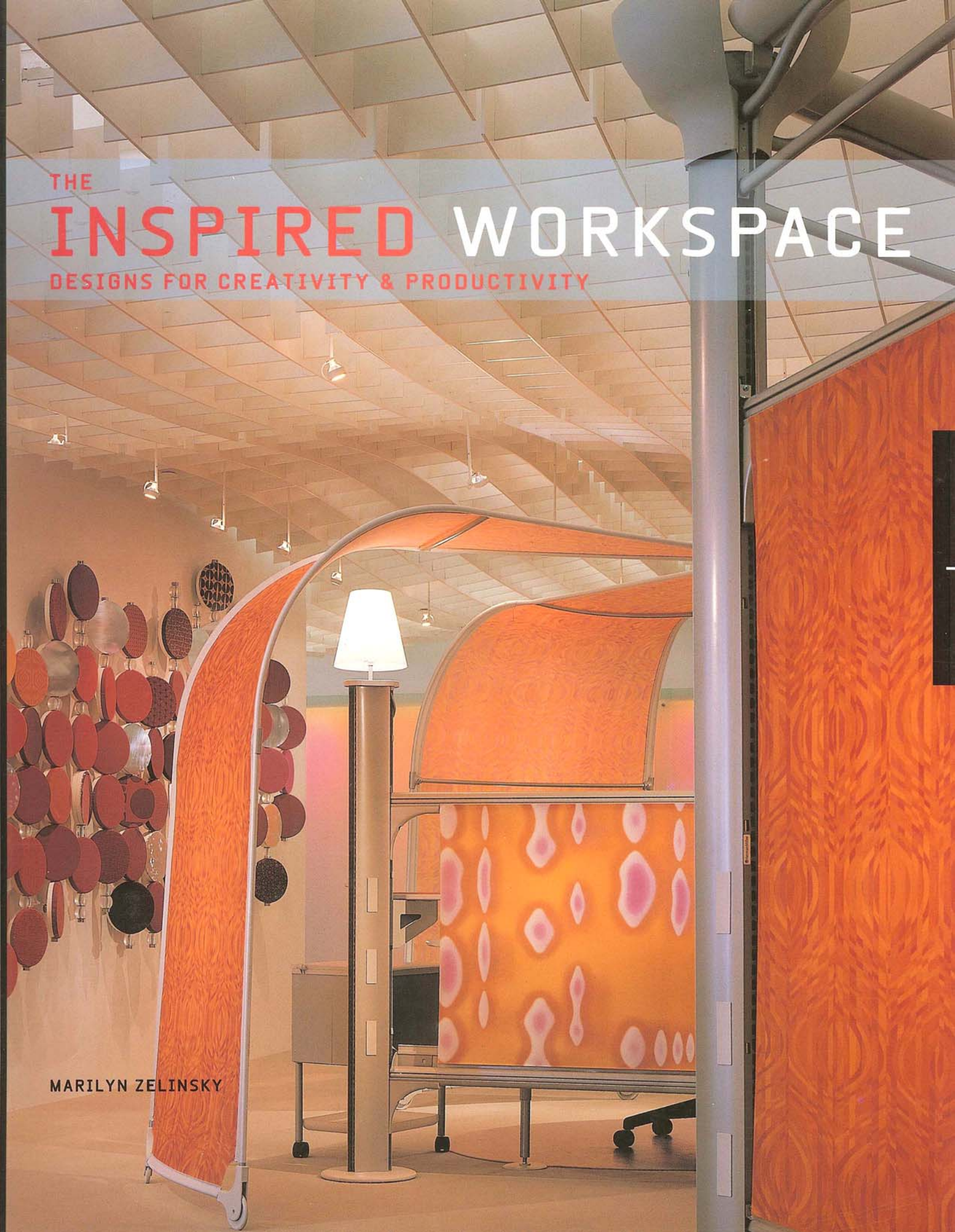


THE
INSPIRED WORKSPACE
DESIGNS FOR CREATIVITY & PRODUCTIVITY

MARILYN ZELINSKY



“For peace of mind, we need to resign as general manager of the universe.”

Larry Eisenberg, science fiction writer

TOWER OF POWER

PILL MAHARAM ARCHITECTS STUDIO

Another word for “cube” is “block.” That’s how architect David Pill felt when he worked in a cubicle years ago. “It was hard to let go in that workspace. There was a stiffness in that type of office environment. It was repressive,” Pill remembers. He soon found that working on the third floor of his home wasn’t much better. He became claustrophobic—the roof of the top floor was sloped, so Pill felt closed in, snuffing out his creativity.

But there was hope. Pill and his wife, Hillary Maharam, a former landscape architect and current design journalist, bought their 1711 farmhouse with an outbuilding/garage just 90 feet (27 meters) away from the main house, with the intent of turning it into a studio for the architect.

Pill always believed that the best of architecture made a building fit into a site—a way to connect with nature—and was happy to have the chance to do that when designing his own studio. He also felt strongly that architecture should be “inventive and reflect what comes from within you.” So he relied on his own instincts, his love of sustainable design, and astronomy to build an artistic haven that he dreamed about for so long.

