

WEEKEND JOURNAL.

EUROPE

Straight to the trash

Getting in the door is harder than ever for book and screenplay writers



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Design from Michael Michalsky collection 'Sinners and Saints' autumn winter 2009/10

© Michalsky

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Illustration by Lisa Haney

COVER, illustration by Brett Ryder.

WEEKEND JOURNAL

EUROPE

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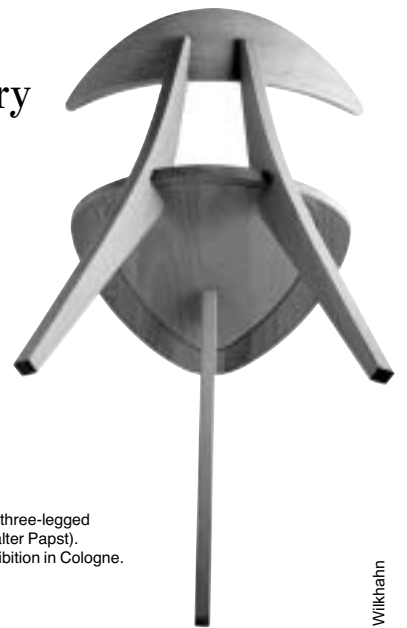
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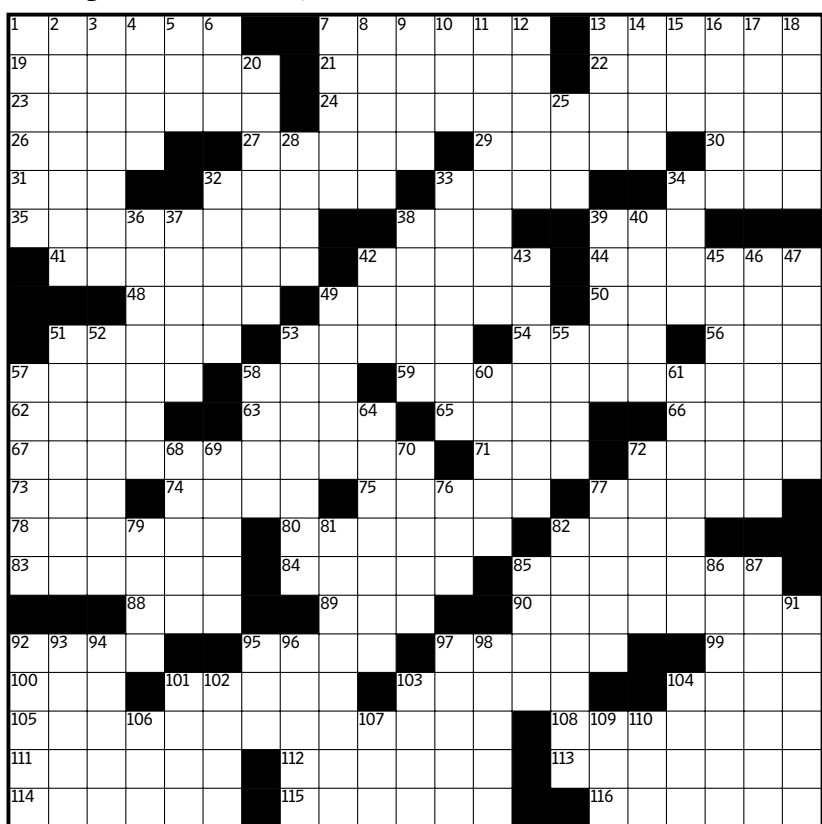
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❖ Fashion

Michalsky keeps it real

Berlin fashion designer expands by diversifying his lifestyle label

BY JESSICA SALTZ

MICHAEL MICHALSKY'S fashion label is just three years old, but the German designer has well-honed credentials for success and his clothes are worn by Berlin clubbers and Karl Lagerfeld alike.

While he is busy with his Berlin fashion show this week, he also continues to lend his business acumen and instinct for trends to other brands within the industry.

Mr. Michalsky, 42 years old, is often credited with making Adidas popular again after the German sports-wear maker was on the brink of bankruptcy in the mid 1990s. He also breathed life into flailing accessories label MCM, was head designer of Levis and signed a deal last summer with Italian sports brand Kappa to work on their range of indoor sportswear.

"Realness and sustainability" are the words Mr. Michalsky uses to explain his brand's success in a competitive market and his label's motto is "real clothes for real people." His autumn/winter 2010/11 fashion show on Jan. 22 as part of Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Berlin is entitled "Michalsky Stylenite," and will take place in conjunction with two other top German designers, Lala Berlin and Kaviar Gauche, in Berlin's grand Friedrichstadtpalast theater. It will be streamed live on the Internet, and with a live performance by Spandau Ballet it promises to be the kind of brazen spectacle for which Mr. Michalsky is famous.

"The only designers who are going to survive in the 21st century are the ones who realize the need to diversify," Mr. Michalsky says.

This belief is reflected in his eponymous lifestyle brand, which was founded in Berlin in 2007. It is comprised of the opulent Michalsky high-end fashion line, jeans, eyewear and living. The Michalsky fragrance is planned for release this year.

He opened the Michalsky boutique in 2007 in Berlin's bustling Monbijouplatz, which was followed by the grand Michalsky gallery in the city's Ritz Carlton building in October last year. The gallery shows his range as a designer, displaying anything from golden trainers, florid sunglasses and psychedelic-print cushions to sumptuous satin evening gowns trimmed with lace and cropped fur jackets.

But the designer says he rejects the often esoteric nature of high fashion: "When I started, people told me 'your clothes are too wearable,' but for me that is a compliment. I am inspired by what I see on people around me. They wear jeans and sneakers, but the women want a nice dress when they go out in the evening. It's not a contradiction."

The Michalsky brand sells in 10 countries world-wide. Austria and Russia are currently the two main markets for his designs, but he is taking the label to China and Japan this year. He also signed up with Proctor & Gamble Co. to promote Ariel washing powder in 2010. The designer features in advertising for the product and will promote it in his Autumn/Winter 2010/11 fashion show.

Mr. Michalsky was global creative director of Adidas AG in 2006 and at the peak of his success with the brand, when he left to start his own label. "Adidas was a sleeping beauty when I started working there," says Mr. Michalsky, who worked at the



Clockwise from left: Michael Michalsky; women's fashion from the 'Sinners and Saints' autumn/winter 2009/10 collection; men's look from the same collection; Michalsky Gallery opening in Berlin last fall.

company for 11 years. "I loved what it stood for within youth culture and music, its involvement in the emerging rap and hip-hop scene of the late '70s, early '80s. I really began to live and breathe the brand."

The label's renaissance was aided by high-profile collaborations with, among others, rapper Missy Elliott and Japanese designer Yohji Yamamoto, with whom Mr. Michalsky created the Y-3 collection.

Mr. Michalsky's instinct for trends in music and youth culture helps explain his success in the world of fashion design and branding, and after years of working in New York and studying at London's College of Fashion, Berlin is now his home, business base and the source of his inspiration. "Berlin is the most interesting city in the world right now because it is always changing. It feels like New York at the end of the 1980s, where you have a mix of classes of people, arty people, rich and poor. And it is in the heart of Europe."

Mercedes Benz Berlin Fashion Week is currently in full swing and runs until Jan. 23. The presence of notable urban tradeshows Bread & Butter, Premium and Jam, which made the move from Cologne for the first time this season, means that the city is becoming an important biannual trip for people in all sectors of the fashion industry.

Mr. Michalsky also recognizes the importance of a good publicity stunt to promote his young label. He

staged his autumn/winter 2009 collection—entitled "Sinners and Saints"—in a church. Models strutted forth from the altar in floor-length halter-neck gowns emblazoned with the prints of stained-glass windows, leather bomber jackets and voluptuous furs.

It was the most coveted invitation of the season in Berlin, but caused "a public outcry," he says.

Bild, Germany's largest selling daily newspaper, held a public poll the day before to ask readers whether such a thing was a sacrilege.

"The results were 50-50," he says with a smile, but the show, which the mayor of Berlin attended, helped establish the brand as a household name in Germany.

—Jessica Saltz is a writer based in Berlin.



