



serpentine logic

Martini, Meyer's curved walls got straight to the point at Product Visionaires, a Berlin company that develops the cell phones of the futures

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From her office window, designer Alexandra Martini looks out at one of her favorite sights in Berlin, the docks near the Oberbaumbrücke over the River Spree. "It's still an industrial area, but-at the moment-it's the place to be," she says. Her neighbors include the German divisions of MTV and Universal Music Group. And just across the river, she can see one of the most recent projects completed by her firm, Martini, Meyer.

Product Visionaires, a subsidiary of Siemens, specializes in developing high-tech products for mobile communications. When it came to choosing a headquarters for an enterprise that invents such gadgets as a slider cell phone that disappears into a thin aluminum case and a pistol-shape combi-

nation phone and portable gaming device, CEO André Fischer opted for 13,000 square feet split between two floors at the top of a 1913 warehouse.

As for settling on a design firm, Fischer came across Martini and fellow principal

Henrike Meyer while reading a magazine article about their interior for Berlin postproduction company Das Werk, where director Wim Wenders cuts his movies. Fischer was particularly intrigued by an upholstered wall that swept upward

to become a free-floating chaise lounge.

As one of Martini, Meyer's first important commissions, Das Werk represents a flair for dramatic statement that has remained a firm hallmark. (Talk to Meyer, and she mentions a predilection for a "strong conceptual approach.")

For Product Visionaires, the two designers built their proposal around a concept they call "solid: flow," inspired by the juxtaposition of the warehouse's mass and the river's flux. Straight lines contrast with meandering shapes, density counterbalances transparency.

On both floors, the showstoppers are organically undulating walnut-veneered walls that gently ripple their way along the primary circulation paths.

"People at the forefront of technology need to have something very tactile, very material, very human," Martini explains.

Taking the anthropomorphic idea a step further, architects applied blood-red plastic laminate everywhere the walnut is "cut" by doorways and mail slots. Concealed behind some walls, closet interiors are clad in the same shade, which happens to be Product Visionaires' logo color.

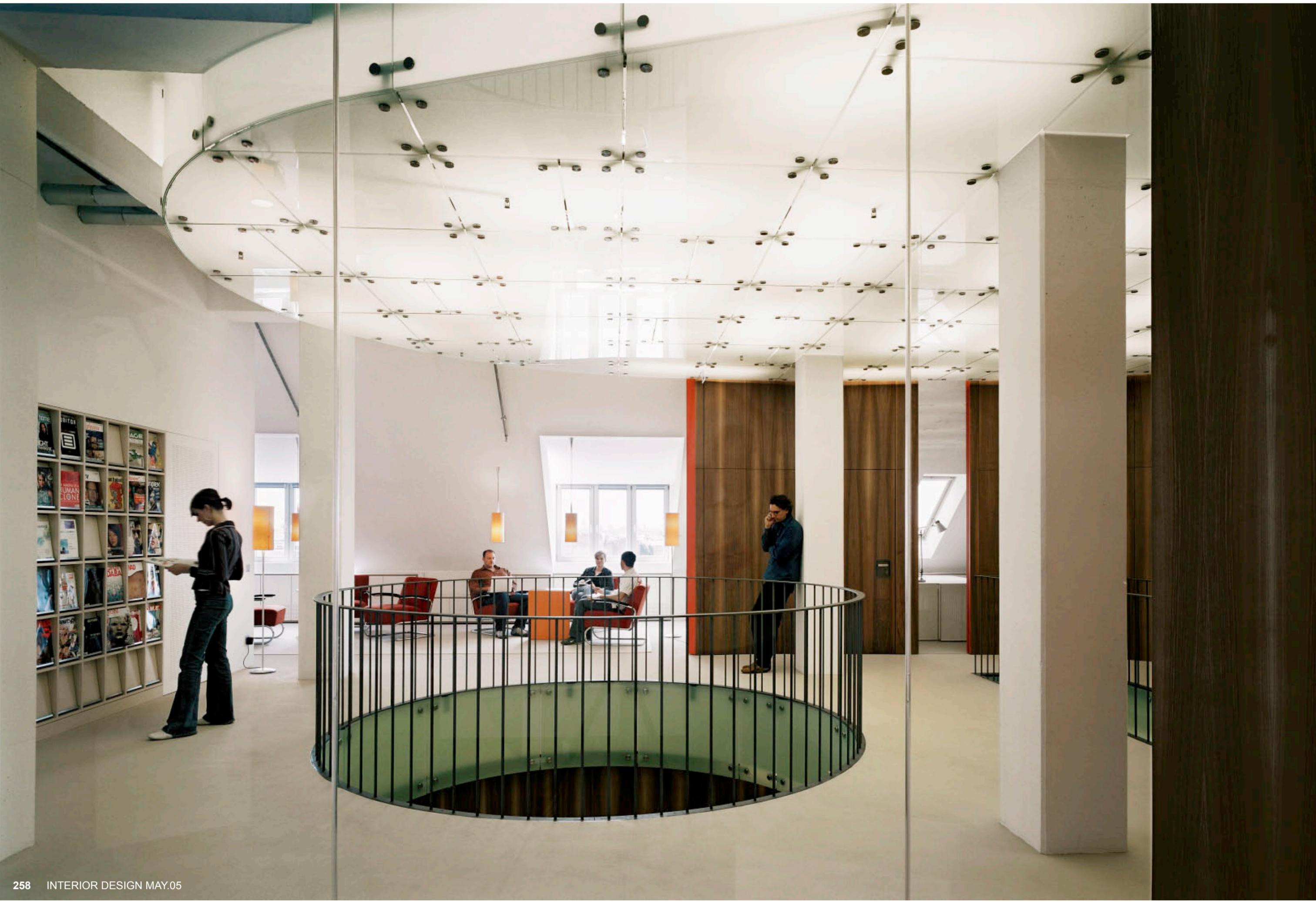
The "endless wave" of the walls, as Martini describes it, finds a balance in the central areas' dropped-ceiling grid, planes composed of translucent laminated-glass squares held in place by round stainless-steel rivets. They glow with backlight from white fluorescents.

