

Renovation

Photo
Refinish

International Center of Photography,
New York City
Gwathmey Siegel & Associates
Architects

For those irked by the visual pollution in Times Square, the newly redesigned International Center of Photography, just one block east of the neon-drenched, tourist-choked crossroads of the world, offers welcome relief.

The \$10.5 million renovation by Gwathmey Siegel & Associates Architects includes a complete overhaul of the museum's graphic identity by design firm Siegelgale. The project marks the 25th anniversary of ICP, an institution that began as a fund for mounting photo exhibitions at various art venues in New York and abroad.

Though it adds only 1,000 square feet to the total site area, the design nearly doubles the exhibition space by moving offices and storage into the adjacent building.

But the "principal reason for the renovation," says Steve Rooney, ICP's deputy director of administration, who oversaw the project, "was to incorporate cutting-edge electronic technology for lighting, storage, security, and climate control." New systems—including a motorized blackout shade on the atrium's 10-foot window, a wide array of photo-specific lighting fixtures, and a climate-control mechanism that keeps the temperature within a two-degree range—enable the museum to maintain sensitive collections they were previously unequipped to handle.

For project architect Celeste Umpierre, who worked with Charles Gwathmey to reconceive the space, spatial flow was no less important than airflow. She designed a series of consecutive display areas out of floating walls, eliminating corridors and encouraging "smooth transitions between installations." On the lower level, a sleek new café opens onto the galleries offering what Umpierre calls a "holistic view of experiencing art." You can enjoy coffee in plain view of the pictures. International Center of Photography, 1133 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY; (212) 860-1777 or www.icp.org.

International Center
of Photography's newly
redesigned galleries,
by Gwathmey Siegel.
photo: Norman McGrath/
courtesy The International
Center of Photography