Getty Images (2) Michalsky (catwalk)

Small-plate sensations

New trend lets diners savor a dozen flavors in just one meal

BY BRUCE PALLING

THE SMALL-PLATE concept of dining seems to be gaining culinary traction throughout Europe but London has become the ground zero for experimentation with cuisine derived from three main sources—the *cicchetti* of Venice, *tapas* of Barcelona and *pintxos* of San Sebastián. From these century-old beginnings, the style has expanded into creative dishes which are all starter sized.

There are innumerable reasons why they make sense—the price for one and then there is the opportunity to savor a dozen different taste sensations in one meal. It is as if the haute-cuisine tasting menu concept has suddenly come down to the level of bars and simple restaurants but with an important twist. You choose what you want and in which order it arrives.

In London, two of the three new Michelin Bib Gourmand awards have gone to small-plate restaurants—Bocca di Lupo in Soho and Terroirs in Covent Garden. Another outstanding one, Dehesa (www.dehesa.co.uk) off Carnaby Street, got its Bib Gourmand a year ago.

Terroirs (www.terroirswinebar.com), located in a side street underneath Coutts bank, has been an extraordinary success. Although based on the natural wine bars of Paris, Terroir has created a wildly successful venue for people to just drop in, and have a glass of wine with such signature dishes as Lincoln smoked eel with celeriac remoulade or anchovies, shallots and unsalted butter. The paper place mat is actually the daily menu, so customers can instantly order at any time of their stay. Chef Ed Wilson believes speed to be of the essence: “Because we prepare everything in advance, even before the drinks order has arrived we can be serving a plate of charcuterie, duck rillettes and a few slices of ham straight out of our kitchen.”

Diners typically order three or four dishes each, which is similar in San Sebastián in Spain, where the *pintxos*, or bar food, is arguably the most sophisticated in the world. In Spain, the main factor for its development has been cultural. Basques rarely have a proper breakfast, so they tend to eat more in bars later in the morning. Gabriella de Aguirre, the American-born expert on Basque cuisine, also believes that “it is more stimulating to have a whole parade of culinary delights on offer and it is some of the most economical and wholesome food you can find.”

The most innovative *pintxos* bar in the Old Town of San Sebastián is A Fuego Negro (www.afuegonegro.com), which has a range of conventional bar snacks at the entrance. Inside, a series of blackboards offer a modern take, ranging from rare roast beef with a smear of strawberry and chocolate with a sprinkling of chilli, to mussels and shrimps on lemon, covered with a foam made from bitters.

There is a similarly strong tradition in Venice for a great array of sophisticated bar snacks, known as *cicchetti*. The Cantina do



Pintxatu black salad at A Fuego Negro restaurant in San Sebastián; below, Chef Ed Wilson carving Jamon Iberico at Terroirs in London.

Mori (+39-0-41-522-5401) has been operating in the same premises since 1462, offering an array of bar snacks skewered with toothpicks in glass cases that look like a miniature edible yacht marina. The selection includes deep fried tuna balls, char-grilled artichokes, anchovies with boiled eggs, pureed cod on polenta, marinated sardines and a variety of cured meats with pecorino cheese.

On the other side of the Grand Canal, there is an intriguing new small-plate concept at Naranzaria (www.naranzaria.it), owned by the Brandolini family. Here, with views overlooking the Rialto Bridge, you can eat the full array of conventional *cicchetti* but also try innovative dishes created by Akira Nakasuga, the Brazilian-born Japanese chef. He offers interesting cultural mixtures such as tuna, mozzarella and tomato sushi. “People like small plates because you can try Japanese algae and then have perfect risotto at the same table,” says co-owner Contessa Marie Brandolini.

It is almost as if with the reduction in plate size, chefs feel obliged to be more creative and individualistic because they have more opportunities to impress with a greater number of dishes. One relatively unknown London bar restaurant that excels in creativity is Dehesa (www.dehesa.co.uk), arguably the only restaurant in London that is equally inspired by Spanish and Italian influences. Located at the edge of Carnaby Street, it serves stimulating combinations such as spiced line-caught tuna carpaccio with dehydrated olives, capers and preserved lemons (Italian), next to prawns with saffron potatoes Piquillo peppers, chilli and prawn essence (Spanish). Creations like baked gratin of Taleggio with trompette de la mort mushroom, cavolo nero and potato gnocchi could rival any dish in the tasting menu of a Michelin-starred restaurant.

Founder Simon Mullins says customers usually order three or four plates each, which puts a challenge on the kitchen as that adds up

to about 5,000 plates a week. “Our average spend is £28 a head so this is approximately the same price as a main course at a top restaurant,” Mr. Mullins says. “If you sit down with a group of people you can easily have 10 or 12 dishes and share them, which makes it tremendously sociable—it really affects the way people interact when they have so much to talk about—it builds rapport through the food.”

New Zealand-born chef Peter Gordon was the most renowned Pacific Rim chef in London in the '90s. Since 2001 he has run a small-plate restaurant located on Marylebone High Street called The Providores (www.theprovidores.co.uk), which is the last word in small-plate fusion cuisine.

“Whenever I had chefs dropping by to try my food, I would end up making them lots of small plates, so I thought, why not start a res-

taurant with that concept for all the dishes,” says Mr. Gordon. For him, it’s not about the speed of the meal but about the variety: “People can experience more, which we think is a good thing. If I come back from my other restaurant in Istanbul, or from a trip to Japan, I naturally incorporate some ideas into the dishes too.” This would explain the presence on the breakfast menu of poached Turkish eggs with whipped yoghurt and hot chilli butter, or char-grilled aubergine with pickled ginger, toasted coconut, coriander, den miso and shichimi.

The most acclaimed small-plates chef in London is Jason Atherton, the Michelin-starred chef at Maze (www.gordonramsay.com/maze/), located next to the American Embassy in Mayfair. He was the first British chef to spend a season at Ferran Adrià’s famous El



South Africa's Winelands

THE SOUTH AFRICAN vignerons have high hopes for 2010. With a World Cup kicking off in June, interest in their wines is predicted to be at new levels as visitors from across Europe descend on the Western Cape. Su Birch, chief executive of the industry body Wines of South Africa, says they are expecting a 10% rise in sales as supermarkets across Europe pre-

myriad of styles and flavors it is difficult to describe it in such broad brush terms.

I have visited the region twice in recent years and found a uniquely Old World philosophy in many of the Cape's most sought after wine estates such as Hamilton Russell, Kanonkop, Rustenberg and Vergelegen. This can be summed up in one word: subtlety. For white wine this means not overdoing the oak, producing less wild, tropical flavors that dominate the nose and opting for more mineral, understated, dry flavors.

Wine WILL LYONS

pare for a summer of South African promotional activity.

In wine circles there is a growing feeling that the time has come for the vineyards nestled around the towns of Stellenbosch, Franschhoek and Hermanus. In 1995, when South Africa last hosted and won a World Cup—the Rugby World Cup—the Winelands were still building their reputation. Just five years after the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, F.W. de Klerk's negotiations that moved the National Party out of power and the end of apartheid, the world opened its doors to a wine industry a little unsure of its identity. James Farquharson, a winemaker who has completed stints at one of the Cape's best known wine estates, Boschendal, said it was a hugely exciting time.

"I graduated in 1994," he told me. "And for the first time as a winemaker I could go anywhere and experience anything." He headed to France where he worked vintages in Bordeaux and the Rhône Valley, learning to pick early, not to over-oak and reduce the natural residual sugar of the grapes. The result is that his winemaking has a slightly European feel.

That search for identity has led many wine critics to describe South Africa's Winelands as a bridge between the restrained, delicate Old World character found in European vineyards and the up-front, fruity character found amid the hot plains of the New World. Indeed, it is often said that South Africa is the most Old World of the New World wine-producing regions. Certainly, the Cape possesses some of the oldest geology in the wine-growing world and three centuries of winemaking lineage, but today there is such a

sensational with notes of dark cherry, black spice and an earthy savory character. More importantly, these sell at around £25 a bottle. By no means cheap but when compared to their counterparts in the Côte de Nuits in Burgundy they are trading at a near 50% discount.

