion and Gerard Lee) is smart and spare, but much of "Top of the Lake's" effect comes through its visual framing. There are chaotic sequences set in a dive bar, in which people bump into one another like weather systems. In a trailer bedroom, wishbones dangle from a clothesline. When a woman lies on a bed, we see the soles of her feet—her panty hose are ripped, forming jagged patterns. (It's an image that echoes closeups in "The Piano" of white skin framed by a hole in black stockings.) One sex scene is filmed almost invasively, with rough closeups; another includes shots from a distance, deep

in the forest. In the series' numerous crane views, Campion's New Zealand landscape drowns the actors, turning them into tiny afterthoughts, like figures in an Andreas Gursky photograph. She uses these images not to establish a setting but to induce a mood, hypnotizing the viewer with soft green tufts of trees sticking up like feather dusters, or black mountains looming over a search party. Campion shared the directing with Garth Davis, but they used the same editor, Alexandre de Franceschi, and the same cinematographer, "Animal Kingdom's" Adam Arkapaw. Whatever the division of labor, "Top of the Lake" feels unified; it's a collaborative work that functions as a singular vision.

While the crime-solving sequences are comparatively straightforward, the sequences set at G.J.'s cultish encampment have a hilariously self-referential quality, not least because Holly Hunter is done up much like Jane Campion—gray hair to the shoulders, butch stare, and a crone's glamour. These scenes begin as comic relief, with Campion poking fun at the needy, post-menopausal groupies. There's a strange subplot involving a half-naked ditz whose pet chimpanzee attacked her best friend, and G.J. herself is less mother hen than megalomaniac. But somehow, the series also takes seriously the encampment's philosophy, as a circle that helps heal the broken women who flock there from the town. "The body has tremendous intelligence," G.J. tells one of her followers. "Follow the body." It's an idea that links the two plots, the one with the hard-boiled detective and the one with the New Age guru. The truth must be reckoned with, if we ever hope to purify corrupt institutions.

Speaking of corrupt institutions, "Top of the Lake," which ends up revolving—like "Twin Peaks" before it—around sexual exploitation, suggests alternatives to television's typical approach to the subject, which too often relies on hot bruised corpses served as visual candy. Campion's way of dramatizing crime is hypnotic and circular—we understand a few of the case's facts before the detective figures them out, and so the audience's "gotcha" impulse to solve the puzzle and be done with it is circumvented. "Top of the Lake" needn't be a template for all TV production, but it's an eye-opener, in both senses: a model of the sort of series in which words and images carry equal weight. ♦

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## FUN IN THE SUN

*"Spring Breakers" and "Reality."*

BY ANTHONY LANE



Harmony Korine's new movie casts James Franco as a drug dealer named Alien.

**N**ow all the youth of Tampa are on fire. Such is the considered opinion of *"Spring Breakers,"* and in particular of its opening minutes, aflame with the seaside carousing of beaux and belles. Tan, toned, and deaf to all entreaty save that of their rollicking senses, they bend and bulge toward the camera, up close yet oddly impersonal, beating time on our eardrums and daring us to risk our retinas. The music is by Skrillex, who created such tender ballads as *"Bangarang"* and *"Kill Everybody,"* while the color scheme, stuffed with explosive pinks and dreamy tangerines, makes Matisse look like Giacometti. Who, you want to ask, can possibly be the magus behind this bacchanal—this forthright sucking of Popsicles, this spume of beer hosed across bare flesh, this char-grilled day?

The obvious answer is “The candyman can,” but in fact the director of *“Spring Breakers”* is Harmony Korine. Whether you can still be an enfant terrible at forty is a matter of debate. Nonetheless, since the age of nineteen, when he wrote the script for Larry Clark’s troublemaking *“Kids,”* Korine has applied himself to the necessary, if often tire-

some, business of provocation. By now, after works like *“Gummo”* (1997), *“Julien Donkey-Boy”* (1999), *“Mister Lonely”* (2007), and *“Trash Humpers”* (2009), in which old-timers really do have sex with garbage cans, it’s clear that Korine can hardly spot a hackle that he doesn’t feel compelled to raise. Most of those movies, however, lolled about in itchy disaffection. What is new about *“Spring Breakers”* is the punch of the thing: positively raging with affect and crafted with a care that rebuffs the deliberate, faux-amateur roughness of early Korine. Is that care loving, though, or mocking? Has the outsider joined the mainstream or has he simply realized that there is no better, dumber place to hold a pool party?

