

NYU

IN NYC



conservation

PHOTO © SERGE CASHMAN

TWO DOZEN LUCKY FRESHMEN GOT REFURBISHED BIKES AND LESSONS ON PROPER CARE WITH TIME'S UP! MECHANIC PHOENIX DRAGO.

award from NYU's Sustainability Task Force, Allen, former classmate Mark Simpson (CAS '07), and others, harvested 50 abandoned bikes stored in campus facilities and donated them to Time's Up!, a non-profit cycling collective on East Houston Street at which both Allen and Simpson have volunteered. Time's Up! staff and NYU students refurbished 25 of them—stripping the rest for usable parts—and gave them to interested freshmen during Welcome Week last fall. Recipients were required to learn maintenance skills and safe urban riding techniques—a must for navigating the obstacle course of New York streets, says Allen, a California native.

For phase two, Allen is surveying students' cycling habits and preferences, researching other city and university bike programs, and will make recommendations on parking, storage, and road safety to the Sustainability Task Force's transportation committee. Jeremy Friedman (GAL '07), the task force's project administrator, predicts her effort will inspire a new campus bike recycling policy. "It hits so many targets: transportation, greening, education, cost savings, and it works within the community," he says.

While government surveys estimate that just 5 percent of the nation's bicycle riders bike for transport, Allen hopes early exposure will convince students of cycling's economic, time, and health benefits. "Part of why we targeted freshmen was to create an NYU rider for four years," she says. "If you get someone riding in their freshman year, then when they move away from campus they'll still think it's a good mode of transportation." Plus, she adds, a brisk morning ride always wakes one up for classes. ■

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

A CYCLIST RESCUES ABANDONED BIKES FROM A GRIM FATE

by Suzanne Krause / GSAS '08

Early in fall 2006, Emily Allen (GAL '10) noticed the slick bicycle chained outside her freshman dorm but grew sad as she watched the seemingly abandoned vehicle deteriorate week after week in the cold and rain. The building manager told

her such neglected bikes are eventually tossed away with other garbage, inspiring the ardent peddler, whose own four bikes occupy part of her living room, to apply for a grant to collect and refurbish the wasted cycles haunting her on almost every campus bike rack.

Last summer, aided by a \$5,000

Avant-Garde Rx

A NEW CLINIC OFFERS ACTIVISM AND ART

by Sabine Heinlein / GSAS '07

After spending a semester in Berlin, where big trees line nearly every street and abundant parks feature thick woods and wildflowers, Moo Kyung Sohn (STEINHARDT '08) dreaded returning to New York's concrete jungle. "The nature we see in the city is not real," the undergrad says about Manhattan's carefully planted plots. "It's an *idea* of nature that we made for ourselves." So Sohn turned to NYU's Environmental Health Clinic to assuage her green deprivation. The clinic, which officially opened last October at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, marries conceptual art with social and environmental activism. It welcomes appointments from "impatients," individuals such as Sohn who are too anxious to wait for protracted legislative changes.

"Coming to the clinic doesn't require that you are an environmental activist or a community organizer," explains founder Natalie Jeremijenko. "It's a way of coordinating diverse, local actions and making them amount to something significant." The goal is to create environmentalism that is mediagenic, publicly legible and, most of all, approachable and manageable by anyone. "People *can* actually do something," says Jeremijenko, who joined Steinhardt last semester as an assistant professor of visual art.

Jeremijenko first evaluates an

impatient's concern and, upon diagnosis, issues a prescription for action. In Sohn's case, the "doctor" directed her to create "NoParks" in two of New York's many no-parking zones, such as in front of fire hydrants. One sunny day last September, passersby and local residents came to admire Sohn's micro-swamp with ferns, mosses, and rocks on East Ninth Street and her wildflower garden on Stuyvesant Street in the East Village. Her favorite visitors were a group of butterflies that made the wildflower garden their temporary home.

To help people tackle environmental issues often perceived as

inaccessible and abstract, Jeremijenko plans to design a whole repertoire of such empowering actions. To folks who want to reclaim pedestrian power in a city known for heavy traffic, she might prescribe a unique pair of shoes that, through a spring in the heel, increase the wearers' stride by 20 to 40 percent. "It's a sensible shoe, but it's [also] about putting a spring in your step [and] treating gender differences," says Jeremijenko, whose artwork-cum-science projects have been exhibited at the Whitney Biennial in 1997 and 2006, the MoMA, the Guggenheim, and the Cooper-Hewitt

Design Life Now: National Design Triennial 2006–07.

