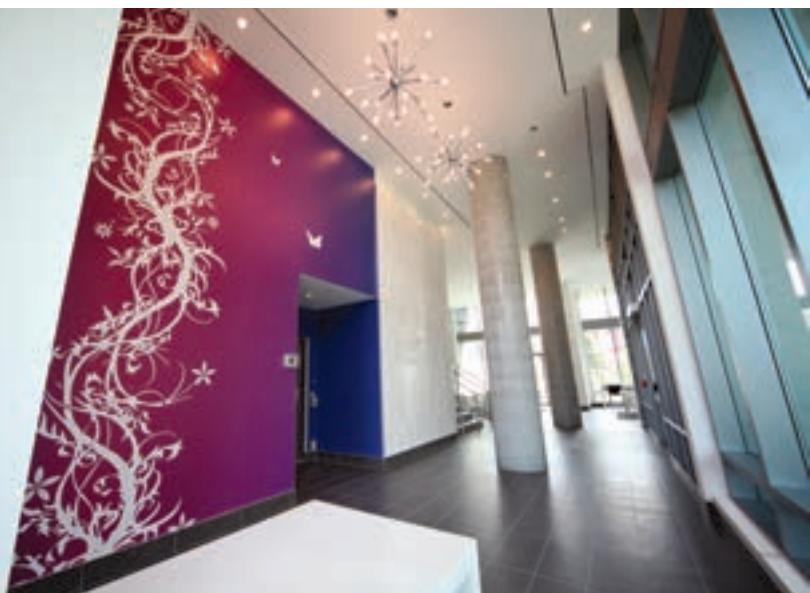




THE HEART OF URBAN COOL

IDC's Sarah Bradbury speaks with Azen Bongard of Studio 8 Design Inc. about Liberty On The Park



Liberty Village pulses with the energy of the young and hip. Trendy urbanites flock to this formerly industrial area which, in the last 10 years, has seen rapid residential and commercial development. At the heart of it all is Liberty on the Park. Azen Bongard, ARIDO Registered member and partner at Studio 8 Design Inc., designed the 15-storey building to reflect this new sense of community. With its inviting common spaces, playful fusion of natural elements, funky design, and modern finishes, this condo makes its mark on this cool pocket of the city.

Could you tell us a bit about your background?

I have always loved design and knew quite early on that I wanted to be an interior designer. I did a four-year degree in interior design at OCAD, and went on to work at several high profile firms for 10 years before starting my own company. Studio 8 Design was created seven years ago, and we specialize in condos and luxury residential work.

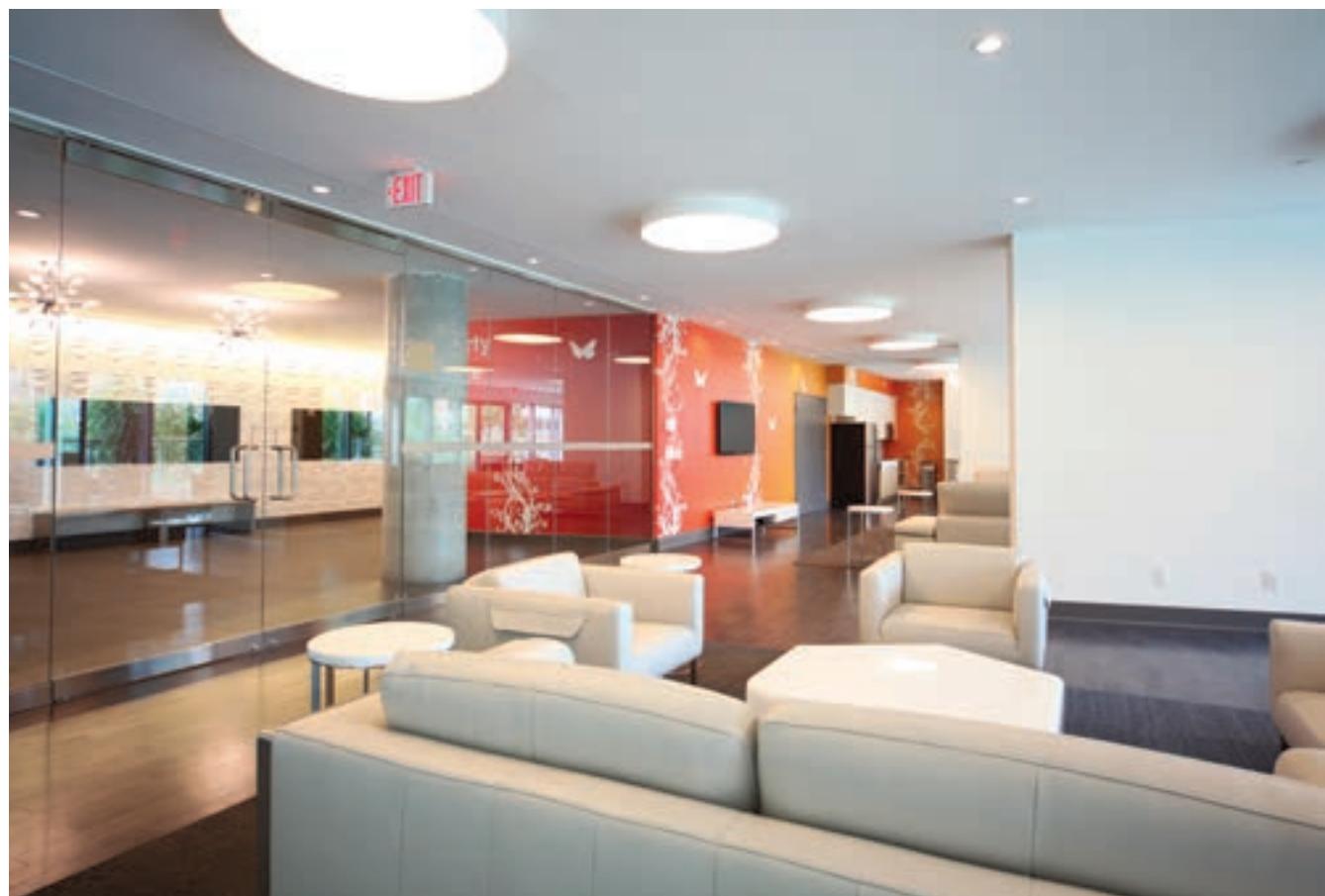
How did you and your firm get involved with this project?

