

A city stumbling on innovation

Toronto's fifth annual public art exhibition serves up another helping of met unexpectations

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Last Saturday's twilight took Torontonians to the street, stumbling, often literally, on unexpected works of art. For the fifth time, the all-night exhibition aimed to bring art to the Toronto public. Did the annual event succeed in its aim? Or did the unofficial, un-incorporated projects more accurately capture the spirit of the sleepless night?

Raking in more than \$38 million for the city over its five-year lifespan, the Scotiabank-sponsored event is not without its financial pros. But at what cost? The long lineups at Yonge and Dundas are enough to drive anyone west.

Then again, an unbearably long line is an indication of something worth waiting for, right? In Huston-Herterich and Tinmouth's "Wait Until You See This," you don't have to wait to enjoy the exhibit - you're in it. The project consisted of people lining up in front of a curtain-clad door, flanked by bouncers, only to be escorted out the other side. The exhibit forced viewers to imagine the possibilities that lay behind the door - though most were too distracted by the giant, inflated clown heads crammed between two Yonge Street office buildings.

Unfortunately, with thousands of people flooding the streets - including over 100,000 tourists - an all-night TTC pass translates to ten bucks better

spent on something to warm the frozen limbs - like a pint or two. In the same camp of many Toronto taxpayers, Alexandra McLaren of the Woodsworth Art Society felt, "Art became an arbitrary necessity to facilitate the night itself."

For the lucky that manage to squeeze onto a westbound streetcar, the night became a bit brighter as the number of people and the quality of art assumed an inverse relationship. At Bloor and Lansdown, the Holy Oak Café was a work of art in itself. The independently produced installation transformed the café into a storybook cottage scene. Says organizer Sarah D'Angelo, "I wanted people to feel as though they were experiencing what it's like to be

interacting with art rather than merely observing it."

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-Sarah D'Angelo

Are these "off-the-grid" exhibitions accessible to the averagely art-informed citizen? McLaren answers, "Art, and its 'meaning,' isn't always acces-

sible, even to the most pretentious esoteric art snobs." Still, how can art be brought to the people if the people don't know where it is? Says D'Angelo, "like anything good you'll have to do some digging to know it's there."

Though reluctant to use the term, D'Angelo sees Nuit Blanche as bringing art to the "905ers" because the rest of Toronto hardly needs it served to them. "Toronto is full of wonderful, thoughtful creations waiting to be digested. I just don't think Nuit Blanche can facilitate reaching that goal." We're kidding ourselves if we think we can consume culture in a span of twelve, often inebriated, hours.

"the campus comment"

the newspaper asks students about their Nuit Blanche.

Here's what they had to say:



Emma Lloyd, PhD, Astronomy and Astrophysics
I worked until 3am, then ran into some random drunk people on the way home. But last year, we had an exhibit at Nuit Blanche! And it was fantastic - a bit ass telescope!



Daniel Shea, 1st year, Chem Eng
I really liked the exhibit they had at city hall. They were projected a video on all sorts of different surfaces. It was interesting.



Nick (last name withheld), 3rd year, Humanities
We started at St. Vlad's, enjoyed the music, went to an afterhours club, and wound up going home at 8 in the morning.



Matt Burley & Osman Yusuf

Omar: Harrowing.

Matt: Stan came to town with his girlfriend. We went to Einstein's had some beer, then we got high in a stairwell... We wandered around the city in the south. There was a big purple light and cause we were high, we were drawn to it—Omar (interrupting): Please don't print any of this.



Ricky Rodrigues, 1st year, Social Sciences

I went to the gallery beside my house. It's Sunny Choy's gallery on Queen West. That was awesome. He had some paintings on icons of female beauty. Some traditional, some contemporary. He uses little brush strokes to create the illusion of very fine details.



Zainab Parekh, 4th year Economy and Poli Sci

I went around campus, Yorkville, then down to Queen. It was kind of eccentric. You don't always understand what they're trying to portray. At Hart House there were these two nude ladies in the doorway staring at each other. I thought it was cool, though.