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Banking on Aitken for winter tourists

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has announced a major public art project in Manhattan by Los Angeles artist Doug Aitken intended to promote tourism in New York during the slow winter months. MoMA and the public art organisation Creative Time have commissioned the artist to create a series of five films to be projected nightly onto

the façade of the museum, from 16 January to 12 February 2007. Aitken is shooting in New York this month and the film is estimated to cost \$1m. According to Cristyne Nicholas of the city's tourism bureau, NYC & Company, which is promoting the project throughout Europe and Asia, hotel

occupancy rates are down 10% during winter months. "Great art brings people out of hibernation," says Mayor Bloomberg, referring to Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *Gates* installation in Central Park last February, which brought 4m visitors to the city and generated \$254m in economic activity
Charmaine Picard