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42

green

36 Not Just for Specifiers

A manufacturing CEO gains insights by earning his LEED accreditation

interiors awards

42 Designers of the Year

Graft: Lars Krückeberg, founding partner; Wolfram Putz, founding partner; Thomas Willemeit, founding partner; Alejandra Lillo, partner; Gregor Hoheisel, founding partner



30

52 Legend Award Arthur Gensler of Gensler

59 The 31st Annual Interiors Awards

- 60 Large Office
- 64 Small Office
- 68 Education
- 72 Healthcare
- 76 Hotel
- 80 Retail
- 84 Restaurant
- 86 Exhibit
- 88 Showroom
- 90 Spa/Fitness
- 92 Sports/Entertainment
- 94 Public Space
- 98 Restoration
- 100 Adaptive Reuse
- 104 Environmental Design

departments

- 16 editorial
- 20 industry
- 30 resources
- 108 designers rate: ergonomic seating
- 112 ad index

process

110 Less is More

HLW presents its 2009 "Rules of Thumb for Interior Construction"

108



cover: Designers of the Year, Graft, photographed in the firm's Los Angeles office in November 2009. Photo by Ricky Ridecós.

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contents: online

on the web

Outlook: Commercial Real Estate Design Business Outlook

Trends: The Hotel Lobby

Practice: Patents

Designing for Health: Leading by Design—A Place to Flourish



Designing for Health: Arlington Free Clinic, Arlington, Va. (photo by Ken Hayden)

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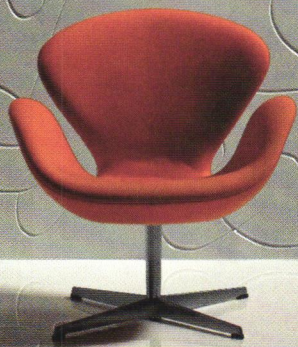
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Jennifer Thiele Busch
Editor in Chief

I'm sure none of us are sorry to see 2009 in the rear view mirror, and 2010 will bring great jubilation here at *Contract* as we celebrate our 50th year in publication! A significant anniversary is always a good time to reminisce about the past, but more importantly, it is an opportunity to look toward the future. And what better coincidence than celebrating our golden year during a time when we are all finding the need to reinvent ourselves and rethink how we do business.

March 2010 will be *Contract's* official 50th Anniversary Issue, but we are starting the festivities off early with an Interiors Awards celebration that acknowledges the evolution of our industry as measured by the career and accomplishments of one legendary man, honors the best of commercial interior design work being realized today, and anticipates the future with great optimism through the eyes of a passionate young design firm for which transcending geographic and disciplinary boundaries and acting on a belief in social consciousness are part of the everyday routine.

Last October, five highly regarded members of the A&D community gathered in *Contract's* New York offices to review entries submitted in 15 project categories in the annual Interiors Awards Competition. John Peterson, president and founder of Public Architecture in San Francisco and our 2009 Designer of the Year, was joined by Lois Goodell of CBT in Boston, Robin Guenther of Perkins+Will in New York, Lionel Ohayan of ICRAVE in New York, and Joey Shimoda of Shimoda Design Group in Los Angeles for the formidable task of reviewing more than 630 project portfolios representing the A&D community's best work in commercial interior design and architecture during the past two years. After a long, exhausting, but rewarding day of thoughtful consideration, their deliberations yielded an exceptional group of 15 winners, which are pre-

sented here in our annual Interiors Awards issue. As always, these winners, along with our 2010 Legend and Designers of the Year, will be honored at our gala Interiors Awards Breakfast in New York on January 29.

M. Arthur Gensler Jr., FAIA, FIIDA, RIBA, founder and chairman of Gensler in San Francisco, arguably could be the one individual, more than any other, whose career reflects the birth and growth of our entire industry. Art Gensler generally is credited with transforming the practice of commercial interior design into a *bona fide* profession that significantly stands apart from architecture for its emphasis on the human interaction with space. His intense focus on satisfying his clients' needs—rather than on feeding designers' egos—has helped build Gensler into the global design force it is today, with 34 offices worldwide. As such, this concept he established of interior designer-as-business consultant is one that has helped elevate the professional status of us all.

Nevertheless, there is no trace of the ego in Art Gensler that he could rightfully claim, given his many accomplishments, and he graciously credits his team of 2,100 (Gensler's current employees), as well as their predecessors, with his own and the firm's success. From the firm's humble beginnings in 1965, designing early projects like the GAP's second store, to its recent foray into super-tall architecture with the Shanghai Tower, Art Gensler has been the tireless, driving force behind it all. That is the stuff that Legend Awards are made of.

The incredibly forward-thinking design firm Graft is already making a worldwide name for itself in terms of both style and substance. Founding partners Lars Krückeberg, Wolfram Putz, Thomas Willemeit, and Gregor Hoheisel, along with their newest partner Alejandra Lillo, practice an exuberant form of design where the boundaries between

architecture, interior design, and graphic design—and sometimes walls, floors, and furnishings—are routinely blurred. The firm's projects exude a particular brand of escapism that suits its adventurous clients, while remaining firmly anchored in the context of place. And nowadays, place may be almost anywhere for Graft, as its offices in Los Angeles, Berlin, and Beijing engender a geographically disperse practice model that keeps all five partners traveling and collaborating across time zones and locations on a regular basis.

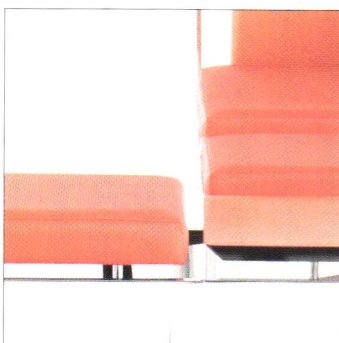
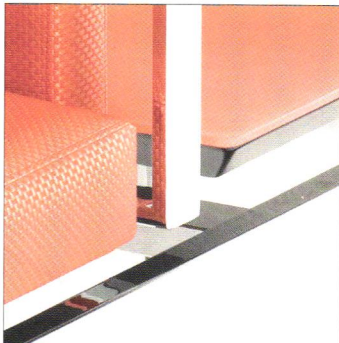
Despite Graft's often surreal take on space, there is nothing fantasy-like about the partners' work for Make It Right, the charitable foundation established by Brad Pitt to rebuild the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. The plight of property owners too financially ruined to rebuild has been a sheer, frightening reality, which Graft is now turning into hope—along with 13 other local, national, and international design firms—with their designs for sustainable, affordable housing for these residents. So following last year's induction of Public Architecture for its socially conscious design mission, the five partners of Graft will assume the title of 2010 Designers of the Year because their vision continue to explore the design stratosphere while their feet remain firmly planted on the ground.

It is an interesting time to be a designer, with so much to learn from the past and so much promise for a future of good and meaningful work. ☐

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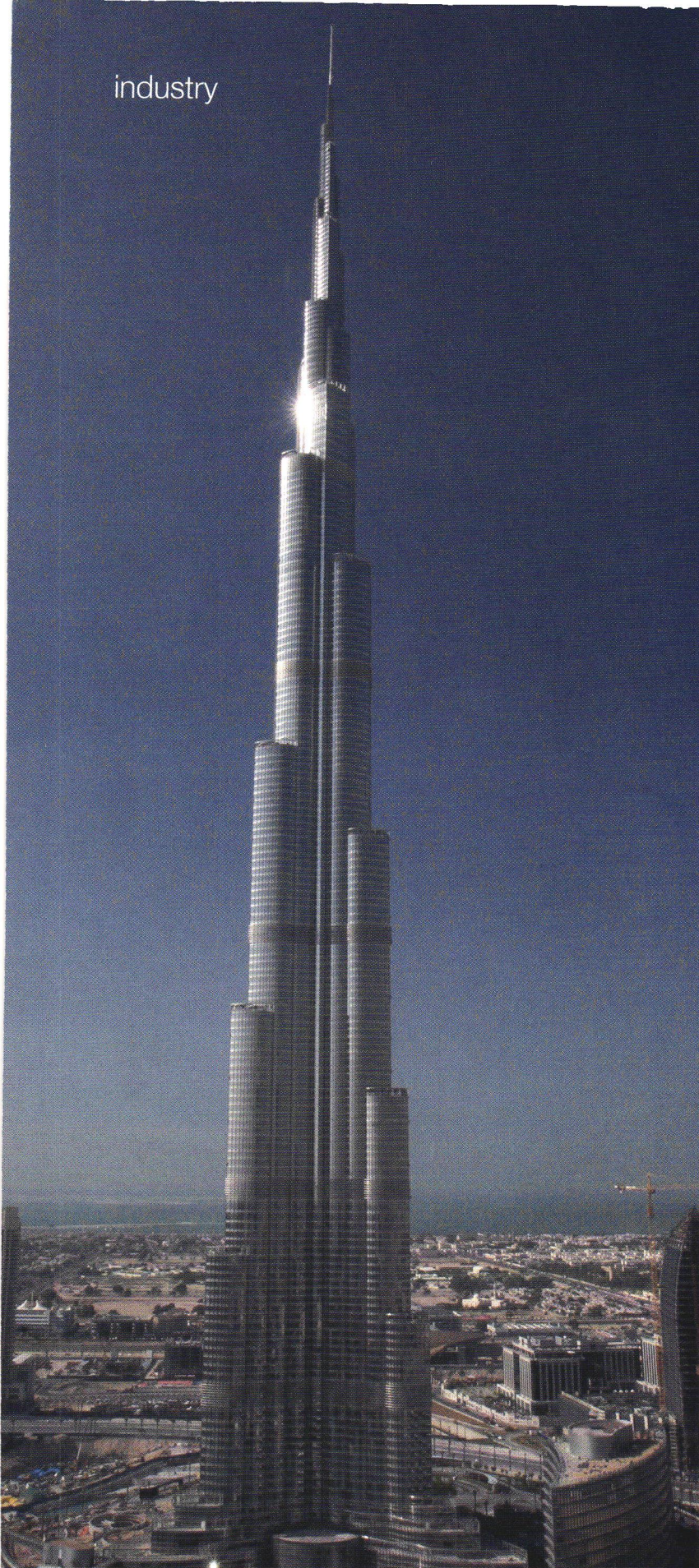


Photo courtesy of SOM

Sky High Dubai

Dubai, United Arab Emirates—Eyes were set on Dubai's skyline on Jan. 4, as Burj Khalifa was unveiled as the world's tallest building. The more than 160-story tower, designed by Chicago-based Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, stands close to a mile in height at 828 m. and beats out the 508-m. Taiwan Taipei 101, which held the record since 2004.

Burj Khalifa, named after United Arab Emirates president Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, is home to the world's first Armani Hotel, designed by Giorgio Armani. The hotel features 160 guestrooms and suites (guestrooms occupy levels five through eight, and suites are located on floors 38 and 39), eight dining options, an Armani/Privé lounge, and a 12,000-sq.-ft. in-hotel Armani/Spa with fitness center and thermal suites. The hotel is set to open on March 18.

In addition to housing 900 Burj Dubai apartments, 144 luxury Armani residences, and 37 office floors, the tower also features At the Top, the world's highest observation deck, located on the 124th floor. To get to the deck, visitors start from the ground level of The Dubai Mall and pass through a multimedia tour of Dubai's history and the Burj Khalifa's features.

Other highlights include a four-story fitness and recreation annex, the Atmosphere restaurant, an 11 hectares park with six water features, and 57 high-speed elevators.

But the defining feature of the Burj, aside from its height, is the brilliant melding of a traditional Arabic and Islamic undertone with the tower's overall sleek modern look. "If you look at the wings themselves, they're all pointed in a similar way that you see Islamic arches that are pointed," says George Efstathiou, lead architect for SOM and managing partner for the project. He also notes that inspiration for the patterning in the carpets and wallcoverings was drawn from Arabic calligraphy, which is considered a form of art in the region.

Completion of the project, which first began construction in 2004 under Emaar Properties PJSC, was realized by the collaboration of more than 60 consultants, including South Korea-based Samsung Corporation and New York-based Turner Construction International.

"Thousands of people from more than 100 countries have contributed to the realization of Burj Khalifa. The tower embodies the spirit and optimism of global collaboration, and shows to the world what can be achieved when communities work in partnership," Mohamed Alabbar, chairman of Emaar Properties, said in a statement. He notes that the tower is a symbol of hope for the Arab world.



For a full Q&A with SOM lead architect George Efstathiou, visit www.contractmagazine.com/dubaiQA.

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Public Project in Unity

Cleveland—The normally pedestrian-vacant Public Square in Cleveland is set to get a long-needed boost in functionality and style. ParkWorks and the Downtown Cleveland Alliance (DCA) awarded the project to New York-based James Corner Field Operations, a top landscaping and urban design firm known for New York City's High Line (2004) and Canada's Lake Ontario Park (2006).

ParkWorks executive director Ann Zoller says city and park officials believe their actions toward a pedestrian-friendly square will provide visitors and residents with a long-needed sense of place and connection to other city amenities.

The current design, which has not been evaluated for redesign since the 1970s, comprises four one-acre plazas segmented by a major traffic intersection that occupies six acres of the total 10-acre plot. Once imagined as an area for pedestrians and community activities, the square is more frequented on its outskirts by bus commuters than residents, leaving the interior park to resemble a ghost town.

Three schemes, all of which call for the unification of the four areas into a centralized public space, are still on the decision table. Frame calls for a 55-ft.-high trellis that will outline the exterior sides of the square and support garden vines to drape the area in natural greenery. Forest would transform the road that bisects the space into a mainly forested area, interjected with open spaces for public activity. And Thread—currently the more favored proposal (*pictured above*)—would reinvent the space by merging the four



Photo courtesy of James Corner, Field Operations

sections via a 20-ft. hill, which would not only generate a sense of public purpose for visitors, but also provide a new perspective of the city and its surrounding architecture.

Major challenges to the project include funding and public doubt that the redesign will actually come into realization, according to Christopher Marcinkoski, senior associate at Field Operations (FO).

All three of FO's proposed designs are still open for public comment. ParkWorks and the DCA will hold a public forum on Jan. 21 at Cleveland University to publicly present the three designs and poll public opinion.



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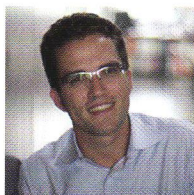


Last year's awards include Meeting Street Center of Excellence, an inclusive school for children with disabilities, and Botanist, a collection of customizable eco-friendly furniture with a cause-related giving program. Go to contractmagazine.com to learn more about these Inspirations Award winners and all six honorable mention projects.

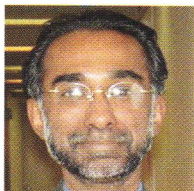
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Susan Piedmont-Palladino
Professor
Washington Alexandria Architecture Center
College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Virginia Tech

To celebrate the **commercial design community's leadership role in furthering global efforts for social responsibility**, Contract Magazine in partnership with Tandus, presents the **second annual Inspirations Awards**.

Contract Inspirations recognizes commitment in the built and unbuilt environments:

1. Recognition of social responsibility in commercial interior architecture—using design and/or design skills to improve the quality of life for those in need.
2. Recognition of cause-related work by the commercial interiors community.

Through the continuing support of Tandus, top honorees will each receive a \$5,000 grant to the cause which their inspirational work supported.

All entries must be received by **February 5, 2010**

[download entry form at contractmagazine.com](http://contractmagazine.com)

inspirations will be awarded in San Francisco, CA on April 8, 2010.

Work will be featured in Contract Magazine print and digital editions, and at contractmagazine.com

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Call for Entries

The Italian Trade Commission and Confindustria Ceramica have begun accepting applications for the 2010 Ceramic Tiles of Italy Design Competition. The annual competition, now in its 17th year, recognizes North American architects who feature Italian ceramic tiles in institutional, residential, or commercial/hospitality projects.

North American-based architects and interior designers are eligible to enter online at tilecompetition.com by submitting their domestic and international new construction and renovation projects completed between January 2005 and January 2010. Projects will be judged based on the following criteria: overall design, innovative use of tile, tile design, quality of installation, degree that tile enhances the setting, and sustainability.

Winners will be announced during the tile and stone show Coverings in Orlando in April at the Ceramic Tiles of Italy Press Conference. Each category winner will receive a \$5,000 cash prize and a five-day trip to Bologna, Italy, to attend the Cersaie 2010 exhibit. Ceramic Tiles of Italy will also award an additional \$1,000 cash prize to be shared by each winning projects' contractors and distributors. Awarded projects will be displayed in the Italian pavilion.

Coming Events

InspireDesign
Feb. 1-3, 2010
World Market Center
Las Vegas
www.lasvegasmarket.com/inspiredesign

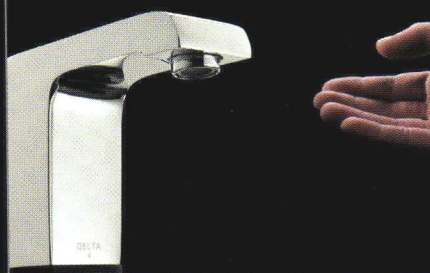
Surfaces
Feb. 2-4, 2010
Sands Expo & Convention Center
Las Vegas
www.surfaces.com

Cevisama
Feb. 9-12, 2010
Sands Expo & Convention Center
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cevisama.feriavalencia.com

GlobalShop
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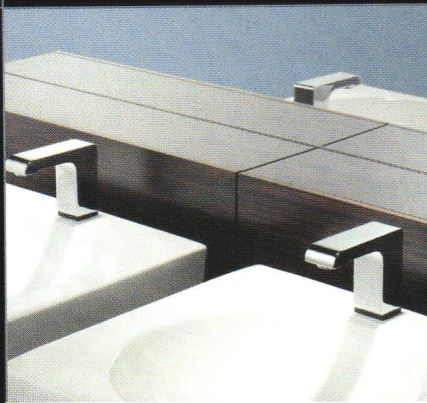


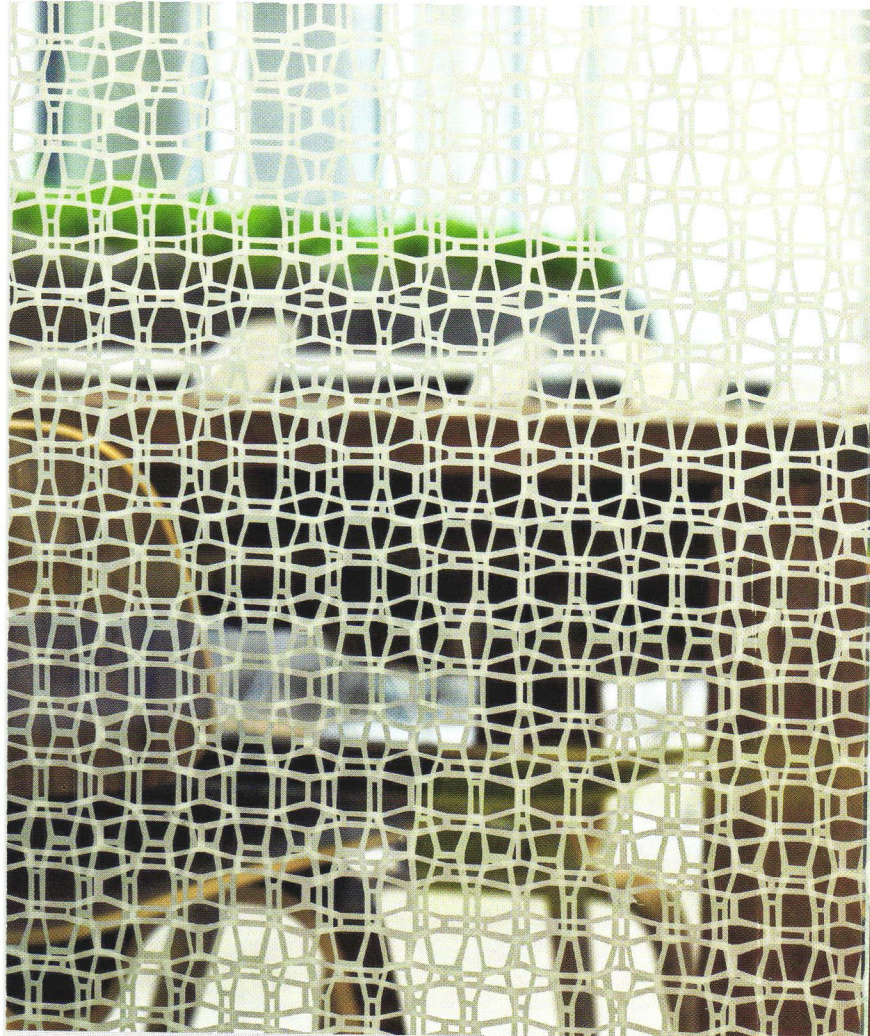
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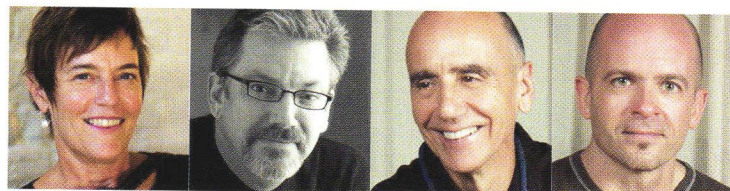




USGBC, Washington DC
Envision Design
Photo: Eric Laignel

Glass as a Beautiful, Functional, and Sustainable Design Material

Featured Speakers:



Suzanne Tick
Suzanne Tick, Inc.

Ken Wilson
Principal,
Envision Design

Charlie Rizzo
President,
Skyline Design

Mark Toth
Sales Manager, Skyline
Architectural glass

In case you missed it the first time, you can now view *Contract* Magazine's webcast, sponsored by Skyline Design and hear renowned textile and materials designer Suzanne Tick and leading environmental designer Ken Wilson of Envision Design discuss the multitude of design possibilities offered by glass and its value to designers as a sustainable building material.

Everyone can appreciate the beauty and transparency for light and views that glass can provide in an interior environment. However, designers may not truly understand how well this age-old material can be adapted and designed for applications ranging from the seriously functional to the purely decorative, and any combination in between. As the A&D community becomes more and more sophisticated in its sustainable building practices, the value of glass as an inherently environmentally-friendly product needs to be better understood.

