

SUKKAH CITY GUIDE

2022

SUKKAH
CITY

A GUIDE TO TEMPORARY
RADICAL STRUCTURES



REBOOT

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In 2010, Sukkah City brought over 100,000 New Yorkers to Union Square for a two-day exhibition of radically reimagined sukkahs. Organized by Joshua Foer, Roger Bennett, and Reboot, the competition attracted almost 650 entries from over three dozen countries, making it one of the largest architecture competitions of recent years. It was covered in the [New York Times](#), the [Wall Street Journal](#), and many of the major architecture and design publications. [New York Magazine](#) devoted a six-page spread to the 12 winning sukkahs. The contest was described in the Atlantic as “probably the largest non-Orthodox, non-Israel-centered public expression of Jewish life in the history of New York.” A [short video produced by the Forward](#) provides a great visual overview.



In the years since the initial event, Sukkah City has inspired a movement of experimental Sukkah projects around the globe, from San Diego to Sydney, from St. Louis to Toronto. Now, for the first time, Reboot and Sukkah City project creators have a set of materials that can help future creatives and communities who want to create their own version of Sukkah City. We hope you will find these to be both informative and inspirational, and also know that each version of this project has its own special context and take on this ancient yet still engaging form of architecture and ritual.

GOALS OF SUKKAH CITY

Our mission is to take Sukkot, one of the original “foot” or pilgrimage festivals that has been lost in the shuffle of the modern American Jewish experience, and reinsert it in its rightful place. Our goal is to popularize and promote the act of building a simple booth, inviting an eclectic mix of friends and neighbors and participating in a week of outside eating, talking and community. In this latest iteration of the project, we want to provide local communities with the tools they need to develop their own versions of Sukkah City.



CRITERIA AND SELECTING THE SUKKAHS

There are a few different ways to select the architects and sukkahs to be built. In the original project, we had a selection process that included a **broad call to action** that resulted in hundreds of diverse submissions from around the world, that were then **reviewed by a jury** of architectural experts and luminaries (Michael Arad, Ron Arad, Allan Chocinov, Paul Goldberger, Steve Heller, Natalie Jeremijenko, Maira Kalman, Geoff Manaugh, Thom Mayne, Thomas de Monchauz, Ada Tolla, and Adam Yarinksy). This also included close **collaboration with American Institute of Architects** and a variety of design oriented media outlets. The requirements that the original version used are available as part of this guide.

In general, the two most popular processes for selection across all iterations for the projects have been either a **design competition** modeled after the original or a **set of commissioned structures**.

Regardless of approach, the following are the types of institutions and individuals to consider including in the process:

- The local chapter of American Institute of Architects and other prominent practitioners in your local area.
- Local architecture schools, including their faculty and students.
- Local media outlets, ranging from general interest publications and newspapers to those focused on architecture, art and design.
- Local arts commissions or other prominent figures/institutions in the broader art and design field.

MARKETING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Depending on the approach taken for selecting the sukkahs to be built, new versions of the projects will have marketing opportunities at both submission and exhibition stages. The submission stage will likely revolve around partnerships that are developed for the selections/commissioning process. The exhibition stage creates a much broader set of opportunities and partnerships. Some things to consider:

- Leverage your partnerships in the selection process to share information about the exhibit and spread the word in the architecture and design communities.
- Work with local JCCs, synagogues, Hillels, and other Jewish institutions to spread the word.
- Work with a publicist to get placement in local publications (both Jewish and secular) leading up to the project. In the case of the original Sukkah City, we worked with [New York Magazine](#) to publish a multipage color spread of the finalists' design renderings and then host the online voting for the "winner".
- Develop a social media strategy and campaign, leverage the design assets of the project and any influential institutions and collaborators (whether institutional or individual).



EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

For the original Sukkah City, Reboot developed two sets of educational materials. The first was a poster for architects and designers that articulated the Halachic requirements for building a Sukkah in a visually interesting and engaging way. The second was a brochure that provided an easier to understand overview of the project—what a sukkah is, brief descriptions of each constructed sukkah and its architect.



Reboot also had an information booth on site where staff and educators could answer questions about the project and hand out the pamphlets, which were also used by community partners and educators who conducted tours of the exhibit for their own communities. Downloadable versions of both educational materials in this resource guide are included with this download.

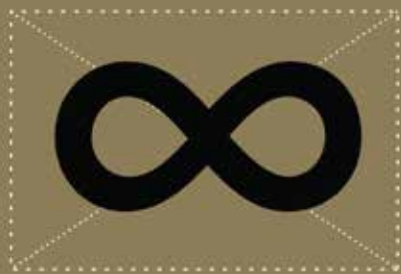


SUNSHINE
SHADE



LEGAL (JEWISH AND SECULAR)

The Sukkah structure sits at a unique regulatory nexus between Jewish law, secular law, and structural engineering. As a result, the original project required the assistance of a lawyer, a rabbi, and a structural engineer. We strongly encourage you to retain the services of each. We used a rabbi to certify that each structure was indeed halachically a sukkah, the lawyer to create contracts with a variety of connected entities (including the designers/builders of the sukkahs), and a structural engineer to inspect each structure for safety before being opened to the public (this was particularly important because it was in a public park). If the exhibition is on public land such as a park, then it is also important to engage the relevant local government authorities for permitting and other related functions. It is also important to obtain a liability insurance policy to specifically cover the exhibition, which will likely be required by a hosting institution. Lastly, the organizers and hosts should consider security measures and costs.



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