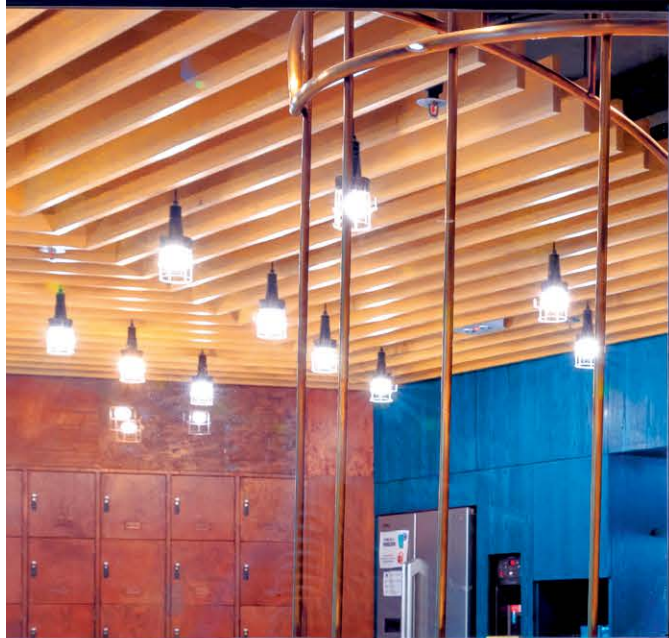


ARCHITECTURE | DESIGN | PEOPLE

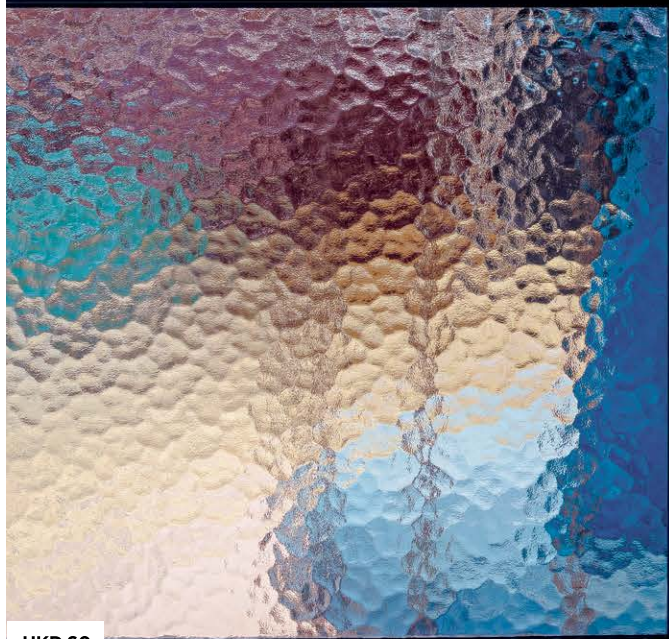
# PERSPECTIVE

NOVEMBER 2018



## WORK IN PROGRESS

CO-WORKING TRENDS  
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THE SHAPE OF OFFICES  
NEW SPACE PLAYERS

COMMUNAL HOMES  
CO-LIVING IN THE CITY



LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL  
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The panoramic sweep of the Morgan Sky Duplex encompasses both the greenery of The Peak and the skyscrapers of Central



Heidar Sadeki

# CINEMATIC VISIONS

BY REBECCA LO

Heidar Sadeki draws on his early filmmaking training to imbue his interior architecture projects with drama, character, narratives and an aura

Photo: The Morgan; Jlit Ma Common Studio Limited

Storytelling courses strongly through Heidar Sadeki’s veins. Born into a literary Persian family and growing up in the intellectual climate of Shiraz prior to the Iranian Revolution in the late ’70s, the young Sadeki was an avid reader by the age of eight. Many of his older friends were studying film and literature. Further influenced by his home country traditions of shisha-infused storytelling in working-class teahouses and street theatre performed against painted screens, he knew from an early age that he wanted to share his own, singular narratives.

“I read Gabriel García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* shortly after it was published,” Sadeki recalls. “It had an incredible influence on me, and I thought I would be a writer. Those street-theatre screens depicting different episodes – they were very architectural. The performers

would explain the action and take on the characters shown on the screen.”

Leaving Iran for America at the age of 18, Sadeki originally studied cinema at Purchase State College, New York State, followed by Mercer County Community College, New Jersey. After a stint as an assistant cameraman, Sadeki soon grew disillusioned with the Hollywood dream. “Only a small number of cinema students become filmmakers,” he says. “The rest work in production, unless they are well-connected to someone famous in Hollywood. The smallest budget for a movie is in the millions of dollars. Not many producers are willing to trust a young filmmaker with that kind of cash. After working in the industry for a while, I became frustrated.”

