

Introduction

This document is a general overview of the event and the application process, as well as a step-by-step guide for completing an application to the Open Call Program of 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**.

Contents

About Nuit Blanche Toronto	2
Project Categories	2
Applying to Nuit Blanche Toronto	3
2026 Theme: <i>Tomorrow's Memories</i>	3
Benefits of Participation.....	4
Applicant & Project Eligibility	5
Areas of Assessment.....	6
Application Form Details	8
Application Deadline	11

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 for consideration as both an Open Call Project and an Independent Project (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 through a different selection process, which will not be influenced by the other. However, only one project from an artist can be accepted per year.

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 Open Call application has been accepted or declined by **February 27, 2026** at the latest. If your Open Call application is unsuccessful, you can still be considered as an Independent Project. However, to be considered you must have applied to both programs separately within their application window.

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

Open Call Projects will be integrated into the geographic exhibition areas and receive:

1. Financial support up to \$20,000.00 CAD (inclusive of Artist Fee) and oversight based on the needs and assessment to produce and exhibit the work.
2. Programming and Production support from the City of Toronto including, but not limited to:
 - a) Artistic consultation and curatorial guidance on all elements of project design, budgets and execution from the Artistic Director, curator(s) and the City of Toronto.
 - b) Securing access to venues as required and possible.
 - c) Technical consultation including assistance with City permits and other permissions (e.g. access to public space, health & safety, when possible).
 - d) Assistance with sourcing technical equipment where required.
 - e) Access to power, where possible during the event.
 - f) Based on your project's unique needs, staff and volunteer support will be included in the facilitation of your project during the night of the event.

The Open Call projects are included in the communication strategies for the overall event, driving attention to the event's print materials and website. The campaign will include media partnerships, print collateral, an integrated advertising campaign (outdoor, print, online, radio and television), a thorough media relations and social media plan intended to garner local and international attention.

Applicant & Project Eligibility

Projects selected through the Open Call process should adhere and respond to the Nuit Blanche event mandate: **to create a contemporary artwork in public space that engages the broadest audience through artistic excellence.** All concept proposals must meet the criteria outlined below and will be reviewed and assessed by the Artistic Director, curators and representatives of the City of Toronto.

To apply to become an Open Call Project, you must meet all the following criteria:

Be a practicing visual artist or collective in collaboration with Nuit Blanche Toronto. Artists and collectives can be based anywhere however, we cannot assist visiting artists with their travel expenses. All costs must be accounted for in the project budget. You must be willing to make the commitment required (personnel, financial and otherwise) to achieve your project.

Rooted in contemporary art. If your primary artistic discipline is not contemporary visual art, please contextualize and describe your practice and how the end resulting artwork would reflect the artistic discipline. Of particular interest are proposals that have strong audience engagement elements or interactive components as part of the artwork.

Respond to 2026 theme. You propose to create a site-specific project in public space, which demonstrates relevance to the ideas or questions posed by the ***Tomorrow's Memories*** theme. Your concept proposal and the resulting artwork must be a work of contemporary art.

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. Please consider carefully if you can undertake this all-night commitment before submitting your application.

Be free: You will offer all-night access to your project that is free of charge to the public during the event, from 7 p.m. on October 3rd to 7 a.m. October 4th, 2026.

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 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. If the project is virtual – it must be free to access, not age restrictive and accessible to the majority of attendees i.e., not require use of uncommon technologies, platforms or personal data.

Be accessible: Accessibility should be considered in the design of your project. Information on the AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) can be found [here](#). An accessibility toolkit related to visual arts 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.

Adhere to the project budget: Your project expenses should fall within the allocated inclusive budget of no more than \$20,000.00 CAD, including supplies, staffing, artistic and production-related expenses, including artist honorarium. Travel and accommodation should be considered if you are an out-of-town applicant.

The City of Toronto cannot support projects that exceed the scale and scope of the allocated creation / production budget. If your project expenses exceed that \$20,000 budget, you are encouraged to seek additional financial support through grants to enhance your project. However, your project cannot rely on this projected funding in order to be successful. A scaled plan to address working with a reduced budget is recommended. While you may seek additional funding; approval of your potential funding partners is required from City Cultural Events staff no later than May 31, 2026. Please note: the City cannot include acknowledgements for grant support directly received by the artist in our marketing materials.

Be safe: Your project must be installed in a safe manner, and abide by all City of Toronto by-laws, laws, and safety standards, which will be assessed and evaluated in consultation with the City of Toronto staff (for example: excessive noise can be a violation, all electrical devices must meet code, measures shall be made to reduce flammability rating of textiles and other materials).

