

hot property

The Lehman Smith McLeish-designed Rockefeller Center headquarters of Tishman-Spitzer is unquestionably class.A.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER ARONSON



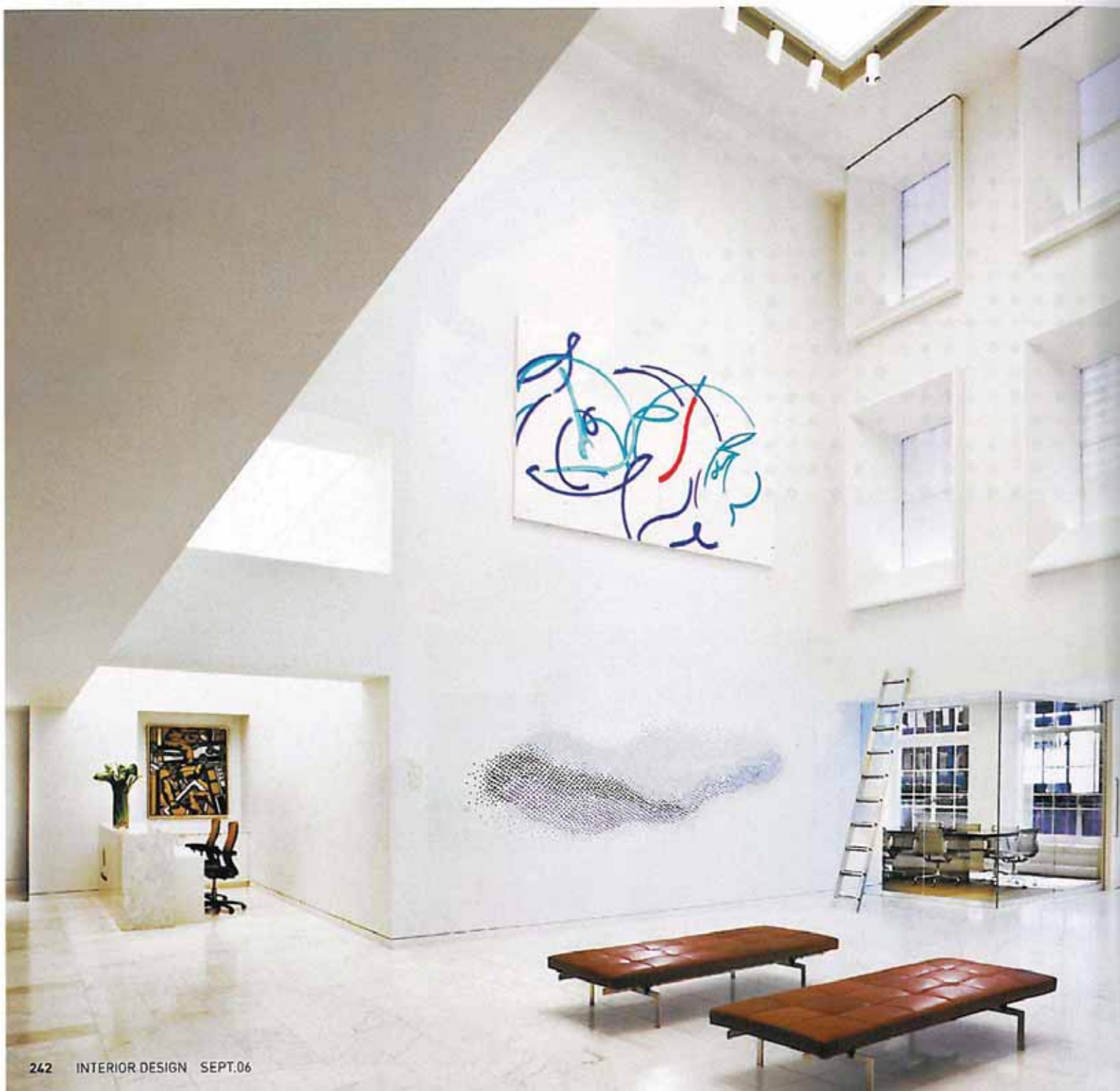
Tishman Speyer has a blue-chip portfolio. Its properties include New York's Chrysler and MetLife Buildings and Rockefeller Center, plus a bevy of trophy addresses around the globe. But the real-estate giant's own headquarters had lost its luster after 20 years. When executives decided to move to Rockefeller Plaza, they asked Lehman Smith McLeish to design the ultimate office. "It had to represent our commitment to building and stewarding the world's most distinctive properties," says Tishman Speyer senior managing director Rob Speyer, a second-generation scion of the family-held firm.

Even within Rockefeller Center's storied deco canyons, Tishman Speyer's location stands out. Occupying the entire seventh floor and half of the eighth floor in a signature tower designed by Raymond Hood in 1931, the office has two terraces overlooking the iconic bronze *Atlas* on Fifth Avenue and St. Patrick's Cathedral across the street. But behind the facade was a less impressive reality. "The ceilings were low," LSM principal Ron Fiegenschuh recalls. "And the light wasn't great." To reflect Tishman Speyer's worldly ethos and showcase the "possibilities of Rockefeller Cen-

ter," principal Rick Bilski says, LSM gutted the 60,000-square-foot space.

