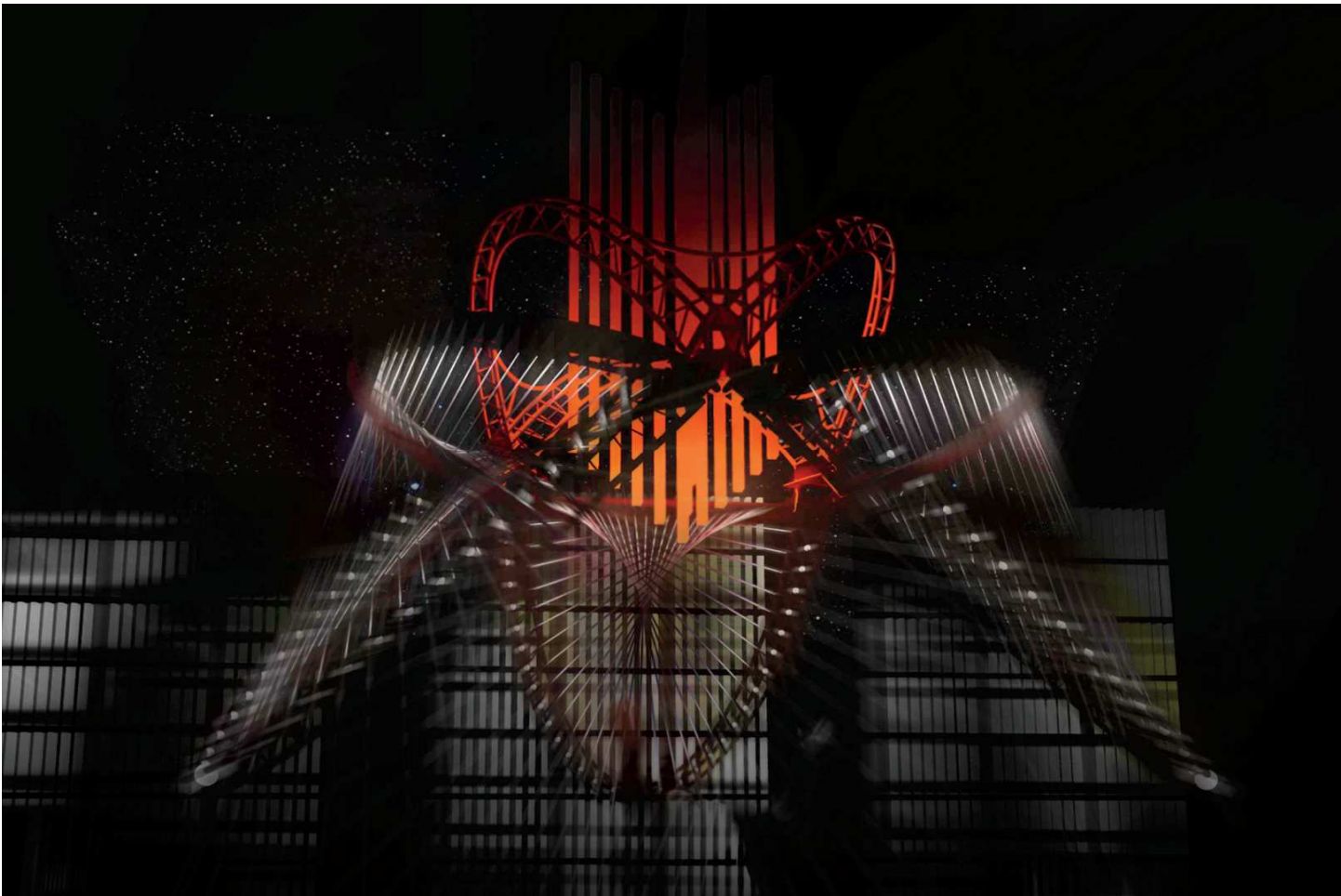


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THE PLAYBOY

HONOR ROLL

MEET 20 PROFESSORS
WHO ARE REINVENTING THE CLASSROOM.
COLLEGE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME

BY LING MA, TIM MC CORMICK AND JOSH SCHOLLMAYER

ANTHONY AMSTERDAM
LEGAL LEGEND,
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF LAW

As a wunderkind attorney in the 1970s, Amsterdam convinced the Supreme Court to suspend the death penalty. Today, as a sage law professor, he continues to advise about 30 ongoing capital punishment cases—with his students serving as co-counsel. “My teaching gives students an environment in which they can think reflectively about their involvement in my work and about how lawyering relates to life.”

