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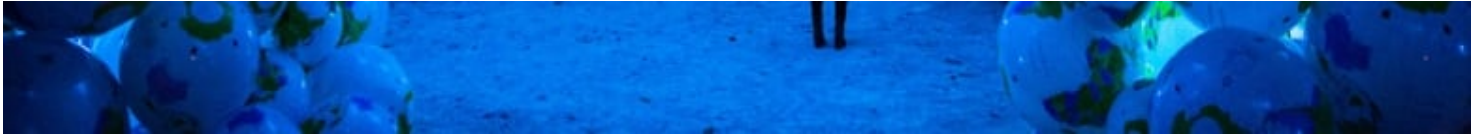
Arts · NUITS BLANCHES

After-dark art festivals popped up all over Canada this weekend, and here's what you missed

Whether you call it 'Nuit Blanche' or something different, see highlights from Toronto to Gimli

Hanan Hazime · CBC Arts · Posted: Oct 01, 2018 6:55 PM ET | Last Updated: October 1, 2018

"Walk Among Worlds" by Maximo Gonzalez appeared at Scarborough Town Centre for Nuit Blanche Toronto 2018. (Courtesy of Nuit Blanche Toronto)

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Over the weekend, more than a million Canadian art enthusiasts ventured into the night. Whether your city calls it "Nuit Blanche" or something different, after-dark festivals were everywhere. Toronto, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Regina all held their own. Same goes for Kelowna, B.C., and Gimli, Man., and Sydney, N.S.

For some cities, like Toronto and Edmonton, the festivities lasted from sunset to sunrise. As for others, the festival ended around midnight. From interactive art installations to a dance party with ravens, Canadian "Nuit Blanches" showcased a variety of contemporary and innovative art projects. We gathered photos and fun facts — plus statements from some of this year's contributing artists — to give you an overview.

Toronto

Number of projects: 78

Estimated attendance: 1 million+

Toronto's 13th annual Nuit Blanche featured the work of more than 300 local and international artists. For the first time, 28 of this year's art projects were on display in Scarborough.

What the night was like for singer Aqua Nibii Waawaaskone, who performed at Scarborough Civic Centre: "This experience was one of my favourite performances thus far in my life. It felt so nice to be surrounded by such a warm, welcoming and engaged audience. Everyone had such good energy. I didn't feel separate from them on a stage; instead I felt they were there with me. It was beautiful."

Ekow Nimako's "Cavalier Noir" was part of the STYLL exhibition at Nuit Blanche Toronto. (Courtesy of Nuit Blanche Toronto)

"Everything I Wanted to Tell You" by Hiba Abdullah at Nuit Blanche Toronto. (Courtesy of Nuit Blanche Toronto)
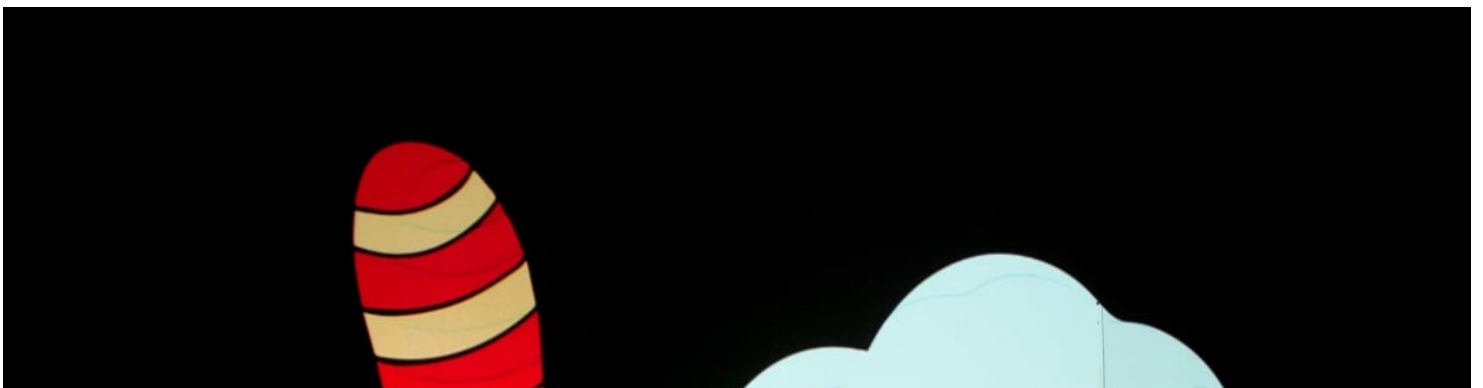
Saskatoon

Number of projects: 22

Estimated attendance: 10,000

The fifth annual Nuit Blanche Saskatoon hosted nearly 50 artists and stretched across multiple neighbourhoods in the city. For the first time, the Heritage Wellness Society, a group of mostly Asian seniors, took part in the festival by teaching Tai Chi to festival goers and inviting them to join in the performance.

