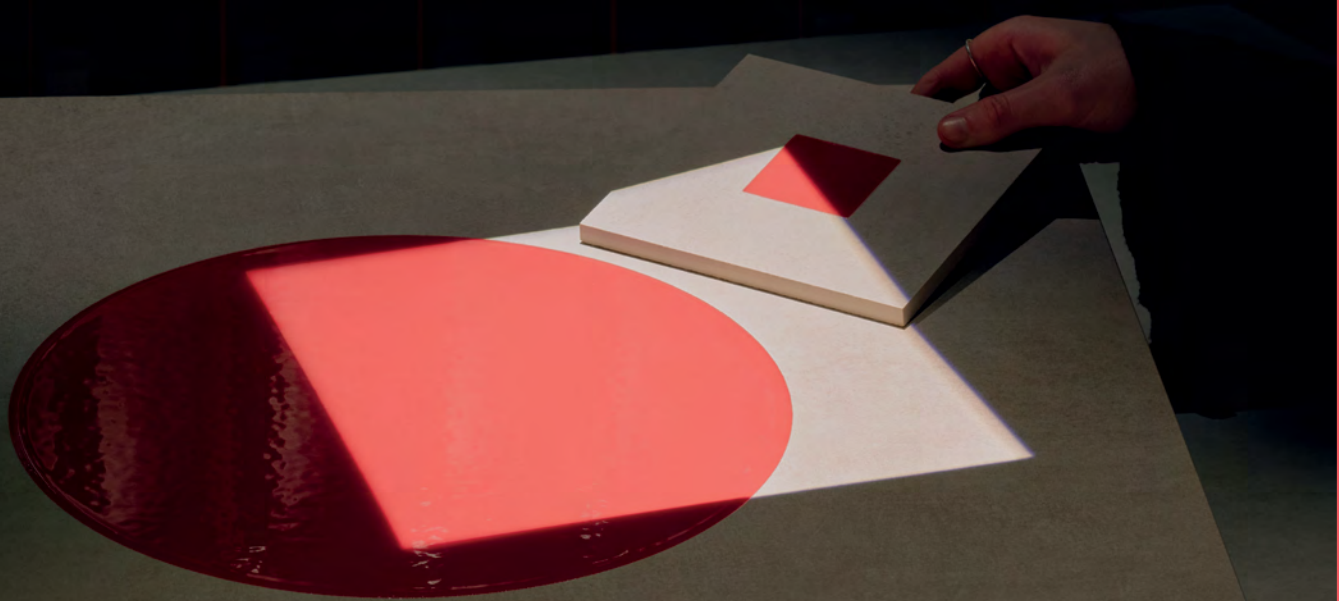


QUARTER

A publication by SOLUS

Solus Studio lights up the
historic Manchester Law Library

**LIGHT
REFLECTIVE
VALUES**



31

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Welcome to Quarter 31, the magazine of Solus Ceramics.

Light Reflective Value, or Light Reflectance Value, is a technical measure of visible light when reflected from a surface, such as a tile. It is measured using a spectrometer and gives an architect or designer information that helps them to light a space appropriately.

If we allow ourselves to relax into poetic ambiguity for a moment, the individual words have connotations that express some of our aspirations as a company. 'Light' could mean 'low impact', 'easily borne', or 'illuminating'; 'Reflective' might suggest 'considered', 'responsive', 'continually improving'; and 'Values' could refer to shared principles and a sense of responsibility.

You will find evidence of all these notions in the following pages. An article about the Ceramophone extends the metaphor of reflection to examine the collaboration that led to the creation of a completely new musical instrument for an event series about sound and space.

A piece about the mental health crisis in the construction sector is expressive of our sense of responsibility towards the members of our community. Award-winning, low-impact projects from Allford Hall Monaghan Morris, TateHindle, Grapes Design, and Specific Generic feature. You will see our desire to continually improve in news about our new studio in Manchester and our plans for Clerkenwell Design Week 2024.

The magazine serves several purposes: it introduces new ceramic collections to the market, explaining their technical and aesthetic points of interest; it presents interesting architectural and design projects, which Solus have supplied; and it acts as a record of the events and initiatives that we have launched within the sector to the benefit of our extended community.

Most importantly, it expresses our purpose; our passion for good design, our fascination with materials, and our desire to collaborate with like-minded people to improve our world.

It has been a pleasure making this magazine. We hope you find it illuminating.

Conleth Buckley, Editor

conlethbuckley@solusceramics.com



“

As I review the content of this 31st edition of Quarter, I have to pinch myself. I'm truly amazed by the diverse and imaginative achievements showcased, alongside the introduction of fantastic new product collections and project case studies. Yet, what truly resonates is the realisation that behind every page lies a group of exceptionally talented colleagues. I feel fortunate to be part of such a dynamic team.

This self-published journal serves as a reminder of the energy we invest in our daily work. I hope that as you, the reader, review its pages, you too gain an insight into the drive and enthusiasm that define the Solus team. I hope it brings you closer to us.”

Sam Frith, Creative Director
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Quarter magazine is printed on Carbon Balanced Paper using vegetable-based ink. Written, designed, and produced in-house at Solus.

 **WORLD LAND TRUST™**
www.carbonbalancedpaper.com
CBP024003

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HOLLOWAY LI AND REFIN PRESENT
A THREE-MONTH INSTALLATION
AT SOLUS CLERKENWELL

LABORATORY

BY

||
HOLLOWAY LI



SOLUS



Laboratory is open Monday to Friday
from 25th April for three months at
Solus Clerkenwell.



“To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour”

Auguries of Innocence, William Blake

This oft-quoted quatrain expresses the idea that the beauty, mystery, and totality of the miniature is characteristic of the whole.

Laboratory, an installation from Holloway Li and Refin, invites us to consider the very small worlds in ordinary materials using special cameras set to high magnifications; to become “microcosmonauts” and explore wax, metal, and fresco in three bespoke experimental stations.

Holloway Li were inspired by Refin's laboratory, a space in which designers experiment with materials to unlock their hidden creative potential. Laboratory reimagines this space and its spirit of inquiry, and transports it to our Clerkenwell showroom.

Alex Holloway, Creative Director and Co-Founder of Holloway Li, spoke to us about how Laboratory came to be:

“We were invited by Solus to collaborate with Refin on this exciting ‘live’ artwork. Material alchemy is at the core of both Refin's and Holloway Li's creative process, taking everyday materials and transmuting them into unexpected states. Working with our collaborator software developer, Will Muir Liia, we designed three live experiments which reveal a wondrous hidden world on the surface of raw materials used by Refin.

“In an era saturated with digital post-production, we set ourselves a strict rule to generate these beautiful images purely via analogue methods, appearing at once microscopic and cosmic, encouraging viewers to look deeper into the everyday”

Rino Bedogni, Head of Marketing and Communication at Refin, told us why Laboratory was important to Refin:

“We believe that sharing the story of our laboratory is essential to fully appreciate the depth and detail of our collections. Our unique approach, based on research, experimentation, and photographic technique, is at the core of our creative process. We call it our ‘artisan heart’. Being able to tell this story and demonstrate how it affects the design of our tiles is challenging, as not everyone can visit our production site and our Design Tale Studio (DTS).

“It was after experiencing the reactions of Solus and Holloway Li during a visit to our DTS that we decided to bring this experience to London. Holloway Li have created something not only effective, but also memorable and emotional.”

Visitors will be able to move through the custom-made installation clockwise, orienting themselves to its purpose in the first section, considering examples in the second, and finally creating their own microcosmic images using mounted cameras at the stations in the final section.

Photography: Gunner Gu and Luis Kramer



SOLUS STUDIO MANCHESTER



Let the
light
pour in

In the darkest days of February, a glimmer, as Solus opens a new Manchester Studio on the ground floor of the former Manchester Law Library at 14 Kennedy Street.

INTERIOR DESIGNER:

Incognito

CONTRACTOR:

ICON Projects

LIGHTING DESIGN:

Artin Lighting

TILING CONTRACTOR:

Horizon Tiling

JOINERY:

2T Joiners, Atelier Joinery Ltd

FURNITURE:

Mater, Orangebox

COUNTER TOP:

The Marble Group

PLANTS:

Nice Things

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Gunner Gu





Using light as a material, Solus have created a unique space in a notable building in Manchester.

Designed by the mysterious Thomas Hartas and completed in 1885, the façade would not look out of place beside the ‘rii’ of Venice. Three highly ornamented bays with tall windows in triple section surmounted by geometric mouldings and one heavy, carved oak door face the street. Across the threshold is a small atrium fortuitously decorated with Victorian terrazzo and mosaic.

The refit of this historic space was designed by Incognito and undertaken by ICON Projects, with lighting provided by Artin Light.

Solus Creative Director Sam Frith explains, “The Grade II* listed status of the building meant that this was a sensitive fit out, requiring a high degree of skill, accuracy, and attentiveness. ICON Projects have been amazing to work with and have brought the outstanding design from Incognito and Artin Light to life.

“I must also thank Knauf for the floating floor, Mater for our repurposed furniture, the Marble Group for the custom porcelain worktop from Casalgrande on the central island, Szczepaniak Teh and Simon Astridge for the tile bank design, Horizon Tiling for the tile installation, and the lovely people at Nice Things who dressed the studio with a gorgeous collection of plants.”

Ryan Bennett, Managing Director of Solus, tells us, “We’re delighted to be in Manchester, a city that shares our scale of ambition. A great team effort has gone into delivering the opening

"When we dim the light down, and the pupil opens, feeling comes out of the eye like touch."

James Turrell





Simon Astridge and Nicholas Szczepaniak designed the concept for the birch shelving system which presents the products.



of the Studio and we're excited to welcome the design community to our new space. The Venetian Gothic façade really sets a dramatic stage for our latest endeavour."

Sam Frith talked us through the purpose and process of the design.

"At Solus, we pride ourselves on the depth of our technical knowledge aesthetic sensibility. We want to help our clients choose the optimum product for their project. With the Studio we wanted to create a space that would enable these conversations. The space should be welcoming, sophisticated, and useful: a place to host celebrations, hold events, and explore ideas with architects and designers.

"We knew that this project would require an innovative approach due to the restrictions imposed by the listed status of the Law Library. We wanted functional partitions that didn't require invasive affixation. I started to think about James Turrell and his work with light. The idea of using light as a material began to seem more like an opportunity than a solution.

"We have used lighting in a dynamic way to delineate different areas of the space rather than using extensive physical partitioning. A theatrical lighting rig suspended above a central gathering island can light tiles to demonstrate how their appearance will change in different environmental conditions.

"Some of the lessons learned through the development of our Clerkenwell showroom informed our work on the Studio. We're immensely grateful to Szczepaniak Teh and Simon Astridge for the tile bank library system design, that we have transposed to the Studio and redrawn to align with the specific demands of the space. Nice shelves, guys!"