There was yet another prerequisite, partner Debra Lehman-Smith adds: "We had to shape our design around the business and the art." To transform standard office space into an airy gallery for a stellar collection of contemporary painting, photography, and sculpture, LSM proposed raising the 8-foot ceilings to as high as 10 feet in the corridors and installing generous expanses of white Calacatta marble flooring.

If the demolition work was "an archaeological dig," Fiegenschuh says, then the



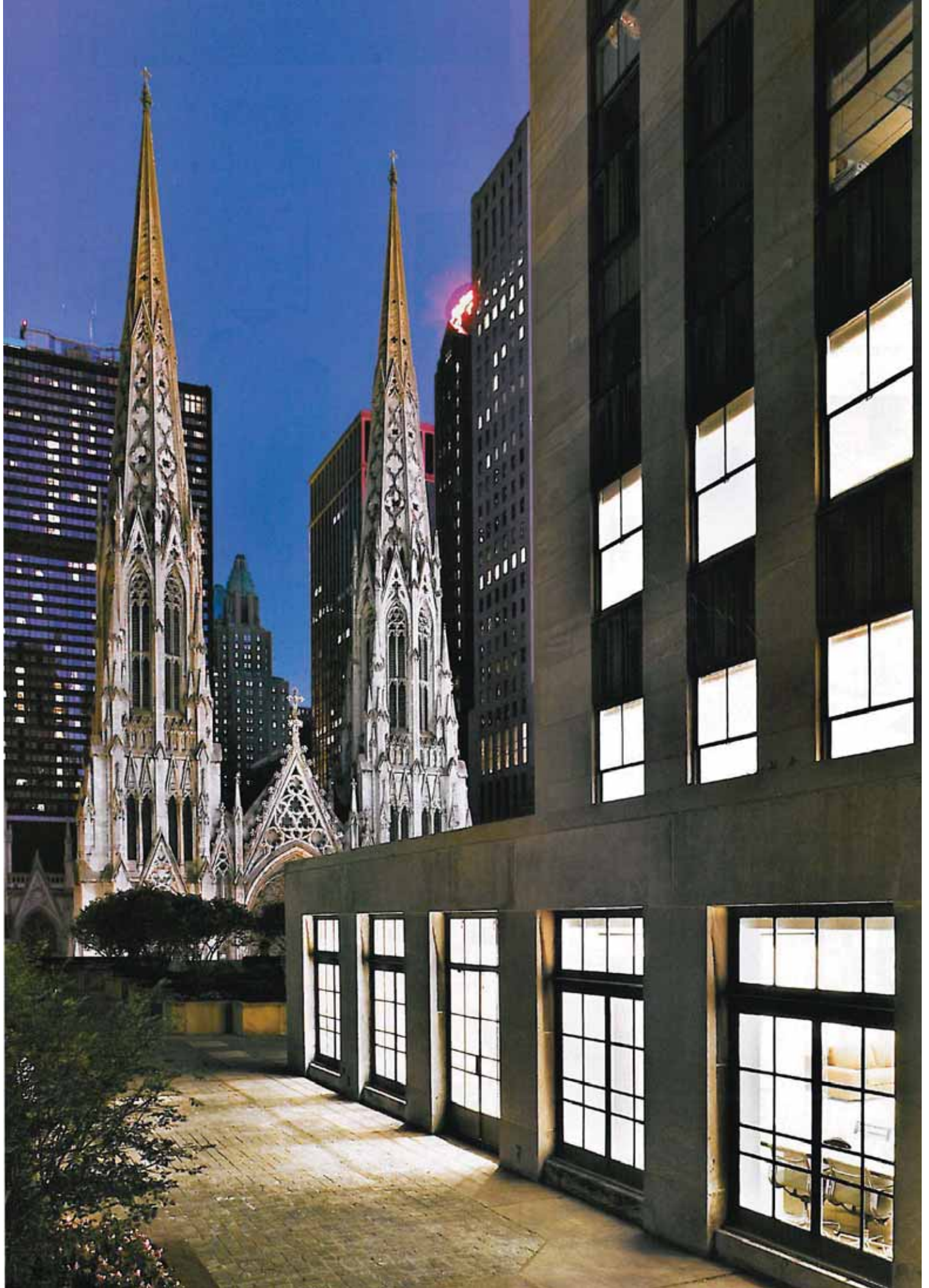
greatest discovery was a bank of disused elevators that were simply taking up space. Out they went, along with several mechanical rooms—allowing a jaw-dropping 28-foot-high atrium to rise in their place. “It’s spectacular to turn the corner from reception and see this amazing volume,” Fiegenschuh continues. One wall opens to a terrace; high up on another wall are two rows of windows that appear larger than they are, thanks to their canted frames. Basking in the natural light, Sue Williams’s large canvas of swooping, looping colored lines hangs above a cloudlike cluster of →



Previous spread: At real-estate company Tishman Speyer’s headquarters in Rockefeller Center, Lehman Smith McLeish carved out an atrium from what was once an elevator shaft and mechanical rooms. Poul Kjaerholm’s benches sit on axis with a Damien Hirst in household paint on canvas.

