

WHITE NIGHT NUIT BLANCHE

Brighton and Hove stays up late

White Night 2011 Audience Evaluation

White Night really encapsulates the spirit of Brighton. It is creative and imaginative with an emphasis on involvement and access for all. Many of the events are made by the creative people of Brighton giving them an opportunity to show everyone just what Brighton is about.

Kayleigh Lewis, Brighton & Hove Free Press



Brighton and Hove White Night 2011

Saturday 29th October 2011 saw over 45,000 people take to the streets of Brighton & Hove for an all night celebration.

The city streets and cultural venues came to life as audiences, artists and venues responded to the theme of Utopia.

Now in its fourth year, White Night is a city wide free arts festival for Brighton & Hove's communities and visitors.

The festival is unique because of its collaborative ethos. It is produced as a creative and collective curatorial dialogue that facilitates both ground breaking artistic practice and high levels of community engagement.

It commissions new work from artists, encourages artists to work in extraordinary new ways and suggests cultural solutions to wider social problems and agenda.

It sets out to make the city feel a safe and special space for everyone to gather on this Saturday night and to showcase the city's year round cultural offer and opportunities for cultural participation.

This report shows how audiences felt about White Night 2011 and how the opportunity to contribute to a major arts event in the city's cultural calendar impacted on artists and arts organisations and on the city itself.

White Night is produced by Brighton & Hove Arts Commission and Brighton & Hove City Council, working with partners across the city. White Night is funded by Interreg IV A France (Channel) England co-financed by ERDF.

This evaluation produced by sam-culture, December 2011.



Brighton and Hove stays up late

The Headlines

- **45,000 people joined in:** most events were at capacity through the night.
- **76% of audiences said White Night was ‘amazing’.**
- **76 indoor and outdoor events specially created for 2011.**
24 were White Night commissions, 2011 was the biggest programme so far.
- **78% attenders were residents of Brighton & Hove.** 22% were visitors coming into the city; 2% of people were visitors from abroad.
- **White Night brought 4% of attenders back to the arts:** they hadn’t attended a cultural event for over 12 months.
- **Audiences went from event to event:** 82% went to more than 2 events; 44% went to 6 or more events and 21% went to 10 or more White Night events.
- **82% of audiences are inspired to go back to venues they visited at White Night.**
- **94% of audiences consider White Night important to Brighton & Hove.**
- **96% of attenders felt safe at White Night.**
- **Atten ders ranged from age 2 to 80,** trying out new venues and going to events which **brought families and generations together.**
- **White Night attracted £95,000 of EU funding.**
- **66% of people were aware of White Night’s partnership with Nuit Blanche Amiens**



Who benefits from White Night?

1. Audiences

- **Brighton and Hove residents and visitors...**

Audiences benefit from the sheer range of experiences opened up at White Night: serious conversations and one-minute manifestos about ideal societies; new installations showing innovative use of technology; doing and making things like a city of clay, seed bombing an urban wasteland; listening to post capitalist underground music, or watching places transformed by light, colour and imagination.

It's an alternative to the Saturday night drinking culture, for city people to reclaim the streets and for new experiences.

White Night means:

- *Seeing the city in a different way and feeling part of it.*
- *Feeling safe and welcome on the city streets.*
- *Encountering unexpected happenings in familiar places.*
- *Trying different kinds of cultural activity, new things to see and do.*
- *Being part of a shared experience with families and friends.*
- *Staying up late for a new annual city celebration.*
- *Seeing Brighton artists create new work for that night.*
- *Having fun with new digital games and the White Night smartphone optimised website*
- *Enjoying all of this for free.*

- **Audiences say what they like best about White Night is:**

'Great opportunity to be out in the city with a broad range of people getting involved in lovely events and activities. It is very friendly.'

