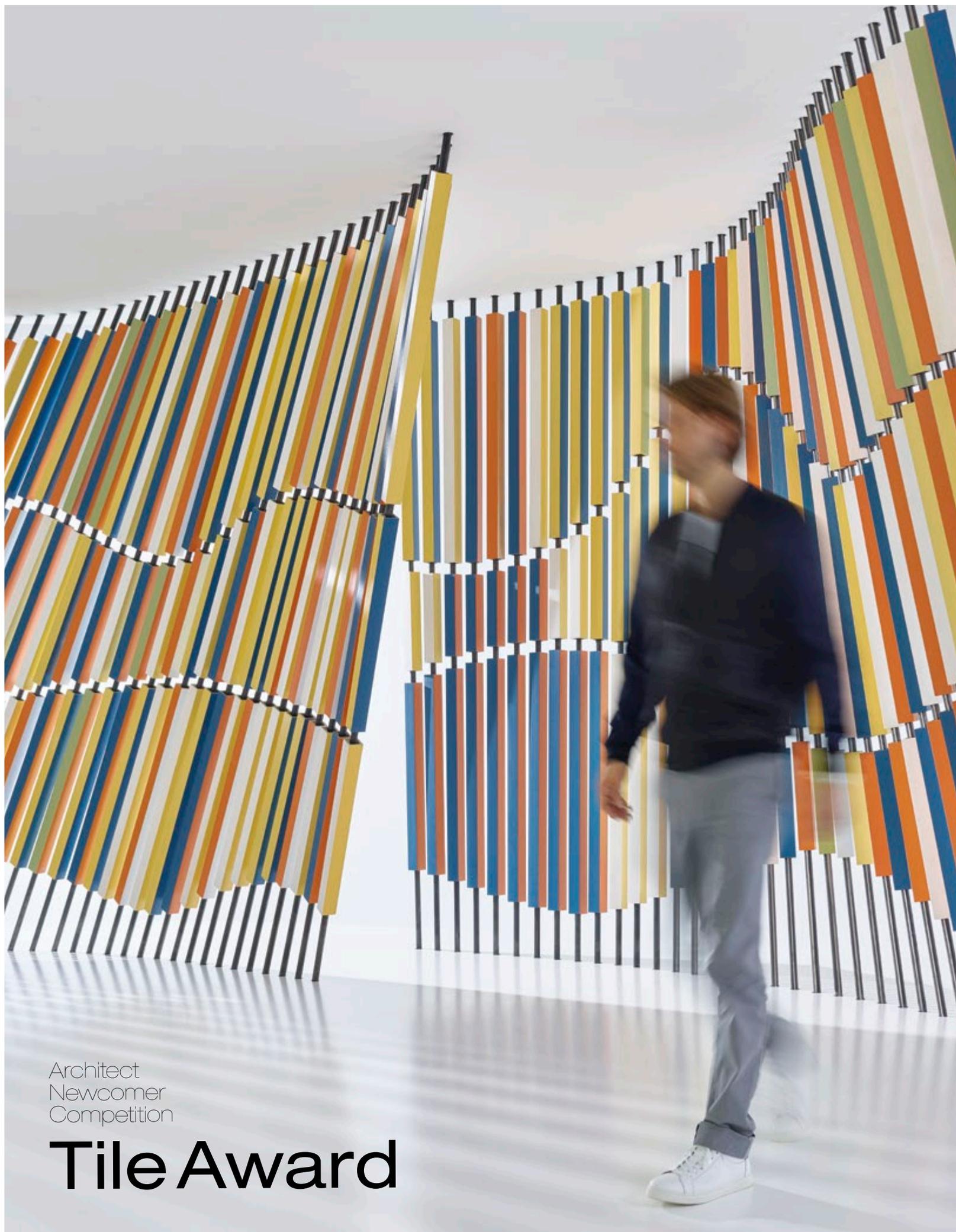


about:

CERAMIC **TILES**

#05

The architectural ceramics
magazine by AGROB BUCHTAL



Architect
Newcomer
Competition

Tile Award



This new issue of about:ceramic tiles presents a range of recent projects in which Agrob Buchtal's ceramic products have been used in imaginative ways: from the powerful restraint of Jamie Fobert's Tate Gallery St Ives to the colorful indulgence of the Oasia Hotel, a spectacular project by WOHA Architects and Patricia Urquiola. And setting aside conventions, the participants in the Tile Award 2017 show a remarkable ingenuity in their experimentations to expand the application of our products even further, underlining the versatility of Agrob Buchtal's ceramics.



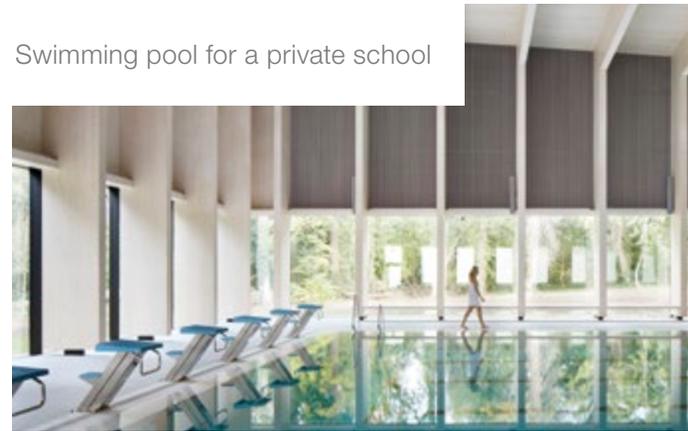
12

Tile Award 2017 in Iceland



48

Swimming pool for a private school



52

Focus on Great Britain





7 Oasia Hotel in Singapore
by WOHA and Patricia Urquiola



64 New products



CONTENTS

07 | about: projects

- 07 | **Oasia Hotel** | Sustainability and delight, a tropical skyscraper by WOHA
- 48 | **Freemen's School** | An architecture of understatement
- 52 | **Great Britain** | Increasing scale, turning tables

12 | about: people

- 12 | **TILE AWARD 2017** | Form follows fun
- 18 | **Winners** | Avishkar Bharati | Agnes Morguet | Andreas Crynen
- 36 | **Special mentions**