On my visit to the Cape, Sauvignon Blanc has particularly impressed me. Among the many that stood out were Buitenverwachting, Klein Constantia, Rustenberg and Vergelegen, all of which produced a restrained, mineral, zippy character with notes of gooseberry and pear. Chenin Blanc, perhaps South Africa's most famous white grape varietal, keeps getting better and better. Mrs. Kirsten's Old Vineyards Chenin Blanc 2007 is sensational. It has an intense, nutty, walnut, creamy character that wouldn't look out of place in the vineyards around Savennières in France's Loire Valley.

While there is almost universal agreement that South Africa's white wines have reached new heights in terms of quality, in some quarters the reds have been criticized for being a little over ripe and baked, with a slight rubbery flavor. Personally, it is the Bordeaux blends that really caught my attention.

Kanonkop's Paul Sauer blend, Rustenburg's John X Merriman and Peter Barlow blends, and Vergelegen's Mill Race and straight Cabernet Sauvignon are all welcome in my cellar any day. It isn't an underestimation to put some of the past vintages on a par with anything produced in the Medoc.

If there is one gripe I have with South Africa's wines, it is the heavy alcohol levels which too often exceed 14.5%. With growing concern about public health, particularly alcohol abuse, I feel this could be a real problem. In the meantime, we will just have to moderate our intake.



The interior at Dehesa in London.

Bulli in Spain. When he first opened Maze in 2005, he was adamant that he didn't want it to be a formal fine-dining experience.

"I wanted it to be exciting and lively and informal with music playing and no table cloths," he says. "But most importantly I want people to have a choice. My wife never wants more than two dishes off a tasting menu, whereas I like having the entire thing. Most of the time you can't have both at the same table, which I think is a load of rubbish—it is for the customer to make the decision, not the chef. If you want to come in and have two desserts a cup of coffee and nothing else, that's fine by me, or a soup and a glass of wine. I want to revolutionize the way fine dining is perceived and I think we have done that."

—Bruce Palling
is a writer based in London.



Above, sardines with harissa; left, Salmorejo cherry over Iberian fried breadcrumbs at A Fuego Negro restaurant in San Sebastián.



Alex Iturraide

DRINKING NOW

Hamilton Russell Vineyards Chardonnay

Vintage: **2007**

Price: **about £20 or €23**

Alcohol content: **13.5%**

This is a very Old World style Chardonnay. By that I mean it has a tighter, drier, more mineral character—a style that wouldn't look out of place in Burgundy. I detected a slight lemony character to the nose with undertones of cashew nuts and a strong intensity.



The death of the slush pile

By Katherine Rosman

In 1991, a book editor at Random House pulled from the heaps of unsolicited manuscripts a novel about a murder that roils a Baltimore suburb. Written by a first-time author and mother named Mary Cahill, "Carpool" was published to fanfare and was a best seller.

That was the last time Random House, the largest publisher in the U.S., remembers publishing anything found in a slush pile. Today, Random House and most of its major counterparts refuse to accept unsolicited material.

Getting plucked from the slush pile was always a long shot—in large part, editors and Hollywood development executives say, because most unsolicited material has gone unsolicited for good reason. But it did happen for some: Philip Roth, Anne Frank, Judith Guest. And so to legions of would-be novelists, journalists and screenwriters—not to mention low-ranking employees at studios and publishing houses who held the hope that finding a gem might catapult them from entry level to expense account—the slush pile represented The Dream.

Now, slush is dead, or close to extinction. Film and television producers won't read anything not certified by an agent because producers are afraid of being accused of stealing ideas and material. Most book publishers have stopped accepting book proposals that aren't submitted by agents. Magazines say they can scarcely afford the manpower to cull through the piles looking for the Next Big Thing.

It wasn't supposed to be this way. The Web was supposed to be a great democratizer of media. Anyone with a Flip and Final Cut Pro could be a filmmaker; anyone with a blog a memoirist. But rather than empowering unknown artists, the Web is often considered by talent-seeking executives to be an un-navigable morass.

"We no longer accept unsolicited manuscripts," says Alexandra Pringle, editor-in-chief at Bloomsbury Publishing. "Since the advent of e-mail, the volume of manuscripts submitted, both by agents and without, has risen so dramatically it has made it physically impossible to deal with everything. So reluctantly we decided we had to follow the policy of most other publishers and only accept submissions through agents."

It used to be that you could bang out a screenplay on your typewriter, then mail it in to a studio with a self-addressed stamped envelope and a prayer. Studios were already reluctant to read because of plagiarism concerns, but they became even more skittish in 1990 when humorist Art Buchwald sued Paramount, alleging that the studio stole an idea from him and turned it into the Eddie Murphy vehicle, "Coming to America." (Mr. Buchwald received an undisclosed settlement from Paramount.)

Today, you can't even send an e-mail to a studio. When visitors to the Universal Pictures Web site select the "contact us" option, they must agree to a waiver that frees Universal and its affiliates from liability related to accusations of plagiarism. "While we are always happy to hear from you," the Web notice says, "it is Universal's policy not to accept or consider creative materials, ideas, or suggestions other than those we specifically request. This is to avoid any misunderstandings if your ideas are similar to those we have devel-

Even in the Web era, getting in the door is tougher than ever for writers



One agent receives 30 unsolicited e-mails a day from writers ... and she hits 'delete' without opening.

oped independently."

"It does create an incredibly difficult Catch-22 on both sides, particularly for new writers wanting to get their work seen," says Hannah Minghella, president of production for Sony Pictures Animation.

Fending off plagiarism lawsuits has become an increasing headache for publishers and studios in the U.S. "It's become the cultural version of malpractice," says Kurt Andersen, the novelist and host of U.S. public radio's "Studio 360."

Some producers make it easy: They just refuse to deal with new writers at all. Mike Clements, president of Good Humor, the production company founded by Tom Werner ("The Cosby Show"), has a personal policy against reading any sample or script that isn't sent to him by an agent. "I make the occasional exception for a friend, or for my aunt," he says. "I just make them sign a release first."

Even in Europe, where there is generally more public funding for the arts, unsolicited film scripts rarely make it to the silver screen—or even into the hands of decision-makers. "People will submit screenplays unsolicited, but most production companies

won't accept [them]," says Debra Hayward, a producer at Working Title Films, the U.K. film company responsible for "The Big Lebowski," "Notting Hill" and "Love Actually." Ms. Hayward said that, to the best of her knowledge, none of Working Title's films had come from unsolicited scripts. Film organizations in the U.K. that receive government funding tend to read unsolicited scripts as part of an informal public-service mandate. BBC Films, for instance, has a designated "writers room" where unsolicited screenplays are read, and the U.K. Film Council has a special "first feature" fund, whose administrators read unsolicited manuscripts (last year they funded 28 first-time filmmakers). But for the BBC, the exercise is more about giving constructive support and criticism to new writers than relying on the slush pile for new films.

"It's more of a needle-in-the-haystack type thing because of the bad economics of relying completely on the unknown," said Christine Langan, creative director at BBC Films, who noted that the role of commissioning has become more active in the British film and television world in recent years.

As writers try to find an agent—a feat harder than ever to accomplish in the wake of agency consolidations and layoffs, particularly in the U.S.—the slush pile has been transferred from the floor of the editor's office to the attaché cases of representatives who can broker introductions to publishing, TV and film executives. The result is a shift in taste-making power onto such agents, managers and attorneys. Theirs are now often the first eyes to make a call on what material will land on bookshelves, television sets and the movie screen.

Still, discoveries do happen at agencies, including the biggest publishing franchise since "Harry Potter"—even though it basically took a mistake to come together. In 2003, an unknown writer named Stephenie Meyer sent a letter to the Writers House agency asking if someone might be interested in reading a 130,000-word manuscript about teenage vampires. The letter should have been thrown out: an assistant whose job, in part, was to weed through the more than 100 such letters each month, didn't realize that agents mostly expected young adult fiction to weigh in at 40,000 to 60,000 words. She contacted Ms. Meyer and ultimately asked that she send her manuscript.

The manuscript was passed on to an agent, Jodi Reamer. She liked what she read, a novel called "Twilight." She signed Ms. Meyer, and sold the book to Little, Brown. The most recent sequel in the series, "Breaking Dawn," sold 1.3 million copies the day it went on sale in August 2008. The latest film grossed more than \$290 million in the U.S. and more than \$685 million world-wide.

