



Destination Stratford
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lights On Stratford Unveils Full 2026/27 Winter Festival Lineup Celebrating "CANADA: NORTHERN LIGHTS"

This year's light festival features exclusively Canadian light art installations selected from over 50 proposals by artists across the country



Stratford, Ontario, August 10, 2026 – Now entering its 7th year, the multi award-winning [Lights On Stratford](#) annual winter festival hosted by [Destination Stratford](#) will once again transform Stratford's heritage downtown and park system with luminous art and interactive light installations with the theme **CANADA: NORTHERN LIGHTS**, dedicated to showcasing Canadian artists, voices, and perspectives.

"We're currently living in a period of global instability and uncertainty, and yet the resilience, creativity and pride that Canada exemplifies is truly inspiring. Our aim this winter is to highlight Canada's unique spirit through innovative light art installations by Canadian artists," said Zac Gribble, Executive Director, Destination Stratford and Festival Director, Lights On Stratford. *"Canada's light art scene continues to rapidly evolve and Lights On Stratford is proud to actively help it grow further and faster with this year's theme."*

Lights On Stratford received **over 50 artwork proposals** from across the country after a national call to Canadian artists, studios, and creative teams to be presented as part of the 2026/27 festival.

"Our seventh season focuses on Canadian artists, tapping into the incredible creativity that exists across the country. It's a privilege to bring those voices together in Stratford and create a shared experience that celebrates Canadian storytelling through light," said Kaileigh Krysztofiak, General Manager, Lights On Stratford.

In addition to the year-round **LIGHTWALL** and **HEART** installations, this winter's curated Light Art includes:



AS WATER FALLS by Iregular (Quebec), Ontario premiere. Artist Statement:

Nature is alive and ever-changing, and so are our artworks; AS WATER FALLS is a digital waterfall that continuously evolves with alternating patterns and visuals that are never the same. This virtual cascade is also accompanied by a changing soundscape that heightens the experience.

As a digital art studio that often explores nature-related concepts, it is no surprise that our attraction to water reverberates in many of our works. The waterfall theme was deliberately chosen to emphasize the power and significance of this natural phenomenon, while the title itself adds movement to the piece from the outset, suggesting the limitless creative possibilities that occur “as water falls.”

The flowing patterns that continuously transform emulate nature’s constant evolution and the inherent randomness of its rhythms. No two moments are ever alike.

Designed for crowds of all ages, AS WATER FALLS blurs the natural/digital frontier and offers people a moment of reconnection with the great outdoors, inviting them to rediscover the timeless, simple pleasures of Mother Nature.



FOREST CHOIR by Ottomata (Quebec), Ontario premiere. Artist Statement:

Forest Choir is a tribute to the silent majesty of the woods, designed to give a luminous and musical voice to the natural world. By intertwining atmospheric soundscapes and responsive lighting directly into the environment, the installation will transform Tom Patterson Island into a living, resonant ecosystem. It invites visitors to slow down, wander, and forge a deeper, almost magical connection with the surrounding trees and the winter night. As a Canadian studio, we are exceptionally proud to bring Forest Choir to Lights On Stratford, a festival that so beautifully celebrates winter and community in such a stunning natural setting.

Visitors step onto one of four stations, speak into a microphone, and see a colored light travel into the trees. The forest responds with the call of a local animal. As more people join, a luminous, dreamlike chorus emerges between humans, the forest, and its creatures.



THE TUNNEL, THE PORTAL, and THE DOORS by B!G ART (Alberta). Artist Statement:

We spend our days dreaming up big, interactive experiences that bring people together, so it's pretty special to be part of a festival that's doing the same for Canadian artists and Canadians alike.

A huge thank you to Lights On Stratford for putting Canadian creativity front and centre this year. Supporting local artists means more bold ideas get built, more stories get told, and more communities get to experience something unforgettable.

We're proud to be among such an inspiring group of makers, dreamers, and builders—and even prouder that it's all happening right here in Canada.

Here's to creating big moments, supporting local talent, and showing just how extraordinary Canadian creativity can be.

Lights On Stratford will be launching, in the coming weeks, a new Call to Artists to fill all 6 of THE DOORS with diverse and unique artwork from across the country.

RHYTHM by ONGA Artful Light (British Columbia), World premiere. Artist Statement:



“RHYTHM: Conductors of the Northern Lights” will transform Tom Patterson Island into a living, interactive canvas where light, sound, and human movement intertwine. Inspired by the organic waves of Stratford’s Avon River and the fluid curtains of the Aurora Borealis, the installation creates an immersive journey where visitors are no longer passive observers, but active creators of the Canadian winter experience.