64 | about: products

- 64 | **New ceramics for individual designs** | Nova and Akazia

71 | Imprint

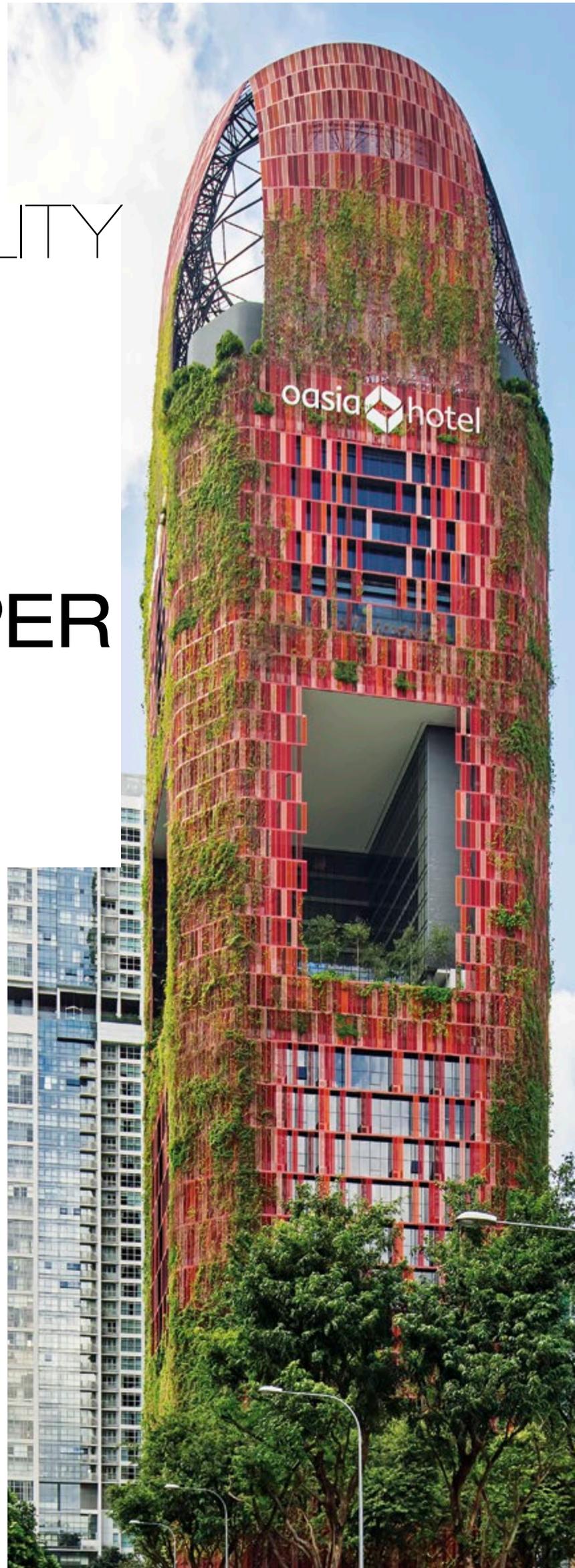


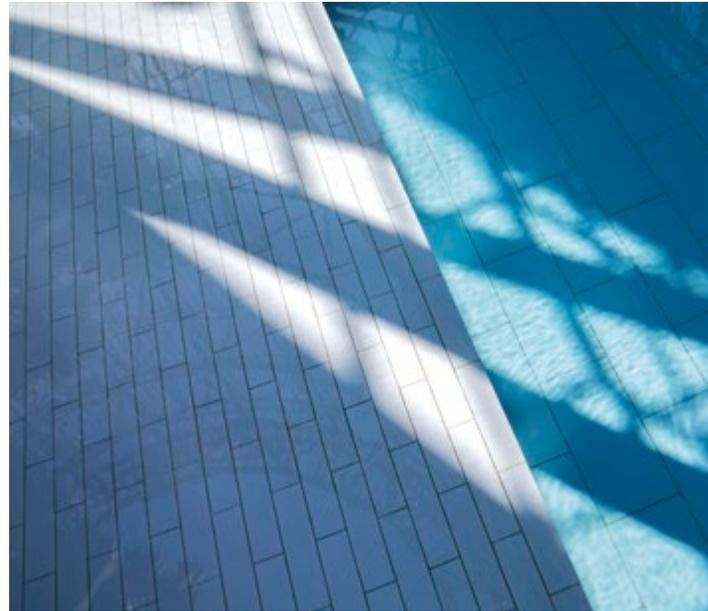
SUSTAINABILITY
AND
DELIGHT

**A
TROPICAL
SKYSCRAPER
BY
WOHA**

Text: Hans Ibelings

Photos: Infnitude





— The Oasia Hotel in the central business district Singapore is by all means and standards a unique project, redefining what a high-rise can be in humid tropical climates. In contrast with the conventional, completely sealed-off, air-conditioned tower, this hotel, designed by local office WOHA, merges architecture and nature, and combines indoor and outdoor spaces in a striking fashion. According to the architects, the aim was ‘to create an alternative imagery for commercial high-rise developments. It combines innovative ways to intensify land use with a tropical approach that showcases a perforated, permeable, furry, verdant tower.’

The tower, which has a height of 190 metres, contains four large outdoor spaces: three enormous verandas on the 6th, 12th, and 21st floor, as well as a roof terrace on 27th floor. This roof terrace is surrounded and protected by a 10-storey-high screen, covered in the same red aluminium mesh cladding as the rest of the tower. This facade will gradually be overgrown by 21 species of creepers and vines, creating a lively contrast between vibrant reds and lush greens.

The Oasia is, like the majority of WOHA's work, located in Singapore. WOHA was founded in 1994 by Singaporean Wong Mun Summ in partnership with Richard Hassell, who hails from Australia and moved to Singapore in 1989.

While the pursuit of sustainability is often accompanied by humourless earnestness, WOHA shows that it prefers to stand apart. This Oasia Hotel, which is part of an eponymous chain, combines sustainability with delight, two terms that are prominently present in the office's design philosophy.

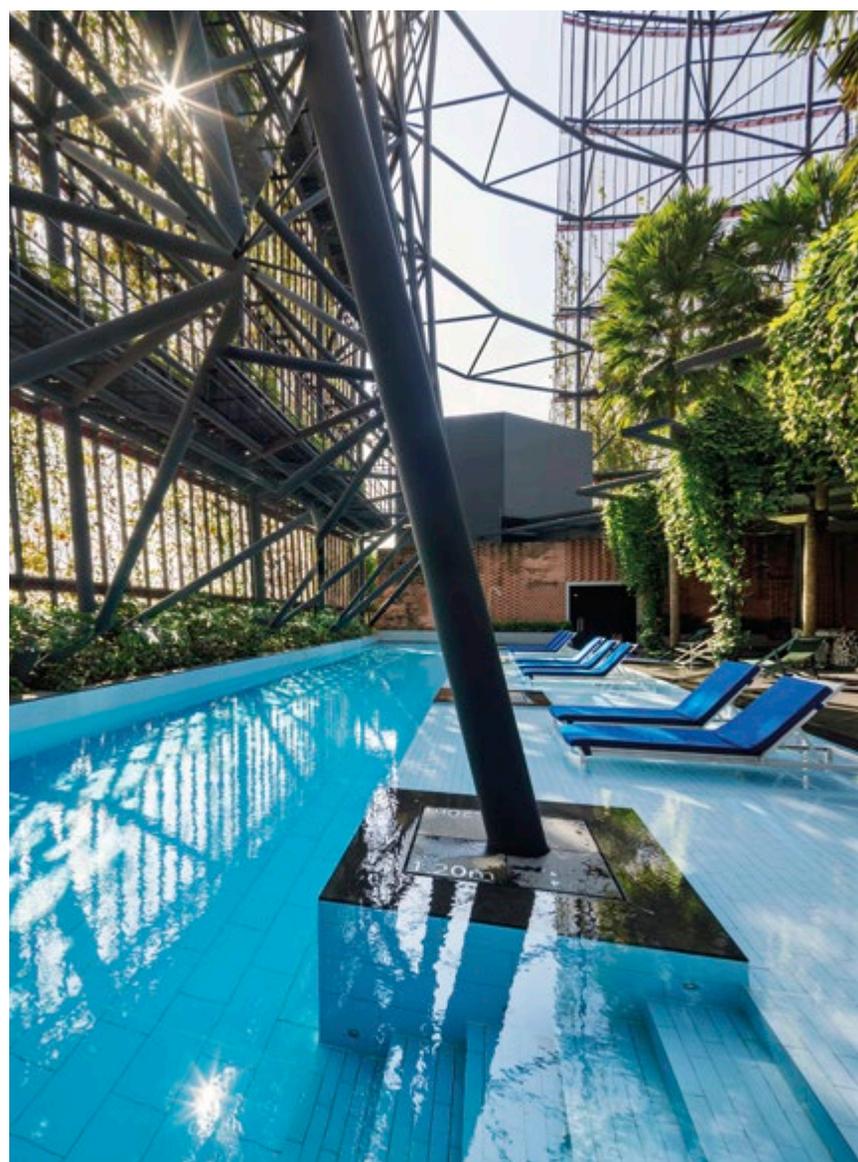
Aside from the red facade – soon to be completely green – the sky gardens also offer greenery, fresh air, and opportunities for natural cross-ventilation, as well as representing the most visibly sustainable and delightful, aspects of the building.

