

# the brightest smile

firm: **antonio sofán architect** site: **arlington, virginia**

**Longtime friends**, architect Antonio Sofán and dentist Alfonso Patrón are both native Colombians with undergraduate degrees from the same university in Bogotá. The former set up Antonio Sofán Architect in Philadelphia, where the latter had specialized in periodontics and implant surgery at the University of Pennsylva-

nia. When Patrón established his dental practice, Implant Logyca, in Arlington, Virginia, there was no question about who would design the office.

"Alfonso was always interested in color," Sofán begins. And he himself came to the project with more than just a passing interest in the subject. For a small hospital in Colom-

bia, he had made comprehensive investigations into the therapeutic value of color, learning how to make it *do* good as well as *look* good.

That prior research had taught him, among other things, that emotionally intense red stimulates circulation and alertness; orange increases confidence and joy; ➤

## walkthrough

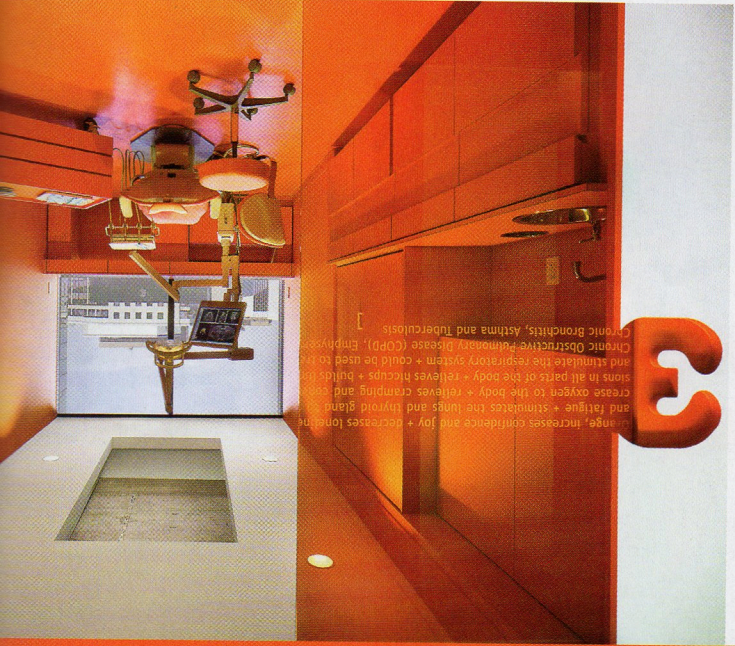
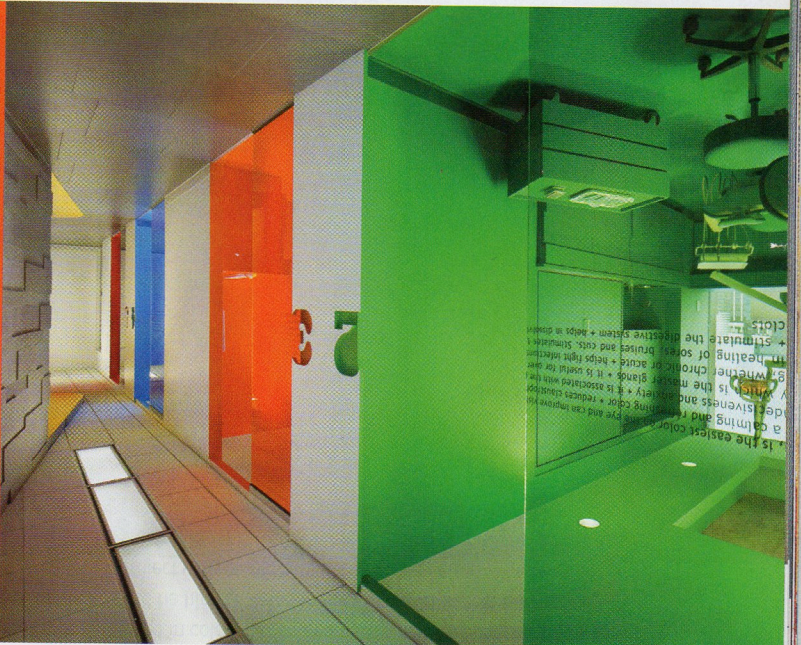
**From top:** At Implant Logyca, an exam room's laminated-glass front bears vinyl text explaining the therapeutic benefits of the color blue. Wool felt covers the freestanding enclosure that contains the check-out office, with its Verner Pantón chairs.





green reduces claustrophobia and anxiety and aids healing; and blue lowers negativity and stress while promoting weight loss and skin rebuilding. So he picked saturated shades of those colors for Implantology—

ing area. On entering, patients proceed directly to the wide end of the triangle, where the receptionist sits behind a built-in desk. At the end of a visit, paying or discussing insurance occurs in a small



**Clockwise from top left:** The four exam rooms run along a single corridor. Lementitious paneling surrounds Cortan-lined niches in the waiting area. In each exam room, the paint on the walls, the vinyl on the floor and chairs, and the plastic laminate on the cabinetry are all an identical shade of the same color.