At William Morris Endeavor Entertainment, Adriana Alberghetti only reads scripts sent to her by producers, managers and lawyers whose taste she knows and trusts. The agent says she receives 30 unsolicited e-mails a day from writers and people she doesn't know who are pushing unknown writers, and she hits "delete" without opening. These days, she is taking on few "baby writers," she says, adding that risks she would have taken five years ago she won't today.

Book publishers say it is now too expensive to pay employees to read slush that rarely is worthy of publication. At Simon &



ANNE FRANK

"Diary of a Young Girl" had been published in the Netherlands and was headed to France. But Doubleday's Paris office had marked it for rejection. Judith Jones, then a "girl Friday," disobeyed her boss and alerted Doubleday's New York editors, and the English-language edition came out in 1952.



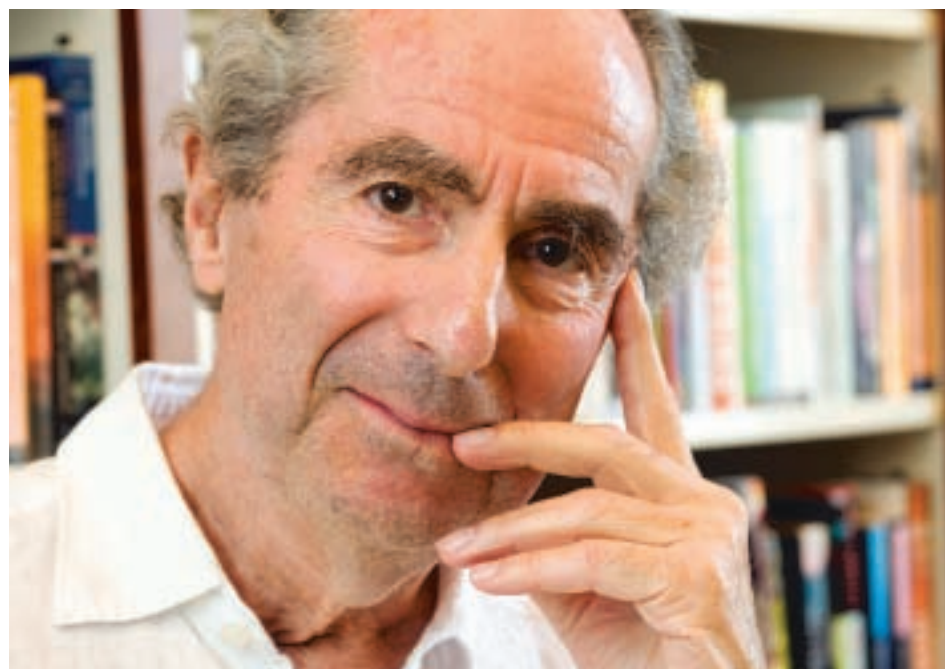
JUDITH GUEST

When Minnesota mom Ms. Guest sent out "Ordinary People" in 1975, it was refused by the first publisher. Another wrote, "While the book has some satiric bite, overall the level of writing does not sustain interest and we will have to decline it." It became a best seller and a movie.



STEPHENIE MEYER

Ms. Meyer sent 15 query letters about her teenage-vampire saga. She got nearly 10 rejection letters; one even arrived after she signed with an agent and received a three-book deal from Little, Brown. She doesn't need to send out query letters anymore.



PHILIP ROTH

In 1958, Mr. Roth was an unknown who had barely been published when a short story called "The Conversion of the Jews" was plucked out of a heap at the Paris Review—by Rose Styron, wife of William. The next year it was published as part of "Goodbye, Columbus."

Schuster, an automated telephone greeting instructs aspiring writers: "Simon & Schuster requires submissions to come to us via a literary agent due to the large volume of submissions we receive each day. Agents are listed in 'Literary Marketplace,' a reference work published by R.R. Bowker that can be found in most libraries."

A primary aim of the slush pile used to be to discover unpublished voices. But today, writing talent isn't necessarily enough. It helps to have a big-media affiliation, or be effective on TV. "We are being more selective in taking on clients because the publishers are demanding much more from the authors than ever before," says Laurence J. Kirshbaum, former CEO of Time Warner Book Group and now an agent. "From a publisher's standpoint, the marketing considerations, especially on non-fiction, now often outweigh the editorial ones."

Getting an opportunity in Hollywood as a writer once required little more than affiliation with elite institutions like the Harvard Lampoon, the humor magazine which spawned writers for "The Simpsons" and a host of others. The Web was supposed to dismantle such barriers. To be sure, the Web has provided a path for some writers who use it well.

Scott Belsky, a 29-year-old Web entrepreneur whose sites include "The 99 Percent," wanted to write a book on how to succeed

'It's more of a needle-in-the-haystack type thing because of the bad economics of relying completely on the unknown.'

in the creative industries. To secure representation, he approached agents with data on his Web traffic, samples of reader comments posted on the site, and the number of times various posts had been blogged about, tweeted and retweeted on social-networking site Twitter. This data convinced Jim Levine at Levine Greenberg Literary Agency to take on Mr. Belsky as a client. Mr. Levine used the information to land him a book deal. "Making Ideas Happen" will be published in April by Portfolio, a division of Penguin Group.

"These days, you need to deliver not just the manuscript but the audience," says Mr. Levine. "More and more, the mantra in publishing is 'Ask not what your publisher can do for you, ask what you can do for your publisher.'"

Despite the refrain that most everything sent to the slush pile is garbage, publishing executives confess to a nagging insecurity of missing something big. "Harry Potter" was submitted to 12 publishers (by an agent), all of whom rejected it. A year later, Bloomsbury published it in the U.K.

In 2008, HarperCollins launched Au-

thonomy.com, a Web slush pile. Writers can upload their manuscripts, readers vote for their favorites, and HarperCollins editors read the five highest-rated manuscripts each month. About 10,000 manuscripts have been loaded so far and HarperCollins has bought four.

The first, "The Reaper," came out in July and sold moderately well. Last November, the publisher released another Authonomy offering, a young adult book called "Fairytale of New York," which has sold over 100,000 copies and is a best seller in Britain. HarperCollins also launched a similar platform for teen writers called "InkPop."

One slush stalwart—the Paris Review—has college interns and graduate students in the magazine's Tribeca loft-office in New York read the 1,000 unsolicited works submitted each month. Each short story is read by at least two people. If one likes it and the other doesn't, it is read by a third. Any submission that receives two "Ps" for "pass" as opposed to "R" for "reject" is read by an editor.

"We take the democratic ideal represented by the slush pile seriously," says managing editor Caitlin Roper.

The literary journal publishes one piece from the slush pile each year. That leaves each unsolicited submission a 0.008% chance of rising to the top of the pile.

—Paul Sonne contributed to this article.

Clockwise from top left: Anne Frank Fonds/Getty Images; Associated Press (2); Corbis

Sheridan explores family ties

Filmmaker shares his thoughts on remaking 'Brothers' and the stress put on relatives by war

By Elizabeth Fitzherbert

IRISH FILMMAKER JIM Sheridan didn't hesitate to tackle his first remake, an English-language version of the 2004 Danish film "Brødre" directed by Susanne Bier. "Brothers" tells the story of two siblings: one a petty criminal (Jake Gyllenhaal); the other a happily married Marine captain (Tobey Maguire), who is sent to Afghanistan where he is forced into an impossible moral dilemma by the Taliban and presumed dead. For the 60-year-old Mr. Sheridan, whose previous films include the Oscar-winning "My Left Foot," "In the Name of the Father" and "In America," the story is "really about the stress put on a family by war."

Also starring Natalie Portman, the film, which opened in the U.S. and some European countries in December and in the U.K. this week, has received two Golden Globe nominations including one for Mr. Maguire. Released by Lionsgate, the film has earned more than \$28 million at the U.S. box office so far.

"Brothers" is no different from his other movies in capturing the complexity of his characters and Mr. Sheridan, who is renowned for directing emotionally intense roles, draws out strong performances from the cast.

Born in Dublin, Mr. Sheridan grew up in a creative environment. His father worked for a railway company but also had an interest in the theater, directing amateur dramatics in his spare time. Before embarking on a career as a filmmaker, Mr. Sheridan produced and directed plays in Dublin. He co-founded Dublin's Project Arts Centre before moving with his family to the U.S. in 1981, where he was artistic director of the Irish Arts Center in New York and briefly studied film at New York University's film school. In 1989 at age 40, he returned to Dublin to make his directorial film debut, "My Left Foot," about the life of Irish painter Christy Brown, who suffered from cerebral palsy. It won Oscars for Daniel Day-Lewis and Brenda Fricker.

