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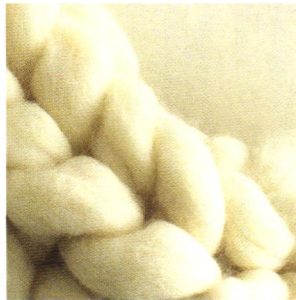
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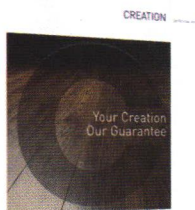
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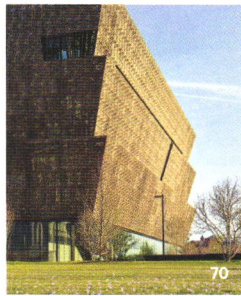
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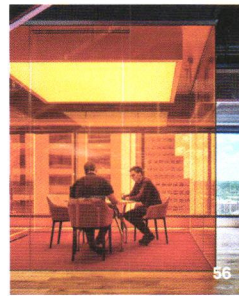
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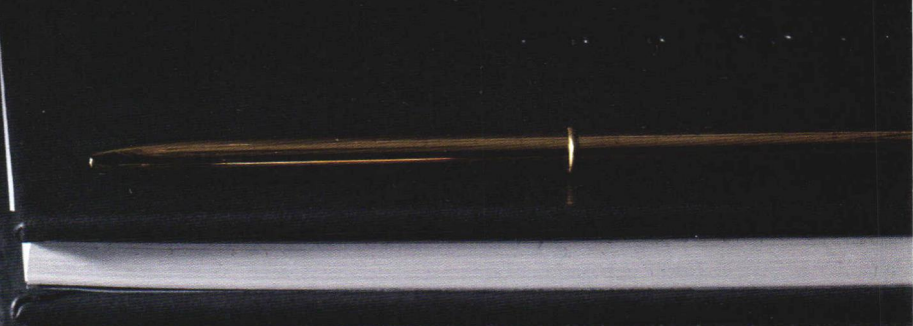
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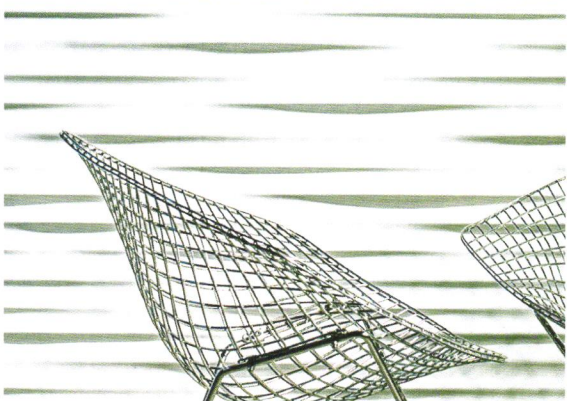
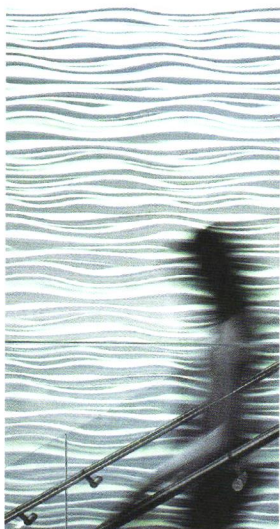
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Mark Gilbreath to Speak at Contract Design Forum

The LiquidSpace founder and CEO will speak at the 12th annual Forum in Del Mar, California, at the L'Auberge Del Mar, November 9–11. The event is open to paid attendees who register to attend.

contractdesign.com/gilbreathforum

Finnish Government Will Not Fund Guggenheim Helsinki

The \$156 million Moreau Kusunoki–designed museum project is stalled because state funding has been blocked by the co-ruling Finns Party.

contractdesign.com/guggenheimhelsinki

REX Unveils World Trade Center Arts Complex Design

Housing four convertible auditoriums, the cubelike design for New York's 90,000-square-foot Ronald O. Perelman Performing Arts Center will be clad in marble laminated with glass to glow amber at night.

contractdesign.com/wtcartscomplex



Theaster Gates Receives \$10 Million to Revitalize a Portion of Chicago's South Side

A network of arts institutions will be established by repurposing a vacant elementary school, empty lots, and a former power plant.

contractdesign.com/gateschicago

Gary Wheeler Joins HDR

The former ASID president will serve as the global director of interior design and workplace strategy based in the HDR New York office.

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AIA Announces 2016 CAE Education Facility Design Award Winners

Twelve schools were honored in the AIA annual program recognizing architectural excellence in learning environments.

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Designing for Health: Finding a Common Environmental Language of Care for Children Across the Autistic Spectrum

Experts at Perkins+Will express the value of employing an empathetic approach in designing healthcare spaces for autistic children.

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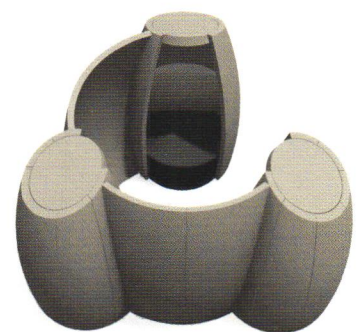
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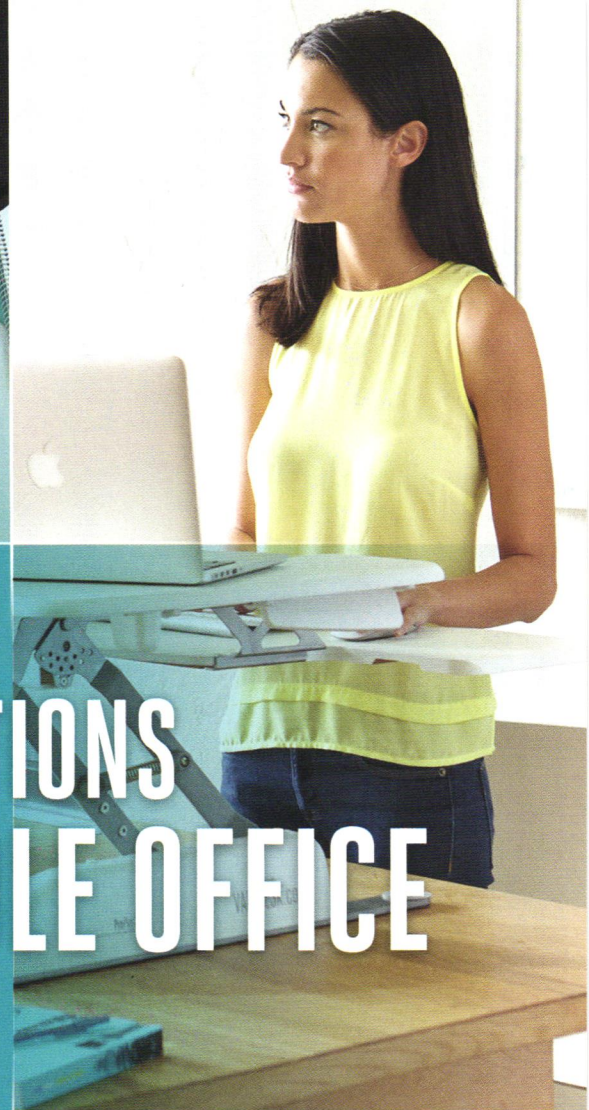
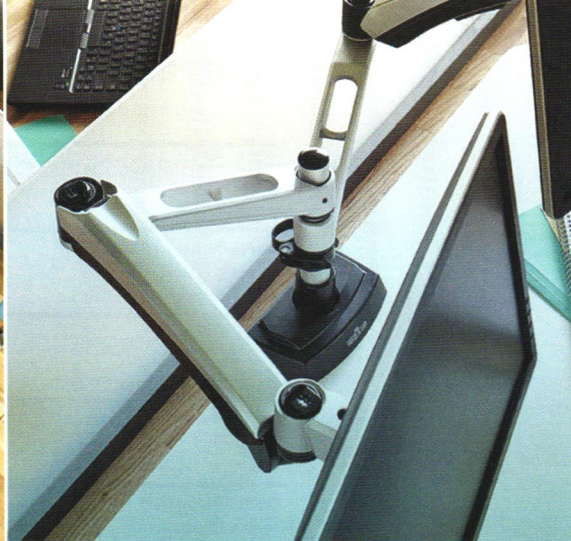
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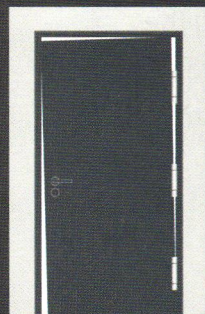
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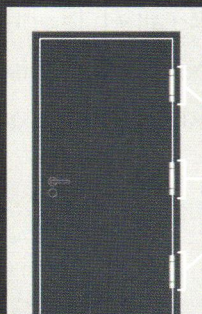
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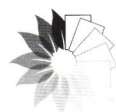
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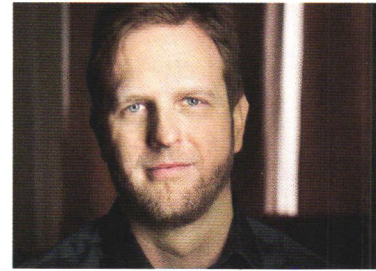
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Illuminating a Culture Through Architecture

As we approach Election Day, we are all well aware of this moment in time and history: a turning point for our country. And the most significant architectural opening in the U.S. this year has coincided with that moment: the completion of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., just steps from the White House. Decades in the making in terms of planning and consideration, the museum took years to build and was completed with only months left in the final term of the first African-American U.S. President, Barack Obama. The September 24 museum opening was a historic occasion for the country, for the Obama presidency, for African Americans, and really for all Americans. At its heart, this is a building about a people, and it conveys a compelling, complex story of history and culture through which the architecture is merely a vessel. But a truly powerful, beautiful vessel it is.

The museum is a triumph for the architects and designers who brought the building to life. I am pleased to publish an exclusive interview with Philip Freelon, FAIA, IIDA, who was the architect of record overseeing the museum project (page 70). In the interview, Freelon speaks freely about the museum and his personal thoughts as an African American.

Freelon, who was *Contract* magazine's 2008 Designer of the Year, had led his own practice, The Freelon Group, which worked with the late J. Max Bond, Jr., FAIA, and his firm Davis Brody Bond on predesign and programming as early as 2007 after President George W. Bush had signed the legislation that made the museum a reality in 2003. Bond, who was instrumental in the project's initiation, died in February 2009, one month after President Obama was inaugurated. In April of that year, the team of Freelon Adjaye Bond/SmithGroup won the competition to design the museum, with David Adjaye as design architect and SmithGroupJJR, which has had a long working relationship with the Smithsonian, focusing primarily on the structure. The groundbreaking took place in February 2012, and Freelon led the team effort while his firm, The Freelon Group, was acquired by Perkins+Will in 2014. Inside, where about 10 percent of the 37,000 objects in the museum's collection will be on display at any one time, the exhibitions were designed by Ralph Appelbaum, *Contract* magazine's 2000 Designer of the Year.

At a juncture of the National Mall near the Ellipse and the Washington Monument, the museum rises with three expanding tiers, a "Corona," in a form akin to the headdress on a Yoruba sculpture. The exterior's 3,600-some bronze-colored cast aluminum panels—with patterns that resemble those that African American craftsmen had created in New Orleans ironwork—both lighten the appearance of the exterior form and help the museum to appear in sharp contrast to the many white museum and federal buildings nearby. Symbolic, literally and figuratively, the building stands proudly in juxtaposition to its surroundings and yet completely fits in.

With the museum as a guidepost, we move forward, rooted in the past yet very aware of the evolving present. As Freelon told me in person, while we stood together in the museum in September: "When I think about Black Lives Matter, Trayvon Martin, and some of these instances that are happening today, it just reminds me of the 1960s. It's like a flashback. And the need for this museum to illuminate our culture so that people can appreciate and embrace it—and to understand that these are American stories—is so necessary."

Many have come to understand the gravitas of this moment in history and the significance of this building. Thus, the demand to be admitted inside is exceedingly high. As of this writing, advanced timed entry passes to the museum are booked through December, and passes starting in January 2017 had not yet been released. But, stay tuned, and go when you can. The importance of this museum cannot be understated. Freelon, Adjaye, and their many colleagues demonstrate the power of architecture and design to tell the narrative of a people and their journey that will live on.

Sincerely,

John Czarnecki, Assoc. AIA, Hon. IIDA
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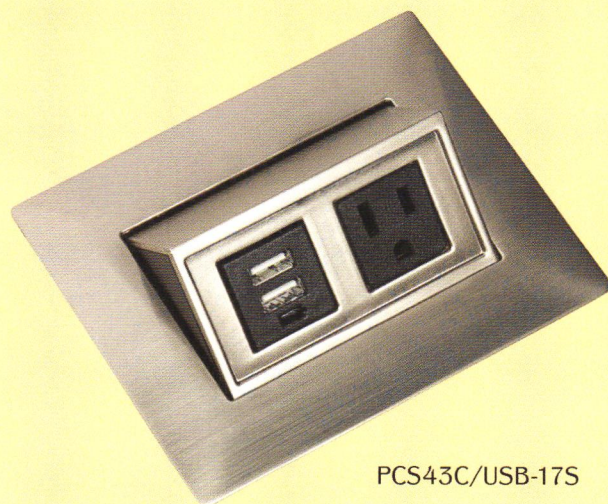
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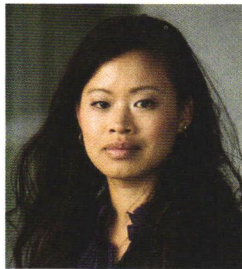
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Productizing Practice: Growing Revenue Without Growing Staff

by Evelyn M. Lee, AIA



Evelyn M. Lee, AIA, writes a regular column for *Contract* on business practices in design and professional development. Lee is a senior strategist at MKThink, the ideas company for the built environment based in San Francisco, and holds graduate degrees in architecture, public administration, and business administration. Lee is currently a member of the AIA national strategic council, and she previously served a two-year term on the AIA national board of directors. In 2014, she received the AIA Young Architects Award. Her website is evelynlee.com.