Certainly, his hirings are astute. The cinematographer is Benoît Debrie, who photographed Gaspar Noé’s *“Enter the Void,”* the opening credits of which provided the liveliest phantasmagoria of the past decade. Then, there are Korine’s leading ladies, half of them—Selena Gomez and Vanessa Hudgens—hijacked from the wonderful world of the Disney Channel and transferred to a

pulsing human zoo where cocaine is licked from breasts, bikinis are worn with handcuffs, in front of a judge, and the correct attire for homicide is a ski mask the hue of strawberry ice cream. Gomez plays Faith, and Hudgens her friend Candy; together with Brit (Ashley Benson) and Cotty (Rachel Korine, the director’s wife), they form a frustrated foursome, who have finished the semester but cannot afford to go to Tampa for spring break. The need to be there, we feel, really is a need—not just a physical longing but a social emergency, to which no alternative can be imagined. American teen-agers are no different, in this respect, from the British upper classes, who, until not long ago, would rather be seen dead than not be seen at Ascot, near the Queen.

On the whole, however, lords and ladies tend not to hold up the Chicken Shack. That is what Korine’s heroines resort to, threatening the clientele with hammers and water pistols in their quest for cash. Thus enriched, they head to Florida, where the mania that we witnessed at the start continues, on a grander scale. The moment at which the camera cranes up, roof-high, to inspect a pullulating swarm of bodies below is like some insane twenty-first-century answer to Bruegel, although the filmmaker, unlike the painter, is scarcely able to contain himself at the spectacle of delight. Then it stops. Drugs are discovered, the girls are arrested, and salvation—or, rather, a grinning damnation—arrives, in the shape of Alien (James Franco), who bails them out and invites them to stick around.

You have to admire any actor who thinks that careers should, you know, career, like dirt bikes or stunt cars, and to jump from *“Oz the Great and Powerful”—* again, a Disney product—onto the planet infested by Alien shows a certain recklessness and style. Alien is a loser, a loudmouth, and a drug dealer, with murder on his mind. He has a field of cornrows on his scalp, a mouthful of metal, and a houseful of guns. The fact that Franco is able to imbue him with a dose of sugared charm, as well as menace, is remarkable. It’s also dramatically useful, almost convincing us that the four students—soon shorn to three, after Faith, true to her name, smells evil in the air and turns for home—would hang with some-

one like Alien and become his partners in crime. Almost.

To be fair, there are sequences that reach beyond the creamy skin of the pleasure-hunting culture, prodding it for signs of decay. A shot of the youngsters in a darkened lecture hall at school, among scores of their peers, each of whom sits before a glowing laptop, speaks volumes—not that most of them would know what volumes are—about what happens when our grasp of experience becomes exclusively and unappraisably visual. Those ranks of screens look like cages in a lab. Push this scary theme a little further, and you get the raid on the Chicken Shack. “Fucking pretend like it’s a video game. Act like you’re in a movie or something,” one of the girls says, and, in deference to her command, the robbery is filmed entirely from a car that circles the building while the violence raves within. The model here is “Gun Crazy” (1950), where the camera stayed in the getaway vehicle for the duration of a bank job, and Korine transforms that trick of suspense into a dread-laden image of emotional shutout.

Later, alas, he blows it by returning to the scene for a jolting flashback, filmed like any other action movie, this time inside the Shack. The longer “Spring Breakers” goes on, the more its creator comes to resemble its characters in his swooning surrender to temptation, and by the time Alien noodles around on a grand piano, in a peachy twilight, on the waterfront, and croons Britney Spears’s “Everytime,” while Cotty, Brit, and Candy writhe along, cradling assault weapons and a shotgun, Korine has mislaid any claim to moral distance. What

began as a blast, gleefully poised between salivation and satire, has dwindled into a gaseous trip, with the phrase “spring break” breathed repeatedly in voice-over, like a Hail Mary. Who will stay with this film, and glorify it? Two sorts, I reckon: real revellers, randy for sensation, out of their heads; and, a block away, coffee-drinking Ph.D.s, musing on the cinema of alienation, too lost inside their heads to break for spring.

No oxymoron, not even “Internet security,” “free love,” or “jumbo shrimp,” has quite the poisoned bite of “reality TV.” This makes it a natural subject for the Italian director Matteo Garrone, who made the engrossing “Gomorrah” (2008). Where that movie mapped the ways in which people’s lives and industries were throttled by the Neapolitan Mafia, “Reality”—though also set largely in Naples, and though cleaving to the fortunes of one man—is actually the more expansive work, because it tells of a choke hold into which all of us, anywhere, can be lured.

Luciano (Aniello Arena) is a fishmonger by trade and a merry soul by instinct. One day, egged on by his three young children and his wife, Maria (Loredana Simioli), he auditions for a role in “Grande Fratello,” the Italian version of “Big Brother.” Although he doesn’t stand a chance, the dream of that chance—the distant prospect of cascading fame and wealth—comes to plague him. Believing that the show’s producers are dispatching scouts to spy on him, he starts to offload his possessions to the poor, not through altruism but simply from a craving to look good. Heaven knows, the Catholic

Church in Italy is under strain and attack right now, but the parody of worship that we see in Luciano’s uplifted gaze, bright with coveting the golden calf of prime time, suggests that to abandon the old, forgiving creed can lead you straight into the maw of the merciless.