- **Discovering somewhere new**

White Night gives unique access to unusual or even familiar spaces and locations, transformed and made magical. Many visitors experienced and appreciated Brighton's rich mix of cultural activity, going into areas and venues in Brighton they had not been to before:

'We did the QR Treasure Hunt which was a brilliant way of seeing lots of events - more than we would have planned ourselves.'

'Being able to go into venues in the city you don't normally think about going to, or have the time to go to.'

'Chance to experience stimulating and entertaining events in familiar and unfamiliar settings.'

- **Trying something different**

For the first time White Night extended the audience experience in to audience smartphones. A mobile optimised version of the website took advantage of the internet and geo-location capabilities of smartphones to create an interactive experience with a downloadable widget providing instant access to the web based software.

10% of the audience took advantage of the user-friendly software to:

- Locate their position in the city and discover nearby events using the interactive map.
- Browse the enlarged and up to date programme, including additions made after the brochure went to print.
- Access information about venue accessibility and food, first aid and facilities.
- Translate the programme into French.

- **A chance to be creative**

New Writing South: Flash Utopia

Utopia Theme: Personal and spiritual development

White Night offers audiences the opportunity to move beyond being a spectator and to try new and different things to do. Being a creative city involves providing people with opportunities to realise their creative potential, to create something new and unique, to see new possibilities, to be imaginative and to develop new ideas. New Writing South works with people to enhance skills, stretch their creativity and inspire their imagination through creative writing.

Performance poet Dean Atta created a mass writing event, inviting audiences to construct visions of their perfect utopia in a flash fiction of poems and stories.

'Our night of spoken word and creative writing with performers and lots of audience participation went down extremely well. White Night is very important. It was our first year and we would love to do it again. We reached out to new audiences, raising our profile locally in a way that we wouldn't be able to do otherwise. Our midnight mass writing event showed that people respond well to the freedom and space to write creatively and share what they've written. White Night enables Brighton arts organisations to produce events for the local and wider population.'

Mark Bryant, New Writing South

- **Open to everyone**

The normal price of a ticket is a barrier to participation for many people. By removing this barrier White Night ensures events are open to everyone.

'It's FREEEEEEEEEEEE!! Creative, so much fun!'

'Able to take my children into town for free events and is exciting for them during the earlier part of the evening.'

'That it is free and so many people get involved.'

97% of people think it important that White Night remains free.



Who benefits from White Night?

2. Artists

- **For artists and cultural venues**

Brighton's reputation is built on its cultural vitality. White Night's commissioning programme creates valuable opportunities for artists and cultural organisations to experiment and to create new work. Artists in the city welcome White Night as an opportunity to take artistic risk and to develop their artistic practice. The event opened possibilities for imaginative interventions which responded to the political and social themes and ideas presented by the idea of Utopia. Creating work to be shown at night and to big crowds is an exciting and stimulating challenge.

'The relaxed nature of the White Night commission and event enabled Red Earth to explore new creative partnerships without the pressure usually associated with the production of new work. We are based in Brighton, as were most of the artists involved and this contributed to the ease of the performance's realisation.'

Simon Pascoe, Red Earth

Utopia was interpreted through themes of Digital Technologies, Personal and Spiritual Development, Protest and Collective Action; Earth and Environment, Retro-Future and Public Space.

76 events: 36 indoor and 40 outdoor events.

Most of the city's cultural venues created special events for White Night. Artists took work into unusual places - including a laundrette, cafés and pubs and churches. New venues for 2011 included Brighton Youth Centre, Embassy Court, St James Laundrette and The Cowley Club, a grassroots co-operative and members club.

White Night takes culture beyond venues and out into the city's public spaces: marquees in the Old Steine Gardens for the Alternative Village Fete; the seafront and the beach for Red Earth and Liz Aggiss; under-used spaces like the Open Market.

**Over 600 artists involved in White Night 2011.
90% are based in Brighton.**

▪ **New commissions**

New commissions make White Night unique. Venues are creating something different for White Night, often bringing people in for the first time.

