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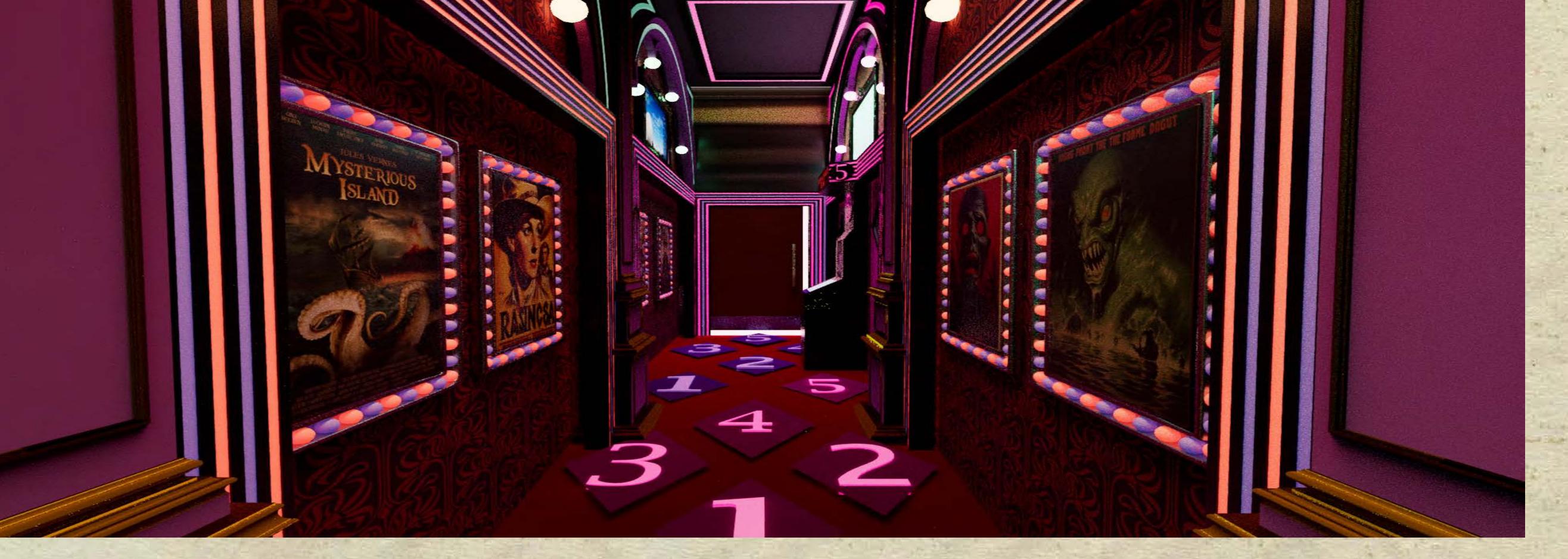
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Render of the Atrium by Anthony Nardone

### fl Note on the Submission

#### A PLACE DELIBERATELY DESIGNED TO BE BUILT

This booklet approaches the 2024 Storyland Design Challenge from the perspective of a start-up pitching a locationbased experience that solves a problem based on research and interviews. Calling themselves "Gateways Creative," the team focused on creating an experience that balances financial responsibility, executability, and creative risk to make something memorable, magical, profitable, and impactful. Therefore, this document showcases not only the

### WE'RE THE TEAM THAT CAN MAKE A DREAM A REALITY

#### TWO ENGINEERS AND TWO DESIGNERS WITH A PASSION FOR ENTERTAINMENT DESIGN

#### **ANTHONY NARDONE**

Mechanical Engineer

Ever since he set foot in the Haunted Mansion for the first time when he was four years old, Anthony has been passionate about working in themed entertainment. He's obsessed with the pursuit of projects that combine art, engineering, and storytelling that touch the hearts of generations of people. In short, he's driven to make things that make people happy.

He earned an M.S.E. in Integrated Product Design with a certificate in Engineering Entrepreneurship and a B.S.E. in Mechanical Engineering with a minor in Fine Arts from the University of Pennsylvania with Mechanical Engineering experience at SpaceX and Walt Disney Imagineering.

#### **KEVIN THOMAS**

Computer Engineer



Kevin is a seasoned software developer with a passion for both technology and creativity. With a degree in Computer Science from the University of Pennsylvania, he has built a diverse career, ranging from roles at tech giants like AWS to working with startups toward realizing their innovative visions.

