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**INTERIORS
MAKE AN IMPACT**



Micki Washington,
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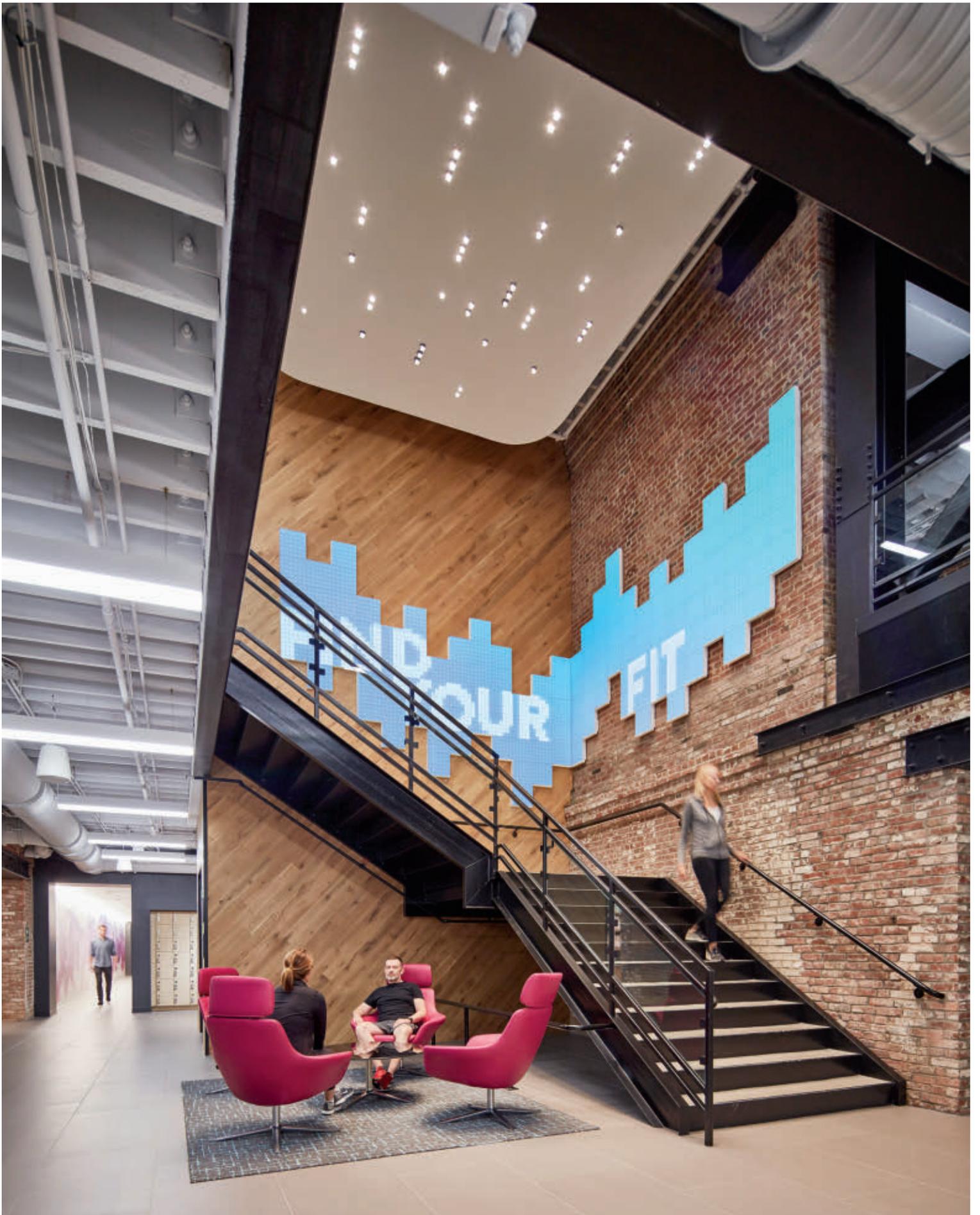


Ali Ucer

IA Interior Architects' experiential graphics design director discusses ways to ensure environments truly engage workers.

By James McCown

A fitness center in Louisville, Kentucky, received an interactive LED feature wall that responds to patrons movements courtesy of Ali Ucer and the team at IA Interior Architects.



Hot List 2021

As the son of an architect and sibling of two brothers who are designers, one graphic and the other industrial, Ali Ucer, creative technology leader of experiential graphics for IA Interior Architects, has design in his blood. In the wake of a global shutdown, he also had the impact that workspaces have on people on his mind.

