

Introduction

This document provides a general overview of the event as well as a step-by-step guide for completing an application to the Independent Project program for Nuit Blanche Toronto.

Please read these guidelines carefully before starting your application. Applications that do not follow the criteria of the guidelines will not be accepted.

Applications must be [submitted online](#) by 11:59 p.m. EST on Friday, January 9, 2026

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About Nuit Blanche Toronto

Nuit Blanche Toronto is a free, 12-hour event; a celebration of contemporary art, produced by the City of Toronto in collaboration with Toronto's arts community. Its mandate is to connect contemporary art to the broadest possible audience; to inspire dialogue, transform public space and to create opportunities for the public to explore and engage with contemporary art.

With its inaugural event held in 2006, Nuit Blanche Toronto has a 20-year history of welcoming audiences to the streets of Toronto to experience an all-night, ephemeral, contemporary art event. From sunset to sunrise, city spaces and neighbourhoods are transformed into temporary exhibition areas populated by compelling new and remounted artworks. Often utilizing unusual or hidden spaces, the city proper becomes a site of contemporary art and facilitates a journey of delight, connection and discovery. The everyday is suspended as the city's landscape is transformed through a variety of artistic experiences. Cultural institutions, museums, galleries and artist-run centres participating open their doors and offer free access to their spaces.

2026 marks the 20th anniversary edition of the event. The event-wide theme, titled ***Tomorrow's Memories***, looks back to the artists, curators, communities and places that defined Nuit Blanche and hold its histories. This milestone edition offers both a reckoning and a reimagining, reflecting on not only where we've been, but on where we are now and where we might be going next. We are inviting our Open Call, Independent Project and Major Institutional partners to respond to the 2026 theme in their projects to create a connective thread of experience for audiences throughout the event.

On Saturday, October 3rd, 7 p.m. to Sunday, October 4th, 7 a.m. the city will be transformed through contemporary art. This is an exciting opportunity to celebrate and showcase Toronto's arts community and the City's commitment to contemporary art, create installations geared at engaging both the unsuspecting and devoted art lovers.

Project Categories

Nuit Blanche Toronto is made up of three categories of projects, two of which accept applications from artists: Open Call Projects and Independent Projects.

Exhibition Projects:

Exhibition Projects are proposed by panel of external visual arts community members, by invitation only, in consultation with the City of Toronto. These artworks are remounted projects selected specifically for Nuit Blanche Toronto.

Open Call Projects:

Open Call Projects are selected by a panel of external visual arts community members in consultation with City of Toronto staff from submissions through an open call application. These projects are funded and produced by the City of Toronto with a budget of up to \$20,000.00 CAD. Artist-led proposals should respond to the theme of the event and will be sited in one of the exhibition areas. This year, up to twenty projects may be selected. International and Canadian artists are invited and encouraged to apply.

Independent Projects:

Independent Projects are self-produced partners of the event, and include Toronto-based practicing artists and collectives, educational institutions, neighbourhood groups and more. Applications are assessed by a panel comprised of representatives of the local visual arts community and City of Toronto staff. Projects can be located throughout the city of Toronto and are not required to be located within an exhibition area.

Applying to Nuit Blanche Toronto

Artists may apply to both the Open Call and Independent Project streams (with the same project OR with a different project).

Separate applications must be submitted for each category. Open Call Project applications and Independent Project applications are reviewed by a different selection process, which will not be influenced by the other. However, only one project from an artist can be accepted.

If a project is chosen as an Open Call Project, it will be removed from consideration as an Independent Project.

You will be informed if your Independent Project application has been accepted or declined by **Friday, February 27, 2026**. Applicants are encouraged to consider submitting an Independent Project application at the same time they submit their Open Call Project application so they may be considered, if not selected for an Open Call Project.

2026 Theme: *Tomorrow's Memories*

Nuit Blanche Toronto reflects on two decades of art and artists transforming the city for its 20th anniversary. Through collaboration with thousands of artists locally and globally, from the new to the established, Nuit Blanche has altered Toronto's streets, cultural spaces and audiences in an all-night celebration of art.