DAN ARCHER AND
ADAM JOHNSON
GRAPHIC PIONEERS,
STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Welcome to the new *new* journalism: graphic novels. Each year comic artist Archer and novelist Johnson, along with author Tom Kealey, task students with producing one full-length nonfiction narrative in comic form. Previous student work from their Stanford Graphic Novel Project has chronicled acid attacks on Cameroonian women and environmental issues in Congo. Says Archer, “What we’re seeing is a rise in what graphic art can do as a type of activism and as an educational tool.”

ARTHUR ARON
LOVE DOCTOR,
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW
YORK, STONY BROOK

Here’s what social psychologist Aron knows about love: It’s as addictive as cocaine, it rekindles with the slightest thrill and it turns longtime partners into mirror images. For empirical evidence Aron ignores the heart and goes straight to the besotted brain, which he observes by MRI in his Interpersonal Relationships Laboratory. “Love is such a powerful drive in human beings—in many ways it’s even more powerful than our sex drive.”

MARK-EVAN
BLACKMAN
CLOTHESHORSE WHISPERER,
FASHION INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY

Although Blackman teaches style—menswear to be exact—it comes with plenty of substance. The collegiate Tim Gunn, he readies his nascent

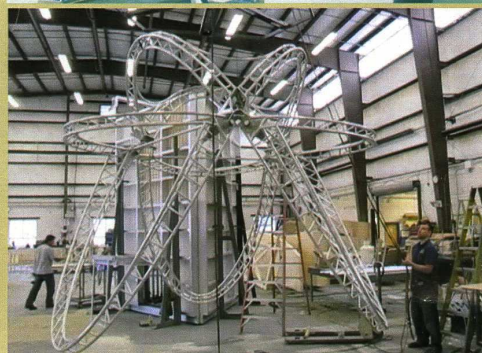
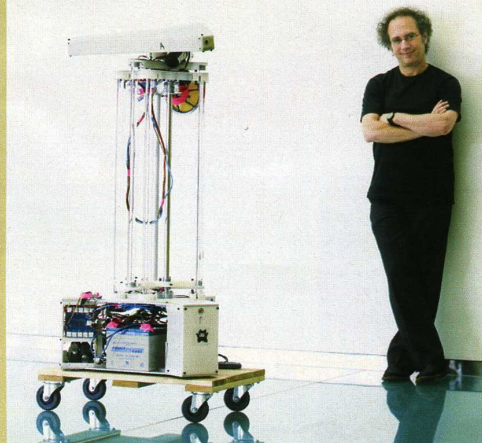
Opposite: The “musical chandelier” set piece from Tod Machover’s new opera *Death and the Powers*.

YOU
SHOULD ALWAYS learn from the best. And so here they are—an assortment of the country’s most brilliant college professors. From their lecture halls and laboratories they will be determining the next 100 years—everything from how we communicate to how we power our homes to how we dress. And though they often work in areas we don’t totally understand yet (the semantic web?), their discoveries can quickly become ubiquitous (*Guitar Hero!*). All the while, they spend each school day imparting their wisdom to the next generation of young minds, which they permanently shape. By design, the big brains assembled here come from every geographic corner and every type of U.S. school (big and small, public and private, with reputations emerging and long established). The only real rule? No **PLAYBOY** contributors. (We didn’t want to play favorites.) Still, trust us: The future is bright.



