

Pierre Yovanovitch's Vibrant New York Studio Is More Pied-à-Terre Than Office
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The Parisian designer's first stateside outpost epitomizes his unique design vision—and is a boon for his U.S. fanbase.



Yovanovitch designed the walnut desk that greets visitors in the reception area. Works from Marina Adam's "Magic Square" series of watercolors, from Salon 94 gallery, hang above. In the far corner, Klara Kristalova's 2014 glazed stoneware sculpture Girl and Goose can be glimpsed. Photo: Stephen Kent Johnson

"It's a very long story," AD100 designer Pierre Yovanovitch tells AD PRO. He is not, however, speaking about one of his many subtly chic interiors, known for their ability to marry any given range of materials with a litany of curvilinear shapes. He's also not speaking about the upcoming publication of his first book—a thorough documentation of his oeuvre to date. Instead, Yovanovitch is discussing the inception of his new Manhattan office, which opened earlier this year in a five-story brownstone on a chic stretch of Madison Avenue.



For those familiar with Yovanovitch's work, his expansive 40-person Parisian office might spring to mind. As with many interior designers' offices, that flagship—completed in 2017—serves as a canvas on which Yovanovitch has been able to paint out the inner workings of his design thought process. It's also a place where current and prospective clients can come see his style up close for themselves. Yovanovitch hopes the same of the more intimate (three staffers will be permanently based there) New York outpost—especially as the firm attracts a growing U.S. clientele.

Filling an America-shaped void is not the sole reason this location came to be, however. Yovanovitch, according to the designer, has been coming to New York City since he was very young. In a way, Yovanovitch always hoped—or sensed—that he might have a home or an office here one day. And with him being based in Paris—a city with a rich history of excellent public parks—a location a stone's throw from Central Park made perfect sense.

The realization of this long-held dream, as well as its specifics, has clearly made Yovanovitch very happy. But the undertaking was not without its initial difficulties. "It was very challenging for us to open an office in the U.S.," Yovanovitch says. "Everything is different and quite expensive, and when you work overseas you don't know all the rules. But I pushed to have this office."

A visit to the space illustrates just how much it differs from its 18th century Parisian antecedent on a core, architectural level. "I wanted to feel like you are in New York," Yovanovitch says. "[The office] is very narrow. This type of building you couldn't find in Paris, with this kind of shape." And indeed, the office, which brims with all the warmth and texture of a Yovanovitch-designed residence, might be understood as a pied-à-terre of sorts.

Yovanovitch was also drawn to the space's strong light, and its windows, which lack molding. He chose to mirror the building's rust-colored facade by painting the interior walls a matching hue. That seamless visual transition, as well as the thoughtfully neutral backdrop it provides, allow for Yovanovitch's furniture choices to shine all that much more brightly. There's a mix of his own designs and vintage pieces, all of which work in concert thanks in part to his muted yet never desaturated palette.

Elsewhere, impressive artworks dot the space. The pieces don't speak just to Yovanovitch's own taste, but also to his awareness that his clients tend to be art collectors. It's pragmatic, therefore, for such visitors to get the sense that Yovanovitch would be able to adeptly integrate their own collections into his designs. Doing so isn't a chore or a hiccup but rather a natural part of his creative process.

More practical yet still visually pleasing features persist. Beyond the office's reception area is its true hidden jewel: a materials library in which clients can pull out marble slabs and other stones to make their own tactile investigations. In a way, this room, this cabinet of curiosities, gets to the heart of Yovanovitch's signature approach, in that it allows visitors to experience firsthand how mixing materials is an essential aspect of the designer's work.

Speaking of the office as a whole, Yovanovitch notes, "You understand immediately that it's contemporary but not cold. There's lots of color and ceramics, [as well as] a mix of materials."

Indeed, the same could be said of any current or future Yovanovitch-designed home.