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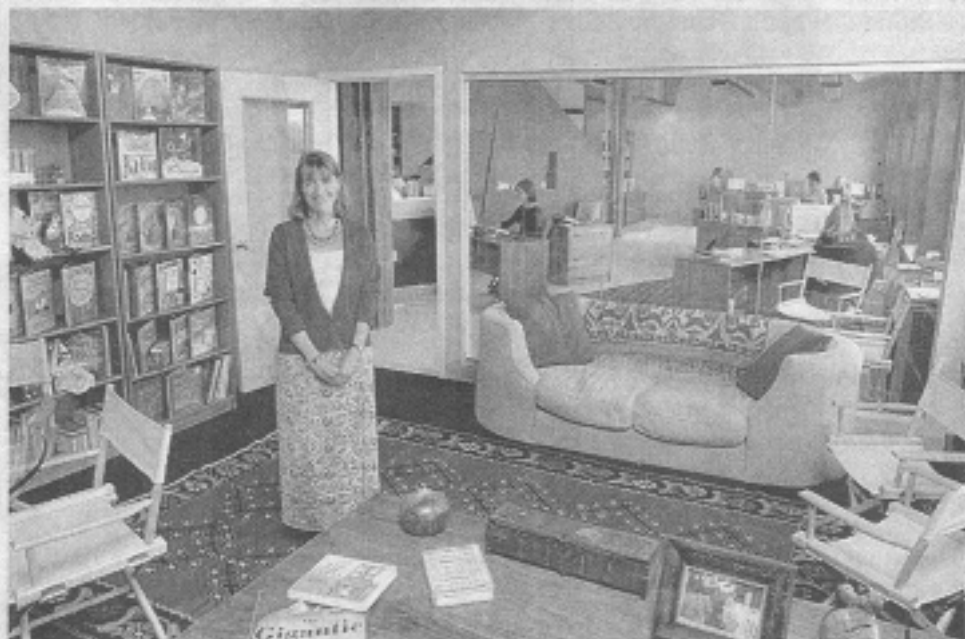
Workspaces / A Look at Where People Work

Nancy Traversy, Barefoot Books

Where: 2067 Massachusetts Ave.,
Cambridge, Mass.

What you see: Peepholes. With crooked-looking windows cut into partitions, the headquarters of this children's book publisher could be the setting of one of its fairy tales. Each window opening is a different size, while dividers are angled and uneven, sometimes cut at a slant. For pizzazz, they're painted four colors: purple, char-treuse, ocher and maroon. The quirky scheme is "all about branding," explains Ms. Traversy, president of the small, privately held company, with operations in the U.S. and England. "We try to make our look as consistent as possible." Indeed, the same hues accent the covers of its books, characterized by rich illustrations and multicultural themes. And an aura of make-believe wafts through its retail store, where stories are told from a whimsical throne. With four children of her own, Ms. Traversy has been known to ascend the ceremonial seat. But the co-founder has an executive chair in her private office. Though she doesn't work out in the open, she can see into the central workroom through a large window. The rest of the room is painted with Barefoot Books' signature colors, each wall a different shade. Ms.

Traversy, 43, displays titles in a tall bookcase, but just as many end up on the weighty desk from India, held together with iron brackets and nails. She puts office supplies



Stephen Swerman

in lacquered boxes and carved bowls made in places like Peru and South Africa. Designed by Margulies & Associates of Boston, the space has arched windows and exposed pine ceilings. Hand-blown glass pendant lights, tinted orange, green and red, dangle from wires. Exotic fabrics cover pillows, while kilim rugs add texture.

Batik tapestries personify a volcano and a bird, melding art with stories from far-off lands.

What she sees: "Imagination. We are not corporate, we are a children's publisher. Our books are all about color and style, and the space we work in has to reflect that. So we thought, let's pretend we're Alice in Wonderland, and we've gone down the rabbit hole. Then we come [out] and find this really unexpected, interesting space. ... I see people talking through the openings, and it's fun. Somehow [the space] has pulled



us together. Everyone is in good spirits."

—Nancy D. Holt
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