



Rana Florida

CEO, Creative Class Group

Creative Spaces: Where to Find Inspiration

My last [Creative Spaces](#) post featured [4th places](#) those blended venues that are neither home nor office, but places where busy creative workers can alight to connect, exchange ideas, meet, and get some work done.

I made the point that most corporations have yet to adapt their work environments to the Creative Age. Whether they're developing a cutting-edge software program or spearheading the next big medical breakthrough, creative workers need peace and quiet and privacy, but they need social stimulation, and sometimes they just need to release their energy and recharge. Can you do that in a fish bowl-style cubicle? Drab furniture, white walls, no natural sunlight, and bland, boring spaces do little to ignite the imagination.

Here we highlight some of the brave new offices that do celebrate and enable creativity, through design, artwork, and architecture. These spaces aren't necessarily high style -- but all of them promote transparency, flexibility and cater to the new ways of working.

A successful workspace is one that keeps workers productive, inspired, and engaged. A little bit of fun doesn't hurt either. My colleague, [Steven Pedigo](#) and I have had the privilege of [working with](#) and touring some of the ones we feature here.

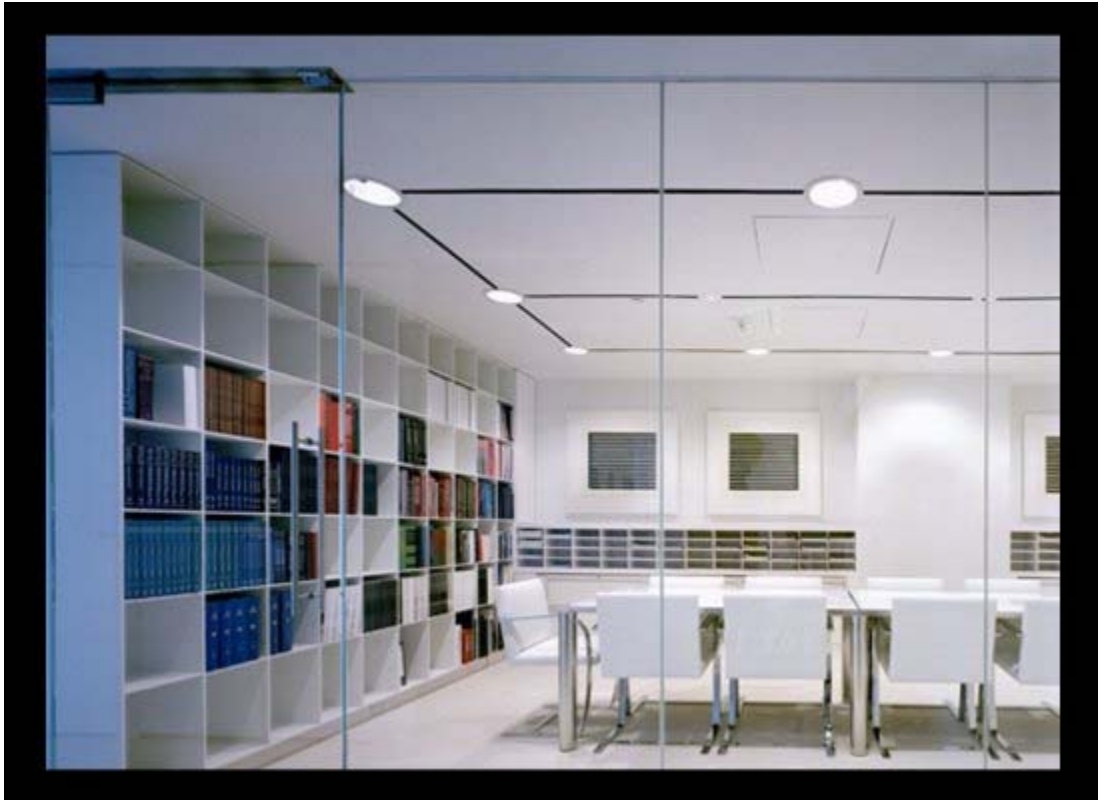
Rubell Family Collection, Miami, Florida



Housed in a 40,000 square foot former Miami warehouse where the DEA once stored seized contraband, the award-winning architect Allan Shulman created a [public gallery](#), a high-level research facility, and a private home for Don and Mera Rubell, whose massive art collection includes works by Andy Warhol, Jeff Koons, and Jean Michel-Basquiat. The house has two identities in essence,” says Shulman, “One aspect is introverted, and the other is extroverted.”