View this archive webcast to receive a basic tutorial on the technical information designers need to know to create intelligent and inspired interiors using glass as a design element.

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Ellen Blakeley Studio

In the Elements Collection, Ellen Blakeley interprets earth, air, fire, water, and metal in handmade glass tile. Crafted through an intricate process of repurposing broken tempered glass and layering and painting it to create a flat surface that is then grouted and sealed, these tiles are all made to order. A palette of 45 colors is available, or tiles can be customized. Blakeley is committed to a sustainable design process by using commercial glass from northern California, water-based grout, low-VOC paints, and minimal epoxy resin to bind elements of the tile. www.ellenblakeley.com

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JANUS et Cie

The new Open lounge seating collection, designed by Michael Vanderbyl, presents definitive geometric lines to resemble natural body proportions for ultimate comfort. Each piece is made from natural rattan, handwoven over a sturdy aluminum base. The full collection of pieces includes a corner, center, and wide-center module, a day bed, and a square or rectangular ottoman.

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KnollTextiles

Fall into sustainability with the eco-vamped Ultrasuede® upholstery from KnollTextiles. The stain-resistant collection, which has been exclusively offered to the contract market since 2006, is now made from 80 percent recycled microfiber via a new processing method that cuts energy use and CO2 emissions by 80 percent. The environmental Ultrasuede collection now touts 12 new shades and is available in 118 colors total.

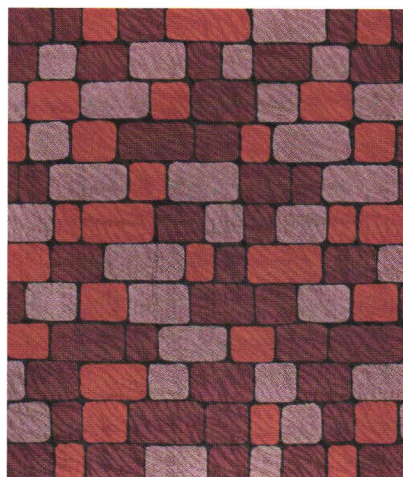
www.knolltextiles.com Reader Service No. 205

Urban Archaeology

Art Deco makes a resurgence with the Elysées chandelier, which draws upon the sophisticated décor of the 1925-1940s era and is fashioned in the style of prominent metalworker Albert Cheuret. Clean lines and notes of old-time charm resonate from this pendant, which reflects a pentagram-like geometry. Cast in recycled brass, Elysées is available in two shade options. Total drop length is 25 in. or greater.

www.urbanarchaeology.com

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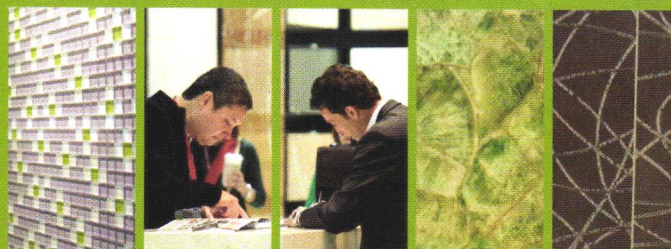
Shaw Living

Retailers can increase their green footprint with the new area rug collection from angela adams for Shaw Living. Specifically targeted to the retail market, all products are made from 100 percent printed recycled nylon from Shaw's Evergreen Nylon Recycling Facility. Carpets come in three signature patterns, six color combinations, and four size options.

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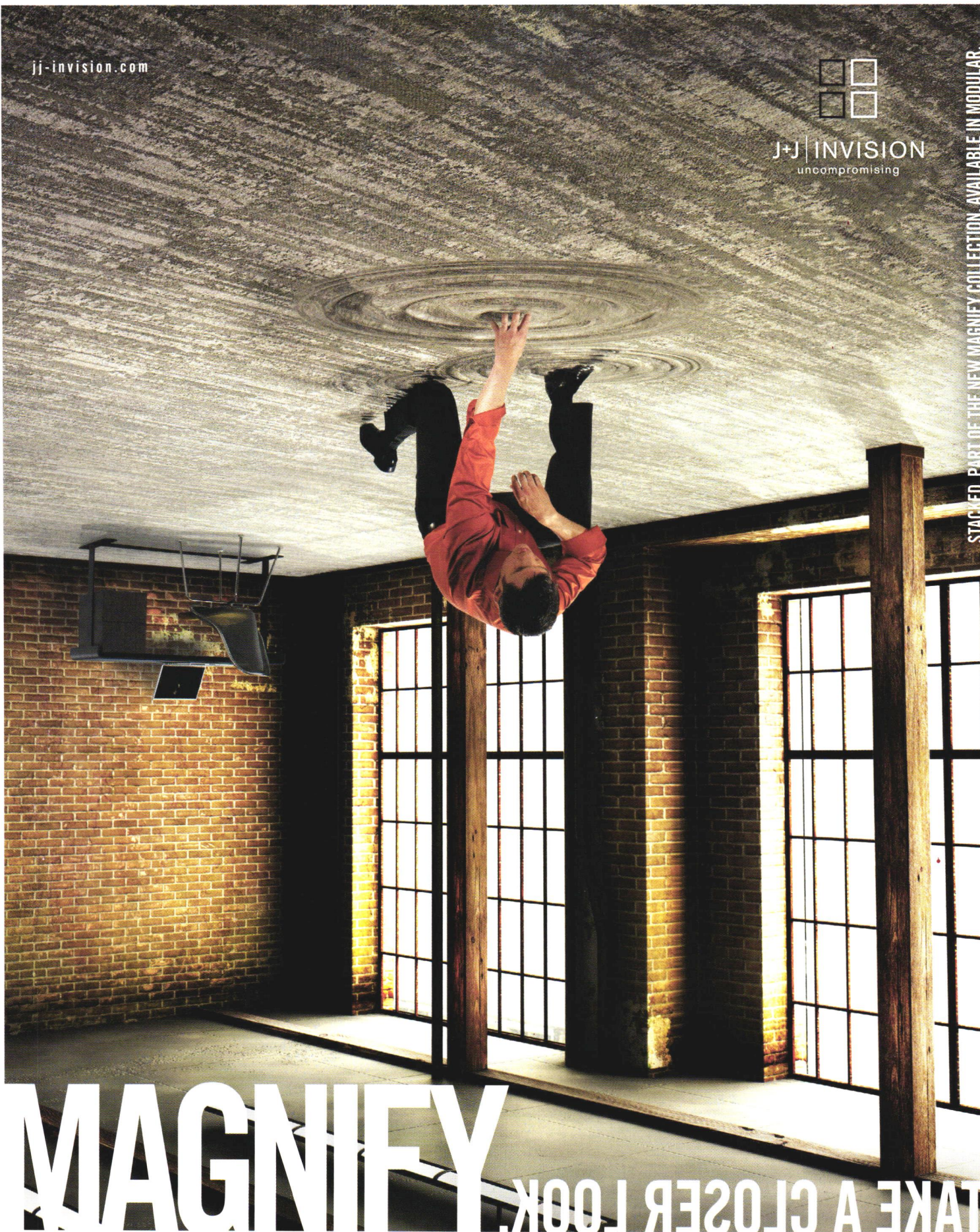
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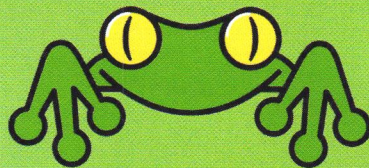
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green

not just for specifiers

A manufacturing CEO gains insights by earning his
LEED accreditation

by Glen Hussmann, LEED AP

We spend a lot of time talking with interior designers, architects, building owners, and facilities managers about environmental stewardship. I am always inspired by the energy, creativity, and resourcefulness that characterizes these discussions about the sustainable environment. Our customers feel a keen responsibility to move sustainability forward by embracing best practices in green design and purchasing. As a manufacturer, we share that passion and take our responsibility seriously. We understand that we can empower specifiers by providing them with innovative products, services, and tools that continually improve quality standards and environmental performance.

As a floorcoverings manufacturer, it would be easy to focus on the floor. But sustainability isn't just about solving one piece of the puzzle. Manufacturers need to take a holistic view of the built environment and how our products can be a more effective piece of the global picture. One of the best frameworks for understanding sustainability is LEED. It's an evolving structure for continuous improvement that is available to everyone—even a CEO of a manufacturing company. LEED is becoming central to the sustainability dialogue so it just made sense to become a LEED AP.

I'm often asked why I made LEED accreditation a priority. There seems to be a perception that CEOs are too busy to become LEED accredited. On the contrary, why wouldn't we pursue opportunities to learn about new technologies and practices, embrace innovation, and partner with specifiers to solve ongoing challenges? The experience has given me new insights into the challenges and opportunities of designers, architects, and building owners and managers. It's been enlightening to walk through LEED-certified buildings with the designers and owners who had a vision and brought that vision to fruition. It's impressive how knowledgeable and thoughtful they are about each decision, and it's exciting to collaborate on a project like that. Very often they aren't doing this for recognition or a trophy on the wall. They are doing it because they believe that it's the right thing to do.

USGBC and LEED provide a context and framework that helps expand new learning and ideas. Greenbuild, for example, showcases an overwhelming array of products all directed toward enhancing sustainability. I've always been curious and becoming a LEED AP has made me more so. I enjoy walk-



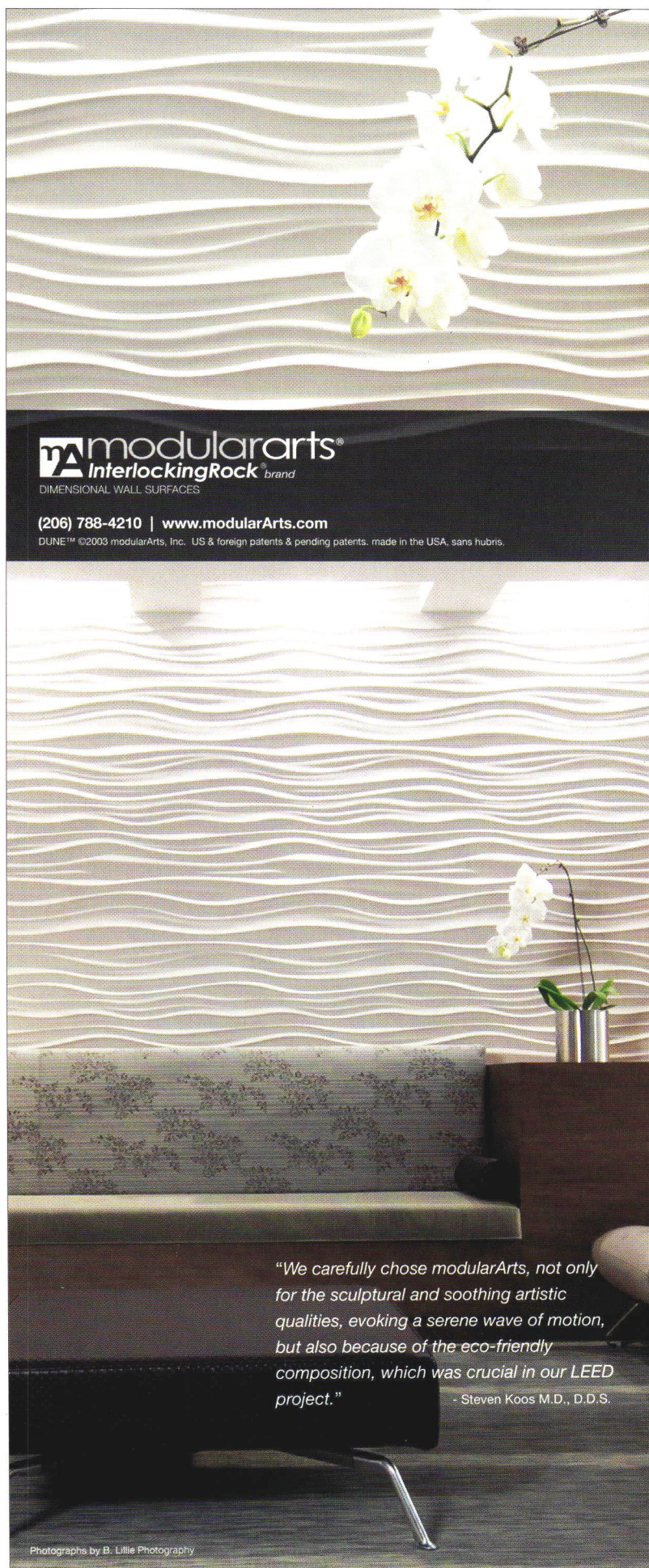
Humane

“There should always be a human benefit associated with whatever it is we’re designing. It’s all about the experience, stimulating a person’s senses in a positive or beneficial way.”

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"We carefully chose modularArts, not only for the sculptural and soothing artistic qualities, evoking a serene wave of motion, but also because of the eco-friendly composition, which was crucial in our LEED project."

- Steven Koos M.D., D.D.S.

Photographs by B. Lillie Photography

green

ing Greenbuild and trying to figure out how creative talents have engineered innovations such as waterless urinals or bio-based office furniture.

LEED is an exciting framework through which we—manufacturers and specifiers alike—can share ideas. We have LEED APs at Tandus, and I've met many from other manufacturers as I've studied for the exam. Once you learn that someone is a LEED AP, there is a kind of bond that happens. Like all shared experiences in life, it gives us a common connection. There's an excitement when we talk about sustainability and a shared enthusiasm when we walk through a building that's incorporating LEED building practices.

I highly recommend LEED accreditation to people at all levels of manufacturing and service firms that supply the commercial building industry. We encourage Tandus employees to keep learning and challenging themselves, and becoming a LEED AP is a big part of that. Tandus has reimbursement programs for continuous education and covers the costs for LEED materials and exams, for instance. Many of our associates find that it helps them to be more valuable to their customers as they can anticipate and respond quickly to customer needs.

There's a perception that CEOs are too busy to become LEED AP—why wouldn't we pursue opportunities to learn about new technologies and practices, embrace innovation, and partner with specifiers to solve ongoing challenges?

I now have a better appreciation for the fact that manufacturers across the building industry need to collaborate and develop material platforms that have more robust recycling capabilities. We need to find common ground to recycle all the materials in a building, rather than just dismantle them. And while we are looking forward, we need to be cognizant of what's behind us. There is a huge volume of material in the marketplace that needs to be recycled. For instance, there are five billion pounds of carpet now in use that we can recycle into new carpet.

At Tandus, we've always taken a very practical, common sense, do-the-right thing approach consistent with sustainability and social responsibility as core values of the company. Becoming LEED accredited was my way of helping to nurture and support this company-wide passion. It's also taught me that there is more opportunity in front of us than behind us. We are capable of transforming the built environment if all constituents—from specifiers and end users to manufacturers and service suppliers—work together. ☐

Glen Hussmann, LEED AP, is president & CEO of Tandus, a global floorcoverings company based in Dalton, Ga., www.tandus.com.



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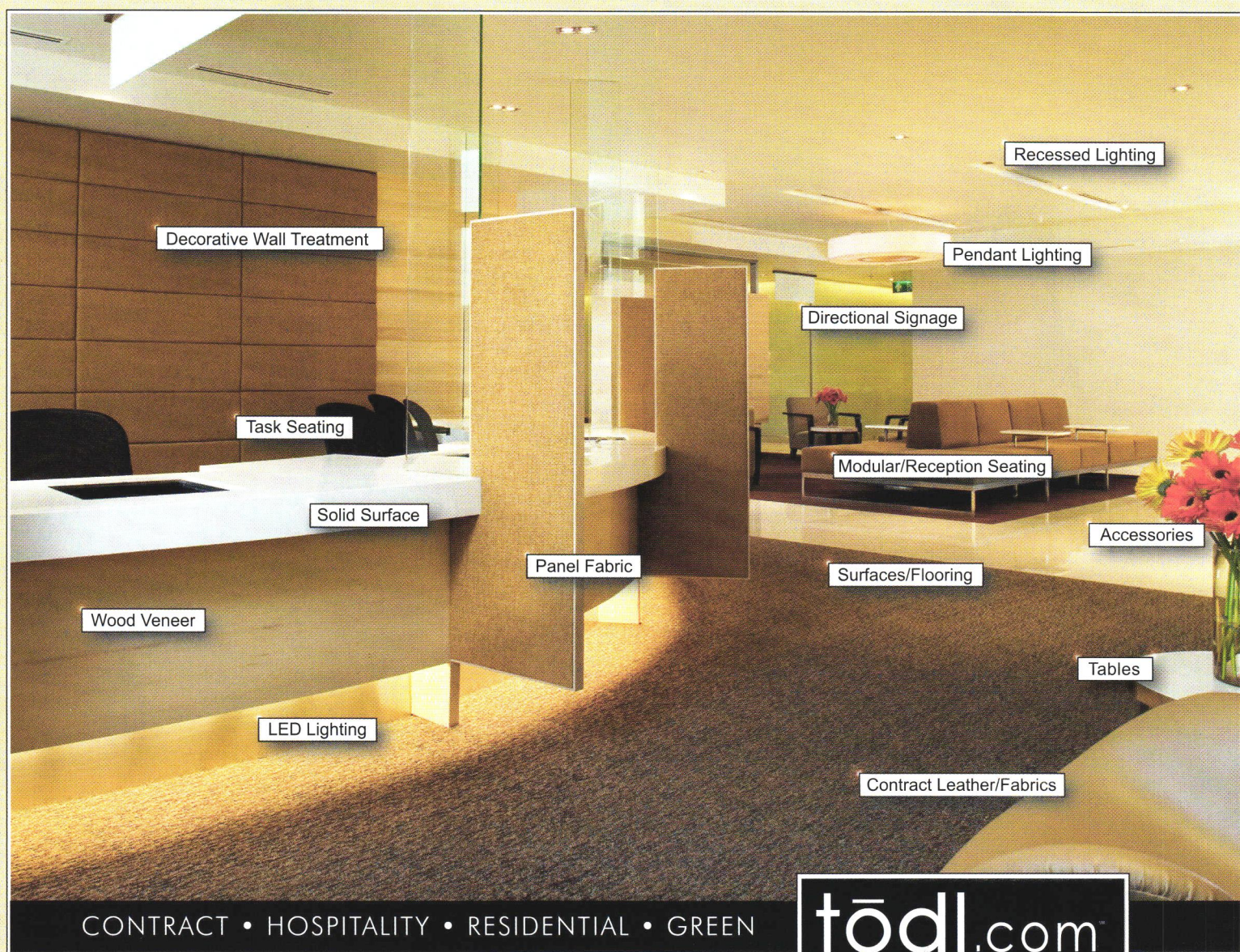
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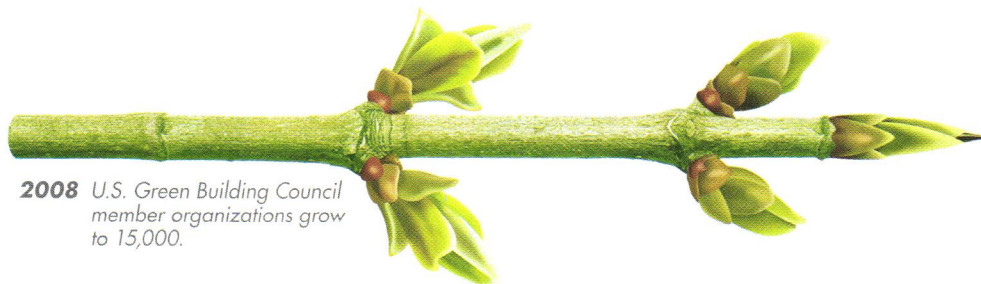
1978 Earth Day brings awareness to Earth's need for continual care.



1988 1,000 communities in America initiate curbside recycling.



1998 EPA launches voluntary programs for energy, water, indoor air quality, waste and smart growth.



2008 U.S. Green Building Council member organizations grow to 15,000.

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designers of the year





Designers of the Year

Graft

From Hollywood cowboys to global crusaders, the partners of Graft have gone far in their 12 years of practice

By Michael Webb
Portrait by Ricky Ridecós

From left to right:

- Lars Krückeberg, founding partner
- Wolfram Putz, founding partner
- Thomas Willemeit, founding partner
- Alejandra Lillo, partner
- Gregor Hoheisel, founding partner



Photo credit: Herbert Lotz

Graft is a productive bundle of contradictions. The five young partners collaborate on every design even though they are now working out of Los Angeles, Berlin, and Beijing. In their 12 years of practice, they've progressed from temporary installations to varied buildings and on to master plans and major urban developments, while insisting that they tackle only the projects that inspire them. The bright colors and swooping lines of their exuberant hotels, restaurants, and commercial interiors carry over into an ambitious project to rebuild a devastated ward of New Orleans. Playful and serious, inventive and socially responsible, there seems no limit to the potential of Graft.

The venture started by chance. Gregor Hoheisel, Lars Krückeberg, Wolfram Putz, and Thomas Willemeit studied architecture together at the Braunschweig Technical University in north Germany and cemented their friendship by forming an *a capella* jazz group. Like many Europeans, they found a new freedom in Los Angeles, where two of them completed their graduate studies and decided to establish an office there. They named it Graft to express the idea of a robust crossbreed, analogous to grafting a shoot onto a genetically different host. The partnership began as a commune, sharing a house and resolving, as Willemeit recalls, "to do what we love, and that way we can't fail."