Evelyn Lee will be a featured speaker at the 2016 Contract Design Forum, November 9–11, in Del Mar, California. The Forum is open to qualified candidates—those who are engaged in the commercial design profession—to attend and participate. Visit contractdesignforum.com to learn more.

The potential revenue growth in architecture and design practices, as professional service firms, is limited by the number of staff and the associated gross margins. Even with technological advances, most firms cannot achieve gross margins above 40 percent. Therefore, in order to increase profitability, a firm ultimately has to continue to grow its staff. But productizing—the act of modifying a concept or tool internal to an organization to make it suitable as a commercial product—is one way that firms can get around this conundrum to create alternate revenue streams. Below are three different ways to integrate productization into practice.

Developing and selling a product

The first strategy is straightforward: designing products—such as furnishings, lighting, floorcoverings, fabrics, or wallcoverings—for the interiors industry. Or, perhaps a designer is more fortunate to develop products with broader mass-market appeal. Famously, the late Michael Graves and his firm designed a multitude of products for Target, and celebrity designer Nate Berkus has an ongoing relationship with that retailer. A number of other firms have done well by designing and selling products. But initial success does not necessarily mean a contract with a large retailer: As with most endeavors, it is wise to start small and eventually push for larger distribution.

For example, a few years ago, Los Angeles-based design-build firm Marmol Radziner launched its own line of jewelry marketed as a “natural extension of the architecture firm.” The collection is now available in more than 100 stores worldwide and online. Also in Los Angeles, Rios Clementi Hale Studios has its office one floor above the store it owns, called notNeutral, which sells furnishings and decor that the firm designed. Many of the patterns found in notNeutral echo those from textiles, metal panels, and other surfaces in the firm’s award-winning architecture.

Delivering product as a service

If tchotchkes are too small game, consider the success of prefabricated buildings. Architect

Michelle Kaufmann of California was one of the first to create a product out of an entire service offering with the success of her Glidehouse prefabricated homes. Capitalizing on the public’s increasing interest in prefab, Kaufmann sold the assets of her company, mkDesigns, to Blu Homes in 2009. Alternatively, LivingHomes brings the designs of Ray Kappe and Kieran Timberlake to the public through its prefabricated offerings.

Going beyond the residential market, design strategy firm MKThink successfully spun off a building technology company, Project Frog, which delivers prefabricated building kits. Now a separate company entirely, Project Frog has received \$50 million in venture capital funding. While it began as an endeavor to develop a better solution for modular classrooms for K-12 schools—it now includes products for data centers and healthcare environments.

Creating a product out of a service

Rather than finding ways to increase profit margins, consider opportunities to package the services that the firm already offers in new ways. Do you have a great approach to stakeholder engagement that is replicable? Better yet, is there a way to create a digital toolkit or interactive tool that allows potential clients to both input information about their project and receive some preliminary feedback on potential approaches?

SYPartners, a managerial consulting firm based in San Francisco, has developed a number of print and digital products that help clients get “unstuck,” find their “superpowers,” and become better leaders through storytelling. The firm has even created a passive income stream by sharing a product it uses in-house: Teamworks, a software-as-a-service (SAS), was developed internally and is sold to companies as a tool to keep teams engaged and aligned. This SAS costs \$59 per month or \$599 annually, and clients include Perkins+Will and Target.

The solutions that architecture and design firms provide are ripe for productization, whether as three-dimensional objects or innovative approaches to problem solving. Technology continues to make these endeavors easier through 3-D printing, the growing use of data in design, and the many ways the built environment is being tracked through the Internet of Things. Product opportunities are not necessarily a means to give one firm an advantage over competitors. Rather, for the firm’s own financial growth, the potential exists to provide the necessary capital to take on new endeavors or to continue to sustain the practice when clients are not seeking design and construction services. Productization comes in many forms and sizes. Which one is right for your firm? **c**



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Healthcare Design Expo Product Preview

Highlights of the products that will be exhibited at the Healthcare Design Expo & Conference, November 12–15, in Houston

1. Kimball Health: Spruce

The Spruce family of healthcare seating for patients and guests, formerly known as Saffron, has expanded to include a high-back lounge chair and tandem lounge seating. Inspired by midcentury modern design, the seats come with wall-saver back legs, clean-outs, and adjustable glides. Optional features include contrasting fabric, spring seating, arm caps, solid surfaces, and moisture barriers.

kimballhealth.com

2. Hubbell: MediMode

Addressing a variety of lighting needs within the patient environment, MediMode features four modes of operation—reading, ambient, exam, and optional night light—that all include a standard antimicrobial compound additive on exposed surfaces. The ambient and reading compartments provide low-glare, even illumination, while the exam lighting compartment delivers 100-plus footcandles.

hubbellighting.com



2

3. Keilhauer: Visit

Keilhauer's versatile line of Visit benches—designed by Austrian design group EOOS—provide varying degrees of privacy for lounge and waiting areas through reconfigurable and interlocking forms. The benches can be linked, with or without inline tables, to create organic curving shapes. Visit is available in two back heights and features stain-resistant and anti-microbial upholstery options, ash hardwood legs, and an optional ledge (as pictured here).

keilhauer.com



4



4. Mayer Fabrics: Kindred

Mayer Fabrics introduces the Kindred collection of three new privacy curtains: Akoya, Chopsticks, and Eden. Available in color options ranging from soothing to vibrant, the curtains feature organic design elements to promote natural healing. The fabrics measure 72 inches wide and extend the height that the motifs are designed to be railroaded in order to alleviate seams.

mayerfabrics.com

5. Spec Furniture: Bud

A collection of adaptable seating options for lounge areas, Bud comes in round, square, and crescent shapes that are designed to be used alone or grouped together to create a range of configurations. Bud can be upholstered in an array of fabrics and vinyls, with optional antibacterial and antimicrobial finishes as well as contrasting seats and sides. Individual elements measure approximately 15 inches wide by 18 inches high.

specfurniture.com



5



3

6. Metroflor: Aspecta One

With a 2.5-millimeter gauge and 20-mil wear layer, the Aspecta One collection of dryback luxury vinyl tiles features a range of wood, stone, and abstract designs. Aspecta One is available in 22 tile options and 24 plank varieties, as well as a series of 4-inch-by-24-inch planks featuring wood motifs to achieve patterns such as herringbone, wicket, and block.

metroflorusa.com



contract

7



7. Clarus Glassboards: Healthboard

Healthboard from Clarus Glassboards features a dry-erase, non-porous glass surface that can be cleaned with any hospital-grade solution for enhanced patient privacy. Offered in more than 50 templates that can be customized, the boards employ ColorDrop technology and are available with several mounting options and in a range of sizes up to 144 inches wide.

clarusglassboards.com

8. Skyline Design: Susan Hable Smith

Skyline Design expands its Digital Glass Portfolio to include works by artist Susan Hable Smith of the design studio Hable Construction. Three new images—Feather, Seagrass, and Bulbs—are based on a series of her watercolors that were inspired by multiple sources: daily walks through her Georgia garden on the way to her backyard studio, the quality of light, and her mother's pressed flowers. The patterns are available in sizes up to 60 inches by 120 inches and in all standard glass thicknesses.

skydesign.com

8



9. Ecore: Galaxy rx

The first Ecore product designed for sterile applications, Galaxy rx joins the Tru Collection of surfacing solutions. It features a 2-millimeter vulcanized surface fusion bonded to a 5-millimeter recycled rubber backing. Galaxy rx aims to reduce structure-borne sound while improving ergonomics, and is offered in 12 nature-inspired colorways.

ecorecommercialflooring.com

10. Takeform: Amplify

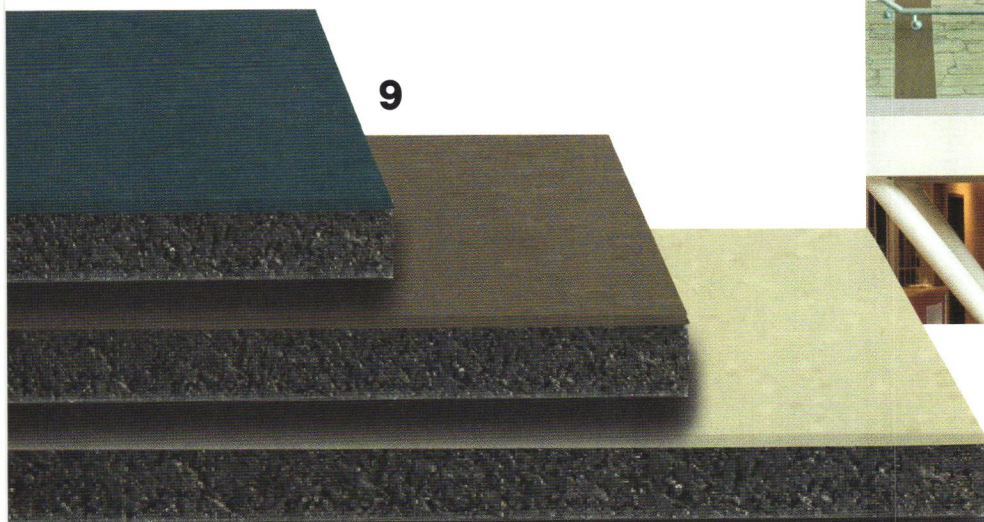
The Amplify collection of wallcoverings and window films features large-format graphics that aid in wayfinding and establish brand identity. The wallcoverings are printed with latex ink that yields high-resolution imagery, and are available in both self-adhesive (Trinity, Soul, and Structure) and paste-up options (Criss Cross and Pebble). Two window films, Lucid and Ghost, create effects that range from sheer to frosted.

takeform.net

10



9





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Photo features Rosendal Midtown Beige in 6 x 36 on the floor and
Entourage Alair Honey in 2 x 4 Hexagon Glass & Stone Mosaic on the wall.



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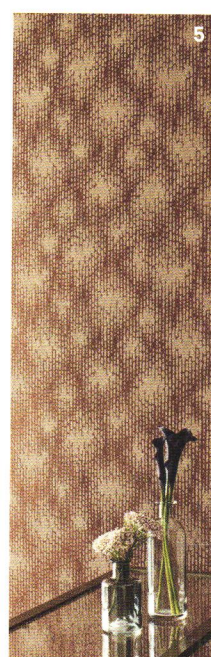
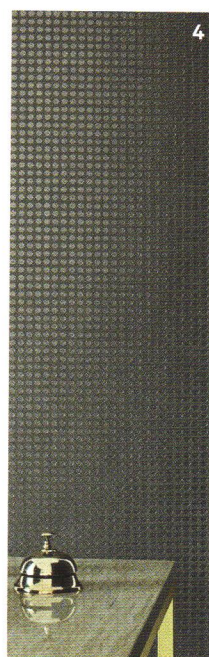
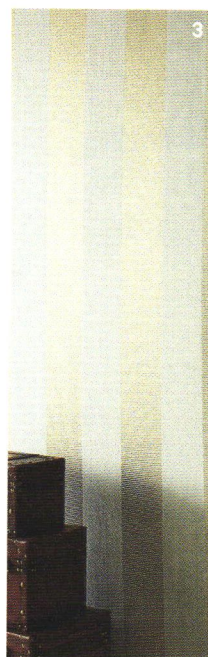
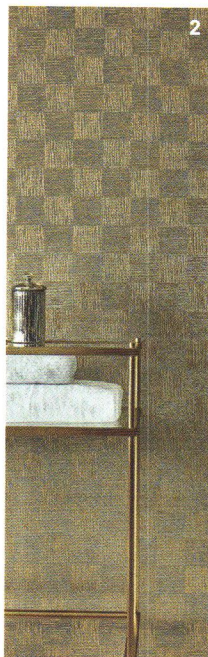
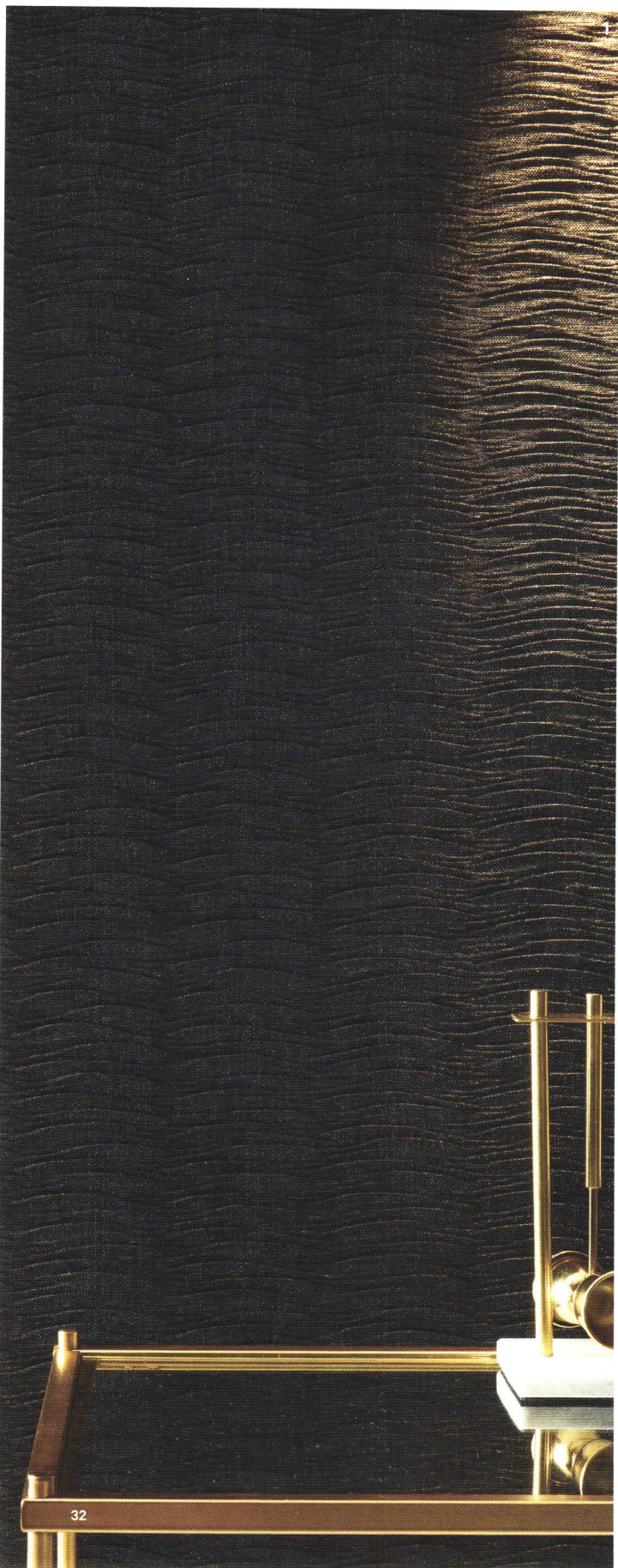


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Haute Couture

Carnegie Fabrics expands Biobased Xorel with Xorel Couture, metallic patterns inspired by French fashion of the late 18th century



Building on its success in developing Xorel as an alternative to vinyl for commercial interiors, Carnegie Fabrics has introduced Xorel Couture as a new collection of metallic patterns that offers a modern twist on high-end fashion and luxurious French styles from the era of Marie Antoinette. The New York-based textile company first launched the Xorel collection of polyethylene textiles in 1981, and it has expanded to include a range of patterns and color options. Biobased Xorel, which comprises 60 to 85 percent plant-based content derived from sugarcane, was introduced in 2013. Xorel Couture is a fashionable update for the collection.