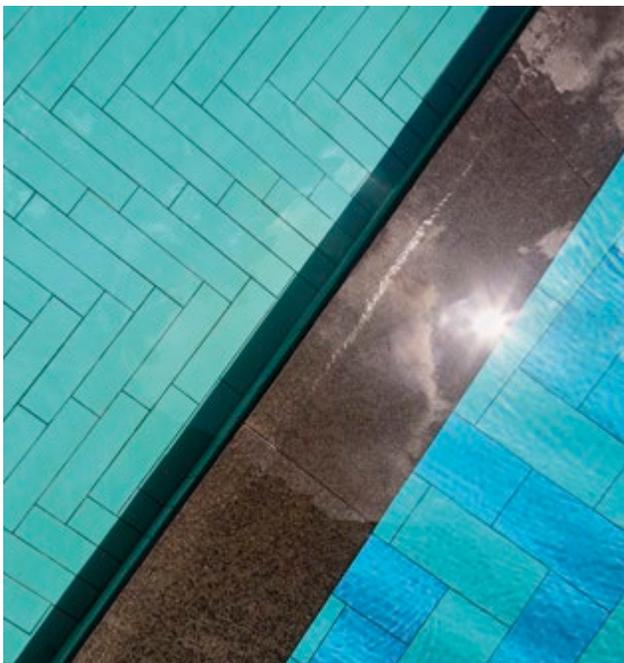
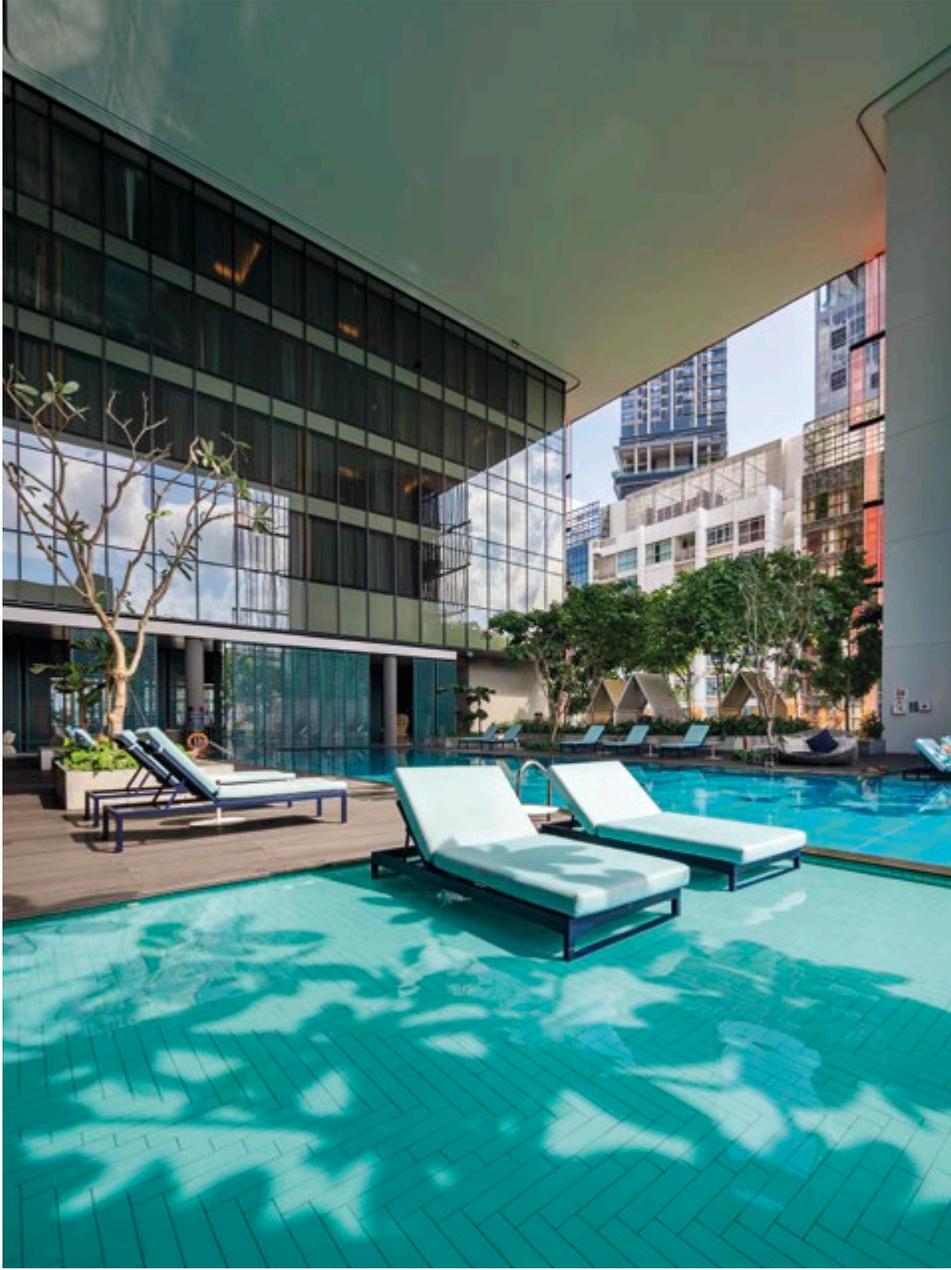
The sky gardens came about in response to the client's brief, which asked for distinct parts in the hotel. Given the small footprint, WOHA adopted what they call ‘a club sandwich approach by creating a series of different strata, each with its own sky garden.’ Introducing these sky gardens, which WOHA describes as ‘elevated ground levels’, allowed ‘the precious but limited ground floor space to be multiplied, creating generous public areas for recreation and social interaction throughout the high-rise.’

While WOHA can be credited for the architecture of the tower itself and the concept of stacking layers, the actual design of the sky gardens is the work of Spanish designer and architect Patricia Urquiola, who was responsible for all interiors as well as the outdoor spaces of the hotel. Urquiola adds a breezy elegance to WOHA's delightfully quirky architecture.

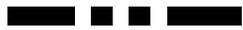
For the pools on the sixth, 21st and 27th floor, she has used Agrob Buchtal tiles from the Chroma series. Each pool has a different character. The pool on the sixth floor is part of a gym; on the 21st floor, the pool acts as a stylish extension of the lounge club. Left and right of the pool itself, which is tiled in a light and dark blue chevron pattern, is a wading pool, just deep enough to get your feet wet while sipping a cocktail.

