

New Museum Sick Talk; Gallery Hopscotch

By Jonathan Napack

We've all seen the art scene previews, but what's *really* happening this fall? Some important categories just didn't make it onto the season listings out there, so for the curious, or merely perverse, among you, here they are.

First is Scariest Artist, which surely must go to Los Angeles performance artist

Art Bob Flanagan and his installation
Diary in collaboration with Sheree Rose, *Visiting Hours*, at the New Museum of Contemporary Art on lower Broadway.

From Sept. 23 till year's end, Mr. Flanagan, a lifelong sufferer of cystic fibrosis, will construct a small hospital room and lie in a sickbed. He promises to talk to visitors about virtually anything. Some may ask about his life's work, what he calls "fighting sickness with sickness"—a dedication to extreme masochistic sex, including trau-

matic body piercing (guess where). An art critic invited to see video work by Mr. Flanagan admitted it was grueling. "By the end, I was the only person in the room," the critic said.

Scariest Art Excursion: Utrecht Art Supply store manager Tom Giacometti's *Blade Runnerish* installation in a 9,000-square-foot loft in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn. Mr. Giacometti uses themes and materials from the neighborhood, such as blocks covered with dangerous shards of broken glass and mannequins holding concealed items.

Then there's the Most Obscure Yet Weirdly Fascinating Art Book: Daniel Rothbart's *Jewish Metaphysics as Generative Principle in American Art*, published by Ulisse & Calipso of Naples, Italy. Mr. Rothbart links postwar American abstraction to the Jewish iconoclastic tradition—Clement Greenberg and the Second Commandment—and reveals the influence of cabalistic mysticism on artists as

diverse as Barnett Newman, Morris Louis, Sol LeWitt and Jonathon Borofsky. Among his insights are the similarity between Rothko's forms and motifs in illuminated medieval manuscripts by Oriental Jews. A former Fulbright scholar with close ties to Italy's *Flash Art* magazine and other critics in that country, Mr. Rothbart is also an artist himself, with a show of bronze sculptures opening Oct. 4 at private dealer Lee Arthur's studio. When he's in New York, he stays on the Upper West Side, above the Shakespeare & Company bookstore, which an uncle owns.

Most-Talked-About, Not-Happening Show: Jeff Koons was planning to show new work at dealer-agent Jeffrey Deitch's palatial new space, at the corner of Broome and Mercer streets, but the exhibition has now been officially and indefinitely postponed. Mr. Deitch, a curator and Harvard M.B.A. who most famously developed Citibank's art program, has visibly worked with Mr. Koons for over a year but has not yet realized any actual projects. One reason may be Mr. Koons' messy divorce from porn star and Italian parliamentarian Ilona Staller, also known as "Cicciolina." As for any other activities in Deitchland, Mr. Deitch's assistants would only say that "things were in the works."

Many galleries have moved this fall, some of them at the very last moment. Movement to West Chelsea has stalled—greedy local landlords raised their prices when interest started picking up, and some galleries decided to stay in SoHo or on the Upper East Side. Yet enough have made the move to constitute a new nucleus on West 22nd and 23rd streets between 10th and 11th avenues. Restorer Abraham Joel is moving his conservation studio and his joint-venture gallery, Contemporary Arts of India, into 521 West 23rd Street, a building affiliated with painter Sandro Chia. It will be open by appointment from Oct. 1. Other tenants in the building include painter David Bowes, now-private dealer Perry Rubinstein (of the recently defunct Rubinstein-Diacono) and Larry Gagosian.

Marilyn Lannon is opening her Lannon Gallery in a 5,000-square-foot space at 530 West 22nd Street, next door to the Dia Center for the Arts. A recent transplant from Chicago, Ms. Lannon plans to show mostly emerging artists in her enormous space, a converted taxi garage. "It took a

lot of work," Ms. Lannon said. "When I came here, there were no windows and a few inches of grease over everything. But I love the possibilities of this location, and it's certainly much cheaper, not to mention larger, than anything in SoHo—\$10 a square foot." (Rents in SoHo range roughly from \$12 to \$24 per square foot.)

Ms. Lannon started by hanging paintings in Boston nightclubs in the mid-80's; her most recent gallery, Lannon-Cole in Chicago, dealt heavily with British artists such as John Kirby, whose works she obtained through her relationship with London dealer Matthew Flowers. Her current backer, Guy Roberts, is also her landlord—he owns the fleet whose garage the gallery has taken over. At press time, two other dealers, Pat Hearn and Paul Morris, were closing deals to move into the same

*Performance artist
Bob Flanagan's
installation at the
New Museum: He
lies in a sickbed and
talks about 'fighting
sickness with
sickness.' So to speak.*

building. "It's a 5,000-square-foot space, so we plan to split down the middle and run separate galleries," said Mr. Morris.

Last but not least, Nicholas Davies, formerly of the uptown Stubbs Books, has branched out and opened a gallery in truly virgin territory, the picturesque West Village. "The space is very idiosyncratic, which is to my taste," said Mr. Davies of the 23 Commerce Street location, which used to be a gloomy macrobiotic restaurant. He explained his move: "I love Jane [Stubbs]. I just was more interested in art than books, and I wanted to be downtown. The commute was a pain in the butt."

Mr. Davies brings an unusual background to his role as dealer. Before his stint at Stubbs & Company, he worked for the interior decorator Mark Hampton. He says he wants to concentrate on lesser-known artists, and indeed, he does have rather idiosyncratic taste. "Right now, I'm into 1970's frescoes," he said. "I find them in grocery stores."

