

# FRAME

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THE  
P O R O U S  
CAMPUS

GEN-Z  
BEAUTY RETAIL

WORK AT HOME  
HOME AT WORK

MULTISENSORY  
SPAS

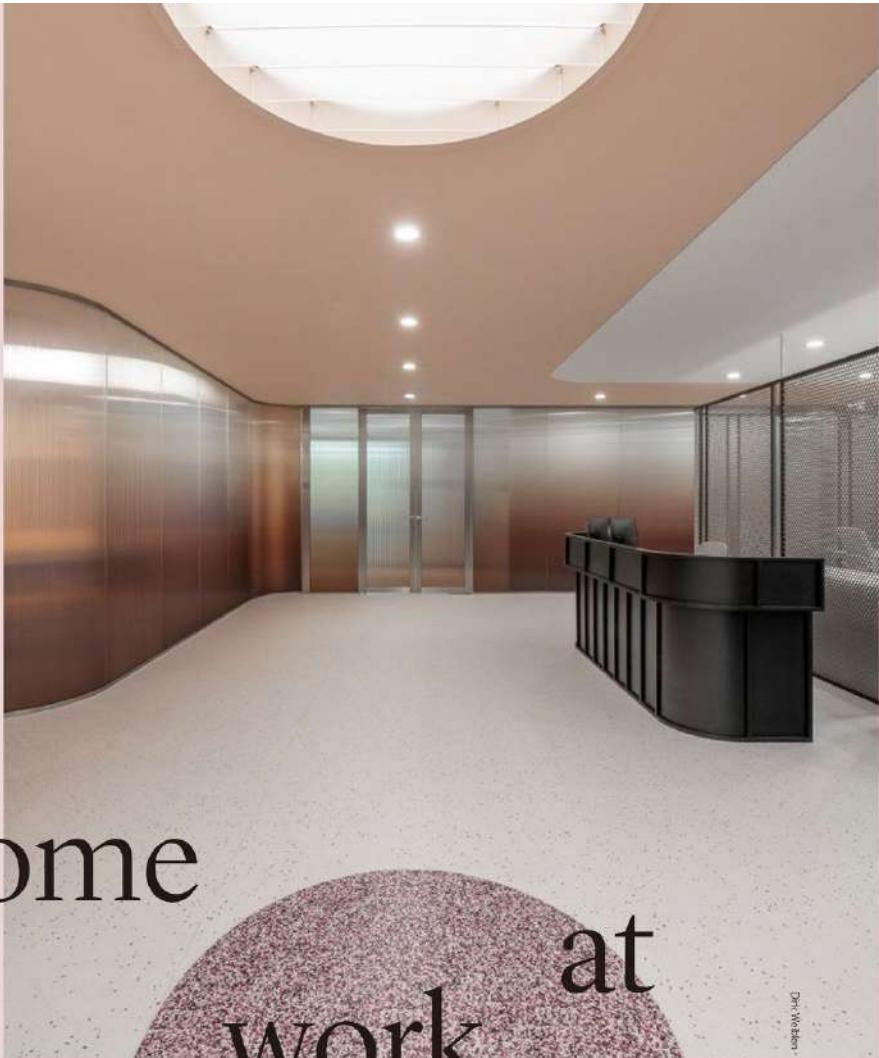
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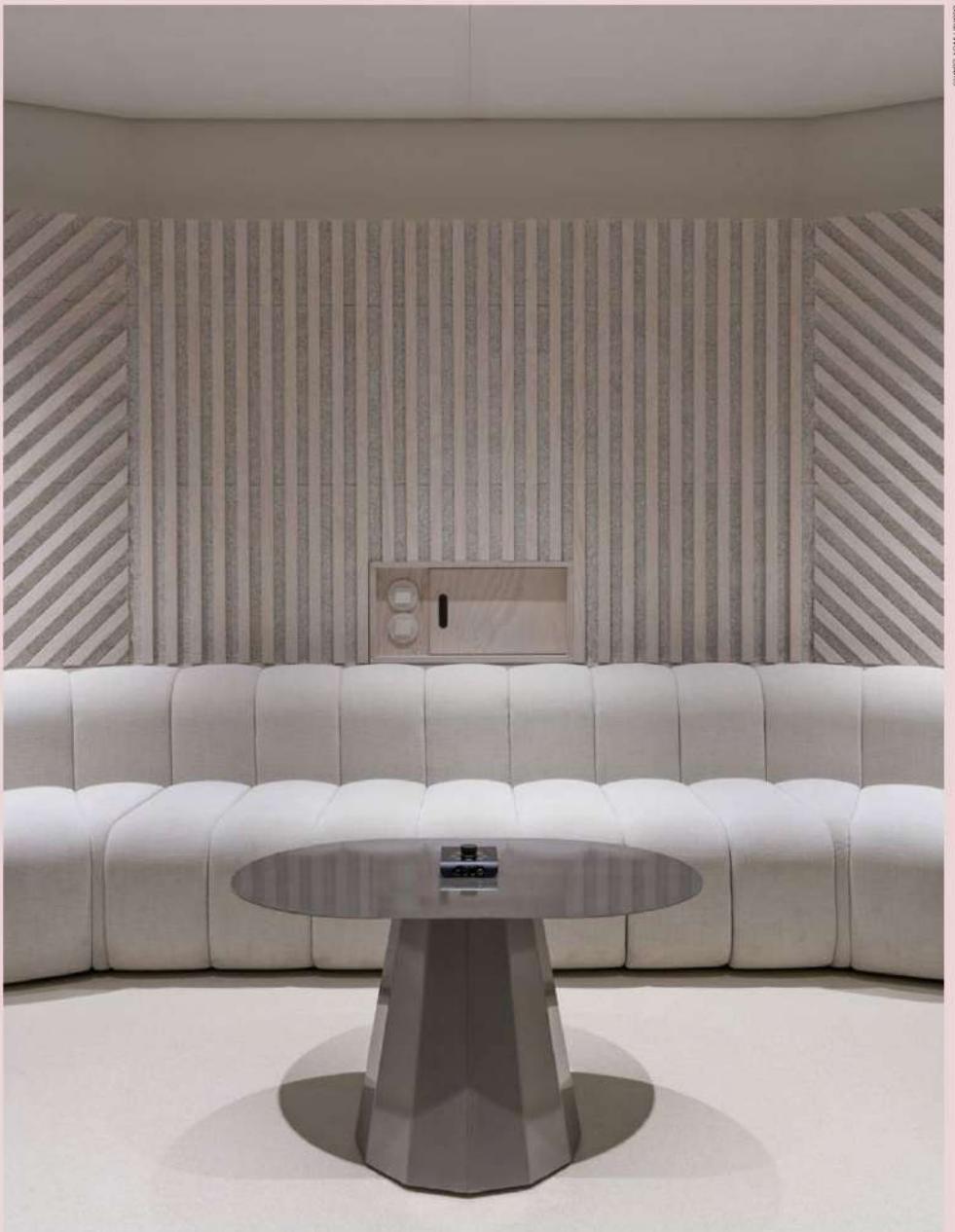