The rooftop pool consists of two parts, on either side of the rooftop restaurant. Unlike most rooftop amenities in hotels, which are all about the panorama, here the city's skyline is almost completely concealed by the vegetated screen. This underlines the unconventionality of WOHA's architecture. Instead of a view, this rooftop offers a place of unexpected intimacy and tranquillity, a surprisingly oasisic escape from the bustle of the city. —









FORM FOLLOWS FUN

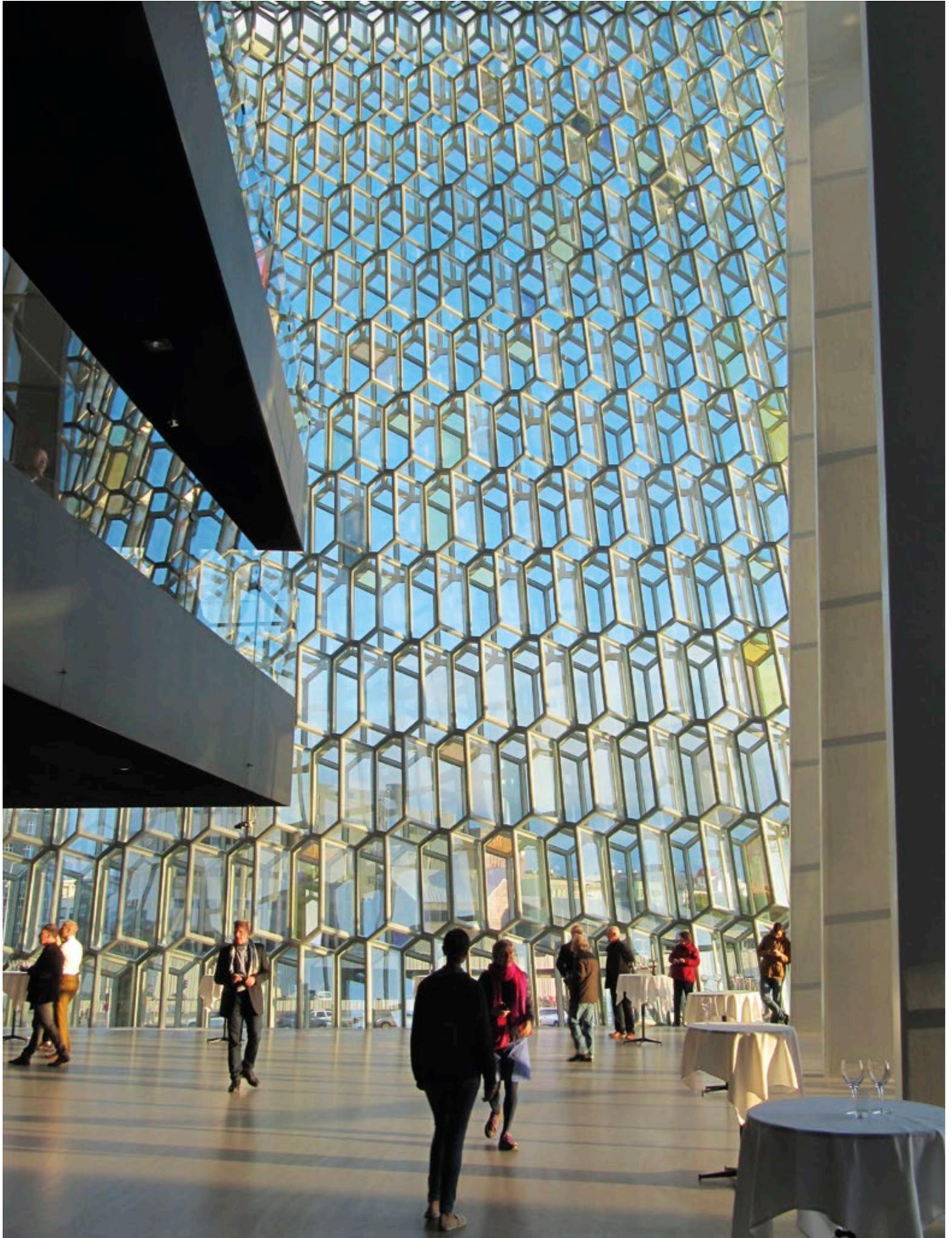
Agrob Buchtal and AIT-Dialog award international newcomers – already for the 4th time. The workshop took place in Iceland.



(f. l. t. r.) The panel of judges: Brendan MacFarlane (Jakob + MacFarlane, Paris, France), Christian Waldner (AllesWirdGut Architektur ZT GmbH, Vienna Austria / Munich, Germany), Bostjan Vuga (SADAR+VUGA d.o.o., Ljubljana, Slovenia), Johan Oscarson (Elding Oscarson, Stockholm, Sweden) and Michael Stoz (Partner AG, Offenburg, Germany)

— “Color and pattern in architecture” – it was under this theme that the TILE AWARD 2017, presented by Agrob Buchtal in collaboration with AIT-Dialog, called for creative and innovative interior designs using tiles. 63 concepts by architects and interior architects from 20 countries showed the various uses of ceramics – and in the course of the first round, the panel of judges selected the nine top contenders.







Nine spectacular interpretations paved the way for their creators to enter the second round and thus venture on a workshop trip to Iceland in September 2017 – to the country of contrasts, with its green pastures, deep-blue fjords and icy glaciers, as well as around 30 active volcanoes. This space gave impetus to ideas for further development, composition and implementation.

Experts from Agrob Buchtal were on site to act as advisers on the use of tiles and all their possibilities.

The panel showed pure enthusiasm for the results – and the decision was difficult on 19 January 2018 at the AIT-Architektur-Salon in Hamburg.

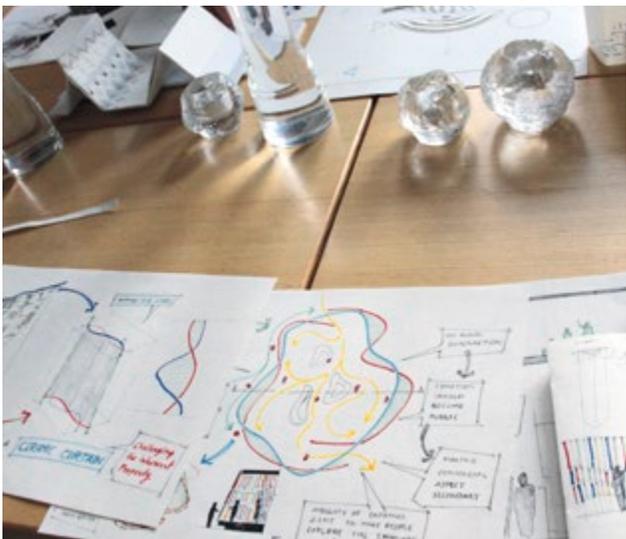
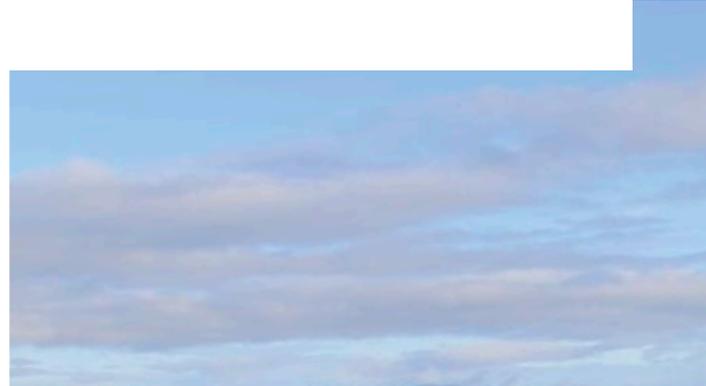
The panel named the following three award winners:

