

EPIISODE 062

TIN BUILDING

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Matteo Bologna, Mucca

AND

Sean O'connor, Mucca

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Follow-up, a weekly podcast that goes in depth into projects recently reviewed on Brand New featuring conversations with the designers, and sometimes their clients, uncovering the context, background and design decisions behind the work.

BRYONY GOMEZ-PALACIO

Hi, this is Bryony Gomez-Palacio and welcome to episode number 62 of The Follow-up.

This week we are following up on the Tin Building by Jean-Georges, a new 53,000-square-foot marketplace in New York. Located in the iconic site of the former Fulton Fish Market at Pier 17 in the Seaport neighborhood, it features over 20 food and beverage experiences and retail destinations. Helmed by world-renown and Michelin-award-winning chef, Jean-Georges Vongerichten, the project was developed by the Howard Hughes Corporation, which, over the past ten years has spent \$789 million on the development of Pier 17, the Tin Building, and the historic Seaport neighborhood. With interior design by celebrated firm, Roman and Williams, the two-floor building features six new full-service restaurant concepts, five fast-casual counters, as well as bars focused on wine, craft cocktails and craft beers—all anchored by a central marketplace featuring a locally sourced, curated selection of seafood, meats, cheese, produce, plus three specialty retail markets.

The project, designed by Brooklyn, NY-based Mucca was posted on Brand New on October 17, 2022. You can pull it up on your

browser at bit.ly/bnpodcast062 that is B I T dot L Y slash bnpodcast062, all in lowercase.

This week we are joined by Matteo Bologna, Founder and Creative Director of Mucca and Sean O’connor, Senior Designer at Mucca.

In this conversation we get to hear about how a chance encounter between designer and future client led to one of Mucca’s most complex projects to date. It was also interesting to hear how much energy had to be expended before even starting the project by having to figure out the scope of the project and the contract to get it done. Seeing the final result on Brand New, it was clear that this project was difficult and demanding, so hearing Matteo and Sean confirm it and delve into what some of those challenges were, makes us appreciate this tour de force even more.

Now, let’s listen in as Armin follows up with Matteo and Sean.

ARMIN Hello everyone, today we’re going fishing for some answers on Mucca’s exhaustive and endlessly creative work for the newest, biggest food destination in New York, the Tin Building. Matteo, Sean, welcome to The Follow-Up.

MATTEO Hello. Hello.

SEAN Appreciate it.

ARMIN Just so that our listeners can know who’s who, although Matteo’s accent is hard to confuse with anyone else, but you can tell us your name and your title.

MATTEO I am Matteo, the guy with the accent. Matteo Bologna, the Creative Director of Mucca Design.

SEAN I’m Sean O’Connor, calling in from New York City.

ARMIN All right. Matteo, let's start with you with an easy one. How did Mucca get involved with this project?

MATTEO It's a very funny story, I have to say. I was having dinner with a friend of mine who's an architect and he designs restaurants, hotels, and fancy houses for fancy people. So we finished dinner and I ask him which way he was going and he says, "I'm going uptown". And I was like, "what are you gonna do uptown? It's 11-o'clock". And he is like, "Hey, I'm going to check on a job that we are doing in a restaurant". I was like, we're in a restaurant at 11:00. And he was like, yes, of course, because you know they need to be open tomorrow so they have workers at night. And so, I was like okay, that's interesting. I wanted to see his work and I went with him to see the space. This is the first restaurant that Jean George opened in Manhattan, I think in like '84 or something like that.

So I went there and by pure chance I meet this person whose name is Lois Freedman and she's the CEO of Jean Gearoge Management, the company that owns all Jean George restaurants. She was there, her daughter who was doing homework, and we started chatting because I didn't have anything to do except for looking at the space and you know, we start chatting, talking about stuff—children and things like that. She asked me what I do, I say, "we have a designed firm, we design identity for restaurants". And she was like, "oh, interesting, maybe we should meet". And we had a meeting a few weeks after and I did a presentation of my work. We told her how much we usually charge for restaurant. And she was like, "wow, that's too much, we never spend that amount of money, but you know, we are doing a project that is founded by this big developer and I think we should present you, to introduce you to them". And that ended up being the Tin Building project.