GOLDEN EYE by Tonya Hart (Ontario). Artist Statement:

A quintessential aspect of dreaming is the fluidity of thought that thrives within the subconscious mind. In art, the Surrealists are renowned for capturing this fluidity through juxtapositions that blur the line between the rational mind and the dream state, unlocking a new realm of creativity. Golden Eye is inspired by the Surrealist dreamscape that combines the iconography of the sun with the symbol of the eye.

The sculpture's spherical shape embodies a vision of the magnetosphere, expanding into an ellipsoid that references both Earth and the gravitational pull of the moon, all through the vehicle of sight—the eye. The key connection between the sun and the eye is light, the fundamental force that bridges all life on Earth.

Installed for Lights On Stratford, Golden Eye will come to life day and night to blur the boundary between reality and the transformative flow of light.

Lights On Stratford is also excited to support and showcase local talent with 3 **COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT** artworks hosted at the Destination Stratford Welcome Centre.



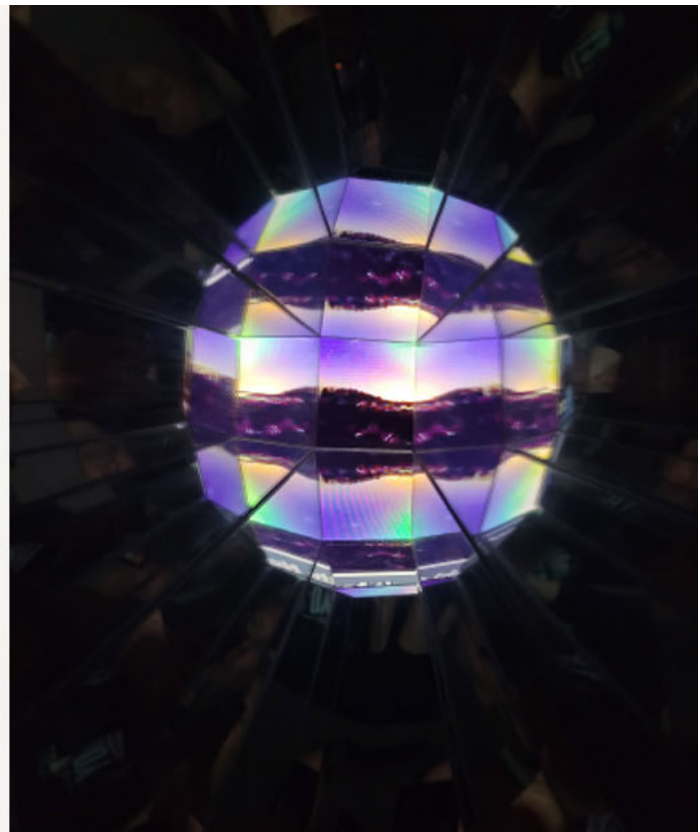
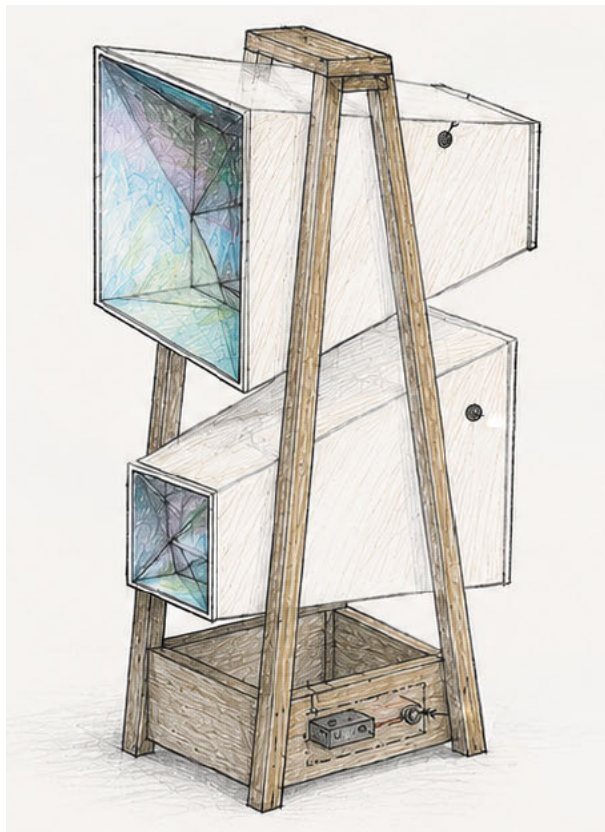
STARLIT NIGHT by Sara Nieto (Stratford). Artist Statement:

The first marks of Starlit Night were created through a process of automatic drawing—spontaneous lines made to move beyond perfectionism and creative limitations. As these forms slowly revealed themselves, they became the foundation for a three-act story exploring the inner universe we carry.