Areas of Assessment

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:

1. Artistic merit of your project proposal and supporting material.
2. Fulfillment of the mandate of Nuit Blanche Toronto: to create a contemporary artwork in public space that engages the broadest audience through artistic excellence, which is free and presented all night long.
3. Demonstration that the project responds to the overall event theme, ***Tomorrow's Memories***
4. Strong aesthetic, conceptual elements, demonstration of artistic innovation, interpretation and integration of contemporary art in the specific context of the curatorial vision, and potential sites.
5. The creation, production and presentation history of the applicant.
6. The feasibility of the project, including a realistic budget and project delivery schedule.
7. A previously demonstrated ability, or appropriate project plan to execute a project of this scope and to work collaboratively with an existing project team including: City of Toronto staff; project partners; venues; manufacturing, technical, and installation contractors engaged to realize a finished temporary public artwork. Not all applicants

will have had this previous work experience, so please highlight any comparable experiences.

8. Durability and sustainability of the artwork, including its ability to withstand large audiences and inclement weather (rain, high winds, etc.).
9. Projects by contemporary artists, collaborations between artists and researchers or creators working in other disciplines relevant to the theme, are welcome and encouraged.
10. The accessibility of the project. AODA compliance is a must. The ability for projects to be engaged with audiences of different levels of ability, of different ages, and without reliance on certain technological tools.
11. Of particular interest are proposals that have strong audience engagement elements or interactive components as part of the artwork.

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 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. Applicants can also use the Pause link on the bottom of each survey page.

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 section marked with a **red asterisk (*)** in advance of starting the online application process.

Application Form Details

1. APPLICATION TERMS

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

2. PROJECT & APPLICANT INFORMATION

You must complete each field to proceed:

- * **Name of Artist, Collective, or Organization:**
- * **Title of Project:**
- * **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, adhering to strict 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.

3. 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 or curiosities are motivating this project?
 - What are the aesthetic and/or conceptual details of the proposal?
 - How does the project relate to the theme ***Tomorrow's Memories***?
- * **Logistical / Technical** (approx. 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, building permit or park permit?
 - Will there be video, audio or lighting equipment exposed to the elements
- * **Workplan** (approx. 150 words / max 1000 characters)
 - Describe what you plan to adequately install and execute the project for 12 hours
 - What is your staffing, install and removal plan, as well as 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, describe them here
- Explain how audiences will access and participate in your piece

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

4. 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 (or short CV) that highlights your professional achievements and history of contemporary art practice.

Name of Artist, Collective, or Organization:

Currently based/lives/works in:

Website (if applicable):

***Biography, Collective History or Condensed CV** (approx. 250 words / max 1,500 characters including spaces/punctuation words)

5. GEOGRAPHY AND LOCATION DETAILS

Nuit Blanche 2026 will bring together the neighbourhoods of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Transformation of public space is an essential element of Nuit Blanche and site specificity is important in your project proposal. Please describe the type of location to consider (for example: a park, alleyway, courtyard, storefront, etc.) as well as the reasoning behind your choice.

If the site's location is integral to the concept of the work, consider the history and treaties relating to the land and the ecological impact human activity continues to have on the natural environment. How does your project incorporate considerations of the land on which it is situated, in your process, form, and/or content?

All Nuit Blanche artworks must be physically accessible. Please consider this in relation to the overall design of your project.

6. *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, permits, staffing, and venue rental. If you anticipate additional funding either through public grants or sponsorship, please outline those details.

Please note that artists participating in Nuit Blanche Toronto who wish to solicit their own funding and/or donations must obtain approval from the City of Toronto before securing funds by May 31, 2026. We encourage artists to be seeking out additional funding before confirmation of inclusion in Nuit Blanche, as necessary to account for current grant notification cycles which can take up to six months. Participating artists are encouraged to apply for other grants but are advised not to rely on receiving them to fulfill their project.

Budget Sample:

EXPENSES (fill in any/all that apply)	AMOUNT (\$)
Artist Fees	3,500.00
Materials/Production	10,700.00
Equipment Rental	800.00
Administrative Costs	
Project Infrastructure (ex. barricades; stanchions; wayfinding; etc.)	
Performers/Facilitators	700.00
Installation/AV Technicians	1,500.00
Transportation of Artwork	800.00
Other (please specify) Flights	2,000.00
Total Expenses	20,000.00

7. *SUPPORT MATERIALS

Audio-visual support material is essential to the assessment process. 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. The maximum file size is 5 MB per file and files are accepted in the following formats:

- Still Images – jpeg, jpg
- 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.

Printed support material can be uploaded in PDF format.

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 eight (8) 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.

***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

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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 Johnson Ngo at the email address below.

Application Deadline

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

If you have questions about the Open Call Program, please call or email:

NUIT BLANCHE TORONTO

Open Call Program 2026 Application Guidelines

Johnson Ngo
Programming Supervisor
City Cultural Events, City of Toronto
Johnson.Ngo@toronto.ca | 416-338-0496