

WOODS BAGOT
ARCHITECTURAL JOINERY

This space describes a new direction for design firm, Woods Bagot Melbourne. It is a local indication of what the practice is doing at a global level.

GLOBAL PROPOSITION

When architects design their own workspace, you can expect something quite special. The new Melbourne office for global architecture firm Woods Bagot is no exception.

_In fact, the result of this space embodies something extraordinary. The studio's relocation to new premises on the city's Yarra River coincides with the firm's new brand positioning known as Public. Essentially a cultural transformation, Public incites a new way of working as a global practice that is sustained by research harnessed to serve both clients and employees.

_The practice's physical space is an important cultural reflection of the business ethos. 'The basis of the design brief was to provide a workplace that supported the firm's new brand positioning,' explains Nik Karalis, a director of Woods Bagot. 'The fundamental shift was to move from a reliable corporate services organisation towards a creative and innovative firm, underpinned by research'.

_The building shell, maintained and accentuated, forms an expressive element of the studio space. The journey for visitors begins from podium level, through a small exhibition space injected with a circular stairway. Arriving in an over-scaled vestibule, the sheer volume of the space provides a stunning spectacle for visitors who are transcended by the scale shift.

_Moving further into the space, large runway corridors lead into the open-plan studio crowned by a pantheon dome. This free-space encourages engagement and communication to build strong working relationships and spontaneous places for workshops where jotted thoughts and ideas can be left on walls, fixed simply with masking tape for study, evaluation and critique.

_According to Woods Bagot, the concept of an active studio environment is where, 'people and communication are the real interior design'. True to this ideology, specially designed and developed long, white work benches and storage, a Woods Bagot and Schiavello collaboration, replace traditional workstations.

Built-in cable reticulation gates and polished plywood joinery, overhead storage run cleanly down the centre of the work bench, freeing floor space and creating a permeable partition. This system helps support users in the highly charged workplace with an emphasis on interaction. 'The work environment is progressive and flexible, and dismisses many existing workplace philosophies,' explains Karalis.

_The main studio's material palette is robust but fun; carpet defines circulation areas and trees in huge pots form part of the internal landscape. Open meeting spaces support multipurpose project areas allowing clients and designers to engage in the design process together in pursuit of significant design outcomes.

_Woods Bagot's new identity will distinguish the company through its people with directors and employees operating as equals. This belief is reinforced in the studio design through the break down of corporate hierarchy and the creation of multi-purpose, unpredictable working environments. For Woods Bagot this space articulates a new way of doing business that is deeply rooted in their 137-year history but is also immediately about the future.

Project Location
Podium Level 1,
Southgate Avenue,
Southbank, Melbourne

Client
Woods Bagot:
Rodger Dalling
Nik Karalis
Kate Frear
Anna Drummond

Design
Woods Bagot:
Rodger Dalling
Nik Karalis
Kate Frear
Anna Drummond

Schiavello [Prima Architectural]
Robert Pegoraro

Area
1,000 m2

Products
Specially designed + developed work benches with cable gates, polished plywood overhead storage + mobile pedestals.

1+2_The Woods Bagot and Schiavello collaboration - long white work benches with overhead storage that runs cleanly down the centre, replace traditional workstations. The concept of an active studio, where 'people and communication are the real interior design'.