As you enter the Studio, your eyes follow a path to a low bar and tea point. To your immediate left an opening gives on to the front

display area, which is lined with simple, birch joinery which display the ceramics. The shelves continue through the space lending the impression of a library and its concomitant atmosphere of serenity. This is a place to relax, take your time, hold the material, and consider it.

Turning away from the windows you'll encounter what's referred to as 'the campfire' – an island lit from above by a theatrical lighting rig. Areas are marked where you can place your potential tile and view it under different lighting settings. The effect is surprisingly powerful; the dynamism of the surfaces is revealed, as is the significance of Light Reflective Values – a technical measure for ceramic surfaces.

Beyond this is a lower shared working space for the Solus team. All five programmatic entities (the entry path, the bar, the front display, the campfire, and the workspace) are lit differently but unobtrusively, so that the transition between areas is subtle yet deliberate.

Solus Manchester Studio offers the architecture and design community of Manchester a place to see, feel, and study the best ceramics in the world. More than that it is a place where Solus hopes to build trust with this community. We will host events, interactive sessions, talks, panels, screenings, and parties. We want it to be a place people feel welcome, where they can pop in for a cup of something or spend a few hours doing research.

Please do call in when you get the opportunity.

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Opening hours: 09.00 - 17.00, Mon - Fri.
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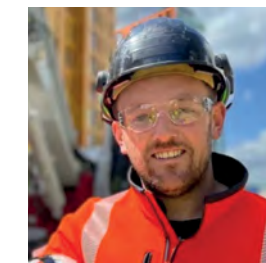


BUILDING MINDS

In late November 2023, we launched our Building Minds event which focussed on the mental health crisis in construction. The event ran for three weeks and created a forum in which members of the industry could voice their concerns and explore solutions to a crisis that accounts for approximately 9% of all suicides in the UK. Source: Office for National Statistics

Solus Commercial Director, Ian Hamilton explained the thinking behind this initiative, "Solus wanted to put this event on to support the contractor community, as they are an integral part of our business. It provided an excellent platform to shed light on a challenging topic and give back to those who contribute so much."

The panel:



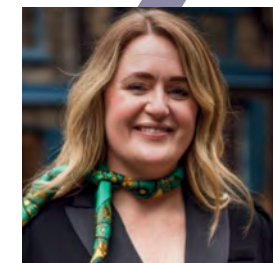
Steve Kerslake
Founder of Construction Sport



Jack Woodhams
Founder of Menfulness and Yorkey Dads



Kari Sprostranova
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Director at Mace



Kara Thompson
Director and Head of UK at Faction

It was an emotive, serious, and challenging topic. We were keen to ensure that the event was sincere in its engagement with the issue and created a safe and supportive space for discussion.

We wanted to hear multiple perspectives on the questions, "Why is there a mental health crisis in construction?" and "What can be done about it?" We also wanted to inspire attendees to get help if they needed it and be clear about where to find support. And finally, we wanted to have a good time and support our community in an uplifting way.

Our opening event brought together a panel of industry figures from different positions around the watering hole.

Steven Kerslake, the Founder of Construction Sport is a groundworker who started his own charity aimed at supporting the mental health of construction workers through the transformative power of sport. Steve organises various physical challenges, including long distance walks and five-a-side football, to give workers the opportunity to make supportive bonds of friendship outside of the job and its pressures.

Kari Sprostranova is the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Director at Mace Construct. Previously, Kari held a senior role in the Health and Safety Executive and brought a unique perspective to the discussion that linked the worlds of government, corporate, and site.

Kara Thompson is a Director with Faction UK, a real estate consultancy. Her work as a project manager gives her a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the competing motivations of participants in a construction project.

Jack Woodhams is the Founder of Menfulness, a charity working specifically with men's mental health. Menfulness brings men together to socialise and play sport in a relaxed environment. They are partnered with a professional counselling service, Serendipity.

WHY IS THERE A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IN THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR?

All our panellists agreed that the primary cause of mental health crises in construction was late payment.

Kara told us that the construction sector had a rate of 19% late payments in 2020 and that the figure has jumped to 53% in 2021, which was the highest jump of any sector. There were three main stressors for the sub-contractor: cost of living, cost of materials, and finance. Late payments are unacceptable as they put pressure on the supply chain.

Steve expanded saying that late payment creates a cascade effect. If a sub-contractor is not paid on time, they can't buy the materials they need for the next job. If the contractor can't pay his workers, they might default on car, nursery, or mortgage payments. The impact of late payment is not easily absorbed by the people who do the work because they do not have the cushion of capital reserves. He pointed out that around 4500 companies have collapsed in the construction industry at mid-year 2023.

Steve made the point that for small businesses who want to pay their workers, late payments "turn honest people dishonest": they





Jack, Steve, Kari, Kara, and Conleth relax after the discussion

have promised to pay and are forced to break that promise. This can be a trigger for suicide.

Steve said that when he asks contractors how they support the mental health and wellbeing of their workers they say, “we try to pay them on time”. They don’t want to be taken on fancy days out if they’re going to be paid late, they’d rather the boss stay in the office and ensure they’re paid.

Kari explained that this is not well understood by the paymasters who are salaried office workers. They do not experience the hardships caused by late payments, as their salary arrives regularly. Build UK is working to expose and remedy the problem of late payment by pushing companies to report on payment performance every six months.

Kari cited the Causeway report which identifies irregular and long working hours as a key stressor on sub-contractors. It also mentions the pressure of tight deadlines that lead to the long hours. Contractors not knowing when or if they will be paid for their work are under unimaginable stress; unimaginable for the people working on the corporate side of things. Kari said, “contractors may wait days or weeks to be paid”; someone in the audience called out “Three months!”

Kara pointed out that, in the UK, there are no significant consequences for companies that pay late. In Australia, if you pay late, you get barred, you get charged, there are progressive punishments. Consequently, 98% of payments are on time. The money is available, it is just being delayed. Kara is in the process of setting up a committee to lobby for changes to the Payment Act.

HEALTH VERSUS SAFETY

Kari said that in the industry, “We’ve been shouting ‘Safety’ and whispering ‘Health.’” There are two pieces of related work to address the mental health crisis: how do we prevent the stress, and how do we deal with it?

Steve raised the issue that suicide is not reportable under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013). He finds it shocking that it is not an investigative procedure for the HSE.

Kari, responding to this as a former HSE inspector, said that although suicide is not RIDDOR reportable, as an employer or contractor there is a duty to investigate. She strongly feels that we need to do more on the health side of health and safety than we have been doing. The Construction Leadership Council have put out a note on how to drive this forward.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE OF THE CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE

Steve told us that people joining the workforce often arrive a bit broken. Veterans and rehabilitated prisoners often find their way into the construction sector. Steve told us a story about an ex-forces colleague who did not want to work with anyone called Mike. A strange request – it turned out that ‘Mike 2’ was a call signal from an operation that had gone badly and was a trigger word for his PTSD. Steve remarked that we sign off our machinery every day, but we don’t sign the person off.

Steve said there was a significant problem in not recognising or acknowledging PTSD within the industry. Furthermore, the work can take you to places where you experience trauma. When working on a Crossrail project there were multiple suicides on the line, one of which his team witnessed. They were offered some days off which they were unable to take because they would have lost their pay.

Jack told us about the suicide prevention initiatives he runs in York college for young people training to enter the construction sector. For many of them, construction wasn’t a choice; they didn’t achieve great academic results. Some of them have reported that the wellbeing checks from site managers are a box-ticking exercise not offered with any genuine intent. In defence of the



In 2021, 507 construction workers died by suicide, equivalent to two workers every day.

Source: Office for National Statistics

site managers, this is due to time pressure and a lack of training in how to have wellbeing conversations.

End of course feedback indicated that the participants wanted training in how to manage their money and how to support their own wellbeing and that of their families. Studies have shown that people who take their own lives overwhelmingly do so because of money problems and/or family problems.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS?

Kari summarised the main points of attack. We communicate how people can get help. We change the culture by ensuring people know that it is ‘okay to not be okay’. More importantly, we look at prevention. We look at payment terms. We look at long hours. We learn about the neurodiversity of our workforce and learn how to support them. We take account of the life cycle of a project which comes in peaks and troughs of pressure and build in support at various points. We set up project teams effectively to respond to the changing needs of the workforce. We bring in more diversity in gender and ethnicity into the industry to challenge stereotypes and get broader viewpoints. There is no silver bullet, but it is critical that we work together.

BIDDING WITH INTEGRITY

Kara said that as a project manager she tries to avoid promising to get something done quicker than is reasonable, even if it means losing out on work. A competitor recently promised a programme six months quicker than her, which was a ridiculous reduction. It’s important to set ourselves up for success, not over-promise, and speak with conviction. If we take longer with the design and flush out all the issues, it allows the supply chain to buy right first time. That then takes the pressure off the profit margins and, when everyone gets to site, it’s getting installed in the right sequence and it’s not rushed, there’s no coming back to fix it. Let’s set realistic programmes that are deliverable in the right way at the right time - that will have a huge impact.

We need to act collectively as an industry to overcome undercutting. If we don’t push the main contractor for an extra percentage, so they don’t push their supply chain, we can show the value of paying people adequately and on time, and maybe get a better outcome for everyone.

Kari added to this saying that early collaboration between main and subcontractors at the tendering stage can be powerful. Realistic timeframes informed by the entire supply chain presented collectively will remove some stress from a project.

She also said that there is some hope that the Building Safety Act will drive up standards in this regard because of the way the designs will have to be set, especially for high-risk buildings. She would love to see work done around undercutting, which has happened in other industries.

PEOPLE VERSUS PROFIT

Kara made the point that, although there are weightings in the tendering process for how a bidder treats its workforce, 95% of the weighting is commercial. Steve said that until you can demonstrate to the people paying for the project that the wellbeing of the workforce is profitable, there is unlikely to be change.

Kari reminded us that during COVID, schedules were reorganised with shorter shifts, and yet productivity was exceptionally high. We weren't burning people out. If you give people shorter shifts and more breaks, productivity actually increases. However, some people want to work overtime, maybe need to work overtime, so it's about finding a balance.

Jack made the point that for every pound spent on mental health, you get five pounds back. Alleviate the stress of the workplace and you don't lose money to absenteeism through ill health. There is a great ROI on wellbeing.

The reaction to the panel discussion was overwhelmingly positive and we were delighted to see that the audience had fully engaged with the issue, which was perhaps unsurprising, given how much it affects them.

We followed the panel with a special guest appearance from Frank Bruno MBE, who took the stage to a raucously warm greeting. Frank has been open about his experiences of bipolar, and has been instrumental in challenging the social stigma associated with mental illness.

