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monday, october 1, 2012

This one's for the archive: Nuit Blanche guide in the Toronto Star

It's a rule of publishing that you have to publish event guides in *advance* of that event. So me posting my Nuit Blanche picks at this time is a gesture quite simply for the archive. I did get out on the night of, briefly, and once again experienced Janet Cardiff's 40 Part Motet (which restored or redoubled my faith or hope in so many different things... what a wonderful experience).

I also went to Hart House and had a drink at Dean Baldwin's Piano Bar and twanged on the piano strings Gordon Monahan attached to the building; I found the Hart House scene a little quieter than in past years, but still fun.

Then I went downtown and saw a fight break out; less fun, more alarming, and definitely more disheartening.

Saw Trisha Brown's Planes, which I wish had been in a less dark, dank, setting, and I also saw Alison Norlen's Beacon; I *love* Norlen's large scale drawings, but in this case I felt the work had a hard time competing with the Brookfield atrium's architecture. Live and learn, I guess, which is always the case with these one-off installational events.

I'll note a more condensed version of this guide text below appeared in the Star on Saturday morning. I hope it was of use to some, though I felt no small degree of anxiety at potentially misdirecting folks. One never knows what will actually be most memorable (in a good or bad way) on Nuit Blanche. (I also wish I knew some better phrase than "culture vulture"; I've tried "culturati" in the past, but, well, no one seems happy about such things.)

And I wish in this piece I had been able (i.e. skilled) to better address Douglas Coupland's installation and his thoughts about it; sometimes I really feel he's the McLuhan of our era, a mode not well captured by the resulting event-guide intro. I hope to see some of his Slogans for the

about unedit my heart

Leah Sandals

Leah Sandals



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@Carzoo hope to see 40 part motet again and also the piano at hart house among other stuff...go all music styles! 5 days ago

Else Marie Hagen opens tonight @ Gallery 44 w. talk by artist & Amish Morrell <http://t.co/Rnp42heN> I follow on the 22nd <http://t.co/5lJxg5Bz> 19 days ago

@elenacpotter yes, I wish our permanent collections on Toronto were free to view too! Envy. 35 days ago

@Carzoo @gabbymoser best to actually probably ask the folks involved, though! :) 36 days ago

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Early 21st Century before they close at Dan Faria Gallery this week. Love that series.

Anyway, here is the text that appeared in a more condensed version in the Star on Saturday.

Over the past year, Douglas Coupland has crashed a car in Etobicoke, put out a YouTube call requesting that strangers mail “titanium pins, breast implants, pacemakers, stents, metal plates, dental retainers” and similar objects to a Vancouver PO box, and entered into a professional partnership with Kensington Market butcher Sanagan’s Meat Locker.

No need to worry, though—it was all for art.

Specifically, it was all preparation for Coupland’s parental-guidance-advised Nuit Blanche installation *Museum of the Rapture*, opening at 7:03 p.m. at City Hall’s parking garage.

There’s been “a bottomless amount of details involved” in prepping for this evening, Coupland says via email. “I had never heard of custom car crashing until this.” (Coupland provided the desired crash specs, while a GTA company specializing in such matters executed the job.)

Museum isn’t meant to address religious themes, Coupland’s said, but rather highlight the question “where does your body end and the universe begin?”—a question with more relevance than ever in our era of cloud computing and crowdsourcing.

The installation will also integrate some of his *Slogans for the Early 21st Century* series—paintings bearing humorous-yet-foreboding mottos such as “Hoard anything you can’t download” and “That sickening feeling when you realize you’ve lost your cellphone will soon be permanent.” Coupland has created more than 100 of these slogan works in the lead-up to Nuit Blanche, with a selection of these also on display until October 6 at Daniel Faria Gallery.

Coupland is just one of more than 500 artists working madly today—as well as in weeks and months past—to get 158 Nuit Blanche projects set up for tonight.

“We’re recognizing that we’re not just inside our bodies any more—we’ve offshored our brains,” Coupland notes of our contemporary culture. “Nuit Blanche is about that, too—the evolving relationship between the mind and body.”

PICKS FOR THE CULTURE VULTURES

Trisha Brown Dance Company @ Dundee Place (1 Adelaide Street East) New York choreographer Brown, known for suspending dancers off of walls and buildings, came of age in the 1960s performance art vanguard of the Judson Dance Theatre. This restaging of her 1968 piece *Planes* is a rare opportunity to view an important—and stunning—early work.

