small scale
CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR BETTER CITY LIVING
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THINK BIG, DESIGN SMALL.

This is the rallying cry of a new generation of architects and artists who aim to improve the lives of city dwellers through small-scale public design projects. Using the city as an open-source platform for ideas, these visionaries create “urban interventions” to address problems specific to urban life. *Small Scale* presents fifty ingenious yet simple projects, ranging from the purely conceptual to the fully realized. From a bridge that curls up into itself when not in use, to a stacked rental car dispenser, to a bus stop–like shelter that uses bright lights to treat seasonal affective disorder in the winter, these projects energize our cities’ leftover spaces and help us imagine the future of our urban infrastructure.
A ticketing and viewing station for urban theater

CHOI ROPIHA AND PERKINS EASTMAN: TKTS BOOTH
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Program
The goal of this project was to provide an efficient, engaging, and consumer-friendly facility for TKTS—which sells discount tickets for Broadway plays and other performances throughout New York City—while also creating a new marker for Broadway, the Theater District, and all of the city’s performing arts. Father Duffy Square—the location of the new TKTS Booth and the northern portion of the “bow tie” that is Times Square—has a dynamic spatial character generated by the intersecting of Broadway with the Manhattan street grid. It is a place of unrivaled urban intensity, driven by entertainment, information, and communication businesses.

The original brief focused on just replacing an already-existing TKTS booth, but the project’s regenerative potential became clear early in the design process, and was expanded to become a more extensive inquiry about the relationships between TKTS, Father Duffy Square, and the broader context of Times Square and New York City.

Solution
The TKTS Booth’s design stemmed from two instinctual responses: a resistance to placing a conventional building in the square, as this would undermine its spatial character; and an observation that, as one of the city’s great gathering points, Times Square had nowhere for people to sit and enjoy the passing show.
The booth has a series of red, luminescent steps rising from ground level that simultaneously act as a roof for the ticket booth—with twenty-four staff members and twelve ticket counters—and an inclined public space—capable of seating seven hundred people—where visitors and customers alike can pause to take in the “theater” of Times Square. Twenty-first-century technology gives the TKTS Booth further potency. Glass is its sole structural component, making the entire building translucent, while LED arrays beneath the steps create a powerful glow that makes the building part of the technological show of Times Square. Outside the booth, a deceptively simple plaza design organizes pedestrian movement while reinstating the prominence of the Father Duffy monument.

The multidimensional aspects of the project unite to amplify the presence of the booth and strengthen TKTS’s position as a New York cultural institution, while the amalgamation of booth and plaza as a public venue has provided a new center for Times Square.