

Wallpaper*

UK £10.00
US \$16.99
AT €16.00
AUS \$16.99
CDN \$17.99
DKK 129.95
FR €16.50
DE €14.90
ITA €14.50
LUX €14.90
SGP \$28.50
ES €14.00
CHF 18.90
AED 85.00

*Architecture | Design | Art | Travel | Entertaining | Beauty & Grooming | Transport | Technology | Fashion | Watches & Jewellery

MARCH 2023

The Style Issue

Delightfully decadent designs
to bring a spring to your step



Philippe Parreno's monster flower
Véronique Nichanian's Hermès homme
Liam Lee's felted fantasies





French class

Parisian creative agency Art Recherche Industrie's new HQ translates a 19th-century landmark into a chic open-plan office worth leaving home for

PHOTOGRAPHY: YOUNÈS KLOUËCHE WRITER: ROSA BERTOLI

Design

Formerly a restaurant, the building's 19th-century Gothic-style ballroom has become an open-plan office, with a rectangular shared desk surrounding a bespoke glass bookcase





Left, on the mezzanine, accessed via a brightly-coloured staircase, below, furniture by USM contrasts with original Gothic-style features and gold mosaics

Opposite, the former Moorish boudoir is now a rainbow-hued brainstorming space

brand Touhami relaunched in 2014 with his wife Victoire de Taillac: under their direction, the former 19th-century pharmacy has become a cult brand combining innovative skincare with diverse aesthetic approaches that merge past and present.

Among ARI's recent clients are silverware specialist Christofle and LVMH-owned heritage leather goods company Moynat, as well as newly launched brands Simihaze Beauty and Gohar World. The agency also works on several in-house creative initiatives, which so far include a podcast, a magazine titled *Wam*, and a board game. Touhami's enterprising nature and his desire to work on every aspect of creation also prompted him to acquire a printing press in Switzerland (which he dubbed Société Helvétique d'Impression Typographique – the acronym is not casual) and one in Paris. 'Anything can be our thing,' says Touhami.

The 25-strong team operates from the Paris office, with satellites in Lausanne and Tokyo (Switzerland and Japan are key markets for Touhami's projects). 'When we found the building, the walls were mostly covered by 1970s interventions,' recalls Touhami. 'We tried to embrace the place: the restoration was done with the idea of keeping the 19th-century effect, to clean what we found, and add a modern side to it.'

The building originally housed Marguery, a restaurant that opened in 1860 and gave its name to a classic dish of sole in white wine sauce. Until its founder died in 1910, it was known as one of the city's most magnificent establishments – a magnet for artists, politicians and cultural influencers. 'Our exceptional ballroom seems to be a vestige of those glory days and has been home to a synagogue, a brothel and a cult,' explains Touhami. 'Many different energies, past and present, intersect and merge here.'

He and his team transformed the former galleried ballroom into a workspace wonderland: over 600 sq m and two floors, ARI's team works among Gothic-style statues, gilded panels, stained glass and expressive veneers. The original ballroom has become an open-space office, a rectangular shared desk enveloping a bespoke glass bookcase. A brightly-hued staircase leads to the mezzanine: originally a resting and viewing spot for tired dancers, it is now part of the office, with USM furniture creating a delightful contrast with the original features.

While some of the rooms appear as pristine spaces catapulted into the modern age straight from the 19th century, other areas of the building feature a much more »

Ask Ramdane Touhami what inspired him when creating his new office in Paris and he offers a succinct answer: 'Beauty'. Set within a 19th-century ballroom in Paris' 10th arrondissement, the space is a mix of old-world charm and colourful, contemporary interventions. 'I didn't have a vision for the space, I just improvised,' says Touhami of the interiors. 'I wanted to create a big, beautiful space for my team that would feel like a home.'

The grand office space is the headquarters of Touhami's art direction agency, Art Recherche Industrie (ARI), which he started in 2013 with the goal of 'advocating home-made and zero-outsourcing'. Its fields of operation include architecture, typography, graphic design, photography, writing and product, as well as 'development of brand philosophies and redefinition of identities'. Among its many and diverse projects is Officine Universelle Buly 1803, the beauty









'The special and crazy thing about our office is that it confronts many aesthetics without ever clashing. Every space melts into another'

contemporary interpretation. Where he couldn't salvage the original interiors, Touhami infused the space with modernity and colour, creating a contrasting bright palette of saturated blue, yellow, green and red that he applied both to architectural features and new furniture. A fine example of this is a former Moorish boudoir, featuring aqua green walls and ceiling, a rainbow floor and modular upholstered seating where the team can brainstorm and have creative conversations.

Touhami wanted the office to be as comfortable as possible for the team, so he hired a Japanese chef to work on ARI's gastronomic projects but also supply staff lunches. Always mixing business with pleasure, the office's basement also hosts two recording studios and a tennis court. 'The special and crazy thing about our office is that it confronts many aesthetics without ever clashing,' says Touhami. 'Every space melts into another: different colours, shapes and textures make sure every step in our space feels extraordinary.' ★

a-r-i.ch

This page, above, the new office's façade on Boulevard de Bonne Nouvelle in Paris' 10th arrondissement

Right, Touhami's cat Chat-Ri takes a nap next to the Japanese edition of *The Beauty of Time Travel*, (€50, Gestalten), a book about ARI's relaunch of beauty brand Officine Universelle Buly

Opposite, Touhami's office is filled with his favourite finds and design classics, with, from left, a dripping prop designed for a store project but never used; a Dieter Rams design for Braun (Touhami is a big collector); a Vitra poster; a mascot from a Japanese ice cream factory; a clock found in a flea market in Mexico City; and a 1970s Altec speaker

