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Environetics Creates Art Gallery-Office Hybrid to Showcase Fremont General's Extensive Photographic Art Collection in a Highly Functional Headquarters Office Space

Ansel Adams, Alfred Steiglitz, and others represented in unique interior design created to blend tradition and art while motivating professionalism and performance.

LOS ANGELES, Calif., May 15, 2006 – As visitors and employees enter the newly designed headquarters of Fremont General in Santa Monica, there is a visible drop in the noise level, much as you would experience when entering an art gallery. For the professionals at Environetics, a leading interior architectural design and space-planning firm, this is precisely the effect they hoped to achieve as they brought their client's vision of creating an art gallery to showcase nearly 400 original photographic prints that also serves as a highly productive work environment, to life.

“When we embarked on this project for Fremont General, the CEO shared his vision of building a space that was in reality an art gallery that served as an office headquarters,” said Rodney Stone, principal in charge for Environetics. “By listening to our client and exploring both their need for aesthetic and performance excellence, we created an interior that not only showcases their art, but that provides a work environment that blends tradition with efficiency and comfort while communicating their values of serving clients with unparalleled quality and passion. This project truly reflects Environetics' vision of listening to our clients, delivering quality work, and applying new tools and knowledge to every project.”

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Fremont General, a client of Envronetics since 1992, is a financial services holding company engaged in commercial and residential real estate lending nationwide through its California-chartered industrial bank subsidiary, Fremont Investment & Loan. The firm's art collection includes approximately 800 original photographs from masters like Ansel Adams and Alfred Stieglitz, of which nearly 400 – mostly black and white – are displayed in their headquarters.

The photos are displayed throughout the office space on the outside walls of perimeter offices, and in two areas designed specifically to house a rotating collection. The corridors are designed to be wide enough to allow both foot traffic as well as room for individuals to view the artwork. The lighting, designed with the help of lighting consultants Fox + Fox, is a wall-mounted track lighting fixture that reduces glare and incorporates a UV filter to protect the photographs. The track lighting is flexible enough to allow the works to be rotated so the company can take full advantage of the collection.

Two unique galleries of approximately 2,000 sf, one in the reception area and one in an area that in most offices would have been reserved for workstations, feature three-panel, folding partitions similar to those used in museums. To accommodate rotating displays, the team employed adjustable down-lighting in linear ceiling boxes. To ensure the art remains the focal point, neutral colors were used such as a dark brown carpet and light walls. Adding to the ambiance, indirect lighting was used in all offices and workstation areas. Not only does this aide in showcasing art in those areas, but it provides a more diffused lighting that is more conducive to a comfortable work environment.

The executive area of the office features a wood paneled wall designed and lighted for artwork. Upon seeing the beauty of the wood, the Fremont General team opted to keep the wall as a natural art element that complemented the photographs throughout the building.

Blending Functionality and Art

Incorporating a productive work flow was a key factor in the design, especially since a Fremont Investment & Loan Commercial office exists within the space, yet works separately from Fremont General. Leveraging the existing floor plan allowed Envronetics to create a unique space for this group while making them feel like a part of the overall office. Envronetics leveraged the existing angles and building structures to locate teams and work groups within Fremont General based on a clear understanding of how they interacted and supported each other.

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The lunch rooms were designed along the lines of a modern coffee house with a goal of providing employees with a less formal environment where they could relax and get a break from work. Environetics incorporated brighter colors on the walls, floors and furnishings to create a more playful feel. Each lunch room maximizes the use of existing windows and opens to balconies furnished with outdoor tables, chairs, and umbrellas.

The meeting space in the office was designed to accommodate a wide range of groups from four to nearly 25 attendees. The large boardroom includes a table seating up to 22 individuals, a lounge area, and a smaller meeting table for four to six people. The room is supported by a full pantry and an extensive A-V system which includes a plasma TV that rotates to face both the lounge area and small conference room. Adding to the ambience, the room provides access to the existing balcony.

Project Facts

Owned or Rented:	Leased
Type/Function of Space:	Corporate Headquarters
Square Footage/Floors:	1 Floor – 60,000 sf
Number of People:	Approximately 70
Principal in charge:	Mr. Rodney Stone
Project Director:	Ms. Stephanie Boldon
Designer:	Ms. Sandra Goda
Scope of Services:	Programming, Preliminary Plans, Design Development, Document Preparation, Government Agency Process, Project Management
Construction Cost:	Phase 1
▪ Cost Per SF:	\$65.00
▪ Project Cost:	\$3,900,000
Furniture Cost:	\$100,000 with reuse of existing case goods
Contractors/Suppliers/Sources:	
▪ General Contractor:	Sierra Pacific Constructors Inc.

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- Furniture Manufacturer: Kimball
- Furniture Dealer: Interior Office Solutions
- Flooring Contractor: Cor/Tech
- Carpet Manufacturer: Atlas
- Wood Paneling: Seeley Brothers
- Lighting Consultant: Fox + Fox
- MEP Engineers: Syska Hennessey Group
- Acoustical Consultant: Martin Newson & Associates
- Structural: Brandow & Johnson

About Environetics

Environetics is a full-service interior architectural design and space-planning firm that specializes in creating unique work environments that improve employee productivity and enhance brand image. Environetics' diverse staff consists of space planners, architects, interior designers, graphic and industrial designers, estimators and CAD drafters, all collaborating to identify client space needs and deliver interior plans for maximum effectiveness, efficiency and design.