Previous spread: At Product Visionaires, a Berlin subsidiary of Siemens, design firm Martini, Meyer built a walnut-veneered wall that contains storage units and defines the reception area. The designers' own leather-covered ottomans create a flexible gathering space.

Opposite top: Walnut walls extend past the desk to meet open rooms. Opposite bottom: Reception is on the lower level.

Above: Near the steel staircase in reception, designers highlighted mail slots and a break in the wall with plastic laminate. Below: Product Visionaires occupies the seventh and eighth floors of this 1913 warehouse near the Oberbaumbrücke on the River Spree.







Piercing the ceiling plane in reception on the lower level, a flight of lacquered steel stairs makes a strong statement of angularity—its profile is offset by the round cream-colored forms of leather-covered ottomans.

Open-plan office zones surround the sinuous central areas. These spaces provide a variety of situations meant to encourage an idea-lab atmosphere. "People here think creatively, and you don't do that only at your desk," Martini says.

On the lower floor, meeting rooms offer standard chairs and tables, while similar rooms on the upper floor are furnished with low-slung armchairs. Pairs of employees often meet in a main conference room downstairs that also provides high stools around a bar that's wired

for computer hook-ups.

Amid the flexibility, color-coding adds structure. Staff can choose from green- and blue-themed meeting rooms, or one with a purple scheme, called Havana. Another with rust tones is Goa. Each comes with a name

that suits the mood.

The designers kitted out a conference room known as Madrid with a collection of unusually baroque chairs with red velvet tufted upholstery. In meetings, you're always trying to have clear, analytical, effi-

cient discussions," Meyer says. "These chairs add emotion to that scenario."

The CEO's own riverfront corner office on the upper level enjoys remote-controlled blinds, a monitor built into the wall, its own meeting area, and an unobstructed view to the other side of the building, thanks to transparent glass walls. There's an openness that's extremely relaxing," Fischer says.

And who knows? Perhaps, if he really tried, he could even peer over to Martini and Meyer's offices across the Spree, where they're hard at work on their next project.

[LOUNGES] CHOIR FABRIC [LOUNGES CONFERENCE ROOMS]: **KVADRAT**. PENDANT FIXTURES: **SERIEN**. STOOLS [MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM] **ORIGLIA**, PENDANT FIXTURES [MADRID CONFERENCE ROOM] **DROOG DESIGN**. ARCHITECT OF RECORD **FRANK REDECKER-CRISTIANSEN**

Previous spread: Michael Thonet's Wool-covered S411 chairs furnish a lounge above reception. Laminated-glass ceiling panels conceal HVAC equipment.

Opposite top: In the main conference room German 1960s chairs, re-upholstered in wool surround Martini, Meyer's table topped in plastic laminate and edged in wengé. Above it hang Jean-Marc da Costa's pendant fixtures with laminated fabric shades. Opposite bottom: A glass part it/on separates the CEO's office from a break-out area centered around the designer's own powder-coated tables.

Above: For open-plan work zones on the perimeter, the designers created desks clad in plastic laminate. Below: Velvet-covered chairs set the tone for the Madrid conference room, with Jurgen Bey's Light Shade pendant fixtures.



PROJECT ASSOCIATE **CLEMENS SCHIFFER**.

OTTOMAN UPHOLSTERY [RECEPTION]: **WINTER CREATION**. CHAIR HAVANA MEETING ROOM]: **ZANOTTA**. TASK CHAIRS [RECEPTION, WORK AREAS]: **HAWORTH**. CEILING RIVETS [RECEPTION]: **PAUL+SOHN**. CHAIRS: **THONET**