TOD MACHOVER
MUSIC FUTURIST, MIT

If music makes the world a better place, what about the man who makes music better? To that end, Machover creates technological instruments with a broader range than their acoustic counterparts, composes science-fiction operas scored with robot choruses and writes computer programs that can turn anyone into a budding musician. (*Guitar Hero* originated from his research group at the MIT Media Lab.) As he says, “Music has a wider definition than we give it credit for.”



designers for the fashion industry by demanding flawless technical skills—there will be sewing!—and by submitting their work for unsparring critique by design directors at Patagonia, Nike and Louis Vuitton, among others. “The kids studying menswear at FIT feel that not only are they in the Navy but that they’re Navy Seals.”

IAN BOGOST
INDIE GAMER,
GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY

The deep thinker within a supposedly childish realm—video games—Bogost refuses to view his medium as mindless entertainment. And so his games—e.g., *Killer Flu* (“a game about how seasonal flus mutate and spread”)—play more like wry documentaries than *Grand Theft Auto*. “The wonderful thing about working in a developing field such as video games is that I’m constantly coming up with ideas I’m sure haven’t been fully explored yet.”

WENDY DONIGER
KAMA SUTRIST,
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

“What I find exciting,” says religion professor Doniger, “is that out of all religions, Hinduism stresses its ideas to the furthest extremes of imagination.” Those ideas include godly devotion, violence and of course sex. Most famously Doniger’s translation of the Kama Sutra upended stereotypes of the ancient text as an archaic sex manual into something else—a woman-friendly, gay-accepting lifestyle guide to pleasure. “And everyone thought it was a picture book of people with legs behind their heads.”

MAHMOUD ELSOHLY
MASTER OF MEDICINAL
MARIJUANA,
UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Weed heals—for real! Just not by bong or bowl. From his federally licensed marijuana farm, ElSohly is developing a pot patch for cancer patients who could use a hit of THC to dull pain or kick-start their appetites. “There’s no question about the potential for the cannabis plant to produce medicinal agents. But using it in this way doesn’t involve smoking.”

Left: The chandelier, a large robotic musical instrument designed at the MIT Media Lab, prior to showtime.

JAMES HENDLER
INTERNET VISIONARY,
RENSSELAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Web 2.0 doesn't have anything on Hendler. His vision of the Internet involves its intuitive understanding of our needs and the complete obliteration of our current expectations of search results. Let's call it Web 10.0. "Say you have an idea about how to lower crime in your town. You can test it out on Facebook, but that's talking to your friends. Instead, what if a simple web search for that idea immediately connected you with a city in India that tried something similar and helped you communicate with the person who started it?"

DAN KAMMEN
ENERGY TROUBLESHOOTER,
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
BERKELEY

To mend our energy woes, Kammen suggests

we look to the sky. He promises enough sunlight and wind exist there to power our lives without choking the atmosphere with carbon emissions—particularly if we're equally bullish about energy efficiency. As Kammen, who is also an advisor to the Obama administration, told *Frontline* last year, "Clean energy and renewable power are the next opportunities to reinvent our economy and jump-start innovation."

GLENN LOURY
PUBLIC PROVOCATEUR,
BROWN UNIVERSITY

Predicting Loury's opinions on matters of race—his grist as a noted, if controversial, public intellectual—is a near impossibility. An economist by trade and a freethinker by nature, he spent the 1980s on the conservative side of racial tempests only to move left in recent

years. But mostly he defies categorization. To wit: "When everybody was on the Obama trip, I was saying, 'Wait a minute!' I like to think I'm being proven right. Nothing against the president—he's a good man, and I'd vote for him again. But I didn't drink that Kool-Aid."