"Fashion has always been a source of inspiration for me: Haute couture is art—textile art," says Heather Bush, executive vice president of creative at Carnegie. "Fashion designers push boundaries using both traditional and modern techniques and fabrics. This is the thought process behind Xorel Couture: How do we push the boundaries in its functionality, sustainability, and aesthetic appearance? How can we create something totally new with the yarn?"

Bush and her team used textile design techniques such as embroidery, appliqué, soutache (a narrow, flat ornamental braid used to trim garments), and embossing. To create a gilded, metallic effect, they developed a new process that uses heat and pressure to superimpose thin layers of gold, silver, copper, and rose gold onto textiles.

Four Xorel Couture patterns can be used for a variety of applications, including panels, upholstered walls, upholstery, and wallcoverings: **Antoinette Couture (2)** features a subtle basketweave effect; **Brigitte Couture (5)** appears perforated and pixelated; **Coco Couture (4)** displays a regular dot matrix; and **Moire Stripe Couture (3)** is true to its name. The scalloped, wavy pattern of **Colette Couture (1)** is suitable for both panels and upholstered walls, while Jewel is a geometric print on 100 percent polyester that can be used for window coverings. —MURRYE BERNARD

carnegiefabrics.com



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1. Emser Tile: Expanse

Expanse is a collection of lightweight porcelain tiles for floor, counter, door, and wall applications as well as exterior facades. It is available in 6-millimeter-thick panels in dimensions up to 5 feet by 10 feet. Twelve color options mimic marble, concrete, and types of stone, and the tiles are available in finishes including polished, honed, textured, and lappato.

emser.com



2. J+J Flooring Group: Etched

Mimicking the art of engraved imagery, Etched is an 18-by-36-inch modular plank from J+J Flooring Group's brand Invision. The flowing lines and strokes produced by the medium are echoed in the patterns of the carpet, which incorporates a textured loop construction. Etched is offered in 12 colorways that feature flourishes of bronze, copper, cadmium, pewter, and onyx set against neutral backgrounds. It can be installed to create a variety of patterns, such as ashlar, basketweave, herringbone, and parquet.

jjflooringgroup.com



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PRODUCT BRIEFS

3. Arcadia: Flirt

Designed by David Ritch and Mark Safell of 5d Studio, the Flirt collection includes guest seating and a mid- and high-back lounge—each with fixed or versatile flip-up seats that allow the chairs to be nested. Optional rotating tablet arms are available in maple, walnut, or oak veneer, as well as laminate and Avonite finishes. The chairs can be upholstered in most fabrics, vinyls, and leathers. Flirt comes with either four-leg or swivel bases. The four-leg base is offered with chrome casters or on guides.

arcadiacontract.com



4. Kirei: VEE Tile

The newest addition to Kirei's EchoPanel line, VEE Tile has a minimal profile and provides an acoustic solution for high-traffic areas. Made with recycled PET plastic with CNC-cut grooved patterns, VEE Tile is 19.7 inches square and only 12 millimeters thick, yet it retains up to 36 percent of ambient noise. The tiles come in 13 colors and customization options will be available soon.

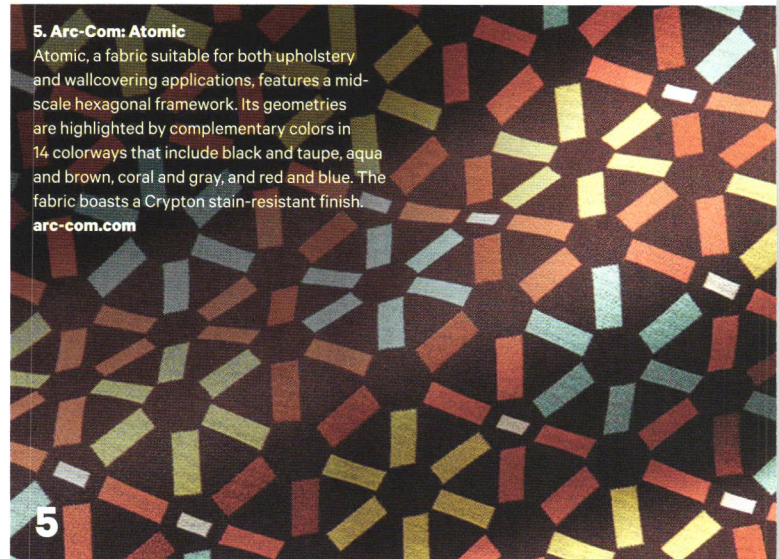
kireiusa.com



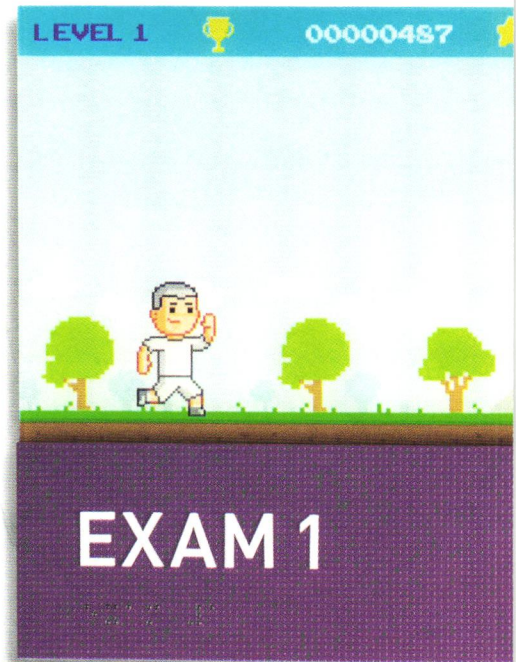
5. Arc-Com: Atomic

Atomic, a fabric suitable for both upholstery and wallcovering applications, features a mid-scale hexagonal framework. Its geometries are highlighted by complementary colors in 14 colorways that include black and taupe, aqua and brown, coral and gray, and red and blue. The fabric boasts a Crypton stain-resistant finish.

arc-com.com



The signs we encounter
in unfamiliar spaces
matter deeply.

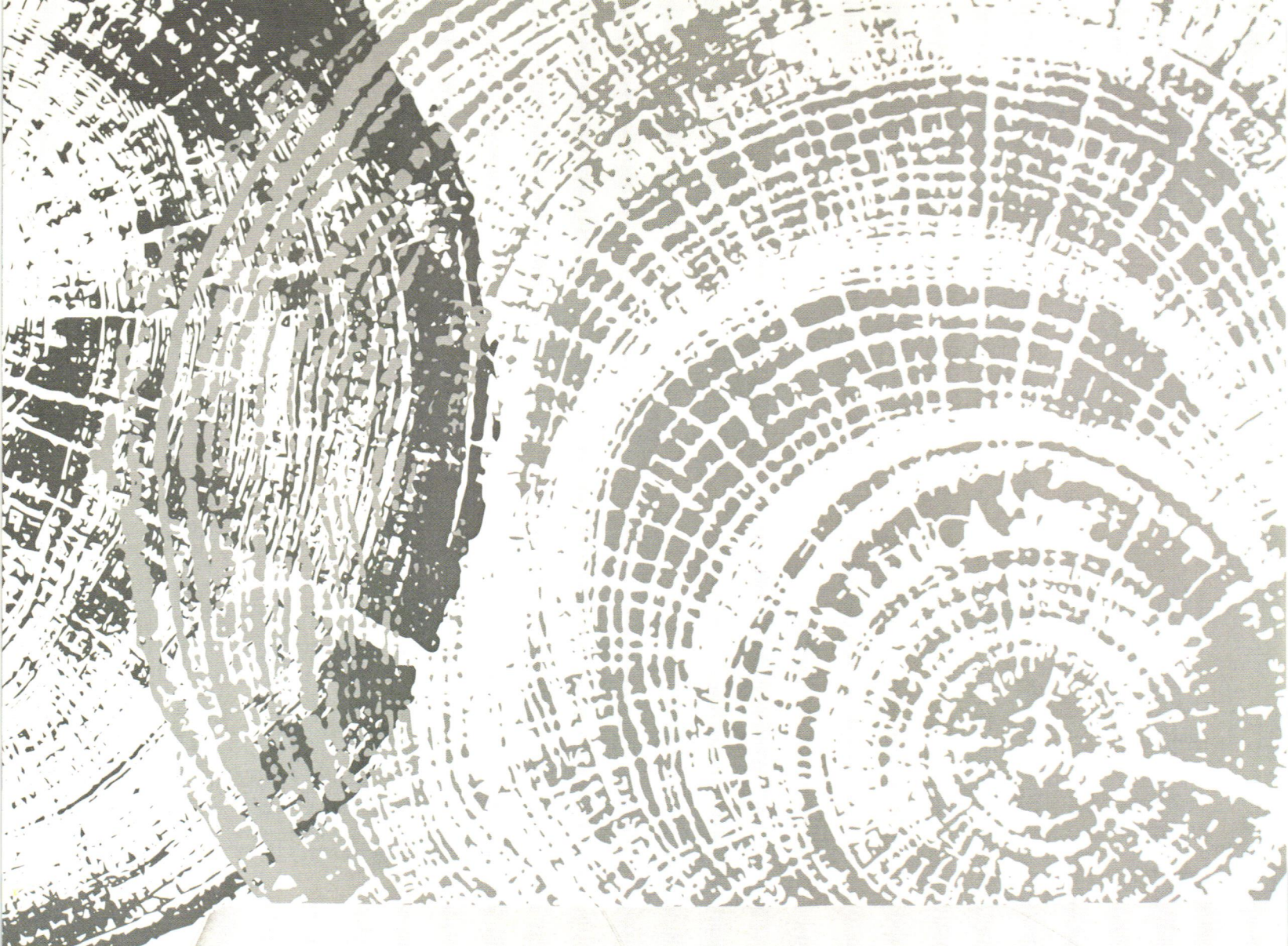


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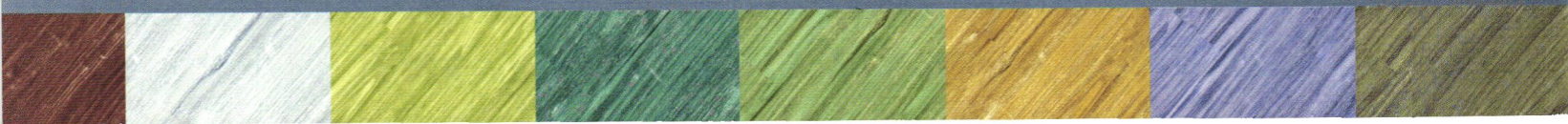
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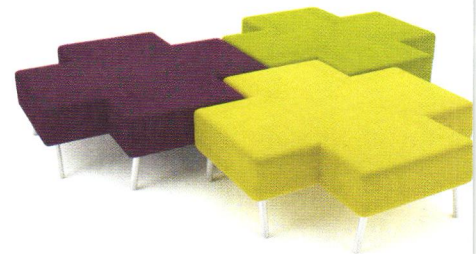
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HIDEOUT / OTTOMAN