Many temporary artworks created for Nuit Blanche no longer exist, living on only in personal and collective memory and experience. Some artists are no longer with us while others are now household names. Some venues have shuttered, while others have moved or transformed, and new spaces have emerged. Art and creativity endure in Toronto, adapting to the everchanging landscape, yet much has changed in twenty years.

Tomorrow's Memories looks back to the artists, curators, communities and places that defined Nuit Blanche and hold its histories. But this is not just about the past, it's a way to look at the present and a provocation for the future. Past Nuit Blanche artworks will be revisited, re-visioned and recontextualized for the 20th anniversary while artists can also propose new works that consider personal and collective memory and histories as a tool for storytelling, reflection and dreaming of possible futures. Proposals may also explore ideas around memory itself, nostalgia and ephemerality.

This milestone edition offers both a reckoning and a reimagining. Nuit Blanche 2026 reflects on not only where we've been, but on where we are now and where we might be going next.

Benefits of Participation

Independent Projects are integral to Nuit Blanche Toronto, contributing programming that transforms the city overnight through contemporary art. As such, all Independent Projects will receive:

Engagement with Audiences: Participation in Nuit Blanche Toronto is an opportunity to reach an exceptionally wide range of audiences. Depending on your project location, foot traffic can range from several hundred to tens of thousands of people.

Marketing: Independent Projects benefit from an umbrella marketing campaign to promote the overall event, which includes media partnerships and an integrated advertising campaign (outdoor, print, online, radio, and television). Independent Projects are included on the event's official website and printed map and receive project signage for the event.

Production Consultation: Independent Projects receive guidance on logistics, permits and processes related to executing their project for the event.

Insurance: All participating partners are covered by the City of Toronto's general liability insurance and many of the permit costs associated with producing an event on City of Toronto property are often waived.

Venue Support: Independent Projects receive assistance with locating an appropriate venue for their project (as needed). However, we strongly encourage artists to seek out venues on their own to ensure a location will be secured for Nuit Blanche.

Funding: All selected Independent Projects receive a stipend up to \$1,750.00 CAD towards materials and fees.

Applicant & Project Eligibility

Please read the following guidelines carefully to determine both applicant and project eligibility before submitting an application to this program.

Nuit Blanche Toronto invites proposals from Toronto-based artists, collectives, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, neighbourhood groups, and BIAs to partner with the event as part of the Independent Projects program.

To be considered for inclusion in the program, all proposed projects must:

Stay open all night: Projects ***MUST*** be open for the entire 12-hour period (from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.). Projects that close early do not fulfil the "all-night" mandate of the event and are not eligible.

Be free: Projects must be free of charge to the public, not age-restrictive and accessible to the majority of attendees i.e., not require use of uncommon technologies, platforms or personal data. Cover charges and entry fees to project premises are not permitted.

Be self-funded: *All funding related to the project must be secured by the applicant in advance of the event.* Successful applicants will receive a \$1,750.00 CAD stipend to offset costs related to producing their project, such as artist fees, equipment rentals, and staffing.

Take place in Toronto: All projects must be located within the city of Toronto, with the exception of projects that take place virtually or connect a geographic location in Toronto with a location elsewhere in the world. It is advisable that when seeking and selecting a venue or site for physical projects you take into account neighbourhood context, resident and business communities, traffic and navigation, and how your project will fit into, engage with, or activate your venue and its surroundings.

Be accessible: Venues and projects should be AODA compliant. Information on the AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) can be found [here](#), and further resources on accessibility in arts and culture spaces can be found [here](#). Venues limited to patrons over the age of 19 are not accessible to all audiences and will not be considered.

Independent Projects 2026 Application Guidelines

Be produced by practicing artist(s) based in Toronto: All projects must have at least one lead artist/curator who is based in Toronto, and at least one professional/practicing artist or arts organization associated with the project.

