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ARTS CHAMPIONS
JOHN EAGLE'S ARTFUL OFFICE
JAY SHINN'S LANCASTER HOTEL



PHANTOM THREAD

Art and design elements woven together bring balance to John Eagle's executive offices designed by Staffelbach.

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From reception into the foyer: Korakrit Arunanondchai (Thai, b. 1986), *Untitled (History Painting)*, 2017, denim, inkjet print on canvas; far wall: Richard Misrach (American, b. 1949), *Untitled*, 2009, pigment print.



The gallery features Michael Heizer (American, b. 1944), *Untitled (after "Levitated Mass", 1982), 1985*, Polyvinyl on canvas; Not Vital (Swiss, b. 1948), *Moon*, 2011, stainless steel; Rebecca Warren (American, b. 1965), *Function V*, 2009, steel and pom-pom; Pat Steir (American, b. 1940), *Waterfall of Ancient Ghosts*, 1990, oil on canvas.

Speaking with Andre Staffelbach about design is a delightful education. From his impeccable design process to historical data to memorable quotes from philosophy and literature, you learn how design is closely integrated with the arts. "I grew up in Graubünden, Switzerland, at the base of the Alps. It is a mountainous place, which gives one the understanding of nature's harmony and order, and that influenced my work," says the founder of Staffelbach. "I learned from a professor at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Zürich, who had spent a respectable time at the Bauhaus."

When automobile magnate John Eagle wanted to expand and renovate his executive offices in Uptown, he had only to look across the street and a block over to DLR Group | Staffelbach. Eagle and Staffelbach knew each other from design and arts events but had not yet worked together.

"I enjoy working with individuals who have a refined knowledge of art, music, architecture, and design, and John Eagle is among them. I have also been taught, during my schooling, that the finest projects are achieved by using the least number of products, a philosophy

John also endorses," explains Staffelbach. "I love to build," confirms Eagle. "I guess I'm a frustrated architect."

Staffelbach works closely with his wife, Jo Heinz. As proof of their global reputation, the firm was recently acquired by DLR Group, an integrated design firm and advocate for sustainable design that provides architecture, engineering, planning, and interior design from offices around the globe. A Dallas treasure, together the couple elevates the city's reputation as an important design hub of influence. "Jo's project management expertise and her attention to detail allowed the project to flow seamlessly," Staffelbach says of his wife, who now serves as workplace leader and principal at DLR Group | Staffelbach. Together with in-house and exterior team members, all requirements were diligently researched for the new environment.

Heinz and Staffelbach found in John Eagle a synchronic meeting of the minds, with his shared passion for design and zealous attention to detail. "It was a delight working with John; his understanding of art and respect for the design process made for a mutual exchange of information. On all details he was interested in the why and why not of every decision," says Heinz. "Our offices being so physically



Above: Gallery with John Eagle's office: Park Seo-Bo (Korean, b. 1931), *Ecruite No. 141122*, 2014, mixed media with Korean Hanji paper on canvas; in the adjacent office: Harmony Hammond (American, b. 1944), *White Rims #7 and #4*, 2015, monotypes on Twinrocker paper with metal grommets. Back office: Matt Connors (American, b. 1973), *You're Gonna Take a Walk in the Rain and You're Gonna Get Wet*, 2011, oil, acrylic and pencil on canvas with artist frame. Left: Another view of John Eagle's office features John Mason (American b. 1927), *Soft Grey Figure*, 1998, ceramic; Chung Chang-Sup (Korean b. 1927), *Meditation No. 20708*, 2000, Best fiber on canvas; Kwon Young-Woo (Korean b. 1926), *Untitled*, 1984, gouache and Chinese ink on Korean paper; Ha Chong-Hyun (Korean b. 1935), *Conjunction 92 -64*, 1992, oil on hemp cloth.

Wood plank concrete wall.



Front office.



close was a great gift," she adds, "because often he would ask us to drop by on the way to work to go over a question or decision." And, Staffelbach says, "I appreciated the continuous respectful and quiet pushes by John, which made the whole project ours—not mine or his, but ours."

The Eagle offices are in a 1930s building, once a small hospital, that was artistically renovated in the late 1990s by developer Boots Reeder with glass-brick walls, exposed brick, and a cage elevator. "There are new projects, and there are projects of a certain age that need to be addressed for the rebirth of the space," says Staffelbach. "In this case, with the objective to create multiple simple spaces for individual requirements, to hold artwork, and for the eye to feel as comfortable as the body. This required the removing and paring away of all prior interior construction until what was left could not be further reduced." The building proved to have great bones he continues. "The discovery brought to light wood-formed concrete in places and brick walls in others, which contrasts with the beautifully formed concrete columns, deck, and beams, whose individual time frame could not be established."

