



Bergen, Frida Escobedo's first residential project in New York. DARCSSTUDIO

ARCHITECTURE

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While continuing with the design process for the expansion of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, MET, the office of Mexican architect Frida Escobedo shares the first views of her new and ambitious residential project in New York.



By Rebeca Vaisman

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The seven-level, almost 19,500-square-meter volume represents **Mexican architect Frida Escobedo's first residential design** in New York. The **Bergen building**, in Boerum Hill, will offer 105 apartments, from studios to five-bedroom duplexes; In addition, it includes common indoor and outdoor facilities, which include a park and garden.



Frida Escobedo, Mexican architect. Zack DeZon.

Already, the first *renders* reveal the **angular and dynamic façade** designed by **Frida Escobedo Studio**, with a lattice that maximizes light from the east and west, “creating a **cohesive rhythm of scale, materiality and color**.” “The building was designed with the intention of respecting and complementing the context of **Brownstone Brooklyn**, **establishing strong roots in the neighborhood and a sense of belonging** for future residents of Bergen,” explained Frida Escobedo.

The Mexican architect's project places great emphasis on the **quality of the materials** that “will pass the test of time.” For example, modules in natural and handmade masonry from Stonext were used. The stone of the facade enters the central volume of the building, the so-called “Glass House”, designed with a **glass curtain wall** that connects the two streets of the block, as well as the east and west residential wings of the building.



The Bergen building, in Boerum Hill, will offer 105 apartments. DARCSTUDIO.

Geometry of mysteries

“Here there is no transparency in which you see everything immediately, rather it is a veil that allows mystery and creates layers – **moments of invitation or slight distance, moments that attract** –,” Frida Escobedo continued.

The orientation of the building was adjusted to allow light and air to enter through the **angular façade and handmade blocks** that vary in size and degrees of opacity. “This connection between the interior and the exterior is reinforced by moments in which the **modulation of the façade changes**, transforming into an element like a brick screen that blocks the breeze, which then unfolds in certain residences, carrying a textured wall. as an accent within inhabited spaces,” said the architect.



The apartments were designed based on noble and simple materials, used in a sophisticated way. DARCSTUDIO.

One of his main ideas was to have a relatively long residential structure compared to the adjacent buildings, "to consider the human scale and at the same time respectfully maintain the scale of the neighborhood," Escobedo said.

In the opinion of the Mexican architect, in residential projects it is essential that people "feel part of a community, but at the same time have their own space and can be recognized within that space." The objective from an architectural perspective is to connect the new community with the one that already exists. In that sense, Escobedo was excited to collaborate with DXA and Patrick Cullina on the landscaping and with the Workstead firm on the interior design.



The soft palette seeks the feeling of an oasis in the middle of the city. DARCSTUDIO.

Sophisticated interiors

"We were very excited to work with Frida Escobedo, we knew she would do something really special with the building," revealed **Ryan Mahoney, principal designer at US firm Workstead**. The interior design began early in the project: Frida Escobedo's office had already established a clear direction for the façade, so Workstead was "definitely responding to what the architecture firm was doing," but there was a fair amount of overlap in the process.



Ryan Mahoney, principal designer of the American firm Workstead, who was in charge of the interior design project. Zack DeZon

