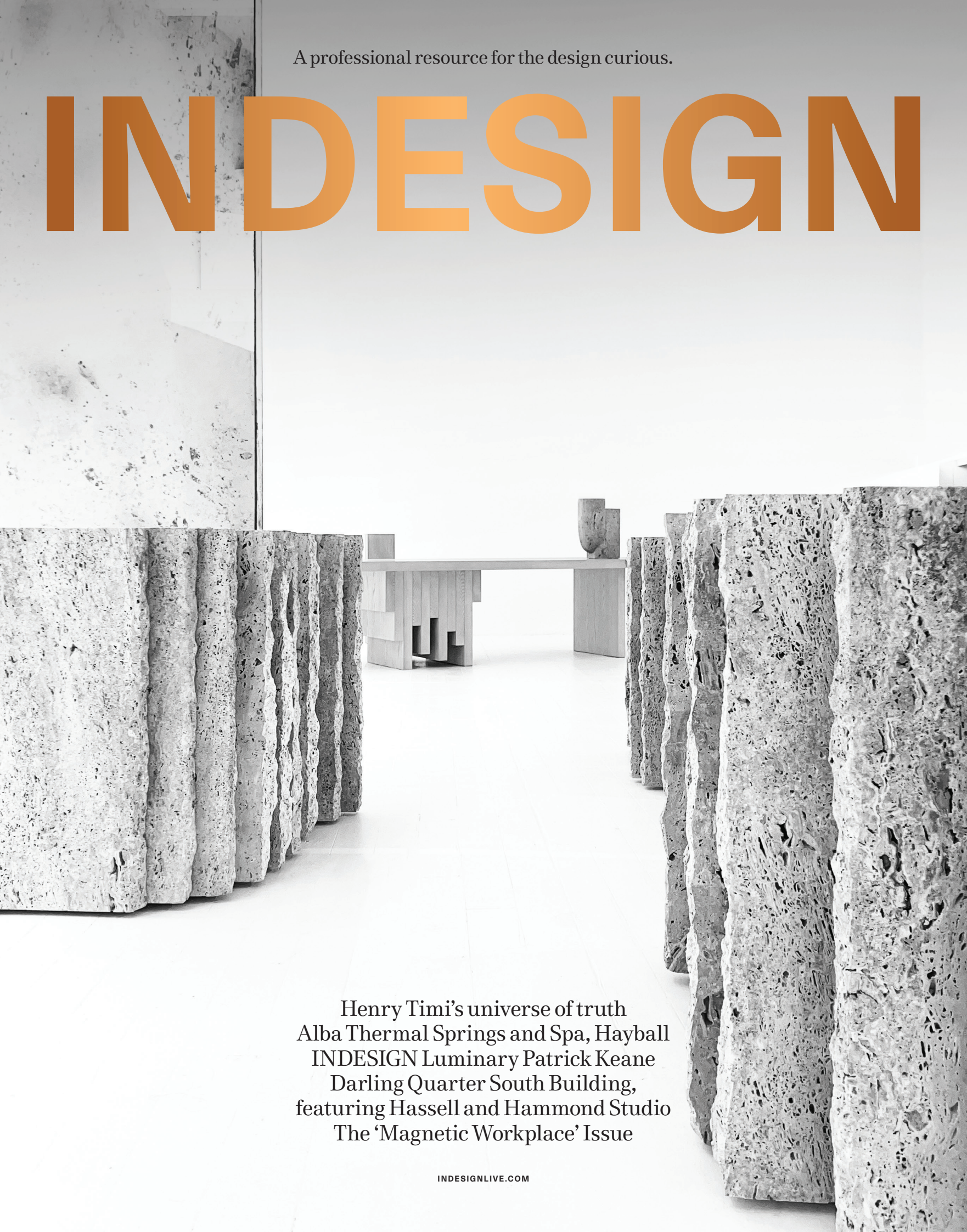


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The 'Magnetic Workplace' Issue

Elenberg Fraser breaks down the boundaries of the territorial workplace with an open, fluid office that meets our shifting expectations.