The concept later took shape through a sentence written in a sketchbook: We are shaped by the places we inhabit, the languages we learn, the sounds that surround us, the people we encounter, and the memories we choose to carry. Like a theatre play, the three acts reflect the constant movement of identity—how we transform, adapt, and discover new ways of belonging across different worlds.

Combining painting and interactive technology, the installation invites everyone to become active participants in the artwork. Through capacitive touch interaction, each painting responds to human presence by activating its own combination of light and sound. Every touch contributes to each artwork, creating an immersive and playful atmosphere. The rhythm of light flows through each painting like an electrical impulse, echoing the emotions that shape us.

Inspired by introspection, the installation creates a sensory experience where viewers can pause, explore, and discover their own connection within this Starlit Night.



THE SHAPE OF ATMOSPHERE by Peg Dunnem, Simon Brothers, and Jeremy Cox (Stratford). Artist Statement:

The Shape of Atmosphere is an immersive peepbox installation that combines fibre art, mirrors, moving image (video), light, and sculptural fabrication to create a compact but expansive visual environment inspired by the atmospheric beauty and mystery of the northern lights.

Designed specifically for the LOS Spotlight program, the installation invites audiences to physically approach and peer into a handcrafted peepbox sculpture where woven fibre elements, projected imagery, and mirrored surfaces combine to create immersive optical and infinity effects. Projected light and moving image activate the interior space, where reflection and repetition transform small handmade forms into seemingly endless illuminated environments. Mirrored surfaces multiply and extend the imagery into a prismatic field of infinite reflection, evoking the shifting, elusive movement of the aurora borealis.



WHY DON'T WE TOGETHER by Dear Bear Multi-Arts. Artist Statement:

Why Don't We Together (WDWT) is an electric and intimate audio-visual installation featuring original Canadian audio short stories, rich soundscapes, and immersive lighting. The whole experience takes place inside "The Hut" - a cozy 10ft x10ft custom-built octagonal structure. Audiences are invited to enter The Hut with up to 7 others, (plus room for one wheelchair), where they can collectively choose from a selection of short audio stories just by pushing a button. Once they do: the walls, seats, ceilings, and airwaves come alive to transport everyone into the world of each story.

In this version of WDWT, there will be 6 featured stories, including 5 brand new stories created specifically for this presentation by Stratford artists. These stories last from 3-8 minutes each, and are voiced by the writers of their own stories. Audiences are encouraged to open the door in between stories, so as to invite others to join, or to make room for new groups. The structure of The Hut was intentionally designed so that audiences would be facing each other while experiencing it. Indeed, as the inner panels light up to a rainbow of intricately designed colours, each audience member is framed by the lights behind them, bringing audiences into the foreground of each others' experience. WDWT is an intimate, innovative, and mindful way of experiencing stories together.



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New this year is a Lights On Stratford installation proudly presented by Gold Sponsor Downtown Stratford BIA, featuring more than 100 MAPLE LEAF LED neon lights—made right here in Ontario—displayed in downtown storefronts and across the front façade windows of Stratford City Hall, creating a vibrant celebration of Canadian pride throughout the community.



Festival favourites return this winter, including the popular FREE HOP-ON HOP-OFF SHUTTLE BUS, along with Friday and Saturday FOOD TRUCKS, SILENT DISCO PARTIES, FREE HOT CHOCOLATE, and much more! Visit lightsonstratford.ca for more details, upcoming announcements, as well as sponsorship opportunities.

Prepare to be mesmerized this winter when interactive displays will light up nightly Thursday through Sunday from 5-10pm. The 7th annual Lights On Stratford is free to the public and set to launch on December 18th, 2026 until January 10th, 2027.

Lights On Stratford is made possible through the support of its partners and the generosity of its community sponsors. It is financially assisted by Experience Ontario, a program of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming.

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Images used above are provided courtesy of the artists.

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