- A practicing artist is defined as someone who has developed their skills through training and/or practice; is recognized as such by artists working in the same field; actively practices their art; seeks payment for their work; is not currently enrolled in an undergraduate program; and has a history of two or more years of public presentation or exhibition of their work.
- Priority consideration will be given to artists who have presented within the public realm previously and/or those who demonstrate proven ability to plan and execute a project of this scope.
- A collective is defined as a group of two or more artists working together under a group name, either on a single project (ad hoc) or on an ongoing basis. For collectives of two artists, both must be city of Toronto residents. For collectives of more than two artists, the majority of members must be city of Toronto residents.

The following are not eligible to apply to this program:

- Undergraduate students without commensurate experience.
- Commercial businesses and for-profit organizations.

Assessment Criteria

Projects will be assessed by a panel comprised of representatives of the local visual arts community and City of Toronto staff based on the following criteria:

Relation to Contemporary Visual Art Practice: Nuit Blanche Toronto is unique because it is a large-scale, public event rooted in contemporary visual art. While artists' concepts can be executed in any discipline, proposals should have a strong visual component. For our purposes contemporary visual art practice is generally considered that of artists currently practicing in our globally influenced, culturally diverse, and technologically advancing world. No topic, medium, process, intention, or aesthetic principles are off limits.

Artistic Merit, Production Quality, and Originality: All applications must present a professional, high-quality, original proposal that reflects the scale and spirit of Nuit Blanche Toronto. Repeat projects from previous years are not eligible.

Audience Engagement: Applications should consider how audiences will experience the proposed work. How might large audiences access the work during peak times? How will you ensure consistency of audience experience across the full 12 hours of the event? If audience or visitor interaction is integral to your project, how will you facilitate this?

Feasibility: Applications should demonstrate the applicant's ability to deliver the project as outlined including the financial viability (which accommodates payment of artist fees); and a plan that addresses security and staffing/volunteer needs, production and technical requirements, and any other logistical details related to developing and presenting your project.

Project Contributors: The CV, biography and/or history of participating artists, curators and arts organizations will be considered. The history of applicants who have presented works at Nuit Blanche Toronto in previous years will be taken into consideration.

Relevance to Theme: Proposals that most effectively, critically, and creatively address the 2026 theme *Tomorrow's Memories* will be given priority.

Projects by contemporary artists, collaborations between artists and researchers or creators working in other disciplines relevant to the theme, are welcome. Of particular interest are proposals that have strong audience engagement elements or interactive components as part of the artwork.

Selection and Notification Process

All Independent Project applicants will receive an automated email confirming receipt of their application within 1 hour of submission. If you do not receive this email, your application may not have been received. Please follow up with the Independent Projects Coordinator.

Accepted projects will receive an email from the City of Toronto.

All applicants to the Independent Project program will be notified of the results by email no later than **6:00 p.m. EST on February 27, 2026**.

Certain projects may be accepted contingent on the resolution of minor feedback. In this case, the artists/producers will be notified of this conditional acceptance and will be engaged to resolve feedback before formal acceptance.

Projects that have not been accepted will be notified formally by email. Given the large number of applications received each year, staff capacity for feedback on unsuccessful applications may be limited.

******Please note that all accepted Independent Project applicants are required to participate in a mandatory orientation session which will take place virtually in early March 2026. The date will be confirmed when confirmation emails are sent out.

Considerations and Scope for Self-Produced Projects

Independent Project artists / organizations are responsible for all costs associated with their project including, but not limited to, artist and curator fees, event staff, production/technical equipment, materials for creation, and logistical concerns such as security, barricades and/or power distribution.

All projects must be created and executed in strict compliance with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and all other applicable legislation.

In the assessment of your project, the City of Toronto may identify City departments or external regulating agencies that require further approval for the safe and legal execution of your project. These departments and agencies may include, but are not limited to, Toronto Police Services, Toronto Fire Services, Public Health and/or the Electrical Safety Authority.

In all cases, it is the sole responsibility of the Independent Project producer to ensure they have the appropriate permissions and/or permits in place for the build and execution of their project. City Cultural Events staff will provide guidance through required permit processes as needed.

