

Curatorial Pitch

Category: Uncategorized

written by s2814160 | 22 February 2026



1. Project Premise

The central question of this project is straightforward but difficult: for whom is public space actually allowed to function? I am interested in how openness is arranged, limited, and unevenly experienced, rather than assuming that public space is naturally shared. The issue cannot be reduced to a simple opposition between residents and tourists. What matters is how tourism, infrastructure, commercial visibility, and managed movement work together to shape public space. Some people remain at ease. Others are pushed towards the edge.

2. Curatorial Format

The project is designed as a self-guided outdoor exhibition linked through Edinburgh's public transport network. Route 35 functions as the main structure connecting the sites. The bus is not only a practical device. It is part of the curatorial argument. The exhibition unfolds through infrastructure rather than simply taking place beside it.



Lothian Bus Route 35 in Edinburgh. Screenshot used to indicate the public transport route proposed as the connective structure of the curatorial project. Source: Lothian Buses / route information screenshot.

3. Why This Structure Is Necessary

The project adopts a non-linear structure because it should not depend on one fixed route or one authorized order of interpretation. Viewers may enter from different points, decide how long to stay, and connect the sites in their own way.

At the same time, readability still matters. A project without one dominant sequence can easily become fragmented. For that reason, route design, site prompts, and interpretive tools need to work harder. The main challenge is clear: the structure must be strong enough for dispersed entry to remain meaningful.

4. Main Concerns

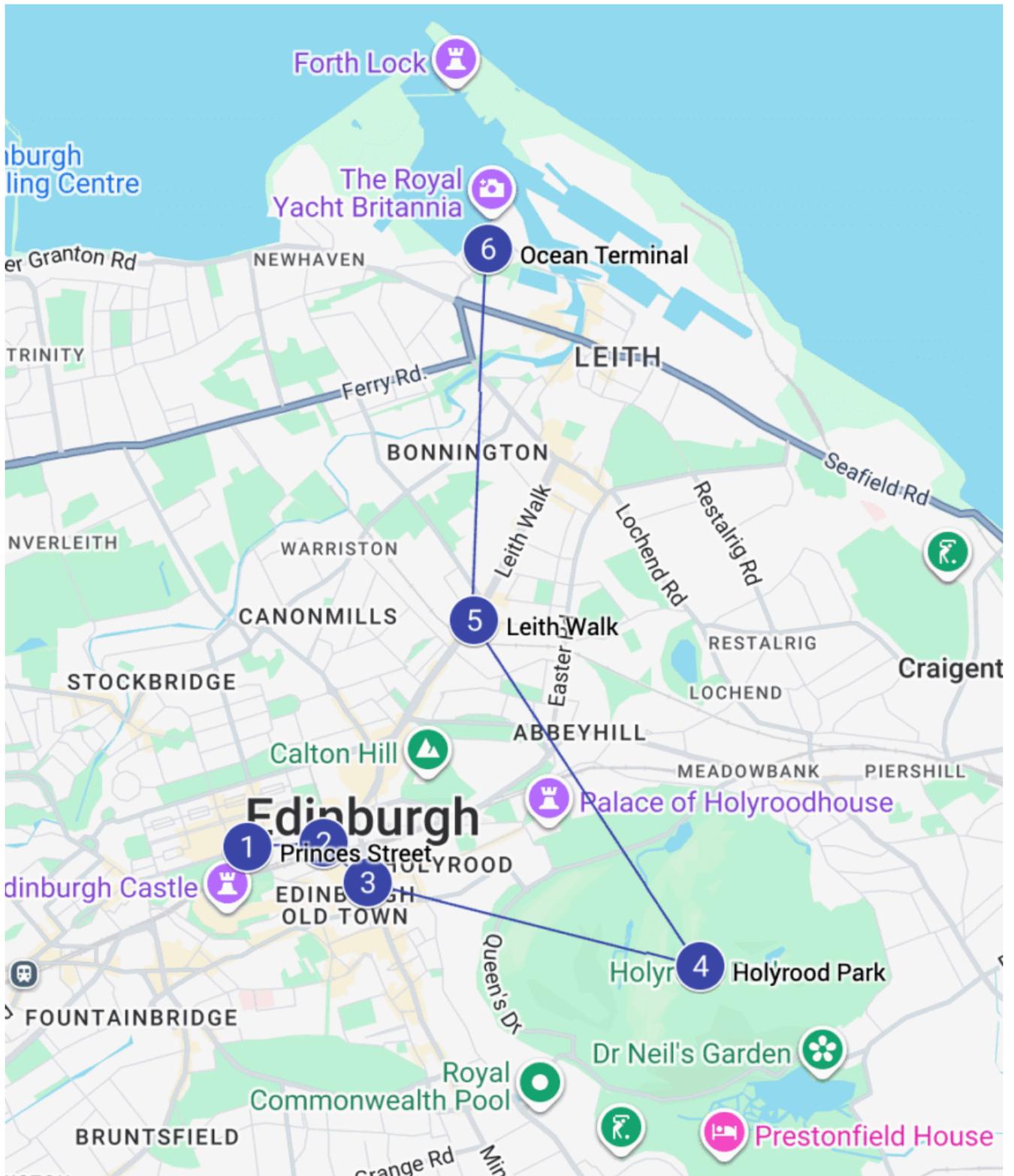
The project approaches its main concerns through three points of entry. First, it examines how tourism reshapes everyday public space, especially where commercial attraction starts to outweigh public need. Second, it focuses on rules that are rarely written down but still affect who feels able to stay, pause, or return. Third, it treats public space as socially produced rather than naturally neutral, and asks how management, infrastructure, and repeated patterns of movement organize space in practice.