ARMIN That's crazy. It's just what a chance encounter beginning from asking your friend, "where are you going?" And then having the gumption to tag along just like, Hey, I'll invite myself to see this. And then that leads

to meeting the client. A good moral of the story, ask questions and go to unexpected places at 11:00 at night in uptown New York. And what year was this? when that chance encounter first happened?

MATTEO I think this was 2017.

ARMIN Oh wow. Okay.

MATTEO Then actually the timeline goes more or less like this: we met with Lois in 2017 and then I think in March 2018 we did our first proposal. It was very complicated because the scope of the work was so big that there were a lot of back and forth. In May 2019, we started doing our first strategy session with them, workshop. And then we had to fine tune the contract because things were added, things were moved. They'd been working on this project already for like five years, and then we ended up creating this very complicated contract. We should have charged just to making the contract because we spent so many hours <laugh>. And then of course when the client was ready to sign the contract was in February 2020, and we all know what happened then.

ARMIN Right.

MATTEO They put this job on hold and we were like, "oh fuck". But thank goodness. Then the contract was signed around May and we ended up doing our first presentation of the design in July, 2020.

ARMIN Even though it was a long process, the actual design work was within a short period of time.

MATTEO Yeah.

ARMIN Relatively, yeah.

MATTEO Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was very short though I have to say that we've been talking about this project for a very long time, and while we were doing the contract, working on the contract, we were talking also with the team about this project. It was such a big inspiration that everyone

started thinking about it. When it was really time to put our hands on the project, we were all charged and ready to work on it.

ARMIN Yeah, a lot of buildup, and then the pause, and then alright, let's go. You mentioned the complexity of the contract and I can only imagine what that entailed... in those early conversations, was there something that stood out other than the scope of it? Was there something that stood out as a big challenge that you knew, or that you had time to prepare for once the project started? And this is a question for both of you, both in terms of managing the project as well as how do you even start a project like this?

SEAN It's certainly daunting to say the least, but exciting nevertheless. Some of the key challenges that we identified at the beginning, some of these challenges that really surfaced were marrying both this graphic identity with the interior. With so many different teams, we knew that we were gonna need this to be a multidisciplinary collaboration to some degree or another, especially with these two worlds, these two creative disciplines like inherently coexisting in a physical place like this. We wanted to make sure that they were really speaking the same language. But to give you some context, there are three markets, a flower shop, four bars, six sit-down restaurants, six quick service restaurants—like counter eateries—45 apparel and home goods, 24 product lines, and over 400 SKUs. So talking about the breath surface level, yes, there were tons of challenges that we knew we were gonna encounter before even starting this. But because this is a physical place and we need things like signage and wayfinding, and then these identities, one of these key challenges that we knew we were gonna need to pay particular attention to was, I guess we would consider it the naming convention and specifically the approach to signage.

And what I mean by that is: with these venues, these restaurants, these sit down restaurants, and then these what they call the central market where you can buy your charcuterie, your fish, your meats. We initially weren't sure if these vendors were going to have a naming

convention where it was very matter of fact, like the breakfast station is just called Breakfast, the butcher is just called Butcher, the brasserie is just called Brasserie. Or if they were gonna have their own, not only their own name, but their own visual identities, right? We named each venue and created sort of a micro identity for each where we kind of split the difference. And what I mean by that is: we wanted to retain a link to the parent brand, without having the uniformity or monotony of a signage system that would be more comparable to something like Essex Market where they have all the vendor signs, the same typography, the same treatment, everything is incredibly uniform. And so we wanted to be like somewhere between that and say like at Chelsea Market where every vendor has its own unique identity, and that is taken through signage, menu boards, et cetera. But it's funny because Matteo, we were talking before this and Matteo is like, "I hate food halls because of this inconsistency or this lack of coherency, generally speaking". So in many ways this was also for us an exercise in creating what we want to see out in the world too.