Photo credit: Research Library, Rubell Family Collection, Miami

Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery - Washington, D.C.



Housed in a stunning minimalist space designed by the award-winning architect Hugh Newell Jacobsen and luxuriously furnished with designer furniture, this is [where](#) Washington's power elite goes to receive the most advanced skin care available, from a team of physicians who have collectively published more than 450 scientific papers and textbooks and who are on the faculty of Johns Hopkins and Georgetown University.

Photo credit: Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery

JV8Inc - New York, New York



Casting and movie director Jennifer Venditti's light-filled offices are filled with unconventional touches. But what makes JV8 such a unique place are the people that she seeks out. "What we do," she says, "is find humans that inspire us and others for advertising commercials, art and fashion projects, film and documentaries. Our goal is to expand ideas of beauty in the physical and non-physical sense of the word." Venditti's esthetic has touches of Diane Arbus, David Lynch, and Robert Mapplethorpe—but mostly, it is a celebration of tolerance and acceptance. "That's what life is," she says. "It's opening up to places and experiences that don't make us so comfortable and aren't as obvious in the pre-packaged ways.... There is magic around us all the time."

Photo credit: Salome Oggenfuss

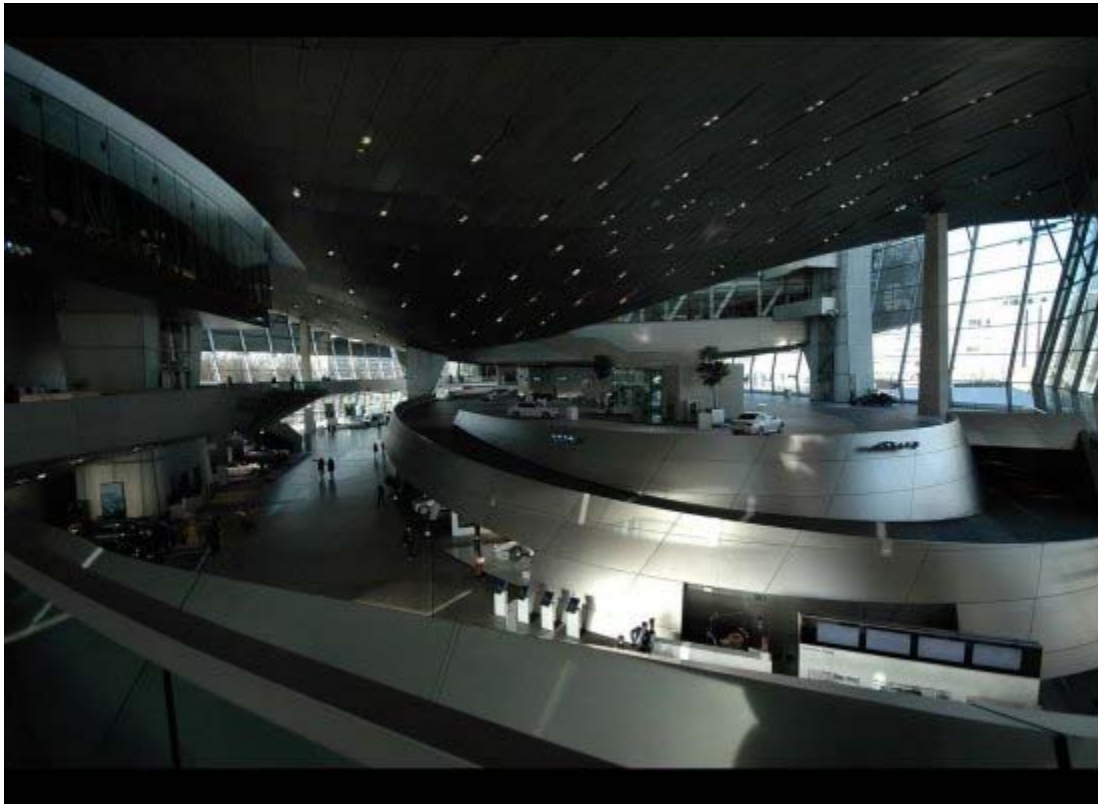
Googleplex - Mountain View, California



The four core buildings that comprise Google's vast California campus are furnished with giant rubber balls and yurt-like enclosures, and feature life-sized replicas of SpaceShipOne and a dinosaur skeleton. There are free laundry rooms, two swimming pools, a sand volley ball court, eleven cafeterias and countless snack kitchens. Solar panels provide a third of the complex's electricity and all of the wood used in its construction was sustainably harvested.

