

Spier Light Art - a unique way to usher in the festive season

 By [Ruth Cooper](#)

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A giant glowing intertwined ouroboros, a hypnotic wave of interactive light, a gravity-defying living room, all this and more can be seen at the Spier Light Art Festival at Spier Wine Farm in Stellenbosch from now till the 19 January 2020.

An annual event, the Spier Light Art Festival is a truly magical and unique way to get into the festive spirit. Add to this the option of grabbing one of the signature Spier picnic baskets with an array of locally-sourced tasty goodies and a bottle of Spier wine to enjoy on the beautiful grounds – as dusk sets in and you have a perfect festive outing for the whole family.



Opening night – featuring stilt walkers, large puppets from Janni Younge and an array of mesmerising dance productions from choreographer Jay Pather and the Indoni Dance Company – has come and gone but 22 light and sound installations from some of SA's leading artists remain and are now on show and available to the public for free every night till early next year.

The installations are dispersed throughout the Spier Estate, and range in style from whimsical to socio-political, here are my top five works that I managed to discover.



Whimsical, mesmerising and poignant

David Brit's *Fire Snake* is hard to miss as it takes the form of an arresting 70-metre snaking tube of light weaved through the branches of a 300-year-old oak tree, which stands prominently in the main festival area. *Fire Snake* is based on the ancient symbol of the the ouroboros – “a snake devouring its tail, an image without beginning or end, whose logic refutes itself and suggests a suspension of time.”



Fire Snake - David Brit

The Needle and Thread by Strijdom van der Merwe is displayed close by. It depicts a giant illuminated needle with glowing thread weaved though the actual ground and speaks of worsening ecological changes and concerns and the need to try and heal and repair the earth.

Wave Machine by Roelf Daling seemed to be the most-loved at the opening due to its interactive nature. A string of connected lights allow the viewer to move the piece in a mesmerising wave of light and aims to signify the fundamental principle of wave theory.



Wave Machine - Roelf Daling

One of the more whimsical works *Swell //* by Luan Nel is best viewed when walking over the Spier Bridge as the work displays a life-size, dated living room setting upon the slanted banks of the river. Seemingly sliding into the water the gravity-defying work speaks of a past being allowed to unceremoniously slip under a current with little resistance.



Swell II - Luan Nel

On the other side of the bridge is *Keep the Lights On* by Qondiswa James and Themba Stewart. Consisting of different types of roof lighting depicting a range of low- to high-income brackets, the work poignantly comments on the accessibility and inaccessibility of lighting for South Africans in different socio-economic communities.



Keep the Lights On - Qondiswa James and Themba Stewart

All in all, a truly magical and thought proving collection of works. Don't miss out!

Spier Light Art is free to the public and is open every night from dusk till the 19 January 2020.

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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