Outside of professional work, Kevin is deeply involved in robotics and enjoys exploring the intersection of technology and entertainment. An avid board game enthusiast, Kevin also channels his technical expertise into immersive experiences, like designing captivating home Christmas light shows that bring joy to the community.

#### LYDIA KO

Illustrator, Branding Design



Some terms Lydia uses to describe herself are illustrator, visual designer, product designer, and artist, but her favorite way to put what she does into words is "making things pretty." The books and animated media she consumed growing up fostered a love for storytelling and art that has stayed with her since. Lydia is particularly drawn to the intersection of both domains--the capacity art has to bring ideas and stories to life, and loves to use her skills to do just that.

This love led her to pursue her Bachelor's in Fine Arts with a concentration in Animation at the University of Pennsylvania, and helps shape her design thinking in her time as a Master's student at Penn studying Integrated Product Design.

#### MIRANDA NARDONE

Motion Design, Branding Design



Infusing her love for art into a passion for creativity, Miranda continually explores new design programs, pushing the boundaries of her imagination with every creation. Aspiring to contribute to the entertainment design world, she is driven by the desire to create experiences that resonate with others, bringing them joy and happiness. Miranda firmly believe that every design should tell a compelling story—one that captivates an audience and leaves a lasting

She is intrigued by the areas where design meets interaction and currently pursues this through obtaining a Master's degree in Integrated Product Design from the University of Pennsylvania.

creative process of Gateways Cinescape but also the constraints of the reality Cinescape would live in.

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### GATEWAYS CINESCAPE FORGES FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH IMMERSIVE GAMING

Gateways Cinescape helps people forge new friendships and reinforce old ones through the power of immersive gaming. It blends four, 15-minute live-action games, a bar with games aimed at sparking socialization, and a lounge that constantly changes to reflect its patrons' performance in the games.

Cinescape's live-action games are movie scenes that guests have been transported to via the theater doors. There's the Iron Diner, a chaotic cooking game where two teams compete to prepare and serve up more orders in an optimistic 1950s musical; Ghost Writer's Study, a 1930s monster film where guests sit around a seance table to defend their hearts from waves of spirits using lights and vacuums; Pirates of the Great Grid, an over-the-top 80s sci-fi adventure where two pirate crews navigate their ships to battle each other in cyberspace; and First Festival, a 2000s fantasy film set in an evil-free world holding a festival of mini-games.

Outside of the movies, Cinescape offers guests even more gameplay possibilities at the concession bar, where guests play minigames and swap seats with new guests after every round of "Speed Gaming."

Finally, the lounge is for guests to enjoy food and drinks, relax, and chat, but also offers plenty for the guests to discover: movie props from the games prominently displayed; movie posters that constantly change; a wall of fame to showcase the best-performing guests; and portraits of the Cinescape Founders. All of the collections serve to fill the space with detail and offer hints to secrets that can be discovered within the movies upon replay.

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With the movies designed to be replayed by groups, bar games that are designed for strangers to interact, and a lounge to offer respite from the action, Cinescape is the watering hole experience chasers have been looking for!



### TODAY'S EXPERIENCE CHASERS NEED A WATERING HOLE!

#### A PLACE DELIBERATELY DESIGNED TO FORGE NEW FRIENDSHIPS AND REINFORCE OLD ONES

In today's increasingly digital age, making friends is not as simple as just playing games on the playground and immediately gaining a friend. Young professionals fresh out of college especially, have found it difficult to do so, citing shyness or the belief that everyone has friendship groups already formed on top of remnants of social anxiety induced by COVID. Generally, common hobbies like sports and music create "watering holes" like sports bars and concerts for people to meet. But, we've identified a group generally aged within Gen Z and Millenial that we call the Experience Chasers that is looking a place to share immersive experiences, escape digital fatigue, and blends "the familiar" with something new. In addition to this, from our primary research, the "magic formula" for making friends is consistency (keep showing up), opportunity for vulnerability (opening up to people), and reciprocity (initiation on both sides). A dedicated watering hole can help make consistency easier to obtain and vulnerability likelier to occur.

Escape Rooms are best poised to be a watering hole for these experience chasers, but the execution of most escape room owners, with special exceptions such as the Escape Hotel in Los Angeles, leaves a lot to be desired. The immersion from the room ends abruptly once guests escape, with a lobby that looks more like a warehouse or doctor's office, leaving no opportunity for guests to want to hang out; and with an individual game only being playable once, the maximum number of times a guest can visit is the number of rooms in the location, thus opportunities for consistency are also lost.