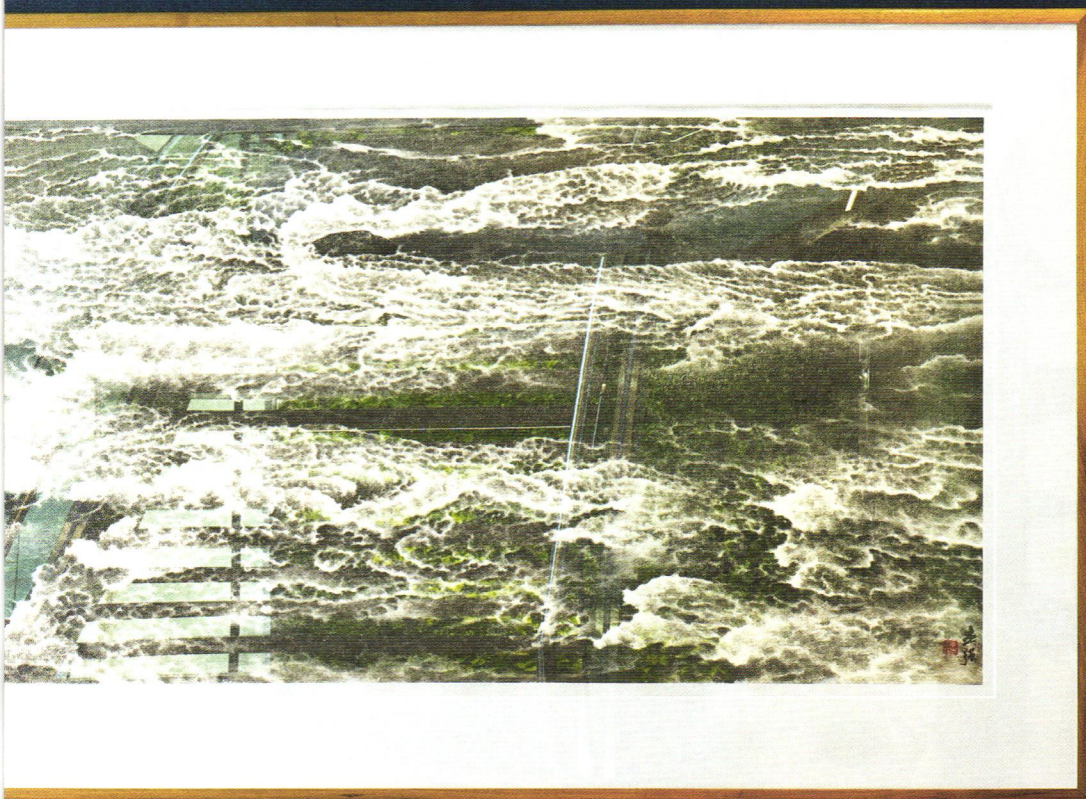


MODULAR



QUATTRO

Most designers of commercial interiors are engaged in the renovation or adaptive reuse of existing building stock. Here, we present three excellent examples of workplaces that are innovative updates within buildings of the modern era. In London, HOK transformed a former BBC television studio into new offices for BBC Worldwide (page 42). In Washington, D.C., the well-known legal practice Nixon Peabody (this page, and page 50) has a contemporary home by Perkins+Will that avoids any preconceived notion of a dowdy law firm office. And in Austin, Texas, Clive Wilkinson Architects created a sophisticated GLG workplace (cover, and page 56) that highlights Texas ingenuity and craft.



New Offices in Reconsidered Spaces



HOK transforms a former news broadcast facility in London into a cathedral-like office space for the British Broadcasting Corporation

By Ali Morris
Photography by
Paul Grundy

BBC worldwide news quarters

In the skylit 26-foot-diameter central atrium, a prefabricated helical staircase fosters connections between staff.





A multifunctional space beneath the stair (above) provides a place for casual meetings and dining. A wide range of seating options are available in the collaboration spaces around the atrium (opposite three).

In 2010, when the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) announced that it would cease broadcasting from its legendary headquarters, the Television Centre in the White City district of West London, some were concerned about what would become of the much-loved home. Completed in 1960, the distinctive brick-and-glass-clad doughnut-shaped building and its adjacent structures had become synonymous with the BBC and the groundbreaking television programs produced there.

Sold to the developer Stanhope for £200 million in 2012, the site is being reimagined as a mixed-use development with luxury apartments, retail space, and a soon-to-open outpost of the private members-only club Soho House. But even with this substantial change in use, the BBC retains a presence in White City with its commercial arm, BBC Worldwide, which is now located in the site's former news

broadcast facility, a red-brick building from 1997 known as Stage 6. HOK led the redesign to create a new home for BBC Worldwide, whose 1,200 employees are primarily engaged in sales and marketing for the BBC brand and its content in various print and digital platforms.

Carving out a central atrium

While reassuringly familiar from the outside, Stage 6's new interior could not be more different. Gone are the dingy office spaces hemmed in by low ceilings and bulky columns. In their place is a cathedral-like refit. "We were given total creative freedom," says Beate Mellwig, the project's principal in charge at HOK. "The BBC is one of the best clients I have worked with in my career. They were incredibly engaged. The only restrictions we had were a start date, an end date, and an incredibly tight budget."

BBC Worldwide

Architect and interior
designer **HOK**

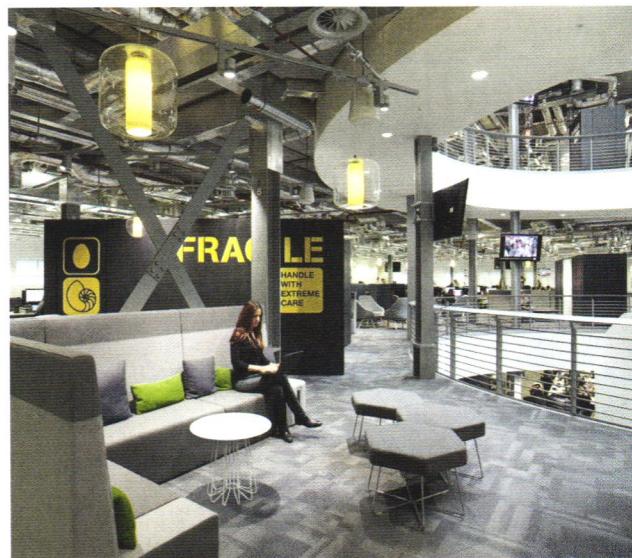
Client **BBC Worldwide**

Where **London**

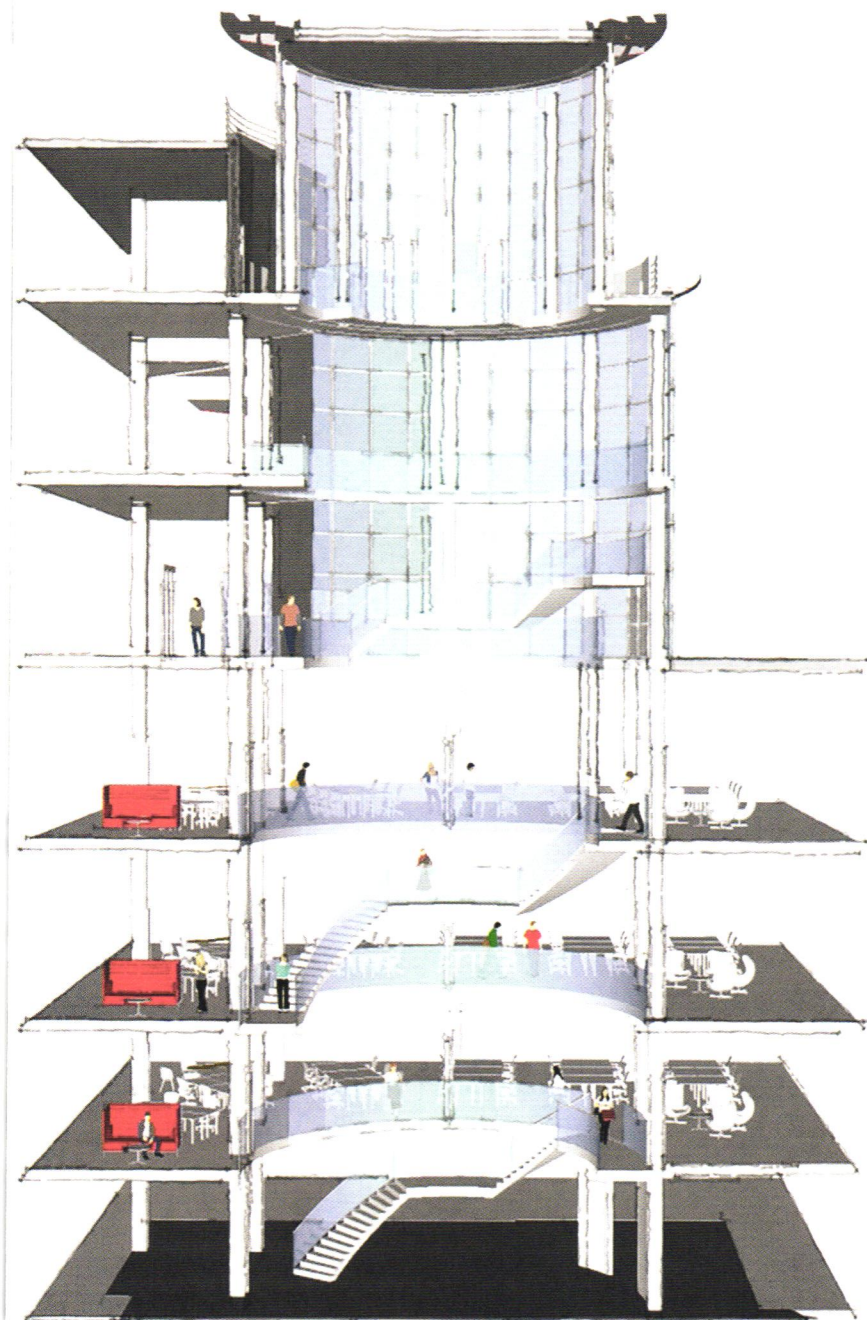
What **127,000 total square
feet on six floors**

Cost/sf **\$284**

For a full project source
list, see page 74 or visit
contractdesign.com.







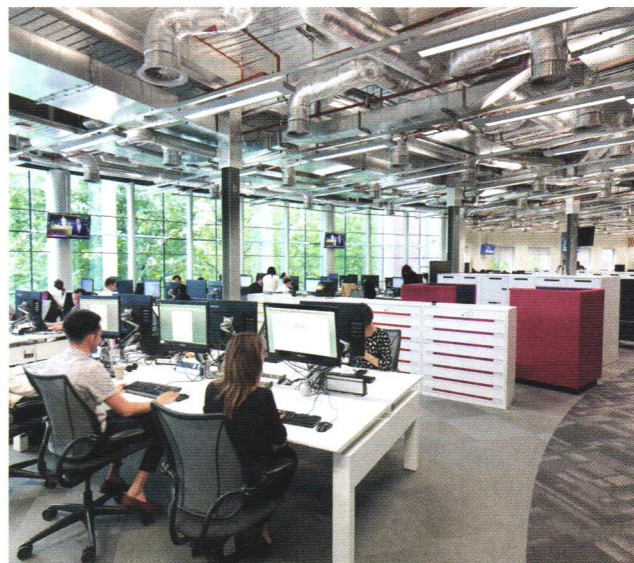
Section Through Atrium

Exposed mechanical systems in an open work environment (top right) celebrate the idea of the BBC as a "television factory." Collaboration zones (opposite, top) wrap the atrium on each floor. Bleachers line an additional seating area at the base of the stair (opposite, below). Fabric panels hanging on the wall have been digitally sewn with staff members' favorite quotes and characters from BBC programs.

HOK completely gutted Stage 6's interior to create six light-filled floors surrounding a 26-foot-diameter central atrium, which is now an enhanced open area compared to a previously underutilized light well. At the atrium base, a jaw-dropping prefabricated helical staircase, which was installed in nine parts, winds upwards to connect all floors. "The energy that the staircase creates is quite significant—you can feel it when you walk in," says Mellwig.

Prioritizing visual connections

To facilitate this dramatic intervention, the project began with the mammoth task of relegating the elevator core from the building's center to its rear—a move that opens up the space while simultaneously encouraging people to use the new staircase, where they are likely to stop and interact.



Key Design Highlights

The focal point of the 26-foot-diameter central atrium is a helical staircase, which was installed in nine parts.

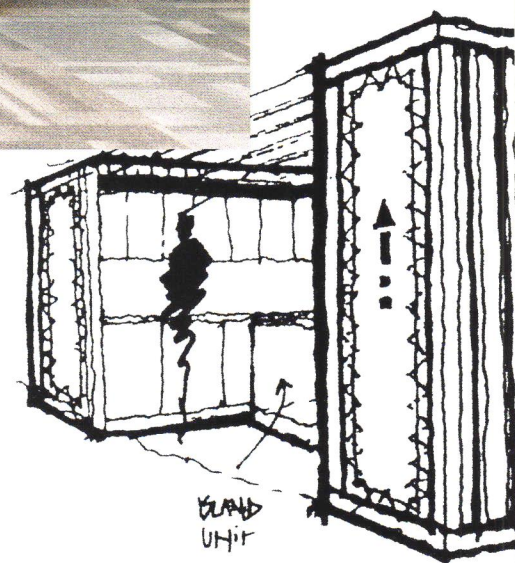
Each floor offers two zones: a work zone and a collaboration zone that wraps the atrium.

Floor plates are divided into departmental areas, but staff are not assigned to workstations and can sit anywhere they choose.

A multifunctional space beneath the stair is lined with bleacher seating and doubles as a meeting and dining area.

Exposed cable trays and ductwork snake around the interior and reflect the idea of the BBC as a "television factory."

Creating an office with visual connectivity and sightlines between floors was at the top of the BBC's agenda. HOK designed a number of different areas that they refer to as "base camps," which cater to a variety of work activities and foster a sense of community. The base camps were a starting point for the design concept—the floor plates were divided into departmental areas but without assigned workstations. Personnel have access to lockers to store belongings, and can sit at any seat. The flexible layout offers two zones on each floor—a work zone and a collaboration zone. "The collaboration zone wraps around the edge of the atrium and serves two purposes; one is to allow workers to break away from the main work areas for impromptu meetings and the other is to provide a buffer zone between any noise that's travelling through the atrium and the work zone," says Tim Hatton, a London-based HOK senior designer.



Corrugated metal panels wrap meeting cubes (above, and sketch) that appear like shipping containers. Meetings occur in rooms with a range of graphics (opposite, top right; opposite, below right) as well as in podlike structures (opposite, middle). Elevator doors also feature graphics (opposite, bottom left). More than 60 television screens (opposite, top left) are positioned throughout the building.

