





HAUTE DESIGN

Privacy marries openness in this 'transparent' office designed for fashion house Provogue, by the talented team at K.S. Associates.

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COURTESY THE ARCHITECT

THIS PAGE The reception area, with its large frameless sheet glass works as a canvas for the 'floating' Provogue signage and plasma screens.

INSET The front of the Provogue office is all plate glass allowing for plenty of light to permeate the structure.



Like a technological extravaganza, this sleek space has miles of frameless sheet glass, adhering to the brief of Nikhil Chaturvedi, head honcho of the fashion house Provogue. 'Nikhil wanted an open, transparent space with an international feel to it,' says Shresht Kashyap of K.S. Associates, whose design articulates the concept.

Who could understand better than a fashion house, that 'trendy' and 'stylish' are words that are frequently redefined by the haute set? Applied to interiors, this means that furniture is no longer thought of as a future heirloom, to pass on to the

next generation. Nothing is going to last long enough to be the iconic piece which sets a record at tomorrow's auction. No venerable pieces of furniture with provenance to be found here. Consequently, K.S. Associates design without baggage, eclipsing ponderous styles and sweeping you into an expanse of pellucid glass and stark steel, juxtaposed with white flooring. This forms the key to the visual continuity of the entire office.

The front elevation of this building is all plate glass, but not mindlessly so. In tropical climates, the validity of letting in so much sunlight from glass facades could be questioned in relation to the costs of air conditioning - considering that even the view might not be great. But since the architects had dead walls on the sides to contend with, the only way they could get in any natural light, was from the front and from skylights, which they had to punch in the ceiling.

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The design areas have specially designed work stations to hold hangers with garments, as well as pigeon holes for fabric swatches. **RIGHT** A CEO's cabin with a textured wall surface, providing a contrast from the smoothness of the Corian and glass all around. **OPPOSITE PAGE** The cafeteria is located in the heart of the office and has movable furniture that allows for flexibility.







THIS PAGE A steel and glass staircase, with the meeting rooms beyond.

Design firm
K.S.Associates
Architects Shresht Kashyap, Neemesh Shah & Kanhai Gandhi

"With a 160 ft long wall with no windows, we had no option but to open up the front, as well as go up for light," says Neemesh Shah.

Flamed granite steps along side a Frangipani tree, usher you into this toughened glass and steel space, the size of which is worthy of a football field. The reception area itself is a good 1000 sq ft. with a skylight, contributing to the 'wow factor' prescribed by the client. The receptionist's desk is in white Corian and steel, in two planes which serve to conceal the clutter of the work space. Vertical 'fins' in wood behind the desk give solidarity and stasis to the design, also providing visual relief from the colourless glass all around. Parallel lines are used repeatedly throughout the office in the frosting of the glass panels at eye level. The logo of the company is backlit, and appears suspended in the air behind the receptionist's desk. Two plasma screens are used to display the designs of the fashion house.

The reception area leads off into 5 independent meeting rooms, so that visitors don't need to enter the main office area at all, in keeping with the new work ethic. Throughout, the central space has been left bare, with the offices of the senior executives and the CEOs on the periphery. The predominant colour is white, with only occasional splashes of mauve and green. Table tops are in white Corian and a China white composite marble is used for the flooring. Laminates are in ebony, and 14 foot high glass panels run throughout this space to delineate work stations, meeting rooms and cabins. Frosted bands on the glass at eye level provide a measure of privacy.

The design area itself has 2 skylights, and very interestingly designed desks to meet the specific needs of the designers. Circular holes in a vertical partition behind the monitors, make a chic design statement,

while meant to hold swatches of fabrics. The end of the desk even has space for hangers to hold the mock ups of the garments. A library also finds place in the design area. In addition, empty floor space has been provided to be used as a ramp, for models to strut their stuff whenever the garments have to be shown.

The cafeteria for the staff is at the heart of this office. Vitrified tile in a stone finish is used for the flooring, while square cream tables and moulded chairs make eating here a pleasant experience. A green wall provides relief from the subdued colours surrounding it.

The six directors cabins are situated in the South West to comply with Vaastu requirements and have wooden flooring, with grooves in the Plaster of Paris on the wall providing contrast in texture from the smoothness of Corian desk tops. The bathroom uses beige and brown tiles in a reed mat finish, the fabricated glass basin and the skylight forming the focus of the design.

The solution to Provogue's brief was clear to K.S. Associates. They turned to the tried and tested device of frameless sheet glass, to establish spaces, or the suggestion of spaces, within a larger area. Evidently, practice makes perfect. Openness and privacy, unlikely bed partners though they may be, co-exist peacefully in this glassy space.