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Saatchi & Saatchi New York Office

Photography by Erick Laignel

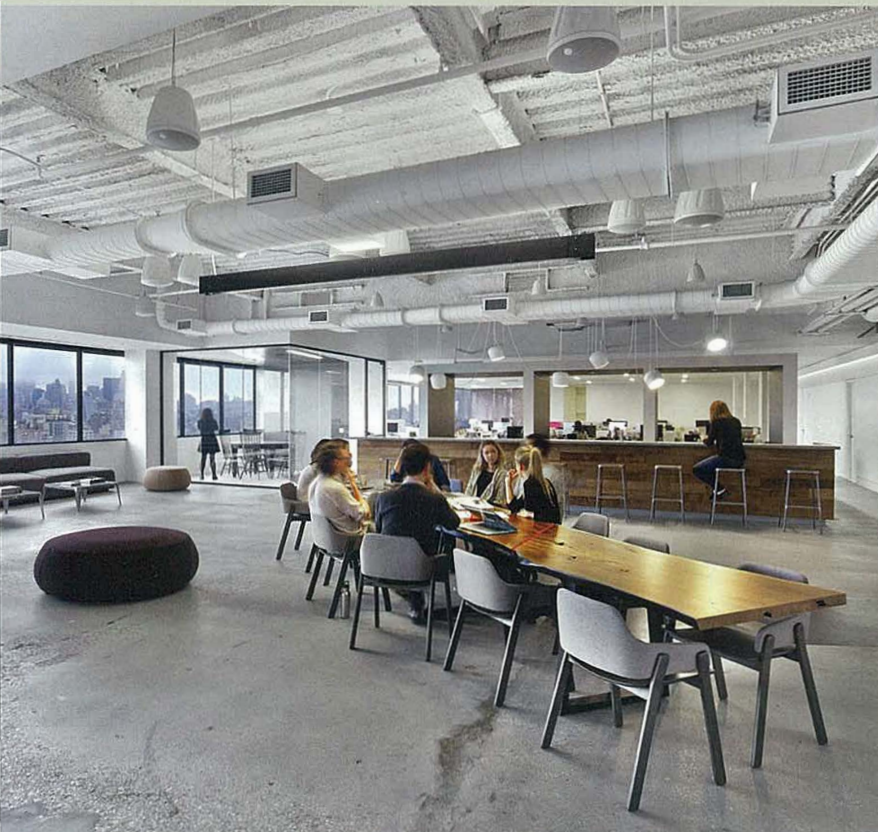
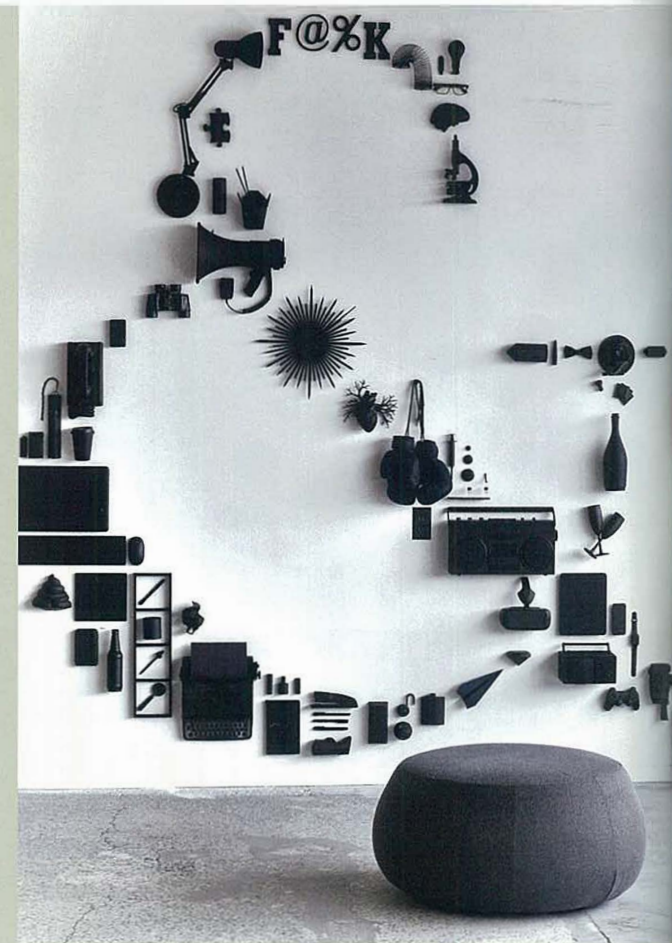
New York City, USA M Moser Associates