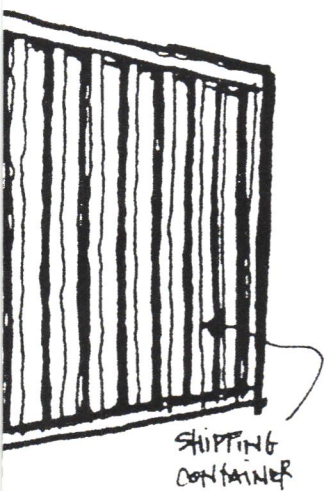
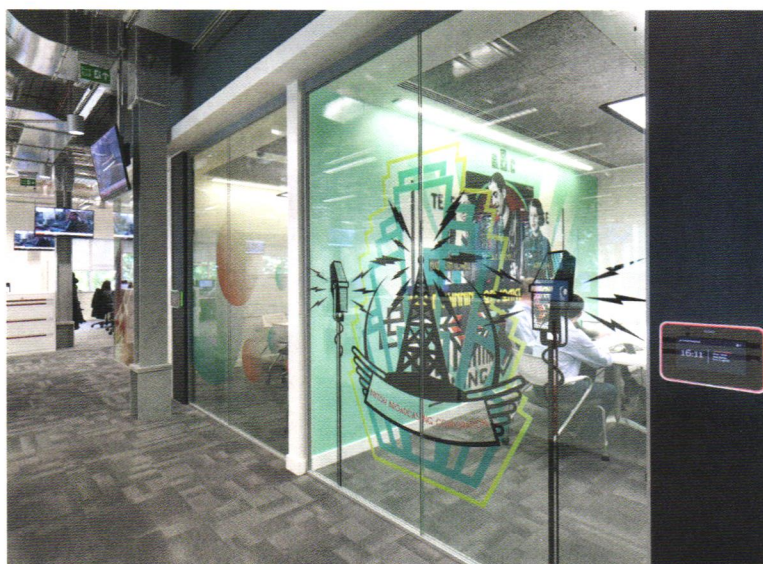
Stripping back the building's low ceilings and column cladding created additional space. Meeting rooms have been consolidated to a single location on each floor, near the core, to avoid the need to build walls in the open office areas. On the ground floor, HOK located client meeting spaces and multifunction areas where the BBC can host premiere viewings of up-and-coming programs. An additional collaboration area near the base of the stair is lined with bleacher seating with a nearby kitchen and dining area.

Celebrating the legacy of television

Instead of hiding the building's services, the designers highlighted cable trays and ductwork, which artfully snake around the interior. "The elements that we started to create across the floor plate reflected the idea of the BBC as a 'television factory,'" Hatton says of the office's

overtly industrial aesthetic. "The corrugated metal panels resemble shipping containers and rectangular photocopying and resource hubs with stenciled signage evolved from the idea of stacked wooden crates."

Opened this year, the new office has already had a significant impact on its occupants, according to Hayden Matthews, BBC Worldwide's head of global property. "The new design experience more closely maps our way of working," he explains. "There is a seamless transition from formal workplace to more informal. It gives a flexibility of approach where an individual can now choose the type of seating or environment in which to work for the day." **c**



rehabilitation



A photograph of a modern office interior. The space is characterized by a series of glass partitions with a blue tint, which are set at various angles to create a sense of depth and movement. The floor is made of light-colored wood. In the background, there are conference rooms with tables and chairs, and a large screen displaying the text "IDEAS CONNECT". The lighting is warm and comes from recessed ceiling fixtures.

Blue glass wall panels set at angles separate the conference room from the adjacent walkway, and their soothing tones evoke the sky and the sea.

By Aphrodite Knoop
Photography by
Eric Laignel

Perkins+Will designs a sustainable workplace interior to align with the culture and values of a global law practice in Washington, D.C.



Nixon Peabody
Architect and interior designer
Perkins+Will
Client **Nixon Peabody**
Where **Washington, D.C.**
What **65,565 total square feet on three floors**
Cost/sf **\$110**
For a full project source list, see page 74 or visit contractdesign.com.

- 1 Reception
- 2 Pantry/cafe
- 3 Lounge
- 4 Conference room
- 5 Team meeting room
- 6 Partner offices
- 7 Library
- 8 Case room
- 9 Finance
- 10 Coffee bar
- 11 Files/records



Sixth Floor



Fifth Floor



Fourth Floor



Located on the middle of three floors, the reception area (top and above) serves as a common meeting space. The nature-inspired material palette includes warm oak floors and walnut wall panels (above). A three-story open stair (opposite) is lined on one side by a window wall and on another by a living wall.

When a law firm forgoes tradition to embrace innovation with an open and sustainable design for its own workplace interior, it is groundbreaking. That is exactly what happened in the Washington, D.C., office of Nixon Peabody—a global law practice with locations in 16 major cities—after a major rebranding and new workspace design.

“We weren’t interested in following benchmarks or what other firms were doing,” says Nixon Peabody Managing Partner Jeff Lesk. “I was charged with reducing our footprint by 30 percent while still allowing for growth.” To accomplish greater flexibility and planning efficiency, the firm relocated its 160 staff members to 65,565 square feet on floors four through six at 799 9th Street, NW, a 10-story, LEED Gold-certified, Class A office building built in 2001. The location is just three blocks away from the former Nixon Peabody office.

To have a new workplace that reflects authenticity, a connection to the natural world, and collaboration—and to align its own culture and values within the new interior—Nixon Peabody commissioned the Washington, D.C., office of Perkins+Will. “Jeff made it clear that they were not interested in anything done before,” says Ken Wilson, FAIA, the project’s design principal at Perkins+Will. “So we looked deep into what kind of firm [Nixon Peabody] is and what its values are. We let those things drive the design.”

Bringing nature indoors

Nixon Peabody took a teaming approach, and began with a sustainability charrette to define its program. “If you start early with a great team, everything goes through an environmental lens,” Lesk says. “Flexibility was also a huge element. We wanted the ability to grow while



Progressive for a law firm, the layout includes common areas and team meeting spaces (top) influenced by hospitality design. A mix of contemporary, relaxed seating (above left; and opposite, top two) eschews the corporate, traditional aesthetic of law firms. Other gathering places include the pantry (above, right) and large conference room (opposite, bottom left). Partner offices include sit-stand desks (opposite, bottom right).

eliminating redundancy and staying on budget." Capturing the firm's vision and commitment to openness and equity, Perkins+Will created a layered, transparent series of spaces connected by a three-story open stair along the window wall. The stairs are anchored on one side by a vegetative wall that cascades from the sixth floor down to a dry stone riverbed on the fourth floor. "Going up and down the stairs is like taking a nature walk," Lesk says.

The interior also provides a connection to the natural world through daylight, exterior views, and the use of materials such as crafted oak floors and walnut wall panels. To separate the conference room from the adjacent walkway, the designers selected blue glass wall panels set at angles to evoke both a calming sky and the sea.

"One thing that many people do not realize is that attorneys see what they do as craft," says Wilson. "You'll see this expression of

craftsmanship reflected in everything from the modern butterfly joint details in the elevator lobby's wood panels to the handcrafted furniture."

Craft, connection, and collaboration

In a design that is fairly progressive for a law firm, the plan turns the traditional workplace layout inside out. Service and storage functions are in the core, surrounded by common areas and transparent perimeter offices, with all partners' offices the same size. Common areas have replaced corner offices that, according to Wilson, "democratize space for employees and provide full transparency from one end of the block to the other."

The elevator entrance lobby is on the middle of three floors, adjacent to a reception and cafe space that also serves as a common meeting area. These active design elements aim to draw people away

Key Design Highlights

A layered and transparent series of spaces captures the firm's vision and commitment to openness and equity.

Cascading down from the sixth floor to a dry stone riverbed on the fourth floor, a vegetative wall is irrigated with graywater from air conditioning condensate.

To create a connection with nature, the designers selected materials such as crafted oak floors, walnut wall panels, and blue glass wall panels that evoke the sky and sea.

Certified platinum for LEED for Commercial Interiors and compliant with the AIA 2030 Challenge, the office enjoys improved air quality through efficient mechanical systems and low-VOC materials, as well as reduced energy use with LEDs and automated window shades.



from their desks. "In the old space, there was always a subliminal separation," Lesk says. "Now, spaces are communal and people are moving and interacting. That's healthy for the staff and for any business."

A key aspect of the high-performance design is the mechanical systems, which improve indoor air quality and offer zoned temperature controls to create a healthy workspace. Additionally, low-VOC materials were specified, and the living vegetative wall—irrigated with graywater from air conditioning condensate—provides natural air filtration and weaves together design, technology, and craft.

A sustainable and supportive environment

Nixon Peabody wanted its office—which is certified platinum for LEED for Commercial Interiors and meets the aggressive energy reductions of the AIA 2030 Challenge—to reflect its support of environmental and

social responsibility. The firm now consumes one-fourth of the energy that it had in its previous office by using LED lights, maximizing daylight penetration, and minimizing heat gain and glare with an automated window shade system. The firm also negotiated a green lease to have solar panels installed on the roof and to have its space individually metered so that it pays only for its own energy use. It plans to donate net energy to an affordable housing project in Washington.

With this interior, Nixon Peabody has set a new precedent for law firm workplaces. The biggest surprise? According to Herb Steven, Nixon Peabody's chief innovation officer, "We hadn't properly understood the positive effect of design on our life and work." ■

By Sam Lubell
Photography by
Casey Dunn

GLG Austin

GLG Austin

Architect and interior designer
Clive Wilkinson Architects

Client **Gerson Lehrman
Group (GLG)**

Where **Austin, Texas**

What **42,000 total square
feet on two floors**

Cost/sf **\$94**

For a full project source
list, see page 74 or visit
contractdesign.com.



Clive Wilkinson Architects conceives a workplace for an information and expertise specialist that captures the feel of Austin, Texas

Just two years ago, Los Angeles-based Clive Wilkinson Architects (CWA) designed the New York workplace for the rapidly expanding information and expertise specialist Gerson Lehrman Group (GLG). And that design informed the sequel in a very different context: GLG's Austin, Texas, office. The goal in Texas was to maintain the New York space's eye-catching identity and freeing openness, while giving the office a decidedly Austin feel. Yes, New York and Texas would find common ground.

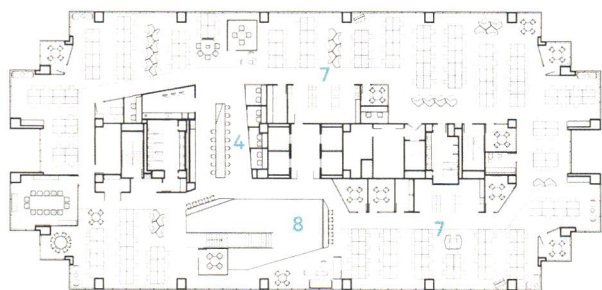
"We've developed an expertise in creating collaborative and creative business environments," says CWA Associate Principal Chester Nielsen. "That's GLG's business model. All they do is knowledge sharing and collaboration. It's kind of a dream client."

For this dream client, Nielsen and Wilkinson created a unique, energy-fueled place that not only enhances the GLG brand but fosters collaboration, innovation, and, most of all, employee happiness. "It's a place where people feel excited about coming to work everyday," says Richard Socarides, GLG's head of public affairs, who was intimately involved in the design process with Wilkinson's team.

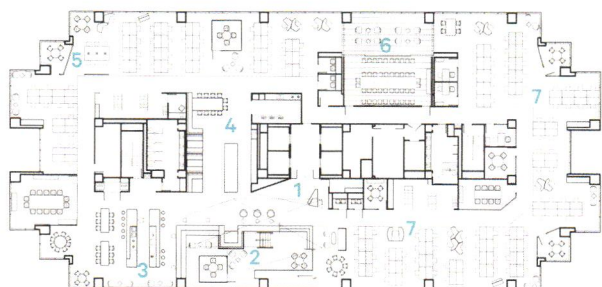
Custom elements reference vernacular

The 450 GLG Austin employees, formerly housed on one lower floor of a 30-year-old Downtown Austin office building on Congress Avenue, moved into the new workspace by CWA that is located on the fifteenth and sixteenth floors within the same building. Totalling 42,000 square feet, the office has commanding views of the thriving downtown area.

In the new space, CWA cut a rectangular slab from the upper floor to create a new atrium space that is connected by an open staircase, producing a central focal point that exudes both sophistication and local charm. White expanded metal mesh guardrails and ceilings, custom fabricated by local firm Sarabi Studio, recall local industrial vernacular, help pull light to the lower level, and provide a visual connection between floors. An oak platform at the stair's base creates a warm, well-situated seating and presentation space. Other bespoke and regionally sourced elements include the timber barista bar by Austin-based firm Hewn, custom milled wood tables, and raw materials like concrete, steel, and brass. "There's a real



Sixteenth Floor



Fifteenth Floor

- 1 Reception
- 2 Platform
- 3 Barista bar
- 4 Pantry
- 5 Library
- 6 Training room
- 7 Open office area
- 8 Atrium

Key Design Highlights

A new atrium featuring an open stair with expanded metal mesh guardrails and ceilings echoes Austin's industrial vernacular and pulls light into lower levels while providing a visual connection between floors.

Regionally sourced materials include an oak platform at the stair's base, a timber barista bar, custom-milled wood tables, as well as concrete, steel, and brass elements.

The work environment is divided into "neighborhoods" that each accommodate 65 to 100 employees within varying arrangements for seating.

Pulp Studio fabricated two-tone colored glass enclosures for meeting rooms.

Furnishings are a mix of desk chairs, bar seats, cushioned benches and loungers, as well as custom-made steel-and-leather bar stools.





Open work areas offer a range of seating options from a custom long bar (above, left) to informal seating within the coffee bar and pantry (above). Bold graphics, such as those on the far side of the wall near the pantry spaces (above, right), proclaim the GLG name and mission statement. Metal mesh ceilings and guardrails line an open stair in the central atrium (opposite, and previous spread). At the stair's base, an oak platform creates a warm seating and presentation area, and two-tone colored glass encloses a meeting room.

culture of making in Texas, and lots of access to local craftsmen," says Nielsen. "It's something you could never really do in New York."