5. Theoretical Framework

The project is informed by critical spatial theory. Henri Lefebvre's argument that space is socially produced gives me a way to understand public space as something built through power, use, and repetition rather than given in advance. Doreen Massey pushes this further. Her writing treats space as relational, contested, and always under negotiation. Together, these frameworks allow me to read Edinburgh as a city in which wider tensions become sharply visible.

6. Site Logic

The project is currently organized around six sites in Edinburgh, linked through bus travel. The six-site structure is intended to register different forms of invisible boundary. Movement between sites is equally important. It creates comparison. It exposes uneven experience. It prevents the project from collapsing into a single example.



Exhibition Site Overview Map for the proposed project in Edinburgh, showing the six selected sites connected through the Bus 35 route. Map prepared for curatorial planning. Source: project planning screenshot by Hazel Ren.

7. AR as an Interpretive Method

AR is proposed here as an interpretive method. I am using it because it can bring different spatial layers into view at the same location and from the same perspective. At selected sites, viewers would be able to access simple AR overlays on their phones. A place that now appears stable and familiar could then be re-read as the result of commercial pressure, redirected movement, spatial replacement, and selective visibility. The point is not technological novelty. The point is to interrupt the assumption that the present condition of a site is natural.

8. Indicative Artist Candidates

The project now has a relatively clear shortlist of artist candidates. These names function as realistic references through which I can test how different forms of intervention might support the argument of the project.

Chris Johanson

Chris Johanson is relevant because his work attends to everyday texture, emotional colour, and the relation between ordinary life and environment. What matters here is not formal similarity. His work offers a way of addressing subtle and affective tensions in public space, especially in places where daily urban life collides with commercial visibility.



Chris Johanson, Impermanence #9 (Ron from the past says hello to me in the present), 2025. Acrylic and house paint on recycled canvas, 57.2 × 76.5 × 2 cm. Source: exhibition image.

Toby Paterson

Toby Paterson is currently the strongest visual reference for the project. His abstract language responds directly to spatial structure, movement, and urban rhythm. The project needs a way to make pathways, circulation, and infrastructural order visible without falling back on simple explanation. Among the three candidates, his practice aligns most closely with the spatial and visual logic of the project.



