ON TEACHING ART
by Professor Archie Rand

COLUMBIA AND THE ARTS
a conversation with Dean Austin Quigley

Also in this Number:
History of the Philolexian Society, Sex, Race and Art
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On the cover: “Campbell’s Condensed Blue & White,” by Katerina A. Barry.
Covers of the BLUE & WHITE incorporate our ancient seal in an image illustrating our current theme. If you are interested in contributing a future cover, please e-mail theblueandwhite@columbia.edu
he arts touch us as do few other things. We spend weeks preparing for “the big show” or a few hours checking it out. We witness yet another sunrise from behind our still half empty canvases, manuscripts, compositions. On rare occasions we display our work, view it, are

effected by it.

In this number, THE BLUE & WHITE inhales a touch of the Columbian arts culture. Archie Rand, professor of visual arts and artist, lyrically communicates what is involved in teaching visual arts. For Archie, the art of teaching is intimately bound up in his own artistic practice, and so his story is personal.

Art native to Columbia is found throughout these pages. Jane Chuang C’01 is featured in Measure for Measure and her short fiction Girl also lurks about.

Random Thoughts on Teaching Art includes images—reproduced in the blue and white of The B&W—from the studio of Archie Rand. Also present are reviews of Columbia’s own art institutions—our quartet in residence and the School of the Arts’s Master of Fine Arts thesis exhibition.

Finally, The B&W and individuals involved in the arts conversed with Dean Austin Quigley. Among the many issues covered, the Dean introduced the possibility of an integrated arts program.

We continue to solicit your contributions: Questions to Dean Quigley, Campus Gossip, feature pieces. Upon returning from Summer sojourns, The B&W will investigate Columbia international—studying abroad, vacation travels, international students, and the various Häuser, casas, and maisons where foreign culture can be imbibed. If you are interested in contributing or just have some salacious gossip, e-mail theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

The Blue and White Writing Prize. Each year, The B&W will award a $100 cash prize to the author of the best piece published in its pages. We invite, as always, your questions, thoughts and observations. Only now, we are willing to pay.
As graduation is fast upon us, it is time once again to give our farewells to another outstanding Columbia class. Amidst the pomp and splendor of Class Day, the Blue J eagerly anticipates the final sagacious words from the class of '99.

And yet the speeches of graduation day, made by the Class President, the Salutatorian and the Valedictorian, have not always been as insightful as one might hope. Considering the competition for grades at Columbia, the valedictorian, in order to have become the valedictorian, doubtless spent the vast majority of her Columbia years tucked away in a cubbyhole at Butler, risking contact with the outside world only when absolutely need be. This sacrifice to academic excellence should of course be duly acknowledged, but does it qualify her to make a final speech which shall stand to represent the class of '99 for all years hence? One year of recent past, our valedictorian’s speech consisted of lamenting her lack of social life combined with vitriolic words 'gainst the parents who pushed her so hard.

Surely this did not leave her class with the warm feeling of closure which the institution of the graduation speech propounds to provide. And why should it have? If the speaker is not chosen based on her possession of speech-giving virtues, who then can rightly expect a good speech? Perhaps it is time to forego the ancient valedictorian tradition and seek out a new process by which the final address may be selected. The Blue J proposes to the administration that it offers a speech writing contest for any member of the class who wishes to speak at graduation. The speeches would be evaluated by a pre-chosen group of faculty and students, thus ensuring that all of the speeches at the class’s commencement will be truly commendable.

But when the Blue J rails against one tradition he may simultaneously call for the reinstatement of another. While basking in the sun he watched the flocking masses of all walks of life come together on the Low Library steps in a spring night’s dream as they danced to the sounds of P-funk. For the Blue J, such a sight recalled fond memories of his own freshman year, when, after finally unpacking his belongings and kissing his mother good-bye, he ventured warily onto the steps where he was immediately greeted by a stranger who, upon handing him a cold, malted beverage said, “Here’s a beer. What’s your name?” This, my friends, is college. That unequivocal mix of intense intellectualism and ridiculous revelry. Yet Columbia’s campus is in desperate want for specific locations where such congregations can occur. Many a Columbian past, ingenious as always, solved this crisis by selecting the perfect venue for their festivities: the Steps. As noted in a guidebook to New York, the perfect architecture of our magnificent Low Library Staircase puts it along side the Spanish Steps as one of the greatest in the world. Yet while the comparison to the Spanish Steps may be apt in terms of architecture, there is no competition in terms of jubilation. The administration has been so successful in harassing students off the Steps, that now only rising seniors can recall the era when this multi-leveled perch teemed with drunken merry-makers. Therefore, I call upon each and every Columbian to follow in the grand traditions of drinking and protesting. Reclaim your hallowed Steps! Hold fast to the wine and spirits of youth, let administrators that come do what they may!
I was asked to write something about teaching, but it is difficult to evaluate the art of my teaching development. I feel that as my teaching career began early in my professional life, that I should start with those incidents, which contributed to my formation, and then discuss how that preparation impacted on my growth.

When teaching, if I can remember how devotion to my practice came about, how I learned, I can then try to find ways to replicate those experiments for my students. Since my schooling was pleasurable, it would follow that my training has heavily informed my attitudes both as an artist and as a teacher.

My father, a part time painter, was rarely at home. When he was, on Sundays, there was always an unspoken invitation to join him in his painting. He displayed whatever tricks of representation he knew. It seemed, somehow, that there was a connection between the sharing of culture and the finding of community.

My high school art teacher was encouraging, as were my next set of mentors. Larry Poons was an abstract painter and Lennart Anderson was a figurative artist with whom I studied at the Art Students League in 1966. I worked on a few distinct bodies of work but didn’t feel the need to resolve the opposing approaches of their instruction as I was young enough not to have formed major aesthetic prejudices. All of the visual tactics and their results seemed to me to be valid and nutritious. I was hungry and happy to have all the stuff made available to me. I was also thankful that it was clear to them that my generational interests would allow me to develop other criteria. As a partial consequence of accepting the polarity of their teachings, my work has usually featured locales which accommodate unfamiliar subjects.

