

THE CHROMA ZONE

In Florence, Italy, the new Museo Novecento
— dedicated to Italian art of the 20th century —
takes a vibrant approach to wayfinding

+ FOCUS: COLOUR

We've got colour covered as we travel the world to find exciting interiors projects which celebrate every shade under the sun

HK\$48
US\$18
€15





In the beginning

Text: Sophie Cullen Photography: David Elliott and Kenneth Tam

Design firm Stefano Tordiglione recently rejuvenated a commercial building in Wong Chuk Hang, Hong Kong, producing a vibrant space for workers from the creative industries

Recently, the once-industrial zone of Wong Chuk Hang has undergone a renaissance of sorts, with groups of artists, designers, restaurateurs and start-up companies moving into the district simultaneously. Among the giant warehouses, a bevy of independent cafés and galleries can now be found, attracting a diverse crowd who want to escape the hustle and bustle of the CBD. It was in this thriving hub that property developers Hip Shing Hong unveiled Genesis, a commercial building that has undergone a transformation from its former self, earlier in the year.

Genesis offers 18 floors of office space and four of retail, but what is truly unique about the project is that Hip Shing Hong has pledged to ensure that around 10 per cent of the space will always be available to young artists, start-up entrepreneurs and other non-profit making organisations — with substantial rent sponsorship

from the company. At the opening of the building, David Fong, general manager of Hip Shing Hong stated, “We have responded to the calls from the community and government for affordable artist space and space for artists and young entrepreneurs. We foresee that Genesis will be a fun-filled office campus that is full of positive energy.”

In keeping with this creative vision, Stefano Tordiglione, founder of his eponymous company and chief designer on the Genesis project, was recruited by the developers to transform the entrance lobby and fourth floor recreation area/creative working space.

Right
Design features of the communal area on the fourth floor include cut outs in the walls that provide space for working, two British telephone boxes and pink lights that reference the wet markets of Hong Kong

Bottom
In the lobby, art has been used extensively to allude to the creative workplaces housed within the building. A neon sign bearing a Bruce Lee quote, a Rolls Royce art piece and a giant hand sculpture with pointed index finger sit harmoniously side-by-side to welcome guests

Facing page
Bright colours abound in the entranceway, offset by pendant lights that hang at various levels



The firm found inspiration for the interiors from the creative revolution of the 1960s and the move towards modernity in the 1970s. Vibrant colours were to play a key role in the project, with a mix of eastern and western style being used throughout. “One of the biggest challenges of the project was making sure the colours matched well with each other. Each colour has its own strong personality, so it was a challenge to mix them together in a harmonious way,” notes Tordiglione.

In the lobby, one wall features a neon representation of a classic quote from Bruce Lee, referencing Hong Kong in the '60s when neon signage proliferated the streets. Next to this, a Rolls Royce art piece can be found, created by an Italian artist to form an optical installation full of light and an embodiment of the creative environment in which it sits.

In the centre of the lobby, a 5m-high sculpted hand can be found.

Modelled after Tordiglione’s own hand, its index finger points to the sky, referencing Michelangelo’s work in the Sistine Chapel from the Book of Genesis. A palette of '60s hues — primary colours in muted Pantones — and a long wavy sofa represent the style of the period and are complemented by wall designs of simple stripes that continue into the loading area.

To reflect the creativity of the work that goes on in the building, the designer has ensured that emphasis is placed on human interaction with the building through a selection of elements. In the entranceway, an interactive LED screen at the far end changes colour as visitors approach it, while the atrium space takes in two storeys and features a mirrored wall and ceiling. The reflective surfaces are tilted at various angles so onlookers see themselves, the lobby and the hanging pendant-like light fittings form a variety of angles creating a wondrous kaleidoscopic effect.





Sitting beyond the stairway, an octagonal door lit in neon opens onto a futuristic lift lobby that references the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, an apt design for the area of transition to the shared recreational zone on the fourth floor.

The common area is expansive and open, and features Italian-inspired furniture as well as meeting areas with surfaces that can transform into ping pong tables to be enjoyed alongside a snooker and foosball table. The reading area lies to one side with comfortable chairs for reclining and resting and a wavy '70s-styled bookcase, while nearby pink lamps hang low, reminiscent of the bright red lamps of the Hong Kong wet markets.

Other elements in the design also reflect the building's location with two red telephone boxes used as a reminder of Hong Kong's ties to Britain. The blue and white checkered walls of the pantry area are typical '70s patterns, and the carpeting features prints of newspapers from Hong Kong in the same era reporting on landmark events including the opening of Ocean Park and the Aberdeen Tunnel. The '70s are further referenced in the organic lines and shapes that appear throughout, including one wall into which shapes of a lamp, a planter, a television and a person have been cut out, offering unique places to sit and surfaces to work on.

The cut-out idea is continued through to the sprawling wood-decked outdoor terrace, with furniture cut out of cubes in a style reminiscent of Italian design trends of the '70s. These pieces sit among planters of lush greenery and white stone-like pieces which light up at night creating a unique outdoor landscape.

Through and through, the interiors of Genesis inspire the people who work within the space to create amid a colourful environment. "From start to finish, the project took almost two years to complete, but the final result has justified all the hard work," says Tordiglione. ●

Left from top

Stripes of bold colour, inspired by muted '60s tones, can be seen extending into the loading area from the lobby • The reading area on the fourth floor, offers a relaxing space for workers to enjoy some downtime

Facing page from top

In the kitchen, white has been used predominantly, while accents of red can be found in the roof and soft furnishings • The entrance to the lift lobby references *2001: A Space Odyssey*, a fitting gateway to the creative communal space on the fourth floor