# home at work

In each issue we identify a key aesthetic trend evident in our archive of recent projects and challenge semiotics agency Axis Mundi to unpack its design codes. Here, we look at how the intimate atmosphere of home and hotel-like environments is being adopted by workspaces.

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Studio Karhard

After months of remote working – and in the wake of the subsequent Great Resignation – workspaces face an intensifying need for knowledge workers to actively choose to inhabit them. Already evolved past *Office Space*'s conforming cubicles and fluorescent, blinding clarity, these spaces are also shedding the maximalist, Google-style 'fun' aesthetic framing workers as excitable children or artists.

Now, the dominant metaphor equating knowledge workers with labourers or artisans has been hollowed out by flexible, distributed, digital remote work. Third-space signifiers such as communal benches, exposed infrastructure and faux-industrial cues feel increasingly quaint.

Instead, new workspaces resemble the pandemic's true sites of knowledge work: the 'domestic cosy' of a comfortable home, and intuitive, welcoming online interfaces. Workers are tempted by human welcome, not identity affirmation. With muted but rich elemental tones, diverse textures and generous plant presence, this aesthetic speaks to the atavistic definition of home as a site of social shelter.

As in UX design's movement from hyperactive hypermodernity into tactile naturality, we see in these spaces papery pastels and skin-like surfaces, rounded button-like shapes, micro-interaction opportunities, anthropomorphic shapes and distorted or translucent textures mirroring glassmorphic design. Cosy rugs bearing rounded chairs or barstools also make the physical sites of screen-work into places of ambient organic protection.

Curved corridors leading into circular spaces echo the soft radiance and friendly serif fonts of recent DTC brands. Mouth-shaped curvilinear forms in burgundy leather or Millennial-pink vinyl recall the vulnerabilities and potentialities of human permeability.

Hints of a home's kitchens and bathrooms appear in tiled or half-tiled walls and tiled desks, meeting-room sinks, delicate blinds, pot plants and Miesian latticed walls that cue onsen-style relaxation. 'Oxygen rooms' powered by diaphanous plant life suggest an everlasting, symbiotic energy.

