

THE APPROVAL MATRIX

Our deliberately oversimplified guide to who falls where on our taste hierarchies.

HIGHBROW

Prudential and MetLife are allegedly making millions by **intentionally delaying payments to families of dead soldiers.**



WikiLeaks identifies Afghan informants working for the U.S.



Pundits who regularly sneer that New Yorkers aren't real Americans **suddenly want to have a say on the ground-zero mosque.**



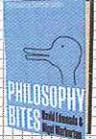
Lance Armstrong is being targeted by an FDA agent who made his name with the pointless steroids investigation of Barry Bonds.

The Man Who Saved New York, a bio of the governor (Hugh Carey) who patched the state back together the last time it almost went down the drain.



Jean-Michel Basquiat: The Radiant Child—eighties-chic nostalgia at Film Forum.

Philosophy Bites, a collection of accessible but sophisticated Q&As taken from the philosophy podcast of the same name.



A superb **Six Degrees of Separation** at Williamstown Theater Festival. Why isn't this play revived more often?



Warner Bros. Archive gives Robert Altman's initially reviled, now-acclaimed classic **Brewster McCLOUD** a **loooong-overdue DVD release.**



During his embezzlement trial, the guy who threw his daughter a \$10 million party **admits he hired prostitutes.** Is there anything this man can't do (in a hilariously abhorrent manner)?!



E-mails that end **"Sent from my iPad."** Yes, it's an automatic feature. But if an automatic feature jumped off a bridge, would you?



No More Dirty Looks, a shocking investigation of the carcinogens, formaldehyde, brain-melting animal botulism, etc., found in many beauty products.

Patricia Clarkson in Cairo Time, an Oscar-perfect picture of repression and melancholy.



Barack Obama on The View: more debasing to the presidency than Watergate?

Summer stench.



Summer storms (if they don't destroy your property).



Dictionary of obscuresorrows.com.

BRILLIANT

DESPICABLE



M.I.A.'s indifference and a terrible sound system combine for one of the worst shows of the year at Governors Island.



Rob Corddry, Zach Galifianakis, Adam Scott, and Bob Odenkirk made a movie together (**Operation: Endgame**), and it's **apparently so bad, it went direct to DVD.**



The open-ended end of Salt. Do we really need *Salt 177 A*: ha ha ha ... Cold War jokes, everyone.

Go, Mutants!, Larry Doyle's new comic novel about mutants.



IFC rereleases **Christopher Nolan's debut**, shoestrung London crime pic, *Following*.



The beautifully nasty opening scenes of Nicolas Winding Refn's insane Viking epic, *Valhalla Rising*.



Comic-Con was so crowded this year that someone got stabbed in a fight over seats.

Kings of Leon had to cut short a concert because there were **too many pigeons defecating on their drummer.**



Samuel Steward's **Stud File—a 50-year sex diary**, from Rock Hudson to Thornton Wilder.



Chicago punk band Cap'n Jazz play Brooklyn Bowl on their reunion tour.



Shyne's new song samples Biggie and Bob Marley and it's still unlistenable.



The fourth season of **The Guild**, an amusing web series about online gamers.



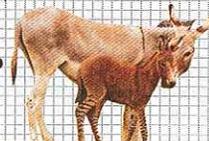
Plain Jane, a surprisingly wonderful you-go-girl makeover show from Louise Roe, who was super-annoying on *The City* but somehow has found her element here.

We didn't believe it either when we heard it, but you can look it up: **The Mel Gibson saga now involves someone burying a placenta under a tree.** True story.



The White House party crashers debut on *The Real Housewives of D.C.*

This baby **"zedonk"** is half-donkey, half-zebra.



Exercising while intoxicated .wordpress.com. May never be surpassed as the ultimate epitome of this category.

LOWBROW

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