This preoccupation was apparent in the “Dear Office” project Ucer led for IA. The participatory art installation featured emotional neon signage in IA’s front window conveying “encouraging messages” from its staff to coworkers and to the office itself. The signage Ucer designed carried missives such as “I love seeing everyone in person! —Bob,” “Missing cookie time. —LM,” and “I miss Coco the coffee machine!! —Jen T.”

The Turkish-born graphics specialist has been in New York City for more than two decades, melding his graphics skills and computer savvy while leading the experiential graphics unit for IA. For Ucer, the word “experiential” is key. “It’s experiential graphics, not environmental graphics,” he



IA developed an LED ceiling treatment (above) for a confidential client in the technology space.

IA developed interactive feature walls (below) for a confidential tech client. LEDs and sensors that respond to people’s body movements integrate the graphic treatments into users’ experience of the space.

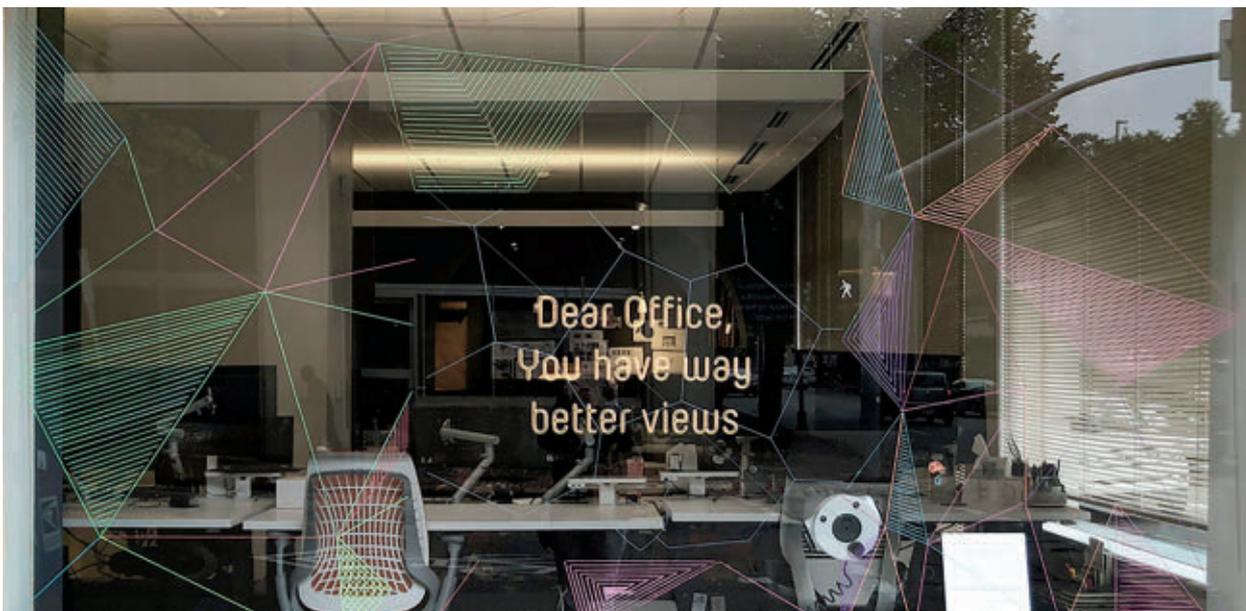
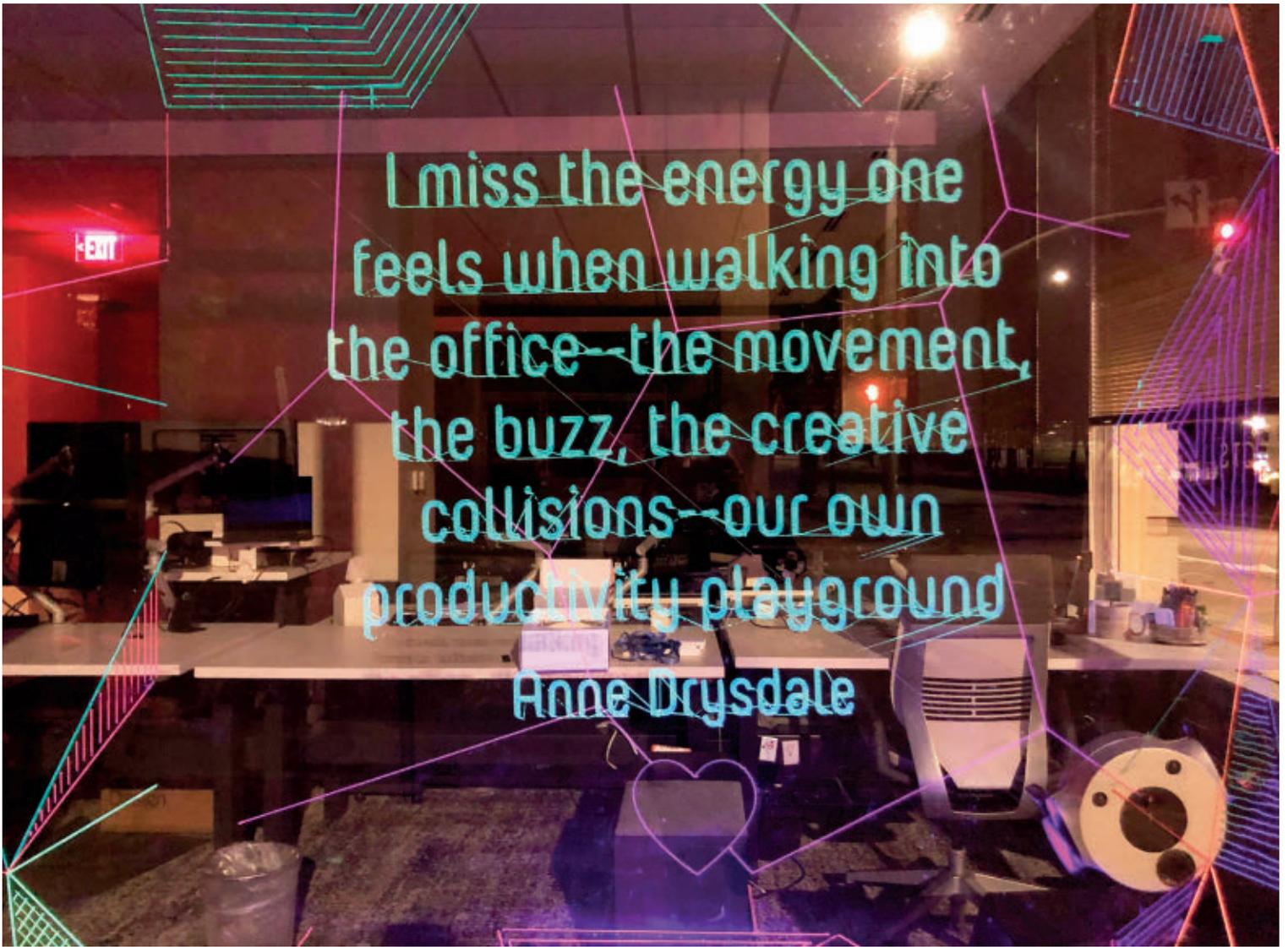
insists. “You’re creating an experience that becomes part of the space.”

