

Omas

Toronto, Ontario

Brian O'Brian and Carl Muehleisen started O'Brian Muehleisen Architecture Studio (omas) in 2006 in New York City. The current practice continues the collaboration as Brian works from the Toronto studio of omas44 while Carl operates from omas41 in New York.

Omas is interested in the expression of place, which may be defined as a reaction to the specific characteristics of site, context, client, and program. Each project is pursued with a focus on its inherent uniqueness, and with the intention of revealing the sublime, in both built and un-built work.

With the partners' combined experience in design, construction, and skilled trades, their work seeks to foster an appreciation of craft, and to focus on the means, methods and fabrication of form and space.



Urban Carriage House

New York, NY

During the design phase for the relatively modest, partial renovation of this 1903 carriage house on New York's Upper East Side, a portion of wall was removed, revealing the original brick, tile, and slate of the partition that had separated the horse barn and stalls from the enclosed carriage room. This discovery led to the full renovation of the first floor.

Materials that complemented the turn-of-the-century structure were used to reinvent the existing spaces with a language speaking to the current time and to the family's lifestyle. Inspired by the fact that the owners were avid wine collectors, white oak staves reclaimed from dismantled sherry casks were used to create the doors separating the two primary spaces on the floor. Blackened steel is employed in the entry doors, the suspended stair, and frame for the oak doors, recalling the building's history while maintaining a crispness of language reflective of current fabrication techniques. The existing opening in the rear wall was expanded and framed with steel and glass to allow more daylight into the family's everyday space. The existing wood floors were sanded, rubbed with white lye and finished with a matte sealer. In the kitchen and family room, new radiant-heated concrete floors were poured and polished. The walls are a rough white plaster, while the ceilings are a smooth and reflective Venetian plaster.

The upper floors carry through this aesthetic but with a softer approach. Bathrooms are tiled in white Statuario marble while the bedrooms are treated with muted tones. The top floor holds a glass box gym at its centre, allowing daylight to filter down from the skylight and traverse the floor, diffusing natural light within the upper landing gallery and library foyer.

- 1 Floor plans
- 2 Front door peep slot detail
- 3 Stair detail
- 4 Dining room and gallery
- 5 View from kitchen through gallery to front door
- 6 Kitchen door detail: steel, glass, salvaged sherry cask oak