For all their high design, Jeremijenko's prescriptions are much more than fleeting eye candy. NoParks are an "engineered micro-landscape optimized for environmental problems," she says. A verdant island on the side of the road, a NoPark can capture the oily runoff from the road before it flows into the river and help reduce standing puddles that serve as breeding grounds for mosquitoes, which might eliminate the need for hazardous fumigation.

While Sohn's NoParks were temporary, the Environmental Health Clinic hopes to get permission from the Department of Transportation to permanently install them. The real thing will require the impatient to dig up asphalt and plant specific flora to filter out cadmium and hydrocarbon runoff. We might soon see NoParks sprout up all over New York, with Sohn leading the charge. "The clinic is not about giving you answers," she says. "It's about having you create your own." ■



PHOTO © WILLIAM MEYER

THIS TEMPORARY "MICROSWAMP" OFFERS A LUSH ALTERNATIVE TO AN EAST VILLAGE NO-PARKING ZONE.

the insider

BEST OF NEW YORK

NYU FACULTY AND STAFF OFFER UP THEIR FAVORITES
by Renée Alfuso / CAS '06

TAKE A DIP OR DISCOVER THE CITY'S RICH BLUE-COLLAR HISTORY THIS SPRING IN SEVERAL VENUES THAT LIE JUST OFF THE BEATEN PATH.

A STYLISH STAY

You can stay at a Holiday Inn anywhere, but for a true New York experience, Donna Quadri-Felitti, clinical assistant professor in the Preston Robert Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism, and Sports Management, recommends visitors try a boutique hotel for the personal service and unusual details. On the west side, she goes for the European luxury of the Iroquois, and on the east side, it's the intimate bed-and-breakfast-like Roger Smith. But the **HOTEL ROGER WILLIAMS** in Midtown's Murray Hill really stands out for being hip yet unintimidating. "It's not so trendy that it's off the scale," Quadri-Felitti says. "Mom can still go there and be cool." With books, scented candles, and flat-screen plasma TVs in each room—some with private garden terraces—the Roger Williams de-

scribes itself as "more fashionable apartment than hotel." And forget waking up to miniature boxes of cereal—the Help Yourself Breakfast Pantry is virtually its own café with heaps of frittatas, European meats and cheeses, and local delicacies such as croissants from Balt-hazar and smoked salmon from Petrossian. Not your average hotel, but as Quadri-Felitti puts it, "Isn't that why you come to New York—for the unique things you can't get anywhere else?" **131 MADISON AVENUE, 212-448-7000; WWW.HOTELROGERWILLIAMS.COM**

WORKINGMAN'S PALACE

Tucked in a row of buildings amidst the bustle of Times Square and Fifth Avenue is a little-known gem of city history: headquarters of the **GENERAL SOCIETY OF MECHANICS AND TRADESMEN**

OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, a favorite of Daniel J. Walkowitz, professor of history and acting director of metropolitan studies. Founded in 1785, the society was established to provide educational and cultural services for working people and their families before there was even a public school system. And that legacy has endured—the library is the second oldest in the city and the school they started in 1820 continues today. Walkowitz says the building is a testimony to the city's forgotten craftsmen. "We somehow think that the builders of New York are simply the great men who provide the money, the Donald Trumps—but Donald Trump's never laid a brick in his life," he says. One doesn't have to be a society member or history buff to appreciate the library's soaring three-floor-high grand atrium topped by a breathtaking skylight. "The architecture is quite magnificent," Walkowitz

agrees, "but the front is just another old building on the block." **20 WEST 44TH STREET, 212-840-1840; WWW.GENERALSOCIETY.ORG**

SPEEDY EATERY

Quick eats are a must for most New Yorkers, but fast food shouldn't mean sacrificing quality, according to Rogan Kersh, who studies the politics of obesity and the fast-food industry and is associate dean and professor of public service at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. "We have been trained through advertising to think of McDonald's as the purveyor of the fast food we need right now," he says. "But an apple doesn't take any longer to eat than a Big Mac." For a full meal that's quick but also fresh and inventive, Kersh hits up **CAFFE FALAI**. He recommends the veal meatballs in tomato sauce or fried mozzarella and beet salad, but his favorite is the honeydew melon juice. Chef



HOTEL ROGER WILLIAMS



CAFFE FALAI



RIVERBANK STATE PARK



FROM LEFT: © HOTEL ROGER WILLIAMS; © ANNEMARIE POVO PURLONG; © NYS PARKS, RECREATION & HISTORIC PRESERVATION; © STEVE ANIAGA
GENERAL SOCIETY OF MECHANICS AND TRADESMEN

Economy

THE ARTS—A GREEN GIANT FOR NEW YORK CITY

by Ted Boscia

When a stagehands strike extinguished Broadway's lights for 19 days last fall, it was a mere blip in an increasingly robust arts industry, a financial juggernaut that contributed \$21.2 billion to the New York City economy in 2005.