- 2,300 people came into St Bartholomew's Church - many experiencing live classical music for the first time.
- 2,085 people came into Brighton Museum and saw a showcase organised by 32 young people.
- 12,000 experienced Shambush in the Dome Foyer Bar - double the number from 2010.
- 1,000 people attended Come Together: West Street Story at the Sallis Benney Theatre.
- Over 4,000 visited Jubilee Library with many participating in Meta-hub or being entertained by Poly Fiesta.

White Night brought 4% of attenders back to the arts: people who hadn't attended a cultural event for over 12 months.

New work is created which tours to other festivals and events, providing a source of income for Brighton & Hove artists and furthering Brighton's national and international reputation as a cultural hotspot.

'Like Shadows: A Celebration of Shyness at Phoenix had over 4000 visitors who stayed for quite a while to see all the artworks. People were saying that it was great to see such an intelligently curated show as part of White Night. We had funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council via The University of Sussex which meant we had some high profile international artists and an internationally recognised curator, Helen Sloan. People travelled widely to see our show and the curator has already received an inquiry about touring it elsewhere'

Anna Dumitriu

▪ **Connecting artists with audiences in new ways**

Sharing the culture by taking it out into the city's public spaces and opening theatres, museums and galleries through the night connects arts and audiences in new ways, giving audiences the chance not just to look but do and make things and share experiences.

Venues enjoyed being part of an event that attracts a diverse audience:

- *A group of homeless men got involved with Ebb Tide;*
- *A family of 12 who thought the Same Sky, Return to Eden tree really was magic when the tree suddenly lit up;*
- *A 91 year old jive dancer enjoying the Deer Disco at the Urban Deer Stalk in Portslade;*
- *650 people took part in the BHF Midnight Half-Marathon;*
- *When the DJ at Hope Springs Eternal played Rock 'n' Roll people with walking sticks started doing the twist in Pavilion Gardens.*

'Everyone was working so quietly and laboriously with such energy in the room - people creating things together.'

Clay City at Komedia

82% of audiences have been inspired to go back to venues that they visited at White Night.

The Metahub: Jubilee Square

Utopia theme: Digital technologies

One of Brighton's defining features is the strength of its creative industries. The city is a magnet for creative entrepreneurs. 16% of Brighton's creative businesses are in the digital sector. The expanded digital dimension this year gave audiences an opportunity to explore some of the new ideas and innovations being created.

The Metahub and Beatabet brought together artists, performers and audiences in a new collaboration. It was a central hub that created streams of audio and video submitted by the public from all around the city. VJs and audio artists took content from the streams and remixed it. The remixed content was then projected using video mapping onto a large sculpture outside the Library in Jubilee Square.

'Because Metahub's installation in Jubilee Square was interactive, it opened up opportunities for people who don't usually engage in art. As the digital hub for White Night we took video streams and we remixed over 500 public uploads and projected these on to our sculpture in Jubilee Square. Under 18's especially liked using their technology in a creative way and thinking more about content and what to capture. The planning stage was useful for meeting and involving other Brighton artists. It felt there was a sense of togetherness in the city. The success of the project was largely in the amount of public participation. This is a testament to the growing trend of digital social media, and an inspiration for us as artists to further develop our work in that field.'

Abraham Moughrabi, Beatabet



- **On home ground**

White Night gives Brighton artists the chance to show their work to Brighton audiences and to make new links with other artists working in the city, which leads to new collaborative projects and new relationships with people in the city:

‘White Night enabled me to try out a new and very successful collaboration with a sound designer, adding a new layer to the work. It also gave me the invaluable opportunity to show the work to producers and potential commissioners. Support from the White Night team, both before and during the event, was out-standing.’ Rachel Henson

Same Sky: Ebb Tide

Utopia theme: Earth and environment

Reports emerge on a daily basis about global warming, rises in sea level and threats to marine life. Sussex Wildlife Trust is running a campaign, Project Fish, to protect the coastline and marine life. Same Sky collaborated with the Trust’s Youth Rangers to explore a dystopian or utopian future for our seas and marine life. The work evolved through an exchange of ideas between Same Sky and the young people as Same Sky felt that it was important that the young people owned the project. Each young person made a part of the installation - large flags with slogans about threats to marine life, land art from the shingle and a video about the campaign, which was screened on the night.

