



The Jewish Museum of Australia and Zahava Elenberg collaborate on Melbourne meeting place

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Article by Online Contributor

Unveiled today at Melbourne's Birrarung Marr, Sukkah is a pop-up meeting place collaboratively designed by The Jewish Museum of Australia and leading architect and designer Zahava Elenberg.

Representing a symbol of community, connection and reflection as the city's Covid-19 restrictions lift, the vibrant prismatic structure forms a kaleidoscopic canopy and offers a place for visitors to rediscover the city anew.



Originally planned to open in time for the week-long Jewish harvest festival of Sukkot in early October but delayed by extensions in Melbourne's lockdown, *Sukkah* is now unveiled as a new outdoor meeting place for Melburnians to gather, reconnect and reflect as the city begins to emerge from its long Covid winter.

"This beautiful site-specific installation reflects the long-held Jewish tradition of constructing temporary booths or huts in which to rejoice with family, friends and neighbours while giving thanks to the earth for its bounty," says Jewish Museum of Australia director Jess Bram.



“As Melbourne comes out of its long and challenging lockdown, Zahava’s inspiring sculpture feels like the perfect symbol of unity and hope that we’re proud to be offering our city.”

Co-founder of Melbourne-based architecture firm Elenberg Fraser and founder of furniture fit-out company Move-in, Elenberg has created the pop-up installation using the same components used for Clikclax – the mobile distancing solution that she launched earlier this year (<https://www.clikclax.com/>) in response to Covid-19.

Initially conceived as a post-pandemic return solution for Move-in’s open-plan Melbourne office, Clikclax is the functional and flexible system for physical distancing for workplaces, public spaces and beyond.

“*Sukkah* is a temporary shelter in memory of the huts used by the Israelites as they wandered the Sinai Desert during their exodus from Egypt. It is a place of memory and empathy for those who are homeless and displaced,” explains Elenberg.



“The walls are the colours of the earth, desert and *etrog* (the fruit of the citron tree). The blue eaves remind us of the limitless sky and encourage us to look beyond adversity. The roof is clear to allow the stars to be seen at night, and is connected with shades of the *hadas* (the myrtle tree), *aravah* (the willow tree) and *lulav* (the palm frond). In this time of uncertainty and isolation, the *Sukkah* brings us together to reflect on humanity and what it means to be part of a community.”

Available to visit now as an outdoor-only meeting place, *Sukkah* will remain on Birrarung Marr until 13 December 2020.

The pop-up will open up further as Covid-19 restrictions ease with visitors able to enter and view the internal structure.

Last year, Elenberg Fraser completed Saint Boulevard, a new multi-residential project situated on St Kilda Rd boulevard (<https://www.australiandesignreview.com/architecture/leafy-haven-modern-primates/>) that the firm created for an emerging social group they call the ‘modern primate’.

Photography by Marie Luise. Courtesy of The Jewish Museum of Australia