MATTEO And I have to say that I hate also the food hall with the signage system that looks like a subway station. Everything is too uniform. We really wanted to do something that felt organic, but at the same time tight.

ARMIN This is a question that I had for later in the episode, but since you brought it up Sean, about the having to marry two disciplines, two teams, those being the interior design and the branding for the place. Both are integral to how this place looks and feels. So, what was that relationship with Roman and Williams who did the interior design, who are well known for designing a lot of the restaurants in New York?

SEAN There wasn't as much collaboration as we hoped for, specifically with Roman and Williams.

MATTEO Roman and Williams did an amazing job with interior design that really fit with the principle and the ideas that we all had about this projec. For us was very easy to integrate the branding with their interiors.

ARMIN It sounds like despite the less than ideal collaborative situation here, it seems that the client provided the right information, the right set of goals for both of you to independently achieve the right look that when they came together they work seamlessly. So the question is: what kind of input did you get from the client early on, and who was involved at the early stages of the project in setting some of these directions?

SEAN One of the key things that I wanna preface with is, that Matteo alluded to earlier, is this project has really been in the making for close to 10 years. Bear in mind, within a 10 year period a lot can happen, and one of the things that happened once you know this project started gaining some traction and momentum, was perhaps to no surprise some change in leadership. The initial leadership when we were first engaged in starting this project wanted these theatrical activations, but it was through many, many, many meetings, rounds of revisions to the strategy specifically, that these activations were toned down in an effort for the market to really be more closely linked to its roots as this vendor and trading post for, you know, really celebrating the magic of food.

MATTEO There's one thing that I think is important to note, is that we were working for Jean George and we were paid by Howard Hughes [Corporation], which hired Jean George to be the creative force behind this. So, Jean George through Lois, the CEO of Jean George Management, they had the final word. The final yes, which was great. Everything was crystal clear how the chain of command, the chain of decision was built. So we were speaking with Lois and Jean George, sometimes he was at meetings and then you know, the approval was her or Jean Georg. And if Jean George was not there, she would send him a PDF, they would talk on the phone, and then we would have right away the feedback. So this was actually an incredible way of working because no middle man, you talk to the top, from us to the top decision make. That sped up the process a lot.

ARMIN It's also nice that the decision maker is not the one paying you. I think that sort of frees off some sort of tension that always happens like,

well this is my money and you know, how do we make the best use of it? In this case the money coming in from somewhere else. I think that may help. <laugh>

MATTEO It's true though I have to say, you know, of course, if the project doesn't look good, they don't make money.

ARMIN So there's this great chain of command, there's a lot of that has changed in the past 10 years, but once you started going into the strategy, once it was clear that this project was a go, what were some of the initial decisions that you made? Perhaps starting with the question of... was it clear from the beginning that you wanted to do an identity that referenced the history of the building? Or was there any point where it's just like, that's not even an option, we're gonna create something entirely new that makes no reference of that. So what were some of those early discovery sessions for you at Mucca on your own, as well as with a client?

SEAN Initially we were really excited to be working on a project with such a rich history. So to put this history of the building by the wayside, in our opinions would've been a missed opportunity. Especially when you consider the role that this building played in the Fulton Fish Market importing and exporting literally millions of pounds of fish annually for close to a hundred years. That in and of itself is something to respect. What we were interested in was how to use this as a starting point, but to tailor it for today. What new perspectives could we add to this, to supplement it? And to get a little bit into the process, I guess perhaps it's worth mentioning that we proposed three very distinctive narratives in this early phase of the creative process, each with their own visual identity. In the initial presentation we showed not only what the core brand identity looks like, but also how that can really be applied to some of these other items in our scope like packaging, like some vendor signage, et cetera.

