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## Nuit Blanche: The rules of the night

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### 1. Kids, Real and Overgrown

Saturday night's fifth annual art marathon Nuit Blanche, for the most part, isn't a family affair, given its late hours and predictable late-night debauchery. Still, early on, the little ones will enjoy such colourful spectacles as Agnes Winter's *Monument to Smile*, projected on the Holt Renfrew façade on Bloor, or Kim Adam's playfully punctured cargo van (called *Auto Lamp*) at Yonge and Queen. But the best bet for families will be the Distillery District, with loads of playfully interactive fun for all.

For the wee-hour crowd, Nuit Blanche provides both cultural enrichment and the ability to get sloshed until very late. Both the Drake and Gladstone Hotels will be serving until 4 a.m., and will surely be the centrepoint of the hyper-social west end of Zone C. But that's not the only place to get the party on: Daniel Lanois and Lee Ranaldo at new and old City Hall (respectively) bring the rock, and a bonfire in Yonge-Dundas Square will make the space the centre of a throng even more massive than in past years.

### 2. Capital 'A' Art

One of the resident jokes about Nuit Blanche is that it's the night when the city's art community locks its doors and settles in for a *CSI* marathon. In other words, the event's sometimes loose definition of art can be a little off-putting for those devoted to the form (as can its hordes of drunken lunatics, but that's not confined to the art crowd).

In any case, Nuit Blanche thrives on spectacle, but it's hardly credibility-free. Dan Graham, one of conceptualism's forefathers, contributes one of his (ahem) conceptual pavilions that reflects (literally) his interest in surveillance and subterfuge on City Hall's green roof. Speaking of credibility, you likely heard about the two naked sentries guarding the entrance to the Museum of Modern Art's recent survey of performance artist Marina Abramovich. It was, of course, an Abramovich piece, *Imponderabilia*, re-staged tonight at the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery at Hart House and the U of T Art Centre. It's joined here by the installation of *Orgasm Energy Chart* by (ahem) seminal Canadian art collective General Idea, and a huge pile of pennies by Gerald Ferguson.

And of course, if you want to talk it out, you can always sit in for a 15-minute bout of Speed Art Criticism out in Parkdale, where a group of art critics — the *Star's* Murray Whyte among them — sit at the ready, whenever you are.

### 3. Be part of the art

Bored of look, don't touch? Each year, a handful of projects live and die with audience participation. This time, Julia Loktev's *I Cried For You* filmed dozens of willing participants to cry on cue for the camera; Thom Sokoloski, Jenny Anne McCowan and John McDowell stage the *River Peace* in the Distillery District, a 12-hour performance needing your help — lots of it — to carry a 600-metre-long light sculpture. Michael Fernandes' *Arrivals/Departures* recruits guinea pigs to scribble answers to probing personal questions on a blackboard, in front of everyone. ("Nothing will be censored," they say. You are warned.)

Isabelle Noel and Kianga Ford's *Dances with Strangers* imposes all the awkwardness of a junior-high dance on the Atrium on Bay. Daan Roosegaarde's *Dune* transforms the lower Bay Station — that's right, underground — into an interactive lightscape that responds to your movement and touch. Meanwhile, Sandra Rechico's *1850*, while not specifically participant-driven, would be nothing without you; a chilly wash of dark blue light penetrates the darkness along Front St., marking the shore of Lake Ontario 160 years ago, before industrial reclamation pushed it down to Queens Quay. Passing through it toward lakeside, you'll be tempted to dip a toe on the other side to make certain it's still dry land.