Toby Paterson, installation view, *The Modern Institute*, Aird's Lane Bricks Space, 15 November 2024–15 January 2025. Source: exhibition image.

Clara Ursitti

Clara Ursitti opens another valuable direction. Her scent-based work refuses to keep spatial experience within the visual. Smell can shape the atmosphere. It can also shift attention. At certain sites in this project, where managed public image and lived environmental experience do not fully match, sensory contrast may be a productive way of making that gap perceptible.



Clara Ursitti, scent-based installation work. Source: exhibition image.

9. Publics

The project is aimed mainly at local residents and visitors. It also addresses commuters, passers-by, and those who move through Edinburgh without necessarily questioning how that movement is organized.

10. Practical and Ethical Conditions

The proposal is intended as a temporary, low-impact, and accessible project. Interventions should remain lightweight. Routes need to stay publicly navigable. Accessibility must be treated as part of the curatorial method and considered from the start.

Because the project depends on connections between different sites, permission strategy, route planning, and risk awareness

also become part of its critical structure. A public-space exhibition has to remain ethically and conceptually coherent if it is to hold together at all.

Exhibition Stop No.	Exhibition Theme Positioning	Real Bus 35 Stops (Ocean Terminal Direction)	Walking Connection (Shortest Measured Route)	Accessibility Guarantee
Stop 1	Tourism Capital Boundary (High-Risk Area)	National Museum of Scotland, Old Town	8-minute walk (via George IV Bridge to Princes Street core); or 1 stop transfer via Bus 22/26	No steps on the walking route; wheelchair ramp available for detour
Stop 2	Transportation Power Node (Level 1 Transfer Hub)	South Bridge, Old Town	5-minute walk (via North Bridge to Waverley Bridge transfer core area)	Underground passage with accessible lift, directly leading to Waverley Train Station
Stop 3	Heritage Landscape Boundary (High-Risk Area)	South Bridge, Old Town	3-minute walk (directly to Royal Mile core, near High Street)	Flat walking route with no obstacles
Stop 4	Nature/Urban Boundary (Low-Risk Area)	Scottish Parliament, Holyrood	5-minute walk (to Holyrood Park main entrance, near Arthur's Seat)	Wheelchair access at the park entrance; walking route is a gentle slope
Stop 5	Class and Community Boundary (Social Boundary)	Kirkgate Centre, Leith	2-minute walk (directly to Leith Walk south core, junction of commercial and residential areas)	No steps throughout; tactile paving on the connecting section
Stop 6	Future/Current Boundary (End Point)	Ocean Terminal, North Leith	Direct access (Bus 35 terminal station, no walking required)	Seamless connection between bus station and shopping mall; dedicated wheelchair entrance/exit

Core Route Table for the Bus 35 self-guided tour, showing exhibition stop number, theme positioning, nearest bus stops, walking connections, and accessibility information. Prepared for curatorial planning by Hazel Ren.

References

City of Edinburgh Council. "About the Edinburgh Visitor Levy." Accessed 14 April 2026. <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/business/visitor-levy-edinburgh>.

City of Edinburgh Council. "The Scheme for the Edinburgh

Visitor Levy.” Accessed 14 April 2026.
<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/business/scheme-edinburgh-visitor-levy>.

Kester, Grant H. “Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Art.” *Variant 2*, no. 9 (Winter 1999/2000).

Fitzgerald, William, and Efrossini Spentzou, eds. *The Production of Space in Latin Literature*. First edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Massey, Doreen. *For Space*. London: Sage, 2005.

McGillivray, David, Alba Colombo, and Xavier Villanueva. “Tensions and Disputes over Public Space in Festival Cities: Insights from Barcelona and Edinburgh.” *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events* (Abingdon) 14, no. 3 (September 2022): 229–41.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19407963.2022.2032109>.