JOHN MUELLER
TERRORISM NAYSAYER,
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Let the terrorists win? Such a victory would be impossible, claims Mueller, a calm voice in the post-9/11 fear culture. Mainly he provides perspective, pointing out that despite the tragedy of the Al Qaeda attacks, statistically speaking terrorism poses no greater physical threat than an errant lightning bolt. "The idea that terrorists present an existential threat to the country is ridiculous," he says. "In fact, every story about

POP QUIZ:

MATCH THE PUBLIC FIGURE TO HIS OR HER COLLEGE MAJOR

PUBLIC FIGURES

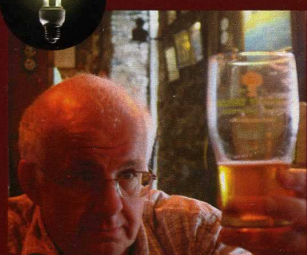
1. CHUCK LIDDELL
2. SPIKE LEE
3. JARED FOGLE
4. ELISABETH HASSELBECK
5. WILL FERRELL
6. BILLY GRAHAM
7. SUZE ORMAN
8. TOM DELAY
9. VERA WANG
10. YOUNG MC

MAJORS

- A. COMMUNICATIONS
- B. ACCOUNTING
- C. FINE ARTS
- D. ANTHROPOLOGY
- E. SOCIAL WORK
- F. BIOLOGY
- G. SPORTS INFORMATION
- H. ART HISTORY
- I. ECONOMICS
- J. INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

ANSWERS: 1-B, 2-A, 3-J, 4-C, 5-G, 6-D, 7-E, 8-F, 9-H, 10-I

CHARLES BAMFORTH
BREWMASTER
GENERAL,
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
DAVIS



Bamforth is to the alchemy of hops, barley and yeast as Louis Pasteur was to hops, barley and yeast (or didn't you know of the Frenchman's *Études sur la bière*?). When not lording over the malting-and-brewing science program, Bamforth gives heady lessons to industry behemoths and micros alike. Meanwhile, one of the most popular classes on campus is his *Intro to Beer and Brewing*, during which he offers a favorite mantra: "All beer is good beer."

WHAT'S IN A NUMBER?

IN THE CUTTHROAT WORLD OF ACADEMIA, TRACKING COLLEGE RANKINGS HAS BECOME AN ANNUAL BLOOD SPORT. BUT WHAT DO THE NUMBERS REALLY SAY? WE LOOK AT THE 2010 RANKINGS ASSIGNED TO ONE RANDOMLY SELECTED COLLEGE, THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY.

U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT



Initiated in 1983, *U.S. News's* Best Colleges is arguably the most established college-rankings report. Its formula gives most weight to "peer assessment," in which college officials are asked to rate schools other than their own. The practice has been criticized for stoking professional rivalries rather than providing an insider critique. Other factors weighed include faculty-to-student ratio and per-student spending, meaning that public schools like Berkeley will generally compare unfavorably with private institutions.

FORBES



Pointing to the tendency of colleges to inflate their statistics, *Forbes's* list considers several third-party sources. Its gauge of student satisfaction is partially derived from RateMyProfessors.com, and its ratings of postgraduate success incorporate salary data from Payscale.com and alumni inclusion in *Who's Who in America*. Critics question the substance of these sources, but *Forbes* defends its methodology as "difficult to game." Reputed to be one of the nation's best public schools, Berkeley ranks surprisingly low here, several notches behind lesser-known institutions such as Kalamazoo College.

PRINCETON REVIEW



The Princeton Review declines to rank schools in one all-encompassing list. "We think such lists are not useful for the people they are supposed to serve," it states. Instead, the selections in *The Best 371 Colleges*, based primarily on "our own college knowledge" and independent college counselors, are listed alphabetically. Additional "ranking lists"—categorical judgments across 62 topics ranging from "Most Accessible Professors" to "Great Financial Aid"—are culled entirely from student-reported data. Touting its listings as the most reflective of undergrad experience, the company says, "We're just the messengers."



NALINI NADKARNI
SCIENCE POPULIST,
EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE

Nadkarni spends most days hanging from trees, studying the surrounding plants and animals. But once she climbs down, she strives to make what she's learned relatable. For guys, she helped create specially designed skateboard decks ("They're made of wood, which provides a link to trees"); for girls, she conceived of Tree-Top Barbie ("It's an alternate role model—one of strength and academic interests"); and for the spiritually inclined, she highlighted Bible passages about conservation ("I emphasize the universal spiritual symbolism of trees").