ARMIN And one thing I'm intrigued by is how, where, when did you source/find all these historical references? Is this something that the client came

with? Is this something that you had to go out and find on your own? Was there one treasure trove with all things that you could handle historical? Or was it more of a scavenger hunt through archives, weird archives in New York?

SEAN We just went on to pinterest.com. No, I'm just kidding. <laugh> It was a little bit of this, a little bit of that. The first place that we went was this really cool letterpress print shop called Bowne & Co Stationers. They're actually located in the South Street Seaport Museum, which is directly across the street from Tin Building. So... yet another reason to really immerse ourselves in this part of lower Manhattan. The cool little footnote about Bowne & Co Stationers is they've been operating since 1775. They're one of the longest running companies in New York that still functions under the same name. If that's telling of anything, we were certainly able to dig up some stuff from their archives. Needless to say, of course we looked at the New York Public Library with this day and age, of course we scoured, there's deep corners of flickr, so many dust gems in there that really proved to be invaluable; and actually it was on flickr that we started to see some of these key points of inspiration. From this historical signage, yes, but perhaps even more so on flickr specifically all this print ephemera and this stationary. Like these old bill heads, these old letterheads that we mentioned just a few moments ago, these old calling cards which are, you know, the business cards of that time period. It was really an aggregation of all of this typographic ephemera and finding a way to do something with it.

MATTEO Yeah, design porn.

ARMIN When you presented this three options, was the custom typeface part of it already? Was it just in the third option? Was it shown in the other two? How did this idea of a single typeface to rule everything come about?

SEAN Well the truth is we played with many of these strong chisel sans serif font options out there. All these explorations really sprouted from the same seed of inspiration though, that being these beveled octagonal letters that we initially identified in these OG vendor signs in the

building. Unfortunately we only were able to dig up a couple photos and they were relatively low resolution, but they were enough to see... in many ways it was the variable font of its time. Each stall had a certain allotted width of space. So if a vendor had a long word, a long family name typography would need to be condensed, right? And if it was a shorter name, it could go wider. All while retaining these same typographic qualities. We thought that was really cool. And then we started digging even deeper, going beyond just these vendor signage signs and we were actually surprised to see how much of this octagonal typography is really intrinsically linked to this world of maritime and the seaport. It was being used on boats, and ships, and print ephemera, but I'm gonna shut up because it was Matteo that really went overboard. Unintended.

ARMIN Yeah, <laugh>, I was gonna say that worked out beautiful <laugh>.

SEAN Like really blowing out this full-blown variable font in various widths and weights. Normally I'm the one that gets blamed with that, but this in many ways was Matteo's baby.

MATTEO Yeah, at the certain point Sean made millions of sketches where I, at a certain point I had to tell him, really stop fucking with this. This is a paid project. We are not doing this for free, so don't spend too much time on creating logos that you know will never be used, but that you just like to draw. I'm the one who kills creativity in the office. I remember seeing one idea where he actually used an existing font, which is Engravers Gothic, and there's a version of Engravers—and it's not Gothic—it's maybe Engravers Octagonal or something like that. Which was similar to a font we had in our catalog, but with some significant differences, actually better than the one that we had. I was intrigued and I said maybe we can modify our font and match it more with this style because it really fits with the story that we want to tell. Because of course, we are masochists, we decided to make a variable font. Because it's fun to have variable fonts first of all, every font should be variable by the way. And the other reason is because of the

complexity of this branding system, we needed to have something that was very versatile, and having a font that can be super heavy, and then light, and then super condensed, and extended, ended up being very, very useful on working in, you know, super small labels or big signage.

ARMIN So you have this great typeface that anchors the identity, and this is just a terrible segue for a pun about this other great asset in the identity, which is an anchor logo. How did that come about? Were there many other logo options on the presentation at any point? Also like the typeface where you show here's one thing that you can do and then just like, yeah, let's go with that.