These references to diverse activity, both in nature and in a human's daily experience, promise in the face of the climate crisis that all of Earth's elements, including water, are welcome, acceptable, and survivable here. Rough-stained paintwork and retained and reusable materials offer evidence of the building as a living, ageing thing. There is still work to be done here, worlds to be rebuilt.

The textures of carpet fabric, stained wood and home appliance-style sheets of metal suggest a home's collection over time, providing a variability that lets workers navigate and recall the phenomenology of distinct spaces as intuitively as they explore the metaverse or the mountains. Stripes, squiggles and interrupted trails, frenzied unpatternable marble surfaces, distorting glass walls, and curved or sharply angular dividers suggest non-linear development based on desire and curiosity rather than efficiency.

These workspaces are neither new nor final: unafraid to show that they occupy a temporal position within the buildings' narratives of use. Shedding the inelasticity of the built environment in favour of natural-digital yielding and manipulability, they provide a flexible, empathetic shelter in an unstable world, where humans can explore lateral and potentially surprising futures.●

[axis-mundi.co](http://axis-mundi.co)

OPPOSITE: Sony Music headquarters by Studio Karhard in Berlin, Germany.

PREVIOUS SPREAD LEFT: Bestseller office by Linehouse in Shanghai, China.

PREVIOUS SPREAD RIGHT: SVD headquarters by A.P.O. in Barcelona, Spain.



OPPOSITE Douglas House by Note Design Studio for The Office Group in London, UK.

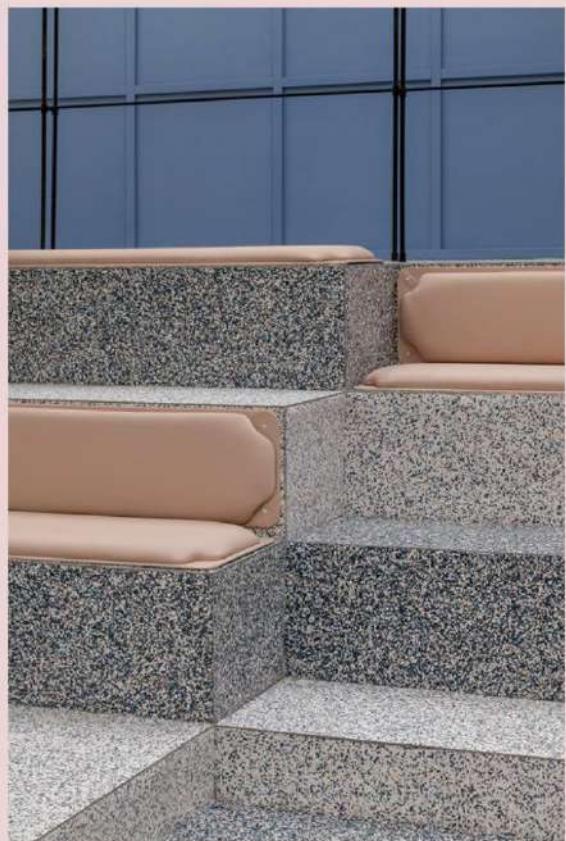
BELOW Bestseller office by Linehouse in Shanghai, China.

RIGHT Entrance lobby at 100 Liverpool Street by Universal Design Studio in London, UK.



Social Space at Jing'an  
Kerry Centre by Linehouse  
in Shanghai, China.





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Spaces



Look Book

ABOVE Bestseller office by Linehouse in Shanghai, China.

OPPOSITE Social Space at Jing'an Kerry Centre by Linehouse in Shanghai, China.

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ABOVE Sony Music headquarters by Studio Karhard in Berlin, Germany.

OPPOSITE Nedap Retail office by Ex Interiors in Groenlo, The Netherlands.





Vibras Lab by Cinco Sólidos in Medellin, Colombia.

**COLOUR** Warm woody and muted neutrals are mixed with concrete and steel greys, dusty reds and sunny yellows in communal spaces and break-out areas, while softer blues and blush pinks are used in meeting rooms and working areas where concentration and focus are required. Pops of primary colour come in the form of vivid furniture and greenery.



**MATERIAL** There is a juxtaposition between materials typically found in clubs and bars, and those reminiscent of a cosy home. Floors feature black asphalt, end-grain timber, cork, speckled vinyl and terrazzo, while walls and partitions are made of glass blocks, exposed aggregate concrete, stainless steel and backlit glass slats. Marble, wood (such as ash and walnut) and ceramic tile surfaces meet tactile textiles used in soft carpeting, upholstered leather cushions and floor-to-ceiling curtains.



**FORM** Curvilinear walls and wavy forms make for fluid circulation. Mobile design elements and modular spatial systems allow for a high degree of spatial self-determination. Meeting alcoves, intimate banquette seating and lounge furniture, in their turn, encourage dwell time and the adoption of a slower pace.