Sadeki enrolled in graduate studies at Princeton University’s School of Architecture without intending to ever practise architecture. “The pedagogy at the time was



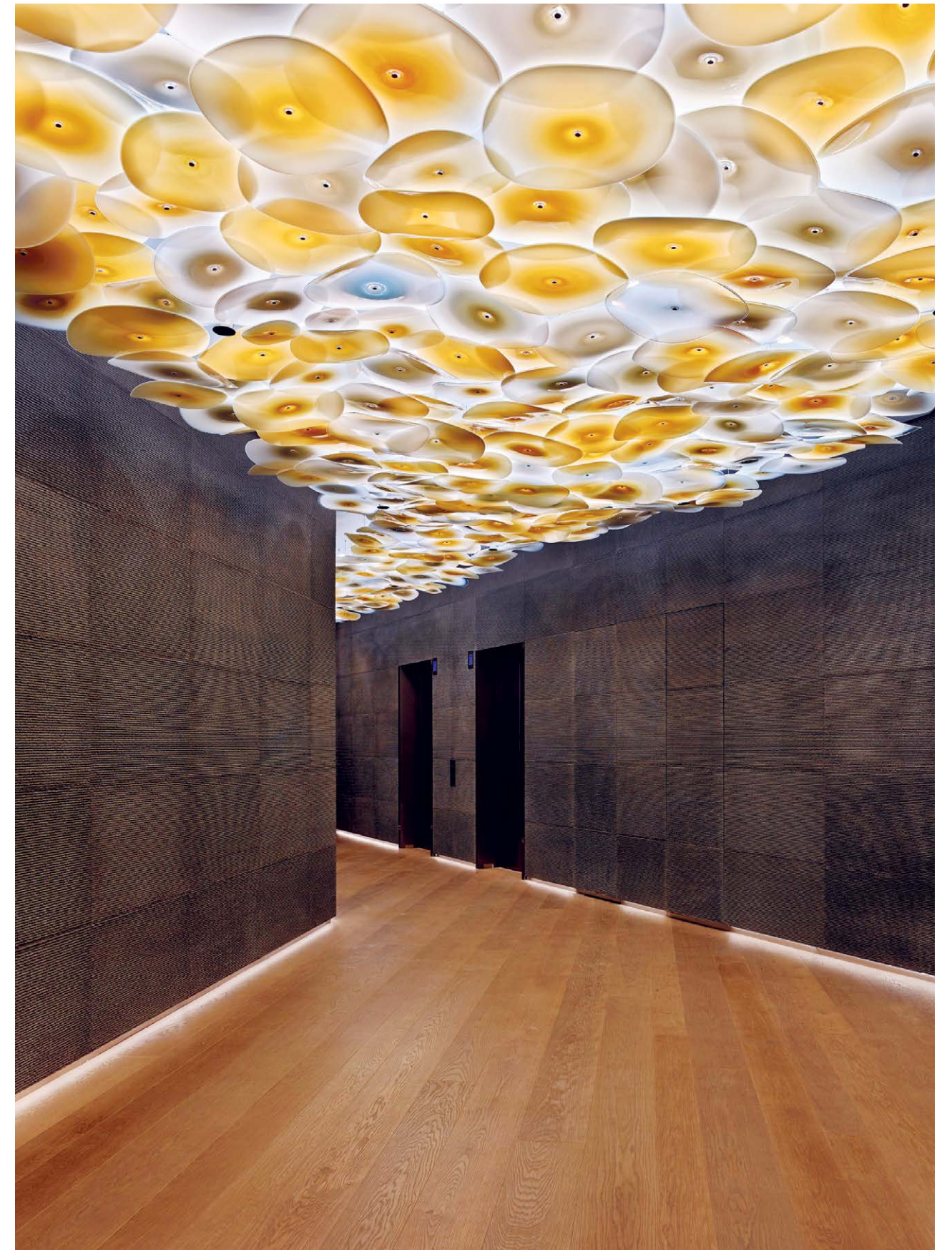


Co-stars: Free-standing bath and marble bench in the personal spa at The Morgan Sky Duplex

extremely loose,” he recalls. “Students could choose what they wanted to work with and create non-traditional architecture. I produced videos, and this was equally acceptable as architectural course work: for example, I did a project based on the movie *Dead Ringers*. None of my projects were spaces that could be entered; they were mostly cinematic sets. I never considered myself to be a good architect. In fact, I was somewhat intimidated by architecture. I was more drawn to the purity of the creative approach.”

