

THE (ANNIVERSARY EDITION) APPROVAL MATRIX

Our deliberately oversimplified guide to 40 years in the culture capital of the world.

SO WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED IN New York over the last four decades? Let's see. There was Letterman. And hip-hop. And, you know, books. And pretty much everything else that was important in American culture, except maybe country music and Hollywood. So how do we fit it all in here? Simple: We don't. This is two pages, not a black hole. We did, however, make room for the most brilliant, despicable, memorable, and iconic. In answer to your next question—*But where the hell is [insert favorite influential New York cultural figure here]?*—we can only say, "Read it again." They might be in there somewhere. If not, hey, this is New York City. You try to cram 40 years into four boxes.

DESPICABLE

Rudy Giuliani declares war on Chris O'Fili's *The Holy Virgin Mary*, hitting the cynical trifecta: opportunistic, demagogic, and philistine.

The Met's 1998 production of *Samson et Dalila*.

Opera diva Kathleen Battle phones her management and tells them to call the limo company, have them call the driver, and tell him to turn down the A/C in her limo.

Avery Fisher Hall's persistent acoustic deficiencies.

The memoir industry.

The Sokal affair.

The Jayson Blair affair.

The souvenirification of Keith Haring.

The Megan Marshack affair.

Monster strollers swallow Brooklyn.

That second, crappy Woodstock.

The just-as-bad-as-you-remember *Bonfire of the Vanities* movie.

Madonna turns British.

Movie stars on Broadway.

Reality stars on Broadway.

Worst new building: *The Marriot Marquis*.

Sides of beef and tranny hookers out: *Manolos and bottle service* in.

Literary chroniclers of eighties excess become exemplars of eighties excess.

December 8, 1980.

Studio 54 popularizes the concept of the "velvet rope."

Reality stars on MTV.

"The Rachel."

"We Didn't Start the Fire."

John Gotti, folk hero.

Gordon Gekko, folk hero.

"I've got a mind for business and a bod for sin."

The posthumous Biggie industry.

Diff'rent Strokes.

Every sitcom that ever put up brownstones on a soundstage and tried to pass it off as New York. But especially *The Single Guy*.

Also: *A Stranger Among Us*, in which Melanie Griffith cannily infiltrates the Hasidic community.

John Rocker, amateur sociologist.

Sean Combs and the City College concert stampede.

Central Park West, the TV show.

The old, dirty, seedy, dangerous Times Square.

The fact that the new, soulless, corporate, sanitized Times Square can actually make you nostalgic for the old Times Square.

Ghostbusters 2.

Jackie Chan's *Rumble in the Bronx*, in which Vancouver stands in for the Bronx. Even during the hovercraft-chase scene.

Staying Alive.

C.H.U.D.

HIGH BROW

The *Gates* as public art.

The *Gates* as public spectacle.

James Levine's 2,400 (and counting) appearances as conductor of the Met orchestra.

Bobby Short's 37-year residency at the Carlyle.

La MaMa.

The paragraph on fame that opens *Great Jones Street*.

The broken-window theory actually worked.

***Bonfire of the Vanities* nails eighties New York...**

...And *American Psycho* guts and fillets it.

The riot-y, feel-bad, let's-rob-each-other blackout of '77.

The *Producers*, the movie of the musical.

The riot-y, feel-good, let's-rob-together blackout of 2003.

The *Producers*, the musical.

The *Producers*, the movie.

Julian Schnabel, real-estate developer.

Tim Gunn.

Sex and the City fans.

***Saturday Night Live* with Howard Cosell. Look it up.**

Sex and the City.

***Saturday Night Live*, season 14. (Mike Myers debuts, Conan joins the writing staff, and Steve Martin pays tribute to Gilda Radner on the day she dies. Oh, and the "change bank" sketch.)**

Howard the Duck, the comic book.

The hair. The buildings.

The *Apprentice*. The Donald.

Norman Mailer with a penknife.

Norman Mailer with a pen.

Frank Rich's review of *Moose Murders*.

Moose Murders, Broadway's most infamous flop.

Julian Schnabel, painter.

Carlo Bini replaces Placido Domingo mid-performance, and the audience boos him until he's "traumatized and disoriented."

Julian Schnabel, film director.

Beloved.

Alvin Ailey's *Cry*.

Robert Caro's *The Power Broker*. Turns out Moses wasn't leading us to the Promised Land after all.

Sontag.

Sondheim.

Scorsese.

The reliably goose-bump-inducing opening sequence of Woody Allen's *Manhattan*.

All That Jazz.

And that "things that make life worth living" list at the end.

"Now vee may perhaps to begin. Yes?"

Do the Right Thing. Up you wake, America.

Surprisingly, the *Annie Hall* look still holds up.

Grace Paley.

The Negro Ensemble Company.

Simon & Garfunkel in Central Park.

Pacino, the early years.

The *Corrections*.

***A Chorus Line*.**

Pauline Kael.

Paris Is Burning.

Club 57.

Area club.

The *Joe Franklin Show*.

That Sarah Silverman joke about Joe Franklin in *The Aristocrats*.

The Edith-is-attacked episode of *All in the Family*.

Sesame Street.

Saturday Night Fever.

"Mommy, what job in the Village People is the guy in the leather suit supposed to have?"

Your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man.

Willis Reed takes the floor in Game Seven.

Mr. October.

Reasonable Doubt.

Illmatic.

Ready to Die.

The fact that an aggressively un sentimental comedy about four whiny New Yorkers was the top-rated show in America.

Letterman begat Stewart begat Colbert. And it was good.

Sipowicz.

Spy.

Sassy.

Jerry Orbach, in all his guises.

Mr. October.

1974: The Ramones, Talking Heads, and Blondie all form, and the Bottom Line club opens on Mercer Street.

Super Bass-O-Matic 76.

The Beastie Boys: Punk meets rap, Jew meets black, and East Coast smarts meet West Coast cool.

"Warriors, come out and plaaaay."

KISS.

LOW BROW

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