Additional Funding, Donations and Grants

Participants in Nuit Blanche Toronto who wish to solicit their own funding support or corporate donations must obtain approval from the City of Toronto before securing funds. The City of Toronto secures overall corporate sponsorships to fund Nuit Blanche Toronto and it is necessary for us to ensure that there are no conflicts with our sponsors. Please note, Nuit Blanche Toronto is not able to credit additional project donors or funding partners on the official event collateral.

Participating artists are encouraged to apply for grants and public funding but are advised to secure all necessary funding by **May 31, 2026**, at the very latest.

Completing Your Application

Applications must be submitted online by **11:59 p.m. EST on Friday, January 9, 2026**.

IMPORTANT:

While AI could be useful to develop your application or generate conceptual renderings, we strongly encourage that:

- Application responses are written in clear and concise plain language, as if describing your project and ideas to someone without visual arts knowledge.
- Support documentation must be reflective of your skills and practice, such as an artist-made image of your proposed project and photo(s) of previous projects. AI-written applications and images will not be considered as they do not demonstrate the ability to execute.

You can pause and return to the online application as many times as you need to either by closing the browser window or by clicking on the Pause link at the bottom of each page. Answers are saved automatically when you click the Next button, so it is best to pause immediately at the beginning of a new page. When you open the application link again, you are automatically brought back to the last page you were filling out.

We recommend that you prepare your answers in advance of starting the application process. There are strict character limits for some sections.

Please read thoroughly through the details below, and prepare any mandatory sections marked with a **red asterisk (*)** in advance of starting the online application process.

Application Form Details

APPLICATION TERMS

Review the text and check the box to confirm you understand the terms.

ELIGIBILITY

Please refer to the criteria in this document to ensure you are eligible for the program before proceeding.

PROJECT INFORMATION

All sections marked with a **red asterisk (*)** are required.

Name of Artist, Collective, or Organization:

If your artist or collective name is different from your legal name or the name to which payments and documents should be issued, please indicate both here.

***Brief Project Summary** (maximum 200 characters including spaces and punctuation – approx. 25 words)

Use this section to provide a short, functional description of your project, strictly adhering to the character counts listed above. Treat this description as an introduction for your project, focusing on the critical details.

An example of a Brief Project Summary is:

"Infinity Mirrors" is an exhibition of paintings, sculptures, and immersive installations by Yayoi Kusama, in which audiences can explore endless landscapes that subvert time and space.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Use this section to provide a detailed description of your project, focusing on four key areas:

***Concept** (approx. 300 words / max 2000 characters including spaces and punctuation)
This is the “what” of your proposal.

- what ideas are motivating this project?
- what are the aesthetic and/or conceptual details of the proposal?
- how does the project reflect the theme, ***Tomorrow's Memories?***

***Logistical / Technical** (150 words / max 1000 characters)
This is the “how” of your proposal.

- are there elements that require fabrication or building?
- do you need a venue contract, building permit, park permit?
- are there video, audio or lighting equipment exposed to the elements?

***Workplan** (approx. 150 words / max 1000 characters)
- describe what you need to adequately install and execute the project for 12 hours
- consider staffing, install and removal planning, breaks for performers if applicable

***Anticipated Audience Experience** (approx. 100 words / max 750 characters)
- if you have goals for a specific type of audience engagement, list them here
- consider how audiences will access your piece

***Marketing / Interpretation / Community Engagement** (approx. 150 words / max 1000 characters)
- describe your marketing and outreach plan (over and above the Nuit Blanche event campaign) and any partnerships that will help you draw an audience.
- describe the methods you will use to provide interpretation of the work to audiences (i.e. artist talks or tours, didactic, audio interpretation, etc.).

We strongly recommend you review the section *Assessment Criteria* on page 8 of this document before creating your description.

Writing tips:

- Be clear, articulate and concise in your descriptions
- Have a friend or colleague who is unfamiliar with the proposed project, review the description to ensure readability, clarity, and completeness.