Photo credit: Flickr user caccamo

BMW World Headquarters - Munich, Germany



Designed by the Austrian architect Karl Schwanzer and built between 1968 and 1972 for the Olympics, the quartet of 21 story towers represents a four cylinder engine; the lower building is meant to represent the tire of a racing car. In a tribute to its futuristic qualities, the building complex was featured in the science fiction film Rollerball.

Photo credit: Flickr user herby_crus

Manitoba Hydro Place - Winnipeg, Canada



Twenty-one stories tall and with 695,000 square feet of space, the corporate headquarters of the Manitoba electricity and natural gas utility is one of the greenest, most-energy efficient buildings in the world. The building is sited to take maximal advantage of prevailing winds and solar energy. Green roofs use plants to reduce stormwater runoff; waterfalls humidify the interior and a solar chimney provides fresh air.

Photo credit: Eduard Hueber

Zappos - Las Vegas, Nevada



Starting in 2013, after some \$40 million of renovations, [Zappos](#) will move its corporate headquarters to the former Las Vegas City Hall, which it has leased for 15 years. Zappo's investment goes well beyond office space—it is working with local developers to secure affordable housing for employees, has sunk money into the local arts and music scene, and more. Forbes dubbed Zappos precedent-setting effort “corporate neo-urbanism”: it is adapting a whole city to its purposes, to its employees’, its shareholders’, and the city’s benefit.

Photo credit: Zappos

Turning Torso - Malmo, Sweden



54 stories and 623 feet high, Malmo, Sweden's most famous landmark is the tallest building in Scandinavia. Designed by the Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava after one of his own sculptures, the building mostly houses luxury apartments. Its two lowest cubes, however, are office space, including the headquarters for the home builder [HSB Malmo](#).