I was a member of that class of painters who had not fought in any of the primary battles of post-War art. As I came of age, it was apparent that the smoke was clearing and there were no winners. I saw not only intellectual, but moral alternatives in my choice of style selection. Our generation did not see ourselves as indiscriminate—we had varying affections and an educated understanding of the positions. To break this stand-off, we had to construct a language capable of dialogue. Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg had technically instructed us in one mode of cross-pollination. But to me, their methods appeared to be within the realm of strategy, avoiding the satisfaction, or even, the obligation of statement. At a loss for corroborated direction my first answer came from someone who was not a visual artist.

In my teens, as an amateur piano player, I had become familiar with the pianist/composer Cecil Taylor. Taylor played huge compositions, made from many avenues of musical attack, arrayed in enormous, and beautiful aural piles. I asked him, simply, how did he do that? He told me something, possibly profound, which I carried around in my head for years until I could decode his gift. He said, “If the music is true, then the form takes care of itself.” Thank you Cecil.

Larry Poons was a leading practitioner of the color-field movement of painters. As I became one of his studio assistants, I was routinely directed to paint on his paintings, which gave me confidence that no amount of instruction or praise could replicate. Larry’s calculated generosity made me feel self-respect of a
of a drink you could sit next to contemporary and veteran artists and get a rich education just by hearing their stories. Tales about the late Franz Kline’s instruction, which Kline would often fit into his casual conversations, convinced younger listeners that even without a classroom, he must have been a superb teacher. One afternoon, in Max’s, a painter told me that Kline had said, “Painting has nothing to do with knowing, it has to do with giving.” We listened to whomever was talking and saw that effective teaching could be done through an effective anecdote. I was an art brat and I ate this stuff up.

In 1972, I had the opportunity to take over the teaching of Theodore Stamos’s painting class in Scarsdale. Stamos was bitter over his implication in the Rothko estate case and offering his class to a twenty-two-year-old greenhorn was a show of contempt towards his unsupportive students. Although I was appreciative, it was apparent that this was not an act of flattery. I had never considered teaching before, but was grateful for the chance. I found I had a talent for teaching and that my words could help others create something real. In addition to painting, teaching provided me with another way (remembering Kline) in which I could give. Teaching and work feed off each other. Teaching makes one articulate, more concretely, the current state of their theoretical grounding. Once targeted, the teacher can then ask, “what’s wrong with our conclusion?”

The pupils and teacher evolve and question premises together, which makes a class one living organism. The students act as the control specimens, while at the same time, they are working as accomplices in thought. The health of their accomplishment verifies my direction. I not only enjoy teaching, but I have learned to use its forum for self-questioning as a prod in my own work. Monitoring my work in the classroom becomes my gauge as to the quality of inquiry in my studio work. So that both as a teacher and as a painter, I am stimulated to create fresh avenues of approach.

My evolving profiles become unified by my belief that visual language is a manifestation of some aspect of self-identification. It is a voice, and as such, all visual product made by a given artist is centrally related, and is therefore inherently consistent. As the body of work continues, each accomplishment locates another point on the artist’s increasing circumference. Now, I can watch, more calmly, as my career takes the unanticipated turns. I expect that this feels natural to my students.

Painting is a way in which we display our affection. It is how we save things. To recognize those implied verities stimulates a validation for our existence. This provides a painting’s usefulness. Artists honor a contract to make those things which vindicate the visions of possibility within ourselves. We perceive, appreciatively, that there is evidence of agreement on those matters which we
hope will guarantee our continuity. Often enough, people come along who assure me that freedom is a viable place, and in its habitation one can reflect the unedited range of human experience. These are people who jump ship, and they have no style, only voice: Eva Hesse, Sinatra, Lennon & McCartney, John Coltrane, Louise Bourgeois, Martin Scorcese. Warhol said that “Pop Art is about liking things.” Warhol also took his mother to church every Sunday. Go figure. A colleague once announced to the class that he “doubt(ed) the sincerity of my enthusiasm.” Meanwhile, Rainer Maria Rilke says, “I praise, I praise, I praise” and Louise Bourgeois says, “Thank you. That is my philosophy. Thank you very much.” These are artists who know how to continue. Gratitude is the most essential creative tool. The vulgarity and humiliation of this position is something I deal with. I ask my students to encounter and address this.

St. Paul says that of Faith, Hope and Charity, Charity is the supreme attribute. Charity is, unlike the other two, a person-to-person action. It alone requires an intervention into the real world. To reconnect with human interaction—with our earlier failures which convinced us that we were intimately incompetent—is an act which steels only the best artists. Matisse wanted his paintings to talk to the very bourgeoisie which hounded him (in reality or imagination) into reclusiveness. Warhol said he wanted to be Matisse. We know that it’s not possible. That we can never go home. That we can never re-enter that illusory. These “things” we make now stand in our stead in this world. That’s the deal. Despite that, to not try to reinvigorate ourselves into the very world which we know won’t have us is to blaspheme our calling. Thankfully, we have the capacity to transform our emotional disfigurement into something of use. The great humanists, Piero, Rembrandt, even Pollock, almost succeeded in talking to us in the least aesthetic terms. Their work makes itself available to a quality of dialogue which approaches, or on some level even stimulates, physical touch. Aesthetics, to a large degree, garble the issue. Aesthetics are what the lesser artist will proffer in lieu of statement. The viewer is assured that the artist abides by conventions whose trespass would demand the viewer's involvement. Fearing the emotional consequences of that examination, the artist and viewer decide on inviolable borders. And nothing gets said. There is no comfort since there has been no comparing of note. The artwork is a forgery purporting to chronicle an apparent sharing of a mutually consumed experience. There is no Charity being performed. I warn my students about the perils of work which looks good.

The Talmud states that it considered a crime for a teacher to lecture in such a way that the students can't follow the teaching. Offenses can, in some cases, be viewed so severely as to merit capital punishment for the teacher. To make art about our own alienation is redundant. As a double negative, it neutralizes itself and plays to the groundlings. It is received information and as such is a timid, thoughtless activity. It seems to me that the only thing you can do, really, is to go on. And to try to be clear.

All images in this article are by Archie Rand.
THE DISCOURSE-LOVERS
by Philolectus

August Reader, know that when the Philolexian Revolution comes, everything will be Blue and White. Consider yourself lucky, then, to be ahead of the curve. Consider, also, the Blues and Whites of Yesteryear: the Philolexians and the Peithologians. It was a heady time at Columbia after the War. The school had been renamed, admissions were soaring, the new building on Park Row was becoming inadequate and the King's College Literary Society, in which Alexander Hamilton was notably active, had been replaced with the more democratic-sounding Society for Progress. That Society, in turn, was unable to cope with the demands of the student body for a focus of their rhetorical activities. Instead, each class formed its own debate and literary society.

