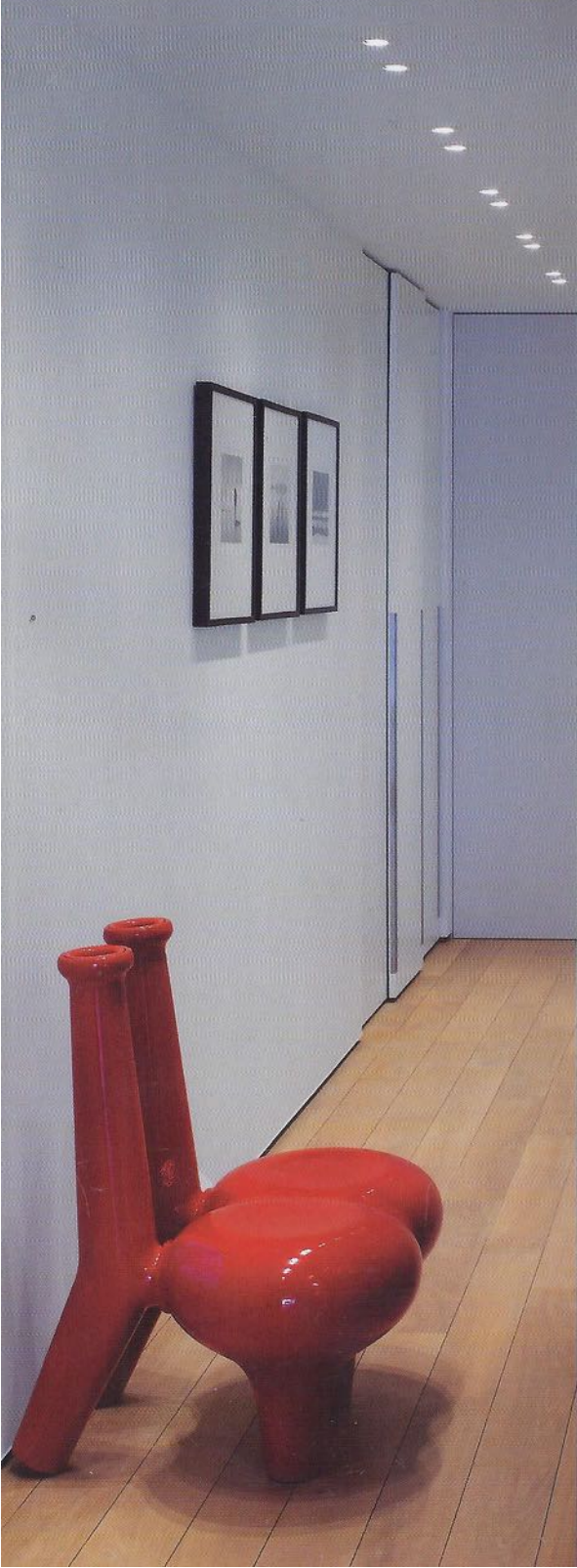


INTERIOR DESIGN

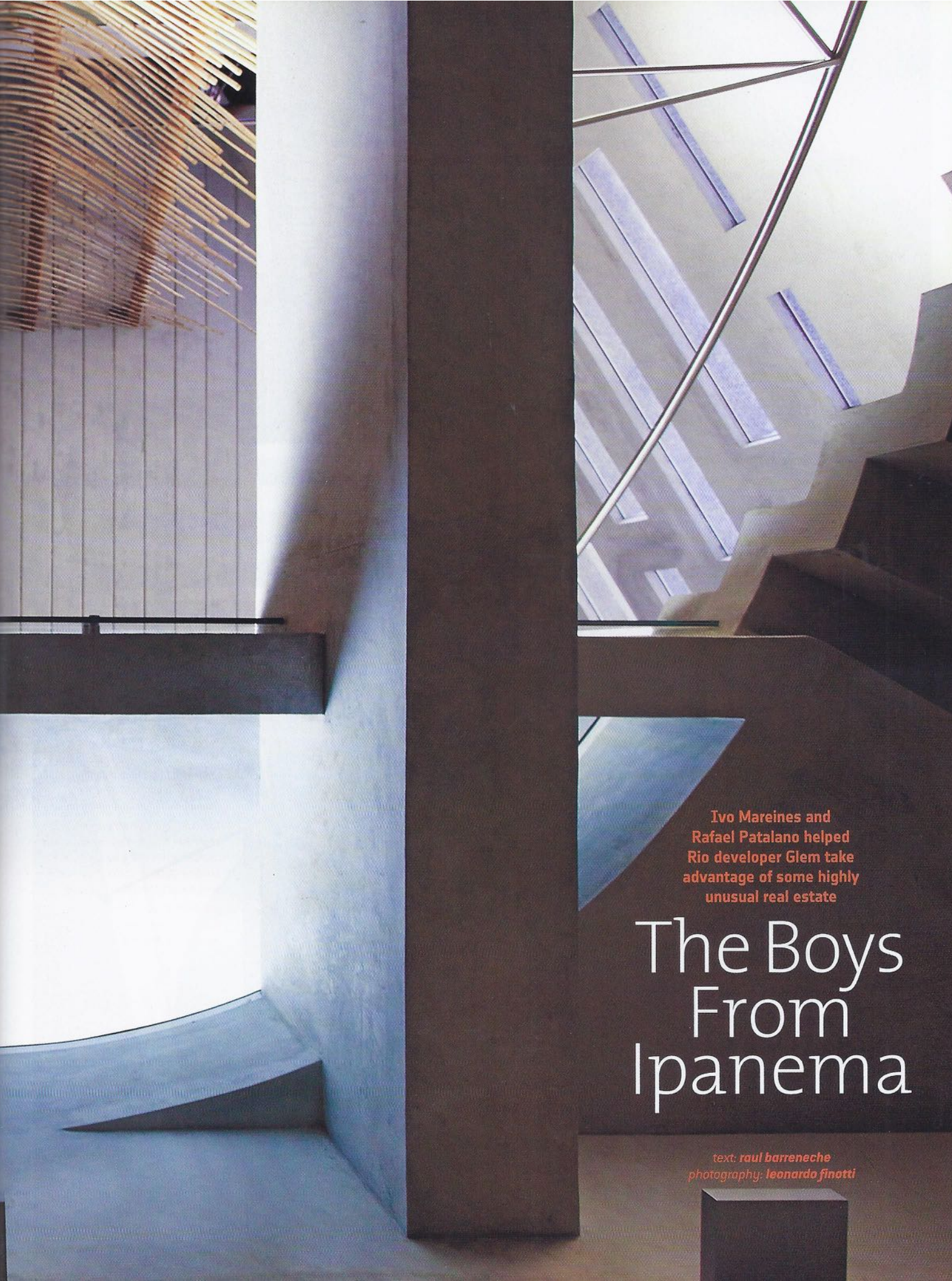
OCTOBER
2009



looming
large







Ivo Mareines and
Rafael Patalano helped
Rio developer Glem take
advantage of some highly
unusual real estate

The Boys From Ipanema

text: **raul barreneche**
photography: **leonardo finotti**

A real-estate developer in Rio de Janeiro, Glem puts its money where its mouth is. When Glem's CEO decided to build a new office, he chose one of the quirkiest properties in the company's portfolio. The location was outstanding: on the shore of a lake not far from Ipanema's fabled sands. But the site itself was a mere wedge of residual space beneath concrete grandstands built for rowing events during 2007's Pan American Games and subsequently snapped up by Glem with the intention of transforming the property into a showplace.

Mareines + Patalano Arquitetura faced a challenge, to say the least. The roof, aka the underside of the bleachers, couldn't be altered, and there would barely be a front facade to speak of, just a long wall along a pedestrian ramp up to the grandstand. To let in some of the only sunlight available while not jeopardizing privacy, the architects scored this concrete wall with thin horizontal bands of clear glass. The other exterior wall is more open, with a large arched window, but security, a fact of life in urban Brazil, dictated that the glass be bulletproof.