Theme parks have long been great places to bring established friends, and sometimes a pleasant conversation in a long line can create moments of respite from the action, but amusement parks are much less accessible than other prospective watering holes like sports bars and gyms. Immersive art exhibits are getting better at this. Exhibits created by Meow Wolf, in particular, are leading to strong communities of people revisiting to appreciate these high art concepts. While they are rapidly spreading, they do function more as a museum would: a special event-style visit that does not necessarily lend itself to the consistency required of a watering hole.

With this small overview of the landscape for experience chasers in hand, the Gateways Creative team set out to design a space that entices guests to come back, deliberately lowers social barriers for strangers to meet through its experiences, and creates an environment for guests to simply hang out.



Escape Room LA via Yelp



Line Queue at Radiator Springs, Disneyland by Ken Lund via Flickr



Meow Wolf, Denver, CO by Suzie Tremmel via Flickr

# PHILADELPHIA IS THE BEST CITY FOR CINESCAPE

### THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE NEEDS MORE LOVE FROM THE IMMERSIVE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

One of the biggest questions the team first asked is "what city would best benefit from an immersive experience like Cinescape?" And in considering the potential of each city in the US, the team considered the following factors: Market Attractiveness which was characterized by population, location attractiveness, perceived cost to operate and taxes.

When evaluating population, we considered % change, population of people aged 20–34 (roughly within our demographic), tourism spending and visitation, and critically, the number of escape rooms per person.

Location attractiveness consisted of quality of life index, income data, and spending habits. Cost to operate included rent, wages, and utilities. All of this research was pulled by the team with over 40 cities considered in the study.

What the team found was that Philadelphia finished second only to New York City with the biggest reason being it's bizarre lack of escape rooms and immersive experiences relative to its population. For being the 6th most populous city, center city only contains 4 escape room locations (many are additionally in King of Prussia which is at least a 40 minute drive away from the majority of the population). Aside from Philadelphia, the aforementioned New York City, Austin, and Charlotte were high-performing cities in our study and could have just as easily been chosen.

Beyond selecting a city, the team scoped out specific locations to ground Cinescape in an actual commercial layout requiring them to design around the constraints of the space. When evaluating spaces, the team aimed for 3500 square feet; rent, nets and utilities all-in lower than \$10000 per month; with a large population of people between 21–44 within a 10 minute drive; high consumer spending; low crime rate; ceiling height (about 12 to 14 feet being ideal); high foot traffic and/or high car traffic; and no work remaining for the Landlord to setup the space. These design needs sent the team to to commercial space in Fishtown, a neighborhood within Philadelphia.

With this in mind, the layout of Gateways would begin



### FOUR MOVIE STUDIO OWNERS DISCOVERED PORTALS TO THEIR MOVIES

#### CINESCAPE IS ABOUT THEIR DREAMS TO TRAVEL ANYWHERE, BUT STARTING WITH THEIR OWN MOVIES

Gateways Cinescape is a theater borne from the collaboration between 4 eccentric indie film studio owners to showcase the future of the theater going experience by immersing guests in their movie scenes in real-time to be actively played out. The four founders are using this new concept to give guests an experience they can't get streaming the movie at-home; to increase their respective brand recognition; and to fund research into the secret of how they're able to transport guests to these movies.

The overall story of Cinescape centers around the discoveries, achievements, rivalry, and irresponsibility of its four founders and their movie studios that each have seen moderate success in their 10–20 years of existence. Prior to Cinescape's opening, the founders went vacationing to a remote island in Central America and discovered a crystal capable of opening portals to new worlds. They could travel across the world in a footstep, into the vacuum of space with a simple leap, or most interestingly, step right into scenes from fictional movies they created. During their journey, one founder accidentally dropped the crystal, and it split four ways. Curiously, they retained their power within each shard, but in a mystery they are actively solving, the power is limited to only allowing passage into the same fictional movie scenes (the last place each founder stepped into before dropping it).

So, the founders created Cinescape to fund research on the crystals as well as to grow recognition for their movies. Each founder wants to focus on a different aspect of research on the crystals: Zara wants to discover how to go to as many worlds as possible; Orion wants to know how to choose where the crystals take them; Blaze wants to know how to get more crystals; and Eira wants to know where they came from. Rather than decide on a single path, they decided the best way would be to split the funds based on the "Studio Support" their studio obtains: the studios receive funding based on the percentage of total visiting guests and high-performing guests that "join" their studio upon entering Cinescape. As such, the theater reflects this dynamic by making games that try to weed out the high-performing guests and changing its interior based on which studio is leading in Studio Support.

