

Art Shines On Tampa



By Lennie Bennett, Times Art Critic
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TAMPA — The Big Turn-On comes to downtown Tampa on Saturday with Lights on Tampa, an ambitious arts project that last illuminated the city in 2006.

Starting at 5:30 p.m., building facades in the southeast area of downtown will be swathed in five light-based installations ranging from photographic projections to animation, using both low- and high-tech systems created by seven artists, most with international reputations. All works, which were underwritten by the city of Tampa and corporate sponsors, will remain until Feb. 1, and some are permanent installations, as are two from 2006, included in the event, by Stephen Knapp and Tobey Archer.

Worth noting is that the three jurors who selected the artists are a very distinguished trio: Jerry Saltz, art critic for New York magazine and formerly of the Village Voice; Anne Pasternak, who has a long history in the arts nationally and is director of Creative Time, a public arts organization; and Dave Hickey, a writer, critic, professor and recipient of a MacArthur Genius award. They no doubt played a large part in gathering an impressive roster of participants.

A new component of Lights on Tampa is Satellites in the nearby Channel District, a collaboration of 11 bay area artists who created videos curated by University of South Florida faculty members Wendy Babcox and Shawn Cheatham.

Dark times these may be, but go and experience a light-filled night for free and see the bright, transformative power of art.

Back To Basics

Artist tries to make us look at world in a different light

Chris Doyle, one of seven artists commissioned for Lights on Tampa 2009, has made multimillion-dollar installations using expensive video and electronic equipment on sites worldwide. Ecstatic City (Tampa) cost about \$100,000 and is purposefully low tech. "It's as basic as you get," he says, "mirrors and light."

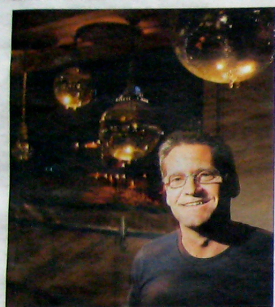
The artist lives in Brooklyn, N.Y., but spends a lot of time on the road. He has been in Tampa for several weeks installing 68 motorized mirror balls, from 16 to 40 inches in diameter, onto the ceiling of the Tampa Convention Center portico and the palm trees that line the entrance to it, as well as in the HART transportation center across the street. When lit and revolving, they will cast a glow of fractured light onto the walls and sidewalks.

Like the other artists in Lights on Tampa, Doyle does more than create a beautiful atmospheric effect. He believes in art's ability to change the way we inhabit a space, to heighten our perceptions. The work's name references Baroque period art, which was characterized by high emotion and sensuality, often associated with a sense of religious ecstasy. Getting that response from 21st century viewers, more attuned to ironic response, isn't easy, Doyle knows. "It's fleeting and elusive and



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BACK TO BASICS



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Ecstatic City (Tampa), one of five new works selected for Lights on Tampa, features 68 motorized mirror balls on and around the Tampa Convention Center that will project light throughout the surrounding area.

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IF YOU GO

2009 Lights on Tampa art and artists

The art installations are at locations in downtown Tampa (see map) from 5:30 p.m. to midnight beginning Saturday and continuing through Feb. 1. See the event at lightsontampa.org. There is a free arts appreciation tour at the Tampa Theatre, 711 W. Franklin St., Tampa.

1. REVAMP FORT BROOKE by Chris Doyle will be the first of five new works selected for Lights on Tampa. Doyle's work features 68 motorized mirror balls on and around the Tampa Convention Center that will project light throughout the surrounding area.

2. TAMPA BELIEVING WATER by Curtiss Ward Jr. is a large-scale, interactive, light-based art installation that will be on display at the Tampa Bay History Center.

3. ECSTATIC CITY (TAMPA) by New York City artist Chris Doyle is a large-scale, interactive, light-based art installation that will be on display at the Tampa Convention Center.

4. TAMPA PUBLIC MOOD RING by Stephen Knapp and Tobey Archer is a large-scale, interactive, light-based art installation that will be on display at the Tampa Convention Center.

5. SATELLITES by Marina Curkovic is an interactive, light-based art installation that will be on display at the Tampa Convention Center.

6. LUMINOUS AFFIRMATIONS by Stephen Knapp is a large-scale, interactive, light-based art installation that will be on display at the Tampa Convention Center.

7. MIRRORBALLS by Tobey Archer is a large-scale, interactive, light-based art installation that will be on display at the Tampa Convention Center.



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