In 1801 the Junior Class of the College designated its literary society by the name of Philomathean. On 17 May 1802, the Philomatheans, realizing that their accomplishments would fade away upon their graduation, opened their membership to all Matriculated Students attending the Lecture of even one Professor and changed their name to the Philolexian Society of Columbia University. Their symbol was the Rising Sun and their color was Light Blue.

In 1803, for the benefit of the new students, the Freshman Society was founded, to prepare the younger students to join Philolexian, which at the time excluded First-Years. In 1806, the members of the Freshman Society, many now Juniors and Seniors, decided to reorganize as the Peithologian Society. Their symbol was the Shining Star and their color was White.

In the years that immediately followed, the sister Societies, then the only activities and social organizations available at Columbia, proved to be enormously popular. Campus social and cultural life revolved around the friendly rivalry of the Philolexians and the Peithologians. Before there was a substantial University Library, something which did not happen until shamefully late in Alma Mater's lifetime, the students of Columbia relied on the libraries of their Literary Societies. Although the Peithologian Society was doomed to die out in the second half of the Nineteenth Century, it left behind an important legacy. When, in due course, intercollegiate athletics were introduced at Columbia, it became necessary for the school to have appropriate colors to adorn its athletes. The student body, neatly split between Philos and Peiths, agreed that the colors of both societies complemented each other. Thus, if you have ever wondered whom to blame for the intimidating colors worn by Columbia athletes, August Reader, you need look no further.

"Cold comfort, this, poor Fresh, what shall he do,
To aid his fainting soul in dragging through
These studies that so torture him and vex?
His guardian angel points to Philolex."

Erasmus B. Rudd, 1861

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Philolexians lived up to their name as "Lovers of Discourse." In 1812, Philolexian initiated Columbia's first newspaper, The Philolexian Observer; which was produced, much like certain current campus publications, at the frequent rate of twelve times in the following seventy years. The Society initiated prizes and
contests in Oratory, Poetry, and Composition, one endowment of which still survives today as The Philolexian Prize, offered annually by the English Department. Most importantly, the Society served as a forum for debate on the issues of the day: “Resolved, May 17, 1814: It would be expedient to extend the benefits of a liberal education to the female sex.” Resolved, March 4, 1881: That a Course on Oratory should be offered.” “Resolved: That the elevated railroad is a greater nuisance than a benefit.” “Resolved: That Polygamy among the Mormons should be suppressed by the National Government.” “Resolved: That Athletics are carried to excess in the prominent American Colleges.” Substantially less serious debates often took place, but in those days, Philolexian was renowned as the home of Columbia’s skilled Parliamentary Debaters. The Society approached its Centennial in 1902 full of pride and, indeed, hubris. In 1909, seeing that King’s Crown, an earlier era’s student activities organization, was weak, Philolexian attempted to become the center of all cultural life at Columbia. Philo expanded into dramatics, it held dances, concerts on the Earl Hall steps; it was everything to everyone. Predictably, this dilution of purpose at its apparent height of power brought about the Society’s long decline. Columbia’s debate record during these years was one of unceasing failure. In a momentous majority vote of 1911, the Society decided it was no longer interested in debate, it would thereafter be an Elizabethan dramatics society, “abhorring all Modern notions of acting.” This period lasted for nearly twenty years, with the records gradually growing sparser. When next we hear of Philo, it was being reorganized, and reorganized again, and reorganized again, its leadership taken over by the University, its functions absorbed, its membership but a fraction of earlier years. Nevertheless, the consolidation provided renewed intellectual vigor to the Society: membership of this era included Jacques Barzun, John Berryman, Robert Giroux, Thomas Merton, and William Theodore de Bary, a name perhaps not unfamiliar to you, August Reader. The culmination of this period exploded a few years later into the Beat Generation under the leadership of three-time Philolexian Prize winner, Allen Ginsberg.

In this Age of Iron, the Society’s brilliance is perhaps less than it was, yet the spirit of the Beats left a deep irreverent streak that still lives on at Philo. Every year the Society holds the Alfred Joyce Kilmer Memorial Bad Poetry Contest, a just commemoration of the author of “Trees,” a Philolexian of the Class of 1908. Guided by its sometimes surreal traditions and beatnik sensibilities, Philo continues to play an active role in the intellectual and cultural life of Columbia, hosting open debates every week and publishing a literary magazine, Surgam, every May. With that fitting motto, I leave you: Surgabis, Dear Reader.

To contact the Philolexian Society, e-mail philo@philo.org.
Columbia Conversations

Dean Austin Quigley on the Arts

In this number, we continue our running dialogue with Dean Austin Quigley, members of The B&W and students with a special interest in the theme. We solicit specific questions, comments, and general topics for discussions from all readers.

Our topic was the arts. Present were four members of The B&W—Noam M. Elcott, Katerina A. Barry, Matthew Rascoff, and Charles London—in addition to Kate Grossman, a member of the music department, and Aliza Pressman, a poet who has published work in previous numbers of this publication.

In our next number, to be published in September, we will discuss international life at Columbia and options for travel and study abroad. Responses from readers and suggestions for future topics must include the author’s name, class and year, and should be sent to theblueandwhite@columbia.edu.

20 April 1999, Office of the Dean

NME: What is the position of the Arts in a liberal arts education?

AQ: Evolving is probably the answer to that. Columbia College . . . has relatively recently committed itself to arts majors. And for a very long time Columbia tended to share the opinion that was fairly widely distributed around the United States that there are two kinds of people involved in the arts: those who engage in the practice of the arts and those who think about the arts by doing criticism, theory and history. And there has been a history around the United States that there are two kinds of people involved in the arts be intellectual enough. And then, on the other side, there has been a concern for people involved in creating or performing art that you should not contaminate their minds with history, theory, criticism or anything else that can get in the way of the spontaneous production of art. Both of those presuppositions are of dubious validity.

For these reasons and others, Columbia College has [only] in the last few years decided to establish a range of arts majors. The project has been to see whether or not, in our curriculum, we can in fact integrate the creation of art with thinking about art. And most of the majors have been set up to try to show that artistic creativity and intellectual creativity can enhance each other. On one hand, performing and creating art can in fact be done better by some people some of the time if they know something about history, theory and criticism. And, on the other, if you’re going to study an art form in terms of its history and theory, it might be as well to have some sense of the environments in which art is created, displayed and performed.