Photo credit: Flickr user mirko junge

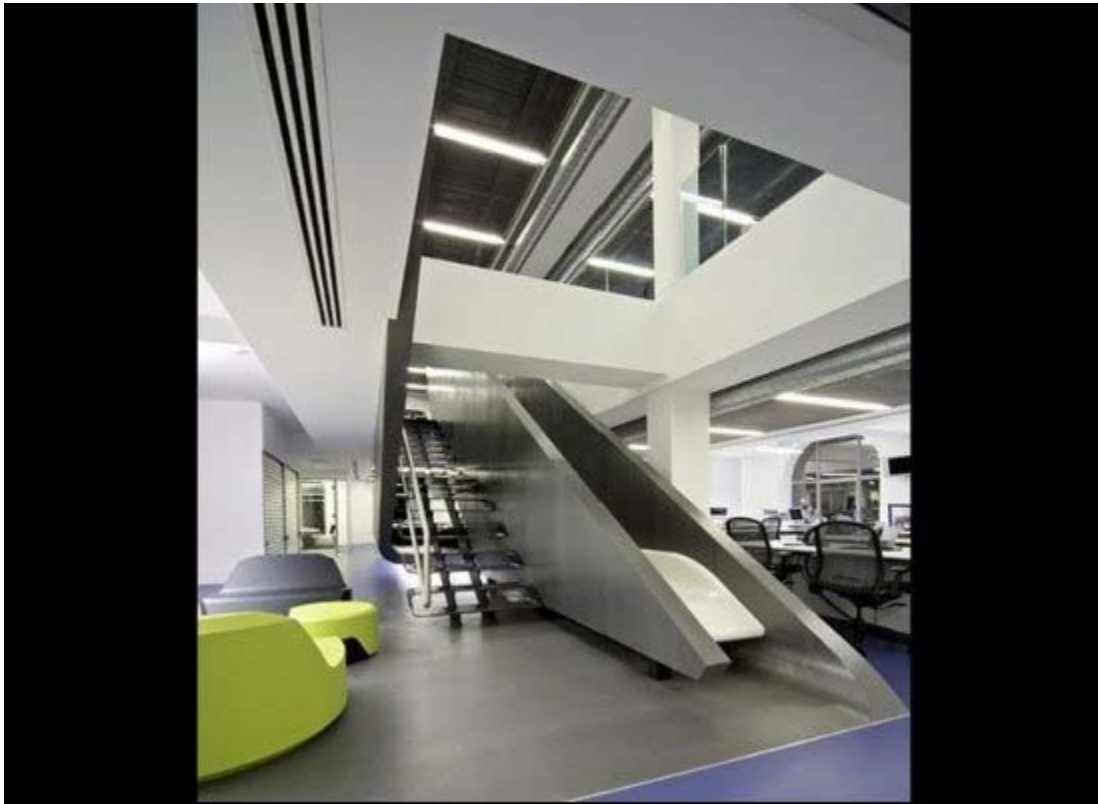
Pixar Headquarters - Emeryville, California



Steve Jobs commissioned Bohlin Cywinski Jackson to design the Pixar campus. The heart of the facility is a large atrium that acts as a central piazza. Facing it are the offices, a 600-seat theater designed to THX standards and two forty-seat screening rooms. The piazza includes a lobby, a café, and a fitness center. The qualities of light, space, landscaping and architecture facilitates a cutting edge yet comfortable, human-scaled workplace.

Photo credit: Flickr user satomiichimura

Red Bull HQ - London, England



[Red Bull's](#) brand proposition is all about youth and energy, so when Jump Studios set out to amalgamate two contiguous offices into one, they connected them with slides and a floating staircase. Startlingly biomorphic, filled with amenities like ping pong tables, lounges, and a bar and café, Red Bull's ultra-kinetic space is as super-stimulating as its product.

Photo credit: Flickr user Veerle

Martin Prosperity Institute - Toronto, Ontario



Located in a former hospital building in Toronto's MaRS Discovery District (which stands for Medical and Related Sciences), the [Martin Prosperity Institute's](#) space was designed by Detroit-area architect Christian Unverzagt of M1/dtw in collaboration with [Richard Florida](#) and Kevin Stolarick. All materials in the office (bamboo, cork, glass) are renewable. It was conceived of as a creative, open space where surfaces can be creatively engaged, and where the spaces are flexible in terms of how they can be used.

Photo credit: M1/DTW

Segas Cano Architecture Office - Madrid, Spain



Built in a ravine near Madrid, the Selgas Cano Architecture firm's sleek metal and glass offices are sunk into the ground. Seen from the outside, the effect is a bit like a minimalist cave, open to the woods and sky. Some critics opine that its employees must feel like rats in a test tube; others marvel at how seamlessly its space is integrated with the surrounding landscape.

Photo credit: Flickr user toodleson selgas

Vodafone Portugal Headquarters - Porto, Portugal



Designed by the Portuguese architectural firm Barbosa & Guimarães, the building, the architects explain, “is a shell of concrete irregular shapes, forming a kind of mosaic that plays with the acute forms of the glass, becoming a unique and formidable piece of art. The geometric forms full of movement seems to dance and convey the Vodafone idea: Vodafone Life, Life in Motion.”

Photo credit: Flickr user mgyselr