Each of the main experiences within Cinescape showcases a movie produced by one of the four founders: Orion's Stellar Studios produced Pirates of the Great Grid; Eira's Obsidian Films produced Ghost Writer's Study; Zara's Fellowship Pictures produced First Festival; and Blaze's Spark Cinema produced Iron Diner, and all of them have movie posters, prop displays and portraits prominently showcased within the lounge.





11 Render of the Atrium by Anthony Nardone

### BLAZE

### FOUNDER OF SPARK CINEMA

Spark Cinema is a bastion for aspiring actors and those interested in transforming the looks of those actors, be it hair, makeup or costuming. Founded by Blaze Ardent, the studio pumps out great romantic, comedy and romantic comedy movies. It values raw passion, optimism and beauty (not necessarily extrinsic, fleeting) above all else. Spark Cinema's mascot is the Luxanary (a phoenix/songbird hybrid with feathers that changes colors with its emotions). Blaze is the hot-tempered heart of the group and has a strong flair for showmanship. It's why she pushed for her movie, the Iron Diner to be prominently positioned on a stage for all guests to see.









### FOUNDER OF STELLAR STUDIOS

Orion's Stellar Studios is for the visionary directors and those with an eye for stunts. For the few who's power is best realized from behind the camera, Stellar beckons. Vision, ingenuity, and imagination are valued above all else to the studio, specializing in sci-fi and action films. The studio captures its essence with its mascot of the Grid Kraken, the fantastical sea monster imbued with Tron-like cybernetic tech. Orion processes the strongest entrepreneurial instincts of the group, always pushing for unique concepts that he believes people will love. This risk-taking led to the conception of the Concession Bar, using the bartop as a space for speed gaming and rapid socialization rather just as a place for drinking.



### FOUNDER OF FELLOWSHIP PICTURES

Zara Everwood founded Fellowship Pictures to be at its best when screenwriting and creating special effects through CGI. Able to craft witty or realistic dialogue, along with some intense worldbuilding, this studio is specializes in the fantasy and adventure genres. The Fellowship values honor, cooperation and courage believing in the need of the studios to work together to create art better than the sum of its parts. The fantastical Taios is the mascot: A deity of the forest and adventure made of trees and rock. Zara is witty, kind, and simply enjoys being with her friends. It was her idea to use Cinescape as an opportunity for guests to play out their movies as groups rather than individuals.







### FOUNDER OF OBSIDIAN FILMS

Obsidian Films is best known for its set design, creature shop and overall productions. Its emphasis on practical effects is evident in the creative ways it carries out its intense horror and thriller flicks. Obsidian is for those who want to work behind the scenes in creating convincing environments. Founded by Eira Noir, Obsidian values observance, determination and gentleness, valuing the quote "speak softly and carry a big stick" as its mantra. Its mascot is a living Gargoyle, shrouded in darkness and glowing purple eyes with a deep purple and black color palette. Eira is the quiet lone-wolf of the group. He prefers to be left to his own devices, but still cares deeply about helping his friends. It's why he pushed for every game to have a special role in a separate room for one person in a group of guests.



Character Sketches by Lydia Ko

### A MAD OF CINESCADE

### FEATURES OF THE LOCATION

- **Box Office**
- Coat Check
- Concession Bar
- Lounge
- Bathrooms
- Office
- Theaters



# THE BOX OFFICE BECKONS

#### CINESCAPE'S BOX OFFICE TRANSITIONS GUESTS INTO ITS REALITY

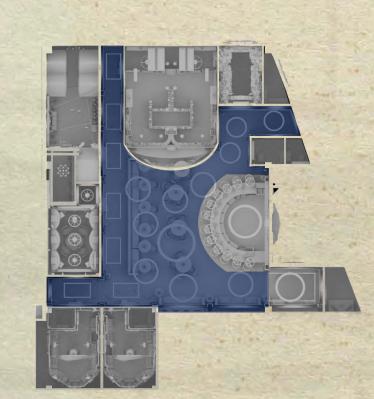
When guests enter the exterior door into location, they find themselves in-between the reality of the world they were once in and the world of the Cinescape Theater. In front of them is the Gateway into the theater fit with a grand neon marquee sign advertising the movies. The night sky rains starlight down on the space, and a mix of citrus and earth can be smelled. Sounds of rustling foliage and crickets fill the night as 1920s-style music is played from a still-working prop radio. This area resets emotions as guest anticipation builds. To the left is a coat check area made to look like a ticket counter, and to the right are a series of movie posters for those playing at the Theater.