There is one other issue that your question raises. What you always hope to have happen at a research institution is that the undergraduate and graduate programs will productively intersect. And that, in a variety of different ways, the inevitably more advanced work that goes on at the graduate level can be linked through the graduate students in direct teaching, supervision of some kind or simply in collaborative work. This has worked very well over the years in primarily academic departments . . . . But there is a separate degree program at the graduate level for people involved in the performing/creative arts, who earn an
MFA instead of a Ph.D., because the MFA is much more directly related to subsequent professional work in these arts. And these graduate students may or may not be so well informed about history, theory and criticism. And, therefore, the linkage between MFA students who are going out to do professional work in the arts is not quite so simple as the linkage between people who are going out to get doctorates and teach in the universities and the undergraduates in those departments. That creates a situation in which new relationships need to be developed among students in arts programs at the B.A., MFA, and Ph.D. levels.

MR: As not every art is represented, where does one draw the line?

AQ: I think you’re looking for a more clearly defined conceptual line than actually exists. The presence or absence of particular programs and even their overall shape is a matter of the history of the institution which, with the exception of Barnard, has tended not to foreground practice in the arts at an undergraduate level and which already has certain kinds of undergraduate and graduate programs in place. It’s just a matter of how fast we move ahead in various areas.

KC: [That being said, in the music department] we have this really amazing group of students who, for one reason or another, didn’t apply to the Juilliard program and are here pursuing their BA’s and find a remarkable dearth of opportunities. Talented musicians are slipping through the fingers of Columbia. Every year many people graduate who could have created a very lively music scene at Columbia and didn’t have the opportunity for whatever reason.

AQ: [That is] partly the downside of the upside of New York City. The upside being that in New York City the arts are at a generally high level and audiences are of a fairly sophisticated kind. If you want to do performances of various kinds, you’re going to have to attract that sophisticated New York audience, and I think that puts pressure on the performance arts around here. . . . I think that’s a very good pressure. But it does mean that [student performance groups] must arrive fairly rapidly at a very high level in order to gain an audience. It is a challenge for all students in our majors but it is an even greater challenge for students whose work in the arts is not linked to the curriculum, as the professional facilities tend to be linked to curricular programs. The new student center, Lerner Hall, really will help here.

CL: With New York right here, the audience and the creators have a whole different opportunity. People could stay on campus, but a lot of times they try their abilities out there in the professional world. And the audience is the same way. Conceivably, on a Friday night a campus theater could be competing with The Iceman Cometh or Rent. . . .

NME: Or not competing. . . .

AQ: So, I guess the point we derive from this in general is two-fold: students coming here with an interest in the arts have the right to expect the institution to be providing first-rate programs and facilities. . . . But the other side of it is that the institution will also be expecting on the part of students, a significant amount of talent and commitment to make best use of these programs and facilities. [The belief at] Columbia is that things must be done at a high level, and the expectation on all sides is that the arts are coming from a long way back. But we’ve made a lot of progress in ten years.

MR: What is available for students who don’t find their niche in studying any one artis-
tic practice but still have a general interest in art?

AQ: One of the possibilities being considered by the School of the Arts, is an integrated arts program, which would attract students who all have a serious interest in a particular art form, don't necessarily want to major in it, but would benefit from exploring the arts in general. Someone who is an excellent sculptor, someone who is an excellent actor, someone with an excellent voice . . . it might be useful for them to study together in terms of an integrated arts major where you bring the history, theory, criticism and practice of the various art forms together into a single program. Students can learn from each other both about particular art forms and about the arts in general.

AP: This program raises the issue of the relationship between theory and creativity? Must creativity conform to pre-existing theories?

AQ: Creativity that isn't related to anything that preceded it wouldn't be recognized as creativity within that field. So, there's not necessarily a collision between creativity and continuity with previous practice or previous thoughts. Indeed, for creativity to earn that status it needs to be considered in terms of how it is like and unlike what came before. You can use the past as a means of guiding you forward rather than governing what you think. Creativity can be guided creativity, which works both with and against what went before; it doesn't simply ignore it. What is not creative is simply replicating the past. But between replicating the past and ignoring the past there's that piece in the middle which displays guided creativity and informed imagination. The nature of creativity is one of the things that an integrated arts program would in fact do by looking at creativity in a variety of different art forms. And this is, of course, one of the issues that registers the potentially productive intersection of artistic creativity and intellectual creativity.

NME: How can those students not involved in the arts as creators or performers benefit from the arts life at Columbia?

MR: They can attend performances.

AQ: A lot of practical activity that goes on in the arts involves behind-the-scenes work. So even if you don't have the talent to write or paint or get up on stage to play an instrument or sing or act, there is a role to be played in simply setting the scene for the arts and making the arts performable and available for presentation. And you can learn a lot by just getting involved . . .

KB: I think the practical benefit is just the idea that when you come to college you learn as much from the other students you meet as you do from your professors. Having a community of artists alongside economics and history majors is important because, through conversation in and outside of class, alternative views will be introduced into an otherwise purely academic setting.
HARK! HARK! THE LARK!

By Peter G. Lech

O, Spring, playful maiden, Winter’s halcyon days are here, you, subject of the songbird’s warbling melody! Indeed, Spring has heralded the advent of these ever-distracting songbirds which adorn not only the eaves of Butler’s storied colonnade, but also the stage of Miller theater and the sixth floor of Dodge. A special bird, a rara avis, a Lark, in fact, has found its perch in the hallowed halls of Columbia’s music department, host in the past to such musical names as Varese, Bartok, and Elgar (not to mention Verdi’s librettist) and has in fact made its nest here, hoping to continue its stay through next year.