Frank spoke about his career as a boxer and entertained the crowd with fight stories, before speaking about his work as a mental health advocate. He told us about the Frank Bruno Foundation, which he set up to help people achieve good mental health.

“My struggles with mental health were very public because of who I was. It's not what I wanted, but it is what it is. I set up the Frank Bruno Foundation to do something positive with my so-called celebrity name, or notoriety if you like! I thought I could do something useful to help people going through hard times.

“We offer free, non-contact boxing classes. Therapy with gloves on. The gym becomes a safe space, a place to sweat out the anxieties, pound away the doubts, and build up that inner strength, one jab at a time. It's not about becoming a Rocky



Attendees enjoyed a Scalextric racing competition sponsored by Mapei and Schluter which raised £2000 for Construction Sport.



Frank Bruno spoke movingly about his journey to mental health.



If you or anyone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, help is available at [Samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org), or call 116 123.

Balboa, it's about rediscovering your own fighting spirit, your own resilience.

“We have workshops, talks, support groups – a whole toolkit for managing your mental health. We connect folks with the right resources, from therapists to doctors to fellow fighters who've been there, done that. The whole point is to show folks they're not alone. To let them know that even a heavyweight champion like me has gone through it and come out the other side stronger.”

Afterwards, Frank signed copies of his new book ‘60 Years a Fighter’, a reflection upon his career and his mental health journey, available online and in all good bookstores now.

Building Minds was a success by several measures, the most important of which was the number of people who approached Steve, Jack, and Frank after the talks to find out more about where to get support. Members of the Solus team were told by architects and developers in attendance that they had no idea how injurious late payment was and planned to review their processes in light of the discussion.

More information about the services offered by Construction Sport, Menfulness, and the Frank Bruno Foundation can be found at their respective websites. Frank's book can be found at frankbruno.co.uk.

With a design inspired by the ancient rammed earth construction technique, the aesthetic of this collection is organic and meditative.

Drift



- 8 COLOURS
- 2 FINISHES
- 5 SIZES
- 3 MOSAICS
- 3 DECORS

Floor:
3DRF104
Desk:
3DRF107



Designer Federico Peri's keywords for this collection were earth, nature, stratification, warmth, and harmony.

Drawing inspiration from rammed earth or pisé de terre, Peri sought to capture the authenticity and essentiality of this ancient construction technique. Rammed earth is an ancient and sustainable building method that utilises locally found materials. Earth, lime, clay, silt, sand, and gravel are mixed before being poured into a formwork and compacted by ramming rods. The mix is added and tamped iteratively which can create a layered pattern that recalls geological stratification.

Peri was also influenced by the clear, simple geometric forms and curved lines typical of the work of Gio Ponti, the curves central to the modernist gardens of Brazilian landscape artist Roberto Burle Marx, and the three-dimensional mosaics of English sculptor William Mitchell.

The result is a stunning, naturalistic collection that evokes calm. Our Ivory, Light, Sand, and Fossil colours present the compelling stratified patterns, while our Bone, Greige, Brown, and Grey show dense, powdery intermingling of dust and grainy muds in warm shades. Peri won an Archiproducts Design Award (finishes) for this collection.

The collection is available in an exceptional range of formats from 600x1200mm to 1200x2800mm. 3D mosaics offer extended design options, as do three decors which interleave the stratified pattern with the monocolour.

The manufacturer has invested significantly in an industry carbon zero standard that directs resources to reforming and improving the sustainability profile of industries in developing economies. The life cycle of the product is measured to calculate the CO2 debt, which is then paid into the sustainable industrial development scheme. For this product the manufacturer overpaid by 10%, leading to the "Carbon Zero" rating.

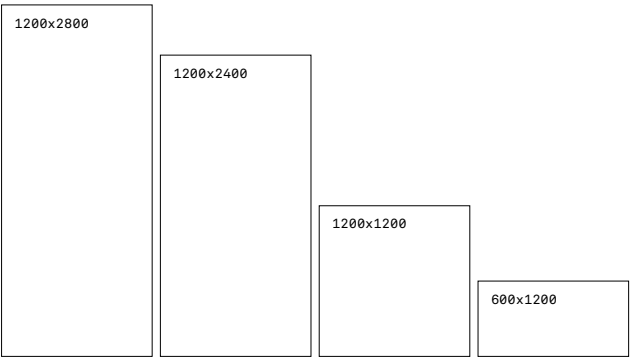


FINISHES:
Matt R10 (A+B), Anti Slip R11 (A+B+C)

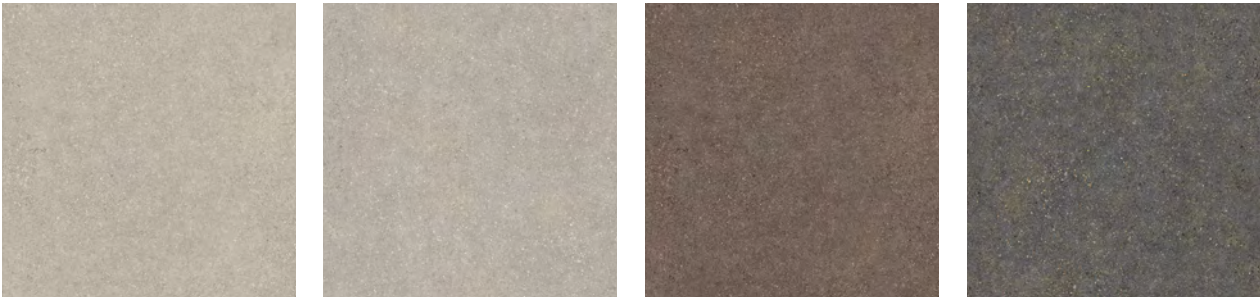
APPEARANCE:
Stone

MATERIAL:
Porcelain

USAGE:
Floors and walls



All sizes are in mm. PTV results available on request. EPD available on request.
Search for Drift at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.



DRF-Bone
3DRF101

DRF-Greige
3DRF102

DRF-Brown
3DRF103

DRF-Grey
3DRF104



DRF-Ivory
3DRF105

DRF-Light
3DRF106

DRF-Sand
3DRF107

DRF-Fossil
3DRF108

“This exceptional collection will appeal to designers working in a variety of contexts. The large formats offer strikingly monolithic effects, and the natural warmth of Drift is aesthetically satisfying.”

Justin Jennings,
Product Manager



Design possibilities are further extended by small 300x300mm 3D Mosaic pieces and large 1200x2800mm Decor pieces that incorporate the range colours. Examples above are not to scale.



The stylishly understated Aggrelite creates a subtle backdrop for your design features.

Aggrelite

6 COLOURS
3 FINISHES
4 SIZES

Aggrelite marries the timeless beauty of terrazzo with the technical advantages of porcelain.

While terrazzo has exerted a pull upon the imaginations and aesthetic sensibilities of designers for hundreds, if not thousands, of years, the material comes with a few disadvantages. Cracking and staining, a high initial cost are all common problems, and the floor itself is quite cold. Porcelain is affordable, easy to replace, impervious, and will accommodate underfloor heating systems.

Aggrelite is a full-bodied terrazzo-effect porcelain tile, which means that the colour pattern runs through the entire tile. So, in the event of wear, the design is not affected. The speckles are in useful colours which permit a variety of combinations, leaving increased freedom for design decisions.

Sizes are predominantly medium format, consistent with the aesthetics of traditional terrazzo. One larger 600x1200mm piece is available. All pieces are 10mm, or more, thick, giving the option of outdoor use. Aggrelite is suitable for walls and floors and comes in a Natural R9, Polished, and Anti Slip R11 finish.

The collection comes from a manufacturer with a long history of providing reliably excellent products. Aggrelite represents 60 years of experimentation, research, and technical expertise from a company that has shown leadership in sustainable business practices within the sector.



Floor:
3AGG105



Floor:
3AGG103

FINISHES:
Natural R9, Polished, Anti Slip R11

APPEARANCE:
Terrazzo

MATERIAL:
Porcelain - Full-Body

USAGE:
Floors and walls

SHADE VARIATION:
V3 - Moderate

“This is a deceptively simple terrazzo-effect range. Designers will find Aggrelite particularly useful due to the eternal appeal of the terrazzo aesthetic and its understated expression here.”

Justin Jennings,
Product Manager



AGG-Beige
3AGG106



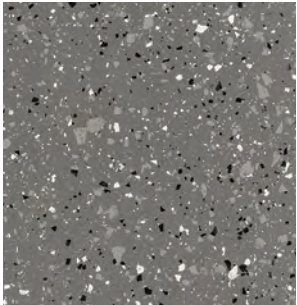
AGG-White
3AGG105



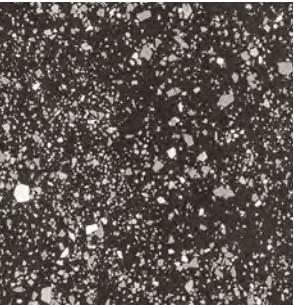
AGG-Silver
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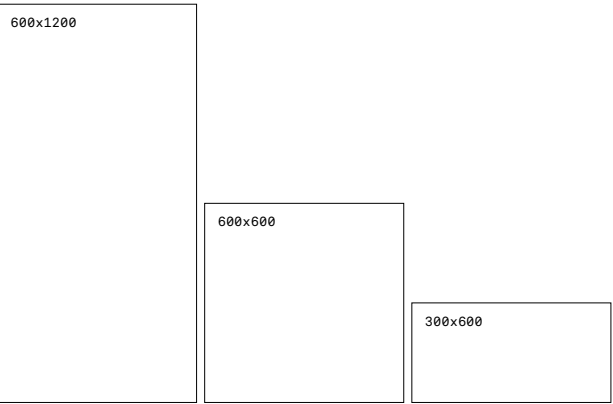
AGG-Grey
3AGG103



AGG-Ash
3AGG102



AGG-Black
3AGG101



All sizes are in mm. PTV results available on request. EPD available on request.
Search for Aggrelite at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.



Floor:
3AGG103

NEW RANGE

Palos

Discover new possibilities with this versatile and colourful range.

13 COLOURS
2 FINISHES
2 SIZES

Tile:
6PLS105

Palos can be utilised in a variety of contexts due to its functional dimensions.

Palos comes from a manufacturer who is philosophically and aesthetically committed to the essential qualities of ceramic materials. This producer does not create ranges that imitate natural forms, but rather they seek to explore and expand the possibilities of the material itself.

Practically, this outlook is manifested in several ways. In the development of their products, they do not reproduce the textures of other materials or use digital printing. They invest in and create their own 'biscuit', or 'bisque', which is unique to them and cannot be copied. They utilise many artisanal techniques such as double firing and traditional enamelling, which allows them to achieve spectacular colours and glosses, and a high-quality finish.