Nielsen and Wilkinson designed an activity-based working environment with neither corner offices nor assigned cubicles. Divided simply into "neighborhoods" of 65 to 100 employees each, the floors are filled with varied seating arrangements, allowing for every possible work style and need. These range from custom sit-stand desks to colorful, two-tone meeting rooms clad in colored glass fabricated by Pulp Studio. Informal seating areas, like those in the coffee bar and pantry spaces near the building's core, allow for various work conversations. The furniture selection is an eclectic mix of simplicity and ruggedness, with colorful modern desk chairs, bar seats, cushioned benches and loungers, as well as custom-made steel-and-leather bar stools.

A lab for innovation

Now, GLG workers are on the move more often, and people who once never saw each other are constantly interacting. But, that is coupled with a somewhat surprising new challenge: Finding colleagues is difficult because they rarely stay in one place. "[The new office] works spectacularly well for us as far as promoting collaboration across disciplines," says Socarides.

Atop the atrium, a field of hanging LED lights reference industrial and agriculture architecture. Each LED can be controlled digitally, and their long shelf life allows them to be placed in hard-to-reach areas. Dome lights in the pantry areas add a modern touch. Like most CWA projects, ceiling heights are maximized in this interior by leaving the ceiling structure, ducts, and electrical systems exposed.

Besides operating as a lab for innovation, the interior also serves as an excellent advertisement for GLG itself. Bold graphics, on the far side of the pantry spaces, proclaim the GLG name along with the mission statement. "We try to do all our meetings with clients in our office," says Socarides. "We can say more about our brand with the space than we ever could with words. When people come here, there's this 'wow' effect—a sense that there's something cool and something spectacular happening here." ■

Reconsidering the Midcentury Workplace

By James Pfeiffer, AIA



The American Enterprise Group headquarters (right), completed by SOM in 1965, is an iconic midcentury modern office building. AEG still occupies the structure, which BNIM renovated to update the work settings and fully showcase the company's artwork (above and opposite).





Commercial office buildings from the 1960s and 1970s that were initially considered to be architecturally progressive and modern, but now may seem outdated, exist in cities large and small across the U.S. and worldwide. Some of these structures constitute highly notable architecture of the era and others are fairly nondescript. Today, one may say that they are outmoded, designed for a different time, and ill-suited to contemporary needs. Yet, structural integrity, embodied energy, embedded history, and other considerations compel owners and their designers to apply ingenuity to adapt such structures—capturing the best attributes and transforming them into both highly functional buildings and captivating neighborhood anchors.

My colleagues and I at the architecture and design firm BNIM relish the challenges of transformative reuse. Superior, human-centered, high-performance spaces can be created within almost any context. Keeping people first in mind leads us to craft spaces that support well-being by providing generous volumes allowing for flexibility and individual choice. Two projects—both of which are the renovations of midcentury modern office buildings for new workplace uses—illustrate how we put people first in design for reuse.

One year ago, BNIM completed the renovation of the American Enterprise Group (AEG) national headquarters, a prominent building in Des Moines, Iowa, designed by Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and completed in 1965. The eight-story, 154,000-square-foot redesign by BNIM was planned for AEG's 330 employees at the time of the renovation, as well as the 150 additional hires anticipated through 2017.

AEG had amassed an impressive art collection over the past 50 years and, while some of it was

displayed, it had never before been fully integrated into the interiors. Therefore, an important aspect of the renovation was the consideration of all surfaces, views, and spatial experiences with respect to the art to honor the high-quality collection.

Advanced for its time, the AEG building's minimal internal structure is open with a 90-foot-wide clear span, allowing for few obstructions. As part of the renovation, transparent or unobtrusive design elements, including custom sliding glass door office enclosures and a new modern open-office system, were designed to preserve the expanse. The company's previous taller and incongruous furniture system panels were removed and replaced with low-profile furniture systems, allowing all employees to have views. Workstations throughout include sit-stand desks and task lighting.

Due to the exposed nature of the structure, technology integration has always been challenging within the AEG building. Therefore, one renovation solution was to more seamlessly integrate new pathways for wiring and technology to both support current needs as well as to provide flexibility for making adaptations over time. Contemporary life-safety standards were met in a nondetrimental manner, which was challenging, though, with the sprinkler system integrated within the exposed structural ceiling.

The 50-year-old building previously had very limited environmental controls. We installed new control options to create an interior that responds to localized occupancy comfort needs. Nearly 230 thermostats now control the building's systems, giving quadrants on each floor the ability to adjust temperatures. In addition, window replacement, insulation upgrades, and new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems deliver significant energy savings. Prior to the renovation, the building was consuming 171 kBtu/sf/yr. The interiors now operate on 59.25 kBtu/sf/yr, representing a 65 percent

energy savings. The renovation and repair will save the company up to \$2 million annually.

BNIM's new office at Crown Center

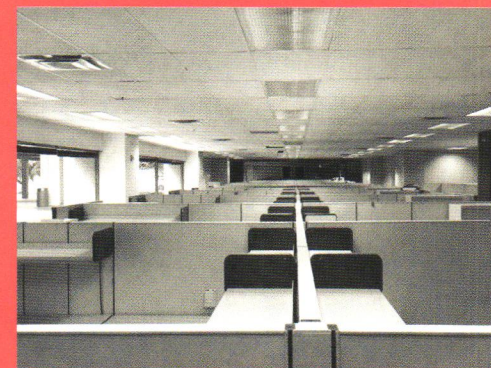
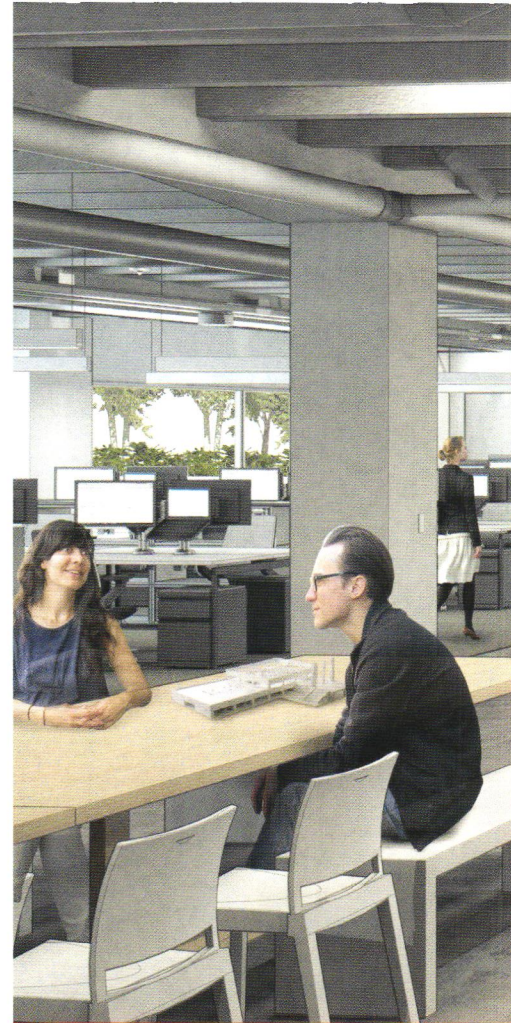
By the end of this year, the Kansas City, Missouri, office of BNIM will move into the Pershing Road buildings at Crown Center, which we are renovating. The Pershing Road building complex, a Brutalist office structure designed by Edward Larrabee Barnes and completed in 1972, was state of the art for its time and unusual: It was conceived as a skyscraper laid on its side. The complex has been the headquarters for Hallmark Cards, which is consolidating its footprint. As a result, floors have become available, including the space BNIM will soon occupy. Crown Center's Pershing Road office building includes six connected office structures that total nearly 600,000 square feet. With 100 employees in 20,000 square feet on parts of two floors, BNIM will be the first to move into the 270,000 square feet of space coming to market at the multi-use complex.

For BNIM, taking on this project and choosing to move into the complex posed interesting questions: How does a design firm, working with an owner on behalf of tenants

including itself, reimagine a complex from an era that is not necessarily viewed fondly by today's culture?

Many have considered the Crown Center complex to be tired and dated at best, but we saw potential. BNIM loved the idea of this challenge. Doing something transformative in an existing facility is irresistible to me and my colleagues. Doing it well—for our own office, especially, so that we can also continue to “tinker” with spatial choices over time—will showcase our culture of curiosity and allow us to demonstrate creativity in a context that we can apply to many future projects. Our new workplace is being designed as a laboratory for exploration and research, with space for education, community outreach, and exhibits in a highly engaging work environment in which we will be encouraged to be mobile and change postures throughout the day. The workspaces will be based upon variety, choice, and the ability to personalize.

Part of the thrill and challenge of reimagining Crown Center is the design dialogue with an existing space. For example, on paper, the 12-foot floor-to-floor heights are not the tall volumes that are highly desirable for today's workplace, so we knew we had to leverage and exaggerate the strong horizontal



The architecture firm BNIM will soon move into the Crown Center Complex (left) within space previously filled with cubicles (above) for Hallmark employees. The BNIM rendering (top) shows the firm's new, open workplace.



qualities of the space to our advantage. One strategy is to enhance the daylight coming through horizontal windows along the perimeter. To achieve this, rows of dated office cubicles and tall partitions have been removed, the number of new internal walls will be minimized, and several communal spaces will be integrated. Ceiling tiles have been removed to expose the concrete joist structural system with a strong lateral rhythm. We also cut a few new skylights to both bring light deeper into the 90-foot-deep floor plate and provide views to the sky.

One key early decision was the selection of a space at grade with access to the neighborhood and its communal garden. With biophilia inspiring our design strategy, we have connected our office to the outdoors by organizing the studio and our shared spaces in proximity to the garden. This allows us to create our own front door and identity within a large, sprawling office complex of sameness. Both visitors and staff will share a common point of entry into our studio through a gallery and bistro, and will be encouraged to use a centrally located stair. A portion of the upper floor has been removed to insert the new staircase, enhancing interaction and connectivity between the two levels.

Many have considered the Crown Center complex to be tired and dated at best, but we saw potential. BNIM loved the idea of this challenge. Doing something transformative in an existing facility is irresistible to me and my colleagues.

The reuse of old buildings is almost always more complex than building anew. Such projects demand integrated thinking and creativity, and sometimes a leap of faith. Given pressures on materials and resources, this type of project will be increasingly appreciated by owners and neighbors alike. Each project is a chance to consider adaptation strategies, encourage others to take a second look, and explore the possibilities of how seemingly dated structures can once again serve and even inspire in unexpected ways. **c**

James Pfeiffer, AIA, is an associate principal, project architect, and designer in the Kansas City, Missouri, office of BNIM. His portfolio spans a variety of building types, including convention centers, outdoor plazas, office towers, and parking facilities. His background includes significant roles in architectural design, concept development, construction documentation, and administration.



2016 ALA/IIDA Library Interior Design Awards

The International Interior Design Association (IIDA) and the American Library Association (ALA) have named the winners of this year's ALA/IIDA Library Interior Design Awards. The biennial competition honors library designs that stand out for their creativity, aesthetics, and function. Eight winners were named in a range of categories, and the projects are located across the United States as well as in Canada, China, and Poland. The Best of Competition winner is the Chinatown branch of the Chicago Public Library by Perkins+Will (this spread). The jurors were Christy S. Cain, IIDA, idea | span; Stasia Czech Suleiman, IIDA, HOK; Jessica Kayongo, Hesburgh Libraries, University of Notre Dame; and Mindy Sorg, IIDA, OPN Architects. —MURRYE BERNARD



Best of Competition

Public Libraries (under 30,000 square feet)

Project **Chicago Public Library, Chinatown Branch**

Where **Chicago**

Designer **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill**

The Chinatown branch of the Chicago Public Library maximizes its angular site and embraces Feng Shui principles. Wrapped with a glass curtain wall and shaded by vertical aluminum fins, the rounded, triangular-shaped 16,000-square-foot two-story building reflects a traditional Chinese courtyard plan with a skylit double-height space that serves as a lounge, exhibition, and prefuction area for an adjacent community meeting room. A children's zone is also located on the ground level, and teen and adult zones are on the second level. Inspired by the history of Chinatown, Chicago artist CJ Hungerman created an 8-foot-high-by-60-foot-long mixed-media mural that spans the wall at the top of a central stair.





Academic Libraries (over 30,000 square feet)

Project **Jen Library**

Where **Savannah, Georgia**

Designer **Savannah College of Art and Design**

The design team at Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) reconceived the university's 85,000-square-foot Jen Library to create an engaging and whimsical setting for students while maintaining the character of the 1925 structure, which originally housed a department store. Providing a range of environments for study, creativity, and connection, the reimagined interiors include groupings of brightly-hued furnishings in playful shapes, a large-scale chessboard, Skype stations installed within vintage postage boxes, sculptural sandalwood seating and tables, and a weathered-wood built-in banquette illuminated by vintage pendant lights and large sconces.



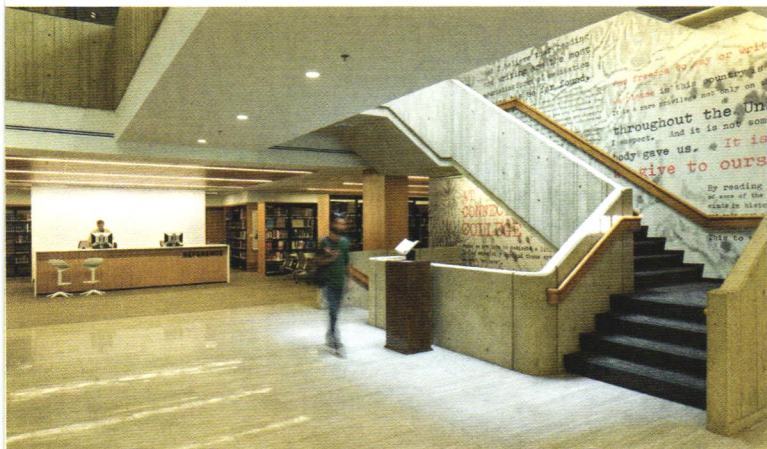
Outstanding Historic Renovation Project

Project **Charles E. Shain Library Renovation at Connecticut College**

Where **New London, Connecticut**

Designer **Schwartz/Silver Architects**

When it opened in 1976, the Charles E. Shain Library (left two) exemplified the end of the Brutalist era. With a modest budget of \$60 per square foot, Schwartz/Silver Architects executed a series of strategic interventions to bring lightness and vitality to the building. Existing slit windows were enlarged and a clerestory monitor was added above the main entrance, creating a double-height reading room. Book stacks were consolidated to allow for study areas along the perimeter. New finishes and furnishings complement the original neutral palette, and a custom wall graphic merges Kurt Vonnegut's 1974 dedication speech with images from the library's Chinese scroll collection.