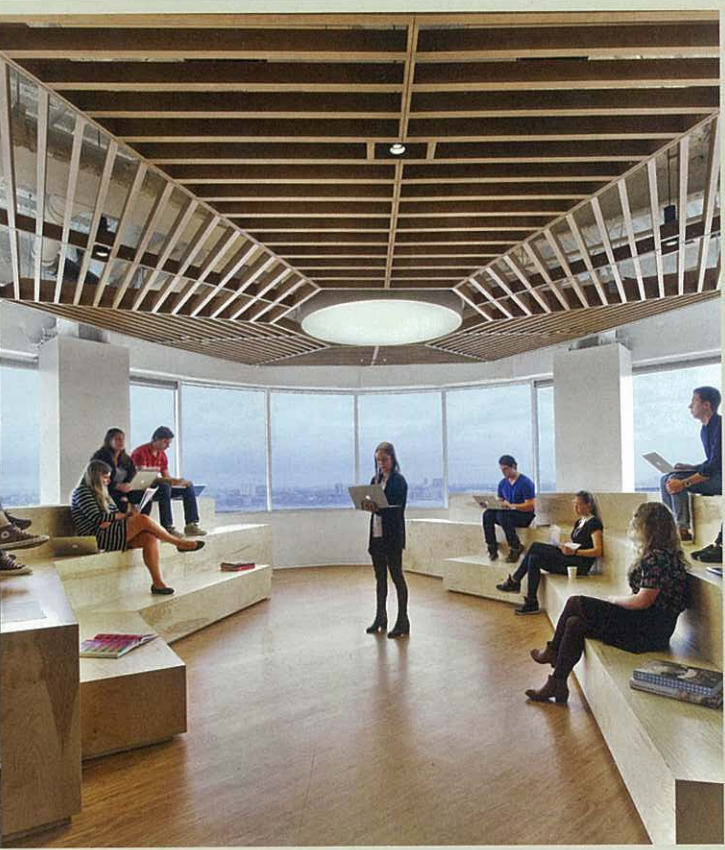
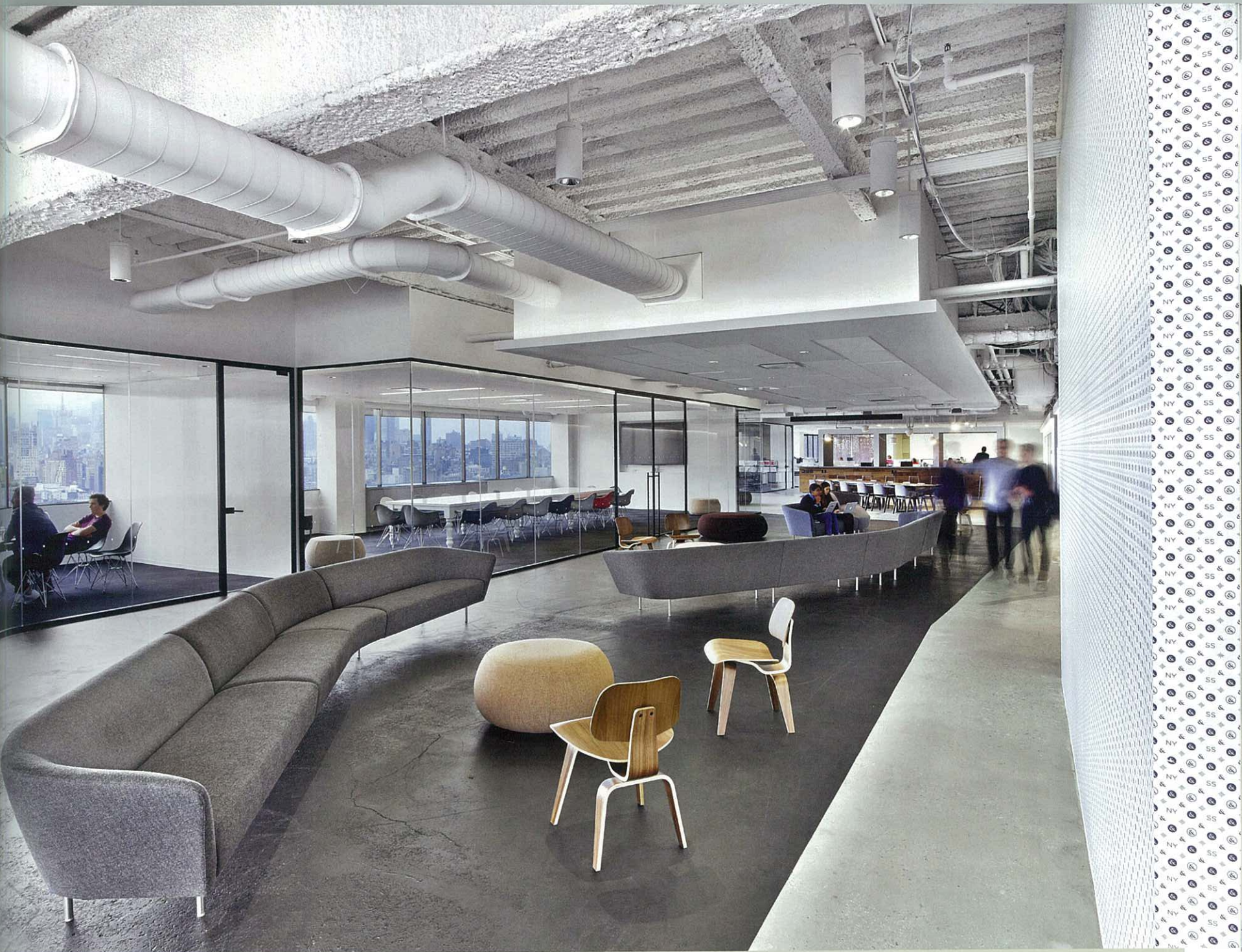
There must be added expectations when designing a workspace for a client involved in the creative industries. At the least, presentation meetings must elicit energetic reactions from people who are involved in similarly 'right-brain' activities day in and day out. They aren't likely to be impressed with anything standard. M Moser Associates, worldwide experts in office design, found itself in such a position when designing the New York offices of Saatchi & Saatchi, an internationally famous advertising company. In fact one could argue that the pressure was doubled, because the client isn't just an 'advertising' firm: it made its name as one of the most edgy, creative and original of advertising firms.