The Lark String quartet is among us. Columbia’s quartet in residence for the 1998-1999 season has already given two performances: one in October which celebrated Ned Rorem’s 75th Birthday and one in February featuring the work of Debussy and Dukas. Their final concert will be given on 25 May at Miller Theater at 8pm. But this is one facet of the quartet’s manifold commitment to Columbia. Citing “increasing attendance at Miller Theater and making accessible the beauty of Classical chamber music” as one of their goals, the quartet has given free “talking concerts” at Miller and in the surrounding Morningside Heights community—in elementary schools and churches—which feature works by well known composers, adorned liberally with commentary by one of the four ladies in the quartet. These gigs have been sprinkled generously between the group’s regular concerts and their tour with Peter Schickele, musical satirist and discoverer of the ridiculously absurd music of PDQ Bach. Make sure to keep your eyes open and your ears clear of obstructions so that you can catch a lark sighting here at Columbia before it flits away into the endless bustle of the New York music scene once again. Comprised of four young women—a far cry from the traditional idea of the music quartet as one of four old men with scoliosis huddled over the score, squinting at it, trying to grasp at Beauty with sweaty brow and fervently pulsing bows—the Lark String Quartet has garnered much attention from the musical world, having won the 1990 Namburg Chamber Music Award, the gold medal at the Shostakovich String Quartet competition and most recently, having commissioned and recorded a piece by composer Aaron Kernis which then won the 1998 Pulitzer Prize in the Musical composition category. They recently extended their six-disc contract with Arabesque Records to twelve, among which have been released a recording of works written for the Lark Quartet by Peter Schickele, titled “Shickele on a Lark,” a CD of works by Schnittke, one featuring Russian composer Borodin, one of Schumann quartets and one of works by Schoenberg and Zemlinksy. Coming soon will be CDs featuring quartets by Mendelssohn and Shostakovich.

The concert on the 25th should be well worth the usual $7 student ticket price at Miller, and with any luck, the Lark will continue to sing sweetly atop its perch on the gilded (and recently renovated) roof of Columbia’s bastion of High Art, Dodge Hall.

Look out for BLUE & WHITE general meetings next year.
GIRL: A Fiction

By Jane Chuang

Girl remembering something but she fakes a yawn and pretends to know nothing. What a bubblehead, the teachers say in the office at lunchtime. Her English teacher smiles when he hears that. He is a big man. He screws her, lets her know when he wants it by beckoning when they pass each other in the hall. They f--- in the teachers lounge after everyone's left. It's got a green carpet and a big wooden table. He unzips, and runs his hands up her thighs. Girl says nothing. She doesn't care. There is nothing in her head. Nothing on her mind. Girl pops gum and chews slowly. She likes the first chew, the intense sugary texture, the softness that folds between her back teeth. Class is boring, then interesting, then boring again. She never looks up at the teacher. “Alliteration—does anybody know what that is?” The carpet in the classroom is blue and grey and red dots fused together. Girl thinks of the slide in art class. Dots and dots, and millions of dots. Mrs. Epstein pulling back on the projector and the dots smaller and smaller and then they were faces and bodies and lawn chairs. Impressionism, remembers Girl, and then she blows a bubble. Small bubbles are for class, when the teacher might get mad. You twirled the gum around the tip of your tongue and blew slowly. It bulged, then sunk in on itself. “Well, since none of you knows, I'll have to tell you what it is.” When he is teaching, he is angry. His bulk shifts from leg to leg, his face expands and grows ruddy. Girl smiles out a corner of her mouth. “Alliteration is,” he writes on the board, “similar consonant sounds at the beginning of words.” “All right,” he says, turning around, rubbing the chalk between his hands. “Can anyone give me an example of alliteration?” Girl studies the carpet again. It is a swirl, a snowstorm of dark colors. The pattern does not end anywhere, but circles back on itself again and again. She blows another bubble. “Miss Drew,” he says. Girl looks up. He is angling his brows down. His eyes are black and narrowed. “Please spit out your gum now.” She gets up and spits it out into the trash bin. She sits down again. “Thank you, Miss Drew.” He underlines the definition of alliteration that he has written on the board. “So, can anyone give me an example?” Everyone is quiet, listless in their plastic chairs. It's almost summer. The air thickens in this room, the humidity solidifies on the walls. Girl tugs her shirt out in front of her to make it stop sticking to her skin. “No one?” He taps his foot and then turns around to the board and writes: “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.” “Can anyone read this for me?” In the first row, Dan raises his hand. “Thank you, Dan. I'm glad you're showing some motivation.” The teacher motions for him to speak. “Sorry, Mr. Gatt,” says Dan. “Just stretchin.’” He grins, and stretches, first one way, then the other. Mr. Gatt sighs, his hand goes to his forehead and he begins to massage his temples, his thumb on one side and his third finger on the other. He sits down, shuffles through some papers and then breathes one long slow breath. “OK. Since you're completely knocked out
by alliteration, I guess it's not much use going on to the rest of what I planned for today. Everyone, just sit and be quiet.” Mr. Gatt takes out a book from his briefcase and begins to read it. Girl listens to the pages turning fast and then slow. She takes out another piece of gum and begins to chew it.

Mr. Gatt stops her in the hallway. “After school,” he says, and then keeps walking. Girl goes to her locker, spins the combination, opens up the skinny grey door and closes it. She goes outside, walks past the football field and to the grassy hill where all the kids go to smoke. “Hey Katie,” says Dan. He offers her a cigarette, but she shakes her head. Shrugging, he taps the pack twice against his palm and then draws one out, lights it, takes long drags of it.

“She’s your demon?”

Girl looks up, startled. Dan watches her for a moment, then cocks his face away to blow smoke. Her face smooths, and she says: “Nothing.”

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Ode to Seniors

We’ll not blush for the past, not at twenty, And what proper old fellows we’ll be, If still able to blush when we’re forty For the years when we earned our degree.

“But at forty—let’s swear, boys, that forty Shall find us so clean, soul and name, That the spirit of twenty might face us With never a feeling of shame.”

Then we cheered once again at his bidding, Clasped hands, said good-bye to our joys, And felt we were men from the moment Of our very last parting as boys.

—The Blue and White, 1891

*Ode to Seniors*
It is the stated goal of *Curio Columbiana* to cull from Alma Mater’s obvious and less obvious collections of great works. In this number, we sought to solve the riddle of the stenciled images found around and about campus. Most familiar are “The Boxer” and “Che,” reproduced here. But what is the history of these familiar silhouettes found on sides of buildings throughout Morningside Heights? Where do they come from? How are they made? And, of course, what are they? Our answer takes us back to the 1960’s, its graffiti, and the art of stenciling.

