

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tabboo!
The Nightingale

September 28 - November 2, 2008

Opening Reception: Sunday, September 28, 7-9pm

Gallery Hours: Wednesday - Sunday, noon-7pm

Performances of *The Nightingale*

Starring Agosto Machado, Brandon Olson, and Tabboo!

Sunday, September 28, 8pm

Sunday, October 12, 7pm

From September 28 - November 2, 2008, PARTICIPANT INC presents *The Nightingale*, a solo exhibition by visual and performing artist Tabboo! (Stephen Tashjian), including paintings and a new play, also starring Agosto Machado and Brandon Olson. Incorporating a myriad of influences derived from Hans Christian Andersen's *The Nightingale* (1844), Tabboo! updates this iconic tale concerning artificiality and authenticity with signature drag queen flair, and transforms PARTICIPANT INC with a theatrical installation for the opening of PARTICIPANT INC's seventh season.

Tabboo!'s installation includes a series of new paintings, in some cases doubling as research for props, costumes, and character studies for *The Nightingale*. The Chinese figure of death wears white. The Emperor's boundless garden, painted from Tabboo!'s apartment, contains black-eyed susans and cactus. A fascination with figurines and flowers, portraiture and puppets, defines Tabboo!'s everyday atmosphere. His encompassing, bittersweet worldview is transferred to a stage constructed and dressed for the exhibition, with performances occurring on opening night, and again on Sunday, October 12, 2008.

When asked in a 1995 interview with Linda Simpson about his early work, Tabboo! noted: "The subject matter was drag, glamour, ladies' shoes, lingerie, hairdos, vinyl--same as now." But always to these exuberant themes, Tabboo! has added defiant resolve, from poignant tributes to friends lost to AIDS, to fairy tales fashioned into sophisticated treatises on gentrification. "A lavish bid to combat sadness," as Collier Schorr described floating swirls in Tabboo!'s evaporating cityscapes (Artforum, December 1993), could aptly express the cyclical sentiments evoked as Tabboo! as Cher singing Bob Dylan performed in front of a backdrop based on the 1964 poster: "Protest against the rising tide of conformity."

Tabboo! (Stephen Tashjian) has lived and worked in New York City's Lower East Side for the last three decades. Originally from Massachusetts, he met Lia Gangitano at The ICA, Boston while organizing the now legendary *Boston School* exhibition in 1995. Tabboo!'s paintings have been included in other landmark exhibitions such as *Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing* (1989) curated by Nan Goldin for Artist's Space, NY; and *The Name of This Show is Not: GAY ART NOW* (2006) curated by Jack Pierson for Paul Kasmin, NY. His collaborations with

PARTICIPANT INC

253 East Houston Street, New York, NY 10002

Mark Morrisroe, Pat Hearn, Howard Stern, Nan Goldin, Deee-Lite, and the whole '80s Pyramid/Wigstock gang changed the culture--in a good way! Tabboo! has performed at CBGB's, Yankee Stadium, Carnegie Hall, and basically every NY nightclub/performance space in the last 30 years. He works in painting, sculpture, photography, puppetry, music, and theater design. He has been photographed by numerous major photographers including Steven Meisel, Steven Klein, Joel Meyerowitz, David Armstrong, Jack Pierson, Ken Regan, Nan Goldin, Mark Morrisroe, Alice O'Malley, Gail Thacker, and Peter Hujar. Lately, he is a star of YouTube. His book *Pearl* is available from PowerHouse Books.

State of the Arts



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PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street, between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets on the Lower East Side. Subway: F/V to Second Avenue, Allen Street exit.

Gallery Hours: Wednesday-Sunday, noon-7pm
www.participantinc.org