The developer for this building is CanAlfa. We have worked together successfully on other condo buildings and just loved working with them because they have a dedication to create well designed buildings that go beyond the ordinary.

How did you decide on a theme or concept for this project?

We designed this project for a young, cool, and hip audience with an appreciation for modern design. The concept was very much influenced by the site of the development, overlooking a

beautiful park, and the marketing which was very graphic and bold. With the park as inspiration, we decided to incorporate flowers, vines, and natural elements in a graphic way. The pendant lights on the ground floor are reminiscent of a dandelion gone to seed. The "seeds" are picked up in the wall panels in the lobby, and in the main corridor, the wall panels are a repeating flower pattern. The client wanted a very colourful, vibrant, and modern look which was achieved through creating custom wall graphics for the common areas.





How did the location of the project affect the design?

Liberty Village has become a mecca for young people who want cool spaces that aren't stuffy or boring. This allowed us to play with colour and modern elements that might otherwise be too bold.

What were some unique features and materials used in this project?

One of the unique features of this building is that all of the amenity spaces are on the ground floor and they are all viewable from the lobby — and from outside. This gives the building a really open and community-oriented feel. To make the most of this, we decided to create large custom wall graphics for this project so that the personality of the interior can be seen from the outside. The oversized graphics really define the space and give it a unique identity.

Can you explain how interior design affects the lifestyle of the client?

This building is a great example of how common areas in a condo get used more when they are visible and welcoming. We have found that the people living in this building use the amenity spaces constantly — not just for parties. Instead of everyone retreating to their private units, more gathering and interacting occurs in the communal spaces, which greatly improves the lifestyle of the people living there.

How does this project reflect your overall design aesthetic and philosophy?

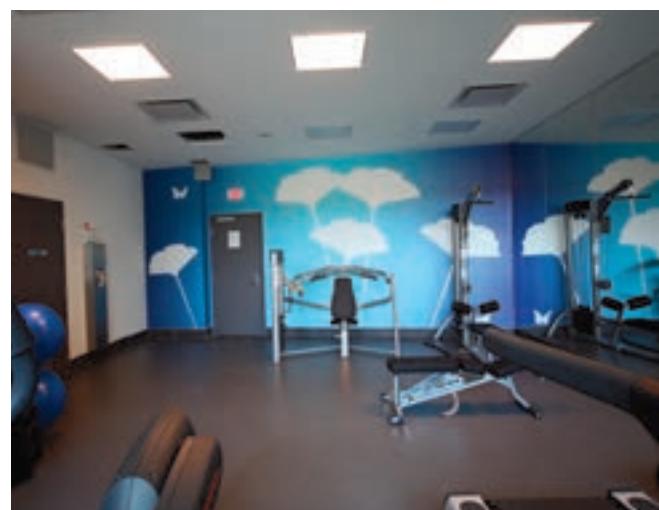
We really feel that each project should have its own personality and be designed for its own target market. It is important to us that our work is unique and inspiring, and that the spaces we design are welcoming and user-friendly. This project is a great example of all of these qualities.

What is the most challenging part of what you do?

Tight timelines and budget constraints are common challenges in interior design work. We see it as our job to use creativity and ingenuity to make the budget stretch as far as it can.

What advice would you give to young designers who are just starting out?

My advice for young designers is to gain as much experience as you can. So much of what we learn happens outside of the classroom; there is so much to learn in our industry. Interior design is an extremely rewarding and amazing field and I feel lucky every day to be able to do what I love. **CL**



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