"We started out in Hollywood and did a lot of temporary stage sets for art and film, and that showed us what we could achieve with different materials and technologies," says Krückeberg. "We are all driven by great stories, and we believe architecture can be storyboarded like a movie." That attitude drew the interest of Brad Pitt, an actor who easily might have become an architect. He worked with them on a house, a studio, and plans for a visionary resort

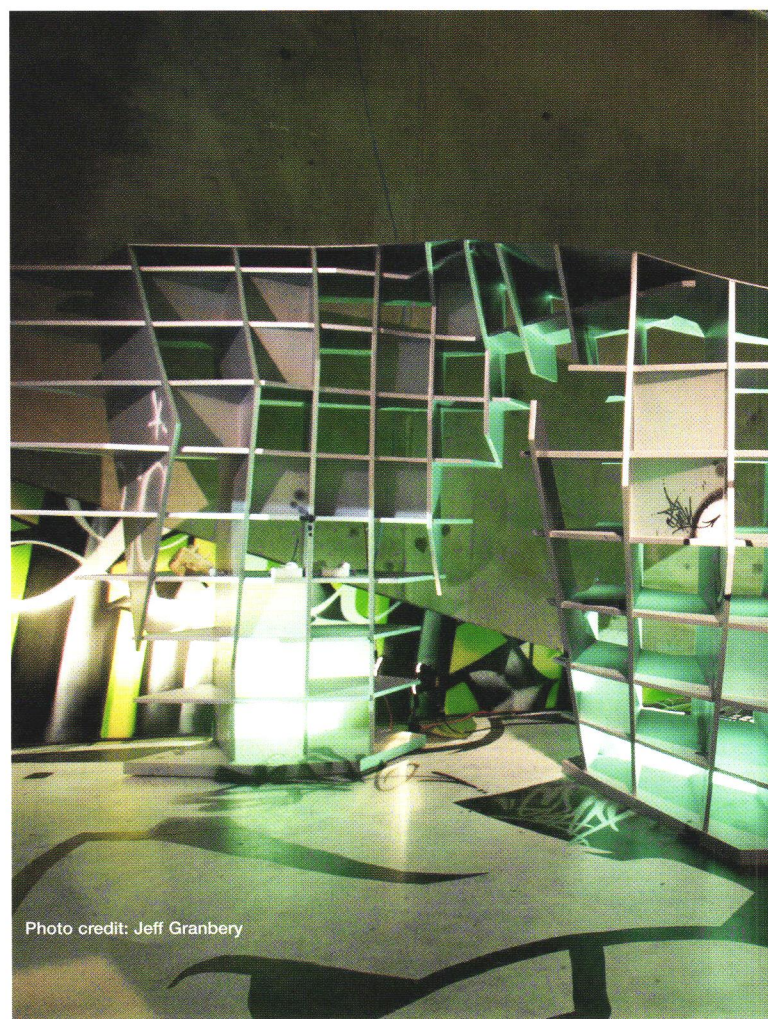


Photo credit: Jeff Granbery

in the desert. Graft broadened its scope by designing innovative installations for SITE Santa Fe, an interactive children's exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and Moonraker, a futuristic environment for Volkswagen near Los Angeles. The designers opened offices in Berlin in 2001 and Beijing in 2003, and they thrived on the challenge of engaging different cultures. "When we went back to Germany, we were cowboys, the easy-going sunshine dudes from Hollywood," says Krückeberg. "Americans see us as serious Germans, punctual and precise, and in China we are sophisticated Westerners grafting ourselves onto local sensibilities."

Hoheisel has settled in Beijing, but his colleagues constantly move around, staying in touch by e-mail and conference calls. Twice a year they get together for a planning session. "There's a salad bowl of ideas to begin with, and the partners push, stir things up, and ask questions," explains Putz. "It's almost a Dadaistic effort where you exchange half-finished paintings—a good business model for content development. Always, there's a project leader, who stays in place until the job is completed." Willemeit likens the consensual approach to a jam session, in which each member of the group plays solo in turn, improvising on a theme. "It's a strategy to provoke the unexpected—in contrast to a hierarchical office, which tends to generate predictable solutions," he says.

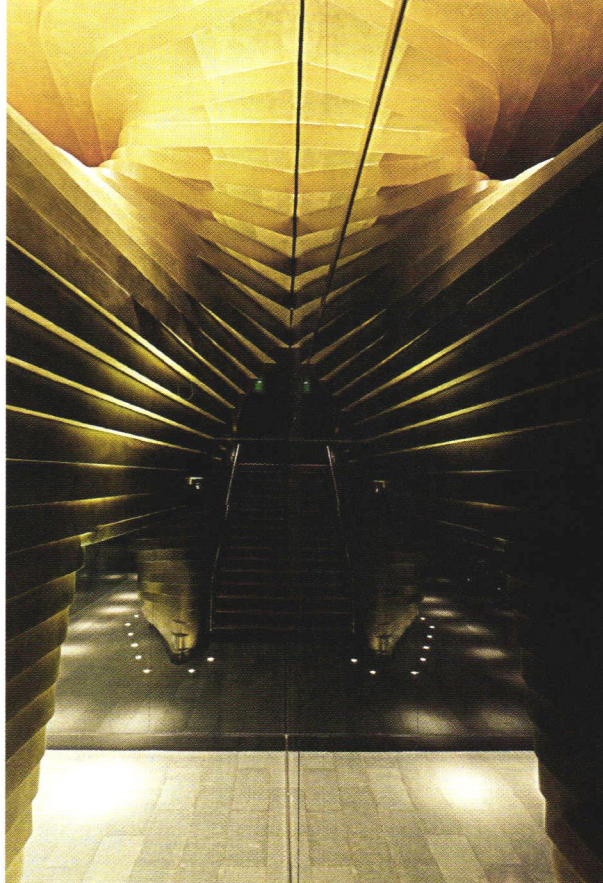


Photo credit: HIEPLER & BRUNIER

For the fourth SITE Santa Fe art biennial in 2001 (opposite top), Graft collaborated with curator David Hickey to transform a generic warehouse into a complex of interlocking spaces that evoke regional cultural milieus in contrast to the "neutral" spaces that characterize most art fairs. Moonraker (below left) is a temporary installation of futuristic living environments created in 2006 near Los Angeles to inspire Volkswagen designers. The Opticon Flagship Store (below right), Hamburg, 2007, features an interactive display of eye-glasses. The Hotel Iveria in Tbilisi (above right), Georgia, 2009, is a dramatic conversion of a 20-story tower that was built during the Soviet era.

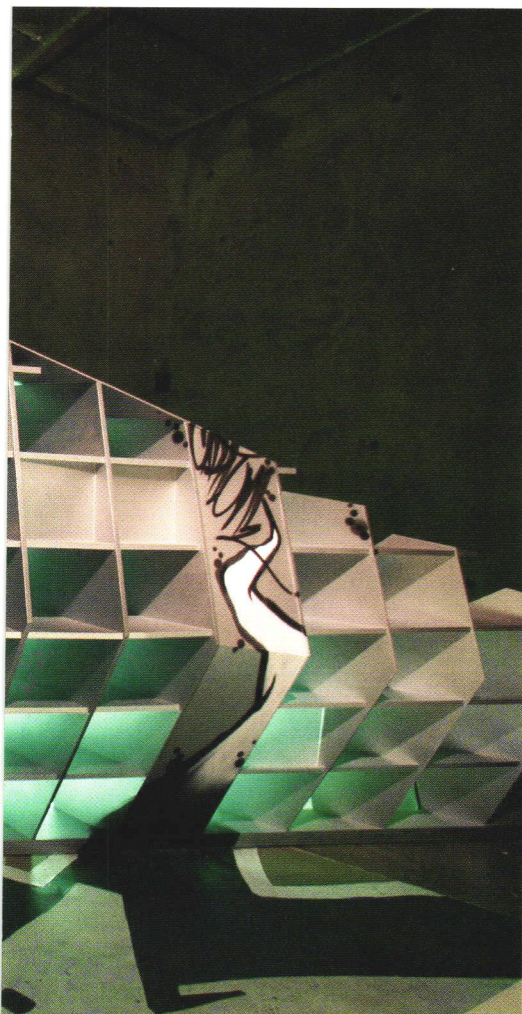
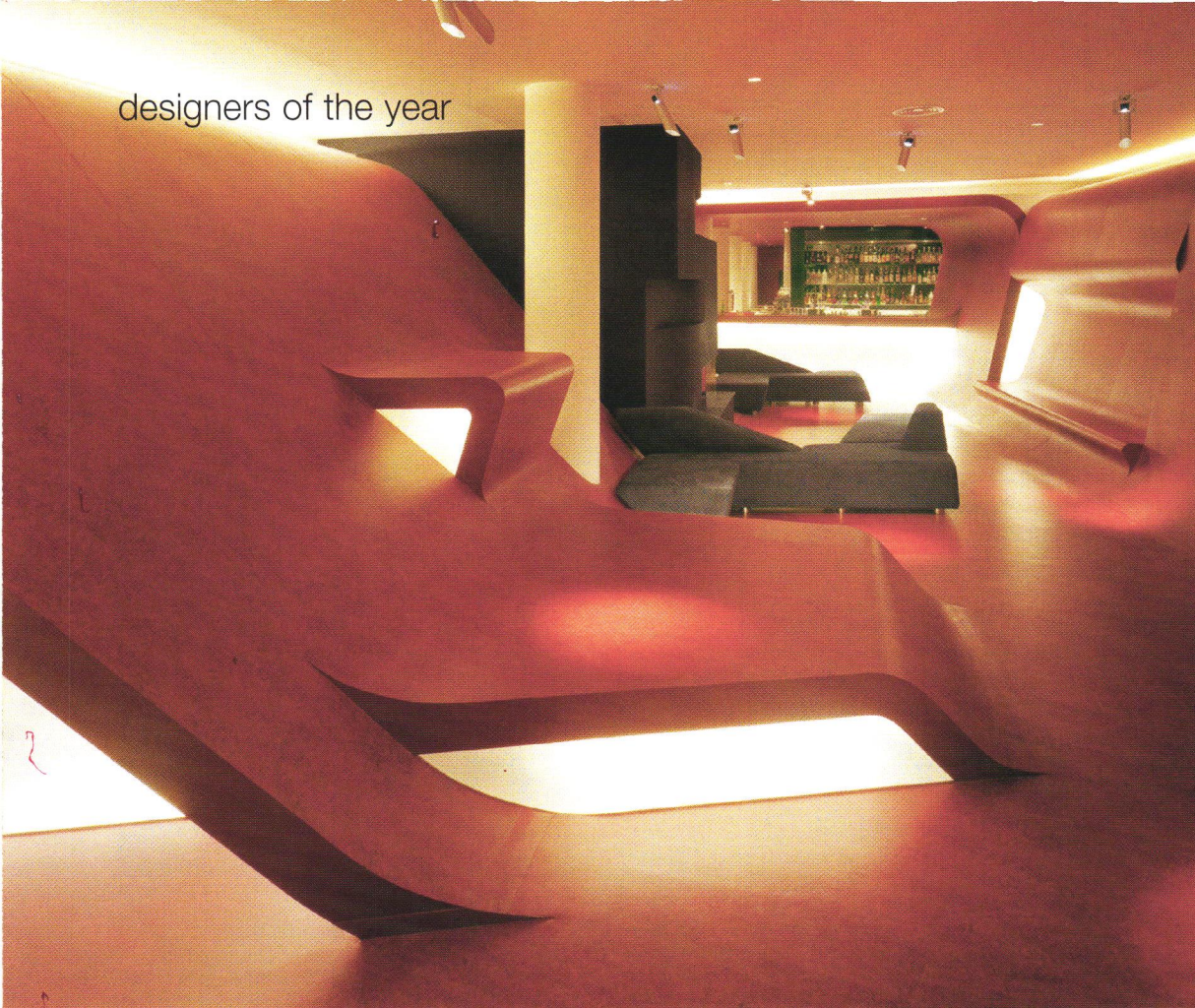


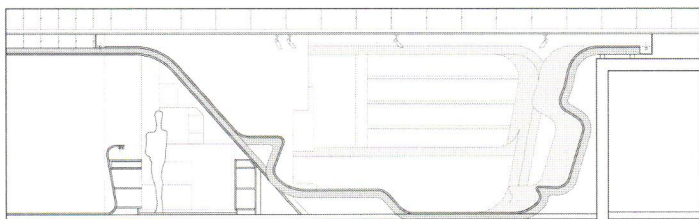
Photo credit: Christian Barz

designers of the year



The Q Hotel, 2004, is located just off the Kurfurstendamm, the Champs Élysées of Berlin. Its lobby (left), guest spa (below left) and guestrooms (below right) transport one to a world of fluid forms and sybaritic amenities. The KU 64 dental clinic in Berlin, 2005, (opposite top and middle) is located on the boulevard, and it employs a similar strategy, allaying the anxieties of patients and evoking the sand dunes of a summer resort. Graft's competition-winning design for the Russian Jewish Museum of Tolerance (rendering, opposite bottom) makes brilliant use of a modernist landmark in Moscow—a bus garage designed in the 1920s by the Constructivist architect Konstantin Melnikov.

Photo credit: hiepler brunier architektur fotografie



Hotels have proved fertile ground for Graft. One of its first major projects was the Q, located just off the Kurfurstendamm in the fashionable hub of West Berlin. In contrast to many design hotels, it is a seamless whole in which the same fluid forms are used consistently from entry to guestroom. Red linoleum flows over walls and floors, curving to accommodate shelves and wall benches, and stopping short of the ceiling. Within the 200-sq.-ft. guestrooms, the beds curve up to incorporate a tub and a slate-topped vanity, and a dark wood closet curves down to provide a desk top on the opposite wall, leaving space for an enclosed shower and toilet beside the entry. Thanks to this ingenious configuration and the crisp black and white palette, the tiny rooms have an air of spacious sophistication.

"In hotels you can crank up the volume because you live there for only a few days," says Willemeit. For Hoheisel, "hotels are like stage design—a refreshing place where guests can be someone else for a short time. But travelers also want to enjoy the unique experience of a specific place, so we try to infuse hotels with the local culture." He continues, "The Emperor in Beijing is very close to the Forbidden City so we used traditional Chinese colors for the interior and identified the rooms with graphic portraits of different emperors. We just finished the Iveria, a big hotel in Tbilisi, Georgia, which draws inspiration from cave dwellings and wine culture."

Alejandra Lillo, who grew up in Argentina, recently became the fifth partner and now heads the Los Angeles office. She was partner in charge on the W Hotel in lower Manhattan, Graft's largest U.S. building to date, which is scheduled to open in April. Located immediately adjacent to the site of the World Trade Center, it enjoys fantastic views but has to contend with the somber memories that will always haunt Ground Zero. "We wanted to open up compressed spaces to vistas within and beyond by punching out as many openings as possible," says Lillo. "But we also wanted to give the W a touch of edginess and *joie de vivre*, and we came up with the concept of punk minimalism, imagining a guy in a business suit with a pink Mohawk walking through the financial district."

Restaurants provide an ideal canvas for Graft's love of storytelling and fantasy. In Las Vegas, the firm designed Fix in the Bellagio Hotel as a glowing cave framed by milled slats of wood. Still more exotic was Gingko Bacchus, an upscale restaurant in Chengdu, the capital of China's Sichuan province. "The design developed as a series of layers," explains Hoheisel. "We started with the concept of treating the blacked-out circulation area as a stream with the eight private dining rooms as boulders along one bank." Stainless-steel lines set into the black granite floor evoke rippling water, and this effect is echoed in the undulating wood ceiling.

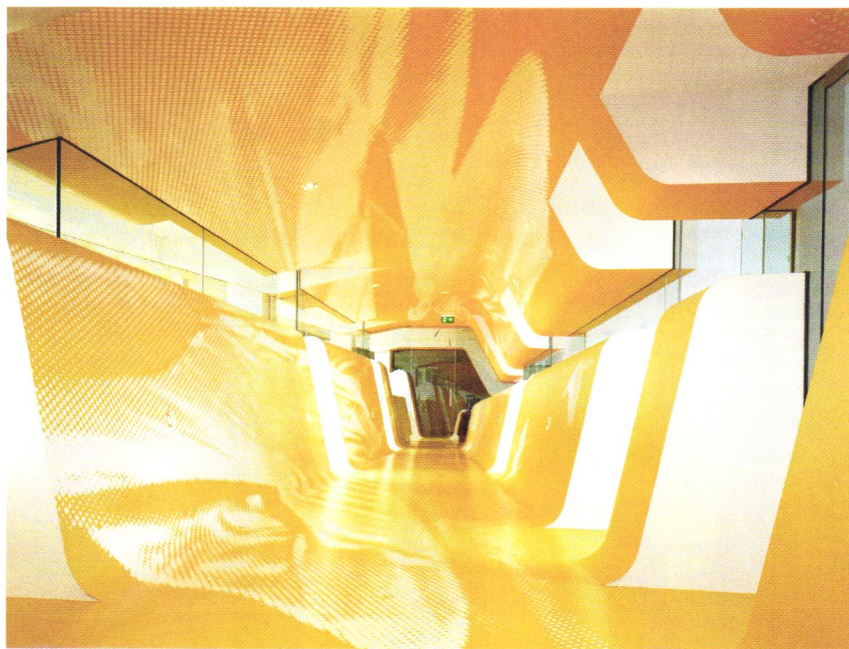
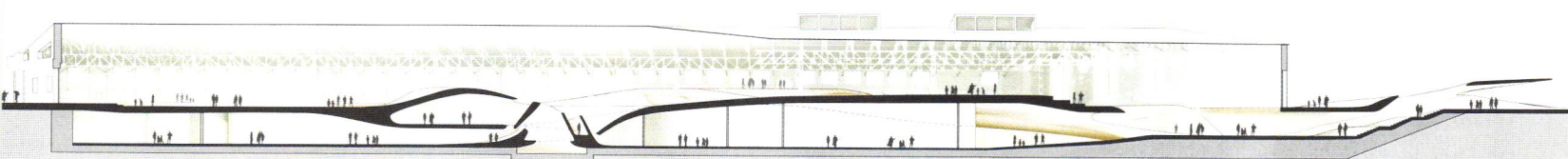


Photo credit: hiepler brunier architektur fotografie



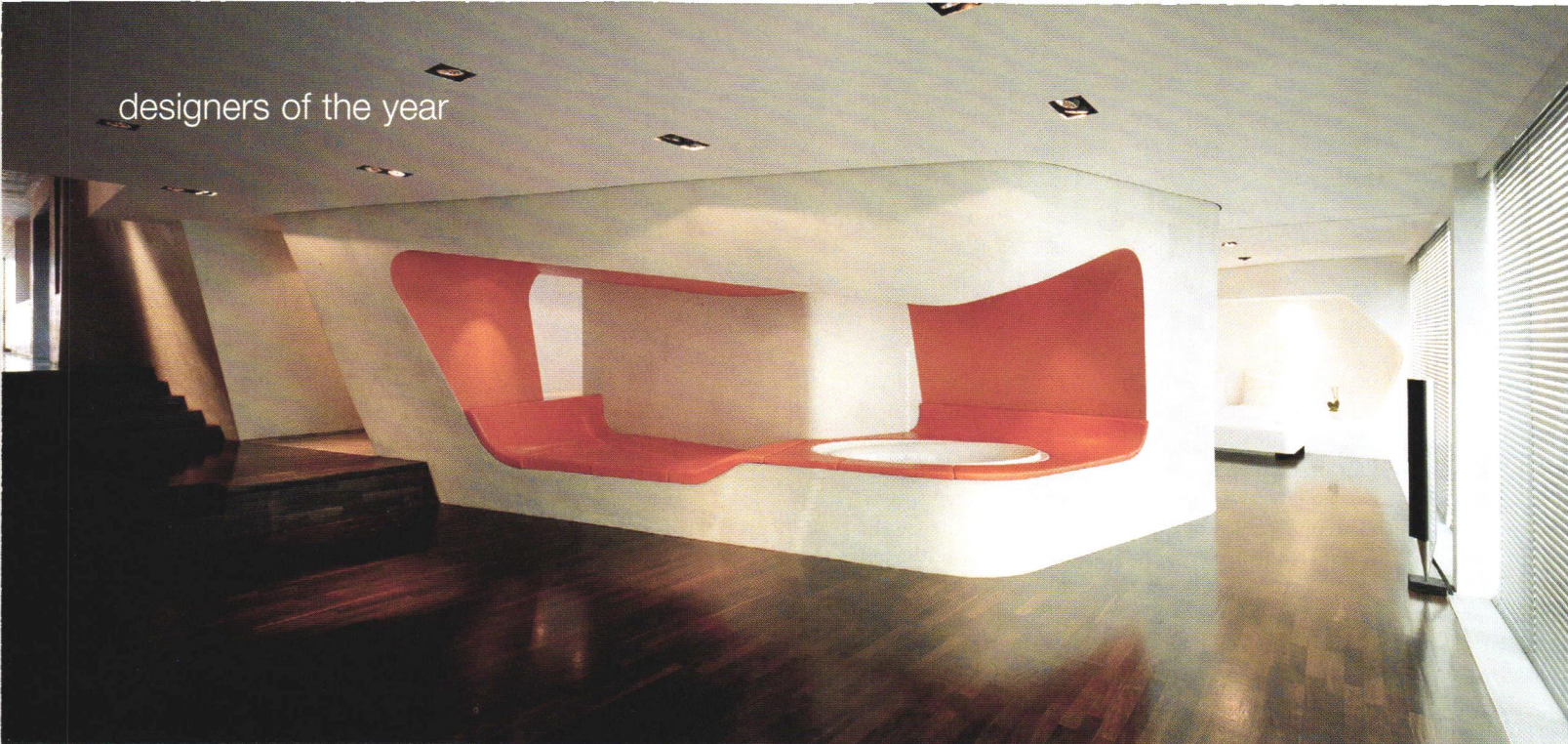


Photo credit: Jan Bitter

Photo credit: Golf Tattler, andi albert photographie



The outer wall of Ginkgo Bacchus is lined with high-resolution photos that put a fresh spin on 17th-century Dutch still-life paintings. These images are set behind one-way mirrors, and the lighting is controlled by a timer on a 20-minute cycle. Details are highlighted and then slowly fade to darkness, allowing diners to catch their own reflections. In the private rooms, vegetables are abstracted in wallpapers that range from artichoke green to red chili. Layered over these patterns are reproductions of old-master paintings of Bacchus, the god of wine, printed onto laser-cut sheets of stainless steel, with nymphs frolicking across the ceiling.

The Berlin office has employed a similar strategy of escapism for dentists who seek to put their patients at ease. "The trick is to work against expectations," says Krückeberg. "Most dental clinics are white and smell of disinfectant. For one client, we created a playful environment with the look of sand dunes, the smell of espresso that the receptionist offers to each new arrival, and cherry wood burning in an open hearth. Excited by the success of this first venture down the street from the Q Hotel, a children's dentist commissioned an equally joyful extravaganza from Graft. A blue wave links three levels of the narrow storefront and evokes the underwater fantasies of Jules Verne. "We take a holistic approach and try to appeal to all the senses," says Hoheisel. "Light is important, as are the smell, acoustics, and sense of touch as you move through the space. You can design a beautiful restaurant, but if you can't enjoy a good conversation, you'll hate it."

