Self Guided Tour STLC

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Right here

Right now

Wherever you are

You are the backstage, you are the concierge, the courtyard where eventgoers spill out and mingle into the cool night.

This tour will be written by you, for you.

Instructions

- At the bottom of each page, you will see which page to go to next.
- Answer character prompts and room prompts with writing or other mediums.
- You do not have to complete or read everything.
- You can complete the same thing more than once.
- Have fun. Be improbable.

you are here with two children

you have a STLC season pass

you biked here

you know a little bit of English

wearing a mask causes nerve pain

you are jet lagged

you have a service dog

you do not own a mobile phone

Enter

By whatever means of getting here, jetpack or canal boat, with a group or alone, you arrive at the St. Lawrence Center (STLC) of your imagination. You can be anywhere, underwater, on a space gondola, or in your room. The STLC is right in front of you, doors open.

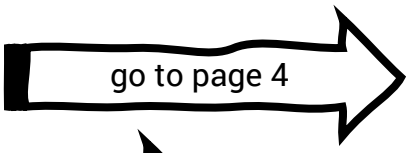
Think about what you know of the center, leave it outside. Grab a blank page by the door and enter.

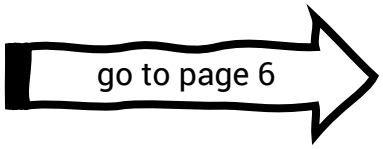
And the STLC looks like… a whole lot of nothing.

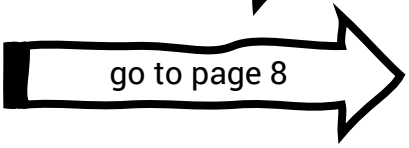
That is what you think at first, until you still your senses and detect three points of interest in the distance. You feel the faint vibration of music and talking. You catch a fleeting aroma of food. And you glimpse a powerful flash of strobe light.

Something is happening over there and you want to join in.

To go to each location, follow the page number below.

- Public Space 

- Food 

- Theater 

If you have visited all that you want, go to page 11

Public Space

A pack of giggling children almost run you over as they weave through weight bearing columns and moveable benches on the bottom of the outdoor space. The space is shaped like an amphitheatre[1], walled on two sides by the building and sloped with brownish greenery in the crisp November air.

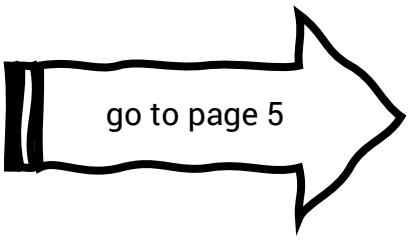
A couple holding hands exits the sliding glass door of the food court, skirts a chalk drawing, and climbs a steep path to reach sunlight. They sit on the recycled concrete edge of a planter that only holds wood chips at the moment.

In the terrace above them just short of street level, an influencer wearing a reflective pink leather jacket and leaning on a crutch speaks at a tripod, doing take after take of the same script. Most passerby ignored the influencer who was making exaggerated gestures at the mass timber buttresses rising between garden beds to seemingly hold up the concrete overhang[2] that contained the theater.

"Pikachu! Pikachu!" Shrieked two kids huddled over a shared smartphone.

The influencer scrapped a take.

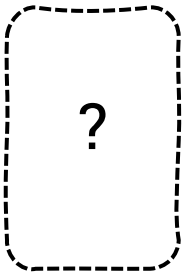
The young AR gamers ran around the perimeter of the amphitheatre and down a winding ramp to the sheltered bottom, a lazy green river of permeable grass paving[3].



[1] Interview: Multifunctional outdoor space, inspired by Little Island NYC https://littleisland.org/
[2] Melding of old concrete and new wood as a narrative, aesthetic, and embodied carbon planning
[3] ADA compliant grass block pavers, also unlocks urban soil https://www.invisiblestructures.com/solutions/ada/

Public Space

Character Prompt



Pick a character or imagine yourself in the scene.

A child is hurt and starts crying. How do you or a character(s) respond?

Optional: apply a card from page 2 to the character or yourself.

Example

A kindergartner in a grey puffy jacket is splayed on the ground in the acoustically perfect center of the bowl-like outdoor space, wailing an angry storm.

Halfway up the bowl, Mel plugs one ear with her finger and sinks the other into her partner's shoulder. "That's why I hate kids," she says. Robin grunts in response and shifts her book to her other hand.

"Give my apple back!" The kindergartner screams at an adult who looks unsure of what to do.

Mel mutters, "go hug the kid. Standard tantrum procedure, move them offstage, jeez."

"You work at a daycare?" Said a voice behind them.

Mel turned around and met the friendly wave of a stranger. "Not anymore."

"Me too, actually. All the runny noses. Sorry for eavesdropping but I thought someone should…" they trailed off.

Robin closes her book and motions for the three of them to head down to help.

