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Newsday Photo / Moises Saman

Chilling Out to Hot Tunes

P.S. 1's Warm Up series combines interactive sculpture with cutting-edge music **B3**

Hot DJs, Cool Culture

Blending art and music in an innovative P.S. 1 setting

By Martin Johnson

ON A HOT, early summer afternoon, there is bustling in the courtyard of P.S. 1 Center for Contemporary Art, the Long Island City-based MoMA affiliate that used to be an elementary school. Shirtless men wheelbarrow around sand and wheelbarrow while art school students in bright P.S. 1 T-shirts are tying together poles and tubing. At the middle of this storm of activity stands architect Lindy Roy, a lanky, fair-skinned woman in a safari hat. "It's so hot," she says. "I have to keep reminding everyone to take breaks and cool down."

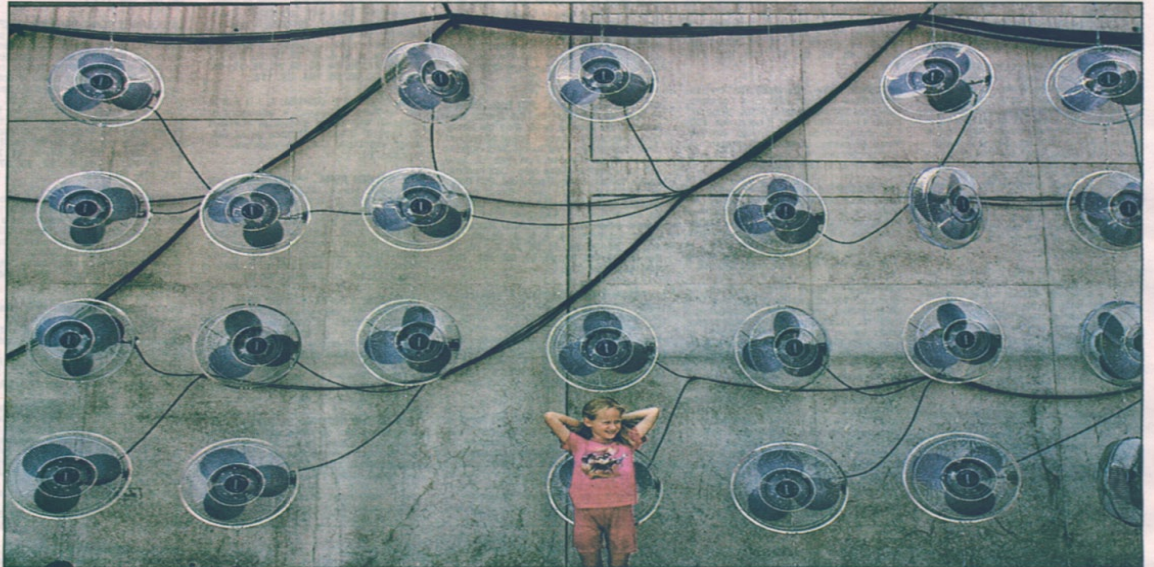
That's appropriate, because her charges are building an installation called "subWave," which will allow visitors a myriad of ways to cool down, literally and figuratively, all summer. The installation is the focal point of the center's Warm Up series, its fourth annual summertime festival mixing urban architecture and cutting-edge music.

Starting tomorrow afternoon at 3 and every Saturday through Labor Day Weekend, the courtyard will turn into an urban oasis that mixes state-of-the-art design with internationally renowned DJs. In addition, Warm Up will serve as a point of entry into the center's other current exhibitions, as well as the Warm Up Dance series, which is going on in what was previously the school gymnasium.

"Back in the '70s, when we began here, art and music were very close," said Alanna Heiss, the founder and executive director of P.S. 1, while sitting in her third-floor office. "But starting in the '80s, those worlds began to drift apart and everything became somewhat compartmentalized."