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Please list **ALL** participating artists, collectives or organizations associated with your project. You will be asked to submit an artist or organizational biography that highlights your professional achievements and history of contemporary art practice.

***Biography or History of Collective/Organization** (approx. 250 words / max 1500 characters)

GEOGRAPHY AND LOCATION DETAILS

Applicants are responsible for securing their own venue. You will be asked to describe your confirmed or prospective venue/location in more detail in this section. Please note, all Nuit Blanche projects must be physically accessible. Please articulate how accessibility is considered in the relation to the site, venue and/or design on the project.

All projects must be located within the city of Toronto. It is advisable when seeking and selecting a venue or site for physical projects that you consider the neighbourhood context, resident and business communities, traffic and navigation and how your project will fit into, engage with, or activate your venue and its surroundings.

While it is not necessary to have a confirmed venue in order to apply, site specificity is important. You **must** receive permission from the venue before listing them on your application and include the reason for that particular location. If your project is accepted, you will be required to supply us with a copy of your venue agreement. More information on this process will be shared during artist orientation following Independent Project selection.

If you do not have a venue, we can assist you in finding a suitable location for your project, pending availability, upon acceptance into the program. Site specificity is an important consideration so please describe the kind of location you are seeking (for example: a park, alleyway, courtyard, storefront, etc.), as well as the reason you feel it best suits your project. Your project must be sited in one of Toronto's 25 wards outlined below. To confirm the Ward of a specific location or site please visit the [City of Toronto's Wards Profile webpage to search an address](#). Projects will be considered regardless of location.

Projects that require the use of public space, such as a park or road, are responsible for securing their own permits. The costs associated with permits when producing a project

on City of Toronto property are often waived for Nuit Blanche, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Neighbourhood / Ward Titles and Descriptions:

Ward Name	Ward Profile
Etobicoke North	View Etobicoke North ward profile
Etobicoke Centre	View Etobicoke Centre ward profile
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	View Etobicoke-Lakeshore ward profile
Parkdale-High Park	View Parkdale-High Park ward profile
York South-Weston	View York South-Weston ward profile
York Centre	View York Centre ward profile
Humber River-Black Creek	View Humber River-Black Creek ward profile
Eglinton-Lawrence	View Eglinton-Lawrence ward profile
Davenport	View Davenport ward profile
Spadina-Fort York	View Spadina-Fort York ward profile
University-Rosedale	View University-Rosedale ward profile
Toronto-St. Paul's	View Toronto-St. Paul's ward profile
Toronto Centre	View Toronto Centre ward profile
Toronto-Danforth	View Toronto-Danforth ward profile
Don Valley West	View Don Valley West ward profile
Don Valley East	View Don Valley East ward profile
Don Valley North	View Don Valley North ward profile
Willowdale	View Willowdale ward profile
Beaches-East York	View Beaches-East York ward profile
Scarborough Southwest	View Scarborough Southwest ward profile

Scarborough Centre	View Scarborough Centre ward profile
Scarborough-Agincourt	View Scarborough-Agincourt ward profile
Scarborough North	View Scarborough North ward profile
Scarborough-Guildwood	View Scarborough-Guildwood ward profile
Scarborough-Rouge Park	View Scarborough-Rouge Park ward profile

***BUDGET**

Proposed budgets must reflect **all** potential artistic and production costs associated with producing the project, such as artist fees, staffing, equipment, fabrication, crowd control mechanisms, permits, and venue rental, along with **all** confirmed and projected sources of revenue.

Please list the \$1,750.00 CAD stipend as confirmed revenue. While other sources of funding are not a requirement, the financial viability assessment criteria considers additional and confirmed revenues as an asset. Include all confirmed and projected sources of revenue. Total revenues **must** balance with total expenses.

If you list public sources of funding from organizations, such as the Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council, or Canada Council for the Arts in your revenue budget, you will be asked to describe which specific funding programs you have or plan to apply to. Similarly, if you have listed funding partners, you will be asked to list all prospective and confirmed funders, and whether their contributions are cash or in-kind.