The Palos collection is a range of brightly coloured long 20x450mm and short 20x150mm stick tiles mounted on a mesh. These sizes permit affixation on curved surfaces. A huge range of vibrant colours with variations, texture, and pitting that derives from the production process make Palos a strong choice to achieve differentiation in your design.

Palos is suitable for walls. The 'crackle' finish will need to be sealed with Fila MP90 Eco Xtreme or Fob Xtreme.

Colour variation and textural complexity adds to the appeal of the tiles.



Wall:
6PLS101



Wall:
6PLS114



Wall:
6PLS104

Palos is mounted on a flexible mesh which allows it to be adhered to curved surfaces.

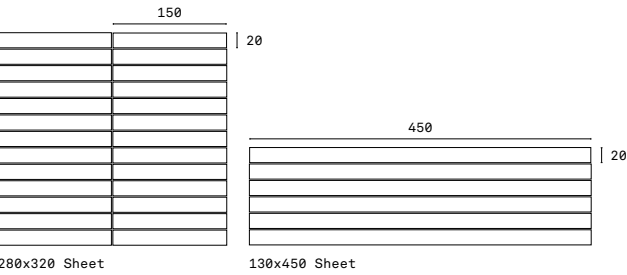
FINISHES:
Gloss, Gloss Crackle

APPEARANCE:
Mono Colour

MATERIAL:
Ceramic

USAGE:
Walls only

SHADE VARIATION:
V2 - Light



All sizes are in mm.
Search for Palos at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.



“Palos is a lovely range from a fantastic manufacturer. The handmade appearance of the material is beautifully rustic, and the unusual dimensions make it versatile. By remaining true to the material, the manufacturer is unleashing the design potential of ceramic tiles.”

Justin Jennings,
Product Manager

Dryland

The colours of a sandy desert are the inspiration behind this collection.



6 COLOURS | 2 FINISHES | 5 SIZES | 3 DECORS



Wall:
3DRY109D103

Dryland is strikingly contemporary in its performance, with aesthetics that add warmth to minimalist and refined interiors.

The desert is a dynamic and complex system. In *The Physics of Blown Sand and Desert Dunes* (1941), Ralph Bagnold wrote, "The observer never fails to be amazed at a simplicity of form, an exactitude of repetition."

The Tuareg people will tell you that the desert is the shape of the wind. The desert occupies a strong hold upon the human imagination as a place of retreat, of peril, and of safety. Dryland is an exploration of the desert in porcelain.

The surface of the tiles, much like the desert from afar, is only apparently featureless, and, upon closer inspection, reveals nuances and colour variations. Movement and depth emerge thanks to the richness of detail and articulated grain aesthetics.





Floor:
3DRY103
Wall:
3DRY102

Six warm, natural colours with light variation can be used to create interiors that evoke warmth and safety. Three compelling decors extend design possibilities. Decor A resembles a woven textile, Decor B recalls corrugated sand, and Decor C in 3D relief resembles the blue of the desert sky.

The collection may be used on walls and floors and comes in five useful sizes that can accommodate all project scales. A 40+ PTV finish makes this collection suitable for transitional spaces between wet and dry areas, and indoor and outdoor settings. The brand new Matt-Pro Surface is a micro-glaze that is grippy when wet, achieving high anti-slip ratings.

“I am delighted with this collection. The warmth and cosiness of the colour palette is really something. The exceptional PTV and size variation will be especially useful to ambitious designers.”

Justin Jennings,
Product Manager



Floor:
3DRY107D101

FINISHES:
Matt R10 (A+B), Anti Slip R11 (A+B+C)

APPEARANCE:
Stone

MATERIAL:
Porcelain

USAGE:
Floors and walls

SHADE VARIATION:
V2 - Light



DRY-Light
3DRY101



DRY-Bone
3DRY102



DRY-Tan
3DRY103



DRY-Sand
3DRY104



DRY-Brown
3DRY105



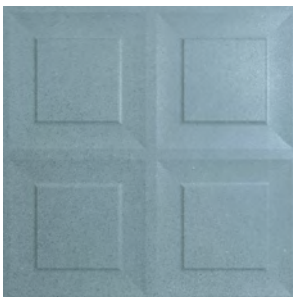
DRY-Copper
3DRY106



DRY-Decor A
3DRY107D101

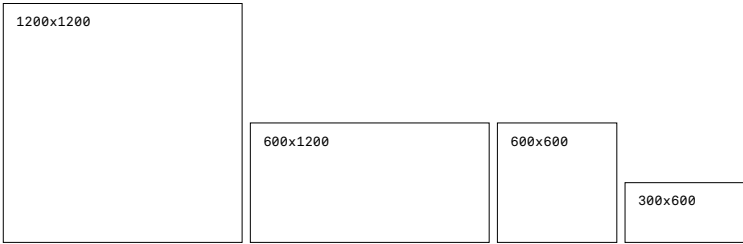


DRY-Decor B
3DRY108D102

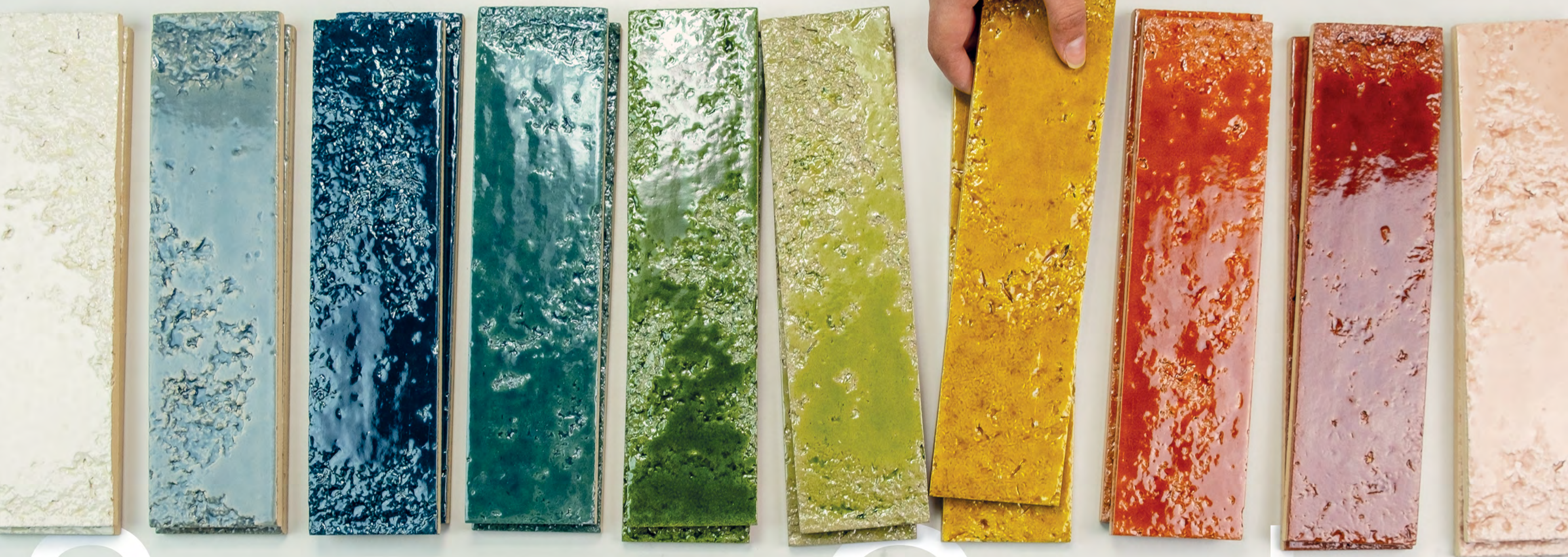


DRY-Decor C
3DRY109D103

All sizes are in mm. PTV results available on request. EPD available on request. Search for Dryland at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.



The enamelled and irregular appearance of this collection creates a dynamic surface that calls to mind the sea.



Sea Garden



Sea Garden is a strikingly beautiful range with a breath-taking range of colours. These 64x260mm wall tiles are available in 20 different, bright, and expressive glazes. The colours call to mind tropical coral reefs and the species that live amongst them.

The face of each tile presents unique variations as a consequence of the production process. These tiles are pressed in a mould, giving them a pitted surface that creates movement between lighter and darker areas. Combined with the bright, enamelled glaze, the pitted surface achieves a shimmering fluidity that is suggestive of sunlit water.

The technical characteristics of Sea Garden make the collection suitable for walls both internal and external, and swimming pool walls, where they will catch and refract the light in an attractive way.

Sea Garden can be mixed to achieve exciting colour contrasts, or unified as one colour to harmonise with a design. The collection can create fascinating feature walls by virtue of the palette and texture. Sea Garden's apparent simplicity belies its depths.

Sea Garden comes
in a spectrum of
colours that will
illuminate any wall.



Unique patterns of pitting create dynamic textural contrasts and swells of colour.

FINISH:
Gloss Crackle

APPEARANCE:
Mono Colour

MATERIAL:
Ceramic

USAGE:
Walls only

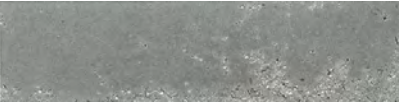
SHADE VARIATION:
V2 - Light



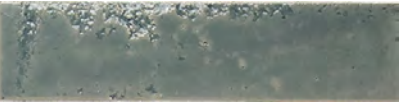
SGD-White
5SCG109



SGD-Cream
5SCG105



SGD-Grey
5SCG116



SGD-Steel
5SCG113



SGD-Ash
5SCG117



SGD-Green
5SCG101



SGD-Forest
5SCG102



SGD-Sage
5SCG111



SGD-Teal
5SCG110



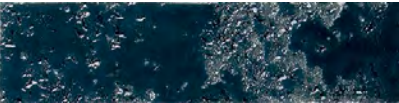
SGD-Basil
5SCG103



SGD-Jade
5SCG112



SGD-Ocean
5SCG114



SGD-Blue
5SCG115



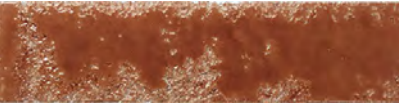
SGD-Black
5SCG118



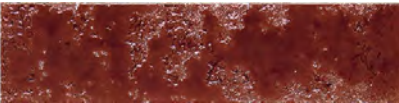
SGD-Rose
5SCG119



SGD-Amber
5SCG120



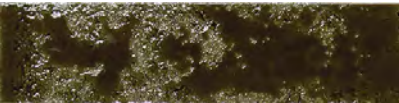
SGD-Bronze
5SCG106



SGD-Terra
5SCG107



SGD-Chocolate
5SCG108



SGD-Army
5SCG104



64x260

All sizes are in mm.
Search for Sea Garden at solusceramics.com for more information about this range.

“This delightful range was a real pleasure to discover on a recent trip to Valencia. Its vibrancy and variation will appeal to the designer with an eye for colour.”

