

## D.J. Spins Museum's Attitude



Fred R. Conrad/The New York Times

SOON after the Metropolitan Museum of Art hired Limor Tomer last year to oversee its concerts and lectures department, she invited her old friend Paul D. Miller, the hip-hop turntablist, composer and author, on a private tour of the galleries.

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The two had known each other since the 1990s, when Ms. Tomer was overseeing the programming at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's BAMcafé, and Mr. Miller was starting his career as "D J Spooky, That Subliminal Kid." By the end of their walkabout, which hadn't begun with an agenda, Ms. Tomer and Mr. Miller were sketching out ideas that he will explore in a yearlong artist residency

at the Met that begins Friday with a screening of the 1956 South Korean film "Madame Freedom." Mr. Miller has composed a new soundtrack score for the film that he and a

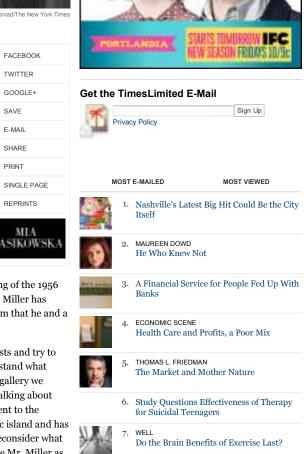
string quartet will perform live.

"What I tend to do," Ms. Tomer said, "is walk around the museum with artists and try to see the galleries from their perspective - to see what they see and to understand what speaks to them and how they would animate these spaces. With Paul every gallery we visited he'd say, 'Oh, yeah, I have this project.' In the Asian gallery he was talking about early Korean film and postwar Korean theater, art and culture. When we went to the Oceanic gallery it turned out he's building an artist retreat on a small Pacific island and has been studying the musical instruments there." The tour led Ms. Tomer to reconsider what  $residencies \ at \ the \ Met-previously \ long-term \ affairs-should \ be \ and \ to \ see \ Mr. \ Miller \ as$ exactly the game changer she was looking for.

Napoleon's sword to Thomas Edison's first cylinder recordings. They have an incredible archive - not just the paintings and sculptures, but technological artifacts, armor. And I







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"To me the Met is like a huge record collection," Mr. Miller said. "You have everything from thought that would be incredible to do a megamix, responding to the collection. So Limor

and I began to talk about that, and I said: 'I don't want it to just be music. I want it to be conceptual. I want it to be a rigorous engagement with contemporary art.' "

Mr. Miller, at 42, is a self-contained industry. He makes CDs — the latest is "The Secret Song" (Thirsty Ear) — in which he revels in the art of the remix, a magpielike approach to juxtaposing newly composed music with snippets of existing recordings that become a kind of running commentary, and he has been engaged to remix tracks for other artists, including Yoko Ono, Meredith Monk, Stewart Copeland and Steve Reich. He has ruminated on what he calls "remix culture" in a book, "Rhythm Science," and compiled "Sound Unbound," a collection of essays on the subject by musicians, novelists, lawyers and filmmakers. (Both are published by MIT Press and come with CDs.)

Then there's his D J Spooky <u>iPhone and iPad app</u> (an Android version is in the works), which lets users do D.J. moves — mixing, scratching, beat-matching and adding electronic effects — on tracks from their iTunes libraries using a twin-turntable interface. And he edits a magazine, <u>Origin</u>, which describes its mission as reporting on "yoga, art, music, conscious lifestyle, humanitarianism and sustainability."

Mr. Miller allowed that he does not do yoga — his preferred form of exercise is jogging — but calls himself "kind of a workaholic."

Echoes of most of these projects will find their way into Mr. Miller's Met residency, which will include not only concerts and talks but also a gallery tour and the publication of three books based on his planned multimedia performances.

Mr. Miller seems perpetually onstage, but comfortably so. Raised in Washington and now based in New York, he is the son of two academics. His father, Paul E. Miller, was the dean of Howard University Law School; his mother, Rosemary Eloise Reed Miller, is a historian of design. The younger Mr. Miller attended Bowdoin College in Maine, and though he studied composition with Elliott Schwartz, he expected to pursue a career in diplomacy.

"I wasn't planning to do music," he said. "It still blows my mind that I'm 42 and being called D J Spooky."

Speaking about his projects on a rainy morning recently he settled into a plush chair backstage at the Met's Grace Rainey Rogers auditorium and set out a handful of gadgets, including an iPad and a Samsung tablet — he believes in giving the recent litigants equal time — on a coffee table.

The devices were in constant use as he spoke. Discussing "Madame Freedom," for example, he pulled up the film's original Korean poster on his iPad. A passing mention of the Renaissance mathematician and astronomer <u>Johannes Kepler</u> was followed quickly by a portrait, which he displayed on the Samsung. Visual and musical examples, as well as film clips, punctuated the discussion of his Met projects.

In "Madame Freedom," a morality tale about the collision of Korean and Western culture, Mr. Miller's 2011 score replaces the original jazz-tinged soundtrack music by Kim Yonghwan. Mr. Miller's contribution will be performed live by the Korean Film Ensemble, a string group, with Mr. Miller adding electronic sound and using his iPad app to manipulate the ensemble's performance electronically.

"The reason I'm interested in this film," Mr. Miller said, pulling up a copy of his carefully notated score on his iPad, "is that after the Korean War we saw the rise of Korean cinema, which is now really dominant in Asia. And at the time of 'Madame Freedom,' jazz, rock and a lot of the Korean musical scene was what was coming out of American soldiers' radios.

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