Avishkar Bharati, JDAP Design – Architecture – Planning, Mumbai, India, “Transmittance – Color curtain”

Andreas Crynen, Ingenhoven Architects, Düsseldorf, Germany, “RE:TILE”

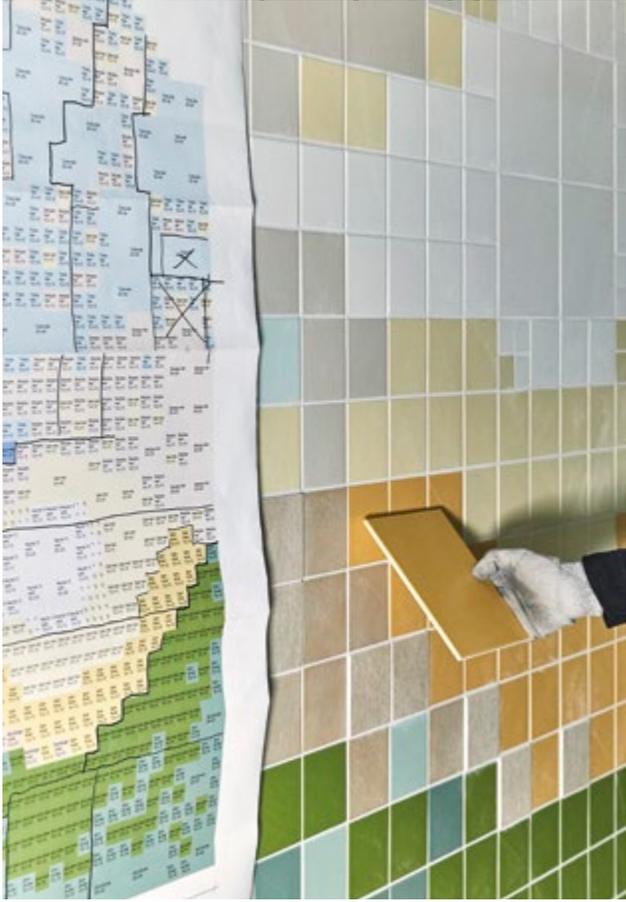
Agnes Morguet, Agnes Morguet Innenarchitektur & Design, Cologne, Germany, “Stay Unique”

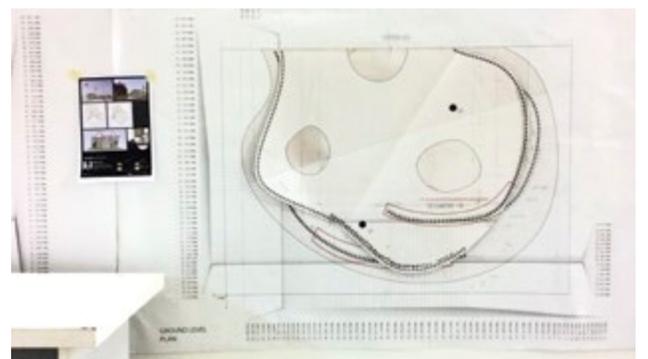
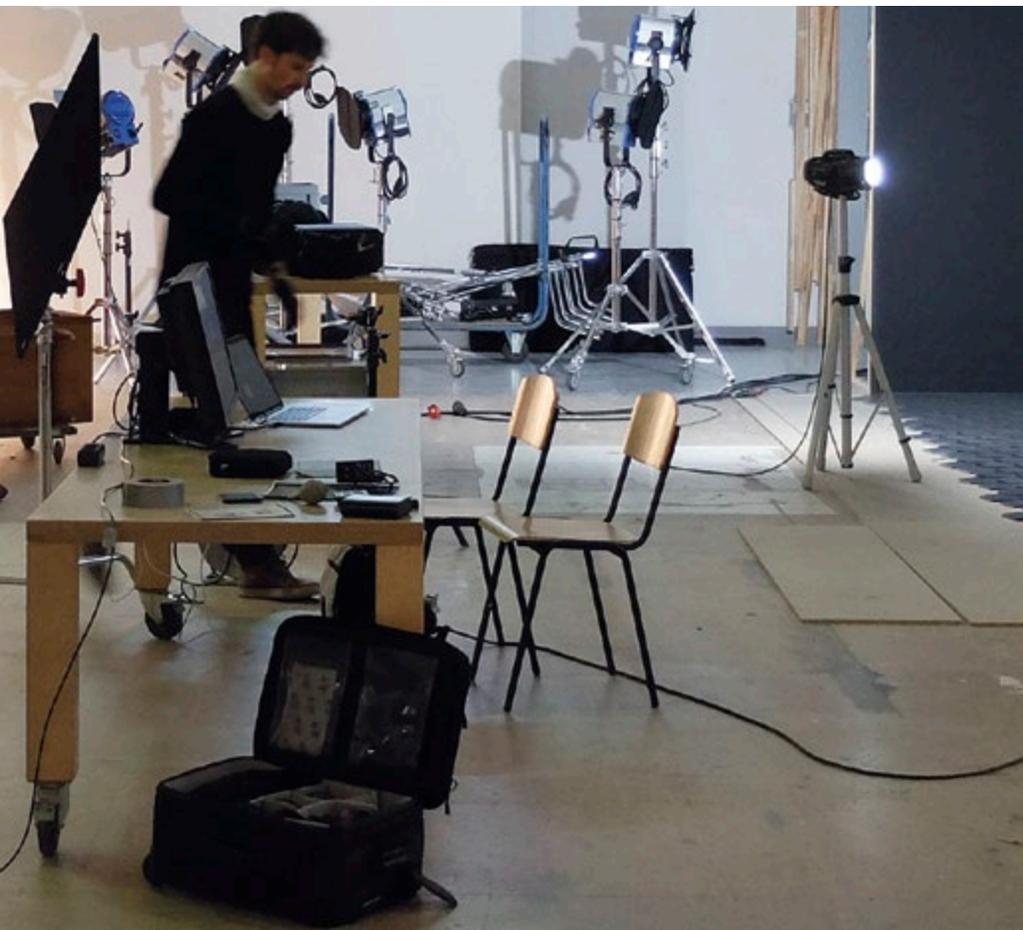
For the publication, the winners’ designs were realised in a 1:1 model. They were documented in a professional photo shoot.