MATTEO The current look that you see now, the logo plus the monogram, and the world that is around this logo, it was part of that presentation. That was one of the three logos that we presented. And then we went from there. Sean can probably talk more about it because he's the one who designed 3 million sketches, and then I told him with the gun pointed on his head to make a fucking decision and choose a logo that we could use across the space, and the products, and the website, that would work at different sizes without breaking.

SEAN Let me start with this. And this kind of goes beyond what we're specifically talking about the logo, but if we zoom out for just a minute. We knew we didn't want to take the Disney theme park approach for a market like this, right? So much of the semiotics and these cultural codes that we imbued into this project are indirect references to the past. One of the founding partners of Base Design, his name is Thierry Brunfaut, probably butchered that, sorry Thierry. He said "A good logo evokes, a bad logo illustrates", and when I first came across that it really stuck with me. And I think in the context of Tin Building, we felt we needed to strike a balance here, to know when to be a bit more literal, and on the nose, prescriptive... and when to be a bit more evocative and expressive. And in many ways we kind of evoked and illustrated in the logo, the monogram, the identity system as a whole there. I think there are bits and pieces of both of these elements here.

At the point that we completed the logo... we had this typeface that was in the works, and then we used the typeface to create the logo, and then we customized it and great, we have this rather simple logotype with some nice inner beveling details. But at that point we felt like this logotype was still missing something. It's missing this element of prestige and authenticity that we spoke about earlier. So much of what we do is looking to the past for the answers, rather than looking to the now, or to the future. Most of the answers lie in the past, especially for very historically rooted projects like this.

It was looking to the past, it was looking at these old incredibly beautiful bill heads and letterheads, the types of bill heads that you wouldn't mind getting a bill for this amount of money because this paper is so beautiful. It was looking at this ephemera, the hash lines, and the drop shadows, and the embellishments, and all these beautiful details. Additionally, a lot of these beautiful lockups at the tops of these bill heads had some form of a seal or a monogram. And that's when we started to think about, okay, what if we paired something more delicate with the logotype that's a bit more strong and rigid in nature? And I would like to say, maybe this goes without being said, but at Mucca we believe that no identity is complete without a monogram.

MATTEO And maybe 3,000 variations of that <laugh>, all part of the brandin. Because we like to waste our money.

ARMIN <laugh> And monograms are great, and you do a great job at it. So it's a fine motto to live by.

SEAN And one of the strengths of having a monogram in this case that sort of lives within this badge, this seal, whatever you want to call it, is there are these layers. If you think about it like this physically layered thing, you can remove just the monogram if you wanna put that on something, you can remove the monogram and the type, you can remove the monogram, the type, the rope containing device, you

can remove that with the logo, with all the qualifiers marketplace merchant. So yes, in short, we are masochists. In short, yes, Matteo is absolutely correct. We give ourselves way more work than we really need to have. But it's all in an effort to really feel like this could have been a brand that existed in the past. Like you look at old facades, old storefronts, and the term logo didn't even exist back then. You know you have a sign of your family company on the door, and on the window right next to the door is a totally different logo, let's call it. There's these quirks, these really charming ways of approaching branding that we sort of borrowed from the past in this way.

MATTEO And there's also another important thing. This identity is mostly for a captive audience. There is a part that goes outside through the website, the facade, the advertising, but it's mostly a brand that has a lot of products within their worlds. Once you have a captive audience, I think it's disrespectful to treat them like idiots and keep repeating the logo, and the identity, and the look in a way that is very industrialized. It's kind of like an old way of thinking about branding. Okay, let's find a system and replicate it because that was the only way that was possible to do it before computers. And we kind of inherited this idea that if you have a big line of products, they all need to look the same. In this case, we decided to make all the product, all the packaging specifically very different, all the lines very different from each other, with a few elements of affinity such as the typography, the presence of the logo and the monogram, and always a border around the labels. But we played, let's say we fucked with colors, textures, sizes, and illustration to make sure that the brand looked organic and made with love, which actually we did. We really love this project.