We spoke to Mr. Sheridan by phone about "Brothers," the challenges of doing a remake and American audiences' newfound interest in seeing films about Iraq and Afghanistan.

What drew you to the project?

It was the idea of a man being put in a position by God or the Taliban or whomever, beyond morality. It is a "Sophie's Choice." He either lives with the consequences of what he does or he dies. That kind of idea is what brought me to it.

Did you have any reservations about doing a remake?

Not when I started. The only thing about a remake that is difficult is that a lot of critics have seen the original movie and it is hard for them to experience the same thing twice. That is the only negative.

It has a real emotional truth, which is your trademark.

I suppose I am always looking for the emotional truth. With emotions, if they are invisible then movies are invisible.

In what ways did you rework the story?

I did quite a lot of changes. I made Sam Shepherd's character an ex-Marine. I changed Mare Winningham to a stepmother, rather than a mother. I introduced some scenes for the children that weren't in the original. I think the dynamic in the original is very much a love story. It is a kind of love triangle. Although that is still there, I think it is more about the stress put on a family by war.

Did you meet any veterans and their families while you were preparing for the film?

Yes. We went around a lot of the bases and met people. The veterans are less likely to talk about their problems but we met a few. Tobey Maguire in particular was affected by that and really wanted to show the sorry state of the veterans when they come home



Was it difficult to get the dynamics of the casting right?

Things just fell into place in a weird way quite quickly. Jake came in first because I know him, and I knew Tobey from the past and we always wanted to work together. It wasn't actually very difficult. It is one of those things that it either works like that or takes two years but it all came together in a couple of weeks.

You are known for directing powerful Oscar-winning performances. Do you rehearse intensively beforehand, or rely more on spontaneity?

I rely more on spontaneity but usually we have worked it out, talked it through and addressed it so much that everyone is agreed where we are before we start so we are not searching too much. I think it is just about creating a good atmosphere. I actually love actors and get on really well with them. I always have. I think they are often underestimated and sometimes ignored. So no wonder they are all a bit nuts when that happens.

Is Oscar recognition important to you and do you hope "Brothers" will receive some acknowledgement?

To me personally every kind of recognition is well received. I like it when we get nominated for the Globes because it brings a kind of attention to the movie. You also feel good if somebody acknowledges what you do.

Previous Iraq and Afghanistan war films have struggled at the box office. Do you think American audiences are now ready to embrace the subject matter?

I was amazed that we could end up making as much money as we did. I thought we could open and do a couple of hundred thousand dollars but I was amazed that they decided to go nationwide [in the U.S.] It just seems like a sea change since Barack Obama came to power. People seem less conflicted about going to these kinds of movies now.

It is 20 years since you made your film debut with "My Left Foot." How do you look back on that experience now?

It was amazing. It was such a huge hit and totally changed my life. When I was on the set with Daniel Day-Lewis I knew there was something extraordinary there but I didn't know if it would be found and rewarded. I had no idea the effect it was going to have. It was one of the first independent movies in the Oscars.

You have collaborated with Daniel Day-Lewis three times. Do you have any future plans to work with him?

There is nothing I would like better than to find a movie that Daniel would do. That would make me so happy and I think he would be happy to work with me. We are still friends. I look at his work with awe. He is so amazing, such a great person. He is kind of like an ambassador for the business. Just one of those unique individuals who, in a business that is really hard, says nothing and controls his image. He is really a true poet to me.

—Elizabeth Fitzherbert is a writer based in London.



Clockwise: Jim Sheridan; 'Brothers' 2009 poster starring Tobey Maguire, Natalie Portman, Jake Gyllenhaal; from left, director Jim Sheridan, Jake Gyllenhaal and Tobey Maguire on set.

Clockwise: Getty Images, ImageForum, Rex Features.

and that we should be thinking about them.

They are very demanding, complex roles for the cast. Was the atmosphere on set very intense?

Not really. Maybe it was very intense for the actors but it wasn't for me. That's normal for me (laughs). I am used to that kind of thing. It was very cooperative and warm and everybody got on fairly well. There was a bit of rivalry between Tobey and Jake but that's natural.

Your three main actors, Tobey Maguire, Jake Gyllenhaal and Natalie Portman took substantial salary cuts. Could this film, which only had a budget of \$25 million, have been made without their support?

They took way less than they normally take and it couldn't have been made without their support. I also ended up putting a lot of my fee back into it. As a director you want to make it work so you contribute to the budget. It was almost like a labor of love.

The case for golf-only clubs

THE EARLIEST GOLF clubhouses in the U.S., like most of their predecessors in Great Britain, were golf-only affairs. The elegant Shinnecock Hills clubhouse on Long Island, N.Y., designed by Stanford White in 1893, was the first U.S. structure purpose-built for golf, and it still keeps watch, relatively modest in size, over the great links-style course there.

It didn't take long, however, for golf clubs to morph into country clubs and clubhouses to become stupendous. There have always been a few, like Shinnecock, that remained pure golf clubs, but most of the 20th century was an arms race to see which clubs could outdo the others in size, function and all-around opulence. Now, however, there seems to

Golf

JOHN PAUL NEWPORT

be a new appreciation for smaller, golf-only clubs and clubhouses.

Take Whisper Rock in Scottsdale, Arizona. It's expensive, with initiation fees running now at \$130,000 (€92,200) and, as an all-male club, politically incorrect. (Women and children are allowed to play golf there several days a week.) But it's also much envied for having something like 40 current or former PGA Tour players as members, all of whom pay the full initiation fee and regular dues. During a recent lunch visit there, I spotted Paul Casey, Gary McCord and Peter Kostis.

There's no tennis and no pool at Whisper Rock, only golf on two superb courses, one of them designed by member Phil Mickelson. And the clubhouse, confidently done in Arizona-desert style, reflects this orientation. Upon entering, visitors see an open locker room to the left and a grill room with large circular tables to the right. Except for the pro shop, that's it. Architecturally, everything feeds out to the putting green, driving range and the courses beyond.

Whisper Rock opened in 2004, just before the U.S. golf course building boom ended. At about the same time, a number of similar high-end, golf-only clubs with understated clubhouses also opened. Dallas National in Texas is one, Chesapeake Creek Club in Okatie,



The Royal Birkdale Golf Club in Southport, U.K.

Photograph by Alan C. Birch

S.C., with its Ben Crenshaw and Bill Coore-designed course, is another, and The Dye Preserve in Jupiter, Florida, is a third. There's no real trend in golf-clubhouse development these days, if only because, at least in the U.S. and Western Europe, there are practically no new golf courses being developed. But if there were a trend, clubs like this would probably be it, because economically the giant old-style clubhouses no longer make sense.

"The big formal dining room, where men wear jackets and ties and women get somewhat dressed up, just doesn't work anymore," said Richard Diedrich, a clubhouse architect out of Atlanta. Joe Webster, who developed and manages The Dye Preserve, put it more bluntly in dollars-and-cents terms: "Most clubs that are open for dinner at night are losing seven figures on their food and beverage operations."

Those losses are folded into dues. Mr. Webster said that a typical golf club with 300 members might spend \$1.5 million a year on course maintenance, or \$5,000 per member. "Everything you pay in dues above that is basically so you can have lunch," he said. Lunch is his shorthand for the cost of supporting a kitchen, other services such as the locker rooms, and clubhouse staff—essentially, all the non-golf amenities that a club offers.

Dues at Dye Preserve, which has a 15,000 square-foot clubhouse (and is not open for dinner), are \$9,000 a year. "So that's \$4,000 for lunch," he said. A nearby club in Jupiter, with a 50,000-square-foot clubhouse plus a pool and tennis, charges \$21,000 in dues. "So those members are paying \$16,000 to eat and for the other stuff," he said. Yet another club in the area, built in the go-go 1990s as a real-estate play, has a 100,000-square-foot clubhouse and is operating under bank-

ruptcy protection.

