

INTERIOR DESIGN[®]

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headliners

HARIRI & HARIRI ARCHITECTURE

"Light as Air," page 282

FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL:
Gisue Hariri.

FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL:
Mojgan Hariri.

COMPLETED PROJECTS:

JSM Music Studios and Juan Valdez Café in New York; residences in New York and Sagaponack, New York; a chandelier for Swarovski's "Crystal Palace."

CURRENT PROJECTS:

Sternbrauerei Salzburg residential project in Austria; Two Arts Plaza, a residential development in Dallas.

HONORS: *Interior Design* Hall of Fame; American Academy of Arts and Letters Academy Award in Architecture.

UPTOWN: *Gisue Hariri likes to wander around Museum Mile.*

DOWNTOWN: *Mojgan Hariri spends time at the Union Square farmer's market and Chelsea galleries.*

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focus: new york

light as air

At an office in Midtown, Gisue and Mojgan Hariri elevate the financial genre

text: *Judith Davidsen* photography: *paul warchol*

Office design is not exactly what Hariri & Hariri Architecture is known for. Retail, yes. Residential, yes. Institutional, yes. Corporate, not so much. Conversely, the world of finance isn't often associated with cutting-edge design: Conventional wisdom often dictates an equally conventional aesthetic to project an aura of unshakable stability. So just imagine what happened when a financial firm needed to see an example of the sister-owned design firm's work. "I took them to a music studio that was all metal," Gisue Hariri says. "Can you imagine?" Fortunately, the clients weren't interested in conventional wisdom. "They came to us because they were looking to go outside the box," she continues.

The office space was intended to attract creative employees and induce them to work ever longer hours. "The CEO said to make it so nice that no one would want to go home," Mojgan Hariri reports. "With our residential experience, we know how to make things comfortable." Another requirement was to increase interaction between four divisions of employees—ranging from sociable nods in the corridors to substantive exchanges while waiting for the coffee to brew. ➤

Traders in the bull pen can take a break in Eero Saarinen chairs.





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Left, from top: Limestone flooring surrounds recyclable nylon carpet tiles in the elevator lobby. Fluorescent suspension fixtures shine down on the bull pen's workstations by Robert Reuter and Charles Rozier. **Right:** A wengé-veneered wall and canopy define the reception area's suite of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe seating and tables.

Opposite: The boardroom's custom table has a wengé top that extends 21 feet beneath pendant fixtures by Wilmotte & Associés.





Beyond that, the plan for the 14,500-square-foot floor plate was to be sustainable and efficient, elegant and timeless. And speaking of time, the whole thing had to be designed and built in a mere six months.

Among many design revelations, the biggest was what an environmentally correct raised floor could do for the project visually. Radiator covers that were once window-seat height suddenly stood just 6 inches above floor level, creating what Gisue Hariri calls a "surprising feeling that you're floating out into the city." In this setting, the table in the boardroom reminds her of an airplane ready for takeoff—and has her wondering why all skyscrapers can't be like this. In addition, with the entire under-floor acting as one big duct that channels heat and air-conditioning to almost every individual workstation, along with power and communications cable, the existing dropped ceiling and everything hidden above could be ripped out. Now that the tops of the windows are roughly 1 foot below the ceiling plane, there's an illusion of extra height, plus room for cove lighting that makes the 9-foot ceiling appear higher as well. The new proportions also made pendant fixtures possible instead of the recessed cans and fluorescent troughs ubiquitous in office settings.

Bright white, silver, gray, and some taupe are punctuated by dark wengé. "We used color more as an accent, for energy in specific areas," Mojgan Hariri explains. ▶



Top, from left: One of five function areas in the 65-foot-long central volume is the kitchen, with its limestone island and chestnut floor. In reception, the built-in desk combines natural quartz and etched glass. **Bottom:** The central volume terminates at the research center.

Opposite top: A James Irvine chair and ottoman occupy a corner of the hallway outside the etched-glass front of the CEO's office. **Opposite bottom:** Inside, a lamp by Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni arches above a sofa, lounge chairs, and coffee table by Florence Knoll.



There's orange on one wall, above the storage cabinets in the bull pen where the traders are, and covering a few of Eero Saarinen's Womb chairs. In reception, the rug is yellow. And some pieces in the corporate art collection provide touches of color. The overarching impression is of light and, as Gisue Hariri says, "quiet." Natural light played a large role in the disposition of space and the choice of materials. Executive offices and meeting rooms get windows along most of the perimeter, but light flows into the corridors through frameless fronts of translucent glass. Another full wall of windows allows the sun to shine directly over the bull pen.

Between this open area and a row of private offices and meeting rooms runs a long freestanding volume containing two additional offices, the kitchen, the copy and supply room, and the research center, laid out one after the next. Only the ends of this volume are opaque, veneered in wengé; both sides are sliding glass doors. Because they're rarely shut, light, views, and humans flow through in both directions—staff can't go anywhere without seeing one another. Visitors can take advantage of the wealth of sight lines, too. Unlike the New York offices of yore, this one lets you find your way out without laying a trail of bread crumbs on the way in. ▀

PROJECT TEAM

AARON McDONALD; JENNY SHOUKIMAS; MARLENE KWEE; MARKUS RANDLER; HARIRI & HARIRI ARCHITECTURE. HORTON LEES BROGDEN LIGHTING DESIGN; LIGHTING CONSULTANT. ROBERT SILMAN ASSOCIATES: STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. IP GROUP CONSULTING ENGINEERS; MEP. WILLIAM SOMMERVILLE: WOODWORK. STRUCTURE TONE: GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT KNOLL: SEATING (BULL PEN, LOBBY, RECEPTION, RESEARCH), TABLES (BULL PEN, LOBBY, RECEPTION, OFFICE), WORKSTATIONS, FILE CABINETS (BULL PEN, RESEARCH), WALL COVERING (LOBBY), SOFA, LOUNGE CHAIRS, DESK CHAIR (OFFICE). ARTEMIDE: PENDANT FIXTURES (BULL PEN, BOARDROOM). CASSINA: CREDENZA (BOARDROOM). HERMAN MILLER: CHAIRS (BOARDROOM), GUEST CHAIRS (OFFICE). THERMADOR: REFRIGERATOR (KITCHEN). KWC: SINK FITTINGS. WALKER ZANGER: BACKSPASH TILE. CLESTRA HAUSERMAN: STOREFRONT SYSTEM (KITCHEN, RESEARCH). HOBOKEN FLOORS: FLOORING. COVERINGS ETC: DESKTOP MATERIAL (RECEPTION). B&B ITALIA: CHAIR, OTTOMAN (HALL). FLOS: LAMP (OFFICE). THROUGHOUT INNOVATIVE MARBLE & TILE: FLOORING. INTERFACEFLOR: CARPET. HUNTER DOUGLAS: CEILING SYSTEM. PITCON INDUSTRIES: BASE REVEAL STRUCTURE. BENJAMIN MOORE & CO.: PAINT.

