

## Kristan Horton, Crowd, 2007, Nuit Blanche Collection of online texts

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Wednesday, October 10, 2007

**Nuit Blanche as consumption, ritual, spectacle and theatre**

<http://urbansitesandsounds.blogspot.com/2007/10/nuit-blanche-as-consumption-ritual.html>

### Nuit Blanche as Spectacle

Kristan Horton's installation *Crowd* is a perfect example of a spectacle. "The spectacle," according to Guy Debord, "is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images" (Debord 83). This conceptual installation comprised of a structure of bright lights shining upwards, while a series of speakers around it amplified various noises. What one sees, as stated in the *Nuit Blanche* handbook, "is the collective exposed within a colossal and immersive light environment." As its name suggests, this particular piece manages to create a crowd of people and best illustrates the idea of the spectacle. As a piece of art, Horton's piece is not to be taken at face-value as a structure of metal, lights and speakers. Instead this piece is made a spectacle by the collected attention it draws from its viewers. It draws a crowd, as its lights cast an illuminated glow that can be seen from afar. As one approaches, interest is peaked by the various ambient noises coming from the speakers. By the time one gets close enough to see what is at the centre of this work, they are already a part of the spectacle. As this congregation of people grows, these audible and visual cues mediate the social relation achieved by the piece, thus showing the spectacle as "an instrument of unification" (Debord 83). As stated by the *Nuit Blanche Handbook*, "*Crowd* juxtaposes the stationary with the transitory". By having all

participants attract to the immobile piece, then engage in it temporarily as they discover what it is, the piece highlights the social nature of the spectacle.

### Nuit Blanche as Ritual

When we were told about Nuit Blanche during lecture the thought of adventure and fun came to mind. As it turned out Nuit Blanche was complex, yet intriguing. Firstly the art event was located outdoors. Therefore there were no restrictions on age, sex, class, race etc. The diversity of the crowd made the night enticing and memorable. However, for the same purpose Nuit Blanche functioned more as a “night out” rather than “a night to appreciate art”. According to Carol Duncan, experiencing art is like taking part in a ritual. Duncan writes, “A ritual site of any kind is a place programmed for the enactment of something. It is a place designed for some kind of performance” (Duncan 75). She specifies a ritual site would be an art museum. However, Nuit Blanche took art out of the institution and into the streets. Therefore, it created a constant battle of instincts. It was difficult to react to art outdoors because it was taken out of the confines of a museum to the chaotic streets.

“The museum’s sequenced spaces and arrangements of objects, its lighting and architectural details provide both the stage set and the script” (Duncan 75). Duncan implies that in a museum it is as though we are given an invisible guidebook on how to act. The Crowd exhibit by Kristin Horton, located in front of Queen’s Park, drew masses of people by its magnificently bright lights. Intrigued by its strength, the installation did exactly as its titled suggested. Reminiscent of a religious pilgrimage people crowded around the moderate structure.

In contrast, the 401 Richmond gallery exhibits allowed us to appreciate each art piece independently. While viewing Cecilia Barkovic’s Public Displays of Affection people were conscious to give us space by not walking between us and the art piece. Hence, an art museum or gallery exhibit disciplines individuals to treat art differently. Thus when art is removed from its ritual space it loses its power and influence.

### Works Cited

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Thursday, October 04, 2007

### Zone A: Crowd

<http://nuitblanche07.blog.com/2150251/>

This is at Queen's Park, created by Kristan Horton.

At first we were drawn toward a blinding white light and some kind of construction stuffs. Once we got near the light, we hear strange sound. Sometimes it's classical music, and sometimes it's people chatting, and it even said something about alien invasion. The sound comes from different direction, so it create quite a confusing and yet interesting experience. People are trying to understand what is going on, but they become the crowd, which the artist is trying to create. It is like the audience walked into a frame of art and becomes part of the art itself.

Szu-yu Yeh



Tuesday, October 2, 2007

### What's going on here?

<http://nuitblanchelovedme.blogspot.com/>

We find our way to the south lawn of Queen's Park where we encounter "Crowd", a conceptual installation by Kristan Horton. Large scaffolding towers above us with bright white lights flooding the area. Speakers emit sounds both familiar and strange, some audio clips are discernable as sci-fi cult classics. our 'Nuit Blanche brochure' tells us that we have entered a stage set for a 'close encounter'. We mill about through the crowd unclear as to what it is we are experiencing until I realize, this is it. The crowd. Our 'close encounter' is with each other. In the

bright lights I feel exposed. There is a distinct and eerie feeling of being watched. I glance across the scaffolding to the other side of the crowd were onlookers nervously look back. Everything is suspended for the moment in uncertainty. As with "Non-Specific Threat" I am unsure what it is that I have experienced here. We move along, still not quite sure of ourselves, but knowing that there is still so much more to see.

Ruth



Monday, October 1, 2007

### "Crowd" By Kristan Horton

<http://nuitmorgan.blogspot.com/2007/10/crowd.html>

This project was set up in the middle of the park. Scaffolding and bright lights draw people towards it. There are speakers set up with sounds of crowds, yelling people, engine noise and eerie music playing over. The piece itself, needed explanation. I didn't realize until reading the note that it was meant to be an encounter. But once I understood, the piece came together. It really felt like an encounter. The lights and crowds of people, all very confused and bewildered, staring up at this immense piece of metal. It really worked!