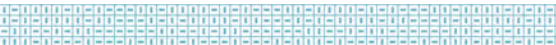
Justin Jennings,
Product Manager



Wall:
5SCG120

The central rectangle in the mosaic chip is randomly oriented creating a simple yet compelling arrangement.

Shift



3 COLOURS
1 FINISH
1 SIZE

Shift creates a sense of movement through the directionality of recessed rectangles in the individual chips.

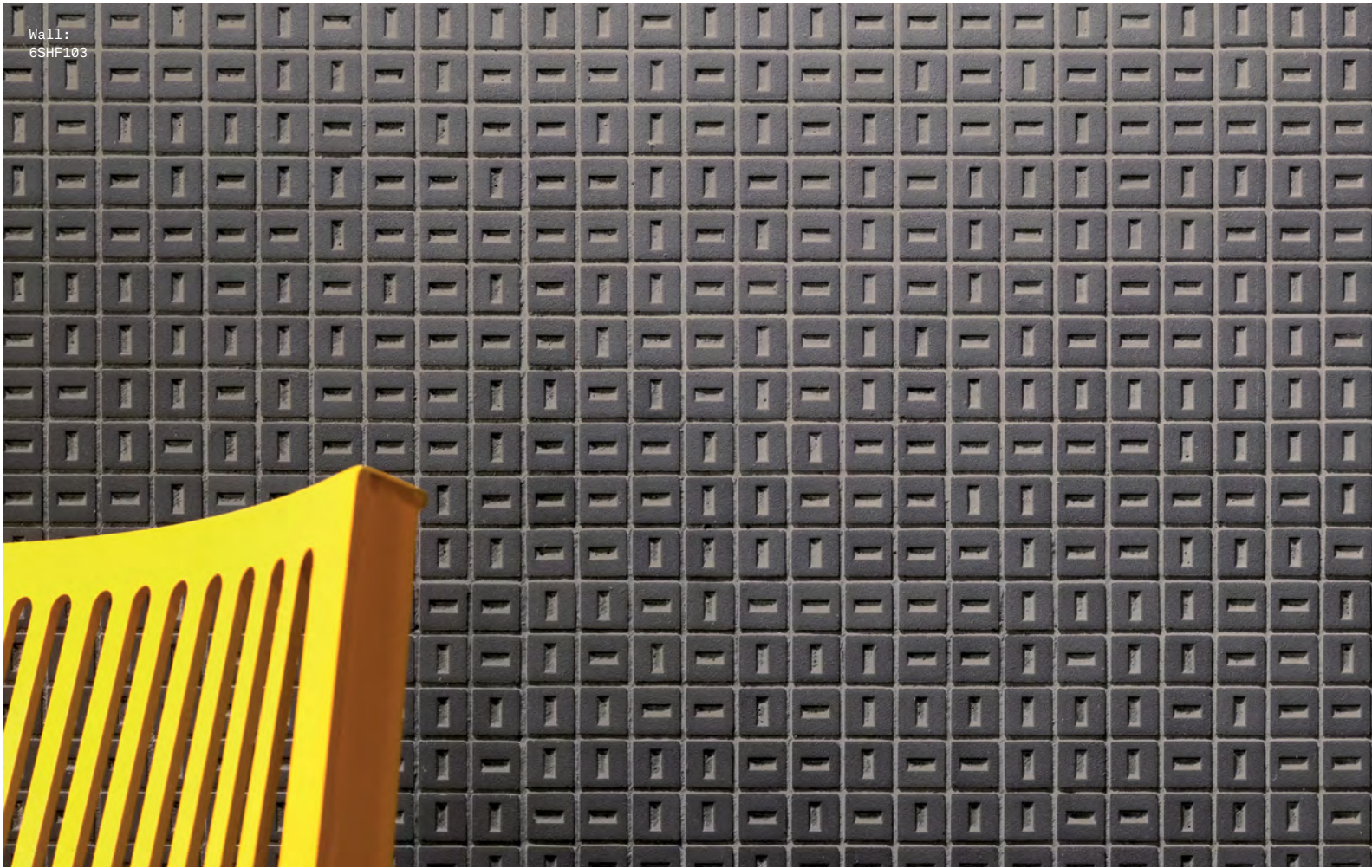
Shift is a full-body porcelain stoneware mosaic, composed of 20×20mm chips, 6mm thick, characterised by a central recess, and mounted on a fibreglass mesh to form 300×300mm sheets.

It is the creation of award-winning designer Simone Bonnani. Bonnani worked with Marcel Wanders in Amsterdam before opening his eponymous studio in Milan. He describes his work as focused on “the search for uniqueness and on the attribution of a precise graphic identity to the product through the accurate simplification of its silhouette.”

Shift achieves its full potential through the judicious use of cementitious mortar which is used to delineate the tesserae and fill the rectangular recess. Tones can be chosen to contrast or agree with the colour of the mosaic, extending design options.

“I was interested in the movement, in the vibration. I focused exclusively on the design of the single chip, aware that a graphic sign on repeated element - especially if simple or almost imperceptible - would generate a continuous pulsation all over the composition. It is a way to make the wall vibrant and present, to think beyond the traditional grid structure.” Simone Bonnani.

Cementitious mortar is used to contrast or to conform with the tone of the tile.





Wall:
6SHF102

“I was excited to find this product and am delighted to bring it to market. The dynamism and energy of the design is really appealing and will be great for a feature wall.”

Justin Jennings,
Product Manager

FINISH:
Matt R10 (A+B)

APPEARANCE:
Mono Colour

MATERIAL:
Porcelain - Full-Body

USAGE:
Floors and walls

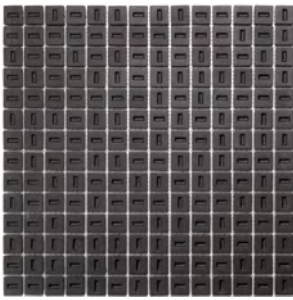
SHADE VARIATION:
V2 - Light



SHF-White
6SHF101



SHF-Grey
6SHF102



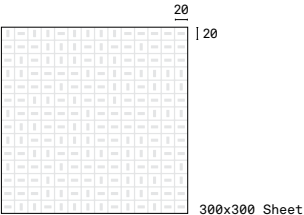
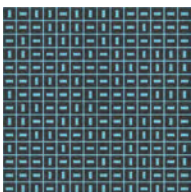
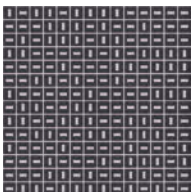
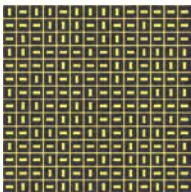
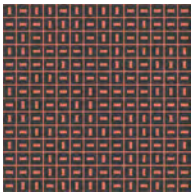
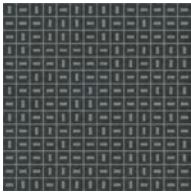
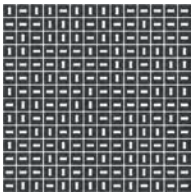
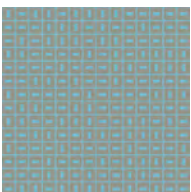
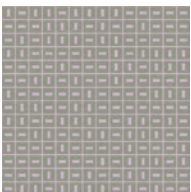
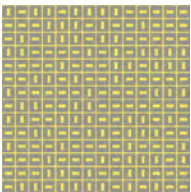
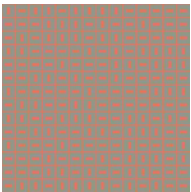
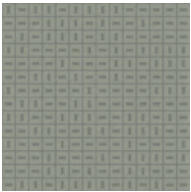
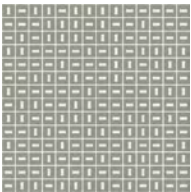
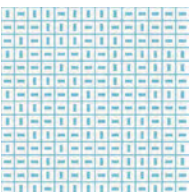
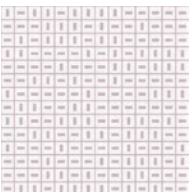
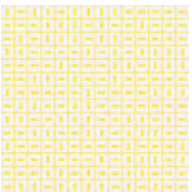
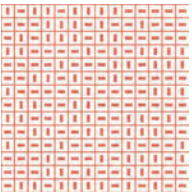
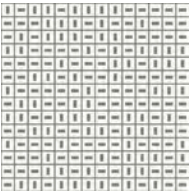
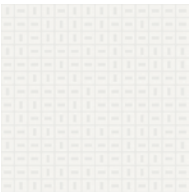
SHF-Black
6SHF103

The images to the right are examples of the effects which can be achieved with Shift through the use of coloured grout.

Grout is an essential component of the design and must be purchased separately.

The matrix lines of the mesh and the recessed central rectangle are filled with a cementitious grout.

The manufacturer recommends Ultracolor Plus by Mapei.



All sizes are in mm.
Search for Shift at [solusceramics.com](https://www.solusceramics.com) for more information about this range.

BELSTAFF

REGENT STREET, LONDON

BELSTAFF REGENT STREET
RE-OPENS WITH BRANDED
SOLUS KETLEY QUARRY.

DESIGN ARCHITECT:
Specific Generic

DELIVERY ARCHITECT:
NW Architects

CONTRACTORS
Jones Homes, AD Baker Shopfitters

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Paul Riddle

RANGES USED IN THIS PROJECT:
Ketley Quarry



A SENSE OF AUTHENTICITY AND HISTORY CONVEYED BY STAFFORDSHIRE BLUE BRICK.

Beloved British motorcycle outfitters, Belstaff, kickstarted in Staffordshire in 1924, when founder Eli Belovitch combined the first syllable of his home county with that of his name.

Today, Belstaff is a luxury brand synonymous with high-quality British workmanship of yesteryear, and an authenticity that harks back to the era of the great British motorcycle marques - Bonneville, BSA, Brough, etc.

Hollywood legend and notorious petrol head Steve McQueen loved his Belstaff Trialmaster so much that he once cancelled a date with Ali McGraw to rewax the jacket. Popes, explorers, revolutionaries, actors, and artists have all enjoyed the sporty British elegance of this Midlands firm.

Scandinavian architects, Specific Generic, wanted to reference this history and sense of place in their design for Belstaff's flagship store on Regent Street. Serendipitously, they visited Solus during Clerkenwell Design Week 2022 to experience our installation, 'The Marl Pit' – the slogan to which was 'Everything Old is New Again'.

This installation designed by Simon Astridge and Nicholas Szczepaniak featured a dynamic floor of brick slips balanced on

their ends; brick slips made from Staffordshire Etruria marl clay called Ketley Quarry. What better way to demonstrate the roots of this company than create a floor composed of the very clay of their home county?

