REFLECTIONS: Lights On Tampa artist Chris Doyle

LIGHTS FANTASTIC

The public-art party Lights On Tampa is set to shine again.

BY MEGAN VOELLER

Lights On Tampa 2009
Jan. 10-Feb. 1 with a public celebration on Sat., Jan. 10, 5:30 p.m.-midnight. For a downloadable map of project locations, visit LightsOnTampa.org.

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Doyle, whose public installations are often commissioned by medium-sized burgs looking to enhance their arts and cultural offerings, describes his objective as animating a space. Though relatively low-tech, the mirror balls exude high energy in their ability to create an atmosphere of indefinable expectation. With the portico balls set to remain installed at the Convention Center permanently (while the palm tree balls will come down after the Super Bowl), both residents and conventioneers may find themselves responding to the installation with the occasional party, impromptu or planned — and that's part of the fun.

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DISCO ROUND: A mirror ball awaits installation in Chris Doyle's *Ecstatic City*.

Ecstatic City/ Chris Doyle
Tampa Convention Center

— Get your groove on beneath the mirror balls posted around the perimeter of the Convention Center (see accompanying story). Starting at sundown, motors powering the rotating balls kick into action, turning the comparatively staid Convention Center environs into a space pregnant with possibility. Stroll through the adjacent plaza to the Riverwalk — and if you feel like throwing down an homage to John Travolta's *Saturday Night Fever* with strut the way, it's OK. (Just this once.)

PARKING LIGHT: A rendering of the Fort Brooke Garage as it will be transformed by Casa Magica.

Revamp Fort Brooke/ Casa Magica
Fort Brooke Parking Garage, 107 N. Franklin St.

If one project from Lights On Tampa 2006 lingers in the public memory above the rest, it's Paris-based artist Jorge Orta's animated projection, which temporarily transformed the University of Tampa's Plant Hall into a giant, kaleidoscopic screen. This year German duo Sabine Weissinger and Friedrich Foerster, aka Casa Magica, have concocted a similarly image-based architectural intervention, though their target is the decidedly less romantic Fort Brooke parking garage — one of downtown Tampa's several Brutalist gems. A series of six multilayered digital collages composed by the artists aim to embellish the garage's austere façade with shifting images of lush adornments. Elements in each composition — e.g., larger-than-life military uniform buttons, Spanish tiles, tattooed skin, a boat's sail — evoke Tampa's past and present while creating the illusion of form and texture on the building's exterior.

RING IN THE NEWS: The Tampa Bowl Mood Ring will allegedly reflect the city's mood during Super Bowl.

Tampa Public Mood Ring/ Will Pappenheimer and Chipp Jansen
Cotanchobee Park, 601 Channelside Drive

The Lights On Tampa 2009 project is predicated to be either a smashing success or the butt of Dan Rather's columns for decades to come (perhaps both). Pappenheimer and Jansen's *Tampa Public Mood Ring* has two components: a large-scale public sculpture in the shape of a giant mood ring, located in Cotanchobee Park; and an interactive website where online visitors can attempt to change the color of the ring by "rating the mood" of news stories related to the Super Bowl. Pick a color that matches your reaction to a story on blogs.tampabay.com/superbowl, and the hue of LED lights atop the ring sculpture changes in accordance. With ESPN scheduled to feature footage of the ring during commercial breaks from the big game, fans from around the world could be tuning in and logging on to change the color of the *Tampa Public Mood Ring* in February — or when word about the project gets out online. In the meantime, it serves as a cheeky emblem of LOT's progressiveness as a public art project.

FLOOD LIGHT: One of Marina Zurkow's post-apocalyptic visions of a waterlogged Tampa.

Slurb/ Marina Zurkow
St. Pete Times Forum

What would happen if Tampa suffered a Katrina-esque hurricane or a cataclysmic global warming-induced rising of polluted seas? The answer, in begoggledly lovely form, might be found in Marina Zurkow's *Slurb*. The artist's 15-minute animation, to be projected outside the St. Pete Times Forum, presents a fragmented, post-apocalyptic narrative set against the backdrop of Tampa, submerged. Boat-borne figures navigate a watery landscape of beached mermaids, floating derelict and metamorphosis, only a buzzing dragonfly seems to have a bright future. The animation's surreal visual style and scroll-like progression from left to right combine to create a formal beauty that exists in tension with its startling message. An ethereal soundtrack of vocals and electronic sounds is icing on the cake.

STILL WATERS: A photograph by Carlton Ward Jr.

Tampa Bay: Living Waters/ Carlton Ward Jr.
Channelside Drive & Franklin Street

Well known in the Bay area for his breathtaking conservation photography, Ward is the only Tampa-based artist featured as one of Lights On Tampa's headliners. A cluster of LED screens housed in a storefront adjacent to Doyle's *Ecstatic City* will display a rotating portfolio of Ward's work. The photographs, which speak to the vital connection between the region's ecological and economic well-being, showcase water, wildlife and the human culture dependent upon the natural environment to survive. A naturalistic bookend to Zurkow's animated Cassandra call, Ward's images serve as a reminder both of our good fortune to inhabit an area of such natural richness and the responsibility therein.

Channel District Satellites/ Various artists
Grand Central, Florida Aquarium and elsewhere

Though billed as a supplemental project, this group of 10 distinct video-based installations located in sites throughout the Channel District offers its own cornucopia of sights. Curated by University of South Florida professor — and Lights On Tampa 2006 participating artist — Wendy Babcock and Shawn Cheatham, the lineup includes a mix of local and visiting artists. Keep an eye peeled for Jon Griffith's *Thunderstorm Machines* (at the Grand Central at Kennedy), a trio of flashing urn-shaped sculptures that invoke Tampa's claim to the title "lightning capital of the world." Peter Sigmeriem's *Cadillac Beach* (at the Florida Aquarium), an audio installation of parked Cadillac Escalades that play altered recordings of whale song; and Mike Reynolds' two-channel video projection (also at Grand Central) documenting the systematic and creation destruction of 100 one-dollar bills as an ode to economic despair. Other participating artists: John Orth and Alan Culpepper, the Fluff Constructivists, Yoko Sugiura and Maria Saracino, Anat Pollack and Robb Fladry, Meg Mitchell, Gregg Perkins and Wesley Weberington.

Creative Loafing 1.07.09

Lights on Tampa 2009 art show: A downtown street party

By Megan Voeller

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