It was the Trust’s most successful outreach with young people. For Same Sky it was valuable opportunity to work over a sustained period with a group of young people.

‘Audiences were invited to see the hidden world that emerges as the tide ebbs and to make their own sea creatures. The installation also gave the queues for the Sea Life Centre a visual spectacle. Being seen in our home town and working with young adults to create high impact tableaux is such an opportunity and contrasts with our mass participation Brighton flagship events. We enjoyed the collaborations and seeing the city alight at night - that special Brigadoon moment of magic time.’

John Varah, Same Sky



Who benefits from White Night?

3. The city

For Brighton and Hove Arts Commission and Brighton and Hove Council...

- **White Night showcases the vibrant cultural offer of the city and shines a light on its innovation and accessibility.**
- **Its scale and profile encourages many residents who are not in the habit of attending cultural events to come into the city centre and enjoy the arts.**
- **It boosts the profile of culture in Brighton and Hove by creating new opportunities and commissions.**
- **It brokers new relationships across the cultural sector.**
- **It tackles city issues through culture.**

Come Together: West Street Story

Utopia Theme: Public space and cities of the future

The impact of alcohol abuse is an increasing problem for Brighton and Hove. 27% of adult drinkers are estimated to be binge drinkers and at weekends the city is a destination for clubbers and drinking. West Street, notorious for the noise of its pubs and clubs is designated as a 'stress area' by police.

White Night aims to use the city's cultural resources to make creative interventions that address city issues. The commission in West Street set out to be an antidote to the Saturday night drinking culture. Working with The Noise Abatement Society and musician Martyn Ware, founding member of the Human League and Heaven 17, created an original 3D ambient soundscape that people walked through and experienced a contrast to the raucous street sounds around them. Audiences could then experience the piece at the Sallis Benney Theatre in surround sound and with live footage, filmed and broadcast by Driftwood Productions, of people moving through the soundscape.

In Come Together, psychobiologist and communications expert Dr Harry Witchel from Brighton and Sussex Medical School facilitated masterclasses about Body Language, Music and Social Territory so that participants could see the effects of the soundscape on the body language and behaviour of people moving through the West Street space. The experiment was based on research compiled by Dr Witchel in his book 'You Are What you Hear: How Music and Territory Make Us Who We Are'.

'White Night's theme of 'Utopia' allowed us to focus on how sound evokes togetherness, joy and love; we felt this needed to be demonstrated in a difficult area like West Street. White Night enabled us to take a creative, collaborative approach to challenging issues. Importantly, combining arts and social action in an upbeat party atmosphere sent a positive, non-judgmental message, promoting cohesion rather than entrenchment in established views. Audiences on the night were large, positive and curious, engaging with the issues, which was stimulating for the artists. We saw a new White Night audience in West Street where the original 3D soundscape saw people laughing, hugging and dancing spontaneously - a marked departure from the normal tensions and aggressions the area is known for.'

Lisa Lavia, Managing Director, Noise Abatement Society, Brighton

- **It provides a creative solution to the issue of residents feeling unsafe in the city centre at night.** Only 50% of Brighton and Hove residents reported feeling safe in the city centre after dark, reasons for not feeling safe include groups of young people and drunkenness. (*Brighton and Hove Council: The State of the City, 2011*)

'Reclaiming the night in a city from a place and time that is conceived to be reserved for partying, drunkenness and danger - advocating the concept that a city can be taken over by creativity that is freely accessible to all walks of life.'