Daniel Barrow at the Drake Hotel (1150 Queen Street West)

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The 2010 Sobey Art Award winner known for unforgettable overhead-projection tales goes large-scale here, with a performance held in the Drake's windows every hour on the hour from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. and an epic piece projected on the front of the building all night.

Slavoj Zizek at City Hall (100 Queen Street West) A maverick name in cultural theory—Zizek is a visiting professor at Columbia and Princeton—forms an unexpected addition to our big art party, discussing capital and the end of the world from 11 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Jon Sasaki at Queen Street West & Brock Avenue The dryly witty Sasaki both deflates and inflates Nuit Blanche hype with this reality-show-style competition: who can stay awake in the cold all night, touching a cube van? The winner will get Sasaki's \$500 artist fee, stored in cash in the same vehicle.

Christian Marclay at the Power Plant (231 Queens Quay West) Yes, worldwide hit *The Clock* is here for a few months yet, but there's only a few chances left to squeeze in the work's wee morning hours and prove your art-loving bona fides. If you couldn't manage it in Venice, why not try it here?

Also on the radar: Oliver Husain's *Moth Maze* at City Hall's parking garage (100 Queen Street West); Kelly Mark's feature film debut, *Scenes from a Film I'll Never Make, with Alternate Scores*, at the Eaton Centre (220 Yonge Street); Berlin-based Canadians Hadley & Maxwell's perpetual load-in for "Nirvana's last concert" at the Elgin (160 Victoria Street); and Ceal Floyer's punny inversions at Richmond Adelaide Centre (130 Adelaide Street West).

PICKS FOR ART NEWBIES

Janet Cardiff at Trinity St. Paul's (427 Bloor Street West)

Cardiff's audio installation *The 40-Part Motet* is one of the most universally loved contemporary artworks of the past decade, with good reason. Viewers worldwide have been moved by its sensitive reproduction of a 16th-century choral piece.

Shelley Miller at Metro Hall (55 John Street, viewable from King east of John) Graffiti and street-art fans will get an interesting segueway to contemporary-art appropriation practices in the work of Miller, a Montreal artist who tags walls and creates throw-ups with... cake icing. Sweet.

Geoffrey Pugen @ City Hall (100 Queen Street West) Pugen's point-for-point re-enactment of Bjorn Borg and John McEnroe's 1980 Wimbledon tiebreaker, co-created with Tibi Tibi Neuspiel, was a hit of last year's Nuit Blanche. Will Pugen pull off the same crowd-pleasing charm in *416-788-9663*, his re-creation of a 1990s rave? Don some day-glo bell bottoms and find out.

Yves Caizergues at Sun Life Financial Tower (150 King Street West) Old-school video game fans (or anyone who grew up in the 80s) will enjoy a shot of nostalgia with this light installation by France's Caizergues. Titled *Green Invaders*, it displays gleeful, prancing space invaders prancing.

Built for Art at 401 Richmond (401 Richmond Street West)

All-in-one-building events can provide a great introduction to Nuit Blanche, sans too much walking. Artist-led karaoke, screenings French-pop Scopitone videos of the 1960s, and galleries open to 2 a.m. are among the attractions.

Also keep your eyes peeled for: Hanson & Sonnenberg's sculptures of "drunk" light standards, which will amuse nightlife denizens (or those sick of them) behind Toronto City Hall or at Temperance and Yonge;

Pablo Picasso Club
 Petty Heaving
 Plan for a Miracle
 Planet S
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 Sally & LM
 Shotgun Review - Cdn West
 Simpleposie
 Spacing Toronto
 Tangerines in a Red Net Bag - Anthony Easton
 The A Word
 The Art Newspaper
 The Belgo Report
 The Coast - Halifax Arts
 The Georgia Straight - Vancouver Arts
 The Scope - St. John's Arts
 Theatre Is Territory
 Things of Desire
 Torontoist
 Two Coats of Paint
 Un Show de Mot'Arts
 Untitled
 Uptown Magazine - Winnipeg Arts
 Vananodyne
 Vernissage.tv
 View on Canadian Art
 Vue Weekly - Edmonton Arts
 Yonge Street

TIFF Bell Lightbox's (350 King Street West) silent films with piano accompaniment or, if you're feeling more gory, montage of 101 zombie disaster scenes; and Fly by Night at the Gladstone Hotel (1214 Queen Street West), another great under-one-roof event featuring civically minded projections by Broken City Lab and a time-capsule display.

