



Ha and Yanagishita of Front Studio bring an artistic twist to arch

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Since Front Studio's inception, partners Yen Ha and Michi Yanagishita have made it their business to bring a unique and artistic twist to the profession of architecture.

Ha and Yanagishita met as freshmen at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Together, Ha and Yanagishita are fluent in French, Japanese, and Vietnamese -- to the delight of their international clients. The New York City based architecture and design practice is also one of the few solely Asian-women owned firms in the country.

Founded in 2001, Front Studio possesses a highly diversified client roster that includes The Badge Building Condominium in Long Island City, French Embassy Diplomatic Residences in New York, Fischer-Harling House, AXA Art Insurance Corp. Office, Village Kids Nursery, and the Outdoor Gallery of the City of Gdansk. Front Studio's 2005 renovation of a Manhattan one-bedroom downtown apartment focused on maximizing storage space for a stylish older couple who had amassed a lifetime of books, vinyl records, designer shoes and suits.

Adding to the list of recent projects is the sales center for Urban Green, a residential development in the heart of Williamsburg. An oversized, photo-realistic wall rendering next to the reception area brings the condominium's central courtyard to life.

"We enjoy taking on projects where we can take risks with the space," said Ha. "Anyone can take an empty space and mimic the reigning style, but we are looking to capture the essence of the space, using our minds and imaginations to turn the space into something truly unique for the client."

At the Badge Building, a 44-unit residential condominium in Long Island City, Front Studio recently designed the lobby and all the interiors in the building, including the kitchens and baths.

With a distinctive sense of humor and a keen attention to detail, Ha and Yanagishita are able to take any space and turn it into something that reflects the client but remains loyal to their niche: architecture that portrays effortless fun, drama, and most importantly, their own particular brand of style.

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