

THE WITCHES' DEN

Proposed Interactive Art Installation

Burning Man • Fly Ranch • Cooperative Light / Sound Ritual



A warm, handmade refuge that becomes a shared ritual when four strangers choose to act together.

1. Project Vision

Immersive social sculpture for Burning Man and a future life at Fly Ranch



Interior visual target with the central witch, cauldron, four ritual pillars, floor pillows, low tables, rugs, lanterns and hanging botanicals.

The Witches' Den is an immersive, nature-inspired environment that reads externally as a mysterious hand-built cottage and internally as a warm gathering room of driftwood, fabric, moss, hanging botanicals, rugs, low tables, floor cushions, lantern-like light, a central sculptural witch and a theatrical cauldron.

The project operates in two ways at once: as a quiet refuge where people can sit, talk and reset, and as a participatory artwork that comes alive through cooperation. The full ritual occurs only when four participants activate four separate sculptural pillars together.

SOCIAL SCULPTURE

The emotional center is cooperation: four separate participants must notice one another, coordinate, and hold the moment together.

SENSORY ENVIRONMENT

Warm light, low sound, haze, tactile wood, fabric, botanicals and the overhead skylight create a space that feels discovered rather than staged.

Core Visual Language

- Rustic, handcrafted and organic rather than polished or futuristic.
- Circular / octagonal interior centered on the cauldron, witch installation and four ritual pillars.
- Branch and driftwood forms layered over a hidden conventional shell.
- Warm amber lantern light, low tables, floor pillows and rugs instead of conventional seating.
- The atmosphere comes from materials, light and story rather than busy symbolism.

2. The Interactive Cauldron Ritual

Interactive ritual, activation sequence and cauldron collaboration



Updated ritual atmosphere reference with floor pillows and low tables surrounding the cauldron space.

This updated proposal image keeps the collaborative ritual moment at the center of the scene while aligning the surrounding lounge area with the rest of the project language: floor pillows, rugs and low

Activation Sequence

Idle — Pillars hold a faint breathing glow; the cauldron rests at ember level.

1 pillar — That pillar brightens and its root/floor light wakes toward the center.

2 pillars — Subtle sound begins; paired light paths start moving inward.

3 pillars — The cauldron brightens, haze begins, and witch illumination intensifies.

4 pillars — All four held ~1.5–2 seconds: crescendo, white-gold cauldron core and a narrow theatrical LED beam through the skylight for ~3–5 seconds.

Artists Collaboration

The central cauldron is envisioned as a hand-made sculptural feature developed in collaboration with Hind Baghdadi in Morocco.

The artisan fabrication shapes the vessel's craft identity while the technical team integrates lighting, haze/smoke, service access and control components.

The preferred witch face reference remains preserved in the retained ritual image.

3. Participant Experience / 4. Safety Principles

A quiet refuge that teaches the ritual through discovery

DISCOVER

Enter a warm, quiet den and explore the tactile environment.

NOTICE

A touch wakes a pillar and sends light toward the cauldron.

COORDINATE

Strangers realize the effect grows as more pillars are held together.

ACTIVATE

Four people complete the ritual together and release the light beam.

Themed Potion + Elixir Night

On one designated themed evening, the Witches' Den becomes an alcohol-free Potion + Elixir Gifting Night. Handcrafted botanical teas, fruit and citrus infusions, sparkling herbal elixirs and spiced cacao are gifted freely to those present. Service can use trays, low tables or portable vessels and build toward sunset and the cauldron ritual.

Ingredients and common allergens should be identified, and all preparation should use potable water, food-safe methods and appropriate sanitation.

Atmosphere + Scenic Elements

- Driftwood/fabric witch with an organic, less-defined face and low internal illumination.
- Central cauldron with programmable amber-to-white-gold light, simulated haze/smoke and concealed sound.
- Four driftwood ritual pillars with hidden touch surfaces, internal glow and root-like light paths.
- Hanging herbs, preserved moss, branch structures, rugs, floor pillows, low tables and lantern-like fixtures.