Adaptive reuse also is an important part of Graft's work. They transformed a ruined factory in the former East Berlin into a complex of live-work spaces, exploiting its position on a bend of the Spree river to create a magnet for young entrepreneurs. The entry lies beyond two courtyards and a huge freight elevator that was part of the factory serves as a mobile lobby. The original idea was to put a receptionist in this spacious room, but the requirement that every German workplace have natural light made that impossible. Instead, the designers installed comfortable seating and a bar with music, colored lights, and videos related to the floor being accessed. The journey takes at least a minute, and the elevator has an after-hours role as a party space. Another adaptive reuse project will soon take place in Moscow, where Graft triumphed over several other prestigious firms to win a competition for the Russian Jewish Museum, to be housed in a landmark building.



Photo credit: Golf Tattler: Lai Xuzhu, Oak Taylor Smith

A residential loft (opposite top) in a 19th-century building overlooking the Spree River in Berlin, 2005, is dubbed "Cocoon for an Open Mind," and it juxtaposes expansive, unfurnished spaces with a dense core of bathroom, stairs, and service areas. In the Kinderdentist (opposite bottom) in Berlin, 2008, the dunes of KU 64 become an ocean wave that crests over a staircase linking the entry to the upper and lower levels of the building and fusing the disparate waiting and treatment areas. The Hotel Emperor (below) in Beijing, 2008, takes its cues from the vibrant colors of the Forbidden City nearby in its lobby, corridors, and guestrooms. In the west Chinese city of Chengdu, the Gingko Bacchus (left), 2008, comprises a floor of private dining rooms linked by a corridor that eddies like a stream and is lined with abstracted renderings of old master paintings.



Photo Credit: Hong Chao Wai, L2 studio



designers of the year

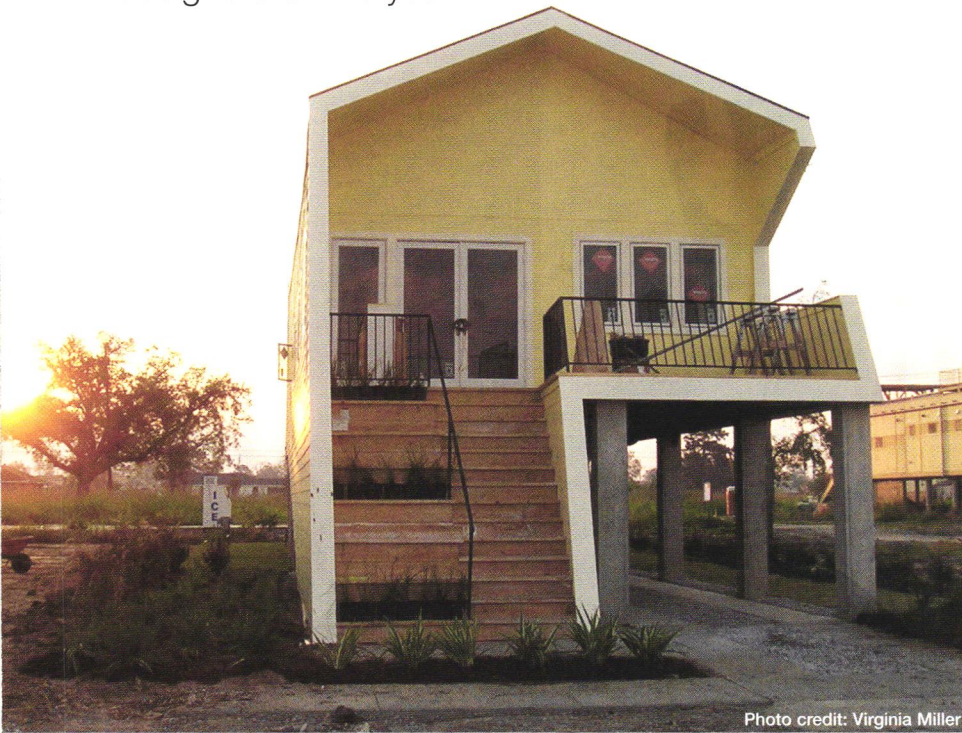


Photo credit: Virginia Miller



In 2007, Brad Pitt invited Graft to collaborate with other architects on a project called Make it Right that would help regenerate the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, which was devastated by Katrina and abandoned by the authorities. Graft designed a single-family house (above left) and the Camelback duplex (above right) as two of a score of designs for a 150-house program. The designers also created Pink, 2008, (below) a temporary, site-specific art work that generated public attention and funding for Make It Right.



Photo credit: Stefan Beese

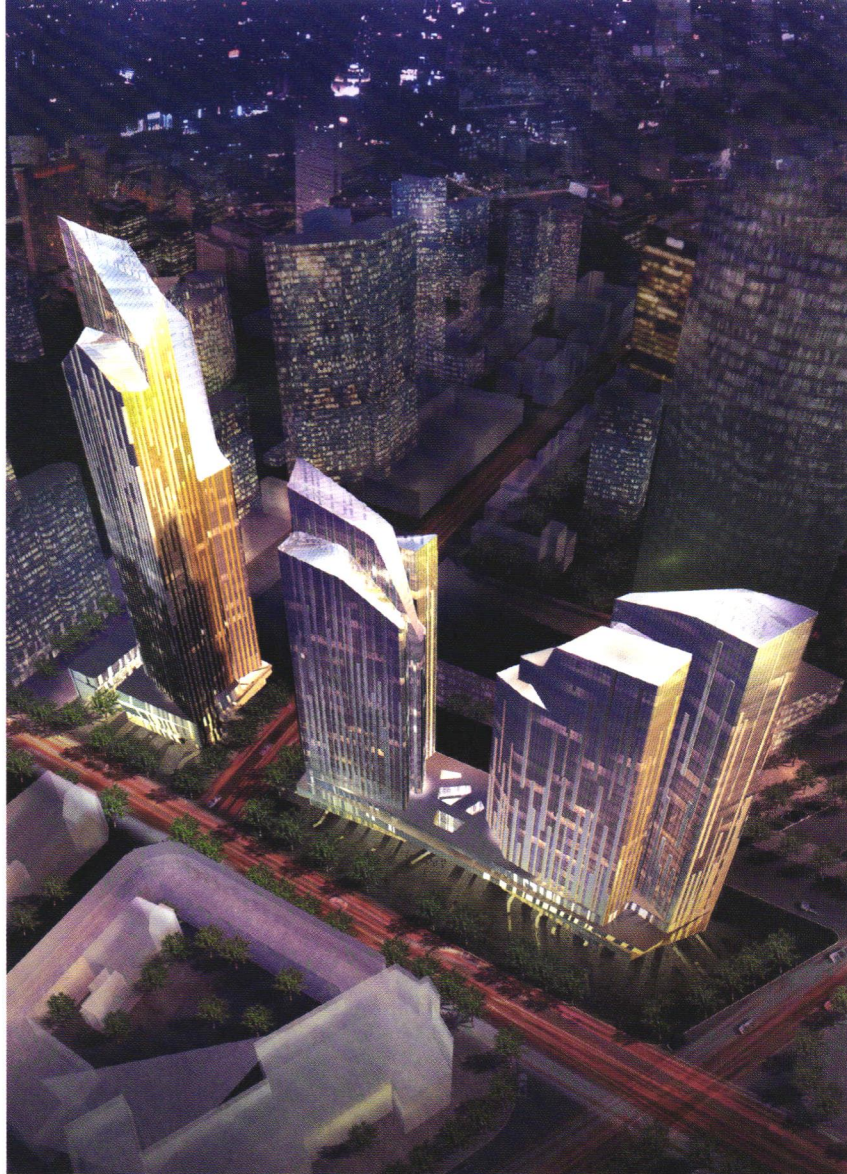
The pivotal project in Graft's brief career may turn out to be Make it Right (MIR), an idealistic response to the devastation of Katrina and the failure of the authorities to protect or re-house the poorest residents of New Orleans. Brad Pitt, who loves the city and was angered by its neglect, asked Graft to help in building 150 model homes for residents of the Lower Ninth Ward who owned sites but couldn't afford to return. "We designed two houses that would be sustainable, affordable, and architecturally appropriate, but we realized we should not try to do everything ourselves," says Krückeberg. The partners brought in William McDonough, a major authority on sustainability, and Cherokee Gives Back, a charity run by a company that cleans up contaminated sites. Together they selected 13 local, national, and international architects to design a single-family residence. In a second phase, eight architects designed two-family duplexes.

Each of the houses was developed in close consultation with residents, who then made their choice from the menu of possibilities. It was a learning experience on both sides. Architects who usually work with other professionals were closely scrutinized by people who had never imagined they could afford good design. "It was very different from air-dropping a spectacular project in Ordos or some other architectural zoo," says Hoheisel. "Here we were working face-to-face, and we realized that architects can change people's lives." As Lillo observes, "The task of the designer is to take every obstacle and turn it on its head to spur an innovative solution. Everyone should share the benefits of sustainability. It was truly moving to meet an owner boasting of his \$3 electrical bill, and a mother telling me that her children no longer suffer allergies since they moved into their MIR house."

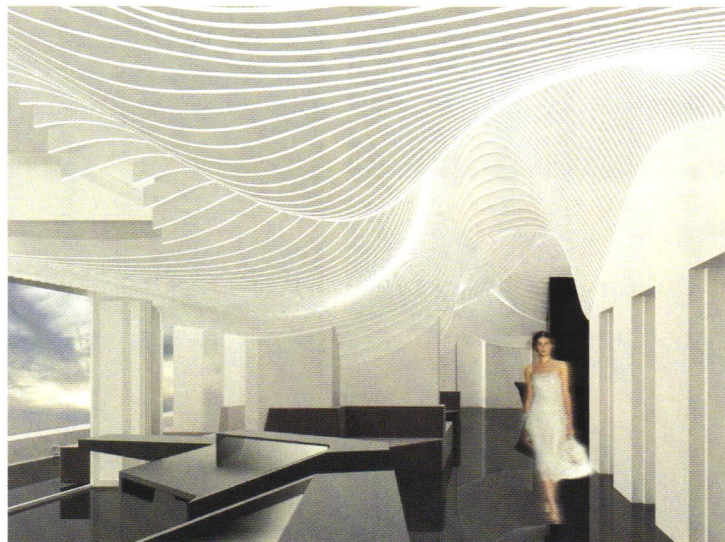
House Leader Nancy Pelosi called MIR a role model for the nation. Graft has been fielding inquiries from other distressed communities, and it collected the data and put it in a book, *Architecture in Times of Need*. The firm also created Pink, an installation that was dreamed up by Pitt and erected on the MIR site for the five weeks following Thanksgiving 2008. Inexpensively constructed from sheets of recyclable fluorescent pink fabric, it comprised 150 house-like blocks in 12 different configurations to anticipate the diversity of designs that would be realized over the next three years. It focused public attention on the potential of MIR and triggered donations from individuals around the world.

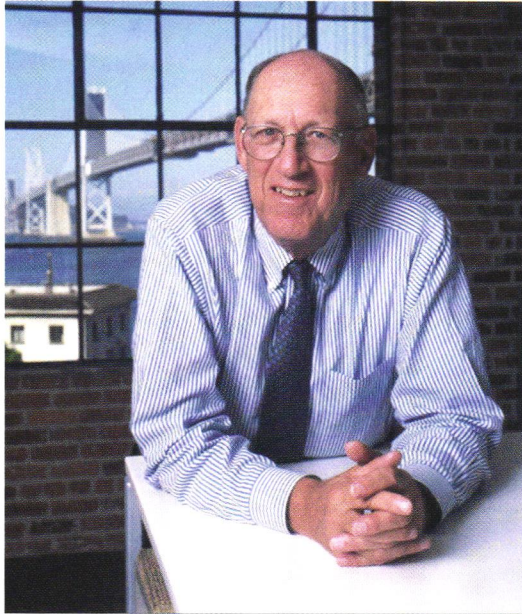
About 20 MIR houses have been completed, and the rest should be in place by the end of 2011. All are LEED-Platinum certified, making this the greenest community in the United States. Beyond its social utility, this community points the way forward for every architect and designer. As Krückeberg explains, "We can reclaim territory that has been taken away by developers and specialists. Think global; act local." As an example of this inclusive approach, Graft currently is developing a sustainable electrical power generator for African villagers that could dramatically improve their health and communications.

Gathered together for a creative retreat, the partners reflect on how far they've come in 12 years. "We need to be flexible in a way our parents were not," says Krückeberg. "If you don't move around, you won't have a job." The 40-something founders of Graft share ideas, work until 3 a.m. when they need to, and fly around the world without a second thought. "We are hosts and guests in every location, and that keeps you off balance and makes you think," Willemeit cuts in. "We don't want to specialize; we'd rather try everything." ■



In the Chinese city of Dalian, Graft designed an office tower for a newspaper group and two apartment towers (rendering above) rising from a three-story podium of commercial space. The sharp-edged complex will serve as an urban landmark and should be completed in 2011. The W Hotel and Residences in lower Manhattan (rendering below) is due for completion in April 2010. It exploits a dramatic site, looking out over the water, while respecting the memory of Ground Zero

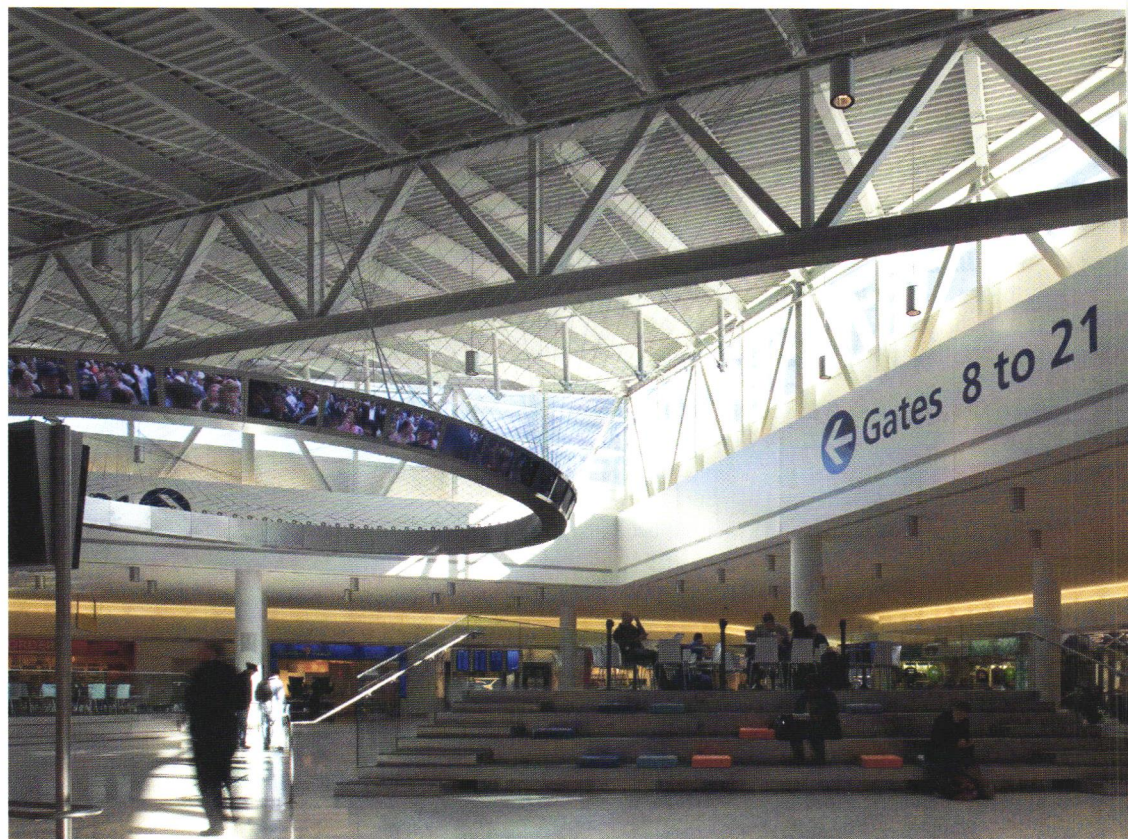




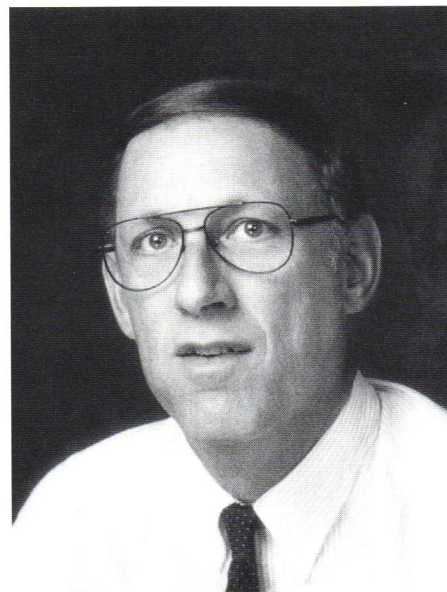
a constellation's shining star

Art Gensler, collaborator in chief

By Holly Richmond



The United Airlines ticket office in San Francisco (left and above left; photos ©Jaime Ardiles-Arce) was completed in 1972. In 2008, the Jet Blue Terminal at New York's Kennedy Airport (above right; photo ©Nic Lehoux) was the first airline terminal to be completed from the ground up after 9/11 and established the terminal security expertise of Gensler's aviation practice.



Spending an afternoon with Art Gensler is an exercise in humility. The possibility of coaxing this icon of design to talk about himself seemed peripheral at best, permissible at worst. Gensler, chairman and founder of Gensler, one of the world's largest and most prestigious design firms, eschews "me" in favor of "we." This is not disingenuous posturing or a contrived persona—this is Art Gensler, a design culture unto himself. For those rare few people in the industry who have not had the opportunity to meet Gensler, you may wonder if this renowned leader is as down-to-earth as his reputation confers. In a word, yes. Who else, when asked how he had the know-how and courage to start a firm with one draftsman, minimal prospects for work, three children and a wife to support, and \$200 in the bank would reply, "Because I was too stupid to know any better."?

That was 1965 in a one-room office in San Francisco. Today, 45 years later, Gensler corporate headquarters are still in San Francisco, though the array of talent that makes up the firm is in 34 worldwide locations from New York to Las Vegas, Abu Dhabi to Beijing. Gensler's conception of what a design firm should be—an inclusive entity to meet clients' needs not feed designers' egos—has persisted since day one and now permeates every Gensler project from large to small. Gensler states, "I believe much of a project's success rests on the chemistry between client and designer. Every designer at Gensler is a good designer, so there is always a perfect fit. I don't try to control it. I just get out of the way."

As usual, the conversation veers back to the firm's role, not Art Gensler's role, in generating success. This idea is encapsulated in the Gensler motto: "The one firm firm." Not to sound too Musketeer-ish, but Gensler himself seems to thrive intrinsically on the concept of "All for one and one for all." You can almost imagine this perpetually optimistic leader's 6-ft.-plus, formidable frame donned in an early 17th-century blue tunic and feathered hat, wielding a French sword whilst chanting the melodic refrain. "There was no grand plan when I started, but I knew I could communicate well and get people excited. It's really an attitudinal perspective for me," says Gensler.

His positive attitude is no match for his design skill and business acumen. He describes how the two work in tandem by stating his belief that certain people, including himself, are born with a three-dimensional perspective and capability. "Architecture is great training for almost any business because we have to think circuitously, not simply lineally. Both design and business are a progression. I thrive on the process."

Arthur Gensler in 2000 (opposite top; ©Michael Rubottom) and circa 1984 (above right; photo courtesy Gensler). Oracle's headquarters in Redwood Shores, Calif., (above left; photo ©Tim Hursley) was completed in 1998. Consolidated Freightways (below; photo ©Jaime Ardiles-Arce) in San Francisco was completed in 1982 and helped establish Gensler's enduring reputation for elegant, classic workplace design.





The Beverly Hills Hotel in Los Angeles (top left; photo ©Erhard Pfeiffer), completed in 1993, incorporated the integration of architecture, interior design, and graphic design for which Gensler is now known. The expansion of San Francisco's Moscone Center (top right and above; photos ©Roland Halbe) in 1992 represented a major leap into public sector work for the firm. Goldman Sachs in London (left; photo ©Jaime Ardiles-Arce) in 1991 heralded Gensler's move into Europe and established the London office.



The Gap's headquarters (above; photo ©Mark Luthringer) in San Francisco was completed in 1998. Gap, a 40-plus-year client, is one of Gensler's first and oldest.

This process, it seems, is what the Gensler team thrives on, as well. Walter Hunt Jr., vice chairman, client satisfaction officer, partner-in-charge and a 41-year firm veteran, who is also based in San Francisco, says that a choice aspect of his job involves accompanying Gensler to client presentations. Hunt, as well as others who work with Gensler, paints a picture of a role-up-your-sleeves, pen-in-mouth, excited yet in-charge leader and visionary. He chuckles as he reflects, "Super!" is one of Art's great lines." Hunt also admires Gensler's presence in front of groups, adding, "He gets to know the client and from there can truly inspire them. I'm not kidding when I tell you he believes in every single project and sees it as a venue to make the client's life better."

What is it that makes Gensler so inspiring? Those who know him best say it is his focused dedication to the client. He takes his time to perceive what the client's needs are, sift the good ideas from the great, and then offer a solution. "It is almost as if he is standing in a client's shoes," says Andy Cohen, Gensler Santa Monica, Calif.-based executive director, who has been with the firm for 30 years. Cohen believes that Gensler redefined the design industry with the notion that design is always for and about the client. From the firm's inception, Gensler believed that architecture is not an object; it is about people. "He's always light-years ahead of the competition and thus started looking at architecture from the inside out, from the people's perspective," Cohen adds. This, Cohen believes, is why the firm now has 16 practice areas and dozens of globally based offices. "It was revolutionary, thoughtful, and therefore successful. Art is focused on building the client's dream, not building a building," he says.