CONNECTING WITH NATURE’S BEAUTY

In designing the studio in the two-story outbuilding, Pill knew he would create a central place where he could pursue all of his interests. So he included a workshop/sculpture studio downstairs, an architectural/art studio upstairs, and an observation tower on the side of the building as a perch for his telescope, and a way to stay connected to the creative and artistic inspirations he finds in nature’s beauty. The studio is also a way to stay connected to his young children Jake and Liza, who visit dad during the day.

The dilapidated garage, snuggled into a hillside, was already in the perfect spot. Pill wrapped the exterior in corrugated metal and natural shingles, and topped it with a corrugated metal roof. Pill gutted the building’s interior but kept the

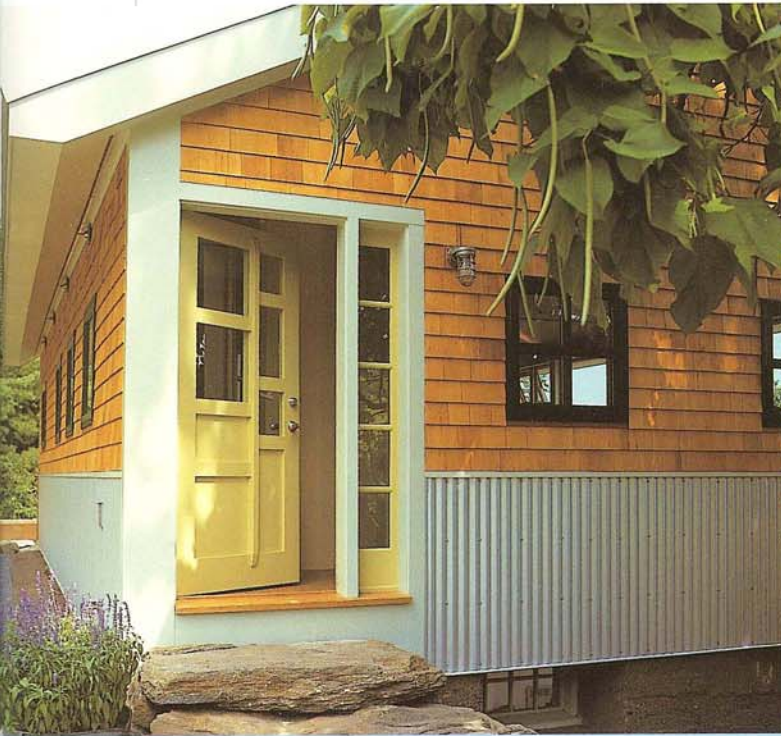
original floor plan, adding only a bath and kitchenette behind a butter-cream-yellow painted wall, and raised the roofline slightly to create an airy, sun-filled, and uncluttered atelier.

The mix of sustainable materials further reflects Pill’s love of nature. Custom-built cabinetry of birch and maple topped with slate line the southern wall of windows, radiant-tube heating covered by 4-by-8-foot (1.2-by-2.4-meter) sheets of Resindek—a formaldehyde-free particle board used for warehouse floors, rejuvenated timber collar ties, water-based wall paint, and ceiling fans—all promote a healthy, and inspiring, environment.



The 25-foot-tall (7.6-meter-tall) observation tower with two platforms is made of rough-hewn timbers. Architect David Pill built it to accommodate his love of astronomy. One year, the family gathered on the platform at 4 A.M. to watch a meteor shower; the next summer, a bird nested in the ladder—the architects watched the birthing process unfold through a tiny window on the doorway next to the doorknob (a great height for curious kids).

The unorthodox, nearly chartreuse-colored front door to the studio, designed by Pill and built by Kevin Whitney of Thomas Buckborough and Associates, speaks volumes of the architect's creativity. Rough-hewn slate steps offer a spot of warmth.



Pill wants to experiment more with sustainable materials, and has begun the process in his studio. He built a slate countertop under the bank of windows as a measure to build up thermal mass, using nature as a way to heat the space. For additional and even heat, Pill used a radiant heated floor, called Resindek, that looks and feels like cork when the tiles are turned upside down.



Even the walls of Pill's studio are uncluttered. As for color, Pill preferred to keep the interior walls clean and bright white, with the exception of one wall painted Pratt & Lambert's "Gladstone" #1713, a serene hue of butter yellow. Above, a simple sculptural touch—metal tie rods on the ceiling

SPECS

THE COST OF CLUTTER

Architect David Pill specifically designed an uncluttered workspace. "Clutter drives me crazy," he says. Pill admits to being neat and orderly, but admits that a too sterile environment makes him feel like he's not working. So, he's struck a balance, often keeping models on the countertop under the window, and filling the conference table with drawings of projects on tracing paper.

Even the furniture in Pill's studio is uncomplicated. The clean aluminum-frame conference table with glass top and straight-edged but colorful chairs form the common space in the atelier. The simple hanging pendant lighting hangs in the air without obstructing views. He even did away with intrusive baseboards and used radiant heated flooring, instead.

"...without clutter to obscure your vision, you will see more clearly..."

Michelle Passoff, author, *Lighten Up! Free Yourself from Clutter*