

QUIRK



BUSINESS GETS PLAYFUL AT QUICKEN LOANS' HQ

BY REBECCA POWERS / PHOTOS BY DAVE BURK/HEDRICH BLESSING LTD.



Rossetti trusted Ferrante Manufacturing Co. to produce custom cabinetry for The Qube. The architectural millwork fabricator has been in business since 1946, and specializes in custom woodworking, seating, cabinetry, and commercial furnishing. "Rossetti is one of the easiest firms to work with," says Daniel Friedel, Ferrante's vice president. "They really take the time to explain their vision."

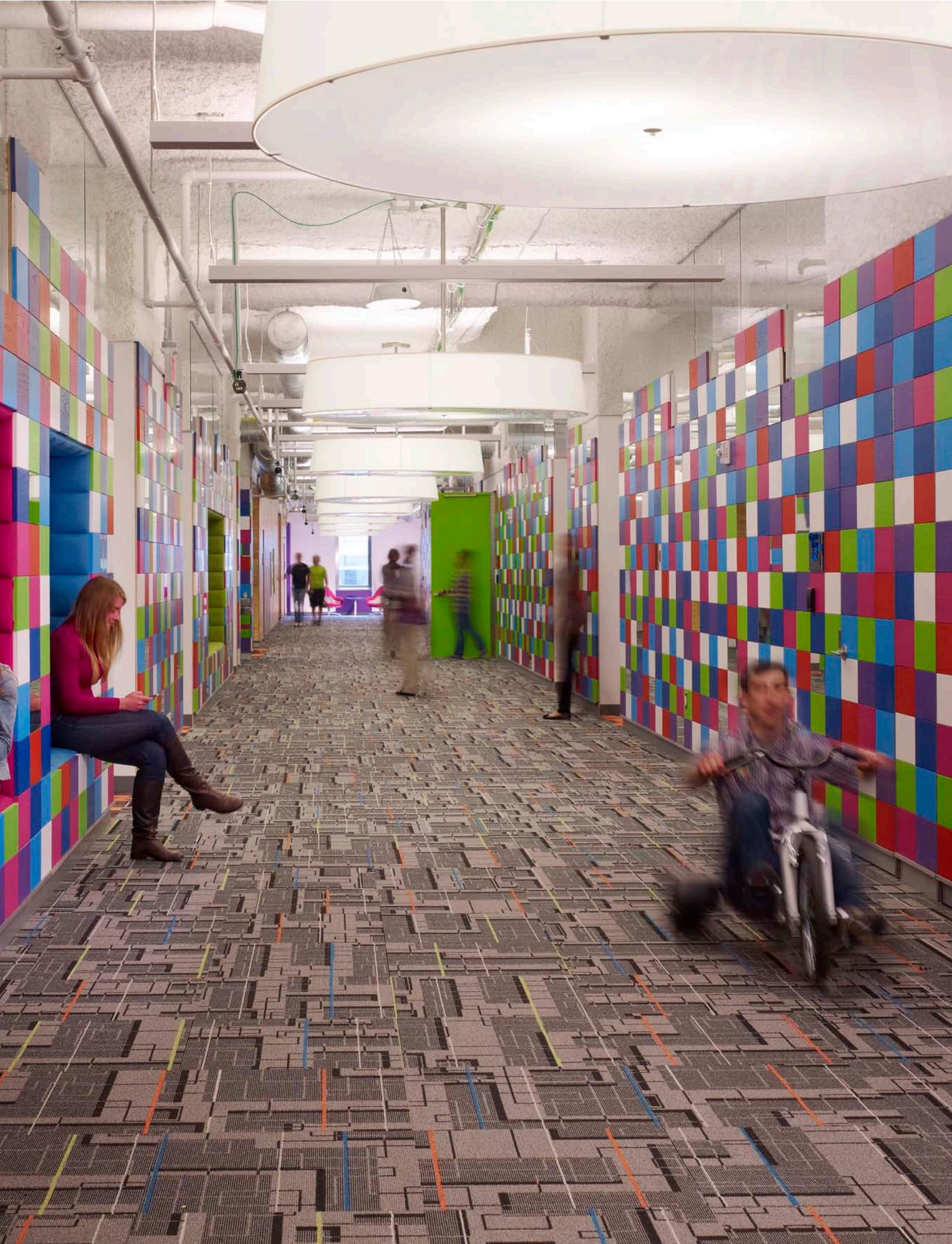
Among the 20-plus downtown properties he has acquired in the last two years is the 14-floor, 500,000-square-foot Chase Tower, Quicken Loans' colorful new office space known as The Qube, where the employee cafeteria is called Qzine. (If "brought to you by the letter Q" comes to mind, you get the drift—Quicken Loans' corporate culture is unabashedly youth-oriented.)

The Qube occupies a modernist Albert Kahn Associates-designed structure built in 1959. But the interior of the stylistically restrained, mid-century edifice is more *Pee-wee's Playhouse* than *Mad Men*. That decor is the result of a risk-embracing collaboration between Quicken and metro Detroit-based architecture, planning, and interior design firm Rossetti.

The appearance of an acid green painted ceiling in the sunlit, marble-floored Chase Tower lobby was the first clue to casual observers that something different was afoot. Within five months, The Qube was nearly complete and had interior design groupies talking (in some cases, clucking).

As it turns out, the green was just the beginning. "It's like the White House," says Kelly Deines, Rossetti's director of creative design and lead project designer for The Qube. "Every room has a color." Colors include cyan blue, orangey-red, lime, and a purple-pink-red. The palette reflects the man at the top: Gilbert's affection for brilliant tones and bright illumination is well documented.







Left: Qzine's floor-to-ceiling columns are oversize sculptural elements coated in "writable" paint. "[They're] exploded Noguchi forms," Deines says. Although physically impressive, they also provide a visual break, as do the white perimeter walls.



CRUISING THE ELEVATOR MIMICS THE VIDEO GAMING EXPERIENCE, WITH DOORS SLIDING OPEN AT EACH STOP TO REVEAL A NEW "LEVEL."

The floors are also distinguished by gaming themes. "Video games are unedited worlds of interior design," says Deines. Cruising The Qube via elevator mimics the gaming experience, with doors sliding open at each stop to reveal a new "level." There's a textural expanse of shimmering sequins on nine; on eight, a pruned shrubbery wall appears.

Comfort was also a consideration. "Our design staff studied what people gravitate toward, where they feel comfortable," says Denise Drach, Rossetti's director of business development and marketing. Because there's no place like home, the team created a version of a living room, patio, and den in the building. The Qzine cafeteria is the spot for comfort food. "So many cafeterias are used 11 AM to 2 PM and after that, they're useless, big spaces," Deines says. "This is sort of a 24/7 space." In addition to featuring a coffee bar and candy bar, Qzine has a ventless ribbon fireplace and contemporary wingback chairs that accommodate personal cell phone breaks.

Even business spaces are dressed down. It's not uncommon to see coworkers tossing footballs near a sea of headset-wearing staffers stationed at sit-to-stand desks. The carpet in at least one work area reveals skid marks from an EVO scooter provided for staff use—same as the foosball tables, video



games, and TV-equipped kitchens, where slushies, cappuccinos, and popcorn all are free. (No wonder Quicken requested a durable interior.)

"Stimulating" is the word Deines uses to describe the visual extravaganza. It's a look, says Quicken Loans' director of facilities Melissa Price, that meets the company's need to compete with Google and Facebook. "If this isn't for you," she says of the office, "I don't know that our culture would be." ❧