

David and Goliath

El Segundo, CA

David Angelo, the Creative Director and CEO of David and Goliath Advertising, wanted their new offices to have the same material appearance and emotive quality as an old, worn leather-bound book.



LOCATION:
El Segundo, CA

TAGS:

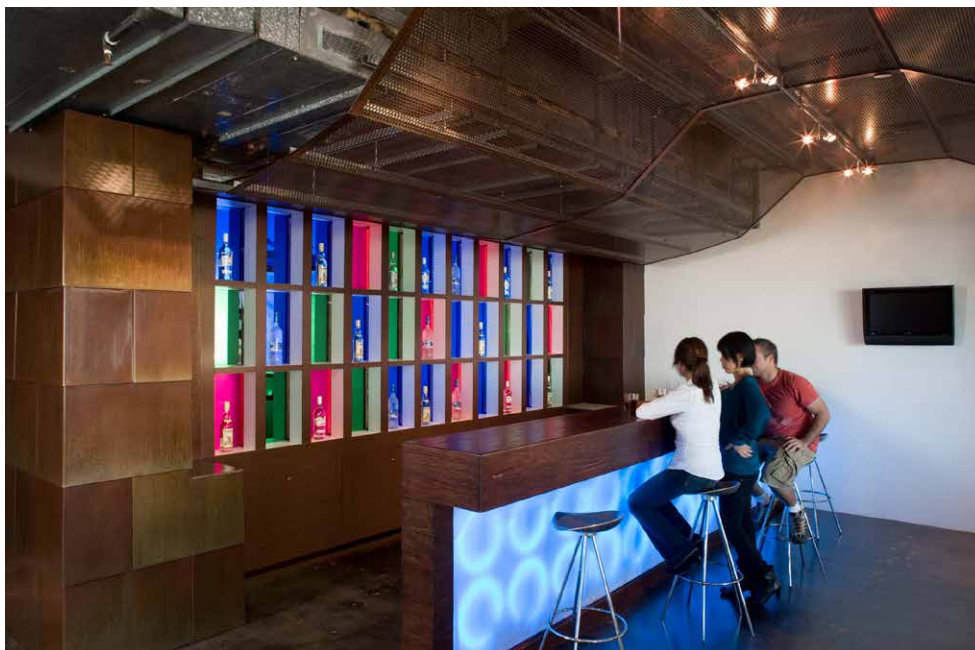
LEGACY

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He felt that the appearance and organization of many contemporary offices did not provide this, nor allow spaces of collaboration or playful interaction — spaces considered indispensable for generating creative advertising products. Just as the advertising product itself, a more desirable workplace would accentuate the immediate appearance of memory objects and the contemporary ephemera of consumer taste. The creative role of the designers was to combine these two disparate artifacts into a unified architectural environment that promotes the advertising imagination. Therefore, the image of the book, not its content, became the starting point of a design dialogue that resulted in a highly identifiable advertising workspace.

The illusionistic qualities (the aura) of the old book, as well as the organizational strategies that promote creative, playful exchange, generated several operating rules consistently executed in the design. For example, many contemporary office spaces use “thin,” shiny, veneer surfaces whose perceptual attributes are opposed to the appearance of lasting permanence. The office design tried instead to suggest a “thickness” of materials, a physical weight and immediacy of rough material surface.

Immediately upon stepping from the elevator, the office visitor confronts another material terrain made of rusted steel, tinted concrete, stained glass and fabric scrims articulated by pop-art lighting effects. Rather than enclose conventional spaces with walls, light and the appearance of materials are used as concrete objects to define the playful “information spaces” of communication. In the lobby, Caesar stone and rough-cut walnut are combined to re-enact the “primal magic of appearance” and to transform the receptionist’s desk into an ancient stone table. The visitor then moves through alternating office spaces, both “open and closed,” where colorful light panels, fabric scrims and carpets are the only elements used to distinguish the open intimate spaces of spontaneous encounter and rapid-fire work reviews. Here, the use of rough, unfinished material, preserves a nascent potential or suggests a pre-generative form that is yet to take shape.



The existing building, housing these offices, was designed to contain a predictable concentric layout of perimeter offices. In order to level the resulting hierarchy and to make room for still more exciting play spaces, the Architects planned the offices as a series of open and closed spaces. The closed spaces use hard walls to contain individual offices, “war rooms” and various service functions, while the open spaces are distinguished by soft boundaries, to house office landscapes or spaces that accelerate activities and unforeseen events, like “water cooler chats.” In turn, these open spaces become familiar performative areas of play and creative collaboration. The bar, coffee counter, informal meeting area, reading and game areas, are all spatially framed by ornamental lighting, perforated metal canopies, curtains and textiles — surfaces intended to counter the rough, brutal materials of the exposed building structure.

The closed doors of the individual offices remain the last formidable sign of hierarchy and control that limits this informal exchange. In the design of David and Goliath they too become part of the architectural concept and instruments of communication. Each sliding office door is printed with a partial image; and when any two doors are open, the staff is rewarded with a complete image concept. The precise content of the door graphics was itself the product of a vibrant dialogue between ShubinDonaldson and “creative staff” within the advertising agency.



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Project Information

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