

HOTshots

Clockwise from top left: Quartzite tops the 25-foot-long counter. A custom steel handle provides access to an ADA-compliant elevator. LED and acrylic signage, also custom, was added to the existing storefront. Synthetic microfiber upholsters the built-in banquette. Husband-and-wife Adam Frampton and Karolina Częcdek are the principals of Only If Architecture.

Although they met while working at the Office for Metropolitan Architecture in Rotterdam, Netherlands, Adam Frampton and Karolina Częcdek had never worked on a project together. That changed when Frampton, 38, moved to New York in 2013 to found Only If Architecture, with 32-year-old Częcdek joining soon after. The principals, now married, have spearheaded a slew of local projects, from a miniscule coffee shop in Manhattan to a 24-mile plan for a Brooklyn-Queens corridor. "We try to make connections across scales," Częcdek explains. The architects tend toward the cerebral—Frampton is an adjunct assistant professor at Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and

Preservation, Częcdek a Fulbright Scholar—and admit the ongoing influence of Rem Koolhaas's rigor. "But we're also trying to invent a new language of our own," Frampton adds.

Witness their design for the City of Saints Coffee Roasters Bryant Park Café, the boutique brand's third location in New York. Its dominating palette derives from the seafoam color of the fiberglass grating typically used for platforms on oil rigs, and utilized here for the first time as part of a company-wide rebranding effort. "We deliberately avoided the coffee-house clichés of subway tile and reclaimed wood," Frampton says. Which explains the actual examples of the grates for the café's dropped ceiling. A centrally located counter, its quartzite top in a coordinating minty green, organizes guests circulating through the tidy 900 square feet in an orderly looped choreography Rem would be proud of. —Georgina McWhirter

shades of meaning

firm: only if architecture

project: city of saints coffee roasters bryant park café, new york

"We approach interiors as architects, interested in paring down instead of adding" —Karolina Częcdek

