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## Nuit Blanche: Bright Night

VARIOUS LOCATIONS, TORONTO OCT 2 TO 3 2010



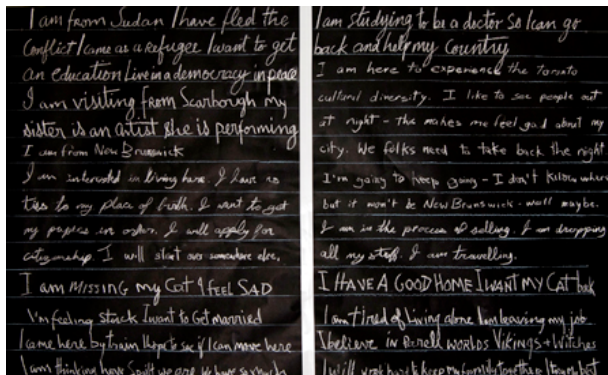
Daan Roosegaarde *Interactive landscape Dune* 2007–10 / photo Studio Roosegaarde

Daan Roosegaarde <i>Interactive landscape Dune</i> 2007–10 / photo Studio Roosegaarde

With 130 projects, 500 artists and 1 million attendees packed into just 12 hours, it's clear that Toronto's [Nuit Blanche](#) has become one of the nation's key art events—and that it's impossible to see it all.

Granted, the festival is trying to make its official exhibitions easier to navigate this year by placing them in a compact, 3-kilometre-long zone—from Bay to Yonge and from Bloor to Front—while a number of independent projects will still stretch west to Roncesvalles, east to Parliament and north to St. Clair.

Though the best of Nuit Blanche is always decided in the individual or flash-mob moment, here's a few of our try-to-sees for the all-nighter, including both official exhibitions and off-the-beaten-path projects.



Michael Fernandes *Arrivals/Departures* 2010

### OFFICIAL EXHIBITION PICKS

#### **Monument to Smile** by Agnes Winter (50 Bloor St W)

Zone A curator Gerald McMaster chose the theme of "The Good Night" for his part of Nuit Blanche's official exhibition, a positivity-boosting direction that will likely be exemplified by French artist Agnes Winter's *Monument to Smile*. Like previous versions shown at Rockefeller Centre in New York and Palais de Chaillot in Paris, *Monument to Smile* will project the faces of hundreds of grinning city residents onto a massive façade—this time, of Holt Renfrew.

#### **Iskootao** by Kent Monkman and Gisèle Gordon (Cumberland St & Bellair Ave)

This performance/installation, co-created by the always witty Kent Monkman, promises to transform Yorkville's central park (which features a chunk of granite colloquially known as "The Rock," a prime spot for

luxe lolling) into “the pulsing heart of Mother Earth” courtesy of Monkman’s “infamous alter-ego Miss Chief Eagle Testicle.” It’s an outrageous-sounding alchemy, but Monkman’s record is equal to it.

**Performance Café with Perforated Sides by Dan Graham (Toronto City Hall Green Roof)**

This spring, *Canadian Art* published a feature on Toronto artist Josh Thorpe’s international tour of Dan Graham’s pavilions. Now, for one night, one of Graham’s pavilions will come to roost in Toronto. Installed in curator Anthony Keindl’s pop-music-themed half of Zone B, the café promises to evoke “the optical effects of rock shows and the psychedelic drug experiences associated with youth and rock culture.” (That it will be situated adjacent to record producer’s Daniel Lanois’ large-scale spectacle at Nathan Phillips Square likely won’t hurt the effect.)

**Day for Night by Dave Dymont (10 Trinity Sq)**

Dave Dymont, a Toronto artist and past curator of Nuit Blanche, revisits the festival with *Day for Night*, in which a rock film will be slowed down from 90 minutes to 12 hours, “moving at approximately three frames per second.” The main attraction, though, is the aural aspect: the slowed-down film will be accompanied by a live string quartet that performs the film’s soundtrack at its revised, lethargic pace.

**Dances with Strangers by Kianga Ford and Isabelle Noel (40 Dundas St W)**

With the number of condo towers increasing in downtown Toronto, nightlife and dance clubs meet with more and more residential resistance. But *Dances with Strangers* might remind us why these sites remain so appealing to so many. In this piece, Los Angeles artist Kianga Ford and Torontonian Isabelle Noel invite viewers to dance in a temporary space, with the focus being on both fun and the flows of pop culture.

**Reunion by various artists (43 Gerrard St E)**

For her half of Zone B, curator Sarah Robayo Sheridan has created the exhibition “The night of future past,” which includes works that transpose “one tense for another” and integrate past, future and present at once. The centrepiece of her show is bound to be *Reunion* at the Ryerson Theatre, in which a group of performers create a piece inspired by a previous contemporary-art milestone for the site—an evening of collaborative performance that included John Cage, Marcel Duchamp and others on March 5, 1968. That performance was one of Duchamp’s last public appearances, and it will be interesting to see how his eccentric legacy is extended here.

**Nuit Market Starring the Toronto Weston Flea Market by Mammalian Diving Reflex (Victoria St & Dundas St E)**

Toronto’s Mammalian Diving Reflex is known for mashups of theatre and performance art that integrate nontraditional arts participants in unusual and unexpected ways. In this work, the company collaborates with a suburban flea market, bringing some of its vendors downtown for all-night “bargain splendors” and “cheap and tasty eats in a convivial pedestrian atmosphere,” using the global night-market phenomenon to cross local social-boundary lines.

