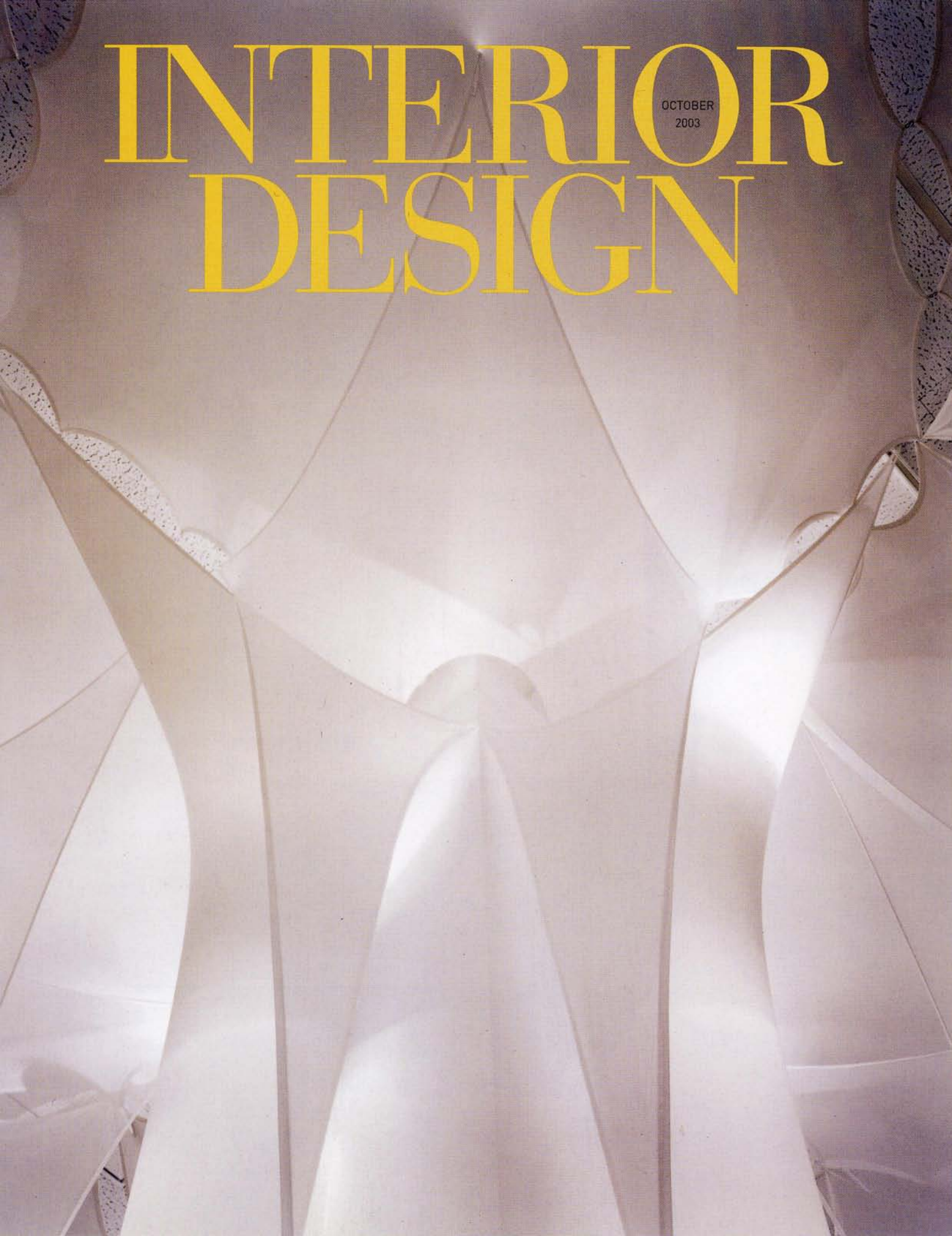


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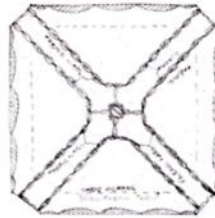






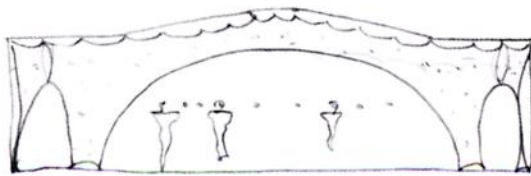
centerfold

PERCHED ON THE 48TH FLOOR of a New York high-rise, fashion designer Elie Tahari's headquarters overlooks Bryant Park through wraparound windows, and practically every single corner comes with million-dollar city views. In the center of the floor plate, however, a windowless showroom offers a dramatic vista of a different kind. A sculptural fabric installation by Gisela Stromeyer Designs supplies billowing cumulus clouds and a sunny glow, rain or shine.



A fourth-generation German tent maker, Stromeyer creates interiors of machine-washable stretch nylon-spandex. "I've always loved the philosophy of the tent," says Tahari. "The airiness and lightness are so uplifting." In the 1,200-square-foot Tahari showroom, Stromeyer's floor-to-ceiling swaths form four pie-shape tents that define separate display areas for regal stretch shift dresses and corporate-sexy wool skirts. The tents disguise infrastructure, too. To cloak a structural column supporting stereo equipment and fluorescent spotlights, Stromeyer used a double layer of fabric, a treatment that creates the impression of ethereal light emanating from the column itself. [Strategically placed openings along the interior layer accommodate the inevitable bulb burnout.] Stainless-steel hooks attach the tents to the column, the walls, and the ceiling, while 25-pound magnetic disks anchor the fabric to the white vinyl floor.

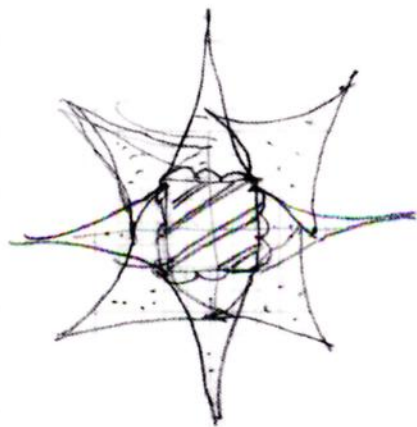
The weights were intended as a temporary solution, to help determine where more permanent anchors should be installed, but the staff loved reconfiguring the layout. As Stromeyer explains, "The system makes it easy to change the shape and location of the tents." Or to do away with them completely. If a division isn't needed, she adds, "You can just unhook them and toss them in the closet." That comes in handy during fashion week, when buyers trade line sheets for lychee martinis. —Mairi Beautyman



quite a stretch

Gisela Stromeyer Designs pulls out the stops at Elie Tahari's New York showroom

TABLE: KNOLL. CHAIRS: ARPER. FLOORING: LONSEAL. LIGHTING CONSULTANT: DAVID APFEL LIGHTING DESIGN.



MICHAEL MORAN

Left: Machine-washable woven stretch nylon-spandex divides a windowless space at the center of the floor plate into four fashion showrooms. When openness is needed, the tents detach and stow away.

Gatefold: Magnetic weights anchor the fabric to the vinyl floor; stainless-steel hooks attach the fabric to walls and ceiling.

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BUSINESS INFORMATION

Gisela Stromeyer Designs
269 Hardenburg Rd.
Ulster Park NY, 12487
Tel: 845.658.8413
Tel: 212.406.9452
Fax: 845.658.7681
www.stromeyerdesign.com