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Nuit Blanche gay guide

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Navigating Toronto's dusk-till-dawn art event

Like nearly everywhere else it's presented, Toronto's version of Nuit Blanche walks a fine line between world-class art event and debauchorous street party. Circulating through crowds, one has to navigate clouds of pot smoke, puddles of vomit and the occasional fist fight. While it's probably inevitable any dusk-till-dawn event would attract its share of rabble-rousers, good and bad, last year's soirée saw a substantial uptick in drunken vandalism, as well as two reported stabbings (one fatal).

Regardless of individual behaviour, there's always something magical about a million-plus people hitting the downtown core under the auspices of revelling in contemporary art (even if it's just an excuse to take drugs and party). This year's event features more than 120 official projects, as well as a handful of "renegade" works (semi-secret works, happening through the evening, but not included in the official program). It's impossible to catch everything, so we've assembled a list of top picks here.

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I'll admit that when I first heard about the *Disco Cat Attack*, I was hoping it was literally a party featuring thousands of bedazzled felines. But Renegade Parade's annual contribution sounds nearly as fun, if less allergy-inducing. Now in its seventh year, the over-the-top, sequin-drenched mobile art party is set to roam the streets bringing unexpected merriment to anyone they encounter. Featuring DJs Jelo, Flyboy and Xphox among others, the event promises guests glitter, whiskers and a possible tongue-bathing.

[Sex Worker, Truth & Archetype](#) — Beaver Hall Gallery, 29 McCaul St

In the years when Nuit Blanche has turned Church Street into a rather tepid version of a "Red Light District," my big question was always where all the working girls went for the night. Though it doesn't tackle the ups and downs of pulling tricks during massive all-night art events, Barbara Greczny and Esther Buckareff's documentary media installation does examine the reality of sex workers' lives through a series of intimate video portraits. Aimed at challenging society's perceptions of those plying the world's oldest profession, the show unapologetically presents the women in their own words. No idea whether their choice of Beaver Hall as a venue was intentional or just a happy coincidence.

All Together Now — Hart House, 7 Hart House Circle, U of T campus

Multitalented, multidisciplinary artist Brendan Fernandes was part of the team behind last year's sleeper hit *Night Shift*. Created with Dancemakers, the piece saw performers meticulously cut hundreds of sheets of gold foil into confetti, which was ultimately tossed into the air at the performance's climax, creating a momentary explosion of light based on nearly a hundred hours of combined labour. This year, he's shifted his focus from movement to song. Along with Sara Angelucci, Johanna Billing and others, he's part of a team presenting an expansive collection of video, sound and performance works, all created in collaboration with vocal choirs.

Telos — Fort York, Garrison Common, 100 Garrison Rd (west end of Garrison Common, close to Strachan Avenue)

Twenty-five-hundred years before it became a Facebook-induced contemporary state of being, Cynicism was a Greek philosophical movement. Quite in opposition to chronic FOMO (fear of missing out), the old-school version was dedicated to living a simple life without material possessions and in harmony with nature. Portuguese artist Vasco Araújo's video installation is based on the life of Diogenes of Sinope, one of the school's early proponents. While the original character had a rather meagre life, living in a barrel and spending his days wandering the streets "trying to find an honest man," Araújo's quirky, genderbending take on the renowned thinker is more likely to energize than depress.

Cinema as Site — Magic Lantern Theatres Carlton Cinema, 20 Carlton St

While I haven't been able to discern much about the films that will

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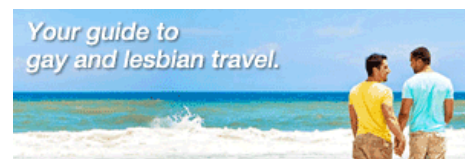
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be screening, if the past works of filmmaker [Aleks Vujosevic are any indication](#), *Cinema as Site* is sure to have some “mature content,” as my mother would say. Also featuring works by Adrienne Crossman (who contributed to the recent *Simpsons*-themed show at Videofag), Cecilia Escobar and Jackson Klie, the event promises to explore and interpret the place we know as the cinema. Presumably popcorn will be served, but there’s no word on whether back-row handjobs will be encouraged.

Global Rainbow — Best viewing location Dundas and Spadina


Yvette Mattern’s laser installation is less of a can’t-miss than an impossible-to-miss. Originating from atop the CN Tower, her seven-colour stream of light will be visible from nearly every point in the city. After premiering in New York for MLK Day 2009, the project has since toured to Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and England. Though most often associated with the cause of LGBT equality, Mattern doesn’t saddle her gigantic rainbow with any political message. Instead, it’s simply a minimalist visual translation of the ideas of hope and peace.


[Screaming Booth](#) — 280 Spadina Ave, 290 Queen St W and 180 Spadina Ave


Whether you’re overwhelmed by the crowds, pissed off at your friends or just need a moment to regroup from your mushroom trip, Montreal-based artist Chélanie Beaudin-Quintin wants to grant the respite you desperately need. Her series of yellow soundproof boxes provides a space to let off steam. And presumably it works both ways. If things get too raucous, you can also pop in for a moment of silence. Fingers crossed that usage will be limited to those not wanting to exchange body fluids.

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