What the night was like for first-time featured artist Chris Morin: "It was an honour to participate. And also terrifying. Yet as the evening went on, everything I dreamed of going wrong with my projection project somehow did not come and unravel. Instead, it was a night filled with kind words and endless laughter as strangers danced with giant farting hotdogs or squelched in mock terror as they stood before a perturbed goat GIF."

"Never Gonna GIF You Up" by Chris Morin. (Photo: Kelsey Fagnou/Courtesy of Nuit Blanche Saskatoon)

Tai-Chi at Nuit Blanche Saskatoon, as led by the masters at the city's Heritage Wellness Society. (Kelsey

Fagnou/Courtesy of Nuit Blanche Saskatoon)

Gimli, Man.

Number of projects: 6

Estimated attendance: 500

For its fifth edition, attendees were offered a unique guided tour of all the art projects happening in Gimli's town centre, from shadow art to music workshops.

Gayle Hallewell is one of the artists involved in Nuit Blanche Gimli event "Follow the Light—to the Beat of Your Heart." Here's what the night was like for her: "Wow, what a great time we had! The drumming beats were so moving and inspiring — a highlight was the 'Stronger Woman's Chant' done by Rose Flaig, accompanied by congos, bodhrans, tubano, rainstick, bells, tambourine, steel and skin drums and more. People moved to the beats and created shadow art on the walls. It was ephemeral and people got actively involved with shapes, bodies and (I believe) souls!"

"Follow the Light—to the Beat of Your Heart," one of the events at Nuit Blanche Gimli. (Courtesy of Nuit Blanche Gimli)
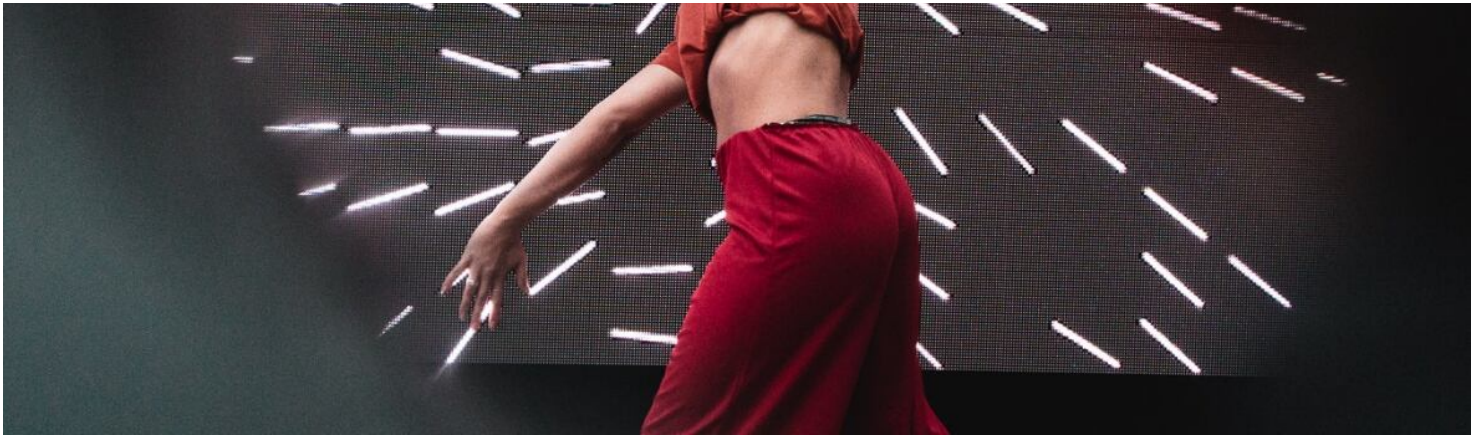
Winnipeg

Number of projects: 115

Estimated attendance: 25,000

Following the theme of "Art's One Night Stand," the ninth annual Nuit Blanche Winnipeg encouraged everyone to rediscover the city through accessible public art — installations, events, workshops and hands-on activities.

"Control No Control," an interactive LED sculpture by Daniel Iregui appeared at Bijou Park as part of Nuit Blanche Winnipeg. (Courtesy of Nuit Blanche Winnipeg)

"Run for Your Lite," a massive hamster wheel that powers a forge, was a project by a couple of Winnipeg design shops, Cloverdale Forge and Wood Anchor. (Courtesy of Nuit Blanche Winnipeg)

Kate Tupper's "Heavenly Bodies; Illuminated Rocket" appears at Nuit Blanche Winnipeg. (Courtesy of Nuit Blanche Winnipeg)

Sydney, N.S.

