

Previews

Governors Island

New York Harbor; Sat 31–Oct 5.

All that separates the concrete jungle of Manhattan from the bucolic splendor of Governors Island is a scant 800 yards. In less time than it takes to subway from midtown to Canal Street, you can hop the ferry at the Battery Maritime Building and enjoy a picnic, bicycle ride or game of Frisbee in relative tranquility.

Of course things have been getting a little noisier lately: Since 2006, the 172-acre former Coast Guard base has added free cultural events to compete with its natural attractions, and this summer sees even more festivals and exhibits—as well as extended hours and days of operation. (The island will now be open to visitors Fridays 10am–5pm and weekends 10am–7pm.)

The fun starts on at noon on Saturday 31 with an opening-day Family Festival, offering music by the Hudson River Ramblers and the Mercantiles, a performance by Kristin McArdle Dance, a puppet-making workshop for kids, and bicycle parade with Bike New York. (Yep, you can take your Huffy on the ferry.) Saturday also sees the unveiling of “In Site,” the Sculptors Guild’s seasonlong exhibition of large works in Nolan Park. (Keep an eye out for Patricia Anne Mandel’s life-size bronze of Angelina Jolie.)

Art is everywhere on the island during Figment, an outlandish free-for-all over the June 27 weekend, when stilt walkers and costumed revelers come ashore, and visitors can enjoy an artsy mini-golf course and human-powered carousel.

As befitting a harbor oasis, water gets major billing this season: A 110-



ISLAND HOPPING
Visitors let their freak flag fly at Figment.

foot waterfall designed by Danish artist Olafur Eliasson (one of four being erected around the city) starts flowing near the Soissons Dock ferry landing in July. And seafarers can fish, take a boat tour, learn to kayak or just paddle around the island during the July 26 City of Water Festival.

Outdoor performances are always a hallmark of summer, and every Saturday in July the island hosts folksingers like Janis Ian and Slaid Cleaves during the Folks on the Island! concert series. Other alfresco offerings include a New York

Philharmonic performance on the former parade grounds (July 5), the African Film Festival (August 9 and 10) and the Pulse Ensemble Theatre’s production of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* (August 29–31).

With all these activities scheduled, major renovations on the horizon (including plans for a 40-acre park on the island’s bleak southern half) and more fanciful proposals surfacing all the time, is Governors Island destined to become as hustle-and-bustle as the Sheep Meadow? For now, there’s enough room to accommodate both those looking for entertainment and

those who want to get away from it all. And Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation president Leslie Koch intends to keep it that way. “We are trying to bring Governors Island back to life and reconnect it to New York City as a place that New Yorkers use and enjoy,” she says. “[But] it will always have unique views and harbor sensations. We’re so excited to have a team that understands the importance of the park and public space as central to the Island’s future.” —*Dawn Shurmaitis*

For details, visit govisland.com.

Non-Motivational Speaker Series

Happy Ending; Thu 29 at 8pm

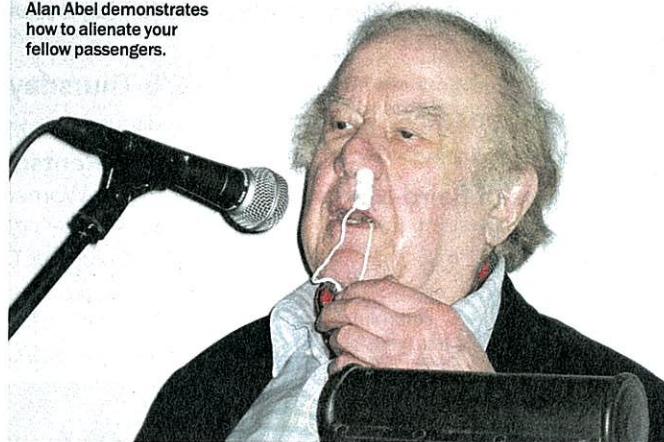
As its sardonic title suggests, this monthly lecture series sponsored by *Gelf* magazine doesn’t offer uplifting bromides from Tony Robbins types. It’s more of a forum for idiosyncratic personalities overlooked by mainstream media (and a chance for the arts-and-culture webzine to score some publicity). In April, infamous hoaxer Alan Abel, who once fooled Walter Cronkite into covering the facetious Society for Indecency to Naked Animals, discussed the merits of culture jamming—the extent of his advice involved behaving erratically to get a better seat on an airplane.

This Thursday, the lineup spotlights two novel perspectives on religion: First, Daniel Radosh

(*Rapture Ready!*) recounts his journey into the world of WWJD merch, Jesus rock and other hallmarks of Christian pop culture. Then, erstwhile Gambino-family insider Louis Ferrante (*Unlocked: A Journey from Prison to Proust*) reflects on his eight-year incarceration and conversion to Orthodox Judaism. (Guess not everyone finds Jesus in the big house.) While the authors won’t be imparting any self-help strategies, *Gelf* editor Adam Rosen suspects that they’ll engage the audience nevertheless: “We hope the speakers will both inform and make people laugh. We’re poking fun at the idea of paying money to be told commonsense things.” —*Erin Clements*

For details, visit gelfmagazine.com.

PERIOD PIECE
Alan Abel demonstrates how to alienate your fellow passengers.



PHOTOGRAPHS: (TOP) HEATHER WHITE; (BOTTOM) JUEL GRAEBIS