Stenciling is a technique that enables an artist to rapidly transfer an image onto any surface. The process calls for an impervious material such as a sheet of paper, thin plastic, or cardboard, to be perforated with lettering, a picture, or a design. Into the spaces created by the perforations the artist adds a substance such as ink, spray paint, or metallic powder which, once forced through the stencil, adheres to the surface the artist desires the final image to be placed on. Once the artist removes the stencil, the painted image, in the shape of the perforations the artist made in his or her template remains. Because of the rapid reusable nature of stencils, in the early 1960s, images such as “The Boxer” and “Che” started to appear in urban areas as a form of pop art.

These pop art stencils came in many shapes and carried varying messages. Some depicted the “Uncle Sam” character while others carried the slogan “Stop War Now.” Stencils became enormously popular because artists could easily reproduce identical images and could quickly affix their work to the sides of buildings or sidewalks. Since stencils were and still are considered graffiti, it was of great importance that the process was rapid. Not only was the stenciling process as rapid as normal free hand graffiti created with a spray paint can or indelible marker, but it created cleaner, more legible artwork.

The simple process of stenciling enabled many people to express themselves in an artistic manner and did so using a medium which was best displayed in public. These public works of art should be valued for their rebellious yet creative nature. Some city beautification advocates would claim that stencils, as graffiti, are destructive to property and to the quality of life of citizens. Actually, stencils turn our streets into art galleries.
SEX, RACE AND ART: A Review

by Noam M. Elcott

The Wallach Art Gallery has featured Thornhill’s rendering of Raphael’s tapestry cartoons, posters from the Spanish Civil War, Hogarth, Piranesi, and now Mahoney. From the Raphael week in Art Hum to 20th century history classes, these names and events, if not common parlance, are certainly familiar. But who is Mahoney? Or Kiki Seror or Monique Andre Aiuto?

The nine individuals featured in the Wallach exhibition will soon receive their Master of Fine Arts degrees from the School of the Visual Arts at Columbia. The works on display are their MFA theses. Works produced by students of art beg the question: How are we to approach the exhibit? Are we engaging with students or artists? homework or artwork?

In her curator’s statement, Thelma Golden conceives of the show as an artist’s débuteante ball or bar mitzvah. “The need for this exhibit,” she writes, “is really about marking the passage from ‘student’ to ‘artist.’” Acknowledging the arbitrary distinction between the two categories, Golden, nonetheless, frames the exhibit within the terms of an artistic education. Her interest lies in pedagogical processes, not artistic products.

Like most Columbia undergraduates, I know less about the two year MFA program than the nine year construction of the Parthenon (thank you Art Hum). So I come to this exhibit without reference to graduate degrees or theses, simply as a critical viewer of art. And I was impressed.

Representative of today’s pluralistic art-world, the exhibit is an eclectic mix of painting and photography, Conceptual art and realism, abstraction and sex—enough sex, in fact, for the Wallach gallery to be the second home of the Jewish Museum’s Freud show. A surprising number of works—from Victoria Kostadinova’s biomorphic drawings to Katherine McVety’s series of photographed body parts—take us back more than half a century to the images of Salvador Dalí or Man Ray. Of historical interest, these works feel out of place among those with a more contemporary bent.

But lest the viewer remain untitilated, these instances of retro-Surrealism are but the beginning of the exhibit’s sexual escapades. In brushwork that approaches photorealism, Timothy Gardner gives us two larger than life portraits, one of which has a Champion clad twenty-something grabbing his crotch mid-jump. In case we missed the point, the adjacent watercolor, entitled Naked 400 (1999), depicts a dozen-odd unclad men at the start of a race.

The exhibit’s rendering of sex climaxes in Kiki Seror’s Rendezvous at a Distance (How Her Fingers Became His Tongue) (1988-99). Thumping, electric music and a mock lunar landscape video are combined with the text of a raunchy cyber-sex encounter to create an orgasmic, Internet-age Gesamtkunstwerk. Yet this high art, peep show is available only when the gallery is empty. With a healthy number of strolling visitors (or even the faint footsteps of the exhibit attendant), the private, anonymous thrill of cyber-sex (or of watching it) is quickly rendered public, and the viewer is snared as voyeur. This review’s earlier language of climax, orgasm and “unified artwork” is undermined in the presence of admonishing eyes. To avoid the label of pervert, the viewer can hope for but a few brief moments of erotic pleasure before moving on to the next gallery. With sound, image and text, Seror suc-
cessfully sets up a cyber-peep show only to put it and its participant on trial before fellow gallery visitors. *Rendezvous at a Distance*, therefore, includes two relationships: The anonymous, distant encounter between the cyber-sex participants and, more importantly, between the viewer and the work of art. We are used to encountering artwork as we would images in a peep show: Our gaze possesses the image; we remain aloof and distant. By creating a public peep show, Seror challenges the anonymity of the viewer and, through implications of voyeurism, forces us to reflect on the act of viewing.

Not included in the exhibit’s Bacchanalian revelries is Gregory Mahoney’s *Children of the Damned* (1999), a room full of straight-on, black and white photographic portraits. At first glance, it appears that Mahoney has merely assembled portraits that span the gamut of faces in American life: differing races, sexes, ages, nationalities. But with a few moments of careful study, an eerie feeling sets in. The photographs have an uncanny resemblance to one another. Here the eyes, there the nose. As it turns out, Mahoney spliced each of the portraits with his own, thereby creating images which carry common traits. This room of diversity becomes a miniature melting pot. We’re all different, but still the same.

Not so simple. Another return to the images reveals that the women carry some stubble and faces with darker skin tones are lightened in certain places. At times, this bleached skin appears like a cancerous malignancy spreading across the face. Gregory Mahoney, it is clear, is a white male. When his image is blended with that of other white males, resemblance is the sole effect. But when his image is combined with that of females or non-whites, Mahoney’s masculine beard or his white skin tone imposes itself onto the figure (with the effect most potent on non-white women). Mahoney has literally stamped the seal of a white, male world onto the faces of every woman and non-white in the group. We are now forced to re-interpret the repeated common traits. They are not what we all share, but instead, what we all share with white males. The uncanny resemblance is the dominant culture peering through each of us. The white male template forces itself on a bed of diversity, creating in its image such perversities as bearded women and diseased non-whites.