“The architects wanted to evoke the atmosphere of a Midlands motorbike workshop and had been looking at brick slips. When they discovered that Solus Ketley Quarry was made 30 miles from the original headquarters of Belstaff, they were delighted. It gave them the opportunity to represent the brand's values and history in the materiality of the space.” David Sherry, Solus Sales Manager.

Maja Bernvill, Chief Creative Officer at architects Specific Generic, elucidated the design process, “We were talking about the evolution of motorbikes, since this heritage is so important to the brand. And that's where this future garage idea came in: it's where the journey starts and ends, where you prepare for the journey, and where you bring memories and souvenirs back from the road.”

Solus created a bespoke brick slip engraved with the Belstaff logo, and NW Architects from Leeds completed the fit out with 200 metres of Solus Ketley Quarry in Smoke. The design has



SOLUS CAN ENGRAVE TILES WITH BRAND LOGOS.



I am delighted with this project. Ketley Quarry is a fantastic and historical product that can be seen throughout the country from the Barbican to the canals of Birmingham. Belstaff clearly connected with the Ketley story and wanted to be a part of it.

I joined Solus from Ketley, so this was a lovely way to transition between the roles – a sort of parting and joining gift. I will be focussing on the luxury residential sector for Solus, an area that we are working to expand. Give me a call about anything Ketley related!”

David Sherry,
Luxury Residential Sales Manager

davidsherry@solusceramics.com



Floor:
2KET101

THE STORE ON REGENT STREET IS BELSTAFF'S FLAGSHIP.

been so well-received that Belstaff have applied it to another store in Cheshire Oaks.

Belstaff's flagship store in Mayfair is now open, just in time for Belstaff's 100th anniversary. Within the space, materials have been carefully selected to convey the underlying tensions between old and new, constancy and change, which still underpin the brand today. The smoke-hued Staffordshire blue brick slips cover the floors, in a nod to the floors of the industrial workplaces and potteries of Belstaff's hometown, Stoke-on-Trent.

On the ground floor, gently curved walls covered in natural clay guide customers through the space and encourage exploration. Brushed stainless-steel elements add industrial touches engineered for function – much like the products that they hold. Hand-hewn wooden benches and shelving by Studio Fonk take their cues from natural found objects that we bring home with us when we wander in the outdoors. The brand's Phoenix icon is subtly stamped in surprising places on the tiling throughout, giving customers something new to uncover as they walk the floors.

“This is a real moment for us, as the vision and conversations we've been having as a relatively new team over the past two years finally come together, spatially, in our London home. Everything in the space has a reason and a purpose. This is the new era of Belstaff, a brand not held back by its history, but propelled by it.” Says Jodie Harrison, Global Brand Director, Belstaff.

For Solus, this has been a great project with which to be involved. We have an excellent record of accomplishment in maintaining brand identities, working globally with brands such as Rolls Royce, Jaguar Land Rover, and Five Guys. It is gratifying to share our local history with a brand that values authenticity in the same way that we do.



Floor:
2KET101

A MINIMALIST
INDUSTRIAL AESTHETIC
REFERENCES BRITISH
MOTORCYCLING HISTORY.

WORKPLACE PROJECT

NEW PARK SQUARE

EDINBURGH



AHMM win laurels for
Edinburgh Park flagship.



CLIENT:
Parabola

ARCHITECT:
Allford Hall Monaghan Morris

MAIN CONTRACTOR:
Sir Robert McAlpine

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Timothy Soar

RANGES USED IN THIS PROJECT:
Bespoke terrazzo
Bright
Technici Gres 4



1 New Park Square is a significant milestone in Parabola’s eco-conscious development of Edinburgh Park.

Edinburgh Park is a business park located to the west of Edinburgh. Partially developed in the 1990s, it was serviced by a car-dependent infrastructure. The arrival of a tram line and two heavy rail stations in the early 2000s significantly changed the character of the site, permitting landscaping and more greenspace.

Peter Millican, the developer behind Kings Place at King’s Cross acquired the undeveloped half in 2013 through his company Parabola, and spent six years creating a masterplan consisting of offices, housing, hotels, sports facilities, and art. The goal was to create a new sustainable urban quarter, creative campus, and cultural destination.

The flagship of this development is 1 New Park Square (1NPS), a five-storey, mixed-use building offering 87,500 sqft of office space, with conference and events spaces, and a restaurant that lets out onto a square. Designed by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM), 1NPS was Outright Winner of the Concrete Society Awards 2023, and the winner of the Architects’ Journal Workplace Project 2023.

The decision to use concrete was supported by a sustainability review using the Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers Technical Memorandum 52 (CIBSE TM52), on how to avoid overheating when designing a building. The use of exposed concrete instead of plasterboard has reduced summer cooling loads by 38%.

AHMM Associate, Matthew Hart, explained, “Concrete enabled simplicity in terms of fire compartmentation and structural

efficiencies, and significantly contributed to lowering operational energy. It’s also a self-finished material, which we enjoy aesthetically.”

The judges were particularly impressed by the appearance of the concrete. “The visual impact of the concrete throughout the building is simply stunning. Walking into the main reception to see the exposed concrete being complemented by various forms of art and lighting is refreshing to see... This building should be promoted and celebrated as a best use of concrete within construction.”

Tony Hordon, Managing Director of Parabola, comments, “The pioneering building is leading the way for a net-zero future with all-electric infrastructure, PV arrays on the roof, high ceilings, openable windows, and double-height balconies providing exceptional fresh air circulation.”

AHMM have been proactive in the industry’s journey towards Net Zero, developing their own process to support architects with this goal. The Delivering Net Zero in Use Toolkit was developed in response to a need to coordinate and visualise a projects carbon data across all stages and disciplines of a building project. AHMM will be presenting the toolkit during Solus’ Clerkenwell Design Week 2024 programme.

Solus supplied two bespoke terrazzo, a wall tile called Bright, and Technici Gres 4 in various finishes for grip. The products helped AHMM maintain high sustainability standards; a factor considered by both the Architects’ Journal and the Concrete Society judges.



Floors:
Bespoke terrazzo



Bespoke terrazzo was designed to conform with the bare concrete aesthetic.



The light and airy reception adjoins a public square.

Solus Area Sales Manager, Pete Toule, commented, “This high-profile, award-winning project was a pleasure to supply. We have a great relationship with AHMM and were able to find products that blended seamlessly with the concrete aesthetic, enhancing the overall design.”

Edinburgh Park is a linear development running north to south; 1 NPS sits at the south end, serviced by the Edinburgh Park Central tram stop, beside a pleasing wetland called Loch Ross. A community garden, a padel court, and a public square designed by Gross Max Architects surround the building.

A colonnade runs around the ground floor on the north, west and south sides, connecting the square to the nearby tram stop. A café, restaurant, and music venue open out onto the new public square which features a specially commissioned bronze sculpture ‘Dancer after Degas’ by William Tucker RA. The work is part of a wider arts trail that includes the recently installed ‘Vulcan’ by Eduardo Paolozzi.

The building houses a 200-seat conference centre with four storeys of flexible office space above. The office floors are designed to allow for multiple configurations, allowing the space to be let as a single office space or split for up to four tenants. Generous floor to ceiling heights improve daylighting, thermal comfort and reduce energy in use over time. Professional services firm, Marsh McLennan, and Sainsbury’s Bank have taken up tenancies.

Parabola Founder and Chairman, Peter Millican said, “Designing a building from scratch is one of the most exciting things I can imagine doing. You start with a blank sheet of paper, and you end up with a sculpture which people inhabit. This new Edinburgh neighbourhood brings stunning architecture, inspirational workplaces, affordable homes, a civic square, and its own arts programme to a sublime setting.”



Floor:
2RPV449
Walls:
5HTR506



Floor:
Bespoke terrazzo

“

It is always gratifying to have products successfully specified. That pleasure increases when the project goes on to win prestigious awards. Thanks, as always, to the team at AHMM who have created something very special in 1 New Park Square.”

Pete Toule, Area Sales Manager
petetoule@solusceramics.com

Hospitality project



INTERIOR DESIGN:
Grapes Design

TILING CONTRACTOR:
Malcolm Charles Contracts

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Michael Franke

RANGES USED IN THIS PROJECT:
Fornia, Program, Carnival, Chic, Glass Source, Venetian

OLD COMPTON

B R A S S E R I E

An all-day brasserie for the Bohos of Soho.

Award-winning Grapes Design recreates a fin de siècle vibe in the heart of Soho.

Soho, (aptly, a battlecry) is a special place, particularly for the queer community. Queer folk have gathered in Soho since the 1600s, according to Alim Kheraj, author of ‘Queer London: A Guide to the City’s LGBTQ+ Past and Present’. The area is widely (and more primly) described as an ‘entertainment district’ and many theatres, cinemas, bars, and restaurants operate.

In the 1920s, the proto-tabloid ‘John Bull’ described Soho as the home of “fornicators, prostitutes, and sodomites”; thankfully, such regressive attitudes are mostly behind us, yet Soho retains its counter-normative aura. Artists have long gravitated to the district: Rimbaud and Verlaine, Moraes, Hamnett, Freud, Bacon, Sartre, Wilde, have all baltered along these streets in various states.

Enter Old Compton Brasserie, a new hangout for the Bohemians on the main artery of queer Soho, Old Compton Street. It was on this street in 1999 that a neo-nazi bombed the Admiral Duncan pub in a hate crime that killed three, injured dozens, and did nothing to diminish the spirit and pride of this embattled community.

Grapes Design have immersed themselves in the history of Soho to give us a brasserie that references legendary local nightspots,

the Cave of the Golden Calf, Madame JoJo’s, the Caravan Club, and all the so-called ‘dens of iniquity’ (aka queer safe spaces) that preceded it. The brasserie describes itself as “A risqué, lively hotspot full of colourful characters ready to celebrate love and life” which aims to “cultivate the London art scene... To become a place where mouths and eyes can feast.”

Art is prominent throughout the design with Pop art murals, cubist paintings, and infinitely regressing light installations that recall the work of Kusama Yayoi. Exposed brick and timber are likely a nod the less salubrious forebears of this slum-chic eatery.

Leather upholstered banquettes and chairs, marble table and bar tops, brass bar gantries, and a hanging mezzanine of black steel express a love of materiality and texture. A cluster of golden ball chandeliers illuminate mid bar area. A backlit feature wall and a neon nod to the ghosts of Soho past adorn the Frith and Dean Street ends respectively.

The use of geometric shapes, stylized curves, atmospheric lighting, luxury materials, bold colours, metallic finishes, and intricate mosaics are a maximalist fever dream of Soho through the ages.



The maximalist design showcases art and light features.



LEFT
Floor:
2EFT104d105
Walls:
5APX101
RIGHT
Floor:
2EFT104d105
Walls:
5PRY502

Floor:
6QMR550
6QMR573
Walls:
5AML101



“

“It is always a pleasure to work with the team at Grapes Design. They always have a clear design sensibility and a vision of what they want to achieve.