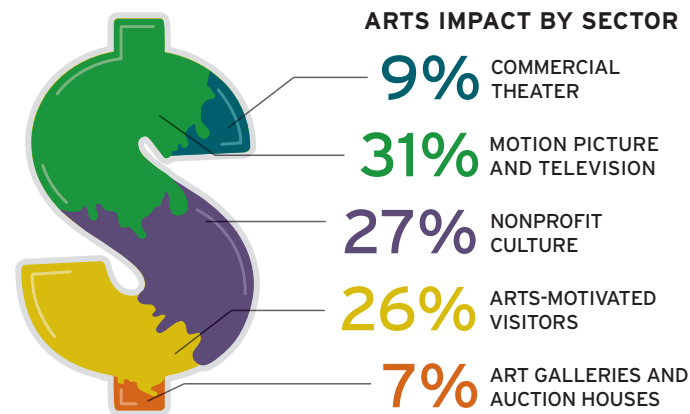
The findings, detailed in "Arts as an Industry: Their Economic Impact on New York City and New York State," chart the steady growth of the sector—defined as film and TV production, commercial theater, art galleries and auction houses, nonprofit culture such as museums, zoos, and dance troupes, and arts-related tourism—during the past two decades. Since 1982, after adjusting for inflation, the arts' financial footprint has increased 86 percent in New York City. "The arts are an economic boon for the city and state," says Rosemary Scanlon, a clinical associate professor at the NYU Real Estate Institute, who led the study for the Alliance for the Arts.

Most notable, according to Scanlon, has been the expansion of cultural nonprofits, which contributed \$5.8 billion in

2005—double the 1982 figure—to the city's economy. While this sector is top-heavy—42 organizations have yearly budgets greater than \$10 million—the city is also home to thousands of smaller nonprofits. Scanlon credits lawmakers' steadfast support, primarily through tax credits and grants, for the growth: "Even when the city was struggling with its budget, it kept up its support for the arts."

To measure the arts' economic impact, Scanlon and other researchers considered the direct expenditures of the city and state's cultural institutions, as well as dollars generated by wages, taxes, and other indirect spending, including outlays by contractors and agencies for hire and money reinvested by employees living in the city. She estimates the annual output of the arts rivals that of the construction trade, another prodigious city industry. More important, she says, the arts have resiliently weathered work stoppages, recessions, and even the 9/11 attacks, which many analysts feared would precipitate a protracted slump. "All the curves are pointing up," Scanlon says. ■

ARTS IMPACT BY SECTOR



SOURCE: ALLIANCE FOR THE ARTS

Iacopo Falai—who learned how to cook in his hometown of Florence and was later pastry chef at Le Cirque—provides a take-out or sit-down menu, and lures customers with an elaborate dessert case up front. Just a block away from the crowds of Soho, the café offers a great break from work or shopping. As Kersh says, "On a rough day, tottering down there around four o'clock is always a rewarding experience."

265 LAFAYETTE STREET, 917-338-6207

SWIMMING HOLE

When Robin Nagle tells people she's been swimming in the Hudson River for seven years now, they're never eager to shake her hand. But Nagle, director of the John W. Draper Interdisciplinary Master's Program in Humanities and Social Thought, swears it's one of the best places to take a plunge. "It's such an extraordinary feeling to be not on the water, but actual-

ly in the water around Manhattan," she says. Some swims are organized by the Manhattan Island Foundation, which raises awareness of just how clean the waters are. For more traditional lap swimming, Nagle heads upstream to **RIVERBANK STATE PARK** with its spectacular views of the Palisades, George Washington Bridge, and, of course, the Hudson. The 28-acre, multi-level recreation facility—which is Manhattan's only state park and boasts a football/soccer field, tennis and basketball courts, ice skating rink in winter, and a restaurant—has public outdoor lap and wading pools (open from July 4 through Labor Day). And just two bucks gains you entry to the indoor Olympic-size pool. Nagle says, "It's a joy to go for 50 meters without having to turn around because it feels like you're swimming in something more substantial than just a pool."

679 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, 212-694-3600