

Summer 2008

# Oculus

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## 2008 AIA NY Design Awards

AIA New York and  
Boston Society of Architects  
Biennial Design  
Type Awards

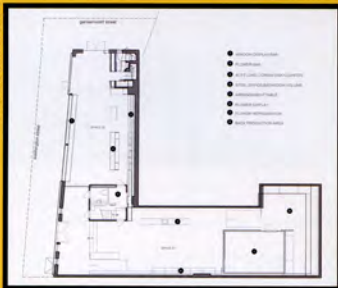
# Interiors HONOR

**Architect** De-Spec Inc. / Vista Engineering

**Project** Banchet Flowers,  
New York, NY

**Client** Banchet Flowers

As in botany, this flower shop is a hybrid. The 2,000-square-foot space was originally intended to be only a shop, but it soon became a popular place for private parties, fashion shows, and photo shoots. Created from a warehouse in the Meatpacking District, the shop opened in 2001 when trendy stores, restaurants, and clubs still shared the streets with wholesale meat companies, predating the neighborhood's designation as a historic district, and the transformation of the High Line. Opened in 2006, the addition added almost 1,300 square feet, including two mezzanines and more views through openings in the masonry of the



atelier. The new space is connected to the old one by a large steel volume that contains workspace and a bathroom downstairs and offices upstairs. A large mahogany pocket door separates the two.

The architects had to fully understand the way the atelier worked so they could accommodate the needs of production. Their vision for the space was to move production to the center so the movements of the staff arranging flowers at workstations became a display in itself for passersby. The architects designed all of the fixed tables, bars, and wall display systems. A 40-foot-long Corian sink further connects the two spaces, and since there is a floor height change between the

two, the sink is counter-height for working in one, and lower for display in the other. The Flower Bar, a large monolithic mahogany box that runs along a wall of windows in the new addition, is a unique spot to relax sip tea, and people-watch.

**Jury:** "This project inserted itself into the fabric of the historic district, opened up a different aspect for the building, and contributed something back to the street."



**De-Spec Inc. / Vista Engineering:** Tom Shea, Gus Patel  
**Structural Engineers:** Vista Engineering Corporation  
**General Contractor:** Wing Kin Consulting  
**General Contractor:** Always Lee Sign  
**MEP Engineer:** Gotham Air Mechanical Contractors