The 1999 MFA Thesis Exhibition is on view at the Wallach Art Gallery through 5 June. The Gallery is open Wednesday through Saturday 1:00-5:00 PM and is located on the eighth floor of Schermerhorn Hall.
THE JAZZ AGE

by Michael Schiraldi

They run our student councils, star on CTV, and push our teams to victory. They always have the best seats on the Steps and their names constantly appear in the Spectator. They wear special pinky rings. You’ll never see them up close. Except on one night.

I speak, of course, of the Alpha Delta Phi Society’s night of Hot Jazz and Cold Champagne. Not since Studio 54 closed its doors has there been a wilder place for New York’s social elite to dance the night away.

There is a black market of sorts, in which those properly connected few obtain a number of passes and carefully parcel them out to those who are owed favors. Only the lucky few that receive a coveted invitation are allowed in.

Despite such selectivity, on 10 April, the ADP house was once again crowded from wall to wall on every floor, especially near the bar. Those brave enough to plunge into these crowds and persistent enough to come out the other side were rewarded with a taste of Wycliff champagne. Last semester, a lesser brand was served, and there were disastrous consequences. Dresses were ruined. Potential hook-ups were aborted. This time around, no expense was spared, and the improvement was well received. The only caveat was the difficulty of opening the new bottles, especially as the night progressed and the revelers grew weary of dancing. The situation was dire until a few guests stepped forward and took over the uncorking. One such hero was Columbia Senior Class President Charlie Leykum C’99, who wore some really fancy studs in his tuxedo shirt.

One really fancy stud who didn’t wear a shirt at all was former ADP president Dylan Hightower E’99. Onlookers debated whether the prelapsarian look was snazzier than the long black dress with the sheer midriff that he wore last fall. Sahil Godiwala C’99, in a dapper tux, also drew attention as he passed from girl to girl, and, except for a few mishaps in the vicinity of the piano, swung like it was going out of style. Looking over it all was Kandi Birdsell C’99 and one of the primary organizers of the event. Some referred to her as the “crown princess of Hot Jazz,” a title she richly deserved.

With so many people and so much cheer, one party wasn’t enough, and so various subparties clustered about the main event. Towards the end of the night, the crème de la crème sociale retired to a VIP Room to sip from a cache of the finest spirits and converse upon news and social matters. But it was not just the social elite who found themselves congregating in the less public areas of the house. A large room on one of the upper floors was a favorite spot, including a large contingent from the ADP chapter at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who made the journey to New York solely to attend the party.

There were also persistent rumors that an impromptu nudist congregation was occurring...
on the lower level, but there were no actual sightings to confirm this. No rumor is too outrageous for Hot Jazz. Many were doubtful in the fall of 1997 when the buzz was that Matt Damon and Ben Affleck were going to show up. Not only did they drop in, but they also threw up all over the downstairs bathroom. Brushes with the fame are common at Hot Jazz. This year, some revelers reported seeing media mogul Susan Gladstone B'99, best known for her work as General Manager at WBAR.

The event officially concluded at around 2 o'clock, when the band had long since left, along with most of the guests. Mauricio Meña C'97, a devoted ADP alumnus, thanked the remaining revelers and sent them on their way. However, many of them wished to keep their spirits high all through the night and onward to the Community Outreach event taking place the following day.

These hearty souls had a splendid post-party reception elsewhere.

Unfortunately, not all of the late-night events went quite so swimmingly. Gentlemen from the Alpha Epsilon Pi and Zeta Psi fraternities entered into a dispute over ownership of a cellular telephone, and it quickly became apparent that there would be no hope of non-violent resolution. The two became so deeply engaged in fisticuffs that a team of Columbia’s Finest had to be called in to restore the peace.
All good sleep is the same and all bad sleep is bad in its own way. Of all the neuroses, addictions, ugly habits, assorted syndromes and pathologies that make this Verily Veritas’ unique being, bad sleep is surely the most egregious, the most hideous, the most embarrassing. Good sleep makes you strong and healthy; bad sleep atrophies your muscles and weakens your immune system. Good sleepers are optimists; bad sleepers are pessimists. VV has become a bad sleeper and for no good reason at all. Bad sleep is to be distinguished from diseased sleep. Unlike true illnesses like insomnia, narcolepsy and sleep apnea, bad sleep is a failure of discipline and is therefore a moral failure. You don’t have to have bad sleep. If you really wanted good sleep, you’d just have it.

My schedule is a recipe for bad sleep. I have CC at 9:00 AM on Mondays and Wednesdays. There’s a paper due every week for my 11 AM Tuesday seminar, and I usually get up at 5:30 to write it. Mix in an astronomy problem set due Thursdays at 1:00, and voila, I’ve just swallowed another weekful of very bad sleep.

The problem is, so has everyone else. Which means no one really makes much of an effort to get better sleep. If I knew you were having great sleep I would want it too. But bad sleep is worn with pride around here. If you really wanted good sleep, you’d just have it.

Generally the bad-sleep braggadocio takes the form of a sum total of hours slept over a number of days, as in: “Yeah, I’m pretty tired—I’ve slept eight hours in the past three days.” The danger of this formulation is that it is easily trumped: “Yeah, me too . . . I’ve had six hours in the past five days.”

I prefer to counter deprivation-heroism with sarcastic awe: “Hmm, you sure are pretty busy!” But really deep down inside I’m impressed. What masters of self-deprivation, self-abnegation, self-flagellation these Columbia students are! I think to myself. They are an elite sect of ascetic monks, an intellectual commando unit, a factory of academic super-machines, turning out startling philosophical explanations, brilliant scholarship, original math proofs, stopping only to refuel! You see I’m just as guilty as everyone else.

How can we explain bad sleep pride? Freudians say flaunting your bad sleep is an unconscious cry for sympathy or companionship, that you discuss your bad sleep habits with those you want to sleep with. Who, after all, would want to sleep someone who actually sleeps at night? Marxists argue that capitalism has made poor students into sleep-slaves, toiling at Orgo into the deep hours of the night just to scratch a measly existence while living in a tenement—Wien. Revolt! they cry, against the sleep-thieves, the sleep-bourgeoisie, those dirty capitalists who steal all the sleep!

