

walk through

pushing the envelope

firm:
**giraldi
associati
architetti**
site:
**florence,
italy**

In the reception area at Giraldi Associati Architetti, a sofa by Archizoom Associati sits beneath a custom pendant fixture in lacquered steel. ➤

Palazzi are sacrosanct in Florence, Italy. That often means not a single architectural intervention allowed. Such was the case for the palazzo now housing Giraldi Associati Architetti. Not a problem, Fulvio Giraldi says: "We played around with what we could." Via nothing more than furnishings, he injected a contemporary flair very much his own.

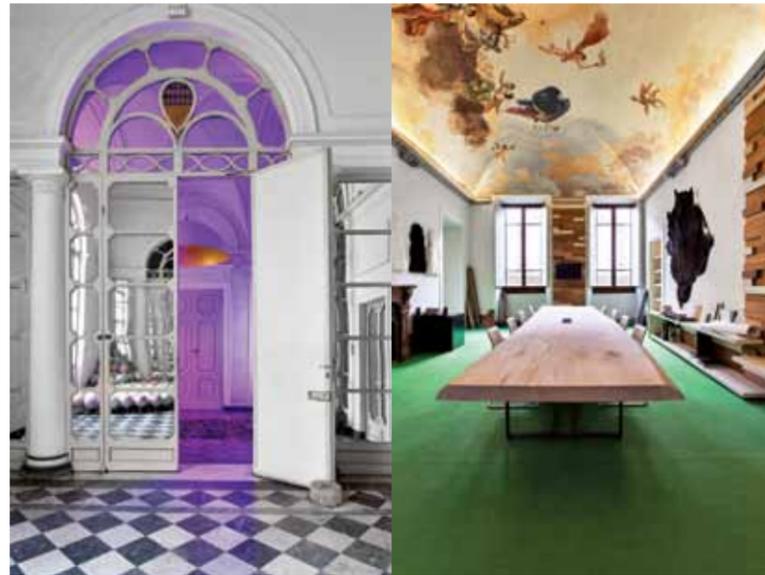
The backstory begins when Giraldi's practice, which specialized at first in retail and con-

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Clockwise from top: Plastic globes compose an installation in the vestibule outside the office. Reception's papier-mâché cow sculpture is by Ugo Ziqqurat Zatini. The custom table in the conference room combines linden and steel. Marble flooring in the vestibule dates to the late 1800's.

Opposite: Two oil paintings, circa 1600, are set into the carved plaster ceiling above custom shared desks.



ceptual projects, found itself taking on larger commercial work and installations. That called for more staff and, in turn, more space. He found it, 6,500 square feet, on the piano nobile of a palazzo dating to the 1400's and enlarged over the centuries. The pluses started, he says, with the office's "wide entry, not common in Florence."

Upstairs, a suite of rooms meanders in several directions from marble-floored reception. Three large rooms are shared offices, while two others serve as a conference room and a lounge. All open onto one another—hallways weren't part of the venerable plan. Considerably smaller, the kitchen and private offices line a long and narrow corridor that terminates at Giraldi's corner domain, complete with a punching bag so he can practice his favorite hobby.

Enriching the space are swoon-worthy arches, cornices, moldings, carvings, frescoes, ➤



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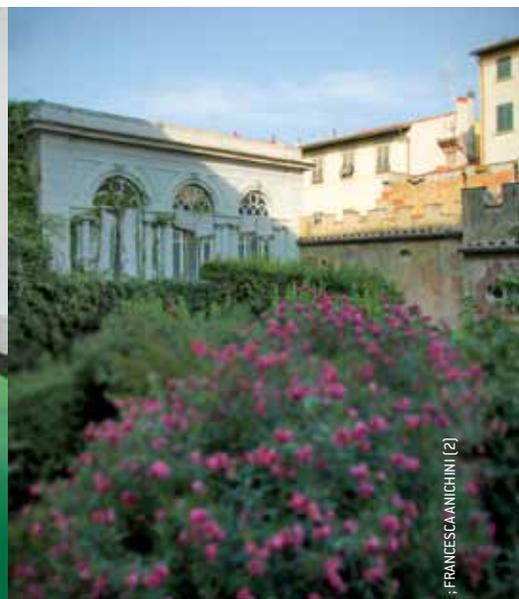
you name it. The angels of a celestial composition, circa 1800, soar overhead in the conference room. In another chamber, architects and designers sit at long white desks beneath a carved plaster ceiling inset with paintings of cherubs, circa 1600. "We're always opening our doors to art historians," he relates.

They're greeted in reception by a much more recent artwork, a papier-mâché cow sculpture

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Clockwise from top: In a shared office with custom wallpaper, the Murano glass chandelier was existing. The palazzo has its own garden in back. Beanbags by Piero Gatti, Cesare Paolini, and Franco Teodoro and tables by Floor Design furnish the lounge. In the principal's office, a punching bag hangs in front of custom concrete panels.



from 2005. "We love cows. Sheep, too," he says, referring to the hide hanging on a wall and the sheepskin rugs. The cow joins reception's undulating white plastic sofa, a cult favorite from 1966, and above it an enormous pendant dome in the Ingo Maurer mode. Decorative touches elsewhere include damasklike wallpaper and bright green or red carpet.

Able to work with so many design vocabularies, Giraldi is appropriately trilingual, as in Italian, English, and German. That comes in handy for his firm's three studios, the latest being in Los Angeles and Berlin. —*Edie Cohen*

FROM FRONT CENTRO STUDI POLTRONOVA: SOFA (RECEPTION). **SAI INDUSTRY:** CUSTOM PANELS (RECEPTION, PRIVATE OFFICE). **MOROSO:** CHAIRS (CONFERENCE ROOM). **IKEA:** COWHIDE (CONFERENCE ROOM), LAMPS (SHARED OFFICES), BOOKCASES (SHARED OFFICE, LOUNGE). **ZANOTTA:** BEANBAGS (LOUNGE). **THROUGHOUT PEDRALI:** TASK CHAIRS. **ROSSANO SCONTINI:** CARPET, CUSTOM RUG. **REGGIANI ILLUMINAZIONE:** LIGHTING CONSULTANT. **ASSO:** FURNITURE WORKSHOP. **L&S GROUP:** GENERAL CONTRACTOR.