Gensler is not shy about this fundamental aspect of his ideology. He does not believe in selling a style. He likes to start with a blank sheet of paper and piece together all aspects of the project from budget to aesthetics to schedule to the smallest of design details in order to formulate a plan that is appropriate for that client—and only that client. "Success is not jamming an idea that I think is great down a client's throat. It's meeting the client where they are and designing a building that perfectly matches their needs," Gensler asserts.



Swiss Re in New York (above; photo ©Nick Merrick/Hedrich Blessing) was completed in 1995 and was honored by IIDA as one of the best designs of the decade.



The Toys "R" Us Flagship in New York's Times Square (above; photo ©Paul Warchol) opened in 2000 and represented a major leap for the firm's retail practice.



ING Café in New York was completed in 2000 (above; photo ©Craig Dugan/Hedrich Blessing).



Allsteel's Muscatine, Iowa, headquarters (above; photo ©Christopher Barrett/Hedrich Blessing) was completed in 2004.

That was the case with Pittsburgh-based PNC Financial Services, where Gary Saulsen, director of corporate real estate, says Gensler went above and beyond their initial goals for the prototype. PNC conceptualized the first and largest “green bank” in the United States. Today, six years after meeting with Gensler, 80 bank branches are LEED certified in locations including Ohio, New Jersey, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. “Art has been ahead of the curve in so many aspects of design,” Saulsen says. “He’s big-minded and believes good design includes aspects of green architecture. It’s not about the project in a limited sense, but how that project influences its users and how its users influence the world.”

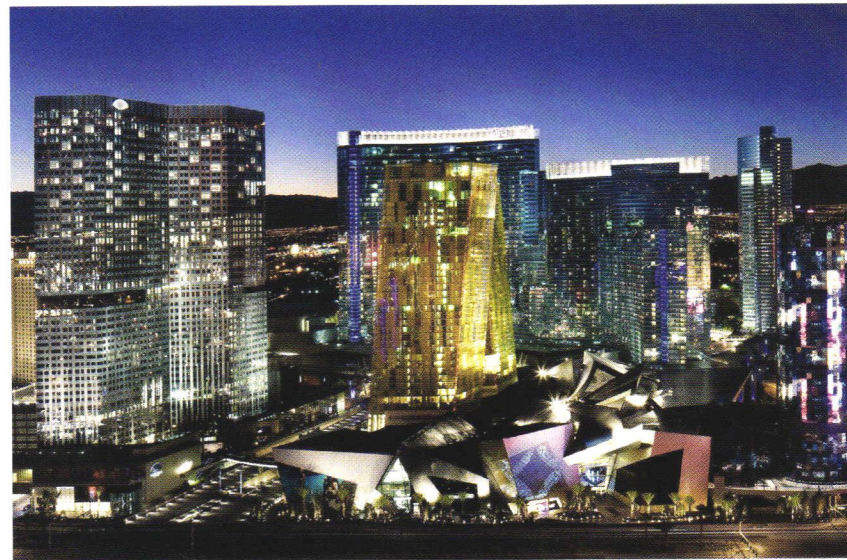
Gensler is resolved in the belief that his success—and the firm’s success—is built on relationships. He points to clients like GAP, which recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. Gensler designed GAP’s second store. “We’ve also been with Bank of America for 42 years, and we have many other long-standing relationships for which I am immensely appreciative,” he remarks. “The better we know a client, the better they’ll know us; and if we take care of them, they will take care of us.”

Another long-standing client is MGM Mirage, based in Las Vegas. While it is obvious that Gensler cherishes every past client relationship and opportunity for growth, he cannot contain his enthusiasm about the present project for this particular client. The firm is serving as executive architect for the largest private real estate project ever done in the United States. The MGM CityCenter, which opened on December 15, 2009, encompasses 18 million sq. ft. of mixed use space, including four hotels, a casino, an 1,800-seat theater, 300,000 sq. ft. of convention space, 16 restaurants, four pools, 475 sq. ft. of retail space, two 37-story residential towers, and one 1,540-unit condominium/hotel. The biggest aspect of this project, however, is the budget—\$8.5 billion. “It has been four incredibly exciting years,” Gensler exudes. “It is a one-of-a-kind project with starchitects doing their thing but working together, which is not the typical modus operandi for this crowd.”

William Smith, president of the MGM Mirage Design Group, matches Gensler’s enthusiasm as he describes the complexity of the project, which consists of 10,000 people on-site daily, with 50 Gensler executives from offices across the country overseeing every detail seven days a week. Gensler was the only firm that Smith believed could manage the enormous scope of CityCenter. “Art has been a progressive designer for more than 40 years and we knew this project was one he would thrive on. In this instance, experience counts, as well as the sincere commitment that he brings to every project. Art is the whole package,” Smith says. Additionally, Smith knew he could count on Gensler’s resources, including the ability to add people to the team as the deadline grew closer. “Gensler as executive architect added a level of credibility to the project,” he concludes.



The 600-m. Shanghai Tower (above; rendering courtesy of Gensler) will be China's tallest building when it is completed in 2014. The project cements Gensler's presence in the Asian market and the firm's move into super-tall architecture. Gensler's interiors for the iconic *The New York Times*' headquarters in midtown Manhattan (top right; photo ©Nic Lehoux), designed by Renzo Piano, were completed in 2007. Gensler served as executive architect for the recently completed MGM CityCenter (right; photo courtesy of CityCenter), the largest U.S. real estate project with 18 million sq. ft. of mixed-use space.



Dan Winey, San Francisco-based regional managing principal for Gensler's Northwest and Asian regions, is also at work on a large-scale project—the Shanghai Tower, which will open in 2014 and be the world's second tallest building. He says Art's dedication to a culture of collaboration has been apparent every step of the way with their Chinese partners. "Art loves to talk about the constellation of stars, which is how he describes Gensler's people. It is not about him, and it isn't about us. Every project is the client's project, the client's building," Winey explains. He reiterates Gensler's ability to establish and preserve the firm's values and foundations. "We play by Art's rules, which are passion for people, entrepreneurship, collaboration, and an intense desire to succeed."

Winey also makes note of "The one firm firm" motto, saying, "Art always brings us back to ourselves." The firm's culture is inclusive, so much so that Winey says the "regional" part of his title often seems irrelevant. He speaks to a global, holistic sensibility in regard to their design scope and corporate culture: if one individual or practice area succeeds, they all succeed. "We are encouraged to be entrepreneurs, to reinvent and challenge ourselves," he says. "You won't stagnate at Gensler. Art is an incredible encourager of forward motion."

Gensler himself has seen much change in the industry and is excited about its steps into the future. He explains that 20 or 30 years ago clients knew

where they were going, what type of business they would be in, and how that business would be run. Today, he feels the story is quite different. "The rate of change is practically day to day now," he notes. "Our work has to morph, the design process has to be fungible to meet the new business paradigm." He sees this manifesting in environments that are essentially built on wheels, encouraging flexibility and adaptability. He believes companies are pushing collaboration rather than isolation. "Everything is evolutionary so we must design around these issues," he says.

In regard to Gensler's next step forward and future plans, he emphasizes the social responsibility that he believes designers have today. He wants Gensler, as a firm through its people, to add value to each project even more than the client expects and in ways that will serve the local community. "It's about building trust and continuing our strong relationships. Our business is all word of mouth, which couldn't serve us better," he says with a smile. As for his "constellation of stars," even though he says he is "sitting in the back of the house now," he is not the least bit concerned about the progression of the firm, stating that he knows his people are great and will continue to be great—to shine, of course. He ends on a typically humble, humorous note, one that continuously beckons the stars to align: "If it were all about me, it would be boring." ■

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the 31st annual

interiors awards

presented by *Contract*

In our 50th year of publication, *Contract* proudly presents its 2010 awards issue, including the prestigious Designer of the Year Award, the 2010 Legend Award, and the winners of the 31st Annual Interiors Awards Competition. The editors wish to extend our congratulations to the five partners of Graft (www.graftlab.com)—Gregor Hoheisel, Lars Krückeberg, Wolfram Putz, Thomas Willemeit, and Alejandra Lillo—who are being honored as our 2010 Designers of the Year. In its young existence, Graft has already established itself as a model for design practice that transcends boundaries of all kinds, be they geographic, disciplinary, or social.

Congratulations are also in order for Art Gensler, our 2010 Legend Awards recipient, who founded Gensler (www.gensler.com) and can rightly be considered the father of commercial interior design as a serious business profession.

Our 15 category winners of the annual Interiors Awards Competition—Cannon Design, Cerquiglini & Rossi Architecture, Clive Wilkinson Architects, Dake Wells Architecture, Eskew+Dumez+Ripple, Gensler, Giorgio Borruso Design, Hartman Design Group, Janson Goldstein, Jestico + Whiles, ikon.5 architects, Munge Leung Design Associates, Slade Architecture, Stantec Architecture, will Bruder+PARTNERS—also deserve high praise for their work, highlighted in the following pages. As usual, these 15 firms represent a broad spectrum of experience, expertise, and geographic origins, proving once again that design excellence need not be confined to any particular location, building type, or budget.

Finally, sincere thanks to our five esteemed judges, who served on the Interiors Awards jury this year. Pictured from left to right are:

Lionel Ohayon, ICRAVE

Robin Guenther, Perkins+Will

John Peterson, Public Architecture

Joey Shimoda, Shimoda Design Group

Lois Goodell, CBT Architects



interiors awards

large office

By Michael Webb
Photography by Alberto Ferrero

project: Fornari Headquarters

client: Fornari

location: Milan, Italy

designer: Giorgio Borruo



jury comment:

"The spatial interplay accented with both natural and artificial lighting brought this project forward. It is one of the few spaces that represents the future and the power of architectural form. Too often workspaces succumb to the efficiencies of function and forget to inspire. This one inspires. It's the progressive idea of office as experience—pure visual poetry."

"With every job, we try to forget what we've done before and start from zero," says Giorgio Borruso. "The goal is to develop a signature for the client rather than ourselves." He also tries to distill all the possibilities into a single, unified concept and then to develop that in detail rather than offering a menu of choices. From his base in Venice, Calif., Borruso and his associates have created distinctive interiors for several leading Italian apparel companies, including Fornarina boutiques in London and Las Vegas. Recently they completed a headquarters in Milan for the parent company, Fornari.

The 35,000-sq.-ft. complex of offices and flexible open spaces for events and display is located in an abandoned porcelain factory. Borruso helped restore the decrepit structure and created an interior as fluid as the canals that still traverse the former industrial area of Navigli. Lino Fornari anticipated the building's new role as a showcase of the Italian design and fashion industries and acquired the space before it was restored.



interiors awards

"A central spine penetrates the entire volume, connecting the different levels in an organic way and guiding traffic through the building," says Borruso. His sensuously curved concourse extends from the street entrance to a sculptured staircase. Walls and ceiling are fabricated from a lightweight tensile copolymer, backlit by LEDs to achieve different color effects that spill over the white resin floor. The same polymer is used on the underside of the coiled staircase, and there the colored light is reflected off a rectangle of resin set into a textured concrete floor. The structural steel frame is exposed, and the straight beams complement the curvilinear stair balustrade of white-painted plywood.

Borruso has turned this orthogonal block into a stage for fashion and for the Fornari brand. Rough and smooth textures, angular and curvilinear geometries, white and colored surfaces play off each other. Industrial-style light fittings by iGuzzini punctuate the void, and stainless-steel pipes double as handrails and supporting frames for displays. There's a strong emphasis on function along with the illusion that the forces of gravity have been suspended. "Lines turn into a 3-D construction," says Borruso, "tying together the disparate spaces." Speaking for the client, communications director Caterina Aimone describes the showroom as "tangible evidence of the company's expansion onto the global scene: a gracious meeting place that expresses the multifaceted character of Fornari and its commitment to innovation." ■





Hogeschool
Nijmegen
Rotterdam
Rotterdam, Netherlands



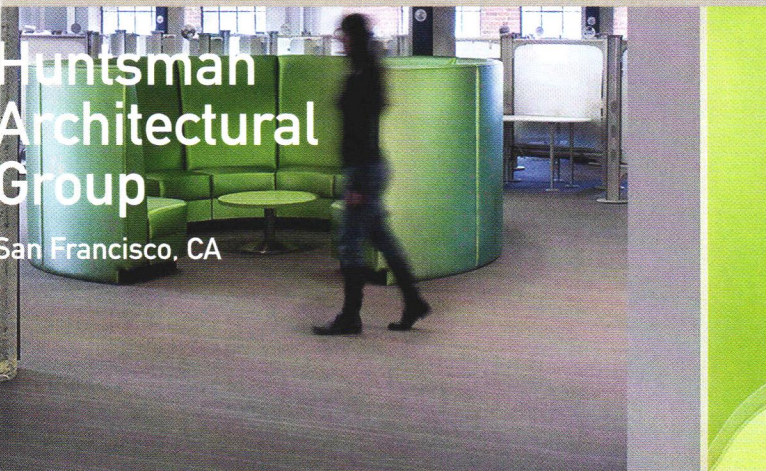
Mozu
Venice, CA



Shimoda
Design Group
Los Angeles, CA



VOA
Associates
Incorporated
Chicago, IL



Huntsman
Architectural
Group
San Francisco, CA



CHAMPIGNY
RAYMOND
studio
Montréal, QC Canada

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interiors awards



small office

By Jean Nayar
Photography by Bruce Damonte

project/client: Confidential Financial Client

location: San Francisco

designer: Gensler San Francisco



After the economic meltdown that touched virtually every corner of the world over the past year, the surviving players in the financial industry have begun to reinvent themselves to survive and flourish in the new global climate. And the design of a small office by Gensler for a financial start-up firm in San Francisco reflects a fresh point of view for a new era of investing.

“Our clients had a clear sense of the image they wanted to project,” says Gensler design director

Terry Walker. “They wanted a space that was light, bright, open, clear-cut, comfortable, and worthy of their clientele, but not ostentatious.” Delivering on every count, the designers produced a crisp environment with a clean, no-fuss profile that’s all about business—and light and views for all.

Located on the entire top floor of a brand new 34-story LEED-certified building designed by Kohn Pederson Fox and occupying about 12,750 sq. ft. of usable space, the office is divided into four suites of

private offices for managing directors and directors and three work and teaming clusters dedicated to the different aspects of the client’s business. With managing directors in glass-enclosed offices, analysts in workstations around the perimeter, and administrative support personnel located in workspaces just outside the enclosed offices, the entire staff has access to natural light and panoramic city and bay views visible through floor-to-ceiling windows all around. The reception area, boardroom, conference room, and small informal teaming

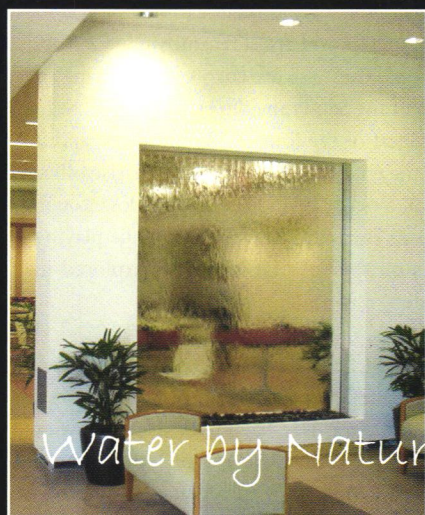
areas were also positioned near windows, allowing everyone—employees and guests alike—the right to light and views at all times. Even in the long elevator hall that leads to the reception desk, a slot cut into the wall offers a surprise glimpse through the adjoining space to a window beyond.

Visually, the setting is sleek yet comfortable, “like a residential penthouse,” says the designer. Though quiet and understated, finely finished, highly crafted materials and furnishings in a neutral palette define the space with a sense of quality. Aged European oak floors, for example, enrich public areas, including the lobby, reception area, boardroom, and coffer bar area. In enclosed offices and workstation areas, floors are topped with a sisal-like carpet, while work-surfaces are made of rift-cut oak and storage units are lacquered white. In the communal café and pantry area in the long hall bisecting the space through the core, on the other hand, a long coffee bar made of dark fumed oak plays off wall paneling and cabinetry in pale quartered olive ash. Thoughtful juxtapositions of materials like these and careful attention to detail throughout define a space that is at once of its time and timeless. ■



jury comment:

“A crisp, elegant solution that is likely to be perceived this way for years to come. The reflectivity of materials largely contributes to the overall lightness of space. The sculptural quality of portal, slot, and simple planes creates a space that is calm as well as intriguing. There is great care involved in presenting the work, and that leads me to think that there is great care in making the work.”



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education

By Michael Webb
Photography By Benny Chan/Fotoworks



project: FIDM San Diego

client: Fashion Institute of
Design and Merchandising

location: San Diego

designer: Clive Wilkinson Architects

Clive Wilkinson Architects designed the Orange County campus of the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) in 2001, and ever since, the West Hollywood-based architecture firm has enjoyed an uninterrupted association with the preeminent West Coast school for fashion and related design disciplines. Their 14 projects include a library for the main campus in downtown Los Angeles and, most recently, a new school in San Diego. They also are currently preparing an extension of the San Francisco campus. San Diego is the smallest of the four FIDM branches, and it occupies the entire third floor of a high-rise office building in a newly revitalized area of downtown. But it has its own unique character, while playing variations on themes that were first explored in Los Angeles.

"The internal landscape is student-centered, supporting their experience through openness, transparency, and user-friendly spaces for work and recreation," says Clive Wilkinson. "Vibrant public spaces contrast with quiet, neutral classrooms and study areas." The library is a mix of both spaces, encouraging students to study there rather than just use the books. An axial concourse undulates and eddies, expanding into social gathering areas. The palette of beige and yellow tones evokes the dry, sun-baked desert that surrounds San Diego.





Those themes are on display in the expansive reception area, which doubles as a place to hang out and opens onto an outdoor terrace. The red birch soffit generates a sense of warmth and intimacy but is cut away to reveal the raw ceiling with its white-painted service ducts. To one side, a band of yellow defines the glass-walled library, dipping down to form a counter. The first of several panels by FIDM graphic designer Miwako Feuer provides a point of focus. Glass-walled classrooms flank a student lounge where sheets of metal are cut and bent to shade suspended lighting. "We were inspired by Elizabethan ruffles, an allusion that worked well for a fashion school, and the metal is an inexpensive way of achieving sculptural depth overhead." An A/V-shaped niche of white drywall painted lipstick red on the inner face is given a glossy finish to evoke the southern California culture of cars and surf boards, and it frames a counter full of computer monitors plus sofas for laptop users.

Annie Johnson, vice president of FIDM, has worked closely with Wilkinson over the past eight years. "Clive's use of color, along with high-concept architecture and interior design, awakens and challenges students to be creative," she says. "As a design college, what more could we ask?" ■





jury comment:

"It's an interesting integration of educational materials, writing surfaces, and display that's integral with the architecture. This project makes me feel like architecture matters in the process of learning. Since it is a design school, it is appropriate that it embody a passion for design and it does so boldly! Color and form create dynamic geometries. The design is consistent with what the stimulus-craving, next generation students are seeking."



healthcare

By Amy Milshtein
Photography by Richard Johnson Photography

project/client: Peterborough Regional Health Centre

location: Peterborough, Ontario

designer: Stantec Architecture

Sometimes the coolest hangouts appear in the unlikeliest of places. The mall, the downtown coffee shop, the park all seem like logical spots, but the Peterborough Regional Health Centre in Peterborough, Ontario? When Stantec Architecture created the new facility the designers knew they were bringing together two old facilities, but did they know it would bring together the community and become a cross-generational gathering spot?

“We intended it to be community connected,” says Michael A. Moxam, senior principal at Stantec Architecture in Toronto. Indeed, instead of letting planning and equipment requirements drive the project, the architect looked to the human experience including connection, emotion, and orientation to lead the way.

The result is a center that embodies the environment of wellness through connection to and reflection of the community it serves. Nestled high in the hills, Peterborough commands sweeping views of the city and region beyond. The lobby serves as a nerve center, connecting all high-traffic areas, like ambulatory care services, admitting, administration, and retail, in a clear and understandable way. Lower traffic areas like diagnostic/treatment and inpatient units use subtle cues to intuitively direct patients along the right path.

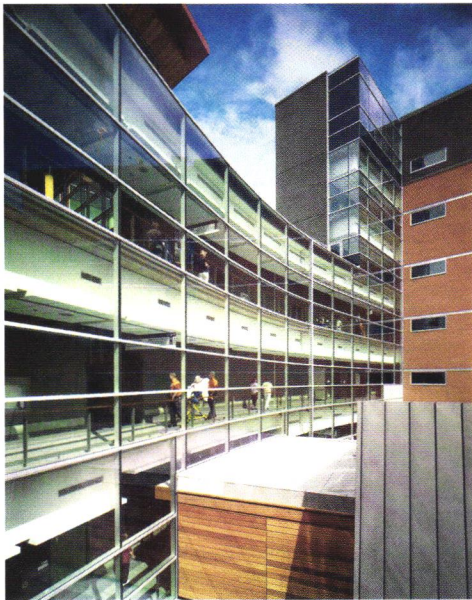




jury comment:

"This project remains appropriately institutional while shedding the undesirable trappings of traditional healthcare. The neutral and natural materials palette is elegant and non-institutional. There is superb integration between the building architecture and interiors...massing of the building stepping down the hill results in great vistas on which the interior capitalizes, making many of the spaces feel like they are outdoors."

