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The Thomas Heatherwick – designed structure has been controversial, as some have likened its shape to a doner kebab, while others believe it could be New York's Eiffel Tower.

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Nick Mafi

Then—as word spread on its design and purpose—came the outrage by many New Yorkers (and [New York publications](#)) that the cost—which exceeded \$150 million—did more than raise a few eyebrows. Some have called it a beehive, a rib cage, and (this writer's favorite) a [doner kebab](#). Others, however, believe it could be New York's version of the Eiffel Tower.

Starting today, those debates can actually begin to flush themselves out as the masses collectively come to define what this structure is and whether we truly need it.



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The animation the people provide changes the structure profoundly. It needs people and the people, judging from their reactions, seem to need it.

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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...