

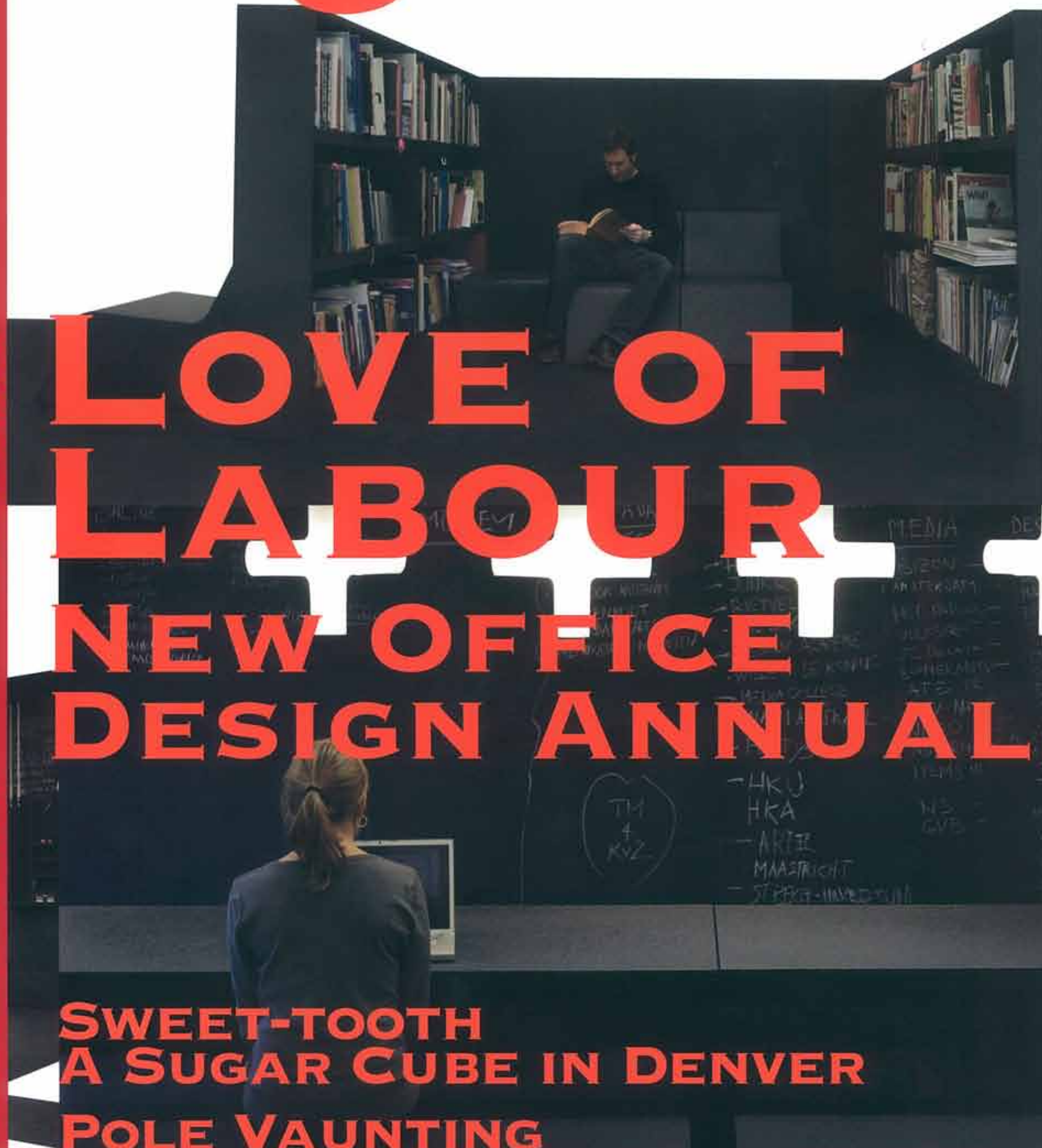
DESIGN IN FOCUS

# hinge

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# BLACKBOARD INC – WASHINGTON DC

Hickok Cole Architects



A corporation aimed at connecting students, faculty, researchers and academic communities through the use of technology, Blackboard Inc wanted their new 112,000sq ft headquarters to reflect those same qualities of communication and collaboration as well as the corporation's brand identity and entrepreneurial spirit.

Hickok Cole Architects took their cue from Blackboard's core users (educators) and carved out a space that mimics the layout of a college campus. Two separate wings of the building are connected by a common area comprising pantries, copy area, mailroom. Employees can choose their own path of circulation around these elements, in much the same way students move across a college campus.

A glowing central stair, linking the two wings and connecting three floors, is the epicenter of activity and contact among employees. Other meeting spaces designed for greater privacy are located further away from the common areas. The corridors on each floor house phone closets and wellness rooms, and are coated in slick white Venetian plaster inspired by the finish of a piece of chalk. On the sixth floor, partitions with waterfall-like motifs shift back and forth along a wide corridor, guarding the entrances to the working studios and at the same time creating spaces for team discussions by equipping the rooms with white boards to scribble on during brainstorming sessions.

One of the nifty features HCA incorporated in their design to push Blackboard's brand is the use of chalkboard sidelights. These are placed on every office door, enabling employees to communicate easily within the office. Full erasers and other materials can be mounted on the wall like brickwork, providing an informal and convenient space for tacking up materials during team discussions.



Photography by Adrian Wilson

