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Nuit Blanche primed to light up the night in Saskatoon

"It's great to see people out en masse ... walking in areas they maybe wouldn't normally go," Chris Morin said.

Matt Olson

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Avery Arseneau takes a photograph of attendants playing with one of many art installations during the fourth annual Nuit Blanche Festival celebrating art in Saskatoon, SK on Saturday, September 30, 2017. PHOTO BY KAYLE NEIS /Saskatoon StarPhoenix

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On the last Saturday evening in September in Saskatoon, the dark city streets will be lit up by one of the biggest outdoor celebrations of local art.

Nuit Blanche is a nighttime arts exhibition and party with emphasis on art that involves light. These “White Night” festivals started in Europe in the 1980s and ’90s before the concept was adopted by cities around the world for local arts celebrations.

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“You’ll have the opportunity to come out for everything from interactive projections underneath the Broadway Bridge ... to making your own glow-in-the-dark, hand-bound book,” Nuit Blanche Saskatoon co-organizer Michael Peterson said.

Peterson said one of the biggest draws of the evening festival is that it’s always completely open to the public, and there is no charge for taking in new artwork on the streets of the city.

This year there are 22 showcases that will be set up for Saturday. The showcases are scattered across Broadway, River Landing and the downtown core. According to Peterson, all but two of them are local exhibitors.



Grade 5 students Amalia Janzen (L), Annabel Murton and Kaitlyn Helgason helped build light-based sculptures and projections that were shown as part of last year's Nuit Blanche festival in Saskatoon. PHOTO BY MICHELLE BERG /Saskatoon StarPhoenix

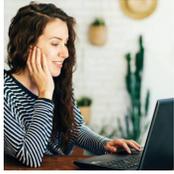
“We have one from Calgary and one from Vancouver — otherwise, everyone’s Saskatoon-based,” he said.

Nuit Blanche in Saskatoon has only been taking place as an official event for a handful of years, but it’s becoming a larger party each year.

Chris Morin, who has helped organize Nuit Blanche in the past, is taking part as an exhibitor for the first time this year.

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Morin said when he was in Montreal, Nuit Blanche was considered “the party of the year” for artists and art fans. Museums would take part and be open late into the evening with showcases, and the partying would last long into the night, he added.



Avery Arseneau takes a photograph of attendants playing with one of many art installations during the fourth annual Nuit Blanche Festival celebrating art in Saskatoon, September 30, 2017. PHOTO BY KAYLE NEIS /Saskatoon StarPhoenix

The movement is younger in Saskatoon, but Morin said there's still plenty to be excited about.

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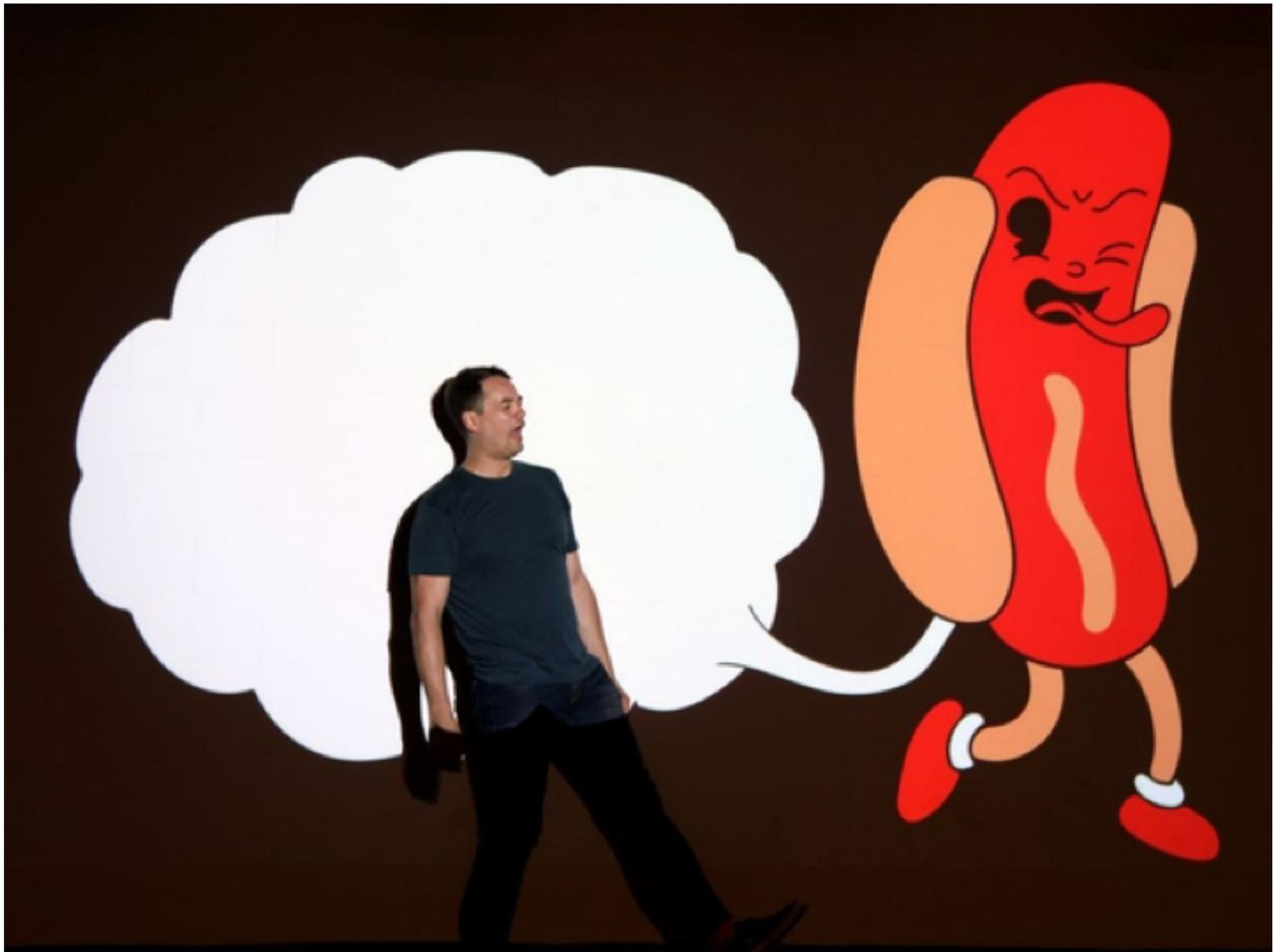
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midnight.

And there's no shortage of partying planned for Nuit Blanche in Saskatoon: Peterson said the courtyard area near the Saskatoon Farmers' Market at River Landing would play host to a DJ and be designated as a "late-night destination" for those who want to do more than take in the artwork.



Chris Morin's art showcase for this year's Nuit Blanche in Saskatoon involves interactive projections to get people involved in the show. PHOTO BY SUPPLIED / PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS MORIN /Saskatoon

The art on display features stationary installations and more esoteric work. Morin’s display involves interacting with cartoonish animated GIFs projected onto a wall, to get people more involved with the artwork they’re seeing.

Morin admitted he doesn’t know how exactly his installation will be received, but said Nuit Blanche was about getting people out to experience art — and there are a lot of different ways to engage the public.

“It gives you a chance to be kind of part of the experience,” he said.

Nuit Blanche takes place on Saturday around downtown Saskatoon and Broadway.

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