Safety + Technical Principles

- The climax effect uses a theatrical narrow-beam LED — not a laser.
- Avoid open flame around fabric, dry botanicals and timber; use simulated flame/steam wherever practical.
- Participant-facing interaction remains low voltage; mains power and drivers stay inaccessible.
- Provide a manual show kill/reset, clear egress and hidden practical/emergency lighting.

5. Burning Man + Fly Ranch Intent

Why the project matters and how it carries forward beyond its first installation

At Burning Man, the piece functions as a social refuge as much as a spectacle. Its value comes from the contrast between the harsh openness of the playa and the intimate interior: people step into a small world of warmth, texture and story. The cooperative ritual creates a reason for strangers to make eye contact, coordinate and share a brief accomplishment together.

The skylight climax also gives the installation an outward-facing moment. For a few seconds, the interior action becomes visible beyond the room as a controlled vertical column of light — a signal that something collective just happened inside.

BURNING MAN

Temporary immersive installation • participant-driven activation • nighttime social beacon • intimate shelter and conversation space.

FLY RANCH

A durable second life focused on repairability, maintainability and longer-term programming while preserving the same cooperative ritual.

MATERIAL APPROACH

Use conventional hidden structure where required, then layer modular driftwood, fabric, moss, botanical and scenic components that can be repaired or replaced.

GIFTING + STORY

One themed alcohol-free Potion + Elixir Night extends the ritual through hospitality, with handcrafted botanical drinks gifted freely to those present.

Project Statement

The Witches' Den is ultimately about transformation through cooperation: a quiet room becomes a living artwork only when people choose to complete it together.

BUILD PLAN APPENDIX

Selected construction information consolidated with the concept proposal

Design Basis

The Witches' Den is conceived as an octagonal timber pavilion with a raised wooden platform, conical roof, central skylight, theatrical cauldron, a 5.9 ft driftwood/fabric witch installation, low-table lounge seating and driftwood tree forms carrying preserved moss and hanging botanicals. Decorative branches and driftwood remain scenic rather than structural.

Parameter	Concept dimension	Planning note
Overall footprint	24.6 ft across flats	Regular octagon, approx. 501.6 sq ft floor area
Octagon side length	Approx. 10.2 ft	Eight wall bays
Wall height	Approx. 9.2 ft	Before roof begins
Roof peak	Approx. 17.1 ft	Approx. 7.9 ft rise above wall plate
Central skylight	Approx. 5.9 ft diameter	Engineered ring / framed curb
Main entrance	Approx. 4.9 ft clear	Final egress width by code
Witch sculpture	Approx. 5.9 ft high	Decorative, internally illuminated
Central cauldron zone	Approx. 4.9 ft diameter	Simulated flame / steam where possible

Structural Strategy

Hidden engineered shell + visible primitive craft

Use rated structural timber, connectors, weather barriers and roof membranes underneath. Conceal the engineered work behind fabric, driftwood tree forms, preserved moss, bark and low-voltage lighting. This keeps the organic visual language while ensuring old branches are not asked to carry structural loads.

This appendix focuses on material quantities, construction sequencing, the interactive ritual system, safety and engineering requirements.

LIGHTING + INTERACTIVE RITUAL SYSTEM

Separate controllable layers allow the room to move from quiet refuge to cooperative ritual

Lighting layer	Purpose
Ambient	Warm 2200-2700K concealed light and lantern-style fixtures.
Tree / root	Small warm fixtures in branch forms plus animated root-like light paths leading toward the cauldron.
Witch	Low-voltage amber points in chest, face cavities, hands and robe openings; illumination intensifies during the ritual sequence.
Pillars	Each touch pillar holds a faint idle glow, brightens when touched and contributes to the cooperative trigger state.
Cauldron	Programmable ember-to-white-gold light with approved theatrical haze/smoke and subtle sound.
Climax beam	Narrow theatrical LED beam aligned through the central skylight. It is not a laser. The four-pillar climax lasts roughly 3-5 seconds.
Practical / emergency	Bright setup, cleaning and emergency lighting remains hidden or switched off during the normal guest experience.