

D'Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles, Inc.

World Headquarters
New York, New York



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The design for this advertising agency's headquarters in the heart of Manhattan's theater district transformed what could have been perceived as an overwhelming building constraint into a vital aspect of the project. Cantilevered over a neighboring landmark, the building contained a zone filled with diagonal supporting trusses, which might have made flexibility in space planning seem impossible for many prospective tenants.

By removing a floor in this area and exposing the structure, the architects created an 8,000-square-foot volume that forms the core of the project: a striking, two-story presentation/conference complex containing a series of adjacent and balcony-located conference rooms. Visitors enter this crucial double-height space via a stainless steel and slate stairway that leads from the spaces housing the New York agency's suites on the floor above. In the conference/presentation space, a 100-foot-long expanse is dedicated to an exhibition

wall illuminated by a flexible composition of lamps and fixtures. On a tier above this exhibition expanse is a translucent grid concealing a catwalk system enabling further flexibility in specialized lighting and theatrical effects.

The individual conference rooms (entered either from the exhibition space or from outside circulation corridors) can be set up as facsimiles of agency divisions, complementing whatever form of media presentation is mounted in the main space.

A system of corridors features pathways terminating in city views and break-out spaces, encouraging spontaneous staff interaction. Gridded glass walls line the corridors, allowing natural light to penetrate from the perimeter offices to interior work stations. Within this somewhat neutral volume, the qualities of light and translucency are the true protagonists.

1 Typical reception-waiting space

2 Typical Executive corridor

3 Typical executive secretary workstation



Exhibition space and stair



Exhibition space

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Key Project Information

- new design transformed structural challenges into an aesthetic focal point
 - 8,000-square-foot flexible complex containing conference/presentation rooms
 - 100-foot-long exhibition wall
 - double-height exhibition/meeting/reception area
 - highly technical catwalk system enabling flexibility in specialized lighting/theatrical effects
 - break-out spaces encourage spontaneous staff interaction
 - integration of art throughout agency's fourteen floors
 - custom-designed furnishings
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- completed 1988
 - gsf 300,000

"The qualities of light and translucency are the project's protagonists. [...] Gwathmey Siegel proved itself to be eminently capable of completing large scale projects with no sacrifice to detail or to the architects' concern for creating environments to address each agency's persona and needs."

Interior Design, January 1993



Boardroom