Room Prompt

What are some of the plant species? What plants will you not find here?

return to page 3

Food

A staff member in a white apron wheels a stainless steel food cart past you. Ahead where pictogram signage[4] points to the food court (and to the main theater down the hall), someone using the self-checkout counter moves to stand in the path of the staff member. They start to argue about the extra cost of takeout containers, while next in line a person wearing business attire shifts from foot to foot.

Child-height food display trollies creates a low wall between seating area, food serving, and open concept kitchen. There's also an alcove with a sink, microwaves, and other simple equipment positioned intuitively for public use.

In the kitchen a chef stops her salad prep to take the food cart from her harried colleague, refilling it with Ontario apples and a sign that says "FREE"[5].

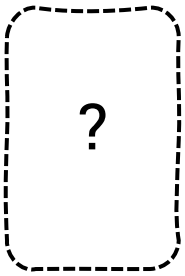
The concrete wall opposite the kitchen has a painted design that transitions smoothly onto a sliding glass wall. An old man sitting on his walker bounces a baby while his large family[6] gathers collapsible wooden tables and chairs from the indoor and outdoor seating area to him like an amoeba.

A teenager with headphones around their neck reluctantly leaves the gathering, carrying at least five tupperwares full of homemade sandwiches toward the public panini press.

[4] Interview: SKETCH Working Arts has these accessible and welcoming designs in its building
[5] https://www.sketch.ca
[6] Interview: Multigenerational gatherings

Food

Character Prompt



Pick a character or imagine yourself in the scene.

The moveable furniture is left behind in clumps instead of evenly dispersed. Do you or a character(s) spend time to tidy them?

Optional: apply a card from page 2 to the character or yourself.

Example

Marek is here with two whiny kids and a headache. “Pick your lunch,” he snaps at the two ten year olds. Dragging a chair to a table that has a clear view of the playground outside, Marek flicks open his work laptop and fires off some emails. He realizes he couldn’t remember what he ordered, then stands up with a jolt.

“Al-“ he starts to call then hushes himself.

Alwin and Nitara are working together to carry stray chairs back to tables without them, under direction from a person in a white apron. Marek sits and watches with interest. The employee or volunteer high fives the kids and points them at another moved chair.

Room Prompt

What is on the menu? What will never be on the menu?

Add a public kitchen appliance to the alcove that no one has thought of yet.

return to page 3

Theater

The main theater is under construction.

You run your eyes over the signage again, then sigh and turn around from the plastic sheeted double door. In the lobby overhanging Scott Street Park, a gathering of people hides the on and off sound of electric drills some thick walls away.

There's a multicoloured 3D printed model of the finished auditorium on a circular display[7]. Two women in motorized wheelchairs[8] take turns tapping on and rotating the model, arguing over virtual production technojargon.

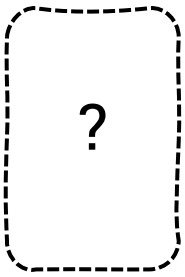
Most of the crowd is staring upwards at an expensive quadcopter hovering on the celling. Following a laser pointer, the drone slowly tilts towards the old exterior wall and traces a white line on the concrete on its way down. The style reflects the food court mural. People move out of the way as the drone paints across the hardwood floor then up the other side: It slows down over exposed metal brackets[9] before painting onto glass, following one of many curved floor to ceiling wooden ribs that give the impression of being in the warm hull of a solar powered giant[10].

Sitting high on a stepladder, the artist in residence shines his guiding laser onto his lap and catches the returning drone.

[7] Interview: Public interaction with things under construction
[8] Interview: Disabled people should be visible and active
[9] Interview: Exposed structure symbolizes a green building
[10] Interview: Natural lighting and lots of wood, UBC's CIRS building

Theater

Character Prompt



Pick a character or imagine yourself in the scene.

The artist wants to give you or a character(s) the drone laser to try doodling on the wall. Interested?

Optional: apply a card from page 2 to the character or yourself.

Example

"No thank," you stammer, hoping this was the polite response.

The artist nods and moves on to the next person. You blend back in with the crowd. Coming here alone was worth it.

Room Prompt

What images, motifs, will be in the finished mural? What will not appear on the mural?

What else should be displayed together with the 3D model?

return to page 3

You have reached the end of the tour.

The three points of interest fade into the background noise of a city of five million and growing. A thousand other tours of university campuses, condominiums, other new theaters, are happening every day. No one but you will remember *this* tour, this place invisible from the skyline.

Wait, one last thing. A hand painted suggestion box pops out before you. On it is blank paper, a pile of crayons, and a Dictaphone.

Last Prompt

What do you put into the box?

Thanks to the Building Better Boot Camp for giving me the white paper award.

Thanks to Bettina Hoar for her role in running BBBC and extensive communication about this off the charts project.

Thanks to interviewees for their anecdotal source material: Alex Lukachko, Jayde Malam, John Robinson, Leslie Lester, Sebastián Carrizo.

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