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UWaterloo Stratford Students Create ‘13 Grandmother Moons’ Art Installations for Lights On Stratford

Three teams from the Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business selected to have their interactive light art projects showcased at the Destination Stratford Welcome Centre throughout the winter lights festival



9 teams of students present their student light art projects to the selection committee at the Destination Stratford Welcome Centre. Photo credit: Noah Pratt

Stratford, Ontario, December 2, 2025 – Now entering its 6th year, the multi award-winning [Lights On Stratford](#) annual winter festival by [Destination Stratford](#) launches on December 12th and will once again transform Stratford’s heritage downtown and park system with luminous art and interactive light installations over the course of six weekends in the darkest and coldest part of the year.

The Lights On Stratford 2025/26 theme is **RADIANCE**. Officially defined as a “*type of glowing: either from a light source like the sun or a healthy, beaming person,*” event organizers extend the concept of radiance to reflect a community that comes together on a winter’s night to celebrate art and light.

And demonstrating an abundance of radiant creativity and innovation, 46 students from the “GBDA 412: Special Topics in Digital Culture” course at the University of Waterloo Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business were challenged to design and create large-scale interactive media art installations specifically for the winter lights festival.

“It is such an incredible honour for our students to be given the opportunity to showcase their creative talent and critical design skills in a festival of this magnitude,” said David Han, the GBDA 412 program instructor at UWaterloo Stratford. *“Public art has a unique power to genuinely connect with audiences, and I’ve encouraged my students to tap into that power to create projects that are grounded in a sense of responsibility and respect for the communities and environments around them. I’m very excited for festival patrons to experience the creativity, care, and innovation that these students put into their work.”*



UWaterloo 4th year students present their GBDA 412 course light art projects at the Destination Stratford Welcome Centre.
Photo credit: Noah Pratt

Students in GBDA 412 were tasked with creating large-scale interactive installations inspired by the 13 Grandmother Moons stories—an Indigenous knowledge tradition rooted in the Stratford region. The project emphasizes ethical design, cultural sensitivity, and meaningful engagement with local communities.

New for this year is the hosting of the final 3 selected light art installations within Destination Stratford's Welcome Centre at 47 Downie Street. *"This is the 2nd year we've collaborated with UWaterloo to create student light art displays, and I continue to be amazed at their creativity and brilliance,"* said Zac Gribble, Executive Director of Destination Stratford and Festival Director of Lights On Stratford. *"Showcasing these new interactive experiences at our Welcome Centre is incredibly exciting with the building itself transformed through exterior window projections, MicroTile wall and indoor/outdoor facing displays. I can't wait for festival patrons to engage with these beautiful and thought-provoking art installations."*



UWaterloo students present "When We Come Together" light art project to members of the selection committee at the Destination Stratford Welcome Centre. Photo credit: Noah Pratt

The 3 UWaterloo GBDA 412 student projects selected to be included at Lights On Stratford are:

Ripples Through Time draws from the stories of the Thirteen Grandmother Moons and lived Indigenous experience to represent how human relationships with water have shifted across generations. Using interactive digital windows and body-motion tracking, visitors are invited to create ripples of light that reveal two contrasting perspectives: one celebrating water as a source of life and community, and another uncovering its disruption through colonization.



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Rooted in Indigenous teachings, **Healing Currents** is an interactive projection installation inspired by the fourth Moon of Creation that transforms reflective prompts into radiant digital sucker fish—symbolizing collective healing through light and renewal.

When We Come Together is an interactive micro-tile installation where small gestures of light connect to form shared radiance, reflecting how reconciliation grows from the self to the community.

Prepare to be mesmerized this winter when interactive displays will light up nightly Thursday through Sunday from 5-10pm. The 6th annual Lights On Stratford is free to the public and set to launch on December 12th, 2025 until January 18th, 2026. Visit lightsonstratford.ca for more details, upcoming announcements and sponsorship opportunities.

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