The first piece of magic is that the posters are how guests check-in! Movie posters are usually dimensioned 27" x 40" which is not a standard screen size, so to execute on this using off-the-shelf components, a TV screen, screen protector and an IR touch frame hidden behind the poster frame would work.

On the left hand-side, a vintage telephone will sometimes ring. Sometimes, when guests pickup, there'll be an automated message from one of the founders welcoming them to Cinescape; but displayed in the lounge is another telephone that will allow guests to inadvertently be talking to each other. What a way to break the ice! Finally, once guests have checked in and checked their coats, they then open the Gates into the Lounge.



Render of the Atrium by Anthony Nardone



## THE LOUNGE

#### AN EXPERIENCE BUILT TO CONNECT PATRONS

Stepping into the Lounge's interior takes inspiration from the eclectic combination of tastes of the four founders continuing their tug-of-war through the interior of the space: the red carpet rolled out at Blaze's request but only as far as Zara would concede on her wood floor; the neon gates hand-picked by Orion holding up Eira's gothic arches. The smell of freshly popped movie theater popcorn pervades the space.

The Lounge is the thesis statement of Gateways: bringing friends and strangers alike together through the power of live-action games and interactive storytelling. The goal of the lounge is to host events that bring guests of all ages together; create moments that guests can smile at and use as conversation starters; and keep guests in the space, so they'll spend more money, be more likely to take photos for advertising, and generate a positive attachment to the space.





### THE BOOKING PROCESS

With each individual game being 15 minutes per playthrough, they exist in a gray area between needing reservation and being treated like an arcade machine. The team therefore created a process that's simple for the guest despite complex considerations from the team; accommodates different group dynamics; and only give guests detail as they need them.

The ideal group size is 5, but the prototypical is 4 with 1 guest taking the lead on booking the experience.

With each reservation, the leader will purchase a reservation at \$42.50/ head for 3 15-minute games. They are told to plan to stay at Gateways for an hour and half, and that they are guaranteed to play their 3 games in that time span. There could be options for 4 games over the span of 2 hours or \$15/guest for 1, and guests not playing the games may visit the Lounge for free on non-peak hours.

Naturally, the first question is why plan for an hour and half when the games are only 45 minutes in total? This gives guests an opportunity to hang out, eat, and drink in between games and gives operations flexibility such that no group will ever be booked to a game within the first 15/30 minutes of their booking, reducing stress on late guests (this was a commonly cited pain point for guests and escape rooms alike). The guests still get the games that were promised to them, and the location remains optimal in how it cycles the games.

Render of Check-in by Anthony Nardone



### LOUNGE'S ENTRYWAY

Upon guests' first steps in the lounge, they can see all that Gateways can offer. To the left is a small alcove with 2, single-person, all-gender bathrooms with one being ADA (60" wide x 56" deep). Portraits of the four founders with plaques can be seen just outside with a display case filled with props from the movies.

Renders of the Entryway by Anthony Nardone



GATE

COCKTAILS

SPIRIT-FREE

Elderflower Spritz \$7.00

Shirley Temple \$5.50 Arnold Palmer \$5.50

CINES

### PREMIERE SEATING

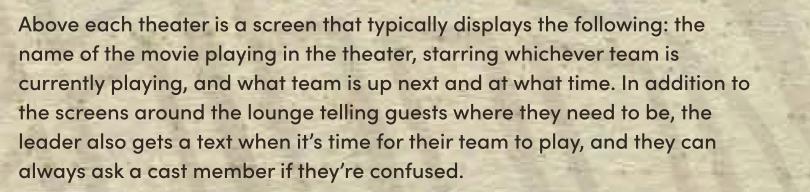
The Lounge seating consists of a mix for all group sizes so teams can hang out, eat/drink, and wait for their next game. All seating will have a QR code that allows them to order drinks, snacks, and food that can then be picked up at the bar. The team decided that partnering with local restaurants would result in better relationships with the surrounding community, likely increase the quality of food, and save space.

Additionally, snacks (especially gourmet popcorn) can be purchased at the concession bar.

The primary seating configuration are the 4–5 person roundtables primarily for food and being in the center of the action. But, there also more communal-focused couches and lounge space to give guests reprieve from the action.