ARMIN That is evident in the results. So now that we're talking about the packaging, how in the world did you even do this? I mean just the idea of 400 SKUs... How you just mentioned that it's not just repeating the same thing over and over in different sizes, in different containers, but actually creating little mini-worlds for each category of products. So how did you manage this?

MATTEO Our main intention for this whole project and especially for the packaging, was to make a system that was chaos proof. Which means: we know that when we started a project that the client is a great expert in hospitality with 50-plus restaurants worldwide. But the truth, they had no experience in product development and private label. All our design proposals were conceived with that in mind. The proof design also the proof direction that they went with was also designed from the beginning to be visually adaptable. We could have just have a simple one color logo slapped, actually you can have just one simple logo slapped on a napkin or a very intricate design on an oil label with multiple colors, varnishes, and foils, and maybe just the type in the signage. That's it. Everything works well together because we knew what we were going to face from the beginning, and we tried to foresee the possibility to play with chaos, which is what is actually happened. Sometimes there were new products that we didn't even know they existed, certain products were canceled, we were assigned part of the scope that was part of the interior design firm. We really set it up in a way that we were able to manage chaos.

SEAN From my recollection, the number of SKUs seemed to grow by the day. No one was aware of how much the scope would actually grow at the beginning of the project. That said, every private label product we touched, we designed really. Whether it's the line of teas, or sauces, or a whole apparel program, we really were on the ground working on what this packaging was gonna look like. I would like to say for some of the product lines with more SKUs than others, like the dried herbs and spices program, for example, with La Boite, that program right there is like somewhere around a hundred SKUs. So if you're asking us if we created a hundred mechanical files for print, the short answer is no.

ARMIN And this interview is over, I'm sorry.

SEAN Yeah <laugh>. We'd be remiss to not give a shout out to Howard Hughes's internal design team 'cuz they were really helping us expand a lot of these collections that we designed. So the process followed suit, we would design the first one, and then define the color palette

for X flavors, the type, the layout, the composition, where all the legal copy goes, point sizes, all that stuff. And then we would give them a template and then they would expand that across the line. That saved us a lot of production time. You know, we've been working on this project on and off for two or three years, probably could have been double if we were creating every single one of those mechanical files.

MATTEO To add one thing about their team and how good they were. At the certain point they did some posters, some promotional material that we weren't even aware of and it looked amazing. We were very surprised because they really embraced the complexity of the brand. It's not just Helvetica left aligned, three sizes, black over white. What we did, it's very complicated and they got it. They took it and they did it in a exceptional way. Bravo to them.

ARMIN Do you know if they had had previous experience working on a project like this? Or was this all sort of completely new and in a way exciting for them?

MATTEO No one has an experience of a project like this. That's the truth. <laugh> We didn't have it. Jean George never had that experience. The Howard Hughes Corporation never had an experience of this scale. This is very, very unique I have to say.

ARMIN And at Mucca, how many of you were working on this?

MATTEO It was more or less the whole team, when we were in crunch time. Especially at the beginning, the first presentation, everyone worked on it. And then it was mostly Sean with the help of two or three people, Karla, and sometimes Andrea, and sometimes Maria, sometimes some of the designers would take over a particular line of products or a particular restaurant. But Sean was really the glue around the whole project.

ARMIN Aside from this crazy chaotic amount of packaging, and then the design of the typeface, and then the monogram that can compose and decompose in different ways. You then decided that each restaurant

or a few of the restaurants, not the outlier ones, would use the No Exit Octagonal as the base, but then completely change it to fit the mood of the restaurant. Whose masochistic idea was this? I'm guessing Matteos, but let's see if that's true <laugh>.

