

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

Pick a Culture: There's Always A Blue Period

By HOLLAND COTTER



The Color of Collaboration

Finally, for the last word in color immersion and its beneficial effects, I direct your attention to an exhibition called "Graffiti 207: Art, Medicine and Design," installed in a pediatric clinic that opened last month in Inwood, near the northern tip of Manhattan.

As the title implies, the show is actually an integral part of the clinic, and together they represent a multidisciplinary project involving several collaborators with an interest in seeing art, science and social activism merge: a medical group called Pediatrics 2000; the Dutch design team of Marlene Kaptein and Stijn Roodnat; the graphic designer Melanie Van Haaren; and Antonio Zaya, a curator associated with the Martinez Gallery, formerly in Brooklyn.

The gallery, established by Hugo Martinez and now at the clinic, specializes in graffiti art, a total-environment aesthetic. For the clinic's inauguration, several of the gallery's regular artists — Case 2, CoCo 144, Giz, KEZ 5, LES, Mosco, Nato, Noxer, Rate, Skuf and Tracy 168 — produced some fantastic work not only in the two-story lobby, but also in the doctors' offices and examining rooms, work that will change regularly. Many of the images refer to the elevated trains that run outside the clinic's second-floor window, but the range of subject matter is wide, vividly imagined and absolutely kid-worthy.

In addition, each room is painted a single color, with all of the colors derived from the predominantly Dominican neighborhood. In this walk-in rainbow, there's a tree-green room (the Inwood park is nearby), a mango-orange room (Caribbean produce is abundant) and a pinkish room (the cakes in local bakeries are pretty and sweet).

And one room is turquoise blue. What was its source of inspiration? The waters of the rivers that meet at the top of the island? Merengue played on blue guitars? In a holiday season generous in coincidence and not without its miracles, I can imagine my sister's Christmas gift is a definite possibility. I live just a few blocks away.

Blue on View, in Galleries and Even a Clinic

The exhibitions in Holland Cotter's Critic's Notebook article:

"BLUE," American Folk Art Museum, 45 West 53rd Street, Manhattan, (212) 265-1040. Through March 6.

"IRAQ AND CHINA: CERAMICS, TRADE AND INNOVATION," Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1050 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, (202) 633-4880. Through April 24.

"OFF THE WALL: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON EARLY ITALIAN ART AT THE GARDNER MUSEUM," Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 280 The Fenway, Boston, (617) 566-

1401. Through Jan. 9.

PERMANENT COLLECTION, Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Avenue, at 82nd Street, Manhattan, (212) 535-7710.

PERMANENT COLLECTION, Newark Museum, 49 Washington Street, (973) 596-6550.

"TRADITIONS/TRANSITIONS: THE CHANGING WORLD OF FIBER ART," Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, 600 Main Street, Hartford, (860) 278-2670. Through March 6.

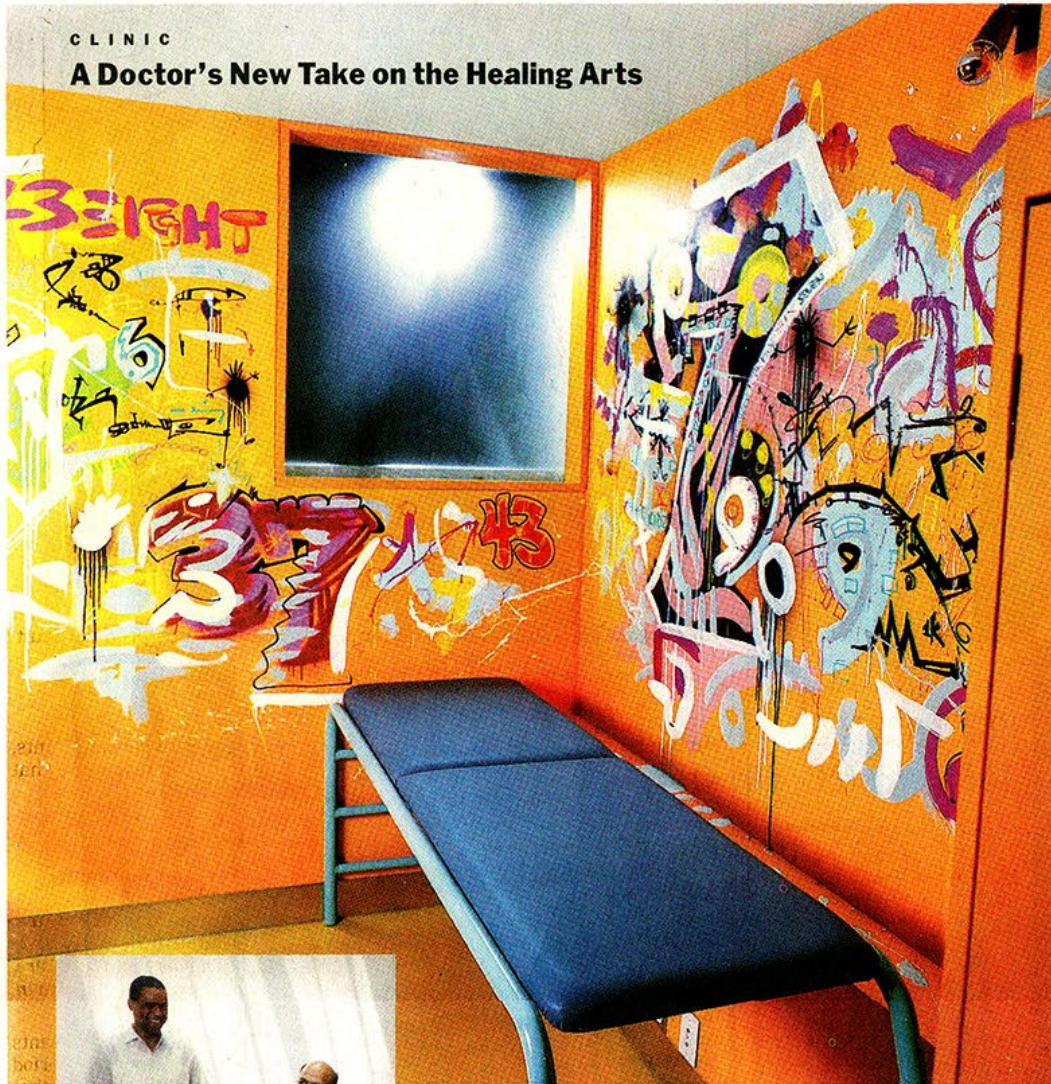
"GRAFFITI 207: MEDICINE AND DESIGN," Pediatrics 2000, 515 West 207th Street, Inwood, (212) 619-2149. Through Jan. 29.