Number of projects: 37

Estimated attendance: 15,000

Lumière is a free three-day contemporary arts festival that has been held annually in Sydney since 2014, but on Saturday, Sept. 29, they threw an "art at night" event which featured a special performance from 2018 Polaris Music Prize winner Jeremy Dutcher.

Faryal Shehzad's project One by One by One appeared at the festival. Here's what the night was like for her: "Lumière CB is interesting in that a large amount of artists, myself included, reference the place where it takes place: Cape Breton. Artists are often local, which gives smaller artists more opportunity for showcasing work than larger Nuit Blanches, and I loved that. There is something very genuine, humbling, and PERSONAL about seeing smaller scale works versus the distance you feel looking at larger-than-life works seen in festivals featuring mostly high-profile artists.

Festival goers look at Negative Impressions by Joe Costello, on at Archive Cape Breton as part of Lumiere. (Photo: Corey Katz/Courtesy of Lumiere)

Jeremy Dutcher performs at Lumiere in Sydney, N.S. (Photo: Corey Katz/Courtesy of Lumiere)

Regina

Number of projects: 22

Estimated attendance: 800

The first edition of Nuit Blanche Regina was spread across four different sites, each one presenting attendees with a wide variety of artistic projects including a virtual reality installation, a performance with an interactive tipi and a raven dance party.

What the night was like for Becky Thera, whose video installation "At Dawn I Win" appeared in Victoria Park: "As it was the first year for Nuit Blanche Regina, and my first experience with this festival as an artist, I was overwhelmed with the engagement and enthusiasm from the audience. The attendance was above and beyond what I expected! I really enjoyed the experience of installing the work outside of a traditional gallery, both because of atmospheric impact of viewing the work, but also because it made the work accessible to a broader audience. Considering that my work discusses systemic sexualized violence, the visibility and conversation this festival allowed was invaluable."
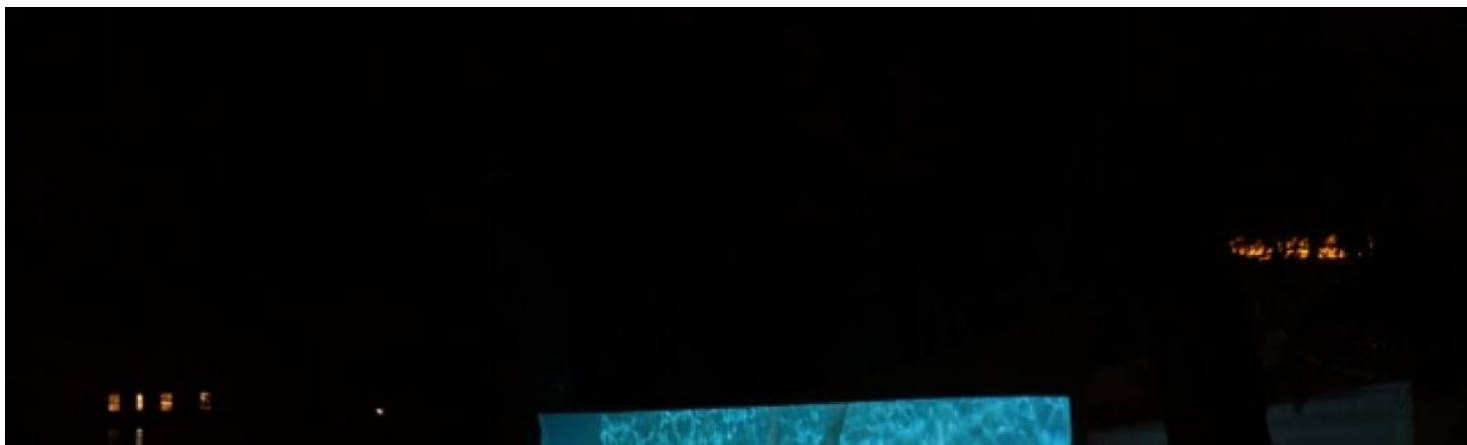
Becky Thera's video installation "At Dawn I Will Win" appears at Nuit Blanche Regina. (Courtesy of Nuit Blanche Regina)

Kelowna, B.C.

Number of projects: 13

Estimated attendance: 3,200

Spread across 10 locations, this was the first time Nuit Blanche Kelowna featured interactive art installations instead of light projections.

What the night was like for singer-songwriter Isaac Balson, who performed at the city's Heritage Museum: "The 'A Night at the Museum' event this year was beautiful. So great to see people from all over come take part of a community event."