Left: Sue Williams’s oil and acrylic on canvas and Teresita Fernández’s wall-mounted acrylic cubes face Martin Honert’s mixed-media sculpture of a boy with an umbrella. The elimination of an unnecessary fire stair allowed for a corner conference room. *Top right:* In the gallery, Damián Ortega’s fantasy vehicle and Margarita Cabrera’s vinyl Volkswagen park in front of photography by Thomas Struth and Andreas Gursky. *Bottom right:* An oil on canvas by Jonathan Meese hangs outside a conference room with chairs by Charles and Ray Eames and a custom table topped in walnut burl.







Opposite: An existing terrace on the seventh floor captures a view of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Above: Virginie Barré's Spiderman clings to the stairwell that leads to the vinyl-floored café, furnished with Eero Saarinen tables and Arne Jacobsen chairs.



Top left: The small meeting room boasts an oil and enamel on panel by Jules de Balincourt, a Saarinen table, Eames chairs, and LSM's walnut-burl telephone credenza. **Bottom left:** Darren Almond photographs line the "art corridor," where the crossbeams support light boxes. **Right:** In a gallery off the atrium, a stack of medicine balls by Miroslaw Balka and a mixed-media installation by Franz Ackermann flank Deborah Butterfield's steel horse.



wall-mounted acrylic cubes by Teresita Fernández. Opposite is Martin Honert's life-size sculpture of a child with an umbrella, frozen in time as he leaps off a ladder. A pair of Poul Kjaerholm's brown leather-covered benches sit in the center of the atrium, like seating in a museum gallery.

A monumental dot painting by Damien Hirst surmounts the entry to a wide corridor, home to a playful installation of a red vinyl Volkswagen Beetle and a gray go-kart-size cross between a tractor and a steamroller. A narrower "art corridor," wrapping the central elevator core, offers



plenty of fodder for contemplation, too. Softened by camel-colored carpet, the column bays frame a mix of photography alongside abstract and representational paintings.

The art corridor gave the designers at LSM another bright idea: With the ceiling elevated to expose the crossbeams, why not turn the openings above into light boxes? The result is a rhythm of white frosted-acrylic oblongs, echoed by the etched-glass panels flanking each support column. Of course, minimal spaces are all about the details, and the Tishman Speyer

office doesn't disappoint. Reveals between walls and baseboards visually elongate the corridors. Stainless-steel hardware and trim add modernist polish. Aluminum-framed glass partitions set off offices and conference rooms.

A similar storefront system encloses the eighth floor's all-white café, with its Eero Saarinen tables and Arne Jacobsen chairs. It's reached via a flight of marble steps—at the top of which a life-size overweight Spiderman by Virginie Barré is rendered helpless with his back stuck to the wall. This time, it's LSM to the rescue. ➤

PROJECT TEAM: JAMES MCLEISH; MANOJ PATEL; ANTONY YEN.
CEILING SYSTEM (ATRIUM): NEWMAT. BENCHES (ATRIUM), CHAIRS (CAFÉ): FRITZ HANSEN. CUSTOM LIGHT BOXES (ATRIUM, ART CORRIDOR): LEGION LIGHTING. CUSTOM WINDOW SHADES (ATRIUM): DFB SALES. CHAIRS (ATRIUM), TABLES (CAFÉ, MEETING ROOM): KNOLL. CHAIRS (CONFERENCE, MEETING ROOMS): HERMAN MILLER. CUSTOM TABLES (CONFERENCE ROOMS). CUSTOM CREDENZA (MEETING ROOM): DATESWEISER. STOREFRONT SYSTEM (CAFÉ): UNIFOR. FLOORING: TO MARKET. CEILING TILE: ARMSTRONG. LINEAR FIXTURES: SELUX CORP. LINEAR PERIMETER FIXTURE: ZUMTOBEL. TRACK LIGHTING, WALL WASHERS: LITELAB. RECESSED CEILING FIXTURES: USA ILLUMINATION. FLOORING, THROUGH CONTINENTAL MARBLE. CARPET: EUROTEX. PAINT: SHERWIN-WILLIAMS COMPANY. MILLWORK: MIELACH WOODWORK. CONSULTANTS: SBLD STUDIO (LIGHTING), COSTELLO MAIONE SCHUCH (AUDIOVISUAL); SHEN MILSON WILKE (ACOUSTICAL). STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: AXIS DESIGN GROUP, MEP: EDWARDS & ZUCK. GENERAL CONTRACTOR: TURNER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY.