Certainly there will always be people able and willing to pay for a full club experience, and strong demand for reasonably priced, family-oriented country clubs that include the latest "it" feature, fitness facilities. But for many whose primary interest is golf, a simpler golf-only club makes increasing sense. "For golf alone, when you start getting clubhouses bigger than 15,000 to 17,000 square feet, or even 10,000 to 11,000 square feet for smaller clubs, you've got the tail wagging the dog," said Robert McKinney, an architect in Houston who specializes in clubhouses.

If future golf and country club developments do trend this way, we'll miss out on a lot, as Mr. Diedrich makes clear in a handsome coffee-table book he recently wrote called "The 19th Hole: Architecture of the Golf Clubhouse." It includes photographs and site-plan sketches of 62 of the most famous U.S. examples.

Many of the great early clubhouses were modeled after English country estates, complete with liveried staff, that affluent Americans aspired to but couldn't afford. Medinah Country Club in Illinois, with its colorful Moorish domes and Byzantine structure, is downright imperial. The architect of the iconic stone Winged Foot clubhouse in Mamaroneck, N.Y., completed in the 1920s, set out to "inspire spiritual feelings" with his work.

As golf spread across the country, so did the architectural vernacular. The Mediterranean vision of developer Addison Mizner, with terra cotta roofs and wrought iron elements, swept through Florida. Desert Highlands in Scottsdale, from the 1980s, incorporated ancient pueblo structures into a design that melded almost seamlessly into the surrounding desert rock formations. In the mountain West, timber

beams and stacked raw stone became the standard, but all was opulent inside.

It's striking, given the large available budgets and the presumed desire of the real-estate developers later in the century to make a name for themselves, how few clubs break new ground architecturally. The art-deco clubhouse at Royal Birkdale in England, completed in 1935, was one of the century's few avant-garde designs. (There have been a few others in recent years, notably The Bridge in Bridgehampton, N.Y., and Liberty National on New York harbor.) Presumably this reflects the continued desire of most members for their clubhouses to be a homey extension of the living room. Fireplaces surrounded by big, comfortable chairs

seems almost to be a requirement for clubhouses, even in the heat of the deep south.

Another common feature of the most successful designs, Mr. Diedrich pointed out, is the flow between the clubhouse and the golf course. Often clubhouses occupy the highest spot on the property, with sweeping views of the finishing holes from the terrace. From the golfers' point of view on the course, the clubhouse, especially when it's all aglow at twilight, is home port—and the smaller clubhouses are usually even more inviting than the big ones. "To me that relationship between the structure and the course is the essence, that's the constant, and I hope it never changes," Mr. Diedrich said.

Arbitrage

Price to duplicate a door key



City	Local currency	€
New York	\$2	€1
Rome	€3	€3
Paris	€4	€4
London	£5,5	€6
Frankfurt	€7	€7

Note: Prices, plus taxes, as provided by retailers in each city, averaged and converted into euros.

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❖ Top Picks

Romantic brilliance at the Bastille Opera

PARIS: Goethe's novel "The Sorrows of Young Werther" was already a century-old icon of the Romantic movement when French composer Jules Massenet used it as the basis for his 1892 opera "Werther," which has remained a staple of the international repertory ever since. The production that opened at the Opéra Bastille last week isn't new either—it was originally staged by French film director Benoît Jacquot at London's Covent Garden in 2004.

But the old operatic warhorse has been given a brilliant new life in this Paris presentation by a superb roster of singers. From German star tenor Jonas Kaufmann in the title role to the sweet children's chorus that opens and closes the passionate tragedy, the cast is a nearly faultless ensemble: Mr. Kaufmann is almost typecast as the handsome Werther, hopelessly in love with another man's wife, his dark, brooding, physically charged presence matched by his deep, coppery, nearly baritone timbre, whether at full volume or floating a soft note like a whisper. French mezzo-soprano Sophie Koch is a lithe and lovely Charlotte, bound by a vow to marry the upstanding Albert but realizing the depth of her own feelings for Werther. With her

limpid voice in full bloom, her performance is every bit Kaufmann's equal. French baritone Ludovic Tézier (who elsewhere has also sung the role of Werther in Massenet's rewritten-for-baritone version) reprises his Covent Garden role as a strong and elegant Albert, easily

giving Werther a run for his money as a Romantic hero.

The secondary roles such as veteran French baritone Alain Vernhes as Charlotte's father the Bailiff or French soprano Anne-Catherine Gillet as younger sister Sophie are just as well played and sung. And if

most of the sets are surprisingly amateurish, the wonderful third-act interior, inspired by the late 19th-century Danish artist Vilhelm Hammershøi, is an unexpected gem.

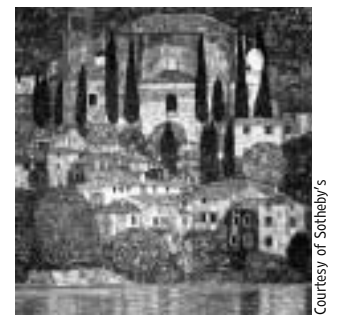
—Judy Fayard

Until Feb. 4
www.operadeparis.fr



Ludovic Tézier as Albert and Anne-Catherine Gillet as Sophie in 'Werther.'

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden/ Catherine Ashmore



Courtesy of Sotheby's

Gustav Klimt's "Church in Cassone-Landscape with Cypresses" (1913) is estimated at £12 million-£18 million.

Set to fetch a grand price

THE FIRST MAJOR European auctions of the year are turning up a number of heavyweight offerings.

For the first time in Sotheby's London Impressionist and modern art auctions (Feb. 3-4), three works will be offered that are each estimated at more than £10 million.

Collecting MARGARET STUDER

Gustav Klimt's "Church in Cassone-Landscape with Cypresses" (1913), a jewel-like work inspired during a summer trip to Lake Garda with his muse and lover, the fashion designer Emilie Flöge, is estimated at £12 million-£18 million. The painting comes from the collection of Viktor and Paula Zuckerkandl, patrons of the arts in Vienna in the early 20th century. The painting was inherited by Viktor's sister Amalie Redlich, who was deported to Lodz by the Nazis in 1941. After the war, the Lake Garda landscape resurfaced in a European family collection that acquired the painting in good faith. The family reached a deal with a Zuckerkandl heir to offer the painting at auction.

Also estimated at £12 million-£18 million is Alberto Giacometti's monumental, 183 centimeter-high sculpture "L'Homme qui marche I" (1960), a lone and haunted man walking which has become one of the most iconic images of modern art, creating "both a humble image of an ordinary man, and a potent symbol of humanity," according to Sotheby's. The vendor, Commerzbank, acquired the sculpture when it took over Dresdner Bank, which had a substantial art collection.

Paul Cézanne's meticulously composed "Pichet et fruits sur une table" (1893-94), a still-life with succulent fruits, is expected to fetch £10 million-£15 million.

Meanwhile, a striking portrait at Christie's Impressionist and modern art sales in London (Feb. 2-3) will be Kees van Dongen's "La Gitane" (circa 1910-11) a sensual Spanish gypsy in blazing color (estimated at £5.5 million-£7.5 million). The painting is being offered at auction for the first time, as is Natalia Gontcharova's "Espagnole" (circa 1916), a dramatic painting fusing Cubist forms with the costume of a Spanish dancer (estimate: £4 million-£6 million).

Light entertainment at the Old Vic

LONDON: "Six Degrees of Separation" has entered into the language, describing the 1960s small-world experiments to find the average path of social networks by psychologist Stanley Milgram, but playwright John Guare usually gets the credit for coining the expression in his 1990 play, taken from a true story, now revived by the Old Vic. Its title supposedly explains how a con artist could gain intimate knowledge about several loosely connected people.

The 1992 Royal Court production had Stockard Channing as Ouisa, the female half of the Manhattan art dealer couple who befriends a

young impostor, Paul, who passes himself off as a friend of their Ivy League children and claims to be the son of Sidney Poitier. The marvelous Adrian Lester was the sham son.

The current show seems, by contrast, a little undercast. Lesley Manville took some time to warm up as Ouisa, appearing brittle and artificial until the last third of the 90-minute, single-act play. This makes it hard to credit her reaction to discovering the naked Paul in bed with the male hustler he has bought with the \$50 the couple gave him.