MAKING OF







Winner: Avishkar Bharati, JDAP Design-Architecture-Planning, India

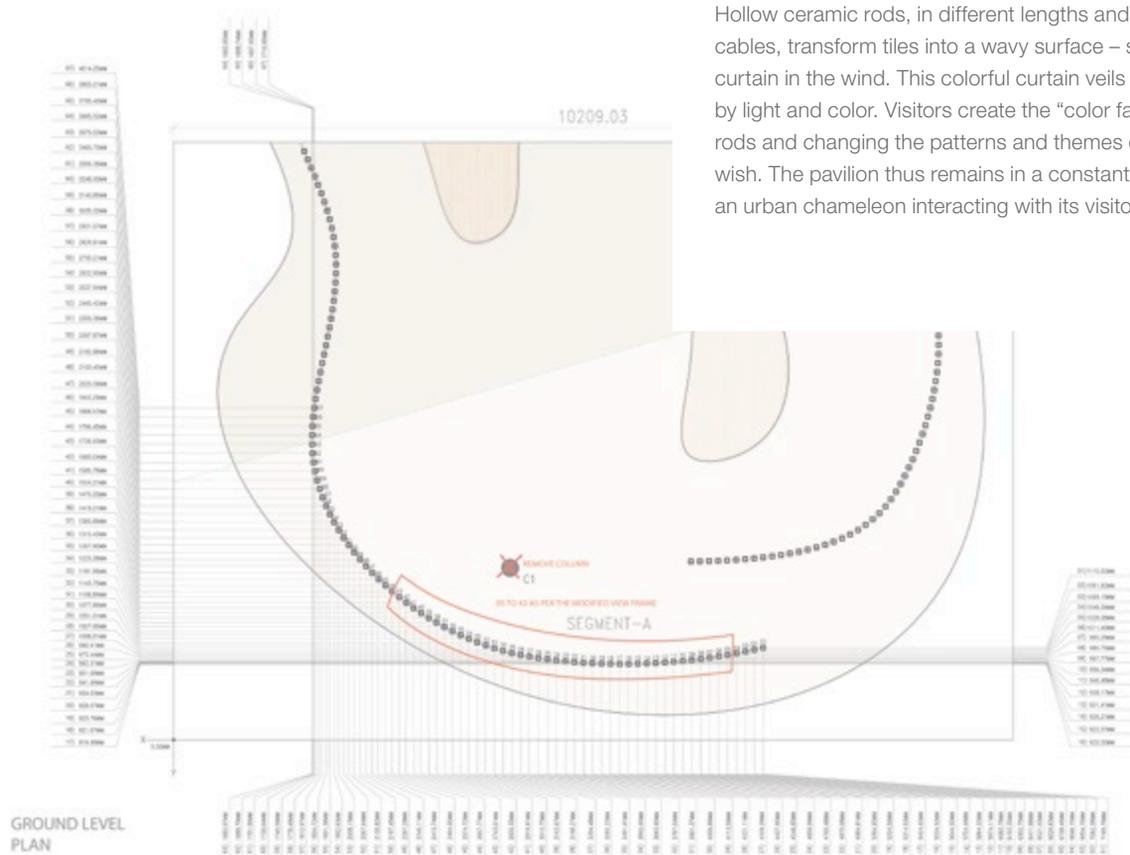
TRANSMITTANCE – COLOR CURTAIN

Dynamics and lightness in the space – with static materials: The Mumbai-based architect Avishkar Bharati is designing a pavilion with wavy walls made from ceramic, moving components. This way, a sensual interplay of colors connects with interactive spatial experience.

“Ceramic is a time-honoured and omnipresent material – but how can it be transformed into new forms? The approaches used here are referred to as dynamisation and energetic flexibility. This creates a space replete with lightness – carried by the persevering geometry of the tile.

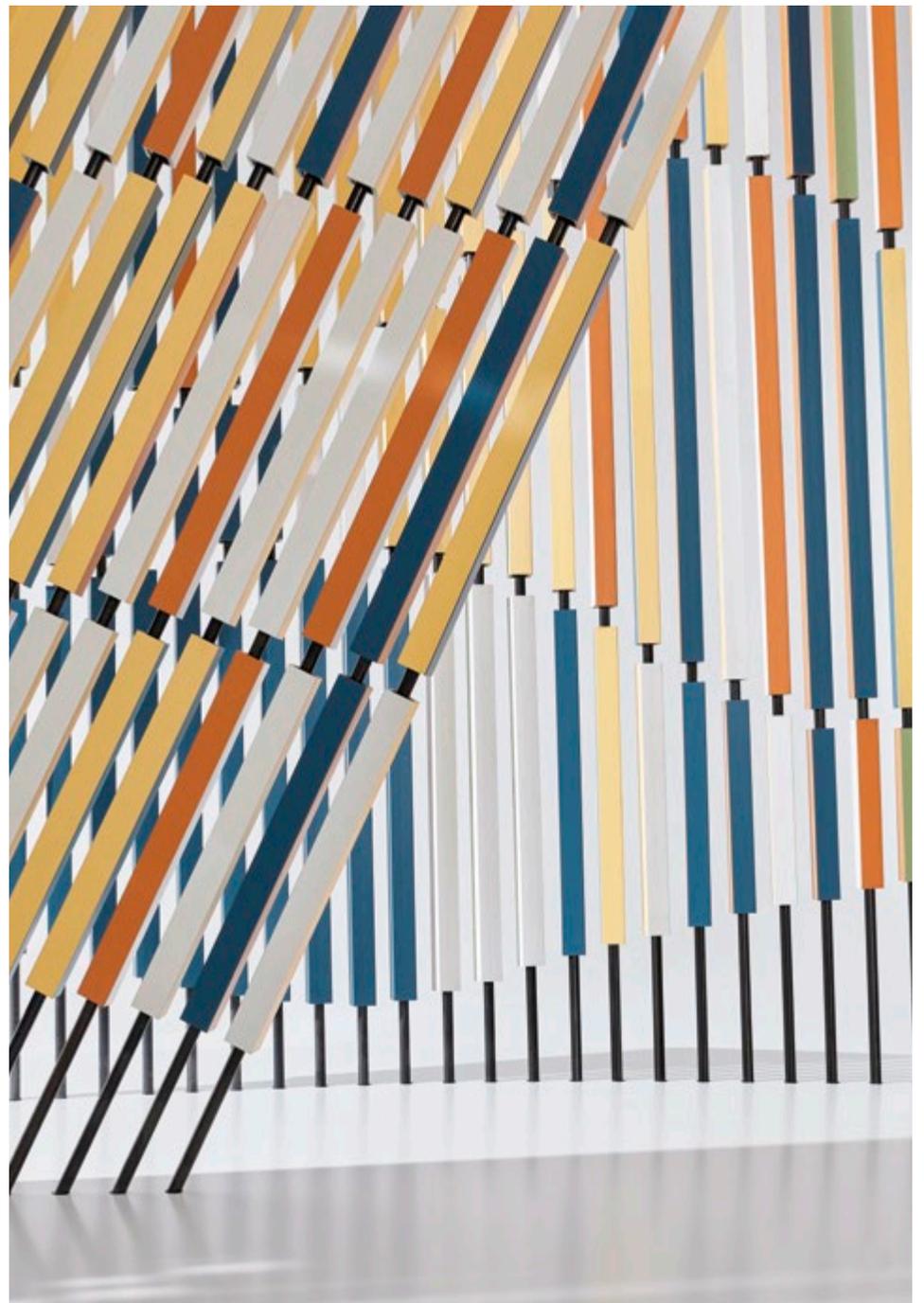
Hollow ceramic rods, in different lengths and flexibly fixed to steel cables, transform tiles into a wavy surface – similar to a fabric curtain in the wind. This colorful curtain veils a room that is flooded by light and color. Visitors create the “color faces” by turning the rods and changing the patterns and themes of the tiles as they wish. The pavilion thus remains in a constant state of flux – akin to an urban chameleon interacting with its visitors.”

Avishkar Bharati





The Tile Award Panel of Judges:
» The ceramics define and form the room.