Sample Budget:

EXPENSES (fill in any/all that apply)	AMOUNT (\$)
Artist Fees	200.00
Curatorial Fees	--
Materials/Production	950.00
Permits (ex. street; park; sidewalk etc.)	--
Equipment Rental	750.00
Project Infrastructure (ex. barricades; stanchions; wayfinding; etc.)	--
Performers/Facilitators	--
Installation/AV Technicians	250.00
Security/Crowd Management	--
Transportation	250.00
Other (please specify)	0.00
Total Expenses	\$2400.00

Independent Projects 2026 Application Guidelines

REVENUE (fill in any/all that apply)	AMOUNT (\$)	Confirmed or Projected?
Nuit Blanche IP Stipend	1750.00	Confirmed
Toronto Arts Council	250.00	Projected
Ontario Arts Council	--	--
Canada Council for the Arts	--	--
Other Grant or Public Funding	--	--
Private Donations	--	--
Private Funding	200.00	Confirmed
In Kind Donations	200.00	Confirmed
Other (please specify)	--	--
Total Revenue	\$2400.00	

*SUPPORT MATERIALS

Audio-visual support material is essential to the assessment process and is a requirement. The material submitted must demonstrate the applicant's ability to carry out the project and therefore must be representative of the work that will be presented.

Still images and audio recordings may be uploaded to the application. Up to 5 files may be submitted, with a maximum file size of 5 MB per file. Files are accepted in the following formats:

- Still Images – jpeg, jpg, pdf
- Audio – MP3, MP4, WAV, WMA

Video support material must be submitted by providing a link to an external website where your work has already been uploaded, such as Vimeo, YouTube, your personal website, etc.

Important: if you are linking to files through a file sharing program such as Dropbox, please ensure your link does not expire for at least 6 weeks after the application deadline, and that it does not require special permissions (i.e. a password) to access and download a file. For audio/video files that are larger than 5 MB, we recommend hosting the materials on a website where we can review directly rather than download, such as YouTube, Vimeo or Soundcloud.

Complete this table with the information that corresponds to your support material files. This should include:

- title of work
- year of completion
- medium/ media
- dimensions

- image credit line
- if the work has been shown previously

***Support Materials File Name & Short Description:**

Name your files by artist last name or collective / organization name along with a number and the file extension name. We will ask you to fill in a short description (max 200 characters including spaces and punctuation – approximately 30 words). See sample chart below:

	Audio, Video or Image File Name	Description (max. 200 characters)	Link (if applicable)
1	Kusama_01.jpg	Installation view of “Obliteration Room” (2018) at beginning of exhibition	N/A
2	Kusama_02.jpg	Installation view of “Obliteration Room” (2018) at end of exhibition	N/A
3	Kusama_03.mp4	Time-lapse video of “Obliteration Room” (2018) during exhibition; 4 minutes	N/A
4	Kusama_04.m4a	Audio clip of audience member in “Obliteration Room” (2018); 1.5 minutes	N/A
5	Kusama_05.pdf	Rendering of proposed project for Nuit Blanche Toronto	N/A

PRIMARY CONTACT INFORMATION

Please list who will be the primary point of contact between the City of Toronto and you as the artist, collective, or organization. This contact will be notified of receipt of this application, as well as application results.

EMAIL UPDATES

In this section, you can opt- in to receive future email communications regarding Nuit Blanche Toronto. We would also like to know how you found out about this call for submissions.

DECLARATION

You will be asked to declare that the application is reflective of your original artistic vision and that all information is true and correct to the best of your knowledge. Once you click this, hit 'Finish' to submit your application.

You can expect an automated confirmation email of receipt within 1 hour of submission. Check your email inbox (or junk folder), and if you have not received this email within the timeframe, please contact Gabrielle Johnson at the email address below.

Independent Projects Contact

Gabrielle Johnson
Independent Projects Coordinator
City Cultural Events, City of Toronto
Gabrielle.Johnson@toronto.ca | 647-459-6844