

SEIZE THE NIGHT

From apartment shows to Nuit Blanche parties, the 2e Porte à Gauche collective brings dance to the masses

dance Philip Szporer

It's not known as the city of lights, but Montreal will be illuminated and dancing all Saturday night long during Nuit Blanche. Getting the dance party started is the 2e Porte à Gauche collective, an intrepid group of young choreographers and performers (founders Amélie Bédard-Gagnon, Marie Béland, Johanna Bienaise, Frédérick Gravel and Katya Montaignac) with a DIY state of mind.

Keen on exposing contemporary dance to the masses, they've previously presented work in a downtown park and on the esplanade of Place des Arts to challenge the viewer's perspective, question the notion of the performing space and stoke the possibility of interdisciplinary collaboration, accessing sources outside dance that serve as inspiration and models.

Such "out of theatre" events can create an ambiguous relationship with the viewer – one of the 2e Porte à Gauche artists told me, "Sometimes you make the right choice and everyone feels welcome and sometimes you don't and everyone is a little alienated."

For Nuit Blanche, Béland and Montaignac conceived of a one-time choreographed club event called *Le pARTy*, at Le Gymnase on St-Denis, inviting 14 choreographers (Dominique Bouchard, Erin Flynn, Alain Francoeur, Sasha Kleinplatz, Hélène Langevin, Jean-Sébastien Lourdais, Dana Michel, Montaignac, Manon Oligny, Thea Patterson, George Stamos, Andrew Tay,

Peter Trosztmer and Katie Ward), as well as DJ MC Gilles, VJ Phil, and, of course, the public, to take over the dance floor.

In a concurrent project, they've rented a nine-and-a-half apartment in St-Henri, where for the last five weeks Béland and several others have been in residence. The premise is that the audience comes and watches, but then has a chance to hang out with the artists, breaking down the parameters between art and "real life" experiences. For instance, you can watch Turner teach a nouveau line dance and then join in. (Check out the video at la2eporteagauche.ca.)

Maturing in a time when arts funding is especially hard to come by, this generation of artists sees an alternative to the woes: They do things with a casual laissez-faire stance, embracing the now, seizing the day and being as vital as possible. It's a perspective that reflects the democratic experimentation and outlook of many post-modern choreographers of a couple of generations ago and the avant-gardists before them. Like their predecessors, the 2e Porte group are finding "ways in" for the participants and allowing for the delineations of the art forms to blur in these newfound "happenings." (◡)

Le pARTy

At Le Gymnase (4177 St-Denis), 10

p.m. to 3 a.m.

9 1/2 à part

At 3737 Notre-Dame W., to Feb. 27, 7

and 9 p.m.



ONE OF THE 2E PORTE À GAUCHE DANCERS, AMÉLIE BÉDARD-GAGNON, BRINGS IT HOME

02/26/2009