I was happy to be able to source products that helped them manifest their vision for this soon-to-be-iconic Soho brasserie.”

John Rose, Area Sales Manager
johnrose@solusceramics.com



Wall:
5AML101

Several Solus ranges were employed in the project to create a compelling interior.

The design references the brasserie's historical antecedents - the clubs of old Soho.

Solus Area Sales Manager, John Rose explains, “We supplied the mosaics and the micro mosaics in blues and aqua tones to this project. We were also able to provide the brick tile and support Grapes Design with the M40 document. We are particularly proud of the brass logo which we inlaid into a mosaic bed, which you will see at the threshold. We provide this service, as well as cutting.”

Grapes Design have made a name for themselves in the hospitality sector winning industry awards for Dirty Martini in Birmingham, and Savage Garden and Chateau Denmark in London. Most recently, Chateau Denmark won the Hospitality Interior Design category at the 2024 Muse Hotel Awards.

“The team is extremely talented with formidable experience and commitment to each individual project. Winning awards from both the hospitality and retail sectors has given us recognition for our dedication for work that we have conducted throughout the past decades.” Darren Grapes, Creative Director, Grapes Design.



THE SALVATION ARMY

Headquarters

Six-storey Salvation
Army UK and Ireland
Headquarters completed in
Denmark Hill, London.

ARCHITECT:
TateHindle

CONTRACTOR:
McLaren

FLOORING CONTRACTOR:
Crean Contract Flooring & Tiling

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Jack Hobhouse

RANGES USED IN THIS PROJECT:
Terrazzo, Travertine 1, Eclipse, Particulate, Scenario, Bright





TateHindle deliver high-quality long-lasting HQ to complement adjacent Sir Giles Gilbert Scott designed training college.

William Booth College in Denmark Hill was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, whose other projects include Battersea Power Station, Liverpool Cathedral, and the red telephone box. It has served as the headquarters and training college of the Salvation Army since the 1930s.

Typically of Giles Gilbert Scott, it features robust brickwork with a strong vertical emphasis, an aesthetic that TateHindle have honoured in their design for the new headquarters which sit beside the college.

The new home for the charity is both elegant and sustainable, offering cost-effective solutions – which was a key concern for the organisation. The space accommodates a modern workforce and integrates with the surrounding estate, providing approximately 66,660 sqft of internal floor space.

The exterior of the concrete superstructure is clad in brick panels, and the interior in warm oak. The necessarily deep plan boasts a central atrium that provides visual connections across the space and creates a sense of community. The heart of the building is this bright and airy space. It features a welcoming cafe, adaptable work areas for different needs, casual meeting nooks for chats and brainstorming, and a rooftop terrace with breath-taking city views.

Instead of a quadrangle-like courtyard as found on the neighbouring campus, the large internal atrium aligns through a glazed opening at one end with the tower of the college. This

innovative design bridges the college's rich heritage and core values, embodied by the towering structure, with the needs of a progressive and modern workforce for the future.

The design cleverly uses projecting brick piers and recessed windows. This creates the impression of a robust brick facade when seen from the side, while maximising natural light penetration through extensive glazing revealed from a head-on view. The window placement is strategically oriented to optimise daylight based on the building's position.

By mixing contemporary design features and materials, such as high levels of glazing and GRC fins with brick panelling referencing the Grade II listed William Booth College, TateHindle have created a unique and modern building that respects its own heritage.

As the Salvation Army expect to use their headquarters for the next 120 years, TateHindle prioritised sustainability from the outset. Their strategy focused on minimising the building's environmental impact throughout its lifecycle – from embodied carbon (emissions associated with material production) to ongoing energy use. This commitment to longevity is further reflected in the use of carefully chosen durable materials that align with the client's values and identity.

The building has achieved a BREEAM Excellent rating thanks to its sustainable features. The structural concrete slab utilises 50% ground granulated blast-furnace slag (GGBS), a

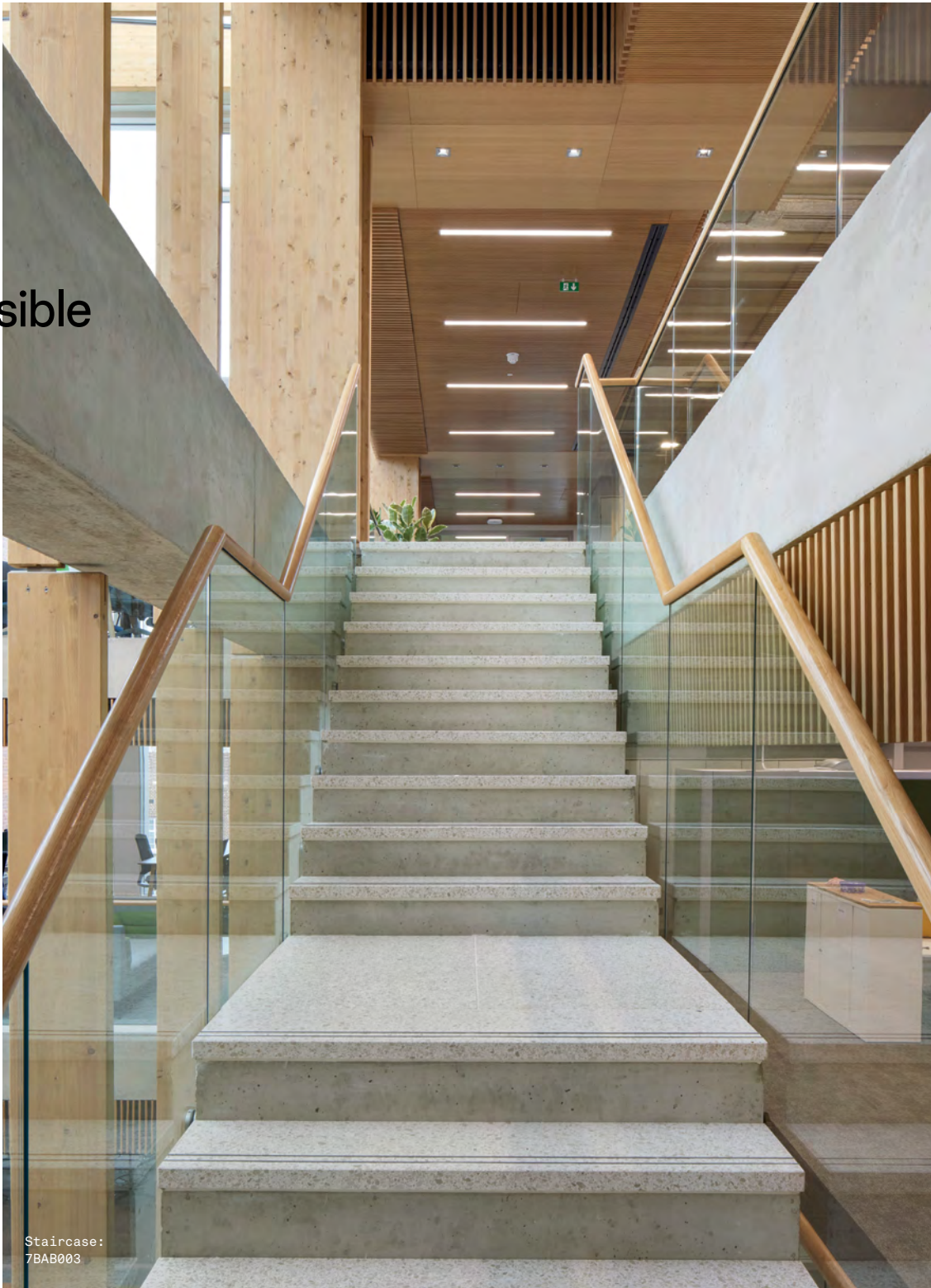


Floor: 7BAB003

The new atrium space has now become the beating heart of the charity, with visual connections between almost all areas and a feature stair facilitating circulation.



The staircases, featuring Terrazzo step treads, are visible from all sides.



Staircase:
7BAB003



Floor:
7BAB003



“

“I felt privileged to be consulted for this project. TateHindle have done such an incredible job. They’ve created a truly inspiring space that will support the charitable work of the Salvation Army for lifetimes.”

Pete Toule, Area Sales Manager
petetoule@solusceramics.com



by-product from the steel industry that reduces reliance on virgin cement. The slab also incorporates ribbing to minimise material usage. These combined efforts not only lessen the building’s environmental impact, but also translate to a 20% weight reduction compared to a standard concrete flat slab. This lighter weight allows for smaller foundations, further enhancing resource efficiency. To top it all off, the roof level accommodates around 100 PV panels, generating clean energy on-site.

Solus was able to provide ceramic solutions for several areas of the building, with a number of products to support the design goals. Our Terrazzo range was used on the staircases and throughout the atrium, Travertine 1 and Eclipse were used in other key areas.

“Working hand-in-hand with The Salvation Army to deliver their new UK headquarters building has been an incredibly rewarding process. Our vision was to reflect their core values with a strong emphasis on wellbeing and sustainability, while also acknowledging their history on the site and enhancing the setting of the adjacent listed campus.” Andrew Tate, Founding Director of TateHindle.

“We were delighted to be brought on for the duration of this project by McLaren. It went very well, and we’re looking forward to working with them in the future. We completed all the flooring both soft and hard elements – tiles, carpet, and vinyl and tiling to the walls. The staircase is visible from all sides, and we were happy to provide a finish that bears scrutiny. One of my personal favourite projects to date. It’s always great working with Pete and all the folk at Solus. They’re responsive suppliers, ready to support on technical and logistical matters.” Daniel Hunt, Contracts Director, Crean Contract Flooring & Tiling.

T H E

Sounds of the Earth was a three-month, multi-event programme hosted by Solus and Mirage at our Clerkenwell showroom from September to November 2023. It was an interrogation of the role of sound in space and how it informs design; there were panel discussions, talks, performances, and parties.



