

INTERIOR DESIGN[®]

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window on new york



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photography: *eric laignel*

in the driver's seat

Gensler steers Cadillac in a hip new direction at headquarters in Hudson Square





"They needed to embrace their heritage but focus on the urban creative class"

Previous spread: An entry with chairs by Lissoni Associati introduces the Gensler-designed Cadillac branded environment in Hudson Square.

Top: Patricia Urquiola designed the lounge's sectional. **Bottom, from left:** Blackened steel frames a street-front balustrade; photography: Garrett Rowland. A screen in blackened iron and walnut sets off the retail lab.

Opposite top: This fin belongs to a 1957 El Dorado. Photography: Garrett Rowland. **Opposite bottom, from left:** A CT6 parks on the terrazzo flooring. A concierge opens one of the blackened-steel doors.



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Elvis toured in one. Everyone from Dizzy Gillespie and Johnny Cash to Lady Gaga and Outkast has written a song about them—Bruce Springsteen wrote *two*. Dystopian bad guys in *The Matrix Reloaded* used one to chase down Trinity, who used another to evade them. The Cadillac is an American icon. In 1902, it rolled off the assembly line, right into pop culture, and has stayed there ever since. Even legends need to look forward, however, which brings us to Cadillac House. At this branded experience environment, 12,000 square feet at the base of a converted warehouse in the Hudson Square neighborhood, displays of cars classic and new merge with social space as well as strategic partnerships with other high-octane brands: the Council of Fashion Designers of America, Visionaire, and Joe coffee.

“Cadillac was the first American car designed by an actual *designer*, not an engineer,” Gensler creative director and principal John Bricker explains. He took the wheel of the project a few years ago, when Cadillac was shifting gears under new leadership and relocating from the General Motors technical center, designed by Eero Saarinen & Associates near Detroit. “They needed to embrace their heritage but focus on the creative class, that kind of downtown urban sensibility,” Bricker adds.

First move? Removing the glazing from two enormous windows framed by the building’s limestone pilasters, then adding balustrades, to turn the front of the space into a sort of veranda or—given the occasional vintage models parked here, alongside the outdoor furniture—a smart wink to a car dealership’s lot. Separating this open-air zone from the interior, proper, is a glass wall. Think of it as a windshield. Clearly visible through the glass, extending rearward through the center of the space, cars line up on a long strip of terrazzo set into the polished concrete floor. The structural columns that form rows to either side now support tall video screens. “We worked out digital templates that can do everything from cinematic arrays, which ➤





Digitally programmed LED screens, mounted on structural columns, rise from the polished concrete floor.



go across all the screens at once, to a more kaleidoscopic approach with car details," Bricker says. "It's super-easy to use. Just feed the asset sources into the template."

Fashion shows can also take over the terrazzo "runway." Where it terminates, hang a left to find the CFDA's "retail lab," a corner where a rotating cohort of clothing designers can set up shop to learn the back-end of merchandising and marketing. "The retail lab gives them the ability to customize a designated store space with their own aesthetic," CFDA senior manager of strategic partnerships Ashley-Brooke Sandall says. Debut occupant Timo Weiland, who brought in mannequins wearing menswear from his spring/summer 2017 collection, says he was "endlessly inspired by the Cadillac House aesthetic, which is uniquely American while also feeling specifically downtown."

Right across from the retail lab, Visionaire, the ne plus ultra of downtown fashion and art publishers, oversees an events venue and gallery. The 1,500 square feet ➤



"You can't buy a car, but you can see what an American luxury sensibility should be"

Top: The limestone-clad 1910 building was originally a warehouse. Photography: Garrett Rowland. **Bottom, from left:** A table with a walnut top anchors a meeting area. Pendant fixtures by Lukas/Peet Design light the Italian marble coffee bar.

Opposite top: Both the reception desk and nearby paneling are walnut-veneered. **Opposite bottom, from left:** Custom signage indicates restrooms. The Visionaire events space and gallery opened with a video installation by Geoffrey Lillemon.