Mimi Banks, Home Live Art

96% of attenders feel safe at White Night, whereas on a usual night only 50% say they feel safe

- **Its success is growing: White Night 2011 attracted 45,000 people.**

Attendances have grown over four years:

2008:	15,000
2009:	25,000
2010:	40,000
2011:	45,000

- **It's a celebration for the people of Brighton and Hove**

78% of people attending White Night were from Brighton & Hove:

32% from BN1
28% from BN2
18% from BN3
2% from BN41- 44
5% from other BN postcodes

- **It makes the city a destination**

49% of visitors came into Brighton specifically for White Night:

16% were from outside the city
3% of people were from London
13 % from elsewhere including 2% visiting the UK

- **It's a Night For all ages**

A White Night experience is attracting audiences of all ages, including families, showing its wide appeal and that it is something for people from across the city. Attracting a family audience is a White Night ambition and this year there were over 20 specifically family friendly events

16 – 19 years:	6%
20 – 24 years:	22%
25 – 34 years:	22%
35 – 44 years:	29%
45 – 54 years:	13%
55 – 64 years:	5%
65 +	3%

'We had a great night and a great audience, many happy faces and a great atmosphere. The age group seemed to be from 6 - 60 with a good proportion of families and teens.'

Gilly Peacock; Youthtopia, Brighton Youth Centre

'The age range was broad and remained so later into the evening; we had under 12's still drawing at 1am alongside pensioners. Otherwise the majority of those attending were broadly spread between 18 - 50.'

Jake Spicer (DRAW), Corporeal at St Pauls Church

'A family audience at start of the night; great feedback from local parents and family friendly groups about the event. Also a teenage audience – younger than usual due to nature of event. An audience who wanted to interact, play and get involved.'

Rachel Lackie, Youthtopia at Brighton Museum

- **It builds a stronger sense of community**

Audiences say that White Night gave them a feeling of community. It was a welcome opportunity to mingle with other Brighton residents.

'White Night brings a sense of community to a very disparate town. The community gets together and the whole night is so much fun. The sense of community spirit. As a resident of Brighton it's great to see all corners of the city come alive! The whole event becomes a celebration.'

'It is really refreshing to come across something which is so creative and gives locals a sense of belonging. This really speaks volumes about Brighton as a fun-filled and artistic community'

Home Live Art: The Alternative Village Fete
Utopia Theme: Public space and cities of the future

The Alternative Village Fete took place in a number of marquees and temporary structures in Old Steine Gardens. A multidisciplinary programme of over 30 individual projects was made up of performance & installation artists, craftmakers, musicians and food producers from a national and local pool of creatives. The project is an unconventional urban take on the British institution that is 'The Traditional Village Fete'.

'The Alternative Village Fete ties in directly with the theme of Utopia because it's about generating a sense of community within the space - audiences gather in creative, communal experiences across the site, in both intimate interactions and mass crowds. Using the concept of a traditional village fete - contributors devised original games, performative interactions, contemporary versions of social dancing and participatory music performances, craft-making and homemade activities; we also worked with a number of quality local and ethical food producers who made particular effort to tie in with the themes of the Fete and of Utopia went beyond the typical 'Food Fair' model. Until this year we have worked predominantly in London so it has been incredibly valuable to Home Live Art to connect with Brighton artists and audiences. Huge numbers arrived and huge numbers stayed. It was a joy to see that crowd engaged in something different - at 12.30am what might have first appeared as a rave mass were dancing the rumba to the instruction of Dorothy's Shoes! Everything was carefully curated to involve a range of audience participation with something for everyone - from food tastings with Brighton's Community chef, to Science games with Brighton Science Festival, to Boogaloo Stu's hour long pop hit making show. Because of a diverse range of interactions on offer it was all embraced with huge enthusiasm and encouraged a mixed audience. Key feedback from audiences was that it was great to have an exciting outdoor event that served as a 'base' to the festival - an environment where people felt they could hang out and enjoy.'

