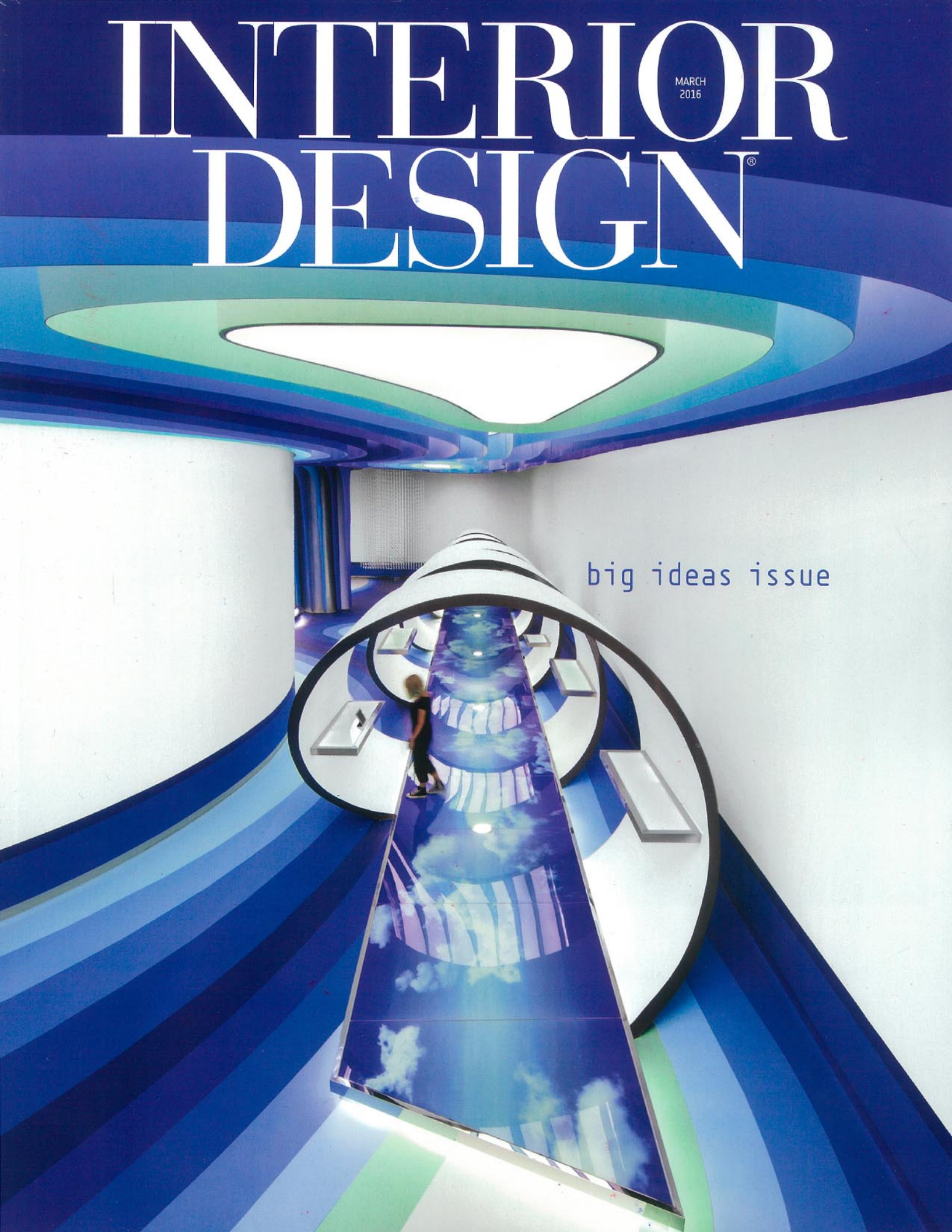
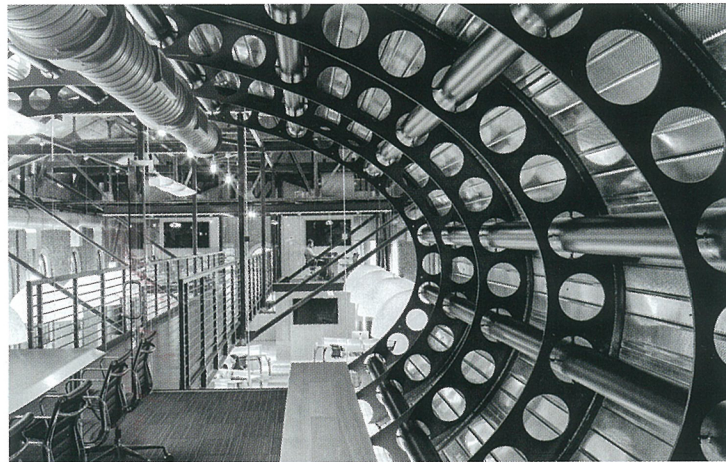


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big ideas issue





It seemed like a reasonable plan to top brass at Kayak Software Corporation, developer of the similarly named travel Web site. Executives requested a real airplane fuselage be craned into the company's new headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut, for use as a conference room. What they didn't consider was the fact that the location, a 1928 police building by "Yale Gothic" architect James Gamble Rogers, enjoys landmark protection. "We couldn't break a hole in that facade," Beinfield Architecture's Bruce Beinfield explains. The disassembly option promised to be equally problematic.

So much for literalizing the metaphor of jet travel? Not so fast. In the vaulted upper reaches of the 18,000 square feet, Beinfield built a bold simulacrum with steel trusses mirroring the original ones holding up the roof.

The faux fuselage cross section started as curved structural ribs of perforated steel. They were sheathed in corrugated steel roofing, which was then surfaced with polished sheet aluminum. "Just like an airplane," principal Mark Goodwin notes. Only a bit wider and flatter for added floor area inside. To get there, staffers cross a bridge of Douglas fir planks and open a door in the conference room's glass front. Beneath the fuselage, glass walls also enclose the café, its convex ceiling the literal underbelly of the beast. —Craig Kellogg

cruising altitude

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