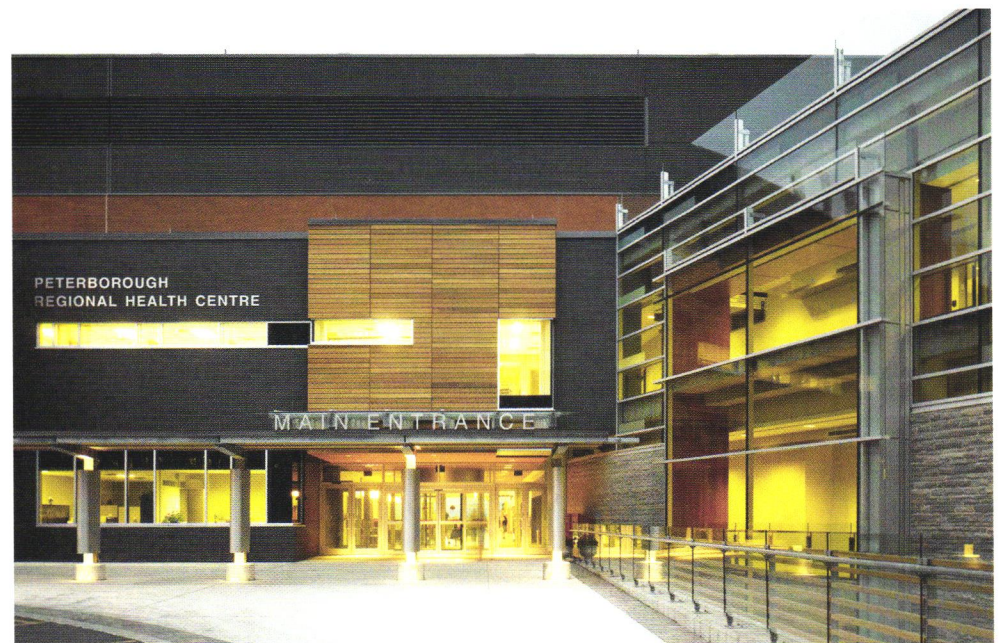




Throughout the large facility, extensive glazing and courtyards continue to reconnect visitors, patients, and staff to the community. Even the most critical and bedridden patients are treated to floor-to-ceiling views, often leading to healing results. “It provides a positive distraction,” says Tom Holden, vice president, planning and hospital services, Peterborough. “I asked a patient how he liked our state-of-the-art entertainment system, and he told me he preferred the view out his window.”

The Centre is also attracting and retaining top-quality staff. Peterborough replaces two antiquated buildings that sat seven kilometers apart. With no natural light, air quality issues, and cramped work areas, the old hospitals served no one well. Using the Ontario model, 70 percent of funding for the new project was provided by the government. The surrounding population of more than 300,000 people came up with the balance. “The community really believed in and bought into the project,” says Holden. “We had one of the highest dollar per capita donation rates ever.”

Residents have claimed the Centre for their own as retirees hang out on the patio in the summer time. More surprisingly, kids from the nearby high school drop by the cafeteria for lunch. Moxam remains delighted. “It was born out of a clear idea of how to connect and has really taken off as a community center,” he says. “It’s been a project of a lifetime for me.” ■



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hotel

By Danine Alati
Photography By Mikiko Kikuyama



project: Andaz West Hollywood

client: Hyatt

location: West Hollywood, Calif.

designer: Janson Goldstein

It's always a challenge to rebrand a property, especially one like the Hyatt West Hollywood that's rich in its history and rock-n-roll lore. But this Sunset Strip property—which originated as the Gene Autry Hotel in 1963 and gained notoriety as Continental Hyatt House, or Riot House, when frequented in the '70s by rock legends Led Zeppelin and the Rolling Stones—was reopened in January 2009 as an Andaz Hotel, a new brand of Hyatt, after a top-to-bottom redesign by Janson Goldstein.

Hal Goldstein, a partner at the New York-based design firm, explains that his team was charged with creating a new brand that was site specific. "We sought to create a place that's unique to the location, incorporating the sexiness of West Hollywood and sophistication of the Hollywood Hills," he explains. "The design is informed by the hotel's history, but not expressed in a literal way. It's like a ghost of its past."

Immediately upon entry, the "ghost of the past" is evident in a full-wall, backlit image, which illustrates a storm with sunspots and "represents the energy of the '60s and '70s," according to Goldstein, who adds, "We worked with artist Amanda Weill to create this image that taps into the essence of what the hotel was back then and brings it into the present."

Furniture, materials, and textures are a mix of vintage and newer pieces that seamlessly integrate so there's no distinction between what's old and new. "The lobby reflects a ruggedness and sexiness of the Sunset Strip," Goldstein says, referencing the burnt oakwood and distressed motorcycle-jacket leather.





jury comment:

"The project speaks of high design but is so drunk with the power of art. The two work together beautifully to create a seductive and yet sophisticated atmosphere. The clear and restrained palette of materials gains enormous life from the celebratory use of glass and light. It's surprising, mysterious, dramatic, and sensual."

The ground floor offers one continuous space where guests can meander through from the lobby into the RH Andaz restaurant. "My favorite part of the project is openness and warmth," admits Andaz West Hollywood general manager Michel Morauw. "I love the way the spaces transition between one another; between the lounge and RH, the communal tables and the oakwood and tumbled marble floors offer a natural transition." Goldstein adds, "When visitors enter the hotel, they can appreciate the layering of depth and details. If you keep returning, you'll see strong design elements, but also see depth to the detailing that keeps building."

Anchoring this hotel in its Hollywood setting, an all-glass pavilion extends RH out onto Sunset Boulevard. This glass box is framed in skeletal steel, with an organic, psychedelic, public art installation by local artist Jacob Hashimoto on the exterior. The hotel also sports an all-glass southern façade. Modeled after case study glass houses in the Hollywood Hills, the loft-like junior suites have balconies enclosed in floor-to-ceiling glass to offer spectacular views of the valley, as does the rooftop pool deck that overlooks all of the Los Angeles basin.

Content with his design team's rebranding of this hotel, Goldstein notes, "There are a lot of products out there in this market segment, and Andaz distinguishes itself as something unique and long lasting within this segment." ☐







retail

By Danine Alati
Photography by Iwan Baan

project: Barbie Shanghai
client: Mattel
location: Shanghai, China
designer: Slade Architecture

"It's a challenge to create the first ever environment for an iconic doll," says James Slade, whose New York firm Slade Architecture was tasked with designing the first Barbie flagship store in Shanghai, a location selected for its large population and market potential. Mattel, the manufacturer of Barbie and licensor of the most Barbie products worldwide, sought to bring together aspects of the Barbie brand in a store that goes way beyond just toys.

"We wanted a retail experience that celebrates the doll as the hero, but also shows the depth and breadth of the entire brand," says Richard Dickson, a senior vice president in charge of the Barbie brand at Mattel. To fulfill this goal, Slade and his partner Hayes Slade established a vocabulary to interpret the Barbie brand, designing everything from the façade, interiors, and furniture to the display fixtures, clothing hangers, and plates in the café. They began by gutting the 35,000-sq.-ft., six-story building and partnering with New York branding and design firm BIG to create a façade that layers molded, translucent, polycarbonate interior panels and flat exterior glass panels printed with a decidedly feminine lattice frit pattern. The reconstructed façade also features softer edges that allude to the curved, sinuous surfaces that await on the interior.

Inside, Slade strategically employed pink in specific places. The pearlescent white entry lobby serves as a decompression zone that helps visitors transition from the gritty, urban Shanghai street into the home of Barbie, but then they are "bathed in pink" as they ascend the escalator. "The pink acts as a signal," Hayes Slade says. "When you come into the white lobby, you see a burst of pink glow from the esca-



lator that pulls you in.” The pink shading becomes increasingly more intense as one vertically traverses the store levels.

A spiral staircase encased by hundreds of translucent, polycarbonate boxes that contain 800 Barbie dolls—all dressed in pink—connects the main (women’s) floor with the levels above (the girls’ and doll floors). “The staircase is the center of the store and one of the most memorable elements,” Dickson says. “I never get bored going up and down the stairs. A pillar of the most fabulous dolls as far as the eye can see, what can be better?!”

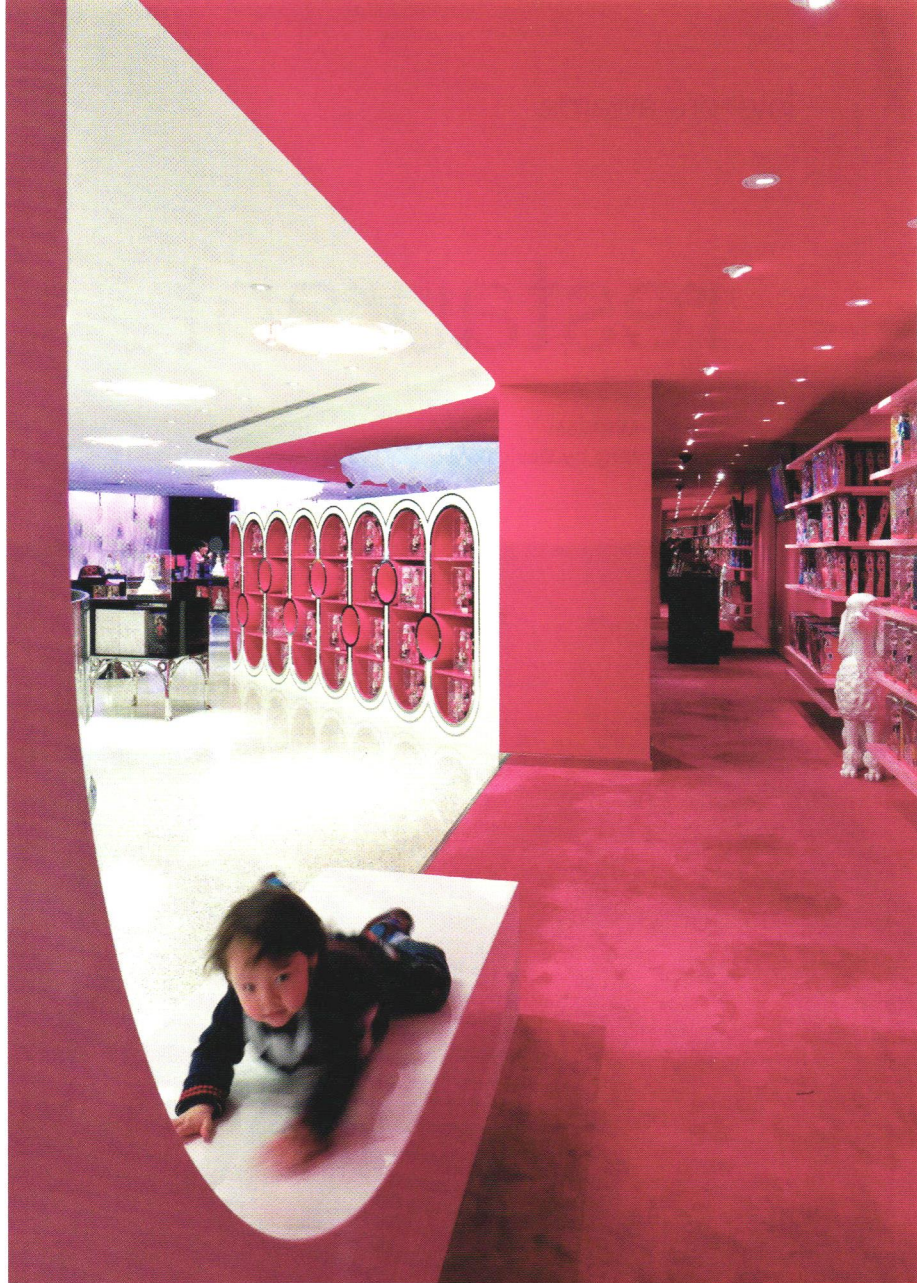
Girls can design their own Barbies in the Barbie Design Center, conceived by Columbus, Ohio-based Chute Gerdman and designed by Slade, while a Barbie Fashion Stage designed by Chute Gerdman allows them to participate in a runway show. With the store intended as a fully immersive experience that attracts girls and mothers alike, the women’s floor features apparel, cosmetics, and a couture line of Barbie merchandise, and the Barbie Café is set on the top floor. “Each section of the store is a unique facet of the Barbie experience,” says Hayes Slade. “We created these distinct little environments that all fold together as a whole space that is very open and visually connected.”

With the client wanting a design-focused retail space that was clean and modern but not cold, the designers added touches of whimsy and played on the sense of scale. For example, looking from the girls floor down through the spiral stair and doll wall, shoppers on the main level appear to be the same size as the dolls. “The store is modern, fun, and filled with ‘oohs’ and ‘ahs.’ It’s a perfect blend of sophistication, quality, and fun,” Dickson says. “It’s eye candy, pure eye candy.”



jury comment:

"What a great project to have...to create a thoroughly modern space to sell Barbie. The stair, with the continuous doll display, totally captured me! The signature color is used with great strength, impact, and conviction—it is just shy of overdone, or just the right amount of overdone. This space would make any Barbie fan feel glamorous."



interiors awards

restaurant

By Amy Milshtein
Photography by Device222

project: ULTRA

client: INK Entertainment

location: Toronto

designer: Munge Leung Design Associates



jury comment:

"The design is focused and unafraid. This vibrant, imaginative, clever, compact space is made more intriguing with the impressive grand-scale graphic scrim. It's stylish and clubby with a good dose of humor, color, and sexy lighting. There is no mistake that the experience in this place is pure theater."

Reinvention is never easy, but in the restaurant business it's a necessary evil—particularly if the trendiest places want to stay current. Still, it was hard for Munge Leung Design to remodel five-year-old ULTRA. The firm's original design for one of Toronto's hottest luxury dining and clubbing spots proved so popular that the city was up in arms when word of the project leaked out. Could the architects along with the owner, INK Entertainment, match the past success?

It takes just one look at the new ULTRA to answer with a resounding, "Yes!" The original space spoke of luxury, elegance, and serious extravagance that owner Charles Khabouth felt was inappropriate for the upcoming half decade. He envisioned something "more playful." He says, "I wanted an approachable space with a bold and cheeky twist."

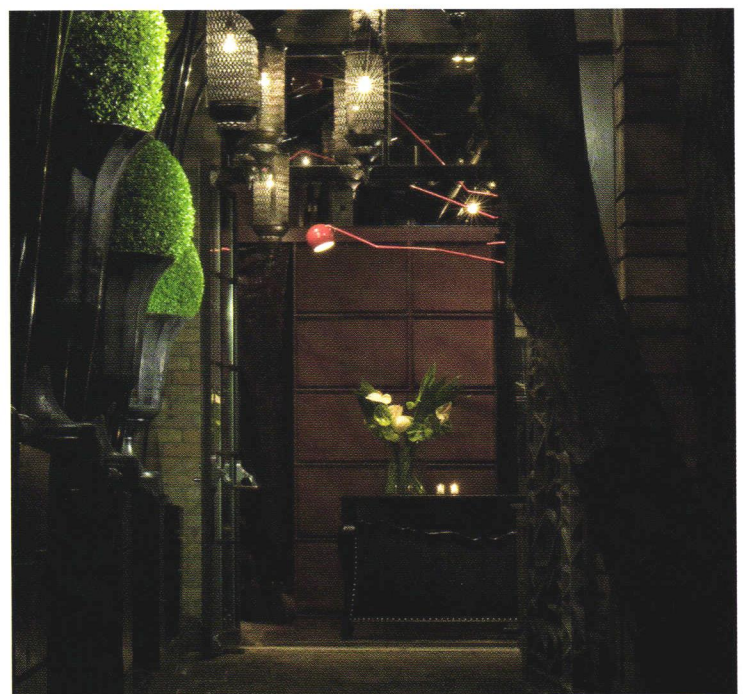
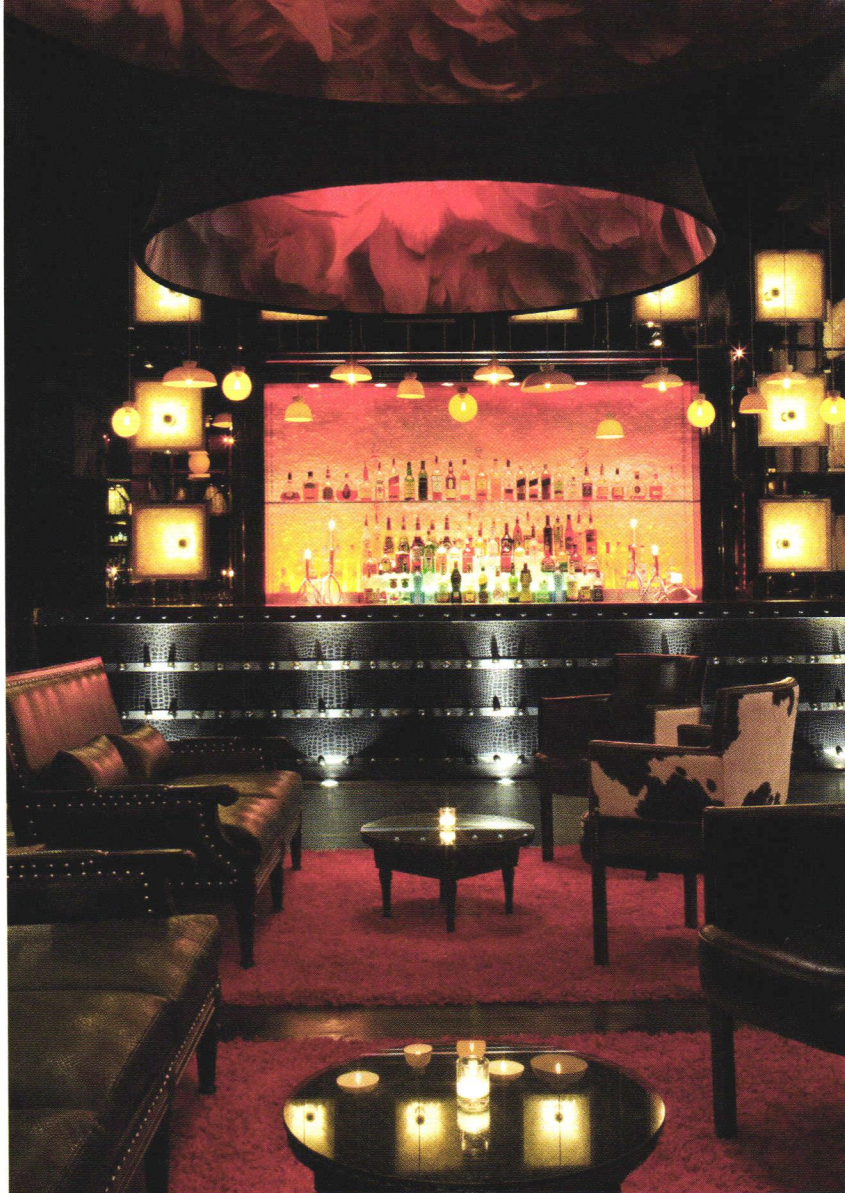
Khabouth can see a trend coming. While the old ULTRA was still beloved and successful, the new one promises to endure with a menu that's 20 percent less pricey than before. Gone are the VIP room and foie gras, replaced by tasting menus, a mischievous attitude, and...roosters?

"The cocks can be interpreted in many ways," says Munge Leung managing partner Alessandro Munge. "They strut and preen just like the people in the restaurant." They lend volume, color, and humor to the space along with inspiring the design further, as seen in the feather design found in the lampshades of the custom pendant lighting and the bird-foot-like candlesticks.

ULTRA's old circular banquette seating gives way to movable tables and chairs along with an impressive 25-ft., solid oak table. Envisioned to act as the hub of the social dining experience, the table seats 24. Like the old ULTRA, this supper club transforms into a dance club at 11:30 p.m. Designing for those dual functions proved a challenge.

Staff moves seating to create a dance floor, while the rooster graphics retract into the ceiling. Lighting levels dim, and the oak table becomes an elevated dance floor/fashion runway where clubbers can jump on and strut their stuff. "Lighting is the most important part of a space to me," insists Khabouth. "I can work with an ugly space with great lighting, but not vice versa."

The new ULTRA still seems to be attracting the right crowd. And the rooster theme has taken off. "I got an email from someone who was inspired by them to create T-shirt graphics," says Munge. Yet not everyone is down with the chickens. Famously vegan PETA spokesperson Pamela Anderson asked that they be retracted when she dined in the space. So when Anderson walked in, the cocks went up. 🐔



exhibit

By Jean Nayar

Photography by Will Crocker Photography

project: Prospect.1 New Orleans

client: U.S. Biennial Inc.