Prior to joining IA in 2008, Ucer worked for a who’s who of corporate and digital America: Microsoft, Uber, Red Hat, JPMorgan Chase, and Bank of America are just a few names that stand out on his résumé. “I prefer to work with people who are passionate,” he says. “That may be someone from a start-up, but it also may be someone from a very established company. And it’s not about one person’s particular taste. It’s about the brand. A good company wants people to live and breathe that brand.”

They also want interiors that are healthy for employees to live and breathe in. “Sustainability is our biggest focus right now at IA,” Ucer says. “I won’t spec Red List materials. I won’t do anything that is potentially harmful.” In his more than 20 years as a practitioner, he has become committed to improving his knowledge of chemicals and materials, along with his expertise in technology.

His education uniquely prepared him to send and receive messages—of comfort, trust, safety—using signage and wayfinding design. In Turkey he got his undergraduate degree in industrial design before coming to New York to earn a master’s degree in communication arts at New York Institute of Technology. The institute was so impressed with his student work that it hired him shortly after graduation to be an adjunct professor. Ucer asserts that he is still learning: “School is just the tip of the iceberg,” he concludes. “It’s all a hands-on learning process.” ■





The "Dear Office" project Ucer led for IA showed his commitment to the idea of experiential graphics, and exploring how graphic treatments can be more than window dressing.