MATTEO Our idea was to play with chaos. We want to keep this unity across of this place and for venues like House of The Red Pearl, we created a completely different self-standing identity. The same for Sheik, the Japanese restaurant, and for Spoiled Parrot. But for other venues we design every logotype starting from No Exit, the font that we designed for them. Yes, it's masochistic, but in a certain way it was also easier because we didn't have to reinvent the wheel every time. We knew that we always said a starting point that gives us a center of gravity to work from.

SEAN This approach was easier than designing all of these identities from scratch, right? At least we had some sort of typographic foundation to base off of. It really was a great exercise in, dare I say, typographic appropriation. Like really looking at how we can use cultural vernacular from other parts of the world to create this visual link to the source. So for instance, for T. Cafe where you get your breads, your pastries, your coffee... for that logo, perhaps in a surprise looked at Italian espresso machine brands 'cuz we wanted something that felt like it fit in that world. And we did that same exercise for many of these venues, like for even Taquito, again to perhaps the no surprise we looked at the beautifully naive painted signs that adorn buildings and vehicles throughout Mexico. As we were going through this process, Matteo's already reiterated that we weren't supposed to have fun because the client isn't paying us to have fun, but this really was like a dream project for many of these reasons. It's almost like a school project. How often do you get to do something like this? Use these types as a basin to see how many different ways you can use it as this blank canvas to build off of.

ARMIN The sense of joy is clear in the result in that they just couldn't stop themselves from taking it further and just playing with it—sounds like that was the case, that it was fun. So now to segue into the last question. What was the most exciting aspect for each of you working on this project? Sean, you started to hint about it, but I know if there's something else besides the sense of fun and...

SEAN Yeah, I mean I can say it's incredibly fulfilling and rewarding to see the fruits of our labor actually being produced, and seeing this place open, and seeing all these food products that we worked on on the shelves. But I think aside from that, to me what was really special about this project was: it was an opportunity to flex all of our design muscles, from strategy, to branding, to packaging to environmental graphics, to wayfinding. I mean, we even got to design a vintage citron food truck that was covered in type that drove around the city. What more could you ask that was the cherry on top for us!

MATTEO Personally, there were two beautiful things that I experienced. The context is this project happened during really the beginning of the pandemic. It was a project that really put the whole Mucca team together. We were all working and rooting for this project. We were having lots of fun doing it. So it created a very great comradery between us, and also with the client. The best thing was that the client trusted us 100%. It was never, eh, but I mean there were moments like that, but they had total trust in our judgment. I don't know why, but they did. And I think that made us feel more daring for certain things. Therefore they were really able to let us do our job without interfering, which is actually, you can see in the results

ARMIN It all sounds like a pretty well set up project despite the difficulties of getting it started, getting the contract going, waiting, and also for the client waiting 10 years and then all of it comes head on in this process of giving it a visual manifestation that will become the real thing. That is the thing that the public will experience. And I think you've all done a fantastic job. And to be honest, there's no place in New York that I want to visit more the next time I'm there than the Tin Building.

Matteo, Sean, thank you for sharing all these great stories about the process, how difficult but enjoyable it was... and again, I can't wait to see it all in person, hopefully very soon.

MATTEO We hope so. So we'll see you soon.

SEAN We'll see you in the city.

MATTEO Thank you very much for having us.

SEAN Thanks for having us on Armin.

BRYONY As Matteo reflected, no one — not them, not the client, not the in-house design team — were prepared for a project like this but it was clear that Jean-Georges and the developer had a clear vision and trusted their partners to get them there, even if it took Sean a million sketches and it tested Matteo's ability to both encourage and manage chaos. We also couldn't agree more with something Sean said... that, quote, no identity is complete without a monogram, end quote. But if there is one moral to this episode it is to be curious, to ask questions, to be a little nosy, to... tag along at 11pm with a friend to see what they are up to on the other side of town because your next career-defining project might just be on the other end.

Today, thanks for listening. Until next time, we'll be here, we hope you'll be there.