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## Web Site Brings NY Scene To CU

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Gregory Mosher wants you.

Seeking to define-or, rather, to blur-the line between Columbia and the New York arts scene, Mosher, the head of the Columbia Arts Initiative, is launching CUArts.com, a web site designed as a comprehensive source for student access to the arts on campus and around the city. The site will debut on Monday, Oct. 10.

The Arts Initiative was created in February 2004, as a manifestation of University President Lee Bollinger's goal to strengthen Columbia's connection to the arts. Mosher spent most of the spring semester trying to figure out how to raise the program's profile on campus. Last year, the Arts Initiative held various events, most notably bringing renowned director Peter Brook's production "Tierno Bokar" to Barnard Hall. This year, programming continued with a well-attended NSOP party at the Museum of Modern Art.

Mosher and AI project coordinator Caralyn Spector, BC '94, continue to achieve concrete results in opening New York's art scene to students. The number of museums allowing free admission with CUID has doubled to 12 over the summer. This fall, AI will begin such free events such as the Arts Bus, which, for a succession of consecutive Saturdays, will bring students for free guided tours of different galleries around the city. All such information will be posted on the site.

But AI is in the process of shifting from planning single events to attempting to foster a lasting connection between Columbia students and the arts. This shift, notes Mosher, reflects the result of ongoing dialogue with the student body.

"The thing that we heard more than anything was, '... We don't know what's happening with the arts around campus, and we don't know what's happening with the arts around town,'" Mosher said. CUarts.com will provide "a place where all the information is, and provides incentive to go check out the information."

"This Web site is acknowledgement that this is a cohesive community," Spector added.

Raza Panjwani, CC '07, spent the summer building the Web site, aiming for it to create a cohesive resource that he, as a student, has been missing. "Columbia brings you to New York, and then leaves

you there," he said.

CUArts.com will have a blog-style home page, with a column of organized links to other parts of the site. It includes such diverse offerings as discount tickets, arts internship listings, a Columbia events calendar, city arts festival schedules, and a student works photo gallery. Spector said that other University offices that perform similar functions, such as Career Services and Barnard's College Activities Office, are glad to see another resource available.

Mosher writes the blog, flavoring the whole endeavor with his theatrical personality. "I thought dance was dorky until I was in my 30s, when I discovered my inner Baryshnikov," he wrote to plug discount dance festival tickets.

Students, including CUPAL president Dan Kessler, CC '06, have been previewing the site throughout its genesis to provide ongoing feedback.

"Finally, there's something from the top down," Kessler said. The Arts Initiative, he added, "finally has the leverage and responsibility to marry the unique position of Columbia University with the awesome artistic community of New York."

Mosher and Panjwani emphasized that the site will continue to evolve based on student feedback. Indeed, they are aiming for a section called the Campus Arts Bulletin Board to become a combination of online conversation and Craig's List for the Columbia community.

Mosher envisions that CUArts.com will revolutionize Columbia students' interaction with the arts on campus and around New York City. AI's shift away from focusing on events aims to build a stronger foundation for that relationship, and Mosher is optimistic about the possibilities.

"I think we're standing in the same place, trying to accomplish the same thing, but I think our gaze has changed," he said.

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