Freedom Of Movement

Slattery by Elenberg Fraser

Location *Melbourne* Traditional Custodians *Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong Boon Wurrung Peoples*

Words *Stephen Crafti* Photography *Jack Lovel*

Opposite: Meeting and work spaces are deliberately domestic with colour a primary agent for change.

Page 90: Break-out spaces are inserted into the primary work space to facilitate spontaneous shifts in need. Page 91: Light and views are optimised with minimalist workstations.

Page 92-93: Sheer curtains demark working spaces rather than walls. Page 94: A magnificent kitchen island sets the tone for relaxed group lunches.





Slattery, a leading quantity surveyor, was formerly operating from a floor in the same building as architects Elenberg Fraser, in Melbourne. Ready for a move (just a block away) and a new way of working, Sarah Slattery, the company's chief executive officer, commissioned Elenberg Fraser for a less corporate environment than the one they were leaving behind. "Post COVID-19, there's been a new approach to working, spending a little more time at home and wanting the office to feel more like home," says Melissa Leung, associate director at Elenberg Fraser.

Located in a 1980s high-rise on the corner of Queen and Collins Streets, the designers were given a shell comprising an entire level to work with. While they couldn't change the generic façade, Elenberg Fraser has managed to create a magical and considerably warmer and more engaging space that Slattery's former digs, which had a minimal black and white graphic scheme rather than

the subtle range of hues for Slattery's new office. These include rust and olive-green velvet-upholstered furniture and banquette seating along with walls with vibrant splashes of blue. Meanwhile, the few white walls are thoughtfully filled with art or sculpture – predominantly by local artists which Slattery is keen to support.

Unlike the former office, with dedicated workstations where every staff member had their own desk, here there's a variety of spaces, from intimate pods that allow for individual Zoom meetings, to breakout areas that have a lounge-like feel.

To allow for privacy in the larger and curvaceous pods, accommodating up to 10-or-so staff to meet, these spaces are encircled with sheer tactile curtains, creating a sense of domesticity. And rather than have a dedicated reception area, visitors steer towards the sumptuous banquette-style seating at the core, with a mini amphitheatre that's referred to as the 'Forum'.







**Un-Boarding
The Room**

Sheer curtaining and a plush lounge challenge old assumptions, and meet new expectations, of how a boardroom must behave.



With generous lockers dotted around the office, the open plan working environment can also be free of clutter – with the omission of drawers below benches. This model, more activity-based, allows people to move freely around the space, whether working individually or in groups. “It was important to create a variety of spaces,” says Laura Graham, senior interior designer at Elenberg Fraser. Here she points out several areas including small enclosed sitting areas for quiet time, and the kitchen/dining zone that’s set up for work and social encounters. The latter features a large stone island bench that would take pride of place in a domestic kitchen.

Another area of note is the library, which is intended as a quiet space. The library is segmented with thick curvaceous glass walls and a sliding door that allows noise to be contained. And to ensure that there’s a certain quietness, Elenberg Fraser included timber-battened ceilings in strategic areas, working with lighting and audiovisual consultants, ACONS. The main boardroom also follows a similar approach: complete with an adjacent lounge, it is thoughtfully framed by sheer curtains rather than severe office partitions.

Unlike Slattery’s previous office, complete with a separate room for printing, the new space is completely paperless – considerably more sustainable. Keen to support local furniture designers as well as local artists, a number of the pieces found here were designed by Zuster. Art in particular becomes part of the working environment with Corinthian columns used as planters, creating an avenue along the terrazzo paths.

Slattery exemplifies a shift in thinking away from the traditional office where space was territorial and meetings were conducted behind closed doors. Here, there’s literally a space for all work modes, whether it be a communal lounge, a private nook or alternatively, perched on a stool next to the bench in the kitchen area. And rather than having to go out for lunch, there’s a sumptuous blue velvet-covered lounge nearby, perfect for a relaxing break. “This fit-out is reflecting the change in the way people now want to work, with considerably more options and fluidity than ever before,” says Leung.

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