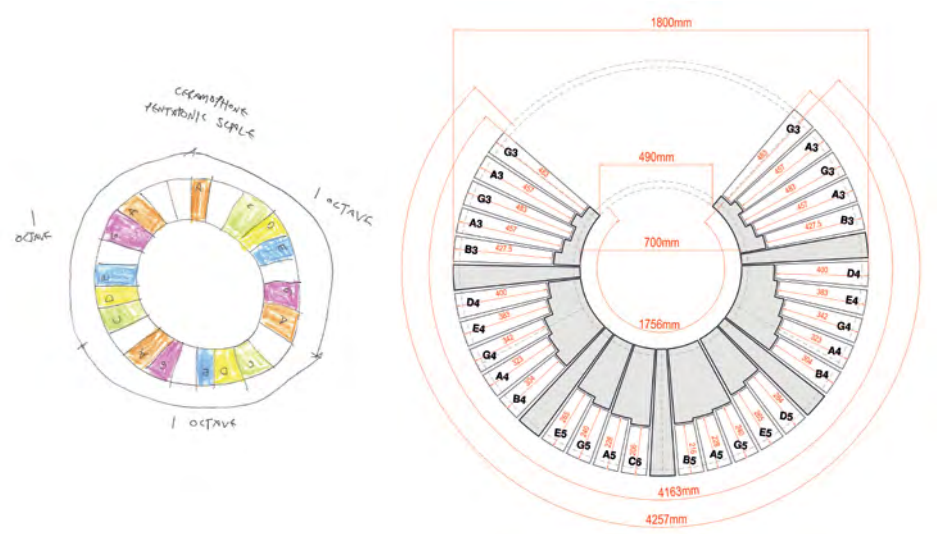
C E R A M O P H O N E



S T O R Y



Music Producer James Mason, Boatwright Jerry Fleming, and Architect Simon Astridge at Jerry's workshop at Lyme Regis Boat Building Academy.



JERRY FLEMING, BOATWRIGHT, MUSICAL INSTRUMENT MAKER, AND MUSICIAN

The Ceramophone was a challenging project; it's an unconventional chromatic percussion instrument, in that its bars are made of porcelain and trapezoid shaped to suit the horseshoe frame. The frame required precise steam-bent oak to follow the outer perimeter of the bars.

Traditionally, tuned bars of a chromatic percussion instrument are made from metal or hardwood; both are forgiving when cutting and shaping. Although the acoustic quality of the Mirage tiles was very good, ceramic is a brittle material to use in this context.

Unlike strings and pipes, halving the bar length increases the pitch (roughly by two octaves). This led to some tricky decisions when choosing the Ceramophone's register. As we had decided on a pentatonic scale (five notes per octave, a nod to Mirage's 50 years in business), there was a risk that we would quickly reduce the size (and therefore pitch) of the bars through the scale from 500mm to 50mm, rendering a 2m instrument slightly absurd.

Although a high-quality product, tiles are not generally quality controlled for their acoustic properties. There were slight variations in sound, even with identically cut tiles. There was a final process of pitch adjustment by hollowing out the underside of the bars or adjusting the length of the bar with an angle grinder and checking with an electronic tuner. Though it sounds aggressive, with care these processes would allow pitch adjustment to the cent (100 cents in a semitone - 12 semitones in one octave).

Once tuned, each bar needs to be tested to find its 'node' location. The nodes are where the bar will be physically supported from beneath. This is the area with the least vibrational energy, consequently less absorption and more volume.

This usually ends up being approximately 20% of the distance from the ends of the bar, however, I prefer to use a more precise approach by sprinkling dust or, in this case, semolina on to the bar and striking it to produce a note. Like cymatic plates, the semolina would vibrate in accordance with the wave interactions and arrange in a line to describe the nodal positions. This was then marked with chalk for the position of bridges to be calculated.

In its simplest form, steam bending works as follows - put a piece of green wood in a steamer, the lignin (organic polymer present in all plant cells) will soften and allow flex. If this flex is held in its new shape while the lignin cools and re-solidifies, you have successfully produced curved work.

A variety of species will bend, although in the UK, Oak and Ash will likely provide the best results. The grain must be straight with no run out and the timber should be free of defects such as knots and resin pockets. All these factors can lead to failures in the bending process which, in the case of the Ceramophone, was exerting a large amount of force on the timber. Tension and compression are generated simultaneously when bending, both on the outside and inside. This can result in tear out, breaks, and compression failure.

Although heated in a steam box, it is the high temperature rather than the moisture that is required to melt the lignin - occasionally we will pre-soak timber to improve the heat transfer. As a rule of thumb, the oak is 'cooked' for about an hour per inch. The boat builder that I learned steam bending from would sometimes say "anyone purporting to be an expert has probably not done enough bending to experience the range of unpredictable outcomes that can result". We encountered several timber and joint failures, as well as spring back issues, when producing the frame for the Ceramophone. I very much still consider myself a student of the practice.



As well as contributing to the design, James Mason was responsible for the Ceramophone *in situ*, recording multiple artists as they created original music.

To listen, scan the QR codes below.



Spotify



Apple



Tidal



Cymatics were used to find the nodes of minimum displacement.



JAMES MASON, MUSIC PRODUCER

We wanted to make an instrument using ceramics which encouraged collaboration. The concept of people gathering and making music around a fire was inspiring to us. This is why we created a circular instrument. Simon had clear goals for the instrument in terms of how it might look and perform. I wanted to make an instrument that didn't require people to have musical training to play it. This is why it was designed with the pentatonic scale, so that all the notes work harmonically together.

The Ceramophone arrived in Clerkenwell the week before the first event. SE Electronics, who collaborated with us, provided microphones and we spent a lot of time trying the microphones in different positions, to see how to best place them. We also built a temporary recording studio next to the Ceramophone, to allow us to record the extraordinary collection of people who graciously agreed to be part of this unusual project.

The 12 weeks of events were a huge success, but a lot of work!

Gosia Kepa and Connor Chambers are incredible percussionists from the Royal College of Music. When I first heard them playing the Ceramophone, I fully realised what we had made. They unlocked the music inside the instrument in a way that I can only describe as transcendent. On the first night of Sounds of the Earth they played a partially improvised piece, to a packed room of garrulous architects, designers, and contractors. You could have heard a pin drop.

Emma-Kate Matthews is an architect and composer and spoke at a Sounds of the Earth event as part of a panel discussion. She recorded samples of the Ceramophone using a rubber mallet, with a close-mic technique, which she then used to create a composition called 'Raindrop Counter'.

Barak Schmoool is a percussionist and composer, who teaches at the Royal Academy of Music. He saw the Ceramophone through the Solus showroom window as he happened to be walking by one day and came inside to enquire about it. Barak became a staple at the Sounds of the Earth events. He performed several times and wrote two compositions for the instrument.

A highlight for me was taking part in a performance with cellist and artist, Jan Erika, and vocalist and designer, Jo Love, in which we reworked Nina Simone's 'Feeling Good'.

The rest of the events showcased a diverse group of artists and musicians who used the Ceramophone as part of their performances. These included Liz Arcane, London-based singer-songwriter; Music Producer Mo Marshall; Yoi Kawakubo, an international artist; Alok Varma, tabla player, and Plumm, a London-based vocalist.

We had been thinking about the life of the Ceramophone after Sounds of the Earth. We wanted it to go somewhere it would have a positive impact. A friend of mine, James Lindsay, works in a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities school called Undershaw. He was delighted to receive the Ceramophone.

Gosia Kepa and Connor Chambers play the Ceramophone at the 2023 Dezeen Awards.



JAMES LINDSAY, MUSIC TEACHER AT UNDERSHAW

The arrival of the Ceramophone was an exciting event for the children. Bringing this large object into the building was a real team effort and it set the tone for how we've been interacting with it. The kids who brought it in were swarming around the Ceramophone and, unlike a guitar or a trombone, they were all able to get onto the instrument straight away.

Because of its tuning to the pentatonic scale, whatever they were playing had harmony. This is something we've explored together – finding common tonalities for improvisations. Immediately, they could improvise together and create something that sounded powerful and good.

That's a huge part of what our school is about – cooperation, creativity, teamwork. This instrument facilitates this collective activity, and so it was much loved from the second it arrived.

Undershaw is quite a unique school, it caters to children with special educational needs, some of whom have come from mainstream settings where the school environment was too big, too noisy for them. Our class sizes are small, usually no bigger than eight with a teacher and a teaching assistant working together. This offers an opportunity for whole group working which is more difficult in mainstream settings.

As the music teacher, I've done a lot of work around forming bands with the students, playing together, improvising together, creating together. The joy of the Ceramophone is that you can have a class of six students and all of them can be involved. With a class of eight, you can have some working on drums playing along with the instrument. This has a therapeutic benefit for the kids because the instrument sounds so pleasant and is calming.

It teaches them early on that the harder they hit it, the worse the sound is. It resonates best when hit lightly. That teaches them a very valuable lesson in terms of music and encourages them to listen to each other – a critical skill for any musician.

The students were unclear on the name of the instrument initially and quite quickly they thought it would be a good idea to name it. The founder of this school lives nearby in a place called Sundial House and he very generously gives up his grounds for an annual festival that we hold called the Sundial Festival.

When the students saw the instrument, they called it 'The Moondial'. Obviously, that's to do with the shade of the ceramic, the crescent shape, and, I think, the calming sound of the instrument, there is something moon-like about it.

The instrument is a kind of portal that puts the children in contact with a primordial means of making music. Communally hitting objects to create sound and harmony feels like a defining human activity. A lot of the music being made nowadays involves music technology, which, while fantastic, can be a bit isolating. 'The Moondial' reconnects the children to a collective act of music making that teaches them valuable life skills.

CODA

So ends our part in the story of the Ceramophone, or rather the Moondial, as it has become. A new chapter has begun and who knows what beginnings it will engender at Undershaw.

It was a story about the collective act of music making, of making a musical instrument, of gathering people to play it. It is an example of how collaboration reveals not only the best parts of ourselves, but also achieves something greater than the sum of those parts. A mysterious gestalt effect, a creative quickening, as though the space in which we collaborate fills with something that is not wholly of us.

Ideas reflected, like sound or light, changed, amplified, sharpened, and improved. It brings us back to the first architecture, a dome of light thrown by a campfire, with warmly lit faces sharing stories, song, laughter, food, and music, reminding us that it is not competition that ensures survival, but rather collaboration.



James Mason, Sam Frith, and Alessandro Bianchi, enjoy the Dezeen Awards.

SOUNDS OF THE EARTH AND THE DEZEEN AWARDS

As its all-too-brief three-month residency as the belle of the Sounds of the Earth ball drew to a close, the Ceramophone had inspired countless conversations, several original compositions, academic research, and a whole lot of joy. Visitors had played it; guests had performed with it; it had become the talking point in the Clerkenwell design community.

But before the Ceramophone retired to the country to work with kids, it achieved its crowning glory by being invited to the Dezeen Awards. Gosia and Connor relived their Sounds of the Earth triumph on a bigger stage to a room full of design aficionados in Shoreditch.

Then, with some dampness around the eyes, we said goodbye as the Ceramophone left for Surrey, to Undershaw Special Educational Needs and Disabilities School.



We were delighted to support the Ceramophone project and the Sounds of the Earth event series.

We strongly feel that this project expresses our belief as an organisation in the value of collaboration, creativity, inclusivity, and social and environmental responsibility.

Thank you to the creative team at Solus for making it happen. Grazie mille!"

Alessandro Bianchi,
Key Account and Sustainability
Manager, Mirage



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