

# temporary and contemporary

THE OPENING DAY last September at New York's Museum of Jewish Heritage could have been an unmitigated disaster. Only three months earlier, architects Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo Associates' six-sided, six-tiered concrete pylon stood alone, unfinished, on an undeveloped patch of dirt in Lower Manhattan's Battery Park City. (Museum administrators' requirements had changed midway through the project: The ticket window in the main museum and administrative offices located in a nearby building were seen as inadequate, and a shooting at the Empire State Building dictated a beefed-up security sequence with a metal detector.)

Roche's design required visitors to choose between the dark interior space and the windy promenade outside (with a rigid logic that recalls the segregation enforced during the Holocaust). To ease visitors' transition, architect Claire Weisz and her husband Mark Yoes were commissioned to build a temporary entrance pavilion. Their design (constructed in about a month) is really a pair of shining trapezoids—one of glass rubbing against another covered with lead-coated roofing—that stand just east of the main building.

The museum seeks to banish anti-Semitic stereotypes, and Weisz and Yoes' 1,300-square-foot pavilion is equally outspoken in a different way. Built of the materials of the modern city, it explodes with light and views that make a case for diversity and openness in the modern Jewish community.

Can it prepare visitors for the magnitude of emotion contained in Roche's museum? Probably not. But the pavilion stands right out front, speaking the language of a changed community. Many buildings designed in the past few decades have challenged the order of established systems by breaking the grid or subverting other expectations. The pavilion continues this tradition, and it proves similarly impossible to ignore. **CRAIG KELLOGG**