Obi Abili handles Paul's long speeches on the importance of imagi-

nation well, but can't give them the emotional depth necessary to convince the audience that this isn't just his credo (and the gist of his invented Harvard thesis) but also the explanation of his extraordinary behavior.

Most of the fault of this is, however, in the play. David Grindley's direction makes the best of the entertaining romp aspect of the piece, but can't make up for its essential superficiality. Paul's conduct is mysterious, but Mr. Guare makes it a mystery without a heart; not a tragic search for identity, but the stuff of a drawing-room comedy. —Paul Levy

Until March 4
www.oldvictheatre.com



Manuel Harlan

Anthony Head and Lesley Manville.

A reappraisal of Robert Doisneau's work in Paris

PARIS: In 1950, American magazine Life published a black-and-white photo spread of "vigorous young couples" kissing on the streets of Paris. The man pointing the camera was Robert Doisneau, and one of these shots—"A Kiss by the Hôtel de Villes"—has become a classic view of the French capital.

Born in 1912 in the gritty Paris suburb of Gentilly, Doisneau saw the street as his studio, and his scenes of children at play in front of the Eiffel Tower and couples waltzing on the cobbles are endlessly reproduced on posters and postcards. These romantic images, however, have overshadowed a body of work that encompasses serious social reportage not only in Paris but also in the factories and shanty towns beyond the city limits.

Now an exhibition—From Craft to Art—at the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson in Montparnasse presents around 100 images from between 1930 and 1966 with the premise that in his finest work Doisneau transcended craft to become a true artist.

Certain shots bear out this argument, for instance an intriguing night view of suburban homes in Arcueil in 1947. However, the overall impression is of a reportage photographer superbly skilled in harvesting atmosphere and detail. A café scene at the Villette meat market in 1953 shows a pretty young woman playing the accordion but also reveals that the butchers, in bloodied overalls, are too bleary-eyed with tiredness to be cheered by her music. Whether the shot is of tramps sleeping out on Pont Neuf in 1953 or of families who have parked a row of prams on a shabby café terrace in 1945, the sense of place is powerful.

It's fitting that this exhibition should be put forward by the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson. The two men were such firm friends that at Doisneau's funeral in 1994 Cartier-Bresson threw half an apple into the grave before eating the other half himself.

—Lennox Morrison

Until April 18
www.henricartierbresson.org



'Jeux africains' (1945) by Robert Doisneau.

Atelier Robert Doisneau

Catastrophe Keeps Coming

Mega and not-quite-mega disasters are happening all the time, so much so that any book about them is likely to seem timely. With the sudden horror recently visited on Haiti, "Mega Disasters: The Science of Predicting the Next Catastrophe" seems eerily prescient indeed. But, in fact, in the past 60 years—a mere flicker in the history of the Earth—we have had three of the most powerful earthquakes ever measured (Chile in 1960, Alaska in 1964 and the Indian Ocean in 2004); the highest ocean wave in recorded history, when a massive rockfall pounded the Gilbert Inlet of Lituya Bay in Alaska in 1958 and created a wave that reached up to 1,720 feet; and the deadliest tsunami—a result of the 2004 earthquake in the Indian Ocean. It would be an easy bet to say something awful awaits us in the near future, but it appears next to impossible to bet where and when.

This is the dilemma and the

dream of "Mega Disasters": that differential equations can narrow the knowledge gap and that we can mine the uncertainty in nonlinear dynamics (chaos theory) to anticipate disaster. Florin Diacu, a Romanian-born professor of mathematics at the University of Victoria in Canada, takes us on a grand tour of catastrophe, from cosmic collisions to financial crashes, and looks at the mathematical (or lack of mathematical) understanding behind them.

Predictably, he is at his best when discussing matters closest to his own field, celestial mathematics; and he makes a compelling case for developing the means, as the Russians appear to be doing, of batting asteroids out of humanity's ballpark.

But sometimes his catastrophic tour is perfunctory. For example, Mr. Diacu believes, not unreasonably, that more people could have been saved in 2004 if there had been a rudimentary tsunami warning system in place in

the Indian Ocean. But he spends a soporific amount of time on how mathematicians failed to model ocean waves—as if wave modeling was the key to preventing the Indian Ocean disaster. It wasn't.

The unending clash between three of the Earth's great tectonic plates in the region was well known; the Andaman Sea teemed with seismic events; and the United Nations Development Program had allocated money for a regional warning system in 1989, after George Pararas-Carayannis, the director of the International Tsunami Information Center in Honolulu, advised it to do so. But the countries bordering this vast fault in the Earth's crust shrugged off the risk as unlikely and, incredibly, spent the money on other projects. As a consequence, a quarter of a million people died.

By contrast, the recent earthquake in Haiti was not foreshadowed by any statistical evidence. The lay of the island signaled that there had been major earthquakes in the past, but not for 200 years; the Enriquilla-Plantain Garden fault line, which runs from the middle of Dominica down through Haiti to Jamaica, was thought to be dormant. Had it been studied, the build-up of stresses might have been measured and, perhaps, some warning might have been available for people to flee to open ground—the only realistic defense in a country as poor as Haiti.

But if it was rational to create a warning system for the Indian Ocean, it was, weirdly, rational not to do so for Haiti. Why spend, conservatively, hundreds of millions of dollars on monitoring what appeared to be only a hypothetical threat?

An earthquake or some other awful natural event awaits us in the near future. The hard part is knowing where and when.



As Mr. Diacu notes, the expense of studying plate tectonics is vast, the magnitude of the engineering beggaring: Beginning in 1970, it took 24 years to bore 7.6 miles down into the Earth, the deepest hole we have yet drilled (the Kola Superdeep Borehole in northern Russia). "But even if we could go deeper," Mr. Diacu writes, "drilling alone would not suffice to give us a full picture of what happens under our feet; it would rather resemble the attempt to assess a person's broken bone with a thin and long needle."

In the event that Haiti had trembled in advance of the quake, the likelihood of disaster would still have been slim: Only 6% of small tremors, Mr. Diacu observes, are succeeded by a major seismic event. In earthquake-prone China, there were 30 false alarms between 1996 and 1999, leading the Chinese government to conclude that it was counterproductive to sound like Chicken Little each time the ground shook.

So what are we to conclude? Even when you have rational grounds for a warning system, preparation is at the mercy of local politics; even when you have a good warning system, you still have to communicate warnings to the population, often a difficult matter; and even when you think you've figured out where the most likely risks lie, and you have disposed your limited scientific and technical resources in the best way possible, you can still be taken by surprise.

Instead of wrestling with these kinds of conundrums and suggesting how we might solve them, Mr. Diacu simply concludes that we'll get better at measuring the Earth's shifting forces and warning when they are about to snap; and that, just as the Global Positioning System revolutionized our ability to pinpoint the collision points of tectonic plates, "future unexpected inventions could bring the era of deterministic predictions closer to us than we hope." There are many tantalizing observations in "Mega Disasters," but there is too much of this retreat to the comfort of "we'll figure something out" for a story so filled with carnage in the here and now.

Mr. Butterworth is editor of *STATS.org* and a columnist for *Forbes.com*.

Five Best / By Duff McDonald

Books on Finance During Panic

1 *The House of Morgan*
By Ron Chernow
Atlantic Monthly, 1990
Can a bank actually be heroic? Ron Chernow suggests as much in his exhaustive history of J.P. Morgan and its instrumental role in the development of the industrial Western economy from the late 19th century to the end of the 20th. But the clear-eyed Chernow does not ignore the less-than-heroic in this National Book Award-winning title, which is as much a social and political history as it is the story of the Morgan dynasty. Of the fallout from the Crash of 1873, Chernow writes: "Not for the last time, America turned against Wall Street with puritanical outrage and a sense of offended innocence." When World War I erupted: "Wall Street, which prided itself on its prescience, was once again caught napping by a historic event." Both tendencies remain in place today. What we do not have is a Wall Street king like John Pierpont Morgan, the man who built the banking dynasty and who had the power to intervene personally in the Panic of 1893 and save the U.S. Treasury by launching a syndicate to replenish the nation's gold supply.

