

INTERIOR DESIGN

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office talk



like water for chocolate

You don't have to be Lady Godiva to know that sometimes you just have to let it all hang out. Often found designing generously proportioned fashion boutiques for Emporio Armani or J. Mendel, De-Spec principal Farnaz Mansuri was handed a New York hole-in-the-wall, just 150 square feet, and expected to turn it into a vest-pocket showplace for the luxury chocolatier and gelato maker Xocolatti. She immediately realized, given the lack of space for a stockroom, that the walls could function as both storage and display, packed right up to the ceiling with chic chocolate boxes. ➤

A glass storefront system was customized for the Xocolatti shop.

XO firm: **de-spec**
site: **new york**

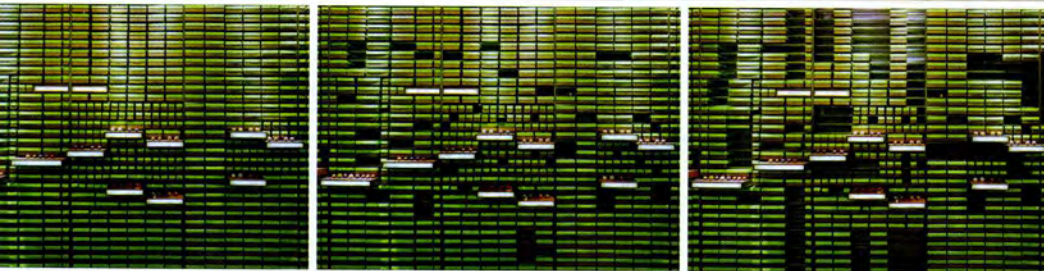


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In place of a traditional shop window, the storefront is exquisitely minimalist full-height glass with an integral frameless door—transforming what’s behind into the display. The three interior walls are lined with a storage system for the boxes. Serving as general contractor allowed De-Spec to keep tabs on the precision installation of these bronze-patinated brass racks and, jutting out from them at strategic positions near eye level, the oiled-walnut shelves that offer unwrapped truffle and cluster samples in signature flavors such as pomegranate, sake, rose-cardamom, or olive oil with basil.

What dominates the panorama, however, are the horizontal stripes created by the vibrant green tops and chocolate-brown bottoms of the chocolate boxes, most of them waiting to be filled. “We used them as ‘wallpaper,’” Mansuri says. Its pattern evolves over the course of a day, as customer purchases produce artful and ever growing gaps. The bigger the void, the more popular the flavor.

—Craig Kellogg



From top: A combined gelato counter and cash-wrap desk topped in Belgian bluestone meets a floor in engineered French oak. Boxes are removed from custom bronze-patinated brass racks. Shelves in walnut and acrylic contain LEDs.

THROUGHOUT **BLUMCRAFT OF PITTSBURGH**: CUSTOM STOREFRONT SYSTEM. **CAVENDISH GREY**: FLOORING, COUNTER MATERIAL. **CODE**: ARCHITECT OF RECORD. **EXIT CREATIVE COMPANY**: GRAPHICS CONSULTANT. **VISTA ENGINEERING CORPORATION**: STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. **SHOCK STUDIOS**: METALWORK, WOODWORK. **ANTHONY CHASE STUDIO**: FINISHING CONTRACTOR.



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