Scene from a collective painting workshop, Colour Coded, at Nuit Blanche Kelowna. (Photo: Claudie

Valque/Courtesy of Nuit Blanche Kelowna)
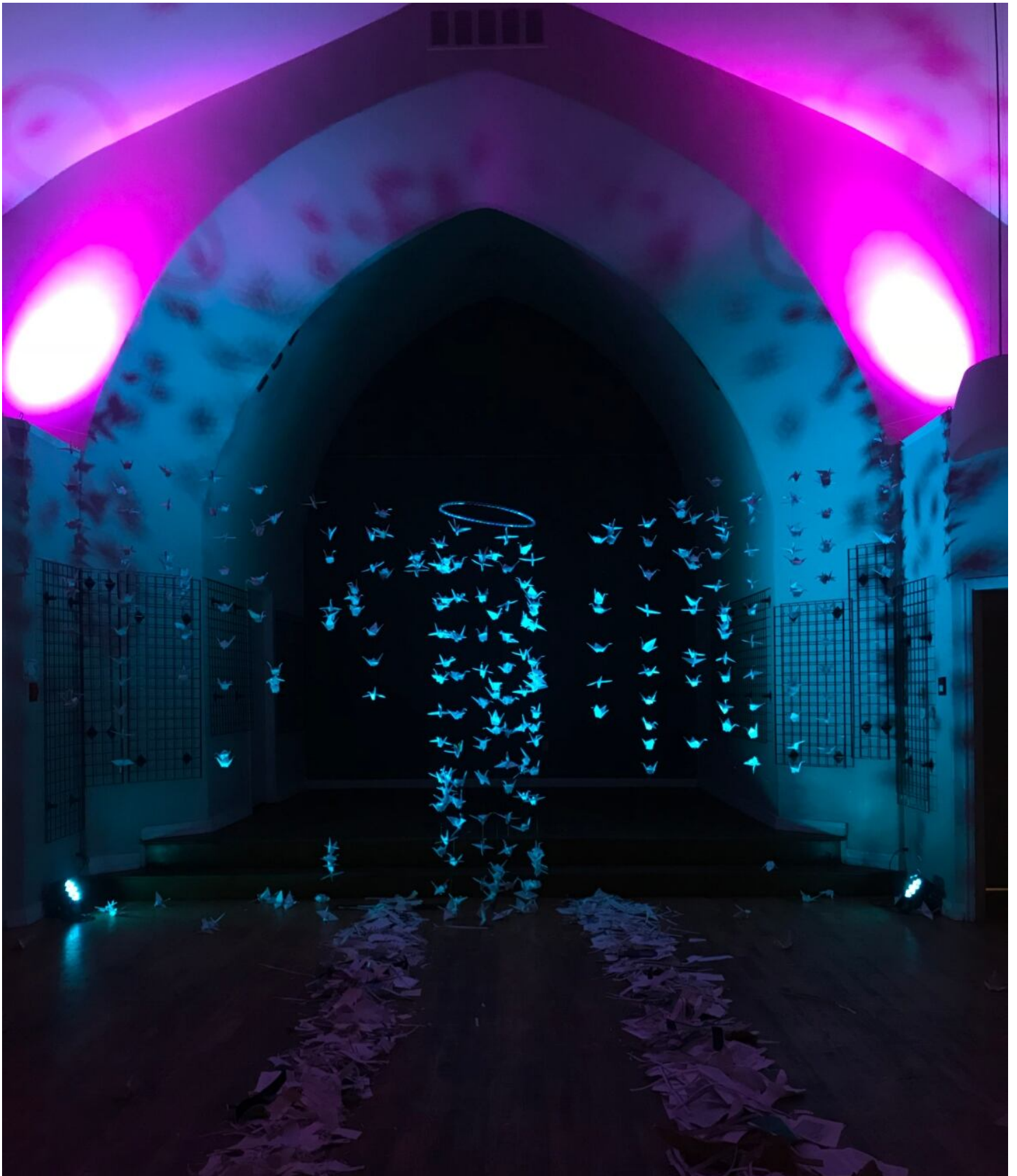
Centre Culturel Francophone de l'Okanagan hosted origami installation "Paper World" as part of Nuit Blanche Kelowna. (Photo: Claudie Valque/Courtesy of Nuit Blanche Kelowna)

Edmonton

Number of projects: 30

Estimated attendance: 46,000

After a hiatus, Edmonton's Nuit Blanche returned with a diverse range of art projects in more than 12 zones throughout the downtown.

What the night was like for Emmanuel Osahor, whose three-room installation, "[Paradise and Folly](#)," was packed with greenery and photos of the river valley: "The experience of making a project for Nuit Blanche Edmonton was an extremely valuable and exciting one. As an artist it was a unique opportunity for me to create a project of impressive scale in such a short amount of time while paying close attention to viewer interaction and trying to be very considerate about how people would experience the installation. It was also really incredible to have over 3,000 people participate and engage with my work! That's an experience that you rarely get to have so it was really terrific."