2 *The Go-Go Years*
By John Brooks
Weybright & Talley, 1973
Just as the stock market moves in cycles, even though each new generation seems to think each new high and low is happening for the first time, so, too, do market players often imagine that they're break-

ing new ground when most are not. Today's high-flyers are pretty much the same as those depicted by John Brooks in "The Go-Go Years," his account of how the stock market changed during the 1960s. At the very moment when stocks were truly going mainstream in America, Brooks produced one of the most enjoyable and insightful books ever written about the tribes and tactics of the stock market. Chronicling the escapades of almost-forgotten swashbucklers such as Gerald Tsai and Saul Steinberg, he produced incomparable observations about Wall Street's merry-go-round of triumph and tragedy. He describes

1968 as the year "Wall Street had become a mindless glutton methodically eating itself to paralysis and death," something that happened again in the period 2004-07. And what of our capacity to learn from our mistakes? "Reform is a frail flower that languishes in the hot glare of prosperity," he observes. Given that prosperity still looks a while off at this point in 2010, maybe reform will actually bloom.

3 *The Bubble Economy*
By Christopher Wood
Atlantic Monthly, 1992
"What everybody knows is seldom worth knowing," begins "The Bubble Economy," an incisive, readable assessment of the Japanese real-estate boom and bust of the 1980s. Christopher Wood, the former Tokyo bureau chief for the *Economist*, writes with such flair that it's a shame he gave up journalism, becoming a financial analyst

and the publisher of the newsletter *Greed & Fear*. His book has aged well; swap out names and institutions and it might have been written last year. "Isaac Newton actually arrived in Japan in 1990," Wood writes. "His presence did not prove a pretty sight in a country where too many people had concluded that the laws of gravity, when applied to their own financial markets, had somehow been suspended." Like a faded rock star, the 367-year-old Newton is back for another world tour.

4 *When Genius Failed*
By Roger Lowenstein
Random House, 2000
A raft of books have been written—and are still being written—trying to explain the complex financial products, such as collateralized debt obligations and credit default swaps, behind the near collapse of Wall Street about 16 months ago. The last time something this complicated took the system to the brink, it was the crash in 1998 of the gigantic hedge fund Long-Term Capital Management, when its "relative value" trades went bad. Luckily Roger Lowenstein was on the case—there is no better writer for explaining the intricacies of finance in eminently understandable terms. His description of how Wall Street reached its precarious state in 1998, necessitating a rush to bail out LTCM, captures the birth of the "too big to fail" doctrine: "Almost imperceptibly, the Street had bought into a massive faith game, in which each bank had become knitted to its neighbor through a web of contractual obligations requiring little or no down payment." A decade later, we'd done it again. If more people had read

"When Genius Failed," today's miseries might have been avoided.

5 *Point of No Return*
By John P. Marquand
Little, Brown, 1949
While Wall Street hardly has trouble generating stories that seem straight out of a novel, there are a handful of sublime works of fiction that capture the spirit of its strivers in ways that nonfiction cannot. These novels, like Tom Wolfe's excellent "Bonfire of the Vanities," show us what the traders were thinking as well as what they were doing. Nearly four decades before "Bonfire," John P. Marquand wrote "Point of No Return," a lost masterpiece that shines a bright light on the mindset of that species of Banker Americanus that helped to build the modern financial-services edifice and that colonized suburbia. Marquand's protagonist, Charles Gray, managed not just to survive but to thrive in the 1929 stock market crash, the Depression and its aftermath, and he has collected an enviable set of trophies: the new house in Westchester County, the wife, the two kids and the country-club membership. But "Point of No Return" is hardly a cheerful success story. Instead, it's a gripping portrayal of a man obsessed with roads not taken and of the insecurities that lie just beneath a veneer of seeming achievement. "The more you get, the more afraid you get," says Gray. "Maybe fear is what makes the world go round."

Mr. McDonald is the author of *Last Man Standing: The Ascent of Jamie Dimon and JPMorgan Chase* (Simon & Schuster, 2009). He is a contributing editor at *New York magazine*.

time off

Yves Gevaert, Anghieri

Amsterdam

art
"Masters from the Museum Mesdag" offers a collection of drawings, watercolors and pastels from artists that inspired Vincent van Gogh.
Van Gogh Museum
Jan. 22-July 4
☎ 31-20-5705-200
www.vangoghmuseum.nl

Antwerp

photography
"Congo (Belge)" shows images by Belgian Magnum photographer Carl de Keyzer tracing touristic locations from the Belgian colonial period.
FoMu (FotoMuseum Antwerpen)
Jan. 22-May 16
☎ 32-3-2429-300
www.fotomuseum.be

Barcelona

art
"Rodney Graham: Through the Forest" exhibits about 100 works by the Canadian artist addressing themes of art history and perception using books, video, sculpture, machines, painting, photography, installation, printed material and music.
Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA)
Jan. 30-May 18
☎ 34-93-4120-810
www.macba.cat

Berlin

art
"Utopia Matters" examines works of nine art movements and the utopian ideals that guided followers, including the Pre-Raphaelites and Bauhaus.
Deutsche Guggenheim
Jan. 23-April 11
☎ 49-30-2020-930
www.deutsche-guggenheim-berlin.de

photography

"F.C. Gundlach: the Photographic Work" shows vintage prints by the post-war German photographer.
Martin Gropius Bau
Until March 11
☎ 49-30-2548-60
www.berlinerfestspiele.de

Bonn

art
"Curious! Art in the 21st century from private collections" exhibits works of contemporary art by 57 artists including Vito Acconci and Ceal Floyer.
Kunst - und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
Jan. 29-May 2
☎ 49-228-9171-0
www.kah-bonn.de

Brussels

art
"Frida Kahlo and her World" presents 19 paintings, an etching and six draw-

ings by the Mexican artist (1907-54).
Palais des Beaux Arts
Until April 18
☎ 32-2-5078-200
www.bozar.be

Cologne

art
"Mondays at Papst's" showcases works from the estate of German designer and plastics pioneer Walter Papst.
Museum für Angewandte Kunst
Until March 21
☎ 49-221-221-2860-8
www.museenkoeln.de

Frankfurt

art
"Peter Roehr—Works from the Frankfurt Collection" displays works by the German artist, exploring conceptual repetition in text and film collages.
MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst
Until March 7
☎ 49-69-2123-0447
www.mmk-frankfurt.de

Liverpool

art
"Afro-Modernism: Journeys through the Black Atlantic" explores how black artists and intellectuals influenced the formation of modernism.
Tate Liverpool
Jan. 29-April 25



Gilbert Hage

Top, 'Casino Royale (Sculpture de Voyage)' (1990) by Rodney Graham in Barcelona; above, 'The Secret Life of Syrian Lingerie' on show in Rotterdam.

☎ 44-151-7027-400
www.tate.org.uk

London

art
"The Real Van Gogh—The Artist and his Letters" features art and original letters.
Royal Academy of Arts
Jan. 23-April 18
☎ 44-20-7300-8000
www.royalacademy.org.uk

art

"Chris Ofili" exhibits pencil drawings and watercolors alongside 45 paintings by the British artist.
Tate Britain
Jan. 27-May 16
☎ 44-20-7887-8888
www.tate.org.uk

Madrid

art
"Impressionism: A New Renaissance" traces the history of the Impressionist movement with works by Renoir, Manet, Monet, Pissarro and Cezanne.
Fundacion Mapfre
Until April 22
☎ 34-91-5814-176
www.exposicionesmapfrearte.com

Munich

art
"Ricochet #1, Cris Koch. 343 m/s" shows paintings, drawings and scul-

tures by musician and artist Cris Koch.
Villa Stuck
Until March 14
☎ 49-89-4555-510
www.villastuck.de

Paris

cars
"Retromobile" displays highlights from a century of racing machines.
VIPARIS Porte de Versailles
Until Jan. 31
☎ 33-1-7677-1226
www.retromobile.fr

Rotterdam

exhibition
"The Secret Life of Syrian Lingerie" shows lingerie sets and photography from the Syrian fashion world.
Kunsthal
Until March 7
☎ 31-10-4400-301
www.kunsthal.nl

Turin

ceramics
"Imperial Porcelain from the Hermitage Collections" presents dinner sets from 18th-century European courts.
Palazzo Madama
Until Feb. 14
☎ 39-0114-4335-01
www.palazzomadamatorino.it

Source: ArtBase Global Arts News Service, WSJE research.



'Grit Hübscher' (1954) at F.C. Gundlach: the Photographic Work at Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin.

F. C. Gundlach