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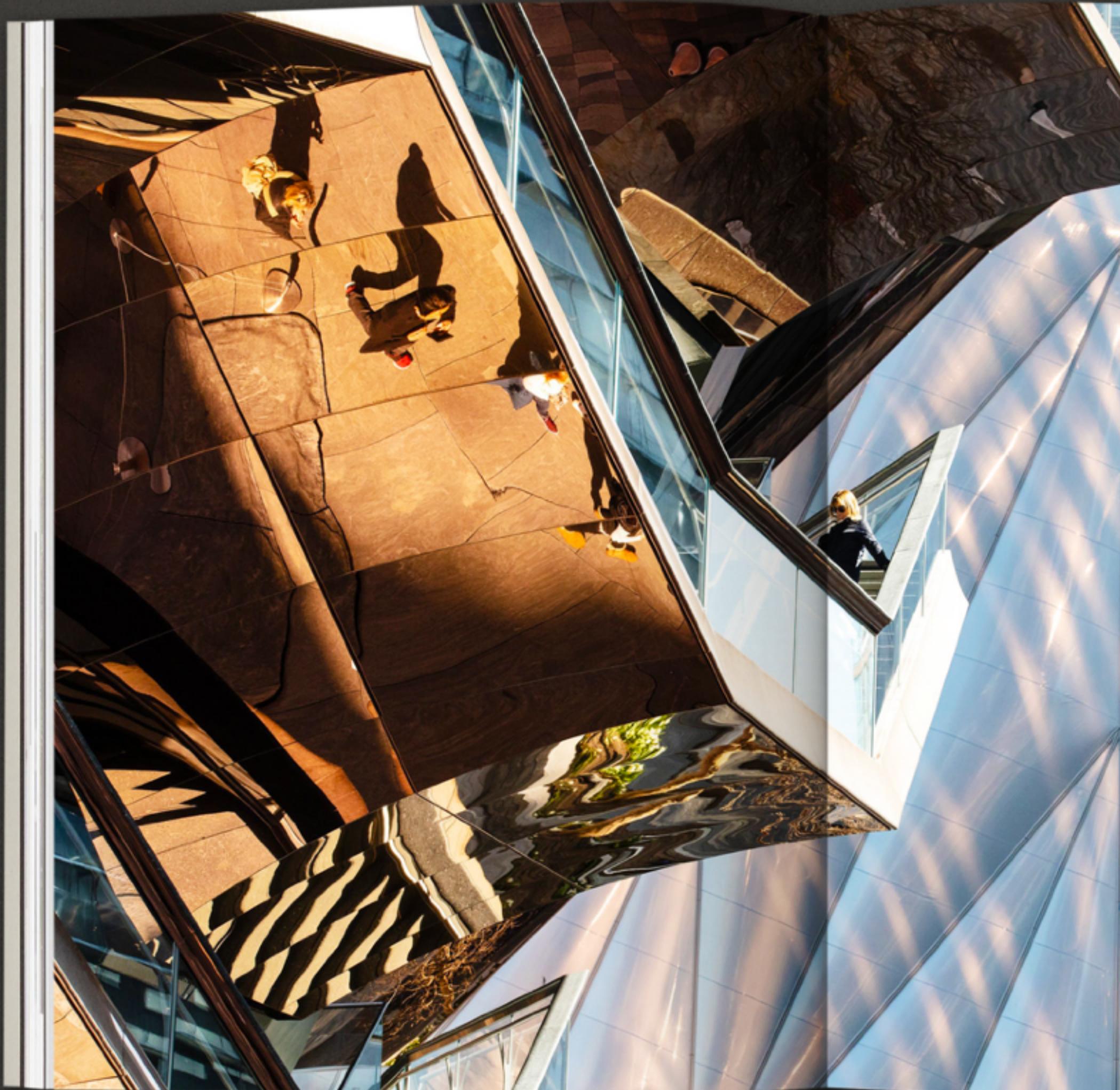
Johnny Tucker

Before it has even opened for the day, a queue wraps around the base of the building. In the queue people can't stay away from their phone cameras and SLRs snapping their reflection in the highly polished copper surface and bubbling with anticipation. The route inside snakes around a helical ramp at the base of the structure, delineated by roughly hewn granite edges. Upon entering the arena-like base everyone stops, looks up and reaches for their phone again.

There is no denying this structure is extremely dramatic from the outside and from within, equally from the ground and aloft at its upper rim.

The crowd starts to disperse variously up the initial four staircases and soon they are spread out all over the structure as they head, mostly, to the top. The animation the people provide changes the structure profoundly. It needs people and the people, judging from their reactions, seem to need it.

Gone are the barking security staff moving visitors around, which dogged it at the beginning. The atmosphere is friendly, relaxed and at the top, just a little bit disconcerting. It may not be high by NYC standards – even in Hudson Yards there's a viewing platform about to open that will be the city's highest – but it's high enough to give you a different perspective...



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*You have not
come to Hudson
Yards to eat hot
dogs and sit on
benches. You are
there to climb the
Vessel.*

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Alexandra Schwartz