

# A wheel of whimsy

## WOOD ANCHOR MAKES NUIT BLANCHE DEBUT

By: Danielle Da Silva

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DANIELLE DA SILVA - SOU'WESTER

Kellen Deighton and J Neufeld of Wood Anchor have created an eight-foot running wheel that will power a blacksmithing forge for Nuit Blanche Winnipeg. The project is in collaboration with Cloverdale Forge and will be installed at the landing of the Esplanade Riel at The Forks on Sept. 29.

Two local design shops have forged a unique partnership to get this year's Nuit Blanche festival off to a rolling start.

Wood Anchor, a St. Norbert design studio working with reclaimed and salvaged timber, and Cloverdale Forge, a St. Andrew's-based blacksmith, will install a human sized "hamster wheel" and forge at the The Forks as part of the contemporary art celebration on Sept. 29.



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Kellen Deighton and J Neufeld take Run for Your Lite for a spin.

The eight-foot wheel — made from three-foot long boards mounted on a rolled steel cage and secured to a repurposed utility trailer — will be the bellows of the forge as people run or walk its circumference.

Topping out at 24 rotations per minute, the project, titled *Run For Your Lite*, is also hooked up to a system of copper switches that when activated ignite dozens of bulbs surrounding the installation.

"People will see all these lights twinkling and blinking and the idea is that the faster you run, the faster the lights blink and the brighter they are," said J Neufeld, Wood Anchor's owner.

"It's designed to bring people in and have some fun for a few minutes."

Since 2010, Culture Days Manitoba and the Winnipeg Arts Council has produced Nuit Blanche Winnipeg in the core of the city. The annual event attracts over 25,000 people downtown to explore dozens of temporary art installations and independent events, galleries, and performances over the course of the evening.

While Cloverdale Forge has participated in Nuit Blanche since its inception, this is the first time Wood Anchor will appear at the event.

Kellen Deighton, Wood Anchor's shop manager and lead designer, said creating an installation such as Run for Your Lite fits the culture of the shop. The day-to-day operations of Wood Anchor focuses on hand built wood furniture and furnishings for residential and commercial settings, but Deighton said the shop's affinity for "farmer whimsy" often means staff are making passion projects on the side.

"A lot of our work publicly is seen as these refined pieces of design but the company is kind of built on a whim and a bet," Deighton said. "I think the more we get into doing stuff like this, the more we want to express the will of the shop and the sense of humour of the shop."

Karen (Rudy) Rudolph, co-owner of Cloverdale Forge, said the idea for a foot powered forge has been on her mind for nearly 10 years and she pitched the idea to Wood Anchor thinking they might be wild enough to execute the concept.

"They took the idea, and no pun intended, just ran with it," Rudolph said.

"I'm so excited to see how the night comes together and I'm excited to see how the public is going to engage with it; if they're going to be shy and say 'I'm not getting in there,' or if they say 'Yeah, I want to do it!'"

Over the years, Rudolph said Nuit Blanche has been a great platform to educate people about blacksmithing and demonstrate that the art form isn't something relegated to historical applications or demonstrations. People who drop by the installation might walk away with a souvenir to remember the experience as well, she said.

"The idea of an all-night street party is really romantic to us in the sense that it brings people out and folks that may not run into each other, mix and mingle in public spaces. And we really believe that public spaces are important to a healthy community," Rudolph said.





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Cloverdale Forge will once again be at Nuit Blanche Winnipeg, but this time will be powered by a giant “hamster wheel” that relies on foot power to fill the bellows.

*Run for Your Lite* can be found at the Esplanade Riel bridge landing at The Forks and will be operating from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. on Sept. 29. For a full listing of Nuit Blanche events go to [nuitblanchewinnipeg.ca](http://nuitblanchewinnipeg.ca)

**Danielle Da Silva**

*Community journalist — The Sou'wester*

Danielle Da Silva is the community journalist for The Sou'wester. Email her at [danielle.dasilva@canstarnews.com](mailto:danielle.dasilva@canstarnews.com)

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