

**THE ARTS
ARE WHAT
WE ARE**

**STRATFORD
ARTS**

Destination Stratford
47 Downie Street, Stratford, ON N5A 1W7
P: 519.271.5140 T: 1.800.561.7926
hello@visitstratford.ca

Lights On Stratford Announces Major “Dandelion” Light Art Installation in Market Square this Winter

Stratford is host to the North American premiere of Dandelion which debuted earlier this year at Vivid Sydney, Australia



Image courtesy of Amigo & Amigo

Stratford, Ontario, September 29, 2023 – Now entering its 4th year, the multi award-winning Lights On Stratford annual winter festival, managed by Destination Stratford, will once again transform Stratford’s heritage downtown core and park system with luminous art and interactive light installations.

The Lights On Stratford 2023/2024 theme is EMERGENCE - a noun that goes back to the Latin root emerge, meaning "bring to light." Just as something comes to light or shows up where there was darkness or nothing before, an emergence happens.

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In addition to announcing the now permanent year-round LIGHTWALL art installation on the heritage façade of 70 Ontario Street, festival organizers are now revealing another major light display that will emerge at the start of the Light Trail in Stratford's Market Square this winter.



Image courtesy of Amigo & Amigo

“Dandelion” was launched to acclaim earlier this year at Vivid Sydney, one of the world’s preeminent light festivals. It is now journeying over 15,000 kms from Australia to Canada for its North American premiere at Lights On Stratford.

“I'm thrilled to be returning for our second year at Lights On Stratford and to introduce 'Dandelion' for its North American debut. Originally commissioned for Vivid Sydney with an astounding 3.5 million visitors in front of the iconic Opera House and Harbour Bridge, our studio, Amigo & Amigo, has been fortunate to see our work travel across North America, Asia, and the Middle East,” said Simone Chua, Director of Amigo & Amigo.

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Inspired by the wind-swept petals (pappus) of the dandelion, an international symbol of playfulness, and in some cultures even believed to have medicinal properties, audience members are transported by the interactive Dandelion into the world of the fanciful and hopeful. Every 10 minutes, Dandelion boasts its natural talents to the audience, by spilling out into an eclectic and modern sound and light animation, inspired by wind, and the natural properties of the dandelion. Make a wish, take a deep breath, and come watch Dandelion blow!

“The Downtown Stratford BIA is excited and honoured to support Lights On Stratford as the Gold Sponsor of the North American premiere of Dandelion,” said Jamie Pritchard, General Manager, Downtown Stratford BIA. *“I have seen the video of it, but I am told it pales in comparison to experiencing it live and in person from the inside out, so I can't wait. This show piece is sure to attract visitors from far and wide into the core of our city.”*