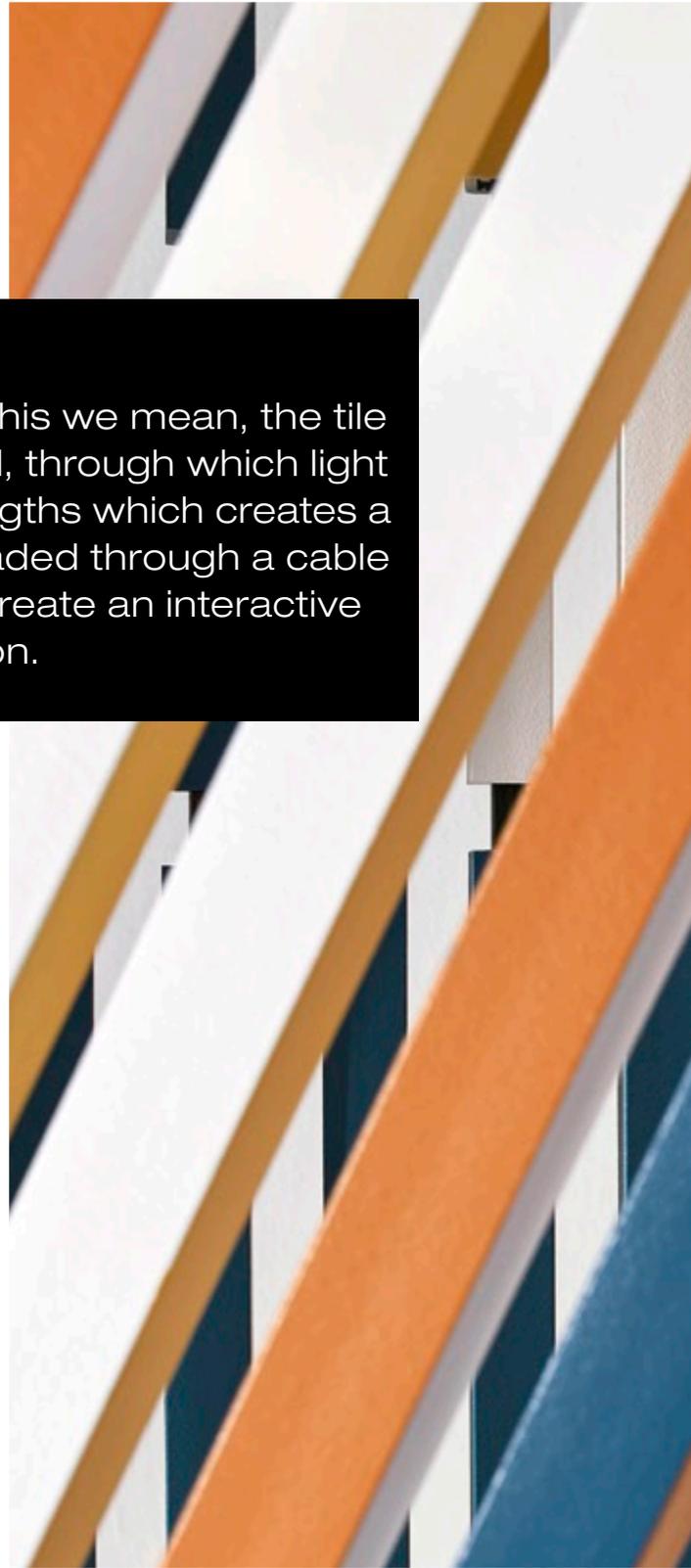
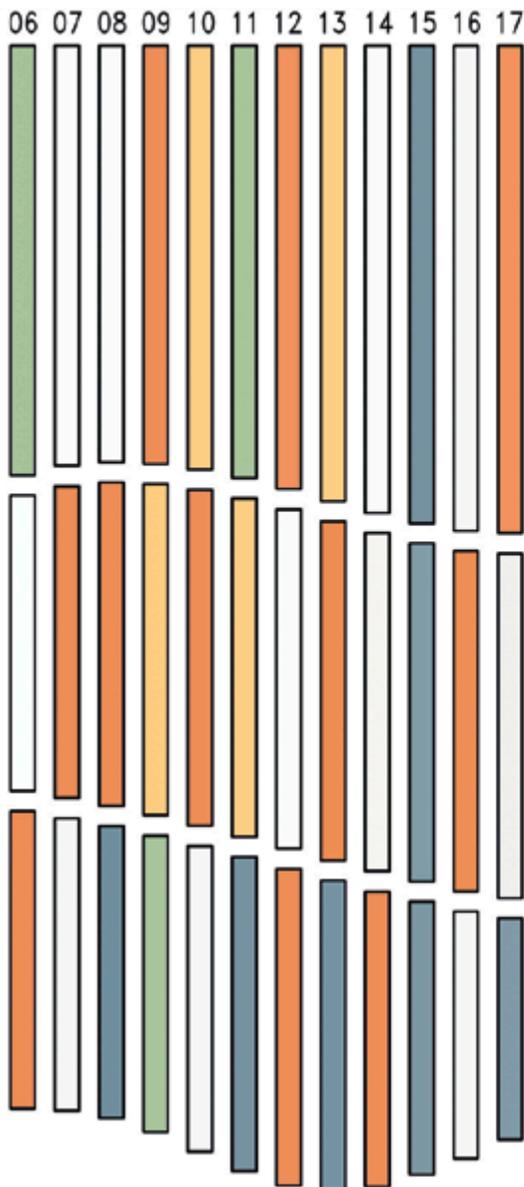


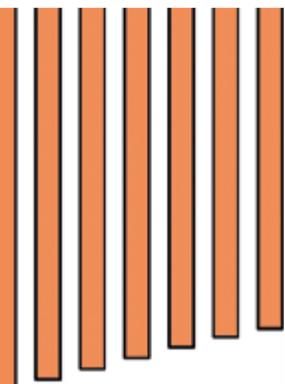
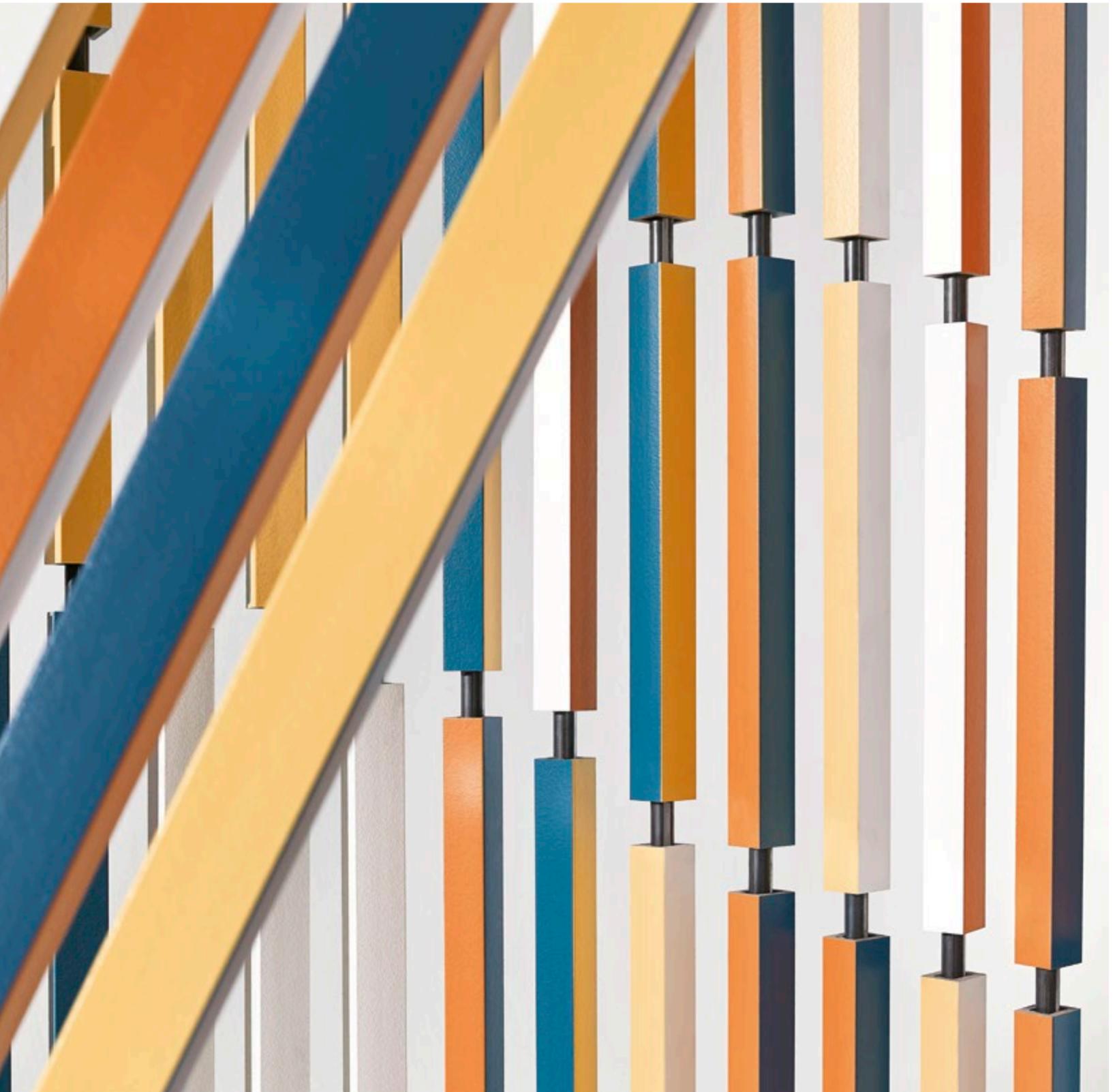