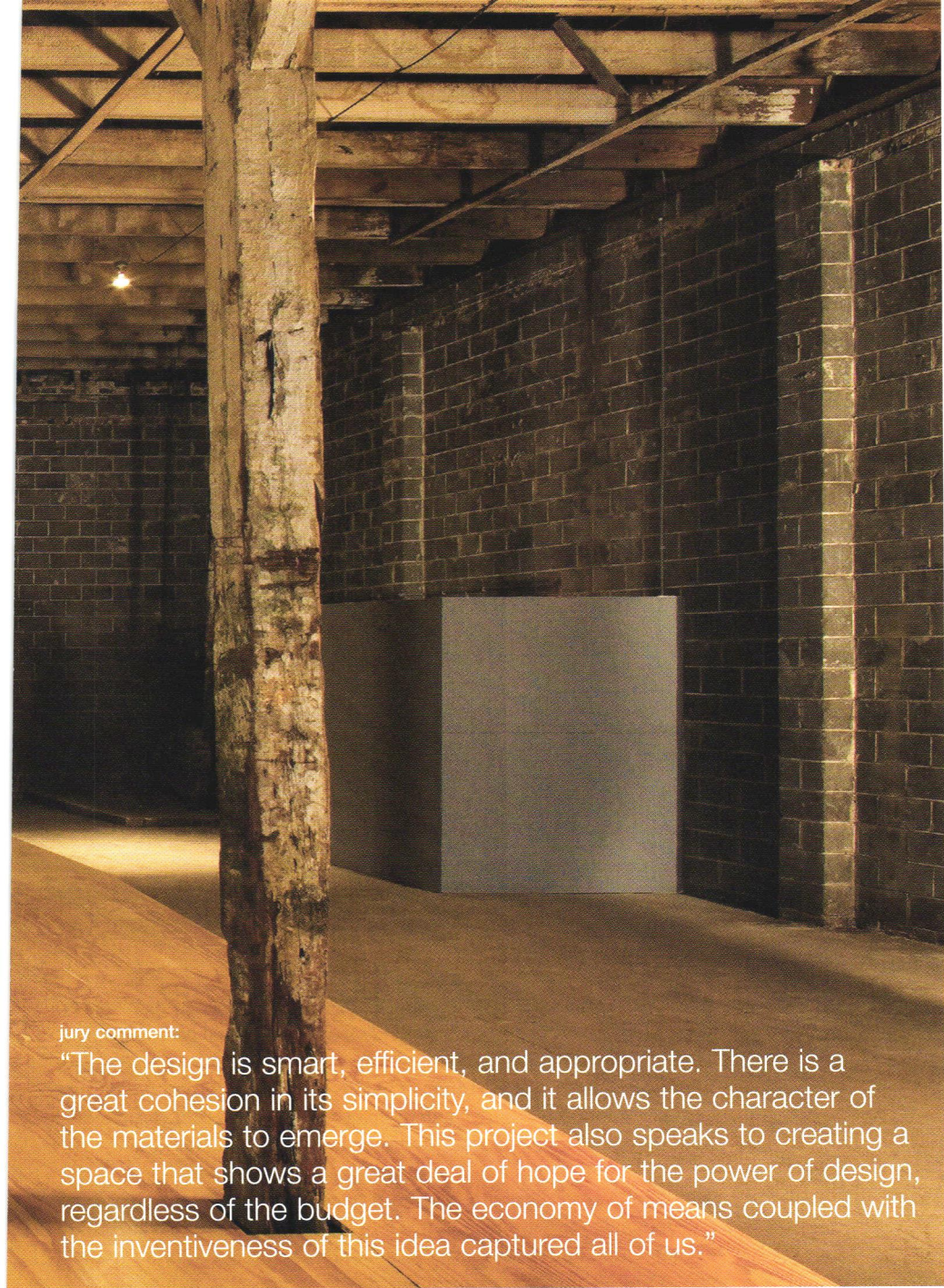
location: New Orleans

designer: Eskew+Dumez+Ripple

One of North America's most distinctive port cities, New Orleans is known around the world for its complex and vibrant culture—a place where Creole cuisine, folk art, jazz, brass bands, and a mélange of languages, influences, and people merge in a shared identity that transcends its diverse population. So, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, it isn't surprising that people from all over the globe rallied to support its on-going recovery. Among the many contributions to the city was Prospect.1 New Orleans, the largest biennial of international contemporary art ever organized in the United States. Its aim was to help redevelop the city as

a cultural destination. And the biennial's imaginative Welcome Center—designed by New Orleans-based Eskew+Dumex+Ripple as the starting point for the citywide exhibition—was in its own way a reflection of New Orleans' international cultural heritage.

Organized by curator Dan Cameron, the director of U.S. biennials for the Contemporary Art Center in New Orleans, the exhibition showcased the work of 81 artists from 39 countries in 22 museums, historic buildings, warehouses, and other “found” locations throughout the city from November 2008 through January 2009. The



jury comment:

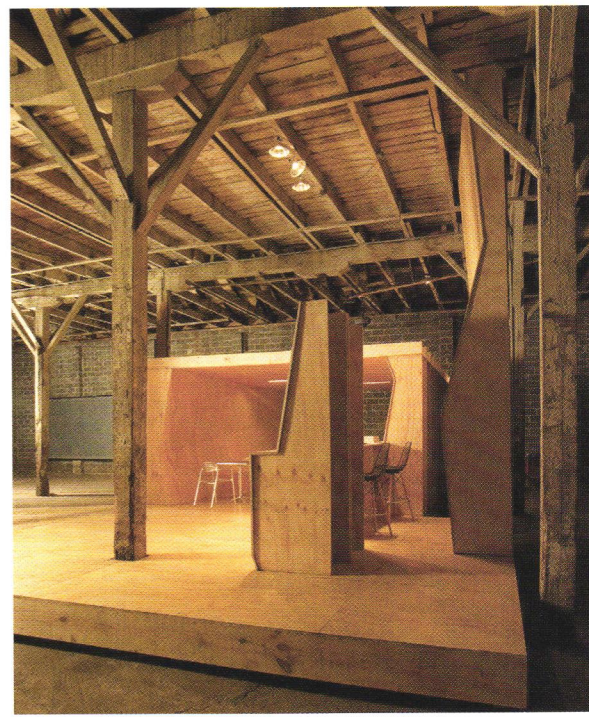
"The design is smart, efficient, and appropriate. There is a great cohesion in its simplicity, and it allows the character of the materials to emerge. This project also speaks to creating a space that shows a great deal of hope for the power of design, regardless of the budget. The economy of means coupled with the inventiveness of this idea captured all of us."

curator asked Eskew+Dumez+Ripple to help him lay the foundation for the exhibition by facilitating permits and regulatory approvals in several of the locations that would house the various works of art. He also asked the architects to design the exhibition's Welcome Center in the historic Heffler warehouse building in downtown New Orleans' Warehouse Arts District.

Funded in part by a \$10,000 grant from the Downtown Development District, the Welcome Center served as the first link for visitors to the exhibition as well as a conduit to other arts-related events around the city. "We wanted its design to

relate to a symbol of New Orleans," says principal designer Steven Dumez. "Originally, we wanted to adapt an existing shipping container as a reflection of New Orleans and its connection to the world through the port, but modifying it would have been too labor-intensive, time-consuming, and costly, so we designed an abstract version and made it of plywood instead."

Designed and built in just five weeks, the sculptural, 300-sq.-ft. structure-within-a-structure was approached by a ramp that led to a reception desk and shelves containing maps, literature, pamphlets, and other descriptive information about the exhibi-



tion and the city. Next to the desk—and backdrop, counter, and shelves behind it—a 20-ft. by 20-ft. container-like volume, supported by a ribbed wooden armature and housing a series of tables, chairs, and refreshments, was designed as a kind of landing pad for visitors before they set off on their journeys.

Constructed as a temporary facility, the artful structure nonetheless played a pivotal role as a gateway to this important event as well as to the city itself. And for those who visited the exhibition, it also will likely remain one of many memorable threads in their experience of the rich cultural tapestry of New Orleans. **C**



showroom

By Alex Palmer
Photography by Pierangelo Pertile

project: Osram Light Studio Showroom

client: Osram SpA

location: Treviso, Italy

designer: Cerquiglini & Rossi Architecture

jury comment:

"The forms and spaces allow the lighting to be the center of attention. The showroom illustrates the immense power that light has over mood and space perception. Information display is cleverly integrated within the motif. The space is transformed as the product is demonstrated."

As one of the biggest manufacturers of lamps and light management systems in the world, Osram aimed to have its showroom—situated on the first floor of its factory unit in Treviso, Italy—be used for internal meetings, as a place to present its offerings to visitors as well as somewhere for visitors to relax and feel comfortable. The company partnered with Cerquiglini & Rossi Architecture to create this space and showcase Osram's values.

"Our goal was to play with light, to give emotion and inspire the clients and designers who visit the Osram showroom," says Andrea Cerquiglini of Cerquiglini & Rossi. The architect aimed for the design solution to meld with Osram's products, integrating the light into the architecture. All shapes, surfaces, and materials were selected for the way they interacted with light.

Since Osram's focus is on light sources and their control systems, rather than light fixtures, Cerquiglini began integrating these sources—particularly LED modules—into the showroom at the earliest stages of planning, rather than adding lighting toward the end. "Light had to be the main material to construct this project," Cerquiglini explains. "All the light fixtures are custom-made solutions, and they *are* the interior architecture project. This project is 'the shape of light.'"

The 150-sq.-m. showroom is divided into two zones. The first is the showroom and meeting space of about 100 sq. m., which offers presentations of Osram's products and services. Second, there is the 50-sq.-m. bistro area with chairs and tables, as well as a bench bar where visitors can relax, have coffee, or meet more informally.



Cerquiglini describes it as a “living project.” Cerquiglini & Rossi chose and proposed colors both to create a consistency with Osram’s company image, and also to show the possibility of creating different atmospheres simply by playing with light. “We wanted to create color with light,” says Cerquiglini. “We hit the targets that we set, and 100 percent of our needs were met.”

There are seven separate systems that Osram can control with a touch-screen, varying from cold to warm color temperatures. They can create repeatable sequences and download them to a controller, modifying them in the system as need be. These sequences can also be synchronized with audio or video to heighten the experience. “The client can watch the video, and then around him the color of the environment changes in accordance to the video,” says Gianluca Filippi of Osram.

The shapes used throughout the space emphasize nature, with a thin line of “pipes” in the coffee-break area, which work with LED modules to evoke the feeling of being in a forest. Rounded half-sphere “bubbles” throughout the showroom, with one large one in the room’s center, allow for a varying ambience to be created as the light system is adjusted.

The showroom also incorporates an innovative panel system for displaying products. Rather than traditional panels, these are presented much like books on a shelf that can be easily changed or removed. “Light had to create very different solutions, very serious solutions, but also a very funny atmosphere for a party for example,” says Cerquiglini.

The innovative showroom required intense creativity and technical prowess. “Throughout the process we discovered a lot,” says Filippi. “At the beginning there was a lot of work to do. In the end, we reached the scope.”

spa/fitness

By Alex Palmer
Photography by Peter Mauss/ESTO

project: The Center for Wellness at The College of New Rochelle

client: The College of New Rochelle

location: New Rochelle, N.Y.

designer: ikon.5 architects/Galina Design Group



jury comment:

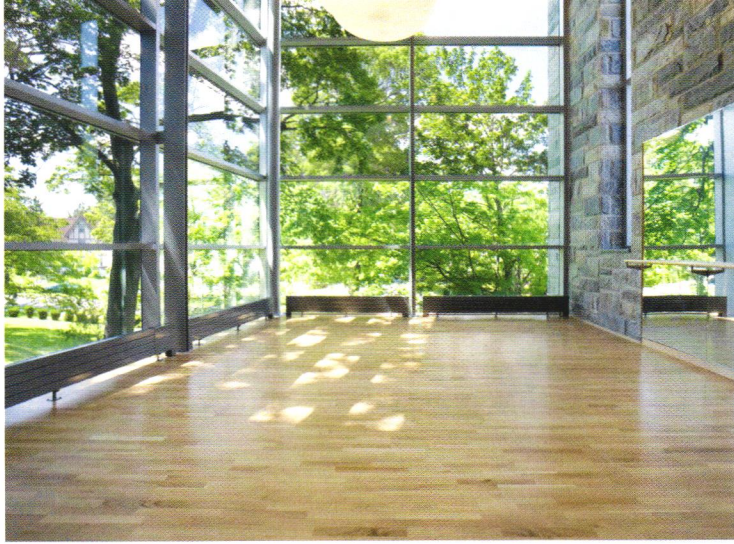
"This project is a great study of solid and void (transparency) using materiality. The seamless blending of architecture and interiors conveys an athletic facility emerging from the ground plane, complete with natural materials that move between interior and exterior. Skylights, clerestory, and extensive use of framed views create a great vessel to capture the light."

When the leaders of New York's College of New Rochelle asked Joseph Tattoni to design a wellness center that would fit in with the surrounding landscape, they probably did not expect that he would literally build it into the landscape. Tattoni, the principal of Princeton, N.J.-based ikon.5 architects, worked with the College of New Rochelle on a sustainable design that eventually built a third of the building—including a pool and locker area—below grade. The plan called for a design that would be distinctly modern while at the same time complementing the 19th-century residences of the local neighborhood, as well as the gothic design of the wider campus.

"The college wanted the building to look more innovative than it looked old, but they did want it to have a connection back to the 100-year development of the campus," says Tattoni. In building the project, Tattoni and his team used the same Westchester granite that proliferates throughout the campus buildings. During the building process, they were able to preserve 87 maple and oak trees, as well as historic specimen trees such as a sycamore at the entry of the building.

The building houses a 1,500-seat gymnasium and fitness and aerobic center, as well as the natatorium, several education rooms, a meditation room, and an outside contemplation chapel garden on the rooftop. "It was about approaching it the same way they teach education at the college: that is, total human wellness, which includes not only the body but also the mind and spirit," says Tattoni.

The designer connected this variety of elements and design goals to an overarching theme of "The Garden of Eden"—a paradise of total health with a sustainable design that evokes the wider health of the planet as a whole. (The facility was designed to achieve a LEED silver rating.)



“It was very important for us to make that statement. This is a wellness center, and integrating that concept holistically is part of our goal,” says Judith Huntington, vice president for financial affairs at The College of New Rochelle, who was heavily involved in the planning of the building. As Huntington and her team worked through the final details of the wellness center, ikon.5 provided them with images and popular portrayals of the Garden of Eden going back hundreds of years to help paint a picture of how this facility could capture this idea.

Each main component of the Wellness Center has a parallel in the natural world. The walls of rough-hewn granite in the lobby concourse create a striking crevasse, the sunlit pool surrounded by sandblasted concrete serves as a grotto, while the gymnasium embodies a rock outcropping. The grand skylight above the swimming pool allows for the area to be lighted partially with natural sunlight, saving on energy costs. There is a heat recovery system

in the pool to capture hot air off the warm pool water and use that to supplement the heating throughout the rest of the facility.

Other elements have been incorporated to strengthen its sustainable design, such as recycled glass chips in the ground concrete flooring of the lobby and cork and rubber athletic flooring in the fitness center. Yet, like so many elements of the College of New Rochelle’s Wellness Center, sustainable components, like the blue and green colored glass in the auditorium that cut back on the use of energy, also elevate the interior to create a more spiritual effect, according to Tattoni.

“The whole interior use of natural daylighting and materials were selected on the basis of reminding one that this is a place of spirituality,” Tattoni says, “even if they’re going there just to play basketball or to swim a few laps.” □



sports/entertainment

By Amy Milshtein

Photography by Gayle Babcock/Architectural Imageworks

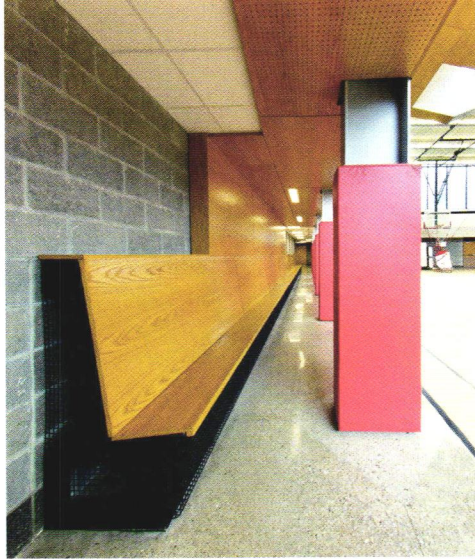
project: Exeter Schools Multipurpose Space

client: Exeter R-VI School District

location: Exeter, Mo.

designer: Dake Wells Architecture





jury comment:

"This project beautifully interprets the word 'multiuse.' It illustrates that you can pack a lot of design into multiple functions without losing personality and excitement. The celebration of each function through change of axis is both understated and perfect. The space suggests energy and motion, which is tied to its use. This solution clearly can be a model for other small schools with modest budgets or limited space."



There will always be "haves" and "have nots." That lesson seems all too clear to the school children of Exeter, Mo. With only 350 students in the K-12 system, they were the poor country cousins of Barry County. "We are surrounded by larger districts, some of them four or five times our size," reports school superintendent Tina Nolan. "We're a small but proud farming community."

Yet the district didn't have a single structure to reflect that pride. Indeed, they taught in five unconnected and—in the words of Dake Wells Architecture principal Brandon Dake—"pretty crummy" buildings surrounding a courtyard. This model posed a safety issue as students moved through the buildings throughout the day. The space restrictions also stretched school hours to the limit. "With all 13 grades needing the gym to practice sports and performance we

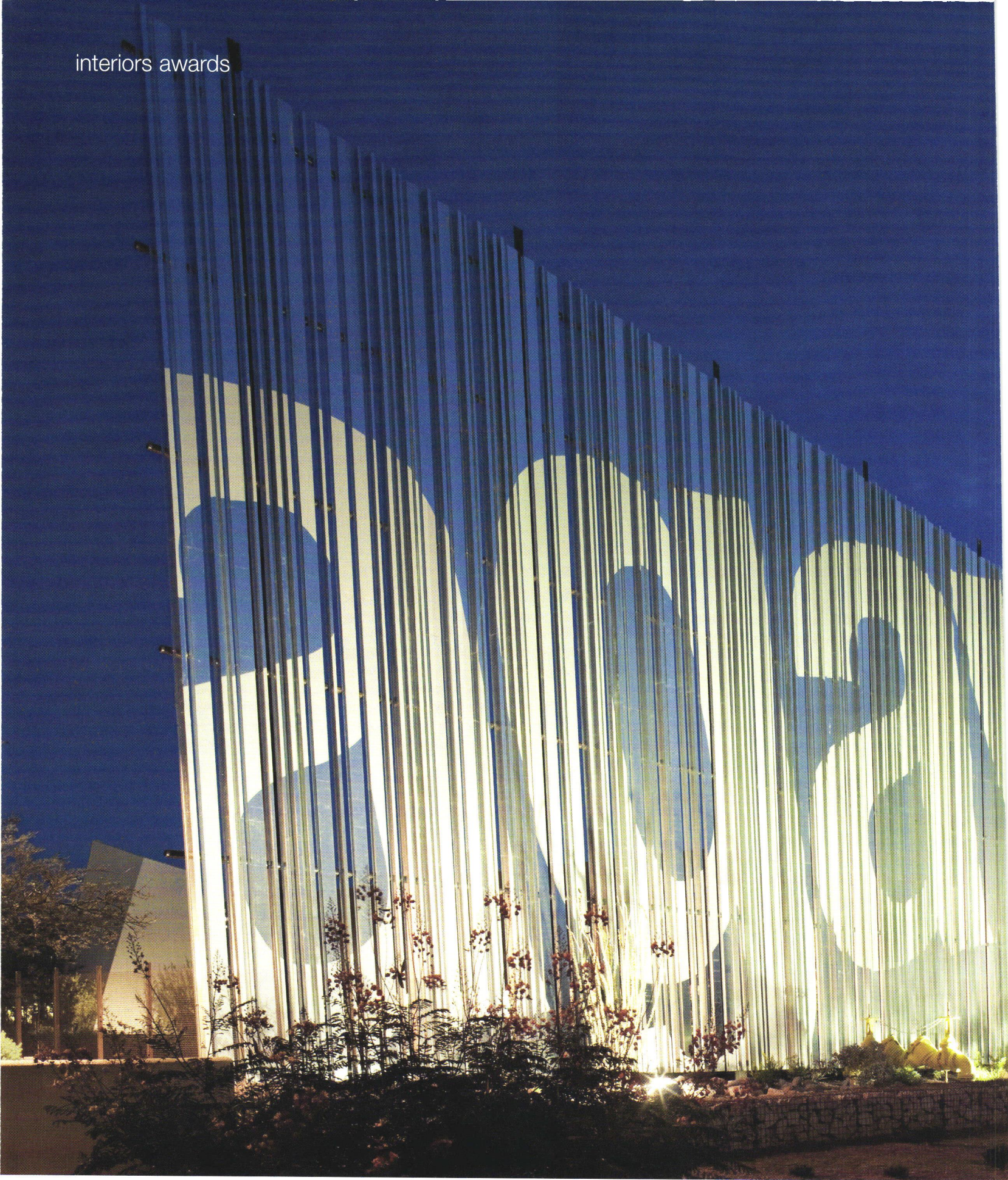
had groups in the school from 5:30 in the morning until 8:30 at night," says Nolan.

Nolan challenged the architecture team to devise a solution that would unify the buildings and become a social center for the school and the community at large—all for \$2.2 million. Springfield, Mo.-based Dake Wells answered with an 11,600-sq.-ft. addition that claims the existing interstitial space between the buildings, while providing the much-needed social hub the community deserves.

Using a three-in-one approach, the space serves as a cafeteria, practice gym, and performance hall. Flooded with light from clerestory windows, the building immediately impresses with its warm, good looks, thanks to its eye-catching, folded-wood ceiling. More than just a decorative element, that ceiling proves the key to the space's success.

"In any project like this the challenge is making a large space feel small and fine tuning the acoustics," says Andrew Wells, principal at Dake Wells. "This ceiling achieves both." Layered with materials of varying absorptiveness, the architects liken the ceiling to a sushi roll. "The white tectum is absorptive, like rice absorbs soy sauce," explains Dake. "The wood wrapper is reflective; keeping all the good stuff in like seaweed keeps the whole roll together."

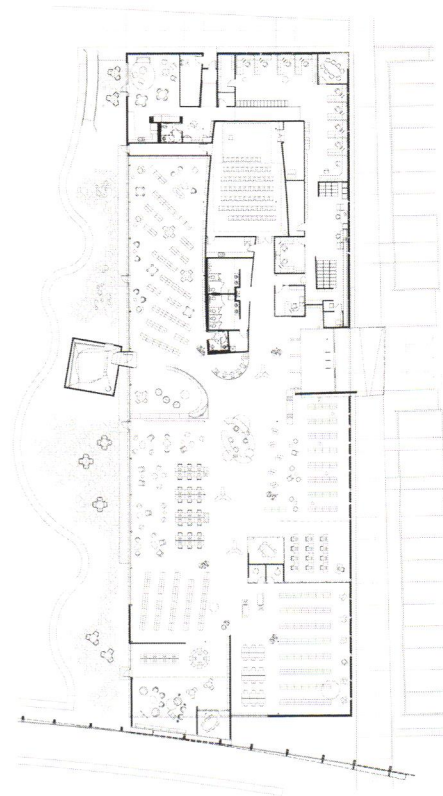
The resulting acoustics impress both professionals and laypeople. An amplification consultant hired to add a sound system couldn't believe how low his reverb readings were in the room. Students and town people alike beam with pride over their new structure. "We've hosted benefits, graduations, and a local company Christmas party," says Nolan. "Even the other school districts are impressed." ■



public space

By Jennifer Thiele Busch
Photography by Bill Timmerman

project: Agave Library
client: Phoenix Public Library
location: Phoenix
designer: will bruder+PARTNERS



Agave Library, a regional branch of the Phoenix Public Library system, is located in a historically underserved area north of the city, neighboring a gas station, a fast food restaurant, a supermarket, and a car wash. At 25,000 sq. ft., it is one of the largest satellite facilities in the system, but it was subject to a strict budget to fulfill a rather typical list of requirements, including community space, access to technology, and separate, dedicated areas for children, teens, and adults. Architecturally, it is the ultimate box, like one you might find housing a Home Depot. By all accounts, it could have been a pretty unremarkable structure. So the fact that Agave Library is so visually arresting is a testament to the exuberant interior design by will bruder+PARTNERS.