Public Libraries

(under 30,000 square feet)

Project **Mill Woods Library, Seniors' Centre and Multiculture Facility**

Where **Edmonton, Alberta, Canada**

Designer **HCMA Architecture + Design and Dub Architects**

Establishing a new civic hub within its suburban context, the Mill Woods Library, Seniors' Centre and Multiculture Facility (bottom three) in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, is a rectangular mass that celebrates the interplay between solid and void. The building's upper portion, which contains the senior center, is clad with black metal panels, while curtain-wall glazing rises and falls to reveal the ground-floor library's sculptural interior. An expansive public space features a faceted ceiling plane that accommodates both artificial and natural light sources. A mostly neutral material palette showcases the colors and textures of the books themselves.



**Special Libraries (under 30,000 square feet)**Project **Southern Study in Shenzhen Library**Where **Shenzhen, China**Designer **BenGuo Design**

Within a footprint of less than 3,800 square feet, BenGuo Design created a flexible interior for Southern Study in Shenzhen Library (left two) that accommodates reading, recreation, salons and lectures, exhibitions, and the storage of classic collections and special literature. Taking advantage of the height of the space, the designer split the book collections between different levels and placed a stage in between to provide seating. Multifunctional and portable furnishings allow the space to be transformed for different uses. For example, cubes double as seating options that can be piled together to create display tables.

**Single Space**Project **Station Culture**Where **Rumia, Poland**Designer **Sikora Wnętrza**

The former Rumia train station near the Polish seaside was transformed into Station Culture (below), a public library and cultural center. The double-height main station hall now serves as the library with modular furnishings that allow the space to also function as a large conference room. Former ticket booths house the main reading room which features podlike seating reminiscent of long-distance train compartments. Throughout the 5,000-square-foot interior, architect Sikora Wnętrza incorporated elements that reference railway infrastructure, such as a clock and timetable railroad-inspired bookshelves, and a palette of red and black details.





Special Libraries (over 30,000 square feet)

Project **The David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Duke University**

Where **Durham, North Carolina**

Designer **Shepley Bulfinch**

The renovation of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library (left) establishes a centerpiece for the learning and research community while improving visibility, capacity, environmental conditions, and security for the university's special collections. Iconic rooms such as the Gothic Reading Room were preserved and enhanced. The existing stack core was extracted from the center of the building, and a modern system—featuring humidity control, UV-free LED lighting, cold storage, and compact shelving—was inserted in its place. Multiple exhibit, event, and teaching spaces are located on the building's first floor and infused with detailing inspired by the library's original limestone Gothic architecture.

Public Libraries

(over 30,000 square feet)

Project **Madison Central Library**

Where **Madison, Wisconsin**

Designer **MSR Design**

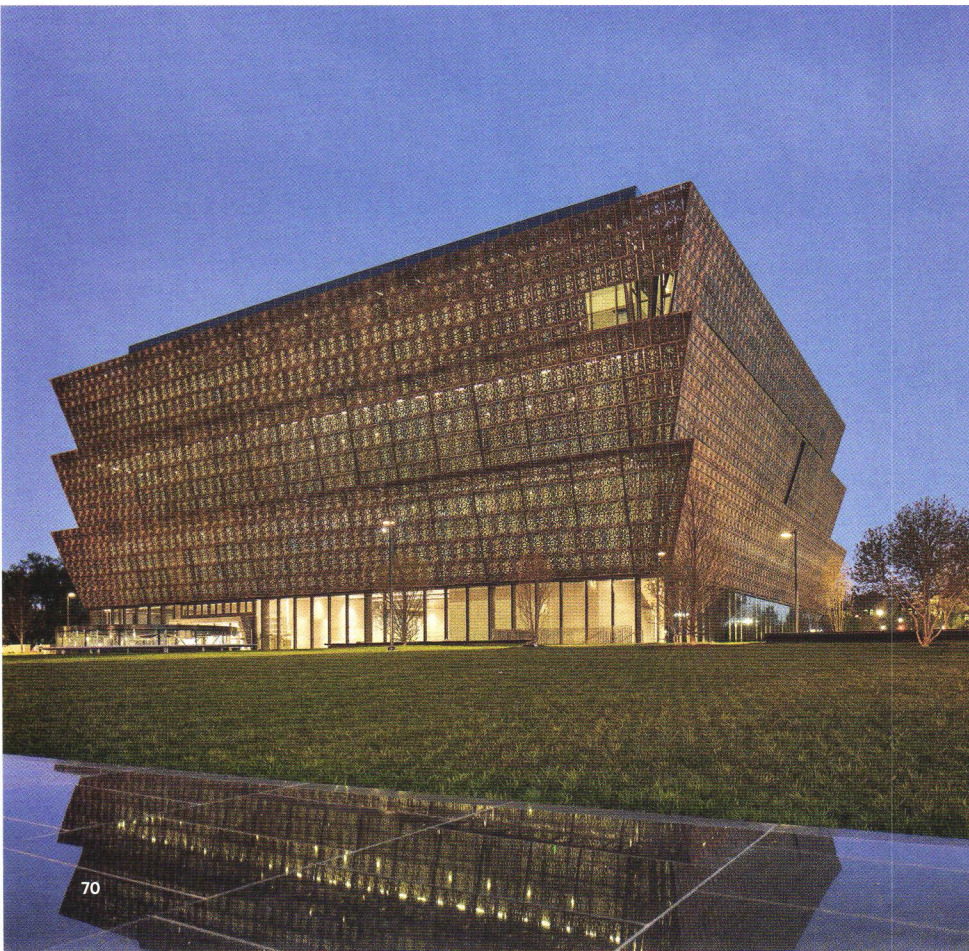
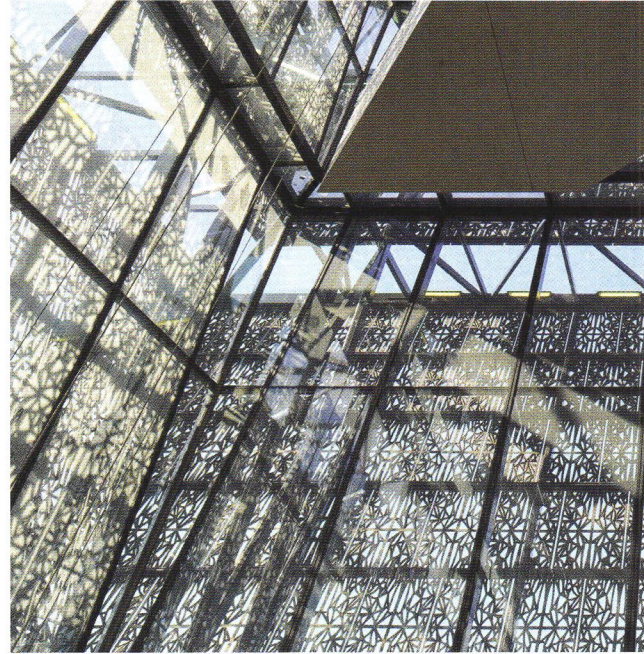
The dated 1960s structure of the Madison Central Library (above three) lacked connection with the rest of downtown and was in need of an upgrade. MSR transformed the 95,000-square-foot building and designed a 25,000-square-foot addition. Living-room-like spaces are located on the first and second floors, and the whimsical children's floor evokes an open meadow with dappled sunlight and vibrant colors. Public art further enlivens the interiors, and the library's street presence is enhanced via a welcoming entrance, a new glass atrium, color-changing LED-lit exterior wall panels, and additional window openings.

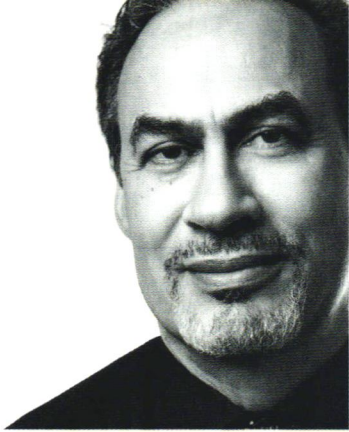


An Interview With Philip Freelon

The architect of record for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture reflects on the team, the process, and the impact of this museum

Following a dedication ceremony with President Barack Obama, the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture opened in late September. The museum, located on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., a short walk from the White House, was designed in a collaboration between four architecture firms and multiple consultants. Lead designer David Adjaye and lead architect Philip Freelon, FAIA, IIDA, together with their architectural team Freelon Adjaye Bond/SmithGroup, won the international competition in April 2009. But Freelon's history with the project goes back further with predesign and master facilities programming, and he went on to coordinate efforts as architect of record. Freelon, who was *Contract* magazine's 2008 Designer of the Year, led his own practice The Freelon Group, which was acquired by Perkins+Will in 2014. *Contract* Editor in Chief John Czarnecki interviewed Freelon about the museum and captured his reflections as an African American.





“As an African American, I feel a sense of honor and deep appreciation for the privilege of leading the design team. I believe that my ancestors would be proud.” —Philip Freelon



The form of the 400,000-square-foot museum (opposite, bottom left) is inspired by the three-tiered crowns used in Yoruban art from West Africa. The structure is clad with 3,600 bronze-colored cast-aluminum panels (left and above).

How important was the team in this collaboration?

I don't believe that one architect possesses all of the expertise necessary to deliver a \$540 million state-of-the-art museum. Each member of the design team brought specific strengths to the table, and the collaboration was very successful. David Adjaye was the lead designer, and The Freelon Group (now part of Perkins+Will) was the architect of record and held the contract with the Smithsonian Institution. Davis Brody Bond and SmithGroupJJR rounded out the team providing technical expertise and strong working relationships with the Smithsonian. Coordinating the work of the four architects and the additional 29 consulting firms was Zena Howard, AIA, the senior project manager with my team at Perkins+Will.

For a project of this size and complexity, it takes a team, it really does. I've been proud of the way we've been able to work together and the coordination not only of the four architects, but also of the consultants. That is something to be proud of as the architect of record responsible for bringing it all together.

What was surprising or unexpected about the design process?

Working with the regulatory agencies was a challenge, and yet also quite productive. The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) were very interested in—some might say concerned about—the presence of the new building on the Mall. With a discerning eye on the long-range vision for the development of the District, these agencies were justifiably interested in the design. The final structure reflects the collaboration between the design team and the agencies, ultimately resulting in a museum that is dignified, respectful of its neighbors, and well-suited to its compact site with half of the building below grade.

In museum design, the exhibition experience is rapidly evolving to meet the desires of people today with changing technology.

How did current thinking influence the design of the interiors and exhibitions in this museum?

One constant about technology is that it is always changing. The museum's infrastructure was designed and engineered to accommodate growth and the possibility of new and evolving technologies. For instance, the changing gallery was conceived as a plain box with a duct grid in the floor and ceiling capable of distributing power and data in virtually any configuration. It is essentially a blank canvas ready to adapt to the next iteration of exhibit content-delivery systems.

Outside of the design team, are there certain entities that you had discussions with that influenced your thoughts on the design of the museum, and what impact did that have?

In addition to the CFA and the NCPC, there were many avenues for input. The predesign and planning process included stakeholder workshops in cities around the country. Director Lonnie G. Bunch III

and his staff were important contributors. The museum formed an advisory board comprised of scholars and historians that vetted the content and message to ensure authenticity. The National Park Service offered input. Even the Secret Service was consulted because there are sight lines from the museum to the White House.

What does it mean to you, personally, to have led the design team for the museum?


For me, this was the commission of a lifetime. Nine years ago, when The Freelon Group was hired to provide the predesign and master facilities programming document, I could only imagine what the new museum might be. Subsequently, winning the international design competition gave us the opportunity to conceptualize and then bring to life this world-class institution. As an African American, I feel a sense of honor and deep appreciation for the privilege of leading the design team. I believe that my ancestors would be proud.

In the broader context of our nation in 2016, how important is this museum?

When I think about Black Lives Matter, Trayvon Martin, and some of these instances that are happening today, it just reminds me of the 1960s. It's like a flashback. And the need for this museum to illuminate our culture so that people can appreciate and embrace it—and to understand that these are American stories—is so necessary. This is the Noah's Ark for African American culture—a place of remembrance and celebration. But it is also a repository housing the difficult stories in our nation's history lest we forget. It is important to tell the truth in all of its painful detail. Ultimately, for me, this museum is about perseverance, resiliency, triumph, and making a way out of no way.

[The museum is here to] build bridges between what seem to be disparate cultures. But we are all Americans. Lonnie Bunch often says that the African-American story is the quintessential American story. There are difficult stories in the African-American struggle, but it's important to tell the truth.

What is your hope for how this building endures through the coming years?

African American history and culture are commemorated and brought to life in and around this museum building. It is a story that continues to unfold. The museum will adapt and respond through its exhibits and ongoing programming to offer all who visit a new lens through which to view the world. 

Tables and Casegoods

Designers identify their favorite new tables and casegoods

Hannah Hackathorn



Principal
Unispace
New York

Geiger: Rhythm

geigerfurniture.com



"Rhythm fits well into smaller floor plans, serving as either a private workstation or a meeting space. It features refined yet comforting aesthetics and offers the customization level of the home office. Rhythm helps center workspaces around people rather than hierarchy."

