

'All the News
That's Fit to Print'

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New York: Today mostly cloudy with light winds, high 58. Tonight partly cloudy, low 43. Tomorrow partly sunny and breezy, high 55. Yesterday, high 54, low 45. Details, Page 49.

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Section 9

A NIGHT OUT WITH

Ryan McGinness

Fun and, Yes, Games

By PAULINE O'CONNOR

SCANNING the crowd in his Chinatown loft, Ryan McGinness, the graphic artist and designer, seemed jittery. Mr. McGinness had invited a passel of friends over on a soggy mid-November night to play parlor games to celebrate the completion of "Multiverse," a series of large paintings made with metallic car paint in luscious Day-Glo oranges, rain-forest greens and pomegranate reds.

But it was not his friends' reaction to his work, created for a solo show at Agnès B.'s Galerie du Jour in Paris, that made him anxious. "People aren't really playing the games," he complained in a Virginia drawl. Apart from Jan Schrader, a chef from Phil-

adelphia, and Geoff Cook, an art director at Base, the design firm, few people were playing. Mr. Schrader and Mr. Cook were engaged in an R-rated Scrabble match.

The other guests were chatting and people-watching. Heads swiveled when Mark Krayenhoff, an architect, and his boyfriend, A. A. Bronson, the director of the nonprofit artists group Printed Matter, made their entrance. The couple wore matching long gray beards and thick-framed glasses.

Mr. McGinness, 32, a former curatorial assistant at the Andy Warhol Museum, owes something to Warhol's appreciation for commercial icons. His kitchen shelves are lined with matching Joy detergent bottles facing in the same direction. The party snacks — teddy bear crackers and caramel

corn — seemed to have been chosen for their shapes and matching colors. Miniature cans of Budweiser were arranged in tidy stacks on the kitchen counter and in the fridge.

And Mr. McGinness, like Warhol, sticks to a personal uniform: a white dress shirt over black pants. He recently started wearing contacts in the intense shade of blue found on a can of Red Bull.

His own signature icons — silhouettes of unicorns, tree roots, variations on highway signs, genitalia — proliferate and overlap on his 14 silk-screen paintings. When asked to translate, he shyly said, "It's like a Rorschach test."

Off in a corner, the sculptor Toland Grinnell (known for his luxury purses) and his assistant, Ara Dymond, jockeyed for control of a Pac-Man arcade game. "Thing about Pac-Man is, you can't be greedy," Mr. Grinnell warned as he nimbly manipulated the joystick. "Unlike how I am

in real life" — his Pac-Man was cornered and killed — "you're greedy, you're dead."

A few feet away, another guest, Justin Muir, was telling Mr. McGinness, "It's really sexy, really hot."

Miranda Purves, an editor at Elle, interrupted. "What's really sexy?" she asked.



Christopher Smith for The New York Times

AT PLAY Ryan McGinness, in his trademark white shirt, presides at a party in his Chinatown loft.

"My jellyfish tank," Mr. Muir said. Mr. Muir is a marine biologist and aquarium artist, whose company, City Aquarium, had supplied the 25-foot-long tank for Vikram Chatwal's new hotel, Dream. "Jellyfish are extremely difficult," Mr. Muir explained.

Mr. McGinness then joined a game of Yahtzee. David Jargowsky, an entrepreneur, rolled two fours. "Hey, that's called Donny and Marie," he noted. Blank stares. "It's a pair of squares, get it?"

Champagne flowed, the hour grew late and the crowd began to leave. Making a dramatic exit in a full-length fur coat was Todd Alric, a furniture designer. Wasn't he afraid of exposing his pelt to the pelting rain? Mr. Alric dismissed the question with an airy wave of his hand.

"Oh, no, I have a car waiting outside," he said.

By 2, only a few close friends remained, and Mr. McGinness finally appeared to relax. He was now free to indulge in his favorite game, one that demanded he draw rather than talk: "Now," he said, "who wants to play Pictionary?"