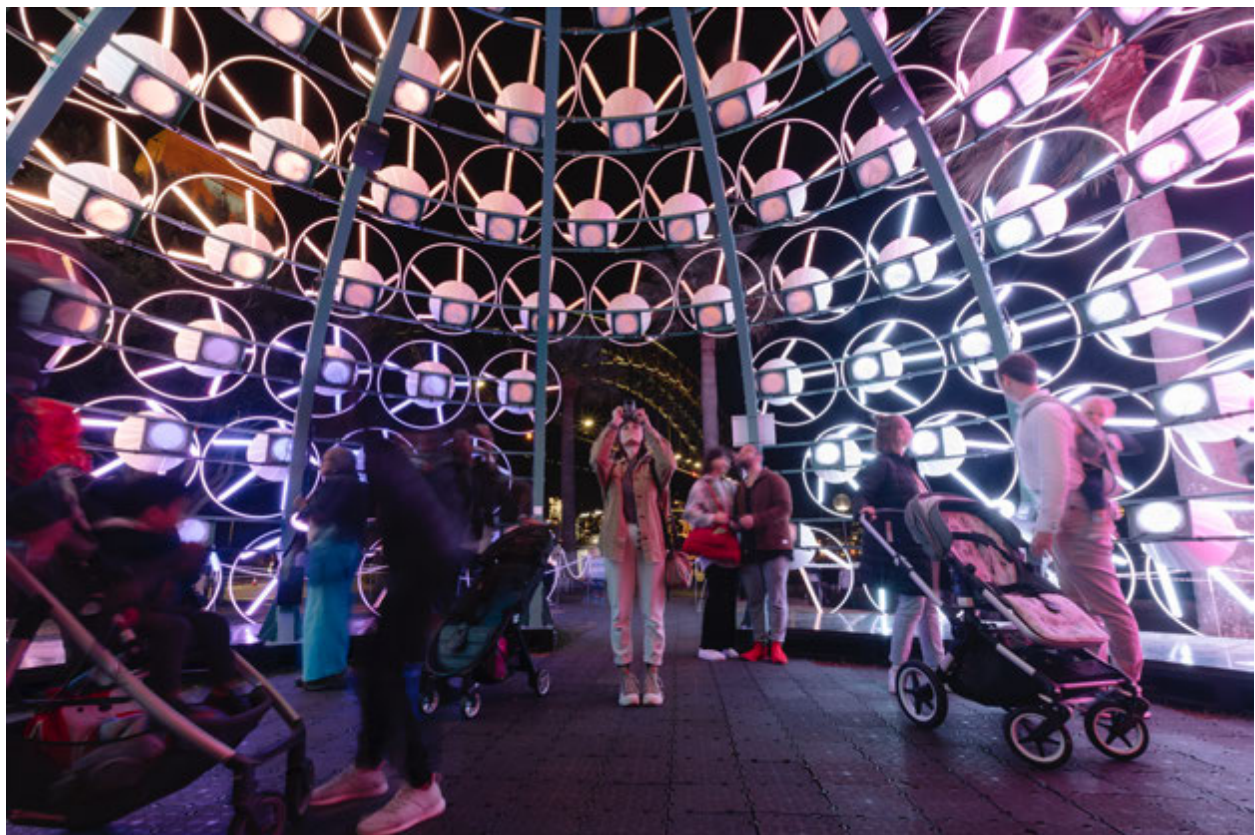


Image courtesy of Amigo & Amigo

Kaileigh Krysztofiak, General Manager of Lights On Stratford, has already experienced Dandelion firsthand. *“In June, I was incredibly lucky to be invited to Vivid Sydney; one of the largest light festivals in the world. With the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House as back drop, Amigo & Amigo’s Dandelion made its glowing premiere. I spent several nights watching thousands of people in awe of Dandelion’s beauty and size, flocking to it to engage and play inside and out of the exhibit. The experience of “Dandelion” is a beautiful, joy-filled composition of sound, light and interactivity. I can’t wait for you to see it!”*

Lights On Stratford’s unique approach and goals are captured in its manifesto:

- We bring light and joy to Stratford’s public spaces.
- We are free to the public and accessible for everyone to participate.
- We are a cultural anchor tenant that enables additional events and experiences.
- We celebrate and embrace winter.
- We help grow a vibrant year-round visitor economy for the region.
- We improve the quality of life within our community.

And with over 80,000 patrons across the main light art installations last winter, this approach is resonating with patrons. It’s also connecting with artists too. *“The support we’ve received from the Stratford community is truly unique, and the city itself provides a stunning backdrop for our light art,”* added Simone Chua. *“Amigo & Amigo are committed to supporting independent festivals like Lights On Stratford. These are events created by and for the community, representing a labor of love and dedication. They hold the power to bring art and people together in a way that is truly special.”*

“I keep saying that it takes a village to build a winter lights festival, and we’re now a global village with incredible local and international artists coming together to make Stratford shine bright with joy each winter,” said Zac Gribble, Executive Director, Destination Stratford and Festival Director, Lights On Stratford. *“We’re incredibly excited about showcasing Dandelion in Market Square and look forward to announcing more festival displays and experiences soon.”*



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Prepare to be mesmerized this winter when interactive displays will light up nightly Thursday through Sunday from 5-10pm. The 4th annual Lights On Stratford is free to the public and set to launch on December 15th, 2023 until January 13th, 2024. Visit lightsonstratford.ca for more details.

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For more information, please email hello@visitstratford.ca.