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can open to the outdoors, divide itself with curtains and movable walls, or disappear entirely behind blackout screens. “We are used to curating within our publication,” cofounder Cecilia Dean says. “To be able to bring that creativity to life in a space that is open to the public is truly thrilling.” Visionaire inaugurated the space by commissioning a psychedelic video installation with eye-popping portraits of the female form that seemed to melt. A Richard Avedon exhibition went up for September’s fashion week.

But back up a moment. At the front, don’t miss the walnut veneer, inspired by Cadillac dashboards, that lines the reception alcove. Concierges here, identified by their chic yellow jackets, offer roadside assistance, perhaps directing you to refuel at the marble counter of the coffee bar operated by Joe. Or pause on the tufted sectional in the lounge, which overlooks the retail lab through a 13-foot-high screen that re-creates Cadillac’s precision-pattern radiator grille. You could also refresh in the restrooms and recharge at tables topped in live-edge walnut with built-in power connections. On a wall near the table, check out the photos dug up from the company archives and now hung in rows. Reminded of the Cadillac legacy, motor over to a CT6 sedan, and pop the hood. Various models informed interior details throughout Cadillac House: The leather interiors inspired luxurious, massive door pulls, while those famous grilles reappear, etched in glass, on the doors themselves.

Around the U.S., dealers and customers alike are looking to Cadillac House for direction. “You can’t buy a car here,” Bricker says. “What you can do is see what an American luxury sensibility should be.” Further down the road, geographically and chronologically, is a Cadillac House in Shanghai. That one will be ground-up, featuring a ceremonial platform, floating on water, for VIP car delivery. ↪

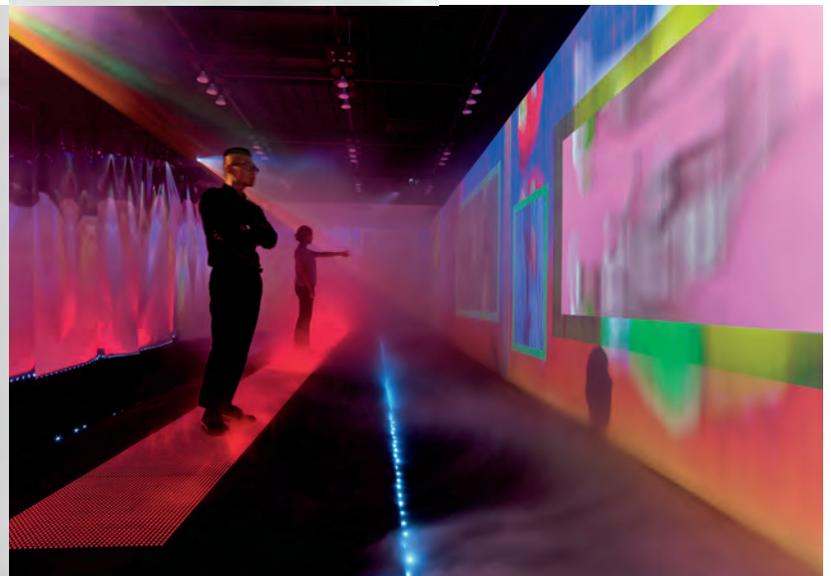
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PROJECT TEAM

STEFANIE SHUNK; DAVID WEINBERG; MATTHEW CALKINS; VICTOR KUNG; RANES GALINDO; KEVIN CARLIN; JAMIE CARUSI; AJ MAPES; RON ROSENMAN; GENSLER. **BOLD:** LIGHTING CONSULTANT. **AV&C:** AUDIOVISUAL CONSULTANT. **WILLIAM VITACCO ASSOCIATES:** CODE CONSULTANT. **McLAREN ENGINEERING GROUP:** STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. **FISKAA ENGINEERING:** ELECTRICAL ENGINEER. **BURGESS STEEL; DIRTT ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS:** METALWORK. **MISTRAL ARCHITECTURAL METAL + GLASS:** METALWORK, GLASSWORK. **TATCO MILLWORK:** WOODWORK. **PRECISION SIGNS:** SIGNAGE WORKSHOP. **SHAWMUT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION:** GENERAL CONTRACTOR. **MACE:** PROJECT MANAGER.

PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT LIVING DIVANI: CHAIRS (ENTRY). **B&B ITALIA:** TABLE (ENTRY), CHAIRS, SOFA (LOUNGE). **MAHARAM:** PILLOW FABRIC (LOUNGE). **MOOOI:** STOOLS. **PHASE DESIGN/REZA FEIZ:** TABLES. **BLOOMSBURG CARPET INDUSTRIES:** CUSTOM RUG. **RAKKS:** SCREEN MODULES (LAB). **NYDREE FLOORING:** FLOORBOARDS. **BLU DOT:** TABLES (EXTERIOR). **CASPRINI:** CHAIRS. **HOLLY HUNT:** CHAIRS (MEETING AREA). **DATESWEISER:** TABLE (MEETING AREA), CUSTOM DESK (RECEPTION). **ROLL & HILL:** PENDANT FIXTURES (COFFEE BAR). **THROUGHOUT BENJAMIN MOORE & CO.:** PAINT.





motor of change

Relocating from the Motor City's suburbs to the Big Apple's Hudson Square neighborhood gave Cadillac the perfect opportunity for reinvention. The global headquarters now occupies a duplex penthouse newly constructed on the roof of a century-old warehouse. And Gensler design director and principal Stefanie Shunk made sure that the 35,000-square-foot space would reflect the branding revolution at Cadillac House, down at street level.

Arriving at the office feels like getting into a luxury sedan, thanks to an elevator lobby wrapped in dark

brown leather as fragrant as car upholstery fresh off the lot. As at Cadillac House, the reception desk is tucked away in an alcove to the side. What visitors see first is maquettes of cars, testing various finish colors, backdropped by a Hudson River panorama. "We kept the landscape of the furniture low to really embrace the views," Shunk says. Mirrored vitrines display hood ornaments and other trophies, while everything is reflected by a ceiling she calls "as shiny as the exterior of car."

Actual white automotive paint coats the cantilevered staircase

between the two levels. Pops of the red, yellow, and blue found in the Cadillac logo's shield rev up the otherwise neutral palette. Meeting rooms, with black carbon-fiber tabletops that she styled after CT6 hoods, are named for concept cars. They range from such heritage favorites as the LaSalle and Fleetwood to the 2013 Elmiraj—proof that Cadillac continues to pick up speed. 

 [interiordesign.net/gensler-shunk16](https://www.interiordesign.net/gensler-shunk16)
for 10 Qs With Stefanie Shunk



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ETC.

Clockwise from top left: At Cadillac headquarters, a lounge precedes a meeting room. Leather lines the elevator lobby. A custom screen in powder-coated steel and frosted glass divides an office area from a corridor. Painted fiberglass maquettes are displayed beneath the reception area's stretched ceiling system. Leather also wraps the top of the table anchoring a break-out area. In reception, lamps by Filipe Lisboa illuminate the leather-covered seating.

FROM FRONT MASLAND CONTRACT: RUG (LOUNGE). **KNOLL:** END TABLES. **BRIGHT GROUP:** SEATING, COFFEE TABLE (LOUNGE), SEATING (RECEPTION). **KELEEN LEATHERS:** WALL COVERING (LOBBY). **NEWMAT:** STRETCHED CEILING SYSTEM (LOBBY, RECEPTION). **WALL GOLDFINGER:** CUSTOM WORKSTATIONS (OFFICE AREA). **RAKKS:** SHELVING MODULES. **ENRICO PELLIZZONI:** TABLE (BREAK-OUT AREA). **VISO:** LAMPS (RECEPTION). **J.D. STARON:** CUSTOM RUG. **THROUGHOUT NYDREE FLOORING:** FLOORBOARDS. **LIGHTING WORKSHOP:** LIGHTING CONSULTANT. **THORNTON TOMASETTI:** STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. **ROBERT DERECTOR ASSOCIATES:** MEP. **MILLER BLAKER; NORDIC INTERIOR:** WOODWORK. **TURNER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY:** GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

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