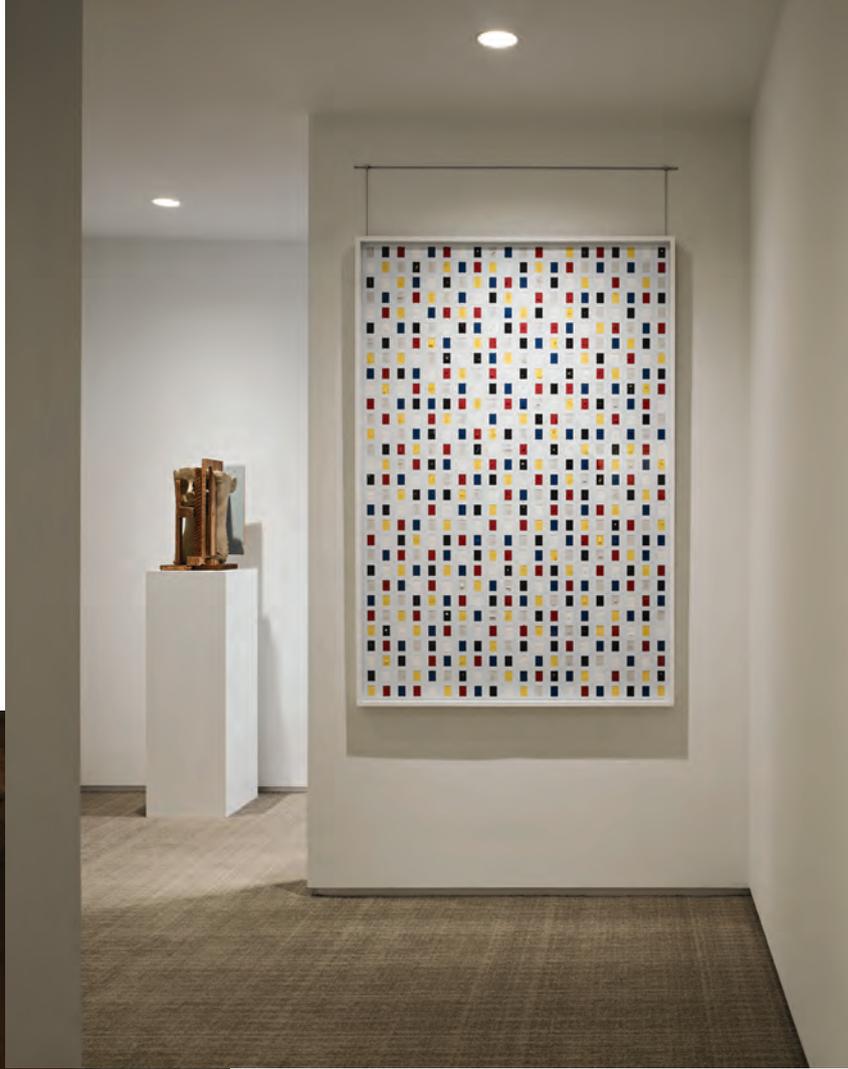
"The building is also residential, so I wanted a residential feel to the space," says Eagle. As you enter the Eagle offices, the foyer provides a focal point for art and furniture with a small tasteful logo and a large color photograph by Richard Misrach. "The foyer is a common area, but we supplied the art and furnishings and we made the logo intentionally small, to be cognizant of the needs of the residents around us," Eagle explains.

A massive carved walnut door leads to the reception area. The light-filled space seems minimal to the eye until the details are recognized. "Successful details are those you cannot see," says Staffelbach, referencing the museum-quality art installation tracks with sprinkler systems and conduits installed intentionally to hug the exposed beams in order to inform the precise nature of the installation. "The lighting, art, and simple, elegant interiors make people feel appreciated," Eagle adds. "The space is designed for art—from the museum lighting system to the color of the LED bulbs."

The concrete columns and beams, sandblasted to their original patina, and revealed-brick walls lend a feeling of authenticity to the space. "The use of concrete makes memory speak to you from its use through the ages," Staffelbach says, referencing Vladimir Nabokov: *Memory is now, a kind of happening at this very moment*. Nothing detracts from the design, with smooth-surface walls seamlessly aligning with concrete columns and beams, dropped ceilings, and frameless glass doors.

