



Destination Stratford
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Lights On Stratford Announces Major Light Art Installations in Market Square for its 5th Annual Winter Festival

Stratford's Market Square will be host to the Canadian premieres of EMERGENCE from the UK and STARGATE from Australia



Image credit Alan Hayes, courtesy of This Is Loop

Stratford, Ontario, June 24, 2024 – Now entering its 5th 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 2024/25 theme is REIMAGINE - to have a new idea about the way something should be.

And the first major announcement for this winter's light art installations has not one, but two main installations being hosted at the start of the Light Trail in Market Square.



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The first is the award-winning EMERGENCE by This is Loop, the collaborative artistic partnership of artists Harriet Lumby and Alan Hayes based in the UK.



Image credit: Nunzio Prenna, courtesy of This Is Loop

“We are thrilled to be bringing Emergence to Stratford this winter, this represents not only the Canadian debut for Emergence but also the first time we have exhibited any of our artworks in Canada,” said Alan Hayes, Lead Artist of This is Loop.

‘Emergence’ is a place for contemplation. A sanctum within which to consider the dynamic interplay between order and chaos and the momentous role this plays in systems, life, the self and the entire universe.

The inside of the individual mirrored nodes of the installation offers surprising and awe-inspiring visual illusions that also culminate in an overall combined effect when viewed from a short distance. Each section is carefully constructed to create an optical illusion inside the unit creating a complete sphere of light when viewed from close by that morph into a giant grid of light when viewed from a short distance. This enables distinct experiences for the viewer ranging from collective to intimate depending on location.



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With reflective surfaces completely covering all its facets Emergence takes on the surrounding environment providing new ways of perceiving a previously familiar space. The structure consists of 75 large mirror units covered on all surfaces with a mirror finish arranged into a cylindrical pavilion style structure with three entrances, these entrances are all wheelchair accessible.



Image credit: Alan Hayes, courtesy of This Is Loop

Four lines of individually addressable LED's run around the outer end of each unit creating a square making a total of approximately 14,000 pixels on the entire structure. These LED's are visible from inside and outside and display a constantly evolving and mesmerising program of highly complex light patterns choreographed to the accompanying audio track.

This is Loop collaborated with the incredible 'NYX: Electronic Drone Choir' to create the choral, tribal-feeling soundscape for Emergence to which the lighting is programmed.

The second light art installation for Market Square is STARGATE.



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Image credit: Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.

"We're so thrilled to be a part of Lights On Stratford this year! It will be the Canadian premiere for Stargate, and we can't wait to share this amazing projection sculpture at one of our favourite festivals," said Jay Tettamanti, a Canadian artist and the award-winning innovative force behind Chalk River Labs, a Melbourne-based creative studio.

Stargate features a 12ft square encompassing a circular ring, ingeniously designed to usher viewers on an awe-inspiring journey through the cosmos. This sculptural marvel employs projection mapping to wrap the entire structure with mesmerising visuals that can be



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appreciated from any vantage point. Viewers are encouraged to climb into the central ring, serving as both a meditative space and a source of breathtaking photo opportunities, creating interaction and shared experiences among spectators. Hypnotic visuals create an otherworldly portal where the audience is transported to the realm of the stars while standing firmly on Earth's soil.

"It is such a joy to sit in the summer sun and look forward to sharing in the glow of these beautiful pieces," said Kaileigh Kryzstofiak, General Manager, Lights On Stratford. *"Our winter will be filled with the warmth of collective play and wonder that these works will inspire."*

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 strive to continually reduce our environmental footprint.
- We improve the quality of life within our community.

"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 both EMERGENCE and STARGATE in Market Square and look forward to announcing more Lights On Stratford displays and experiences soon."*

Prepare to be mesmerized this winter when interactive displays will light up nightly Thursday through Sunday from 5-10pm. The 5th annual Lights On Stratford is free to the public and set to launch on December 13th, 2024 until January 19th, 2025. Visit lightsonstratford.ca for more details.

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

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