Each theater's exterior also shows which individual is currently selected as the Director and which are going into the main room with a control panel of buttons to change that. Additionally, the control panel enables guests to select specific levels or game modes in select games if there si a returning guest in the group.

The interiors of the theaters can be viewed via movie theater windows, so guests can self-select if a game is right for them or just enjoy watching people play the games while they wait.

Renders of the Lounge by Anthony Nardone













### THE COLLECTION

Around the lounge, guests can find collections of movie props, some of which they can interact with! Here's the telephone that can talk to the one in the box office and a costume dress that changes color palettes based on which studio is winning. But, be sure to check them out every so often, because certain props get hidden behind opaque glass if a studio isn't drumming up enough studio support that day!

Renders of the Collections by Anthony Nardone





## KEEPING UP-TO-DATE

Framed in places all over the lounge are screens that shows the upcoming start times at each theater in the style of the "WDW today channel." Essentially a constantly running real-time slideshow that goes theater to theater and shows the next 2 hours of reservations. This allows guests to see when and where their group is slated to go next.

### STUDIO BEACONS

At the center back of the Lounge are the Studio Supprt Beacons of the four studios of Gateways Cinescape. The higher they are, the better the studio's supporters are performing on that day



# THEATER AND STAGE

While all games can be viewed at their entrance's windows, the team believed Iron Diner would be a lot of fun to watch as the premiere competitive party game at Gateways. But, when a game is not being played, a silver screen will drop down showcasing live streams, highlights, live playoff brackets, and the movie trailers echoing the style of 60s drive-in movies. Or, it can just play movies on select nights.



The Wall of Fame is a small area in between the Courtyard and the rest of the Lounge where top-performing guests can be recognized, where their picture can be taken, where all-time stats for each of the games can be explored, and where merchandise can be purchased. Four columns showcase top-performing individuals with the studio they support or top-performing team, what they did, and when it was achieved. To potentially see themselves on the wall, guests need to opt-in to allowing their likeness to appear on the wall and get their picture taken on the mini-stage.







office space for cast members to monitor the rooms. The games are

MERCHANDISE

other teams, but the Challenge Station arcade machine is a dedicated space that allows two groups to play specifically against each other in select Gateways games. Simply have each leader input their reservation code, select a game to compete in, and the system will do the rest!

### THE CONCESSION BAR

The Concession Bar isn't like other bars or concession stands out there. Guests are still able to order concessions, but it also functions as another game-space for guests. The concession bar's primary goals are to be the location for guests to pick-up drinks/food; host bite-sized games taking atmost 13-15 minutes at a time for guests to easily pick-up and play; encourage a kinetic and interactive atmosphere; and be THE place where strangers interact/collaborate/compete.

The Concession Bar holds 12 seats around a curved bar (curved bars are more conducive for neighbors to interact then straight bars). There's an acrylic portrait of the four studio founders prominently displayed. Depending on the game being played, each of the founders will come alive, push the others out of sight of the frame and "host" the game.



### BARTOP FEATURES

The Concession Bar has game controls and the shelves behind the bartender do not just hold drinks, but props and elements that will be used in the various games. The stand itself will also have space for all of the snacks, drinks, and kitchenware needed to run the bar.

After every game, the host will try their best to ask guests to leave and rotate in new guests, which nominally may not be hard as the guests rotating out will likely be going to their next theater reservation. Pragmatically, we want a clock/timer to display the current time and time until the next bar rotation. There will also be spotlights/logo lights to indicate that the bartop is either filled or awaiting more players. Additionally, the logo of the Studio the guest is affiliated with will show up on their chair when it's chosen.

## THE BAR MINIGAMES

# CANDY CODENAMES IS ONE OF TEN GAMES AIMED TO BE SIMPLE, FUN, AND ENCOURAGE INTERACTION WITH FELLOW GUESTS

A section of the bar shelving is dedicated to prominently displayed candy bars and snacks in a grid-like manner. The bar is split into two teams each headed by a candymaster whose goal is to have their respective teams pick a set of their favorite candies. Both candymasters have the same grid that shows which candies they want, which their opponent wants, which are neutral, and which one is poisoned. The candymaster gives his/her team a one word clue along with a number to hint at which candy they want and how many candies fit that clue. One guest (not the candymaster) at a time selects the candy. If they pick correctly, they keep going. If they pick a neutral or opposing candy, the other team goes. If they pick a poisoned candy, they lose. Also note, these will be real candy that is stocked for purchase.







