



**best of year**  
FASHION RETAIL

BEN RAHVA/FRAME

**BURDIFILEK**

JOE FRESH, NEW YORK

**Joe Fresh**, the affordably priced Canadian fashion label, debuted six years ago in a shop-in-shop at a Loblaws supermarket. Now there's a flagship in a New York icon: a Manufacturers Trust Company bank designed in 1954 by a young Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. The main challenge for Burdiflek was that both the exterior *and* the interior were landmarked, meaning the floors, walls, and ceilings couldn't be touched.

Commercial viability and artistic sensitivity at the 17,800-square-foot bi-level site were the key issues in a debate now resolved by preservationists, the Vornado Realty Trust, and JPMorgan Chase & Co., the bank that eventually absorbed the assets of Manufacturers Trust Company—allowing Burdiflek to proceed with a plan reestablishing original details and surgically inserting merchandising elements. The latter would have to defer to the interior's star attractions: a massive steel-and-brass screen and mobile commissioned from Harry Bertoia for the mezzanine, now the main sales floor.

In lieu of solid walls, freestanding modular “wardrobes,” configured in C or L shapes, define roomlike vignettes. Each white box is 10 feet high by 4 wide, large enough to stand up to the architecture's grand scale but small enough to transport upstairs via one of the repositioned escalators. —*Jen Renzi*

DIEGO BURDI; PAUL FILEK; JEREMY MENDONCA; JACKY KWONG; DANIEL MEI; EDWIN REYES; ANNA NOMEROVSKY; ANTHONY TEY; DANIELA CERCHIE; TOM YIP; PROJECT TEAM.