

# onOffice

£14

**COFFEE  
IN SPACE**

167



WORDS BY **ALIA AKKAM**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **SHARYN CAIRNS**



# Thing of Beauty

Melbourne's Studio Tate worked with Mecca, Australia's largest premium beauty retailer, to transform mid-century warehouses into a support centre that feels energising, inviting and warm for team members and visitors alike

↑  
Gold and red shades that are a hallmark of Mecca's retail stores also feature in the design of the company's support centre







Walking into one of the 100 or so lively-hued Mecca boutiques across Australia and New Zealand, you'll find loyal customers perusing make-up, skincare and fragrances – some from the brand's own signature line – in an upbeat, welcoming atmosphere. Mirroring that energy is Mecca's new support centre, a union of two mid-century warehouses on the beauty behemoth's campus in the Melbourne suburb of Richmond.

Tapped during the schematic design stage of the project, local practice Studio Tate was beguiled by the two-storey buildings, with their

industrial melange of bricks, breeze blocks and large swaths of glass. The architecture provided "a blank canvas", as Studio Tate associate Anita Zampichelli puts it, for the warm, tactile interiors – hatched in collaboration with Mecca's retail design and development team – that lie beyond. "It's a long, large floorplan, and there are minimal built forms on the façade because there was this idea of bringing transparency to each part of the work floor through the windows," she says.

Showcasing a collaborative environment is representative of the ethos Jo Horgan introduced when she launched Mecca in 1997. Leveraging



← Quirky accessories, vintage pieces and a library of books encourage employees to take time to pause and unwind

↑ Glass walls delineate spaces for meetings without making them feel shut off from the main office



her experience at L'Oréal, Horgan felt the market was ripe for a well-curated, high-touch retail approach to cosmetics, and plunged ahead with her ambitious venture.

To capture the dynamic Mecca spirit in the support centre, workspaces are peppered with casual lounging areas that invite colleagues to gather and converse as if they were in a café. These hangout zones are melded with a central core of spaces dedicated to meetings, also defined by glass walls, and quiet working. Outfitted with sound-absorbing fabric panels,

the hushed retreats "have an intimate feeling", Zampichelli points out. "They are kind of dark, lined with Portuguese cork and are great for what you need them for." There is also a creative room, which is ideal for brainstorming. This space was part of the pre-existing fit-out, but Studio Tate maximised it by incorporating tiered seating. Two softly lit libraries, one on each floor, also encourage staff to unwind with books for a spell.

All of Mecca's shops, says Zampichelli, are emboldened "with strong oranges and reds", so those tones were embraced in the office, ☺

**"There was this idea of bringing transparency to each part of the work floor through the windows"**



↑  
Brown leather banquette seating makes a rich backdrop for the pops of red provided by cushions and vintage Modus swivel chairs



↑  
Existing elements from Mecca's offices, like this Equa 2 chair by Herman Miller, were revived by Studio Tate to give them a new lease of life

## clerkenwell 21-23 design week may



Click here  
to explore

### ADVANTAGES

- Intelligently integrated cable entry
- For standard 80 mm drill hole
- USB A/C charger with 22W fast charging
- Available in different country variants
- Clean surface, concealed mounting screw



More information:  
[www.bachmann.com](http://www.bachmann.com)

FUNCTION MEETS DESIGN

# LOOP IN CHARGE

Clerkenwell Design Week is back.  
Join us in the BACHMANN's showroom!

45 St John Street,  
Clerkenwell, London EC1M 4AN

**BACH  
MANN**  
We power your life.





To maximise natural light, minimal features were allowed to interrupt the glazing of the façade



too. Colourful chairs, expanses of lockers and doors accented with brass detailing are rounded out with jolts of yellow, plum, pink and blue that forge a connection with the palette found in the shops. Mecca, she adds, shunned an aesthetic that was "typical of a workplace, so you see vibrant colours and domestic furniture, including many eclectic, vintage pieces".

Studio Tate's collaborators were essential in bringing these distinctive layers to life. Opting for loose furnishings that could easily be disassembled instead of built-in joinery was

a practical decision, and takes Mecca's need for flexibility into consideration. Among these selections were vintage items, including moody wall lights and a serpentine de Sede DS-600 Snake sofa tucked behind two staircases, which was sourced by design consultant Denise Neri.

Interior stylist Louise Paterson also lent her savvy to the space, which is spruced up with an ever-changing collection of artworks. Joining forces with such experts "is quite uncommon in the commercial world", explains Zampichelli, but she thinks it's wonderful that Mecca was keen ☺

**"Hangout zones are melded with a central core of spaces dedicated to meetings and quiet time"**



↑  
Feeling more like a café than an office space, the casual nature of the design encourages the team to work collectively

→  
A bank of lockers in Mecca's signature orange shade adds warmth and drama to the group space





to thoughtfully sprinkle in finds from yesteryear, culminating in "beautiful settings, like Le Bambole armchairs right out in the open. There are plenty of spots to break away to."

Cool whitewashed brick, concrete and original terrazzo are juxtaposed with earthy leather, laminate and a walnut veneer that spark a dialogue with the furniture pieces. Reinforcing the support centre's sustainable footprint, which is rooted in the notion of reuse, is a rooftop solar array, Tretford carpeting made from cashmere goat hair, a bevy of plants and Comcork flooring,

which is laid out in large tiles and polished. "It was quite a laborious installation process", admits Zampichelli, but a way to get acoustics into a space dominated by an exposed-truss ceiling.

Wellbeing is another facet of Mecca's mission, and in the support centre it's fuelled by the natural light that streams through the façade. Studio Tate intentionally weaved in such touch points as a curving banquette and a communal table alongside the windows, says Zampichelli, urging employees to step away from their desks and "feel the sun on their faces".

**"You see vibrant colours and domestic furniture, including many eclectic, vintage pieces"**



↑  
Chunky retro-style pendants in primary shades of blue and yellow contrast with the orange of the meeting table



↑  
A vintage red tube desk lamp by Anders Pehrson for ateljé Lyktan and DSC 106 stacking chairs by Piretti for Castelli add character to the space

## Innovative, functional and design furniture for office, contract and home

[Click here to explore](#)



marasrLit  
art direction Mara / photo Nava Rapacchiotta