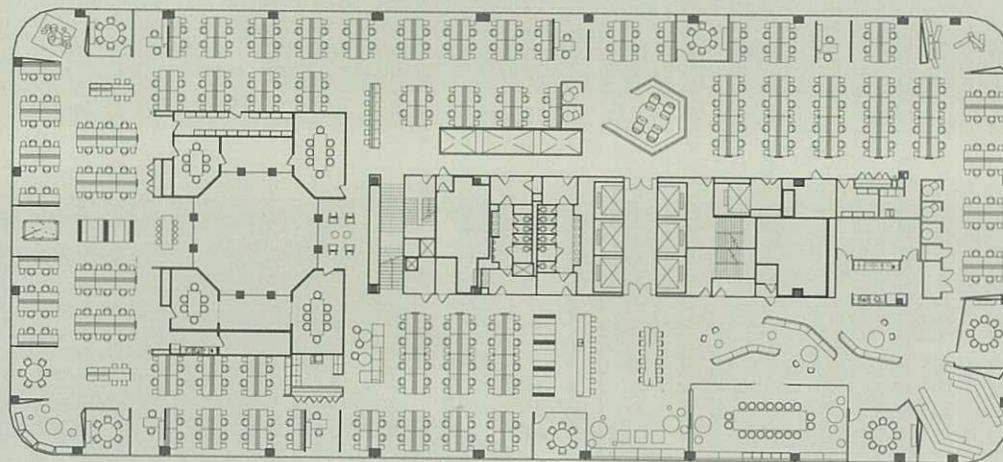
An obvious goal of the brief was to provide a work environment that could tap into and enhance that creative reputation; a space that would reflect Saatchi & Saatchi's own DNA and position at the forefront of an industry catering to clients who themselves have high expectations for originality. When a client of the advertising firm arrives at the offices for a meeting or presentation, they need to enter an environment that reinforces their decision to choose this particular group of people. They need to understand that, here, ideas and concepts are fostered.

And at the 'internal' level, the offices had to do exactly that: encourage interaction and imagination, promote creative individual thinking and collective brainstorming, and welcome spontaneity and unplanned cross-fertilisation of ideas. Could interior design do all that?

The brief also outlined the desire to consolidate and densify the firm's current outfit. It is no surprise that in many fields nowadays, but especially in the creative ones, the old models of office layouts have been replaced by new, more flexible and less rigid planning. Glazed or partly enclosed cubicles and even corner executive







offices are gone. Open spaces and shared desking is in. Pantries, breakout spaces, lounges, diverse meeting areas, varied seating options and a general atmosphere of informality is the rule of the day. Communication is highly valued, so any planning that separates staff is frowned upon. And since so much 'work' today is conducted on small digital devices that can follow a person around, or simply through verbal conversations, a 'workstation' as it was defined for decades makes less sense. Mobility is paramount, visual continuity is prized, and collective activity is taken as a sign of productivity.

M Moser began by bringing all the client's staff and space onto a single floor, the better to foster that crucial interchange on a daily basis. An open floorplan was a given and, after all, the majority of the floorplate is taken up by straightforward workstations (though no cubicles!). Perimeter windows flood the space with daylight, and few partitions or walls interrupt the light and views. As Saatchi & Saatchi happens to be involved in advertising, at least a few walls were necessary, to pin up ideas for

discussion. Dispersed around the floor are meeting and conference rooms of various sizes for planned or spontaneous confabs or client presentations. These provide acoustical privacy, but are usually glass-enclosed so that passersby are aware of what's happening.

Then there are the 'fun' bits, from a large pantry area oriented west toward views of the Hudson River, to a timber-clad amphitheatre at one corner of the building. There are cosy nooks to read, phone or concentrate in; open bar tables for casual chats; a chic mini reading-room with comfy grey seating; and a few lounging areas with sofas, ottomans and coffee-table books to invite brief respites or, again, unplanned concept-sharing. The backdrop palette is white and pale greys, and the open ceilings are painted out but exposed to ductwork and structure. There is a minimalist undertone to the project, which acts as a nice canvas to the bolder activities and proposals of the staff working here. After all, it is their creativity that Saatchi & Saatchi's own clients come for.

SECRETARY

