Locals used to drive by the Nevada Motel thinking it was on

They’re rolling up the sidewalks for the winter along our coastline. The leaves are leaving, and motel vacancy signs glimmer in the night. But there’s a last hurrah here.
In York, something that’s gathering a curious crowd of a thousand people carrying plastic cups filled with wine and plates topped with Mexican food. They walk in and out of a seaside motel on this otherwise silent night, shedding new light on what can happen during the slow season in a beach town.
The Nutcracker
Saturday, November 26 at 2pm & 7pm;
Sunday, November 27 at 2pm;
Friday, December 2 at 7pm;
Saturday, December 3 at 2pm & 7pm;
Sunday, December 4 at 2pm
Merrill Auditorium, Portland

Tap, Tap, Jazz
Saturday, January 14 at 4pm & 7pm;
Saturday, January 21 at 4pm & 7pm
Maine State Ballet Theater, Falmouth

Swan Lake
Saturday, March 31 at 2pm;
Sunday, April 1 at 2pm
Merrill Auditorium, Portland

Visit Instant Art
Ellen Wieske at Gallery 1 at Center of Contemporary Art
October 1 - December 11 2011
Gabriella D’Italia & George Mason at Gallery 2 at Center of Contemporary Art
October 1 - December 11 2011
Deborah Wing-Sproul at Gallery 3 at Center of Contemporary Art
October 1 - December 11 2011
Zach Poff + N.B. Aldrich at Gallery 4 at Center of Contemporary Art
October 1 - December 11 2011
Amy Stacey Curtis at June Fitzpatrick Gallery
October 22 - November 18, 2011
Gerald Robinov at UNE Art Gallery
November 9 – February 12, 2012
Perpetual Present at MECA
November 17 - December 23 2011
has caught them in mid-undress. Sculptures perch on pillows and paintings hang over TV screens. Large tarps block out the windows, movies project onto walls, and cadi-

ging sheets hang from the ceiling. It’s as if the motel is collaborating with the artists to make this extraordinary night come to life.

Sarah Baldwin, of Wells, is excited. “I started doing installation art about a year ago, but this one is really a fun challenge. It’s more confined,” more intimate, explosive. Her room is stippled with hand-drawn, anthropomorphic faces that come to life with changing musical breezes. “My inspiration comes from cartoons and Keith Haring.” Visitors are on the hook to draw their own face and tape them up, too.

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Art Happens (continued from page 25)

In Jessica Lauren Lipton’s interactive room, you are encouraged to clean your hands, dip them in powdered charcoal, and make marks on her skin. Yes, you have to touch this Portland artist. People are rather squeamish to do this at first, but as the night goes on you are more likely to leave their mark. “I didn’t want to do this in Portland,” Lipton laughs. “I don’t want to be at work [bartending at Empire Dine and Dance] and suddenly have someone walk up and say, ‘Hey I touched you.’”

Video presentations also flirt with our conventions and adjust the thermostats on our comfort zones. Jacqueline Weaver, from Troy, New York, rips York’s history inside out and projects it onto sheets of tulle reaching all the way to the floor, each spaced by a ceiling tile. Between these layers of diaphanous white fabric are benches for visitors to watch a movie beaming through the translucent strips. “The multiple projections through the layers provide a dream-like atmosphere for the piece, reference the textiles and clothing in the dress scenes, and create a [wistful sense of the] generational loss of the projected image, much like the loss of our original histories. It also allows the shadows of viewers to enter the projections as they walk through the layers, implicating them in this invented history.” Weaver describes her piece “trying to be a nightmare. Looking at all of the projections together, you gather the jarring sight of a history blurred by each filter it pierces.”

The art isn’t just inside the rooms. Katherine Doyle, from New Castle, calls her space outside a “labyrinth” to help participants move from one state of mind to the next. Red ribbons hanging from a wire direct you to the entrance. “You can write something on these—something personal, something you’d like to let go of—hang your streamer on the line, and then go into your labyrinth. The twists and turns help it get out of your head. There’s a discovery period where you’re spiraling in taut, white canvas walls. “When you emerge, you’re facing the ocean.” The water sparkles just across the road. Surprised by your sense of calm, you realize instant art is about this very instant and you are part of the exhibit.

Don’t even think of checking out. Sounds stream from windows and lights flicker through open doors. Some artists-in-character perform like seaside guests in their rooms, packing and unpacking from decades of lost summers while still more slip out of their units to rub elbows with their friends—a chain reaction. It’s like creativity is exploding through the TVs, the neon lights, the vacation-weary humanity, tossing different styles into each open room. Sometimes it’s true. Art happens.