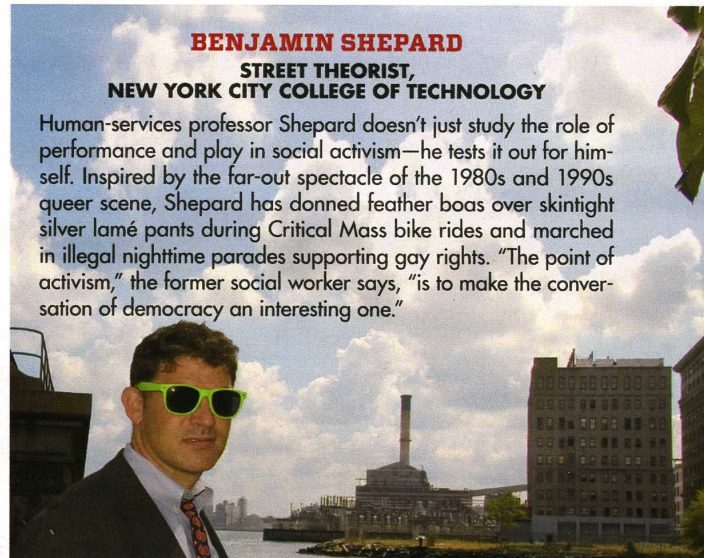
terrorism should mention that your chances of being killed by an international terrorist are one in 80,000."

P.Z. MYERS
**IRASCIBLE INTELLIGENT-
 DESIGN CRITIC, UNIVERSITY
 OF MINNESOTA, MORRIS**

Myers's scripture? The laws of biology. The self-professed "godless liberal biologist" proselytizes the tenets of his faith in evolution while gleefully knocking down the dogma of creationists on his popular blog (scienceblogs.com/pharyngula) and on Twitter (@pzmyers). "The first day of class I tell my students they should always ask a magical question. And that question is 'How do you know that?'"

ROBERT THOMAS
**REFORM SCHOOLER,
 UNIVERSITY OF
 MONTANA WESTERN**

"College is often like war—long periods of boredom punctuated by short periods of terror caused by exams," Thomas jokes. War, of course, is hell, so Thomas has brought peace and prosperity to his tiny campus by overhauling its curriculum. His students now take classes in 18-day blocks that meet far from the typical university setting (e.g., Thomas teaches his geology courses at Yellowstone National Park—roughly a two-hour drive from Montana Western). "They're learning their discipline by actually doing it."



BENJAMIN SHEPARD
**STREET THEORIST,
 NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY**

Human-services professor Shepard doesn't just study the role of performance and play in social activism—he tests it out for himself. Inspired by the far-out spectacle of the 1980s and 1990s queer scene, Shepard has donned feather boas over skintight silver lamé pants during Critical Mass bike rides and marched in illegal nighttime parades supporting gay rights. "The point of activism," the former social worker says, "is to make the conversation of democracy an interesting one."

JENNIFER RICHESON
**BIAS HUNTER,
 NORTHWESTERN
 UNIVERSITY**

Bias and prejudice may be out of sight, but they are never out of mind. Via brain imaging and clever mental exercises, Richeson measures how white minds strain to achieve impeccable political correctness when in the presence of African Americans. "People today generally understand that prejudice is a bad thing," the social psychologist has said. "But they still don't know how to converse or behave with people different from themselves."

EUGENE VOLOKH
**FREE-SPEECH PITBULL,
 UCLA SCHOOL OF LAW**

When discussing the First Amendment, Volokh, a legal analyst, first offers a fact: Speech in the U.S. has never been freer. But there's a caveat: The push for inoffensive speech has begun to suppress that freedom. Though Volokh sees the virtue in antiharassment policies that sterilize workplace behavior ("If these policies ban unwanted touching, it's about time"), he believes their vagueness is troublesome. "You can call overheard political statements harassment, but they're constitutionally protected speech."