

Temple Guidelines: AfrikaBurn

August 1st 2019

*"One of the most important aspects of building the Temple is to remember that while the design initially comes from the artist's vision and the builders' sweat and tears, once it is built it belongs to the community." **Burning Man***

The Temple has developed as a part of AfrikaBurn's physical and emotional landscape as a space of contemplation and reflection. The temple is intended as an area of sanctuary, a site of calm on the edge of the chaos and cacophony of Tankwa Town. A space to spend time with one's own thoughts, reflect on one's life, the lives of others, those recently passed, ancestors.

The Temple should inspire us and stimulate our spiritual awareness of nature and cosmos. While the structure may be a thing of beauty its significance is in its transience. It is a place of letting go, a place of release. It is the pinnacle of our celebration of immediacy and catharsis.

Intent

We encourage the designer and their crew/cooperatives to incorporate positive spiritual intention into the practice and process of the Temple's design and build. The team invests in building a physical space that will hold a metaphysical space for the participants of the festival.

We believe that the motivation and thought that goes into the design, coupled with the collective energy that creates the space and builds the structure, is reflected in the spiritual integrity of the temple and the ritual it hosts.

If the Temple is to be a labour of love this should start from the way we manage and treat each other and the volunteers that make up our collectives: from the design and pre-build, through the period of occupation of the site and the period of construction, until the final Temple is handed over to the community of Tankwa Town.

Placement

A quiet and reflective space. The Temple is usually placed on the outskirts of Tankwa Town to offer a pilgrimage to a quite remote place. But it has been placed in the middle before and activated as a conscious spiritual space to good effect. (see timeline below)

Structure

The Temple can be anything. It should be inspiring. It does not have to resemble a classic temple or other building, but it should have some structure.

In order to facilitate a quiet space free from art cars and bicycles, we encourage the designers to incorporate a boundary/perimeter that creates a precinct around the temple space.

Culture

The Temple is a non-religious, neutral space. Apart from the opening ceremony and closing ceremony before the burn, the space is meant for personal or small group ceremonies that do not monopolise the space for a single use at any given time.

Yoga could be an example of monopolising the space, both as a group exercise as well as religious gathering, which some feel are not appropriate for the Temple space at AfrikaBurn. The crux of this guideline is that the space should be accessible at all times during the event, and any participant should be able to feel free and comfortable to use the temple space for their own ceremony even while others are using the space.

Burn

In the tradition of Burning Man, the Temple burns as a cathartic release for the participants on the last day of the event. Messages and tokens that are left during the week are swept away by fire in an annual cleansing ritual.

The Temple burn is intended as a silent event for the community. The silence is important - it ushers in the sense of the sacred and allows all witnessing it a pause to reflect and go inward (the first in the entire festival for some).

We should be creative and conscious as to how we burn the Temple structure. The environmental impact and sustainability issues associated with burning large structures should be carefully considered. As with other pieces of art that burn at AfrikaBurn, we encourage the use of recycled materials to minimize the environmental impact.

Funding

The piece is not necessarily fully funded by AfrikaBurn. The crew are invited to consider ways in which the Temple build might be used to support fundraising towards a legitimate beneficiary of their choice.

Temple proposals will be assessed using AfrikaBurn's Art Committee (ArtCom) method of assessing and awarding grants and Clan proposals as outlined in the [Grant policy and assessment guidelines document](#).

APPENDIX - HISTORY of TEMPLES at AFRIKABURN

- 2007 - [no title] (Brad Baard & Peter Hayes)
- 2008 - [No temple]
- 2009 - 'The Temporal' (Monique Schiess & Brad Baard)
- 2010 - [Same from 2009]
- 2011 - Pyramid temple structure (Adriaan Wessels)
- 2012 - 'Solace' (Simon Bannister and crew)
- 2013 - 'Compression' (Simon Bannister and crew)
- 2014 - 'The Offering' (Simon Bannister and crew)
- 2015 - 'Metamorphosis' (Verity Maud and crew)
- 2016 - 'Awakening' (Verity Maud and crew)
 - 'Temple of |Xam' (Kim Goodwin and The Dandylions)
- 2017 - 'Temple of Gratitude' (Walter Böhmer and crew)
- 2018 - 'Oasis' (Anushka Kempken and crew)
- 2019 - 'Temple of Stars' (Walter Böhmer & The Starlights)

In year one (2007) a Temple was built by Brad Baard and Peter Hayes. That year our Clan was not completed on time for a burn on the Saturday night and Brad and Peter very graciously let us burn it on the Saturday in lieu of having a Clan burn on that night.

In 2009, Brad and Monique Schiess built 'The Temporal' (the theme that year being 'Time') but the structure wasn't called 'the temple', though its stated intention was to be a quiet and reflective space. It was built in what was 'the outskirts' of the event at that stage.

