



**Opposite, from top:** An existing skylight illuminates the basement gallery and event space at Generator Berlin Mitte by DesignAgency with Ester Bruzkus Architekten and WAF Architekten. While a guest room's wood-grain flooring is actually vinyl, the stools were custom-made from reclaimed oak.

**Clockwise from top:** An oak platform defines the library as separate from the surrounding café. Color-coded acrylic-painted murals in guest corridors are by Thierry Noir. In the café, Sébastien Preschoux strung nylon from the exposed plumbing and ductwork above the custom seating covered in denim or vinyl.

# hostel 2.0

**Faces ranging** from the full-lipped to the buck-toothed accompany guests down corridors at Generator's second Berlin location. These 10-foot-high images are by Thierry Noir, who used to claim entire sections of the Berlin Wall for his expressive cartoons—forever entwining his artistic vision with the struggle to reunite a divided city. "He's iconic in Berlin and around the world," Anwar Mekhayech explains. Besides being a partner at DesignAgency, Mekhayech is the creative director of the rapidly expanding Generator hostel chain, and he brought in Ester Bruzkus Architekten and WAF Architekten to collaborate on interiors for Generator Berlin Mitte. A merger of two 19th-century office buildings, it now sleeps 552 in 139 rooms that range from singles to eight-person dorms.

Street art is a major component of what Mekhayech calls Generator's "raw industrial yet warm aesthetic." The giant faces appear along the walls in guest corridors on each of the six levels—in a different bold color for way-finding purposes. In the breakfast canteen, a mural of Berlin landmarks from the Brandenburger Tor to the Alexanderplatz helps a new guest check them off.

Equally important to Generator's success breaking through in a competitive market is design, including collaborations with local talents such as Ester Bruzkus. On the ground level, she left the old paint on walls and the new plumbing and ventilation systems exposed—shocking the contractors, she says: "They hated it. But then all the detailing and lighting came in, creating these amazing layers." No indecent exposure after all. —Mairi Beautyman >



## DesignAgency with Orbit Architects



**project** Generator London.

**standout** At a former police station, camouflage techniques used for British naval ships in the Second World War inspired the patterns painted on the floor in reception and the ceilings in guest rooms. ➤





## DesignAgency with Progetto CMR

**project** Generator Venice.

**standout** While the facade of this granary from 1855 remains unchanged, right down to the original signage, brick columns and wooden beams inside were stripped of six layers of paint.