Mimi Banks, Home Live Art

- **White Night has become a regular event on the city's arts calendar**

Audiences are now coming on a regular basis. The 2011 audience included:

18% of people who had **attended in 2008**

38% of people who had **attended in 2009**

72% of people who had **attended in 2010**

- **It attracts the media coverage that builds Brighton's brand as a cultural hotspot**

Lianne Jarrett Associates estimates that White Night press coverage reached an audience of over **7 million**, worth an approximate advertising value of **£291,593** and an editorial value of **£874,779**.

White Night made the news in **The Independent**, **The Guardian**, **ITV Meridian East**, a front cover and centrefold feature in **The Argus** and several mentions on **BBC Radio 4**. International coverage included French Television Channel, **France 3 Picardie**, several Berlin publications and the **Easy Jet in-flight magazine**. **Visit Brighton** also took a group of international journalists to the event.

The White Night website had over **50,000 unique visitors** with **570,000** page views in October, an active social network across **Facebook** and **Twitter over 3,000** strong and almost **10,000 people using the smart phone app** over the weekend.

- **Creates civic pride**

It makes audiences feel proud of Brighton and Hove. White Night gives residents and visitors the opportunity to celebrate the sense of cultural adventure that makes the city unique:

'White Night is unique and in Brighton... Cool place!'

'It makes me feel so proud of Brighton and so glad that I live in such a wonderful city.'

'It's free, with unusual events that capture the imagination. Makes you look at Brighton in a different light.'

'A friend came down for the weekend, and absolutely loved it and Brighton!'

- **It brings investment into the city: £95,000 EU funding** levered in by White Night.

- **An international dimension**

It places Brighton and Hove alongside other major international cities in creating an annual White Night celebration. Brighton and Hove City Council was invited to talk to an international meeting of Nuit Blanches from around the world.

66% of audiences are aware of the Nuit Blanche partnership.

- **White Night benefits city business**

'Temptation café took the equivalent of a second Saturday due to staying open late for White Night; the Library café took three times what it does on a normal day.'

Peter Allinson, Temptation Café and the Café in the Library

'We had our busiest day ever, almost double what we would normally take on a Saturday, we also really enjoyed it. As a business it was tremendous.'

Ian Baldry, Our Cornish Pasty Shop

Over 50% of attenders said they spent £20 during White Night and 5% spent over £40 on their night out.



Even utopia has issues

White Night is now a major event. The number of people it attracts has grown very quickly year on year. Such rapid growth is a real success story - but it also leads to a few issues.

What audiences didn't like:

Queues

'We really wanted to go to the aquarium but the queues were far too long'

Drunkenness

Drinking is a difficult issue for the city. Most of the flash points occurred at central outdoor locations, rather than at White Night venues. These external factors and the change in atmosphere through the night impacted on the sense of celebration.

Other European cities, including Paris, have experienced similar issues where a drinking culture has overwhelmed outdoor city celebrations.

'The city has a strong drinking culture and high numbers of residents drink more than recommended guidelines.'

(Brighton and Hove Council: The State of the City, 2011)

Overcrowding in the city centre

Because White Night coincides with Halloween, the volume of people out on the streets is substantial. Sussex Police identify Pavilion Gardens as a 'Code Red' area on Halloween weekend irrespective of whether it co-insides with White Night or not. Police confirmed that the area was very busy on that night. Most people were drinking and the volume of young people caused difficulties. Police noted the presence of 'known gangs' who would not normally be in town. Glass and rubbish became an issue.

'The number of people in the Pavilion gardens became unmanageable later in the evening, and resulted in damage to plants and fencing. Crowd control needs to be reviewed for next year.'

Royal Pavilion & Museums



Research data sources

Data in the report is based on:

- Online and on street surveys with 289 people
- 658 postcodes of White Night attenders
- Focus group with artists and cultural organisations
- De-brief with Sussex Police
- Interviews with Brighton and Hove Council lead officers, local businesses and participating arts organisations
- Brighton & Hove State of the City 2011

Evaluation Report produced by sam-culture

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