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TKTS BOOTH, NEW YORK

A NEW TICKET BOOTH CARVES OUT A DISTINCTIVE SPACE IN THE HEART OF TIMES SQUARE

Project TKTS, Father Duffy Square, Times Square, New York **Design Team** Choi Ropiha Architects, New South Wales, Australia (competition winner); Perkins Eastman, New York (architect); Fisher Marantz Stone, New York (lighting designer); Dewhurst Macfarlane and Partners, London (structural engineer); PKSB Architects, New York (Father Duffy plaza); Merrifield-Roberts, Bristol, R.I. (ticket booth fabricator) **Photographer** Paúl Rivera, Brooklyn, N.Y. **Project Size** 17,200 square feet (plaza); 2,163 square feet (steps); 800 square feet (booth) **Manufacturers** Alcco, Baldinger, Elliptipar, iLight, Lithonia, RAB Lighting, Zumtobel



A stage and a backdrop, the new TKTS ticket booth creates a novel urban experience. The laminated glass staircase uses three bands of red LED striplights per tread to create a glowing effect where visitors are simultaneously performers and spectators (facing page). Compact fluorescents wash the exterior of the fiberglass shell to highlight its curved form (above).

The original 1973 TKTS booth, set up to sell half-price theater tickets, was intended only as a temporary structure. No one expected that the construction trailer surrounded by pipe and rail staging panels would last for more than 30 years or become a Times Square icon. But it did, and in 1999, as part of the millennial celebration, an international competition was held to select the design for a new TKTS booth in the same location. The winning concept by Choi Ropiha Architects depicted a sweeping scarlet staircase. Despite efforts to move the project forward, the process was slow. In early 2001, Perkins Eastman Architects was asked to develop a feasibility study for the ticket booth. Taken with the winning design's idea of red stairs, the architects sought to create a grand glowing urban staircase to reflect the spirit of this unique location and called on the expertise of New York-based lighting consultants Fisher Marantz Stone.

The new booth is a kit of parts and features a white fiberglass shell imprinted with the red TKTS logo to house 12 ticket windows on 47th Street. The shell is enclosed by structural glass walls and the new booth's most dynamic feature—a 27-step laminated glass staircase that functions as both roof and bleachers facing Times Square. The stairs are supported by laminated glass stringer beams and illuminated by 2.7W-per-linear-foot red LED striplights. A reflector pan under the tread helps disperse the light.

Described by architect Nicholas Leahy as “floating, hovering, and humming,” the state-of-the-art TKTS booth breathes new life into Times Square. The elegant presence of this structure provides a moment of calm from the surrounding chaos and creates a distinct public space in an already dynamic urban location. The scarlet steps establish a grand position for people to experience the excitement of Times Square. **JEN BICKFORD**