Then, stretching her arms out as if trying to wrap them around a large ball, she said, "We're trying to bring them together again." Heiss added that by introducing the music crowd to new art and the art crowd to new music, the center was fulfilling one of its core missions. Scrunching up her face, she said, "Art shouldn't just be for insiders."

Deputy director Tom Finkelpearl noted that the Warm Up series is designed to reach



Ellen Teasley, 7, of Pennsylvania, savors a wall covered with working fans, part of an outdoor exhibit at the site of the P.S. 1 Warm Up series.

and, in fact, party with that segment of the art community that doesn't escape the city for summer weekends. Last year's series drew thousands to the center, and the installation was named one of Time magazine's top 10 design feats of the year. Finkelpearl was on the committee that chose Roy from a list of five architects. (All five proposals will be exhibited at MoMA later this summer.) He said that Roy was chosen because her proposal was the most complete and compatible with the courtyard's minimalist aesthetic. "She thought of everything," he said, "from shading the sun to rehydration packets."

"I wanted it to be a relaxation space," Roy said as she thumbed through a book of computer-generated illustrations of what "subWave" would look like. The space will feature 12 shaded, rotating hammocks (which is where some of the rehydration packets can be found); a wall of

fans; several machines creating a mist that the fans will spray; two wading pools, a bar; a DJ area; a dance floor, and several iridescent waves of translucent fabric that looks like high-tech mosquito netting. Yet for the meticulous planning that went into the Saturday events, Roy designed the space so that it can be used during the week as a chill-out area.

"For an architect, this is extremely exciting," she said. "From first proposal to final budget often takes years... years!" With this, we will go from proposal to completion in only a few months." Roy's credits include the Richard Meier development in Sagaponack, a bar in Manhattan's meat-packing district and an affordable housing project in Houston, but she likened this project to a spa that she did in a Botswana safari area. That project also involved flexible spatial design, and it shows she's no stranger to working in extreme weather.

For the second consecutive year, the music is being curated by Jonathan Rudnick, co-founder of Giant Step, an 11-year-old promotion and marketing firm with its own label and club night, currently at Shine. Corresponding via e-mail, he explained that his guiding philosophy was to present music that was "fun, eclectic, mostly very danceable and always a surprise to the very diverse audience."

In addition to DJs, he also includes a few live bands — especially ones that combine roots music with new technology or use ancient instruments in new genres.

The opening-day lineup features Nortec Collective, a Tijuana-based group of DJs that combines Norteno music with electronic music. The group's recent release, "The Tijuana Sessions Volume 1" (Palm Pictures), has been hailed as one of the year's best CDs. Nortec will share the bill with the Venezuelan-based Los Amigos

Invisibles, who mix their indigenous sounds with of-the-moment studio technology.

While there are events throughout the summer, two highlights include the fifth anniversary party on July 21 for Breakbeat Science, the Lower Manhattan record store, which will feature London-based 2-Step pioneer MJ Cole; on Sept. 1, two artists from the renowned Studio K7 label, jazzy house DJ Herbert from France and Philadelphia-based poet Ursula Rucker, perform material from their recent releases.

In general, DJ music — or as its supporters call it, electronic music — took flight in wide-open spaces, but in the metropolitan area, it has found a home in smaller environments marked by urban architecture, such as the series in the Anchorage at the Brooklyn Bridge or during summers at P.S. 1. Rudnick said he would like to see the center extend its program to other seasons. In an e-mail, he wrote, "Did anyone say ice?"

Martin Johnson is a regular contributor to *Newsday*.

WHERE & WHEN Warm Up begins tomorrow from 3-9 p.m. at P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, 22-25 Jackson Ave. at 46th Street, and it continues every Saturday through Labor Day Weekend. Admission is \$5. For more information, call 718-784-2084 or visit www.ps1.org.

To listen to audio excerpts from some of the artists in the Warm Up series, log on to www.newsday.com/features.





Near the wall of fans, a girl cools off with water from a showerhead.