In 2011 Adriaan Wessels built his pyramid Temple structure.

A discussion was then had, initially among ArtCom members and then across the broader AfrikaBurn team and organisation, about whether to have a solicited temple space. It was decided at the time that we would not do a callout or solicit a temple space (motivated primarily by the fact that we didn't just want to cut and paste from Burning Man), but if there was one that rose up in the community then AfrikaBurn would support it.

In 2012 Simon Bannister entered the fray with 'Solace' and followed it up with 'Compression' and 'The Offering' in 2013 and 2014. He initially wanted to name the structures 'The Temple of....' (solace, compression and the offering) but was dissuaded, though he did go on to call the collective 'The Temple Crew.'

In 2015 Verity Maud came along and ArtCom experimented with placing it in the middle of the city for a couple of different reasons:

1. That that was the quieter space at the time. The Loud Zone has moved to the far reaches, so to have the Temple far out would mean that it was in the Loud Zone.
2. That with Verity leading up activating the space very intentionally it would evolve and advance the use of and understanding of the Temple space at AfrikaBurn

In 2017 Walter Böhmer and his crew created the 'Temple of Gratitude', which also incorporated the intentionality of having a space for reflection and letting go. The Temple was opened on Monday morning with a ceremony toward this purpose.

In 2018 year Anushka Kempken and crew created 'Oasis'.

The last four Temples were projects whose crews and workshops were located in Gauteng, which has been awesome - but this was also largely the reason for the Temple burn taking place on the Saturday of the event.

In 2019, Walter Böhmer and The Starlights created the 'Temple of Stars'. This year the temple burn was moved to Sunday at the [artist's request](#) in order to "enable a space for catharsis ". The centre structure was also encircled with a perimeter (fence) for the first time, which worked well to hold the space.

Further reading:

The Temple burn is an example of something that became an unintentionally ritualised icon because our energy made it so.

AfrikaBurn:

Simon Bannister - [reflections on building 'The Offering'](#)

Shani Judes - ['Temple Tale'](#)

Burning Man

- [Initiations and Salutations](#)

- [Building The Temple](#)

Huffington Post - [Burning Man Temples](#)

Wikipedia: Some people might remember or have heard references of temples of old, there are the Greek temples, the Temples of Isis, the ancient temples in India and China, there's even, of course, the temple of the Mayans in this land we are in, here, now. So, the temples have been around the planet for a long time and I think it's significant, because the communities centered

around temples, and such temples were a place for learning, for healing, for governance. The temples were seen to be important to societies and cultures that were emerging on the earth. And we've seen, especially in the last thousand years, a decline of temples. And they have been replaced by empires and religions which are taking over what the temples once were. I feel that temples are about empowering people and helping them live together in a healthy way. So, I think those arts and those sciences about the way we live, the arts practiced in those ancient temples, are really significant for humanity.

Submitting a Temple Proposal

Do you have an idea for the Temple? Here's how to submit your proposal:

The basics:

1. Your proposal must include the sculpture, its intended lighting as well as the burn plan.
2. Send it to art@afrikaburn.com,
3. The deadline for proposals is **30th of September 2019** at Midnight.

Things to Consider:

Designs must be presented in a visually accurate way.

It is important that we can see the intended image and proportions of your Temple.

If you have (access to) the skills you could draw it up on a technical program like Sketch Up, but a hand made drawing on a serviette will also do it.

In line with our Burning Art guidelines, the Temple should be constructed out of **waste materials or recycled / environmentally-friendly** wherever possible. Avoid materials with a high glue or chemical content (such as MDF / Medium-Density Fibreboard, or treated wood).

Consider the **pyrotechnics** carefully. You are building a sculptural fire. Consider the following:

- how you would like your sculpture to burn and fall.
- The speed of the burn, too long and people lose focus, too short and people miss it.
- is there a performance/ritual aspect to the lighting of the Temple?

Seek advice - ask around. Temple-builders and other large fire sculpture builders at AfrikaBurn have accumulated knowledge and experience, make use of it.

We also have a Pyro Team that can help you - please contact art@afrikaburn.com

The Temple must be lit at night. This is an integral part of your design and your budget.

As an aesthetic element, as part of the design of your piece as well as for safety reasons, it's mandatory to light the piece and to keep it lit throughout the event. Lighting also protects the artwork from accidental damage, and from accidentally damaging someone or something in the dark.

The Art Committee will assess proposals from a concept, design, construction, and a cost perspective.

What comes next?

- You'll be asked to generate a detailed budget with all expenses listed.
- You will need to create a detailed timeline for production

If your Temple proposal is selected, we will be in close contact about pretty much everything.