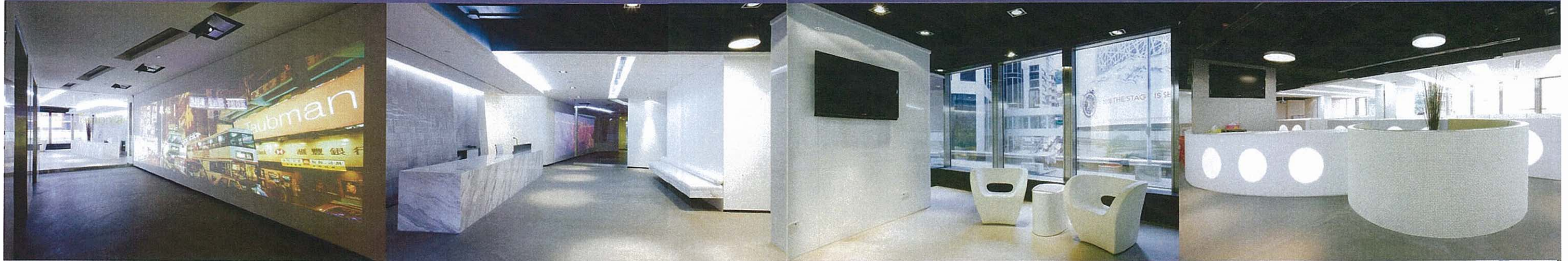


OFFICE LUXURY

Offices of Taubman Asia Woods Bagot



Luxury is not a word usually associated with the office environment, yet with their new Hong Kong office, real estate investment trust, Taubman Asia Limited set out to create a place that would be as comfortable to socialise in as to work. Covering 10,230sq ft including the president's office (at some 300sq ft), the space is designed to accommodate 30 employees (with the capacity to expand to 50). The programme contains a bar area for clients and the president's office resembles more of a lounge or an upscale hotel room - it even has its own walk in wardrobe.

The use of cool materials (marble block furniture elements, metal fenestration, ceramic tiling, treated concrete flooring) does not create a sterile environment. Contrasting warming elements like a leather wall-covering in one of the meeting rooms and circular light fittings echoed in backlit shallow drops and identically-shaped disc lighting elements built into steel-frame alabaster desks and partition walls soften and round the harder edges and the less forgiving textures.

The principal design difficulties arose from the unusual challenge of creating a luxurious space while still remaining functional. The reason for the emphasis on luxury seems to have been just as Ziggy Bautista, Interior Design Associate for Woods Bagot says, that they wanted to create, "a space that was both functional, yet oozed luxury". Time constraints on the project put pressure on the material delivery schedule and specially required materials were difficult to obtain in Hong Kong. Lighting was sourced from Artemide in the Middle East.

The predominantly-white décor is contrasted by the colourful contemporary art collection on display and additions like orange Konstantin Grcic bar stools and red velvet sofa in the karaoke suite (sic). Indeed, the design concept seems very much of the ilk of a New York art gallery. Comparisons with the look of Gehry's New York Guggenheim are not out of place and the designers have created a definitively cool place to work.