Sunday, September 30, 2007

## It that an Alien?

<http://thenuitblancheexperiencejerringtbur.blogspot.com/>

The next exhibition we came upon was *Crowd*, 2007 by Kristan Horton. This was supposed to evoke all the feelings and sounds of coming into contact with an alien life form. As I approached this exhibition I saw the beaming bright lights. Then as I got closer, the lights became stronger and I began to hear unknown sounds. I thought that the location of this piece was well thought out. It was away from the major areas and crowds. It made it feel like you were happening upon this spaceship in the middle of a dark forest; you could hear the sounds of a strange life form around you, a discovery that would change the world as we know it. This exhibition encouraged the viewer to engage with the space and imagine an almost out of body experience.



Nuit Blanche installation review

## "Crowd" by Kristan Horton

by Ghazaleh Etezal

<http://virtualcommunities2007.blogspot.com/2007/10/crowd-by-kristan-horton.html>

10 Oct 2007

I got off the subway at Bay and decided to begin my exploration there and meet up with my best friend. While waiting for him, I walked around the Yorkville area and saw a huge line up for something. It wasn't huge; it was gigantic and I had no idea what it was for. I was a bit disappointed to see that line; it wasn't something I had experienced last year at Nuit Blanche. I then found out that the lineup was for the Bay subway "ghost station" which was apparently really cool. I really didn't feel like lining up for anything for an hour. My friend arrived and we just started walking around. Both of us were tired that night and we had not thoroughly reviewed the handbook and didn't know exactly what the hot-spots were. We did remember that we had wanted to check out the Japan Foundation, since we're both very intrigued by Japanese culture. So, our first stop was there. Line up --again, but this one was short and it was for a gallery exhibition of a Canadian woman's paintings from her trip to Japan's rural communities of individuals with bright colours and Japanese influenced vibrancy.

I didn't find it anything spectacular...really. We were actually both expecting Japanese art since we were in fact in the "Japan Foundation". So, the first stop wasn't very exciting. We then passed by the ROM, which didn't have anything but a bunch of people standing in front of it and lights were being projected on the Crystal expansion. Nothing to see there and I was getting agitated because a: I didn't like overwhelming crowds and b: I was worried if the whole night was going to be like that and if I was actually going to enjoy an experience.

We walked down to the U of T and our first choice was to see the wolf and deer installation, but we couldn't find it and I think if there were actual wayfinding signs for the installations it would have been very convenient, but that's just my opinion.

U of T campus was...interesting? I don't know what the balloon was all about, or even the squash courts. I found them meaningless and not very engaging. I don't think public spaces were used enough at Nuit Blanche. Big fields could have been used more effectively, especially when you're dealing with a massive herd of people strolling through from site to site.

We were both getting disappointed but not to say that we weren't having a good time. I actually really enjoyed walking through the city of Toronto at nighttime. I would never go through the U of T campus or walk towards Queen's Park at that time of night without a reason and I really began to appreciate what the Toronto city landscape had to offer. The night was beautiful and the art I saw was the art of people coming together in a city at night to walk the city and engage through observation and experience. The art of people in a city environment was very beautiful for me.

We had a set goal to reach the "Crowd" installation at Queen's Park. I had marked it as a spot I really wanted to stop at when I read its description in the handbook. My friend assured me that that stop would be great and we would enjoy it and I would write about it (he senses these things quite well). We reached Queen's Park and saw a couple other installations before we hit my favourite part of the night: the "Crowd".

The night was about light. It was the technique of light, sound and space that I was looking to enjoy at Nuit Blanche and Kristan Horton did a very well job of attracting my eyes, ears, full attention and engagement with his conceptual installation. Located at the south end of Queen's Park near College Street, "Crowd" was what I would describe as an environmental sculpture designed like a stage / stadium structured with metal poles and illuminated by a number of positioned lights designed to encapsulate the essence of nature with light, camera, sound and people.

The official Nuit Blanche description of the installation was the following:

"Crowd is an encounter of the alien. What is elsewhere is experienced here. What is "heard" is an orchestration of time and space. What is "seen" is the collective exposed within a colossal and immersive light environment. Crowd juxtaposes the stationary with the transitory, effectively setting the stage for a close encounter."

We found so much meaning, so much peace and so much power in Horton's piece that compelled us beyond our control to sit down and enjoy the experience in the park. I found it so interesting that the installation piece itself – as in the built physical element – wasn't what drew people towards itself; it was the lighting, the trees, the loud speakers projecting sounds of music as if being performed on stage, and voices and sounds drawing connections to a certain experience – like a cockpit for example or happy whistling or even opera singing. It was about the atmosphere it created with the loud projection of sounds and music, amongst a stage of light that invited people to circle around and enjoy being a part of the piece, as if they were the essential elements for completion of the installation.

Horton is a widely recognized artist from Toronto who has had exhibitions around the world:

"Kristan Horton was born in Canada in 1971. He studied at Guelph University and the Ontario College of Art and Design. He has had an international exhibition career since the late 1990's including Glassbox, Paris (FR), ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland, Inter Communications Center, Tokyo."

His sculptures have been recognized for creating a fourth dimension using time and space. NOW magazine credits his work for having such quality:

"Horton scores big points for pushing sculpture brilliantly into theoretical physics."

In Contemporary magazine, Toronto writer and OCAD faculty member Ian Carr-Harris reflects on another installation of Horton's as collapsing "natural cycle and mechanized ambition in a form of reveire on distance".

Horton seems to really have a strong sensitivity on how to engage, captivate and reflect upon the connections between senses and environments using time and space as his tools for design. He sure opened my eyes and ears to new possibilities with installation art in public spaces.

#### Sources

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