CURRENTS

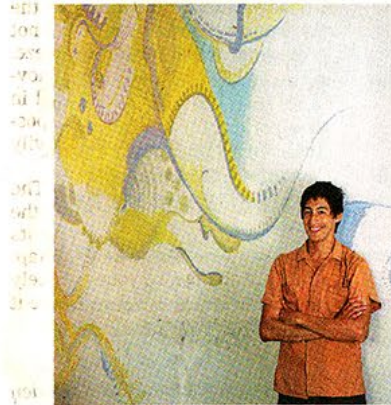
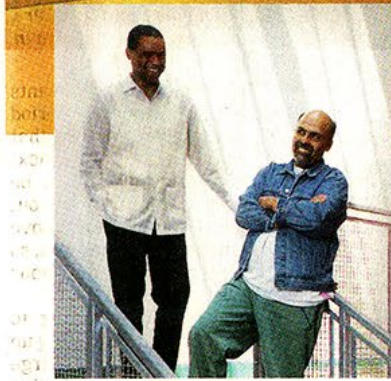
Elaine Louie

CLINIC

A Doctor's New Take on the Healing Arts



Photographs by Paxton for The New York Times



Juan Tapia-Mendoza, a pediatrician and former graffiti artist in New York — his tag was C.A.T. 87 — wanted to open a clinic for children providing emergency care at night. Hugo Martinez, a gallery owner and friend of Dr. Tapia-Mendoza, was looking for a new way to show graffiti art after closing his gallery in Brooklyn last year. So when Dr. Tapia-Mendoza (in white shirt, left) and three other physicians founded Pediatrics 2000, a clinic that will open on Monday in the Inwood section of Manhattan, they asked Mr. Martinez (in jeans jacket, with Dr. Tapia-Mendoza) to open a gallery there and to hire graffiti artists to paint the walls.

Normally, Mr. Martinez said, "graffiti is an 'uninvited collaboration' between the owner of the building, the architect and the artist," but not this time. The designers, Marleen Kaptein and Stijn Roodnat of Rotterdam, who had done Mr. Martinez's Brooklyn gallery in 2000, chose a palette — red, green, orange, hot pink — based on colors popular in the largely Latino neighborhood. They told the artists where they could paint (on some walls, but not on floors or ceilings). They did not, however, specify the subject matter, other than to give guidelines: the art "could not be aggressive or scary," out of respect for the children, Ms. Kaptein said. They asked Mōsco (lower left) to paint something in black and white in the waiting room, but he gave them floating, amorphous creatures in pale greens, yellows and blues. Tracy 168 painted an orange room (above), now called the Numbers Room. The clinic, which cost \$2 million, will have 12 staff doctors and will turn away no patients. It is at 515 West 207th Street (Post Avenue); (212) 544-7777. Hours: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day until Nov. 1, when it will begin staying open until midnight for emergencies.