

Mark Tribe Named Director of the School of the Arts Digital Media Center

BY KRISTIN STERLING

While teaching and working on public art projects during graduate school in San Diego, Mark Tribe saw the Internet as the next public space for artists to work. His interest in this idea grew during the mid-1990s, when he lived in Berlin, Germany and worked as a web designer and artist. As he attended new media art festivals, he discovered that there were many young artists, painters and video artists who shared his interest in the Internet.

Tribe realized that artists needed a place to come together online, to share work and develop a critical dialogue, and he took action. What started as an email list for new media artists soon turned into the non-profit Rhizome.org, a Web site for artists, curators, scholars and students to exchange art and ideas. Today, Rhizome.org is recognized as one of the leading organizations in the new media art field.

After leading the organization for seven years, Tribe is bringing his new media skills back to campus. This time to Columbia's School of the Arts (SOA), where he is the new director of the School's Digital Media Center and will work to shape the Center and develop new media curriculum.

SOA's Digital Media Center provides facilities and training for students working in areas such as computer graphics, digital video

editing and web authoring, and includes labs for film, visual arts and writing students. Film students access the Center for their post-production work, including film editing and DVD production. Visual arts students use the Center for digital video, digital audio, 3-D animation, and large format digital printing.

"Mark is one of the few proven new media artists who moves effortlessly through the theories and practices as they have evolved to date. He is also a proven administrator and teacher," says Bruce W. Ferguson, dean of the School of the Arts. "Thanks to two other digital media innovators—Tim Nye and Peter Norton—who have made this

position possible, we are thrilled to have Mark with us now."

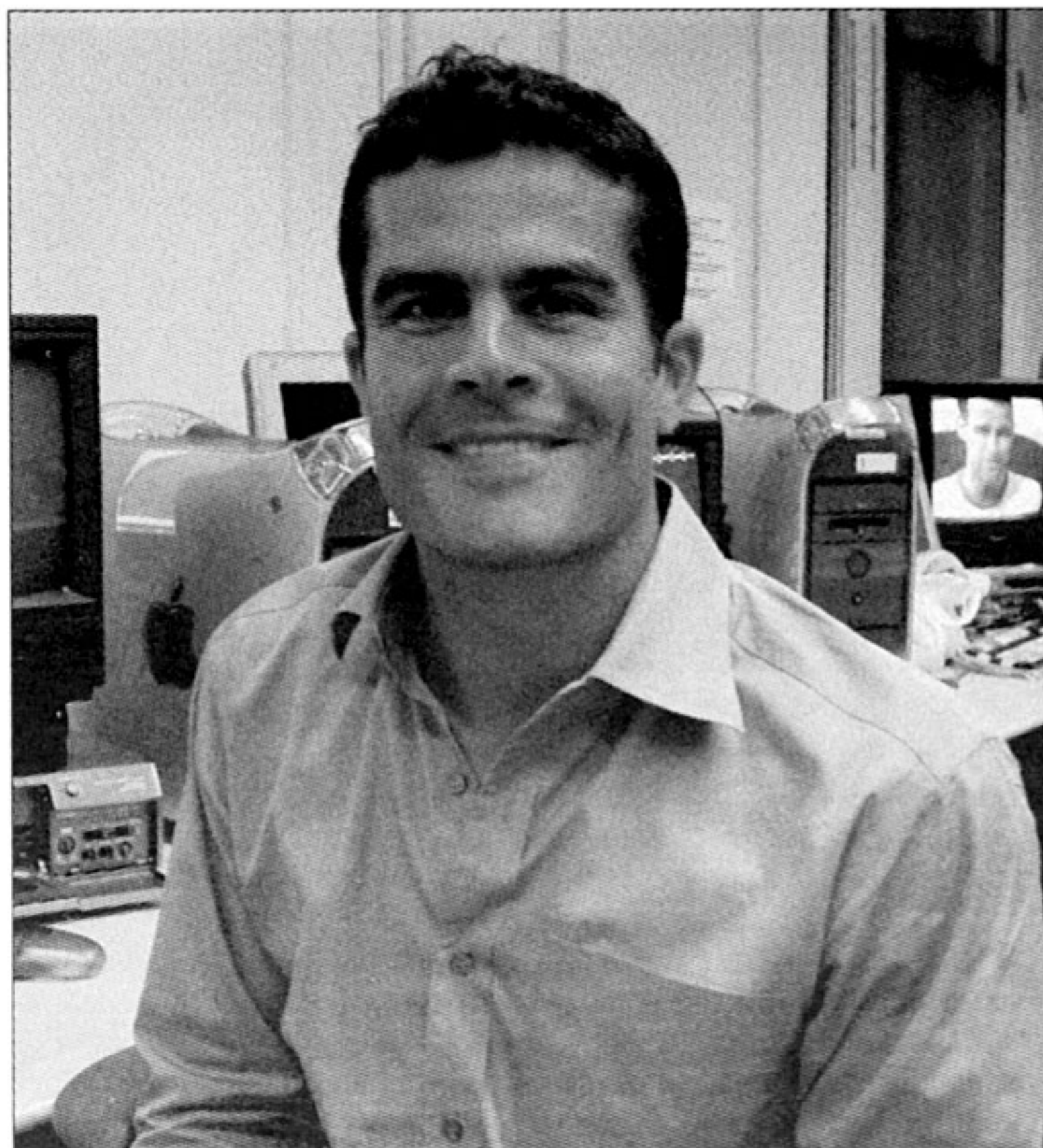
"Columbia and the School of the Arts have a unique opportunity to create one of the world's leading centers for research and learning in the field of new media art," says Tribe. "The ingredients, excitement and interest for a great center are in place, and I look forward to meeting with faculty and students to understand their needs and create a vision to meet them."

Tribe expects his first few months will be consumed with what he calls "discovery and analysis." He will begin by determining the needs of faculty and students in the School of the Arts and considering what faculty members are doing in new media throughout campus.

"New media is an inherently interdisciplinary field," says Tribe. "I anticipate that faculty in other fields are doing work that is very relevant to digital art."

While Tribe will be contemplating the future of the Digital Media Center, he and Ferguson are firm on one point—the Center's activities must be driven by the artists' ideas, not the technology. "This is about putting technology at the service of ideas," Tribe says.

"We are living through a tremendous historical change, and digital media are playing a central role in these transformations," he says. "By using digital technologies in experimental and often unexpected ways, new media artists can help us gain a better understanding of our times."



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Mark Tribe