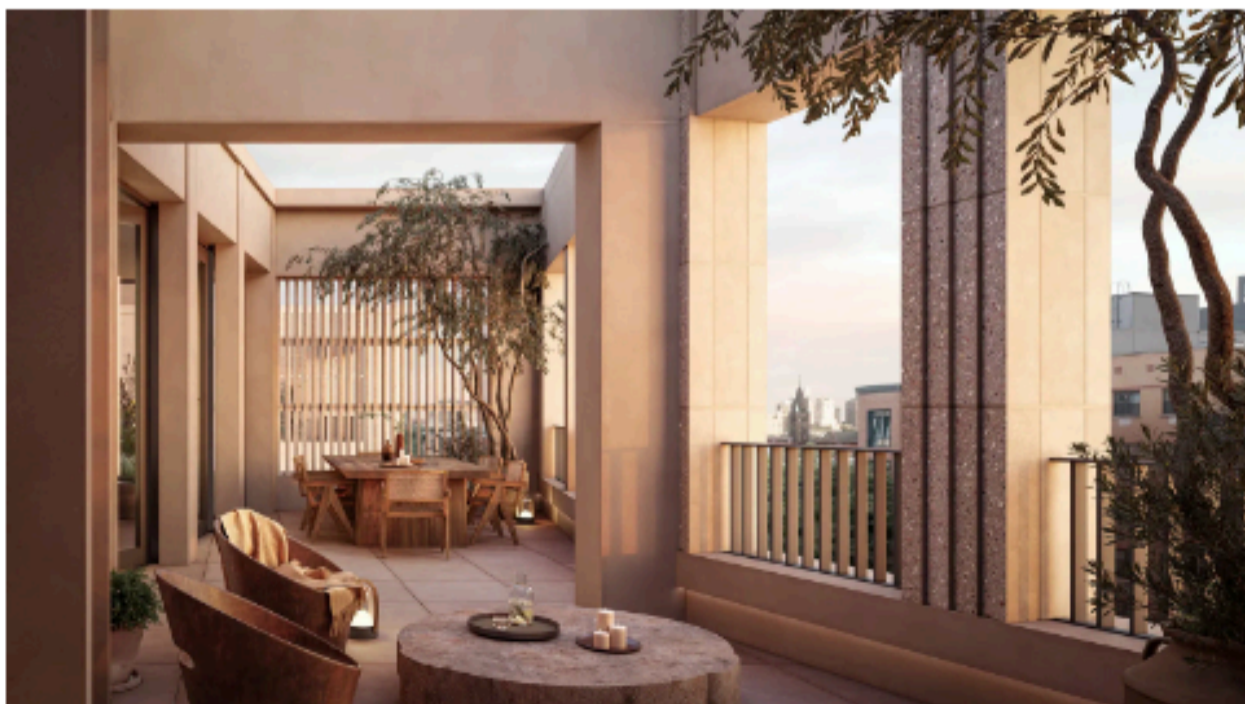
“One of the really special things about how the building has been organized is that the **exterior material enters the building**, which is not very common: there are many instances here where **the masonry enters the residential units**, the lobby and some spaces. common,” Mahoney explained. “That fusion between indoor and outdoor meant a fun opportunity for us.”



Workstead proposes peaceful environments that follow the line of architecture. DARCSTUDIO.

The interior design project opted for **“simple and beautiful” materials** that are articulated in a sophisticated way – “this is how we see Frida's work,” said the American designer. **Wood, stone, metal: elemental materials that have wanted to be appreciated for their own nature** and have been used in a unique way. For example, stone is stacked to create a corner detail on the kitchen sideboard, the handles integrated into the doors are solid oak; The floor in the apartments, also made of oak, is very simple planks, but at the entrance to each residence a small pattern has been created with the planks. “They are **subtle details** that you don't catch at first, but that **if you live in space you discover**,” described Ryan Mahoney.

The soft palette was designed to bring an **oasis feeling to the urban environment of New York**. Furthermore, the interior design firm – recognized for its lighting design – wanted to make a **subtle reference to the geometry of the building** through faceted wood and metal luminaires that dialogue with the foldable architecture proposed by Frida Escobedo.



The interaction between interior and exterior proposed by architecture was also achieved by interior design. DARCSTUDIO.

Frida Escobedo in New York

Even before seeing it materialized, the contribution that this building will make to the urban and architectural landscape of New York is already discussed. " **I think my approach to architecture is that simple forms work best** and that 'luxurious' materials are not needed to express very sophisticated atmospheres," Escobedo reflected. "The **raw materials express a very clear language that, we hope, evokes a timeless feeling** ." "We are very conscious of sustainability, as well as ensuring that we have buildings that age gracefully – it is best for everyone."

The revelation of the first renderings of the **Bergen** building coincide with the announcement that the **Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET)** has raised the sum (\$550 million in private donations) for the construction of the new wing that is currently being projected by the studio by Frida Escobedo. A great achievement, considering that not even a **preview of the design** has been presented . "It is exciting and motivating to have so much support and **such positive momentum** behind the project," said the Mexican architect, who is the first woman to design a wing of the museum in its 154-year history.

The firm has been working on the design concept since October 2023, giving attention to **MET director Max Hollein** and **chief curator David Breslin** , as well as other curators and departments. "Listening, learning and digesting their ideas," Escobedo said. "Just as we have approached the Bergen project with an intention to **consciously connect the building with the nature and environment of the neighborhood** in a cohesive way, we want to create cadence and rhythm with the modern and contemporary wing, which integrates it with the rest of the museum and Central Park, allowing visitors to have contact with nature and natural light."

The **Mexican architect** has recently won the Charlotte Perriand Prize from the CDA (Créateurs Design Awards) and, for her, this honor is particularly significant given her great admiration for the visionary French designer. "That recognition is both mine and my entire team," she concluded. "I feel lucky to have such a talented group around me."



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