PICKS FOR FAMILIES

Alison Norlen at Brookfield Place (181 Bay Street) Brookfield Place's beautiful Calatrava atrium has hosted some lovely Nuit works. This year, Saskatchewan's Norlen—known for large drawings of roller coasters—hopes to create a version of an old amusement-park lighthouse.

The Piano at Hart House (7 Hart House Circle) Hart House does a great Nuit Blanche in a nutshell, with bathrooms, rest areas and vending machines on site to boot. Some previous installments have featured heavier, more adult-appropriate material, but kids will likely enjoy the program this year: an exhibition focusing on pianos in art. It includes works by Gordon Monahan—an Ontario artist known for converting entire buildings into musical instruments—as well as Michael Snow and Dean Baldwin. Some of the emerging-artist installations and kinetic sculptures next door at UTAC also look fun.

Jeanne Holmes at Richmond Adelaide Centre (111 Richmond Street West) A family flash mob dance at 7 p.m. kicks off *All Together Now*, an all-night program featuring dance classes from ballet to bhangra to hip hop. BYO legwarmers.

Nuit Blanche at the Royal Conservatory of Music (273 Bloor Street West) Award-winning children's book author Cybèle Young (*Ten Birds*) will create new artworks live, and Lemon Bucket Orkestra ("Toronto's only balkan-klezmer-gypsy-party-punk-super-band") will play fun, raucous tunes, among other all-night attractions.

Rhonda Wepler & Trevor Mahovsky at Bay Adelaide Centre (333 Bay Street) Known in the art world for their craft-heavy critiques of consumerism, this Vancouver duo will add a bright, populist Nuit note to their oeuvre, creating a lantern-shaped convenience store that will give away 2,000 lanterns during the evening. Some of the other items in the "store" might be eccentric, but the lantern gesture is meant in the spirit of much-loved events like the Singapore Lantern Festival and Basel's Fasnacht.

Also keep in mind: Low-key, family-friendly community events like shadow-puppetry, music and mural-making till midnight at Regent Park's new Daniels Spectrum (585 Dundas Street East) and Google Earth projections and collaborative book writing for most of the evening at Artscape Wychwood Barns (601 Christie Street).

NUIT BLANCHE SURVIVAL TIPS

Layout: Nuit Blanche's officially curated exhibition projects are in one walkable zone this year bounded by Peter Street to the west, Gerrard Street to the north, Jarvis Street to the east and Front Street to the south. Independent projects stretch as far as Roncesvalles, St. Clair, Greenwood and Queens Quay.

Best routes: Street closures will create pedestrian thoroughfares on Yonge between Wellington and Gerrard, Bay between Wellington and Dundas, Queen between Jarvis and University, King between Jarvis and Peter, and Church between Front and Shuter. Walk these routes and you're likely to catch (or be directed to) most of the curated projects.

Transportation: The Yonge-University-Spadina subway will run all night from Keele to Woodbine, as will the Bloor-Danforth line from St. Clair West to Eglinton. Last trains depart terminals at 7 a.m. Sunday. GO Transit will have more late-night service; check gotransit.com for details. Dundas, Queen, King and (on GO) Union are the best stations to disembark for official exhibition projects.

Food: Food trucks are new this year. You'll find them in three spots: Bay Street north of King (near the TD Centre), Albert Street east of Bay (west entrance of Eaton Centre) and Church Street north of Queen (near Metropolitan United Church). Some restaurants and bars are open late; check Nuit Blanche's website for the details. It's always good to bring snacks and water from home, just in case.

Washrooms: Washrooms and rest areas can be found at each of the food truck areas listed above as well as on King Street West at John (near Metro Hall) and Gould Street east of Yonge (near Ryerson).

Information booths & first aid: Information booths will be in David Pecaut Square (King Street West between Simcoe and John), Yonge-Dundas Square and Metropolitan United Church (Queen Street East at Church). First aid stations are also nearby each of these.

Accessibility: Each Nuit Blanche venue is asked to identify whether their location is accessible. Check the Nuit guide and website for designations.

Overall: Dress for the weather, be flexible (sometimes standing in line just isn't worth it) and keep an open mind.

posted by leah sandals at 8:07 pm

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