Like “Gomorrah,” “Reality” should by rights deflate the heart, and many scenes, having made their sardonic point, tend to loiter and drag. Yet there is juice and even joy in this spectacle, whether in the tacky wedding that kicks it off or in the banter among Luciano, his benign co-worker, Michele (Nando Paone), and their customers. Likewise, the members of Luciano’s extended family, with their fleshly curves and the rainbow-shattering colors of their outfits, seem at first like a multi-generational answer to “Spring Breakers,” sent to alarm us. As the tale unfolds, however, we realize that they are the wellspring of kindness and common sense, and that their ancient apartment block—lovely, crumbling, and scabbed over—is Luciano’s cradle, and his only hope. In short, there are moments, in this very uneven film, with its lamination of the ancient and the monstrously new, when the spirit of Fellini hovers overhead like a naughty angel. Picture his reaction to the news that Cinecittà, the great film studio where he shot “La Dolce Vita,” is now the official residence of “Big Brother.” He would either cry out in dismay or merely smile and shrug, as if to say, “I warned you.” ♦

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Richard Brody blogs about movies.

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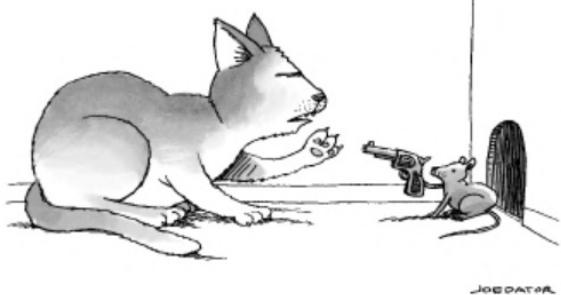
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Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Liam Francis Walsh, must be received by Sunday, March 24th. The finalists in the March 11th contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the April 8th issue. The winner receives a signed print of the cartoon. Any resident of the United States, Canada (except Quebec), Australia, the United Kingdom, or the Republic of Ireland age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit [newyorker.com/captioncontest](http://newyorker.com/captioncontest).

### THE WINNING CAPTION



*"Damn, I loved that giraffe."*  
Robert J. Robinson, Kailua, Hawaii



### THE FINALISTS

*"Six rounds. Nine lives. You do the math."*  
Tom Leonard, Berkeley, Calif.

*"Calm down—I just came to get my things."*  
Amy Crossfield, Brooklyn, N.Y.

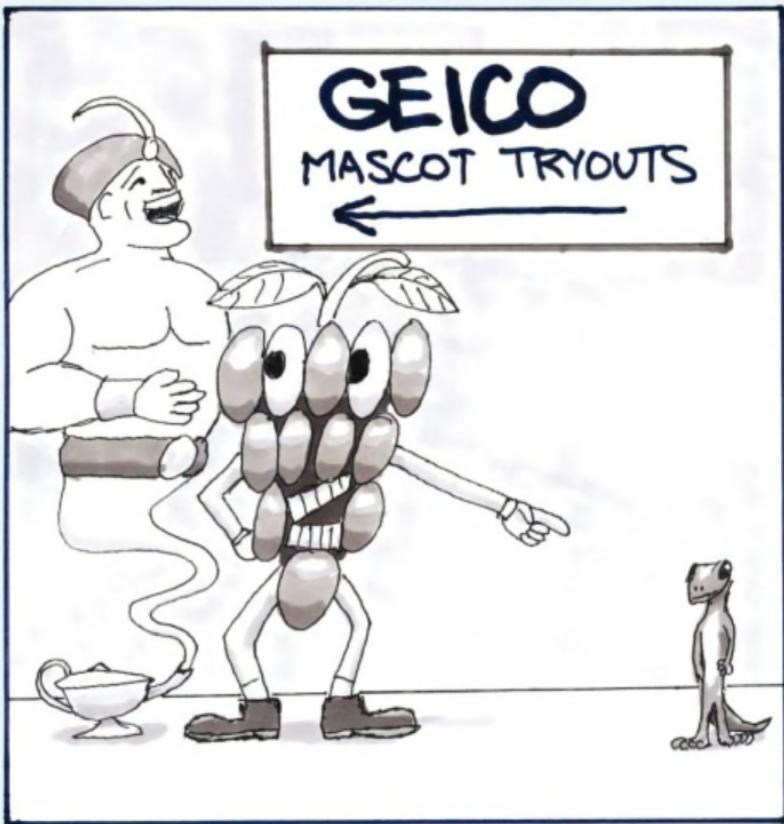
*"Consider the effect of recoil."*  
Richard B. Peterson, Monterey, Calif.

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