

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Architectural Digest

Pierre Yovanovitch's Vibrant New York Studio Is More Pied-à-Terre Than Office

Madeleine Luckel

16 July 2019



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The Parisian designer's first stateside outpost epitomizes his unique design vision—and is a boon for his U.S. fanbase



In the New York office's meeting room, Yovanovitch's Woody Armchairs are paired with the Pebble Table, which was designed by Armelle Benoit for Yovanovitch. All three pieces of furniture are from the interior designer's Oops collection, while the light fixtures seen are vintage. The Italian brass floor lamp dates back to the 1950s, as does the black enameled aluminum table lamp seen by the window. Further uniting the space is a 2016 work on paper, (ink on pigment print on paper), by Julian Schnabel, titled Walt Whitman III (Waterfall). It is from Almine Rech Gallery. Photo: Stephen Kent Johnson

"It's a very long story," AD100 designer Pierre Yovanovitch tells AD PRO. He is not, however, speaking about one of his many subtly chic interiors, known for their ability to marry any given range of materials with a litany of curvilinear shapes. He's also not speaking about the upcoming publication of his first book—a thorough documentation of his oeuvre to date. Instead, Yovanovitch is discussing the inception of his new Manhattan office, which opened earlier this year in a five-story brownstone on a chic stretch of Madison Avenue.

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In the office's lobby, Carlo Mollino's 1960 Polaroid Untitled counterbalances Yovanovitch's Mama Bear Armchair, also from his Oops collection. The chair is from Salon 94 gallery, while the chair is made of solid oak with custom upholstery. Photo: Stephen Kent Johnson



Also in the lobby is Jean-Baptiste Bernadet's 2017 glazed lava stone piece Untitled (Sign), from Almine Rech Gallery, which lends an almost planetary feel. The brass and painted metal hanging light was created circa 1950 in Finland by Lisa Johansson-Pape. Photo: Stephen Kent Johnson



Yovanovitch designed the walnut desk that greets visitors in the reception area. Works from Marina Adam's "Magic Square" series of watercolors, from Salon 94 gallery, hang above. In the far corner, Klara Kristalova's 2014 glazed stoneware sculpture Girl and Goose can be glimpsed. Photo: Stephen Kent Johnson

Filling an America-shaped void is not the sole reason this location came to be, however. Yovanovitch, according to the designer, has been coming to New York City since he was very young. In a way, Yovanovitch always hoped—or sensed—that he might have a home or an office here one

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day. And with him being based in Paris—a city with a rich history of excellent public parks—a location a stone's throw from Central Park made perfect sense.

The realization of this long-held dream, as well as its specifics, has clearly made Yovanovitch very happy. But the undertaking was not without its initial difficulties. "It was very challenging for us to open an office in the U.S.," Yovanovitch says. "Everything is different and quite expensive, and when you work overseas you don't know all the rules. But I pushed to have this office."



Also in the reception area, Yovanovitch's Madame Oops chair is illuminated by his handmade ceramic and blown-glass E.T. Table Lamp. A 1954 rosewood bookshelf by Joaquim Tenreiro from R & Company gallery anchors the vignette. Photo: Stephen Kent Johnson



A table with six chairs in the meeting room is where clients can sit and speak with Yovanovitch and his team. The hand-built ceramic lamp from R & Company gallery is by Katie Stout. Everything else seen, including the walnut table, oak Oops chairs, and the hanging light, was designed by Yovanovitch. Photo: Stephen Kent Johnson

A visit to the space illustrates just how much it differs from its 18th century Parisian antecedent on a core, architectural level. "I wanted to feel like you are in New York," Yovanovitch says. "[The office] is very narrow. This type of building you couldn't find in Paris, with this kind of shape." And indeed, the office, which brims with all the warmth and texture of a Yovanovitch-designed residence, might be understood as a pied-à-terre of sorts.

Yovanovitch was also drawn to the space's strong light, and its windows, which lack molding. He chose to mirror the building's rust-colored facade by painting the interior walls a matching hue. That seamless visual transition, as well as the thoughtfully neutral backdrop it provides, allow for Yovanovitch's furniture choices to shine all that much more brightly. There's a mix of his own designs and vintage pieces, all of which work in concert thanks in part to his muted yet never desaturated palette.

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The materials library, where samples with divergent textures can be mixed and matched. Here, Yovanovitch's Baby Bear Armchair is paired with a ceramic table by Armelle Benoit for Pierre Yovanovitch. Photo: Stephen Kent Johnson

Elsewhere, impressive artworks dot the space. The pieces don't speak just to Yovanovitch's own taste, but also to his awareness that his clients tend to be art collectors. It's pragmatic, therefore, for such visitors to get the sense that Yovanovitch would be able to adeptly integrate their own collections into his designs. Doing so isn't a chore or a hiccup but rather a natural part of his creative process.

More practical yet still visually pleasing features persist. Beyond the office's reception area is its true hidden jewel: a materials library in which clients can pull out marble slabs and other stones to make their own tactile investigations. In a way, this room, this cabinet of curiosities, gets to the heart of Yovanovitch's signature approach, in that it allows visitors to experience firsthand how mixing materials is an essential aspect of the designer's work.

Speaking of the office as a whole, Yovanovitch notes, "You understand immediately that it's contemporary but not cold. There's lots of color and ceramics, [as well as] a mix of materials."

Indeed, the same could be said of any current or future Yovanovitch-designed home.