No stranger to the Phoenix Public Library system, Will Bruder gained acclaim in 1989 for his much-celebrated design of the Phoenix Central Library. In the ensuing years, he has worked repeatedly for this design-savvy client creating numerous branch libraries around the fast-growing city. Nevertheless, he is particularly proud of what has been achieved with Agave, calling it, “user-friendly, intuitive, and as seamless a design as we’ve ever done.”





The simple concept of a completely open, big-box interior with few physical divisions and uninterrupted sight lines places the children's area at one end of the structure, the teen area at the other, and the adult collections and spaces in between. Each is executed with colors, furnishings, floor and ceiling treatments, graphic signage, and art works that define the different spaces and give each its own character. Lead interior designer Marjorie Fichthorn Whitton explains that the overarching concept for the interior was that it be designed as a kind of desert reading garden. "We saw our garden as a series of outdoor rooms to be occupied," she says. "Materials and colors transitioned from outside to inside."

"The designers were able to bring in all these different kinds of slightly funky, colorful features that make the energy in the building so lovely," says Shera Farnham, assistant city librarian. Special touches include a children's story tower, protruding beyond the walls of the main building, which Farnham calls "a wonderful, magical area." A dramatic sculpture by a local artist hangs over the circulation desk, there is access to a landscaped patio off the adult area, and the placement of the teen area on the far edge of the structure intentionally draws adolescents through the entire building. "We bring them in, then take them on a journey," says Bruder. Everywhere natural light flows through an abundance of windows. "We didn't need the light, but we needed the spirit of it," he adds.

"Spirited" is an apt description of Agave, and nowhere is this more evident than in the 56-ft. metal scrim that adorns the entry façade of the building. The scrim features the word "agave" in neon letters, and acts as a marquis to give the library architectural presence in its rather banal surroundings. "Agave represents the best of what happens with great architecture and interior design," observes Farnham. "There are so many wonderful places to feast your eyes." 



jury comment:

"The redefinition of library as community center is executed flawlessly in this project. From the moment the billboard façade beckons pedestrians into the daylit interior, the project welcomes the community through a range of spatial experiences, community spaces, and resources. This project also does a great job of creating areas that nurture degrees of privacy while remaining extremely open and bright. The use of the furniture as the main source of color immediately creates a magnet for people to congregate, albeit quietly....."



interiors awards



historic restoration

By Jean Nayar
Photography by Ron Solomon Photography

project: The Woodward Building

client: SJG Development

location: Washington, D.C.

designer: Hartman Design Group

jury comment:

"The reconstruction and restoration of the main lobby area appear to be done with great care and concern. It reestablishes the solidity and honesty of the original construction. A restrained and honest restoration transforms a badly altered lobby into a walk into another era. Classic elegance is revealed anew."




Even though history is often worth preserving, it doesn't necessarily have to repeat itself. Take the Interiors Award-winning Woodward Building, for example. The century-old classical revival structure was originally designed as an office building. And thanks to its thoughtful restoration by Rockville, Md.-based Hartman Design Group, all that was venerable from its past has been revitalized. But the building itself has taken on vibrant new life as a contemporary luxury apartment complex.

Located in downtown Washington, D.C., one block from the White House, the building is a cornerstone of the newly designated 15th Street financial

district, an historic district that has undergone a recent cultural renaissance, as residents who fled the city after the race riots and assassination of Martin Luther King in the 1960s have returned to live and work. To adapt the building for its new use as a residential structure that would meet today's demand for downtown living space, owner/developer SJG Development worked to rezone the structure and secure tax-credit status and also enlisted the Hartman Design Group to work closely with the Historic Preservation Society to preserve the integrity of its notable historic elements, while adapting other areas to first-class contemporary residential standards.

"The challenge in the lobby and interior promenade was to retain all of the decorative elements, which included a very damaged marble floor and a series of all-glass storefronts," says principal in charge of the project Phyllis Hartman. "At the same time we needed to make it feel like an elegant residence or hotel." After removing, restoring, and reinstalling all of the exterior windows and repairing and refurbishing the floors, as well as the stone pilasters that punctuate the interior retail promenade, the designers turned their attention to warming the space for its new use. They started by covering much of the floor in the lobby, promenade, and seating areas with elegant Axminster carpets to create a residential quality. They also covered all of the interior glass storefronts with silk-like draperies layered with sheers, softening the space like a procession of elegant ball gowns. In addition, they replaced the lighting with drum-shaped pendants surrounding a core of dangling crystal droplets and furnished the space with classic contemporary pieces, including custom mahogany and mohair benches near the elevators and a free-standing mahogany reception desk with a metallic leather inset embellished with nickel nail heads.

Apart from their restoration efforts, the designers also converted a machine room and maintenance shop on the top floor into a contemporary club room and rooftop deck, adapted two oddly configured interior spaces into a cyber lounge and fitness center, and developed below-grade parking in the basement with the addition of hydraulic lifts. By gracefully merging the building's grand old architecture with apt modern furnishings and accents, they've given the best of its past a fresh way to live on well into the future. 







adaptive reuse

By Danine Alati
Photography By Ales Jungmann/Warimpex

project: Andel's Hotel Lodz
client: Warimpex
location: Lodz, Poland
designer: Jestico + Whiles

A former textile factory in Lodz, Poland, built in 1852 and abandoned in the late '90s, sets the stage for the city's first and only four-star hotel. Created by Polish Austrian executive architect OP Architekten with interiors by London-based Jestico + Whiles, Andel's Hotel Lodz is the fourth property of this brand and an embodiment of juxtaposition. "The building is characterized in its contrasts—old bricks with marks of its past against modern design," notes Alexander Jurkowitsch, a member of the management board at Warimpex, the building owner, based in Vienna, Austria. Jestico + Whiles painstakingly followed the city's strict codes of historic building preservation to honor the tradition of the building that housed a mill for Polish textile manufacturer Izrael Poznanski, while energizing the space with modern designs and contemporary furnishings.

The 200,000-sq.-ft., four-level Andel's Hotel (including 180 guestrooms and 80 long-stay apartments) is a self-contained structure within the greater complex called Manufaktura, a retail and entertainment center that's similar to a small city. James Dilley, associate director at Jestico + Whiles, says that the Andel's is "the most impressive building of the complex." With its long, slender shape, "the building informed the design brief and the functionality, not the other way around," he says.

The vast lobby would feel imposing if it were not for Jestico + Whiles' strategic design touches. "We created a journey, where guests happen upon everything and delight in the surprises," Dilley says. And Jurkowitsch adds, "I highly appreciate sitting in the lobby and watching visitors entering the building, being surprised and keen to explore the building."

interiors awards

jury comment:

"This a great example of how one can insert a new and dynamic object into an existing space to create a sense of unexpected spontaneity. Strong color and form in juxtaposition with sinewy, rhythmic structure is effective in highlighting the adapted intervention. Each aspect is executed with enthusiasm and respect. Lighting is inspired!"



The building's original cast iron pillars support the red brick vaulted roof, and three light wells slice through the ceiling with sculptural displays of concentric circles denoting the balustrades of each floor above, each lit with changing colored LEDs. These "light cones," as Dilley calls them, contrast with the rigidity of the brick, concrete, and iron to create visual interest, while the atria channel daylight deep into the space and frame views up to the sky. A key element of the design scheme, the light cones allow guests to read the building three dimensionally.

Carpeted areas in the lobby with soft seating by Fritz Hansen provide spots to meet, mingle, and grab a drink from the ocular-looking bar that is backlit with LEDs. A sandblasted, glass-front, backlit reception desk is set against the opposite wall, counterbalancing the bar. And sculptures in the lobby are changed out monthly to continue to offer elements of surprise. Off of the lobby, the café pays homage to the building's history with concrete walls painted with factory scenes by a local artist, while the restaurant features distressed, exposed brick walls.

"Strange things happen when the building informs the design," Dilley says, noting that the building offered opportunities to create a space full of character. In the long, narrow guestrooms (3 m. wide by 4.5 m tall), for example, the design team purposely chose furniture that would make the rooms feel more spacious. "You can try to mitigate structural issues, which becomes a negative, or you can exploit them, almost in an *Alice in Wonderland* way," Dilly says. The designers also used brightly colored textiles as headboards to contrast with the brick walls. And in a crafty use of material, designers borrowed textiles from the archives of this factory and played with the scale and enhanced the colors to created "new fabrics with memory of the originals." Another nod to the building's history, the hotel pool was created out of a 19th century fire water storage tank, and OP Architekten elected to contain the pool in a cantilevered glass box on the top floor, overhanging the building's brick façade. "This element becomes a marker," Dilley explains. "From a distance, you can see that something is happening here, and it's not just a factory." ■

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environmental



By Alex Palmer
Photography by Gayle Babcock

project: The Power House
client: Cannon Design
location: St. Louis
designer: Cannon Design



jury comment:

"This project creates a great statement for designers in the idea of respecting a beautiful building while still finding a way to make it feel modern. It speaks to the essence of sustainability, which is not only to be concerned about what is new, but also to respect and reuse what is already there. This project demonstrates the notion that the most sustainable building is the one not built. If sustainability emphasizes 'leave no footprints,' this one seems to dance."



photo credit: Patti Gabriel

Sometimes the right building design can spur its occupants to a new, better way of working. That was Cannon Design's aim when it scouted out The Power House in St. Louis as its new, LEED Gold-certified office, seeking a more flexible, open, and sustainable way of working.

At the time, the international firm had been spread among the floors of a building in downtown St. Louis, adding offices when they became available, even if on different floors. "In a space like that, you're just an address on an elevator," says David Polzin, regional director of operations for Cannon. "We thought it was hampering our practice, really. We wanted a space that would connect us to the city and the community."

That was when Polzin and his team decided on The Power House. Originally built in 1928, the steam generation plant had been decommissioned in the 1960s and sat unused until the city tore out the equipment and sold it off in the 1980s.


"The building confounded developers because it had a small footprint but a lot of volume—they didn't know how to make it commercially viable as a multi-tenant building," says Polzin. Cannon saw it as an ideal opportunity to make it a single-tenant space while showcasing the firm's design strength. With the aid of Missouri's historic tax credits, Cannon began an ambitious reclamation of The Power House, modifying its design to fit the company's needs, while retaining the historical character of the building.

Polzin and his team subdivided the tall space by adding two floors to the existing steel columns (which Cannon left in their existing, rusty condition). A main studio space of 32 stations was placed on each of the three floors, with a total of 96 stations. This layout also allowed each floor to offer a limited number of private office and flexible conference spaces along its western edge.

According to Polzin, the single biggest cost of the project was replacing the building's many blown-out windows. Cannon put high-performance, "low-e" glazing on them to help reduce the energy cost to heat and cool The Power House. Additionally, Cannon did not add any parking for the building, but rather encouraged workers to take advantage of the nearby light rail to commute.

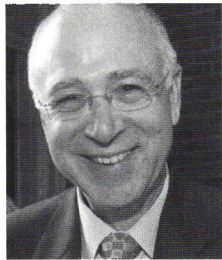
Balconies added to new floors were pulled away from the building walls, preserving the structure's expansive, cathedral-like feel. The lower level empties out into an urban garden on the east side of the building, featuring native Missouri plants and irrigated with collected storm water. According to Polzin, "It was a way to re-green the site and create an amenity for everyone in the facility."

Cannon's new space has allowed the firm to host professional and community events and charity auctions, and Polzin plans to get more art installations and cultural events taking place in the area in an effort to fully connect with the surrounding community. The company has seen a higher level of openness and connectivity within its own team as well.

"The most rewarding thing for me is seeing people using the building in the way it was intended," says Polzin. "In the space we came from, you had to schedule a conference room. Here, you can just grab a table, and have a discussion; collaboration has really increased. It's rewarding to see architecture that transforms architects." 



designers rate



Wayne S. Koch, AIA,
LEED AP
Principal
WKArchitects
Boston



Florencia Kratsman
Senior Designer
TPG Architecture
New York

ergonomic seating

Contract asks two designers to name and explain their preferred products



Wayne S. Koch, AIA, LEED AP
WKArchitects

1. Wilkhahn, ON

www.wilkhahn.com Reader Service No. 207

My preference is for ergonomic chair designs that have a more minimal aesthetic without a great deal of “structural exhibitionism.” The ON chair has a narrow profile, crisp metal elements, and an interesting approach to flexible seating.

2. Davis, Lucid

www.davisfurniture.com Reader Service No. 208

Lucid is reminiscent of Bauhaus Modernism with its bent tube arms while maintaining an ergonomic approach, a dignified mix of form and texture in the woven back finish.

3. Knoll, Life

www.knoll.com Reader Service No. 209

This is an elegant chair that demonstrates that the exposed structure does not need to become an overwhelming design element.

Florencia Kratsman
TPG Architecture

4. Steelcase, Leap Chair

www.steelcase.com Reader Service No. 210

The simplicity of the design allows Leap to be used in classic, contemporary, and traditional environments. The option in Coach leather with stitching details exudes luxury. Easy-to-adjust features under the armrests make the chair welcoming to the most non-technical person.

5. Herman Miller, Embody Chair

www.hermanmiller.com Reader Service No. 211

Embody is good for one's health and environmentally friendly: it improves oxygen flow, reduces heart rate, is extremely comfortable, is 95 percent recyclable, and has 42 percent recycled content. The seat depth adjustment is particularly good—you never sacrifice lumbar support for seat depth, which is ideal for very short or tall users.

6. Knoll, Generation

www.knoll.com Reader Service No. 212

Knoll identified that people sit in different positions and designed a chair to accommodate. Generation is the first chair to be rated Smart Sustainable Platinum certified and PVC-free. Its progressive form complements modern and contemporary interiors, and the color range allows you to make it disappear into the background or to make it the accent in a room.



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less is more

HLW presents its 2009 "Rules of Thumb for Interior Construction"

By Ted Hammer, FAIA, LEED AP, with research by Chris Baxter and Oliver Hamm

HLW once again has collaborated with construction consultancy Faithful+Gould to create a Construction Cost Index for commercial office space. The Index, dubbed by HLW as the "Rules of Thumb for Interior Construction," explains what clients can expect for their money. It takes into account the typical characteristics of the type of space needed and the desired level of design (basic versus high-end), as well as the estimated costs of individual components in the space and what materials can be provided within various cost ranges. A companion chart (which can be found at www.contractmagazine.com) helps designers adjust costs by geographic location.

A Better Way to Work

Last year, this annual article on construction costs focused on downward pressures in the construction market across the country. This year, the headline is not only about lower costs, but about corporate America taking less space. From our perspective, having witnessed every economic downturn since the Great Depression, it is a common and necessary reaction for companies to reevaluate and create more efficiencies during challenging times.

Organizations that are looking to stay competitive are taking advantage of this lull before the next economic upswing to focus on creative solutions to their workplace requirements. As a result of the downsizing, consolidations, and acquisitions that have occurred over the past year, companies are looking to improve workplace efficiency and ultimately increase productivity per square foot of real estate. This is not about simply reducing the size of a typical workstation or increasing population density onto a typical floor plate. It is about creating a high performance workplace environment as a way to become more flexible, sustainable and efficient, and ultimately create a better place to work and fuel future growth.

Sustainability in the Workplace







Organizations are realizing that the ultimate benefits of a sustainable workplace are not only tax incentives and energy efficiencies, but also a more productive workforce. A sustainable approach to design and construction has become the norm; companies expect a sustainable approach regardless of the decision to seek formal LEED certification.

Architecture and design firms are expected to take an aggressive, proactive approach to identifying and implementing design and material decisions that are sustainably driven. These choices can alleviate any added financial burden to the client and add perceived, quantifiable value to the workplace.

The current construction environment already includes green costs that are not optional. There are significant government mandated energy and material requirements in place. Introducing green design measures into a project at the earliest phase and continuing the effort with an integrated team throughout the life of the project are far more cost effective than tacking on individual "green" additions late in the design process. ■

Theodore S. Hammer, FAIA, LEED AP, is a managing partner at HLW International in New York. Chris Baxter is a vice president, and Oliver Hamm is a project manager at Faithful+Gould in New York.

See article with companion chart online at www.contractmagazine.com/processHLW.

Type of space	What are typical spaces like?	Type of Space Needed	Basic Interiors (construction cost per rsf)	Enhanced Interiors (construction cost per rsf)	High End Interiors (construction cost per rsf)
 law offices	Windowed offices Interconnecting monumental stair Large legal library and condensed filing High-end dining facility, Conference center Secure entry, Secured information	Class A Center core for maximum perimeter offices Consistent window mullions for equal size offices Maximum load capacity Many corner offices required	\$95±	\$110+	\$125-\$150+
 call centers	Many small workstations on a raised floor Specific electrical requirements 24/7 operation requiring supplemental air	Large, open, warehouse-like space	\$75±	\$85+	\$100-\$115+
 creative services	Nice reception with expressed identity Creative dept is innovative, but inexpensive Perimeter office with clusters of workstations Workflow for communication Flexible	Flow from elevator to reception Nice area of arrival Interconnecting stair Interesting building details High profile address	\$80±	\$85+	\$100-\$160+
 financial services	Universal plan on numerous floors with shared amenities Office/workstation ratio varies Perimeter workstations Interior offices, Executive area	Class A High-profile address Regular-shaped plan with central core	\$85±	\$100+	\$125-\$175+
 newsrooms	Specialized desks Small workstations Redundant data/electric Visual interaction with others Secured areas, Loud, Late night/early morning	Raised floor High ceilings Indirect lighting	\$125±	\$190+	\$300-\$500+
 showrooms	Open, flexible areas Can hold large events Freight elevator Controlled lighting	Loft spaces with high ceilings Adjacency to potential clients	\$100±	\$125+	\$100-\$175+
 training centers	Numerous, large flexible conference spaces with large breakout areas AV requirements	Large, open plan Fewer columns Many bathroom facilities Controlled lighting	\$110±	\$125+	\$200-\$315+

Rules of Thumb

Electrical	\$14 - \$20
Light Fixtures	\$6 - \$9
HVAC	\$14 - \$20
Carpentry (ceilings)	\$9 - \$13
Carpentry (partitions)	\$9 - \$14
Carpet	\$5 - \$7
Millwork (basic)	\$6 - \$10
Data Cabling	\$5 - \$7 or \$850/seat
Security	\$2 - \$3
Sprinkler	\$5 - \$7

What do you get for \$75 - \$100/rentable sq. ft.?

- Carpet (material cost \$20/SY)
- VCT flooring, vinyl base, ceramic tiles
- No or minimal millwork (plastic laminate finish)
- Basic drywall construction
- Standard 2-ft. by 4-ft. acoustical ceilings
- Standard hollow metal doors and frames
- Minimal lighting (2 ft. by 2 ft., 2 ft. by 4 ft. or high-hats)
- Minimal architectural finishes
- Standard paint finished (Maximum 4/6 Colors)
- Basic wallcovering
- No exposed ductwork and no exposed structural elements
- No interconnecting stairs and no slab openings
- Standard pantry appliances

What do you get for \$120/rentable sq. ft. and up?

- Custom carpet (material cost \$40-\$50/SY)
- Carpet tiles and custom millwork
- Detailed drywall construction
- Sheetrock or acoustical ceilings with Soffits and fascias
- Custom doors and frames with sidelights
- Extensive Array of lighting fixtures
- High-end architectural finishes
- Specialized paint finishes and custom wallcovering
- Exposed ductwork (round, oval) and exposed structural elements
- Interconnecting staircase and slab penetrations
- Ornamental metal and architectural glass
- Exotic materials (stone, marble, granite, ebony, mahogany, etc.)

* Construction costs are based on union construction, which typically results in higher quality, on-time construction, and therefore, may be more expensive.

contract: design forum

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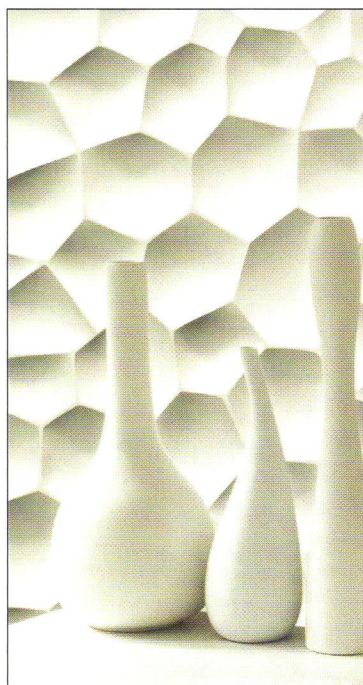
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Manufacturer	Reader Service No.	Page No.
Aborite	152	11
Arcadia	7	9
American Seating	12	22
Armstrong World Industries	71	cover 2-page 1
Armourcoat Surface Finishes	9	6
B & N	88	12
BluWorld of Water	160	67
Bradley	73	33
Carnegie Fabrics	75	15
Cascade Coil	27	30
China International Furniture Fair	8	188
Contract: Design Forum	—	111
Coverings 2010	39	32
Crossville	143	cover 3
Delta Faucet	159	27
DIFFA	—	109
Eurotex	111	2
Flexco	68	23
Grand Rapids Chair	23	58
Gunlocke	98	29
Haworth	125	21
HD Expo	—	111
Herman Miller	47	37, 39
Hospitality Design Awards	—	34
Humanscale	79	3
Inspirations Awards	—	24
IoA Healthcare	127	75
J+J Invision	94	35
Keilhauer	140	5
Kitchen & Bath Industry Show 2010	—	18
Lamin-Art	69	31
Mannington	104	13
modularArts®	156, 157	38, 112
The Mohawk Group	66	back cover
New York Eleven	190	14
Nora Systems	61	41
The New Patcraft & Designweave	17	103
Shaw Contract Group	110	7
Shaw Contract Group	117	63
Skyline Design	2	10
Skyline Webinar	—	28
Spec Furniture	145	25
Takeform Architectural Graphics	32	26
Tandus	181	19
Trade Only Design Library	187	40
Treefrog	49	36
Versteel	91	17

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