After meeting fellow Princeton classmate Clarissa Richardson in school, the two embarked on a professional partnership in 1999 with Bliss Spa in Manhattan as Richardson Sadeki’s first client. Sadeki maintains that due to his background, he cannot separate his way of thinking as a filmmaker from how he designs as an interior architect. “I see through a cinematic lens that cannot be removed,” Sadeki confesses. “For me, every space that I design has an aura. Architecturally, it’s about the narrative of the space. You are the cinematographer. The characters are the living room, the entrance, the balcony. Drama is created through light

Photo: JLit Ma Common Studio Limited



Sadeki designed interiors of 80 suites and two penthouses in Swire Properties’ Taikoo Place Apartments in Hong Kong that features the dramatic Petal Path lighting by Lasvit





The Tea Lounge of Reach, a mixed-use development in Miami's financial district, uses natural materials to avoid clichés of the city

and shadow. What is the nature of this bedroom? Clues tell you that it's the nature of the young girl who occupies it. By thinking of spaces as characters in a movie, I create an aura."

Sadeki's most recent marquee headliner is a 218sqm (2,343sqf) duplex on the 28th and 29th floors of The Morgan, a Robert A M Stern-designed luxury residence on Conduit Road in Hong Kong from Phoenix Property Investors. The interiors are inspired by contrasts: the greenery of Victoria Peak with the skyscrapers of Central. "My challenge was how to negotiate the relaxed greenery of the south with the super-fast urban fabric of the CBD," Sadeki recalls. "I partly opened the wall between the dining area and the kitchen, to continue the visual trajectory all the way through the north-south axis. The colours of the living area are inspired by The Peak: the blues, pistachios and greens of nature. The dining room, which is closer to Central, is more urban: blacks, golds and velvets. This rich dichotomy exists throughout the flat." The white-marble-clad kitchen

contains a breakfast nook where floor-to-ceiling glazing places the city at the owners' feet.

Upstairs, the leading lady is the master bedroom, where she awaits ever-ready for her close up. Connecting the two levels is a travertine clad wall and staircase, to echo the cladding of the building's facade. Inspired by Turkish hammams, Sadeki created a tepid room where owners can lounge in gentle humidity prior to bathing. A freestanding bathtub flanked by a pair of marble stone benches looks out to the pastoral views of the hillside, while a floating wall separates the bedroom from the bathroom. "The bed appears to float in front of an exterior wall – the wall shared by the bedroom and staircase," explains Sadeki. "The bedroom is a series of layers: from the openness of the bath, to the more private area of the bed, to the stone enclosure of the stairs." Reverse knife-edged shelves and counters help horizontal surfaces to dematerialise further, allowing the layers to become more apparent.



For the show flats of Rise Residences in Miami, Richardson Sadeki provided all lighting, drapery, bedding, artwork and accessories

Having worked with Swire Properties since 2010, Richardson Sadeki also recently completed residences Reach and Rise in the hip Brickell City Centre in Miami. The firm designed every aspect, imbuing its tea lounge, children's playroom and hammam with glamour through natural materials, clever lighting and sumptuous fabrics. "Our design approach, as it pertains to Miami as a community, was to reject all false clichéd images of what Miami is about," says Sadeki. "A large number of the residents are from South American countries with rich cultures and deep roots in art, architecture, literature and cinema. Our work here was tailored towards a sophisticated audience with appreciation for good art and design."

Unlike many of his peers, Sadeki presents ideas to clients in large storyboard format rather than from a laptop or tablet screen. The practice comes from his preference for handling the smooth texture of paper rather than scrolling

up and down on a smart phone. "In our studio, every person has three 30-inch screens to work with," Sadeki notes. "I am uncomfortable with a seven-inch wide display. I enjoy flipping back and forth a book's pages. I can leave a finger on a certain page that I wish to return to. It's the same as looking at a physical model, where I can peer at it from all sides or concentrate on certain details. If I present a project digitally, I would need to show 30 screens, so that my client can see how the plan, elevations, sections and perspectives all come together."

With an office in Hong Kong and more than a decade working in the city, Sadeki's biggest pet peeve is the city's lack of decent English-language bookstores where he can escape for a little inspiration. "I tend to do my best work when I'm on an airplane," he says, with a grin. "When I'm on the ground, I like to browse through fashion and art books, to look at something beautiful." ■

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