**Arrivals/Departures by Michael Fernandes (40 King St W)**

Nova Scotia’s Michael Fernandes is well-known for works that humorously probe everyday social and commercial relations. Here, he brings his characteristic absurdist flair to Nuit Blanche by asking passersby “What are you up to? Who are you? What do you miss?” and a litany of other questions. Responses will be transcribed onto large blackboards with the aim of soliciting and registering “a broad sense of ‘travel’”. Located in Zone C’s “Should I Stay or Should I Go” exhibition, curated by Christof Migone, the work will be a good introduction to Migone’s interest in dealing with “transience and traces of the psychic, physiologic and geographic.”

**Endgame (Coulrophobia) by Max Streicher (67 Yonge St)**

Max Streicher’s large, inflatable sculptures are often well suited to soaring public spaces like Toronto’s Union Station, where they were shown during *Luminato* in 2007. Now, Streicher takes his practice to the

next level by using buildings themselves as part of the work—*Endgame (Coulrophobia)* will stick two giant inflatable clown heads into an alleyway, with the sides of two historic buildings holding them in place.

**Wait Until You See This** by Lili Huston-Herterich and Brad Tinmouth (1 Adelaide St E)

Many people have complained about Nuit Blanche's never-ending lineups, which have become common in recent years. While the festival recommends avoiding peak hours (8pm to 1am) to forgo same, Chicago artist Lili Huston-Herterich and Toronto's Brad Tinmouth have decided to address the phenomenon directly with a work that asks, "What happens when the line itself is the end we are waiting for? What happens when the line is all there is?" By framing the limitations of Nuit Blanche itself, Huston-Herterich and Tinmouth may help us locate an expanded field of view.

**Erik Satie's Vexations** by Martin Arnold and Micah Lexier (181 Bay St)

In this performance-based piece, two pianists attempt to follow composer Erik Satie's cryptic instruction for his 1893 work *Vexations*: "to replay 840 times this motif, it is advisable to prepare oneself in the most absolute silence, by some serious immobilities." Each pianist will play the work 420 times during the evening, with each copy of the score being transformed into a folded piece of paper after each performance. This promises to invert Satie's theme of inward-turned anxiety into a grand public work.



Lili Huston-Herterich and Brad Tinmouth *Wait Until You See This* 2010 / photo Bort Onyx

**OFF-THE-BEATEN-PATH OPTIONS**

**Ennui Blanc** by An Te Liu (322 Queen W)

Though not an official part of Nuit Blanche, the Queen Street West BIA's parallel exhibition "Out of Site," curated by Earl Miller, includes many compelling works. One of these is An Te Liu's *Ennui Blanc*, a double-entendre neon sign that encapsulates some of the pressure and expectations many artists and audiences experience around the event.

**All Night I Mourned Myself** by John Shipman, Pamela Williams and Zhang Xing (729 St Clair Ave W)

This independent project will provide a very unusual experience for participants, as it urges them to "engage with life at your own funeral!" Visitors to this piece (located in an 1878 church) will be able to lie down in a coffin, pick up a phone receiver and hear "what the mourners are saying about their lost partner, family member, friend." Viewers can also choose their own monument and listen to music inspired by Chinese and Western traditions of loss.

**One at a Time** by various artists (7 Hart House Circ)

Nuit Blanche at the University of Toronto revisits a few classic works, like Gerald Ferguson's *One Million Pennies*, Marina Abramovic and Ulay's *Imponderabilia* (which will be reenacted), General Idea's *Orgasm Energy Chart*, NSCAD's Projects Class and more. Though it's an independent outing, this site could provide a good "capsule Nuit Blanche" experience

if you wish to avoid big crowds at the official exhibitions.

**The River Peace by Thom Sokoloski, Jenny Anne McCowan and John McDowell (55 Mill St)**

At Toronto's first Nuit Blanche, Thom Sokoloski had a hit with *Encampment*, his installation of lit-up tents in Trinity Bellwoods Park. This year, Sokoloski (who was also a Nuit Blanche curator in 2009) revisits the theme of large-scale spectacle with *The River Peace*, a collaborative participatory performance inspired by Mahatma Gandhi that plans to integrate a 2,000-foot-long light sculpture, real-time media projections and hundreds of people.

**For Font's Sake by Patrick Mimran (Various Queen West storefronts)**

In this independent project, Headbones Gallery brings some of Patrick Mimran's famed pithy asides, which have appeared on billboards in New York, Venice and other hot art sites, to the streets of Toronto. One example: "Collectors want to be dealers, dealers hope to be stars, and curators dream to be artists." Food for thought both for Nuit Blanche and its inevitable morning after.

- [www.scotiabanknuitblanche.ca](http://www.scotiabanknuitblanche.ca)

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##### Nuit Blanche: Best Bets for Montreal's All-Night Art Party

Montreal's Nuit Blanche is Canada's oldest all-night art party, and is celebrating its seventh year this Saturday with installations, exhibitions and performances throughout the city. Here, Canadian Art offers a guide to the most promising offerings in each of the festival's four top districts.

##### Reader Favourites: The Top 5 Art Events of the Year

Last week, we released editor Richard Rhodes' picks for the top 10 exhibitions of the year. This week, we're focusing on top 5 art events of 2009—as determined by you, the Canadian Art reader, and our online story statistics.