Before hiring Mareines + Patalano, Glem's CEO had seen sketches of a beachfront house that the firm had designed with leaf-shape roofs crowning a cluster of pavilions. Glem asked for similarly soft lines to offset the hard geometry and tough materials of the company's 3,800-square-foot office. From what could have been ➤



Previous spread: A stair landing of laminated tempered glass caps the waiting area near reception at Glem's Rio de Janeiro office by Mareines + Patalano Arquitetura.

Top: A 33-foot-high atrium with a polished-concrete staircase connects all three levels of the wedge-shape building. **Bottom:** Chairs by Konstantin Grcic furnish the waiting area.

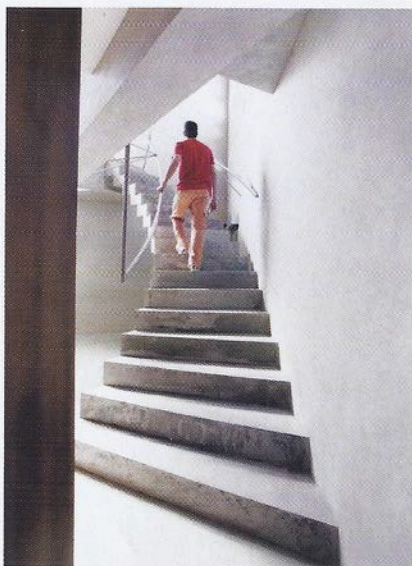
Opposite: Posts of laminated eucalyptus, sustainably harvested, support the atrium screen.





a bunker, the architects crafted an airy interior punctuated by delicate handcrafted elements—the urban loft goes to the beach.

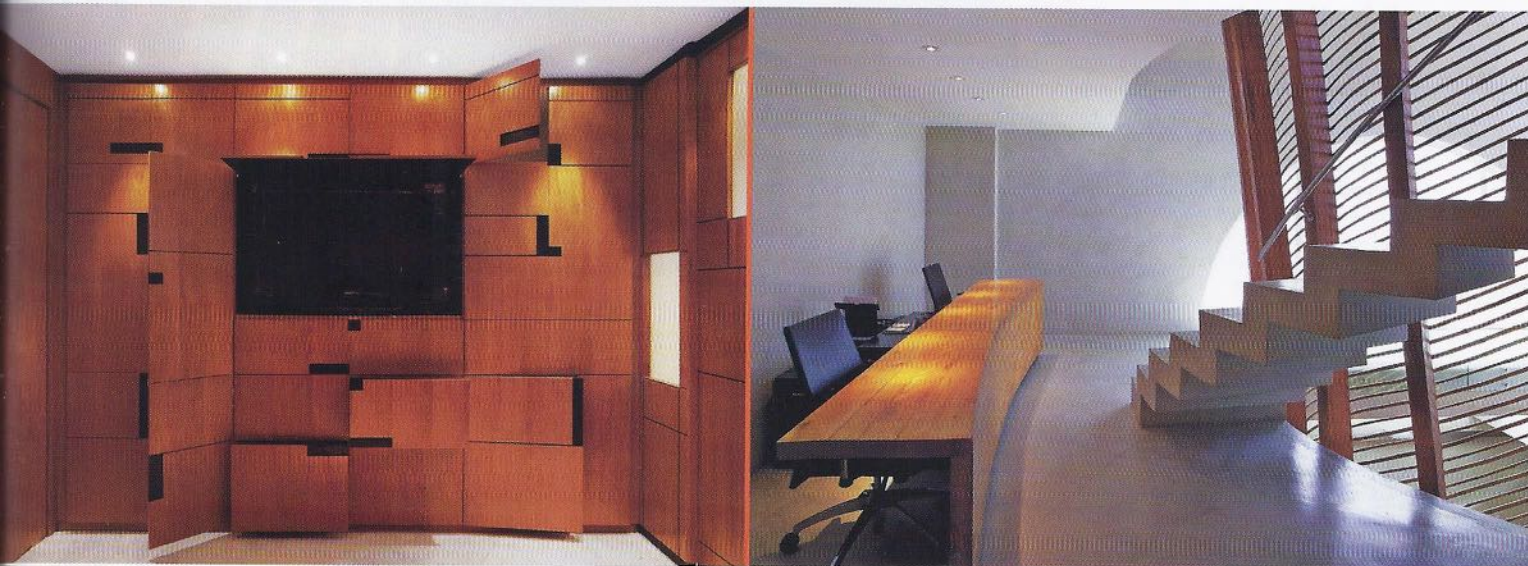
One enters the office from below the ramp to the grandstand. Beyond a small reception area, the interior opens up with an atrium. This vertical void connects all three levels and, Ivo Mareines says, offers “longer perspectives in such a squeezed space.” Sunshine from upper windows filters down through the translucent glass of a stair landing to light a waiting area also used by staff for informal meetings. The atrium’s defining gesture, however, is a curved bamboo screen that rises from a bed of black coal, reinforcing the nature vibe. Though not inherently Brazilian, the lengths of slender bamboo recall the aesthetic of baskets that Brazil’s native tribes weave, typically in smaller grasses or other fibers. “The natural materials and shapes balance the bareness of so much concrete,” Rafael Patalano says. An artisan versed in bamboo construction worked with the architects to craft the screen, heating the stems to curve them and nailing them to nine posts on-site. These industrial-grade laminated-wood members had to be cut down from their standard size and reassembled inside. “It’s not high-tech, but it’s complex,” Mareines says. “It was hard to get right.” ➤