The reception area introduces the architectural ethos with dark-stained oak floors, glass, white gallery walls, and specialized lighting. Classic Walter Knoll furniture adds to the timelessness of the space, where modern slick finishes are married with original building materials of concrete and brick. A painting representing hot flames surrounded by collaged burnt denim by Thai artist Korakrit Arunanondchai is on the front wall. The space is a stage for art, as the reception area becomes a gallery. "I have collaborated with the Staffelbach team before," says John Runyon, Eagle's art advisor of over thirteen years. "The Staffelbach team transformed John Eagle's office into an art advisor's dream space: perfect white walls, fabulous lighting, and a matrix of connected spaces that present multiple curatorial surprises. As veteran collectors, the Eagles have an art collection that provides a multimedia and multigenerational

Below: Garth Weiser (American, b. 1979), *Looks like someone left something on at the restaurant below our aptmt - our aptmt looking like its ok- woken up @ 5 by fire alarms and smoke but interesting moment of grabbing whats important just in case- which is (drumroll) wedding rings, bicycle, Amy's ghi, laptop, 2013, oil on canvas.*



Above: The connecting hallway features on the plinth Mark Manders (Dutch b. 1968), *Unfired Clay Head, 2012, wood and painted epoxy,* and Marco Maggi (Uruguayan, b. 1957) *Windows (South), 2018, cuts and folds on 600 archival papers in 35 mm slide mounts mounted on dibond.*

presentation in this unique workspace.”

The central gallery with major art installations is a rectangle with a symmetrical ceiling grid of polished concrete beams adding to the geometric precision of the space, and a hand-loomed rug holding the area together. The main gallery is anchored by Michael Heizer’s *Levitated Mass* painting from 1985, inspired by his monumental 1982 site-specific sculpture of the same name for the New York IBM building. The five-foot, stainless-steel moon is by legendary Swiss artist Not Vital, the same generation as Heizer. “In John Eagle’s personal office, with floor-to-ceiling glass, the Staffelbach design provided a front row seat, as the theme of density, volume, mass, and space is beautifully represented in this main gallery,” says Runyon. “Center stage, the theme is playfully represented in the sculpture by Rebecca Warren. Attached to a steel ramp is a delicate white pom-pom, seemingly about to take flight. The backdrop to this drama is a cascading waterfall represented in a painting by Pat Steir.”

The end of the gallery has an oil, acrylic, and pencil on canvas work titled *You’re Gonna Take a Walk in the Rain and You’re Gonna Get Wet*, by Chicago artist Matt Connors, who shows the influence of poetry and writing in his whimsical titles of paintings. Outside one of the conference rooms is a painting by Garth Weiser, *Looks like someone left something on at the Restaurant*. Weiser is a New York artist who mixes stark geometric patterns with textured paint surfaces. Also in the hallway is an acrylic on canvas by Sarah Crowner, another accomplished young abstract painter in the collection. More surprises in conference rooms and executive offices are works by Marco Maggi, Mark Manders, and Harmony Hammond.

Of the art collection Eagle says: “My wife, Jennifer, and I are interested in how artists manipulate materials—paint formed into lines or having the texture of carpet. I love abstract art because it is thought-provoking—what is the artist trying to say?”

John Eagle’s own office is a thoughtful space of calm, quiet elegance, and minimal distraction, devoid of clutter. Even the art is contemplative, featuring the work of contemporary Korean artists. Eagle’s cantilevered desk from Roche-Bobois looks over a ceramic sculpture by John Mason. “I don’t like the idea of a closed desk,” says Eagle, “because it creates a barrier to conversation. My cantilevered desk seems to be floating in the space.” Hanging here is a work by Korean artist Park Seo-Bo, who is one of the founding members of the Dansaekhwa monochrome painting movement, which emphasizes tactility and surface. Dansaekhwa, a synthesis of traditional Korean spirit and Western abstraction, emerged in the early 1970s in postwar Korea. Behind the desk are three paintings by Korean artists Ha Chong-Hyun, Kwon Young-Woo, and Chung Chang Sup, reflecting the Dansaekhwa philosophy of balance and nature.

“If there is a thread that runs through the project, it is an unwillingness to dilute any part of our vision of how things ought to be. It is unquestionably about minimalism; it is about a place for art, a place to work, and a place for the eye and body to find serenity,” says Staffelbach.

John Eagle wanted an office where he could savor the time he would be in it. Staffelbach created just that: “Some design is created by adding; my basic instinct is to carve away rather than build up, until the form engulfs you with its simplicity, leaving space for art and for an environment of peace and tranquility.” **P**



Lighting detail in reception area.



Point of arrival.