**Opposite:** A swath of vinyl contrasts with the corridor's porcelain floor tile.

office at the triangle's point. Overlapping strips of dove-gray felt wrap most of the triangle's exterior. To accompany the gray, he chose an energizing sunny yellow for the side that faces the exam rooms. "It's like a bite taken out of the felt," he says. The entire interior is an identical yellow, right down to the Verner Panton chairs in the sign-out office. Sofan applied the same strategy to the color-coded exam rooms. Everything inside—the walls, the cabinets, the upholstery on the treatment chairs—is exactly the same red, orange, green, or blue. So are the glass walls fronting the corridor, and vinyl text on the glass details that color's particular benefits. Next to each exam room's glass front is an open doorway, no door. "Alfonso often works on several patients at

Only the operating and consultation rooms are white. With the exam and operating rooms lined up along the primary window wall, Sofan confronted a logistical issue. "Those rooms needed to be isolated from the waiting area," he explains. Reception and sign-out were also to be separate from each other. All in a relatively limited 1,850 square feet.

He solved the problem with a single element, a freestanding triangular volume positioned to screen the exam and operating rooms from the waiting area. The entire interior is an identical yellow, right down to the Verner Panton chairs in the sign-out office. Sofan applied the same strategy to the color-coded exam rooms. Everything inside—the walls, the cabinets, the upholstery on the treatment chairs—is exactly the same red, orange, green, or blue. So are the glass walls fronting the corridor, and vinyl text on the glass details that color's particular benefits.

As the easiest color to see, red and orange improve a calming and relaxing color + reduces claustrophobia and anxiety + aids healing. Blue lowers negativity and stress while promoting weight loss and skin rebuilding. So he picked saturated shades of those colors for Implantology—



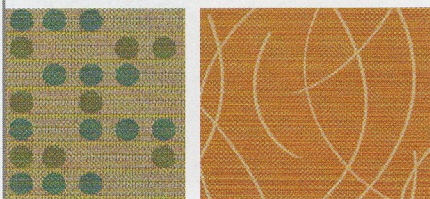


...the most emotionally intense color + it stimulates  
heart rate and breathing + increases blood circulation  
+ increases alertness and self-confidence + decreases lethargy and  
depression + helps ease chronic pain + may lower the frequency  
of severe leg pain causing patients to be less excited +  
thereby reduce pain + stimulates the automatic nervous +  
respiratory systems + stimulates the liver + reduces infla-  
tion and swelling + supports the building of the blood

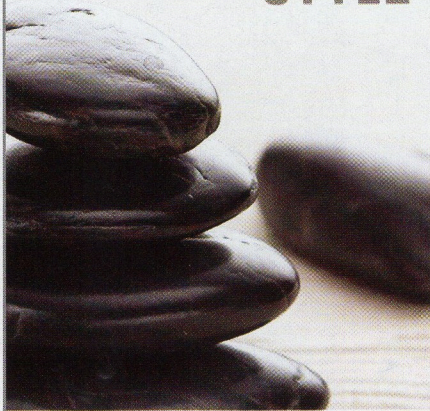




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## walkthrough



once, moving quickly from one to another," Sofán explains. The exception to that rule comes with the operating and consultation rooms at the far end of the corridor.

Its porcelain floor tile reverts to the gray of the felt wall covering, as do cementitious panels on the feature wall across from reception. They're punctuated by the

icy white Corian of three horizontal niches where Patrón displays tiny artworks sure to bring a smile to waiting patients: toothpaste tubes printed with portraits of actual food vendors from a Latin American market. The artist is a friend from Colombia.

—Edie Cohen

**FROM FRONT VITRA:** CHAIRS (OFFICE). **FABBIAN ILLUMINAZIONE:** PENDANT FIXTURES (OFFICE, WAITING AREA). **SUTHERLAND FELT COMPANY:** WALL COVERING. **JOHNSONITE:** BASE MATERIAL. **COVERINGS ETC.:** PANELING (WAITING AREA). **DUPONT:** NICHE, DESK MATERIAL. **DCI EQUIPMENT:** DENTAL EQUIPMENT (EXAM ROOMS). **KOHLER CO.:** SINKS. **ELKAY MANUFACTURING CO.:** SINK FITTINGS. **KNOLL:** CHAIRS, TABLE (WAITING AREA). **IKEA:** LAMP. **KARTELL:** CHAIR (HALL). **THROUGHOUT CARVART:** SHEET GLASS. **LIGHTOLIER:** LINEAR FIXTURES. **ARMSTRONG:** CEILING TILE. **STONE SOURCE:** FLOOR TILE. **LONSEAL:** VINYL FLOORING. **WILSONART INTERNATIONAL:** LAMINATE. **BENJAMIN MOORE & CO.:** PAINT. **ARMINCO:** GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

*From top: The waiting area's chairs by Don Chadwick face a table by Jeffrey Bernett, Nicolas Dodziuk, and David Noel. Philippe Starck designed the chair in the corridor, by the check-out office.*