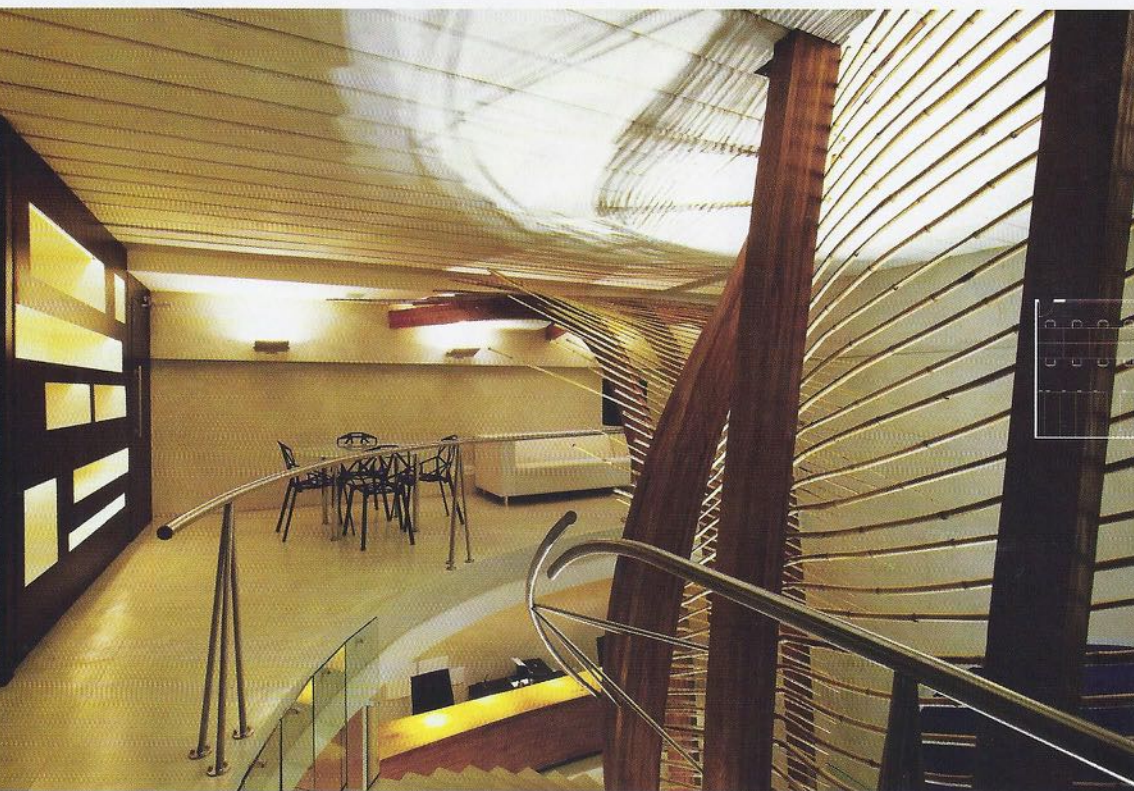




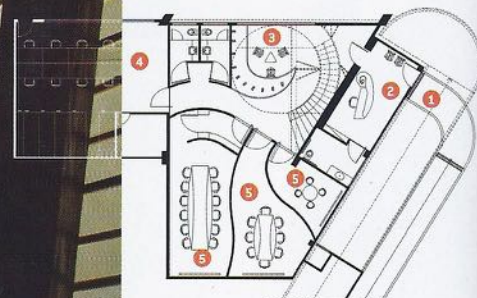
Opposite top: An arched window of bulletproof glass faces a cluster of buildings, while 6-inch-high slits let in light but minimize the view of the pedestrian ramp to the grandstand above. **Opposite bottom:** Handrails are stainless steel.

Top: Sliding doors of pequiá, a native wood, separate the CEO's office from the two directors' shared office. **Bottom, from left:** The CEO's office wall conceals a closet, a coffee station, and storage for documents and media. A second reception area, with a custom pequiá desk, serves the executive level.





0 10 20 40



- 1 ENTRY
- 2 RECEPTION
- 3 WAITING AREA
- 4 OFFICE AREA
- 5 MEETING ROOMS

The remainder of the ground level contains an open work area for the company's eight staff members as well as three meeting rooms: small, medium, and large. Their organic shapes give the windowless spaces a sheltering, cavelike feel, albeit with good lighting. The second level is given over to the CEO and directors, starting with a dedicated reception area overlooking the atrium. Beyond, the three men share a suite composed of a private office for the boss and an open work space connected by sliding doors on the either end of the dividing wall. There's also a small nap room replete with kitchen—call it an executive perk—and, tucked into the narrowest point of the triangular floor plate, a tiny bathroom. Paneled in polished *pequiá*, a native wood, these compact, interlocking spaces have the feel of a well-appointed ship's cabin. Finally, directly above the two work levels are a lounge and changing rooms, the latter presumably used by employees after they hit the beach or ply sculls on the lake. Connecting the three stories, cantilevered concrete steps mimic the grandstand seating overhead as they spiral up through the atrium, encircling the bamboo screen.

While the screen may offer a hint of native baskets and huts, this office is highly sophisticated. Nor does it have the slickness of a Donald Trump-style developer. Relaxed, polished, and hip, the design is the embodiment of Brazil. ▀

PROJECT TEAM

FLÁVIA LIMA: MAREINÉS + PATALANO ARQUITETURA. **ANA MORAES:** LIGHTING CONSULTANT. **SUPERFÍCIE ARTE METAL:** METALWORK. **D'TALHE MARCENARIA:** ESMARA: WOODWORK. **ANTÔNIO ABILIO TEIXEIRA:** GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT JORGE GUIMARÃES: CUSTOM TABLE (WAITING AREA), CUSTOM SCREEN (ATRIUM). **MAGIS:** CHAIRS (WAITING AREA, LOUNGE). **VOKO:** CHAIRS (OFFICES, RECEPTION). **THROUGH VIA MANZONI:** TABLE, SOFA (LOUNGE). **THROUGHOUT LUMINI:** LIGHT FIXTURES.



Top: Grcic also designed the chairs in the lounge. **Bottom:** The screen's bamboo was heated to 176 degrees Fahrenheit in order to bend more easily, then nailed to the posts.

Opposite: At the base of the screen, a bed of coal houses high-intensity discharge (HID) fixtures.