This is all quite compelling, I think, but just when I’m on the brink of becoming a convinced sleep revolutionary, just as the witch-doctor from Vienna has nearly hypnotized me into somno-sexual reductionism, the alarm rings. It’s time to wake up.
MEASURE FOR MEASURE

Night, the way home

you breathe in the crisp black air—
the garage door is still open
your bags are waiting in the trunk
mother and father have already gone in.
it's winter in new jersey.
of course there is no snow—
the storms always skip this part of the state.
if there were light now,
you could see that the grass is savanna green.
behind you, the car makes its last clicks and is quiet.
you are looking out into the sky,
trying to decipher the piercings, the white pinholes of light.
orion's belt. the great bear.
in a letter a friend writes to you from africa,
she describes how her camp is guarded by warriors
when you emerge from your tent into the darkness
they appear: skins brushed with night,
spears slim, tipped with a small piece of lightning.
you are thinking about these invisible guardians
you are thinking about the skyscrapers in the city you left behind
how tall and slight they looked in the distance
as the train headed south.

—Jane Chuang '01

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The Blue and White, May 1999
A gorgeous clear Saturday last week greeted George Clinton and the P-Funk Allstars, among the best of funk bands, to the steps of Low Library. The concert got off to a bit of a dull start despite Mr. Clinton’s best efforts. But just when it appeared that the concert would be a drag, a few joints were rolled and the joint really got rolling. When lack of spirit is the issue, one can always count on Columbians to hash things out.

Dept. of Getting Things Done: From the Email Files of Campus Gossip

Date: Sat, 17 Apr 1999
From: Bingo <theblueandwhite@columbia.edu>
To: Aline Locascio <al230@columbia.edu>

To the librarians:
It was thoughtful and helpful of you to post “the week’s work” on the Internet so the library users would know what to expect. Now, it seems the idea has been discontinued, as the webpage has not been updated since mid-February. Why did you put an end to something useful and downright polite? Bingo

Date: Mon, 19 Apr 1999
From: Aline Locascio <al230@columbia.edu>
To: Bingo <theblueandwhite@columbia.edu>

Sorry, We are short staffed these last several weeks and have not managed to keep the Week’s Work updated on the Web. I am pleased that you find that posting so useful. We are making every effort to resume as soon as possible. Please bear with us! Thanks for your note!
Aline Locascio

Date: Mon, 19 Apr 1999
From: Aline Locascio <al230@columbia.edu>
To: Bingo <theblueandwhite@columbia.edu>

FYI, the Butler Renovation “This Week’s Work” is back online. Thanks again for letting us know it was missed.

Aline Locascio

Richard Axel, a pioneer in the study of perception, was named the ninth university professor.

Columbia is more and more becoming a centre of Art and Music. The lectures on “Modern French Painting,” given by Mr. J. C. Van Dyke last year, are repeated, with additions and changes, in a course on “Old Italian and Modern French Painting.” The number who could wished to take this course, and who could not on account of a scarcity of tickets, is only one proof of the popularity of this series. One can safely say that no subject is more popular with the students or the public. The lectures on Music are almost equally as popular. Mr. William J. Henderson gives a thorough sketch and analysis of the evolution of form and style, and illustrates it as well as can be done with an upright piano. Though there are not so many students taking this course as that of Art, there is always a well-filled room at the time of the lecture.

(The Blue and White, 1892)
With this number we bid adieu to I. S. Salzberg, publisher of the B&W and architect of its 20th-century renaissance. Han, who graduates in May, discovered 1890s copies of this publication in the Columbiana Collection and made it his goal to revive a dead magazine 100 years after it stopped publication. Would that there were more such enterprising Ezekiels to revivify grand old Columbia traditions and create new ones from their dry bones.

Columbia College now possesses one of the finest carpenter shops in the city. 

(Campus Gossip, 1892)

On an a warm but overcast April Thursday, a mini carnavale visited the steps of Low. Two service groups, Jews for Social Justice and Interfaith Voices Against Hunger, set up several tables to combat homelessness by writing letters to politicians and distributing food to those in need. Adding an air of festivity, a rock trio beat out some groovin’ tunes in front of Alma Mater. Just next door, Columbia Special Events set up a “Jumping Castle”—a small shrine to stress relief. While some wanted the free food to go to the students as the homeless relieved stress in the “Castle,” but the reverse proved more beneficial to all.

Overheard: “As many of you know, Austin and I have had our disagreements on occasion. Overall, however, I found it so wonderful to work with him, that I decided to afford myself the pleasure of appointing him twice.”
—President George Rupp, 21 April 1999

Correspondence: About your version of the “Yeah, yeah” story that appeared in the gossip pages of your most recent issue [April, 1999]: I think that story is very well known and a lot of variations on it exist, but I’m going to go ahead and say that my version is the right one and that yours has a few mistakes. First things first—that “anonymous Columbian” is not anonymous. He is Sydney Morgenbesser, still here, and now an emeritus professor in philosophy. I think he’s actually quite well known for his quick and clever comments, “Yeah, yeah” being one of the most famous. Also, the lecturer wasn’t speaking of the prevalence of double negatives versus the lack of double positives. He was claiming that although double negatives create positive statements, in no language do double positives equal negatives. That’s what makes the “Yeah, yeah” funny. It’s an example of what the lecturer said didn’t exist. I refer to him as “the lecturer” because, finally, I don’t think it was Noam Chomsky who was lecturing. I heard John Austin. My sources are pretty reliable, but if you want to be sure you should contact Prof. Morgenbesser. —Rachel Robertson C’00

The first-ever Bacchanal, the University’s week-long Spring festival, was held April 18th–24th. The festivities perhaps sacrificed a bit of historical fidelity for the sake of sobriety (our dictionary defines a bacchanal as “a drunken or riotous celebration: orgy”), but the event proved a success nevertheless. Some of the more popular activities included (in no particular order) sweets at the new bistro Le Monde, midnight dodgeball, a semiformal under a tent on South Field and casino-style gambling.

Two towels are now hung in the Arts washroom. (Campus Gossip, 1892)

I recently noticed a significant change to downtown east corner of 110th Street and Broadway. Mike’s Papaya, home of the 50-cent hot dog, has gone for a new updated look. That yellow antiquated landmark that greeted you after late nights of clubbing and boozing has become history. Do not be fooled: this is bad news. Today they change sign, tomorrow they’ll raise the prices. (If you need evidence of this kind of inflation, just look at Koronet’s.) Enjoy the 2 Franks and a soda for $2 while you can, my friends, because before you know it, you may be paying $2.50. —Anne-Lise Peterson C’00

The Blue and White, May 1999