Herman Miller: Locale

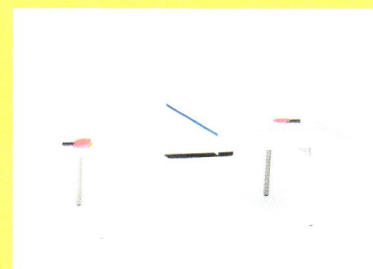
hermanmiller.com



"Herman Miller's Locale is infinitely modular and flexible. It can be easily and rapidly reconfigured as companies grow and their needs evolve. The design accommodates today's digitized workplace and incorporates tech while staying clean and pristine."

Poppin: Series A

poppin.com



"Poppin's Series A table is an ingenious solution for modern workplaces where the lines between work and play are blurred. A conference table that turns into a ping-pong table offers a witty commentary on the changing times."

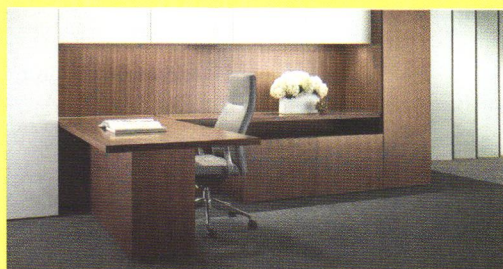
Lucianna Lucarelli



Director of Interiors
TRIA
Boston

Gunlocke: Credentials

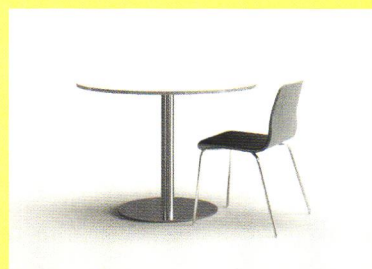
gunlocke.com



"Credentials offers a modern take on casegoods design. Providing a sit-to-stand work surface, a magnetic glass back panel with function and beauty, and integrated power for a seamless design, Gunlocke's design has numerous components to fit every need."

HBF: Core

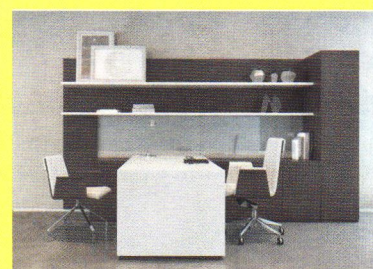
hbf.com



"Created with hospitality in mind, Core delivers a clean and modern approach to workplace cafe design. This is a great table because it comes in a wide variety of surface finishes and metal bases, making it a flexible, sleek addition to any space."

OFS: Slate

ofsbrands.com



"This supports multiple types of gatherings, including lounge and collaboration. The TV monitor is integrated into the support wall and technology is built into the tabletop for digital sharing and interaction. It includes hidden storage units with trash and recycling bins, a coffee station, and operable marker boards."

Michael Poris, AIA



Principal
McIntosh Poris Associates
Birmingham, Michigan

Versteel: The Maker Project

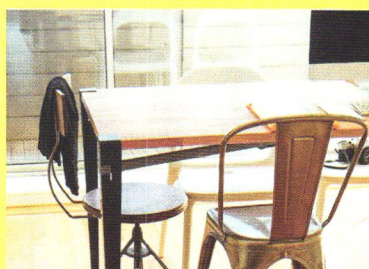
versteel.com



"This is a collection of movable and adjustable pieces inspired by the intrinsic qualities of fabrication and manufacturing. The assortment of furniture includes a bench and presentation whiteboard, along with utility, occasional, and Parsons tables for maker spaces and contemporary office settings."

Floyd: Utility Set

floyddetroit.com



"Floyd's Utility Set offers the perfect opportunity for the user to incorporate reclaimed materials with industrial finishes for an eclectic flare. Its support system of cross-bracing nylon straps thread through four solid steel corner legs to hold anything from antique doors to marble slabs."

Vitra: Hack

vitra.com



"Designed by Konstantin Grcic and made with raw wooden panels, Hack provides a flexible desk solution that challenges tradition with configurations that include options for sitting, standing, and lounging. Hack would be ideal in a creative or technology-driven office environment that incorporates both historical and contemporary architectural features."

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sources

BBC Worldwide (page 42)

who Architect and interior designer: HOK. Project team: Simon Douche; Timothy Hutton; Dan Herriott; Barry Hughes; Mark Kennedy; Andy Warner Lacey; Claire McPoland; Beate Mellwig; Sarah Miller. Contractor: Lend Lease. Lighting, engineering, and acoustics: AECOM. Graphics: Cath Leach. IT/AV: Technology Moves. Quantity surveyor: Currie & Brown. Project management: Pro Core. Kitchen/catering: Tricon. **what** Paint: Johnstones. Laminate: Polyrey; Arpa; Duhospan. Drywall: British Gypsum. Movable walls: Accordial. Hard flooring: Flowcrete; Domus. Resilient flooring: Kingspan. Carpet/carpet tile: Jnj Carpets; Forbo. Ceilings: Sas Catering Boh; Skanda Troidtekt. Recessed lighting: Alpha Led. Track

lighting: Trilux. Pendants/chandeliers: Etap; Viso Lighting; Light Years; Heals; Molto Luce; Foscarini; Fagerhult. Other decorative: Projection Lighting. Architectural glass/glazing: Optima. Window treatments: Soltech Blinds. Conference seating: Wilkhahn. Lounge/reception seating: Fritz Hansen; Hay. Cafeteria/dining seating: Davidson Highley; Deadgood. Auditorium seating: Wilkhahn. Other seating: Lammhults; Offecct; Naughtone; Boss; Hay; Kusch; Zanotta; Swedese; James Burley; Skandiform. Upholstery: Camira; Kvadrat; Gabriel. Conference/training tables: Wilkhahn. Reception desk: Coran Bespoke. Side tables: Naughtone; Fritz Hansen. Architectural woodworking: Ruddy. Plumbing fixtures/fittings: Hans Grohe. Textile treatments/finishes: Whiterock.

Nixon Peabody (page 50)

who Architect and interior designer: Perkins+Will. Project team: Ken Wilson; David Cordell; Nina Lahham; Haley Nelson. Contractor: James G. Davis Construction Corporation. Lighting: Patricia Kazinski Lighting Consultant. Engineering: GHT Limited. Acoustician: Hush Acoustics. Project management: KGO. Audiovisual: CMS Audiovisual. **what** Wallcoverings: Buzzspace; Novawall. Paint: Sherwin-Williams; Scuffmaster; MDC Ideapaint. Laminate: Formica. Solid surface: Dupont. Drywall: National Gypsum. Movable walls: Skyfold. Demountable Partitions: MAI Alur. Tile backsplash: Fireclay Tile. Wood veneer: Dooge Veneer. Hard flooring: reSAWN Timber Company; Floor Gres through Stone Source. Tile accessories: Schluter; Grout; Mapei. Resilient flooring: Armstrong Flooring; Allstate Base. Carpet/carpet tile: Shaw Contract; Interface. Ceilings: Armstrong Ceilings. Recessed lighting: Gotham; Finelite; Focal Point; Fraqtir; Vode. Task lighting: Finelite. Fluorescent/industrial: Lithonia; Elliptipar. Pendants/chandeliers: Peerles; Focal Point; Moooi; Leucos. Hardware: Hager Companies;

Schlage; LCN; Von Duprin; Rixson; CR Laurence; Dorma. Door: VT Industries; Wilson Partitions. Architectural glass/glazing: Pilkington; Cardinal. Decorative glass panels/partitions: GlasPro; Skyline Design; Summit Glass; Walker. Applied film visual distraction markers: Llummar. Window treatments: MechoSystems; Lutron. Workstations: Knoll. Workstation/task seating: Knoll. Conference seating: Herman Miller. Lounge/reception seating: Arper; Bernhardt Design; Coalesse; Davis; Geiger; Herman Miller; Jas. Becker; KnollStudio; Poltrona Frau; StudioTK. Area rug: Arzu Studio Hope. Cafeteria/dining seating: Herman Miller. Upholstery: Bernhardt Textiles; Carnegie; Designtex; Geiger Textiles; HBF Textiles; Knoll Textiles; Maharam; Luum; Textus; Unika Vaev; Pallas; Spinneybeck; Moore & Giles. Conference tables: Nienkamper; Davis. Cafeteria/dining: Bernhardt Design. Training: Nienkamper; Knoll. Reception desk: custom millwork; Gaithersburg Millwork. Side tables: KnollStudio. Other tables: Coalesse; Bernhardt Design. Files: Office Specialty; SpaceSaver. Shelving: Montisa; Metro. Drawers/casegoods: Knoll. Architectural/custom

woodworking/plants/accessories: Gaithersburg Millwork. Signage: Signs Unlimited. Plumbing fixtures/fittings: Kohler.

GLG Austin (page 56)

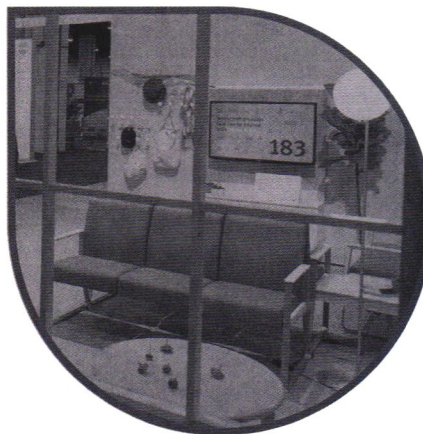
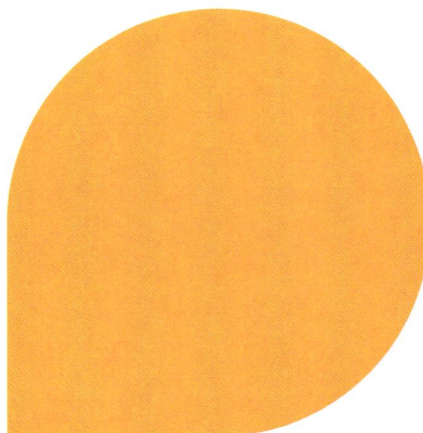
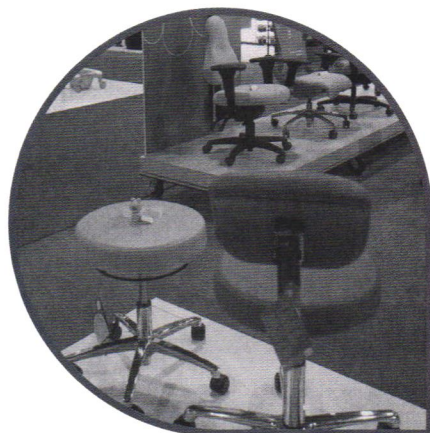
who Architect and interior designer: Clive Wilkinson Architects. Project team: Chester Nielsen; Clive Wilkinson; Miya Hongo; Caroline Morris; Ying Song. Contractor: Harvey Cleary Builders. Executive architect: STG Design. Project management: Aquila Commercial. Lighting: Lighting Workshop. Structural engineer: Campbell & Associates. MEP engineer: MEJ & Associates. Graphics: EGG, Los Angeles. Acoustician: JEAoustics. Expanded metal mesh fabricator: Sarabi Studio. **what** Paint: Benjamin Moore. Laminate: Nevamar; Wilsonart. Hard flooring: Hardwood Designs. Resilient flooring: Nora Systems; Key Resin Company. Carpet/carpet tile: Interface; Bentley; Mohawk. Ceilings: custom expanded metal mesh system fabricated by Sarabi Studio; Newmat; Armstrong. Recessed lighting: Cooper; Atlantic Lighting. Track lighting: Lazer and Ketra. Task lighting/fluorescent/industrial: Cooper. Pendants/chandeliers: Lukas; Tech Lighting; Ketra. Other decorative: Dals. Hardware: Rockwood. Doors: Raco; Innovations. Architectural glass/glazing: Pulp Studio. Window treatments: Draper. Workstations: Dtank custom workstations; Vitra. Workstation/task seating: Haworth. Conference seating: Vitra. Lounge/reception seating: Bernhardt; Vitra; Muuto. Cafeteria/dining seating: Vitra; custom Dtank banquettes. Other seating: Quinze; Milan. Upholstery: Maharam. Conference tables: Vitra. Cafeteria/dining: custom Dtank. Reception desk: custom CWA design, fabrication by Hewn. Side tables: Vitra; Arflex. Other tables: Andreu World. Files: Bisley; Haworth. Lockers/cubbies: Bisley. Architectural/custom woodworking: Dtank; Hewn; Georgetown Woodworks. Signage: Austin Architectural Graphics. Plumbing fixtures/fittings: Kohler; Elkay.



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For The Calhoun School in New York, FXFowle Reconceives Interiors with Renewed Vitality



The Calhoun School, a private school on Manhattan's Upper West Side, has a landlocked urban building that needs updating and reconsideration from time to time to meet the current needs for educating students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. New York-based firm FXFowle recently redesigned portions of the school—a building dating to the mid-1970s—to create a new lobby, cafeteria, and library for greater use and effectiveness.

Calhoun needed a cafeteria with more seating to reduce the number of lunch periods from six to three, and that, in turn, facilitated curricular and program expansion. The designers broadened the building's ground-level footprint beneath an underutilized outdoor plinth. There, and within space that had been the library, a contemporary, larger cafeteria has been installed, with street-level views of the corner of West End Avenue at 81st Street. Counter seating along the new facade animates the school's activity throughout the day, creating more connectivity between Calhoun and the neighborhood. The design team relocated the library to a vacated space in the cellar, and reorganized and expanded some classroom spaces. The overall design of the school's new cafeteria, library, and redefined entry sequence celebrates the school's modern, progressive approach to experiential learning. —JOHN CZARNECKI



A modern, sleek lobby (1) replaces a dated space (2) that had an institutional feel. In what was the library (3), the new, spacious cafeteria (4) matches the aesthetic of the lobby, while presenting a spirited, transparent public face for the school on a busy Upper West Side corner.