The Tile Award Panel of Judges – Johan Oscarson and Brendan MacFarlane:

» The tile is defining [and forming] the space. By this we mean, the tile is made from a thin line that creates a wavy wall, through which light can pass and play. This line is also of varying lengths which creates a fluid surface effect. The [...] ceramic tubes threaded through a cable rope can be rotated individually and therefore create an interactive surface with endless possibilities of configuration.







Winner: Agnes Morguet, Innenarchitektur & Design, Germany

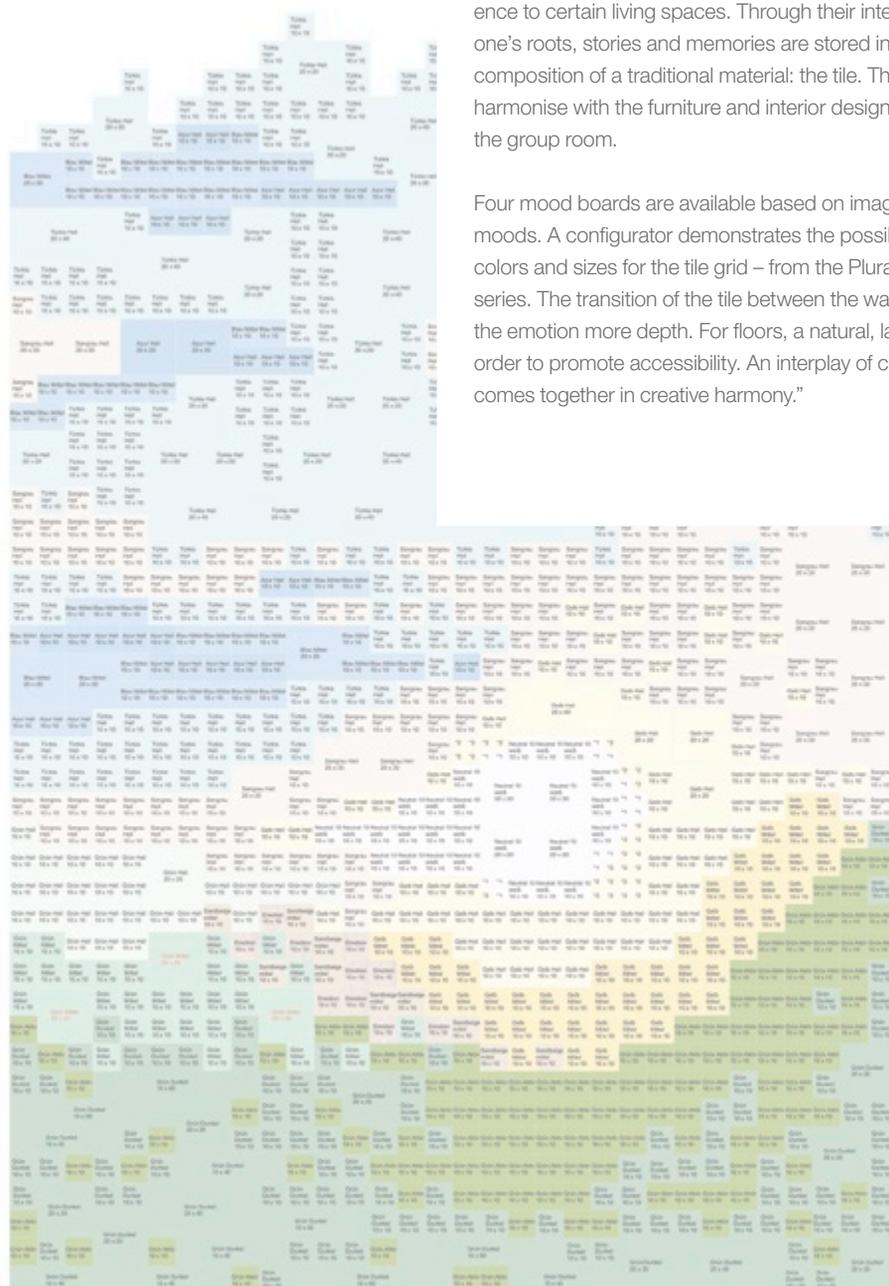
STAY UNIQUE

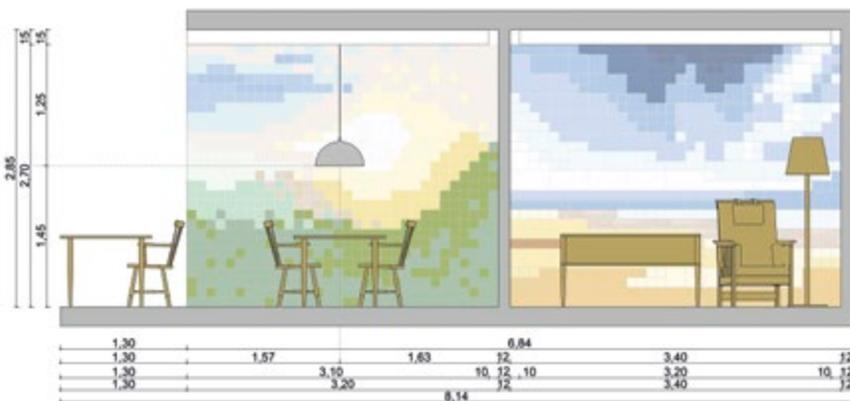
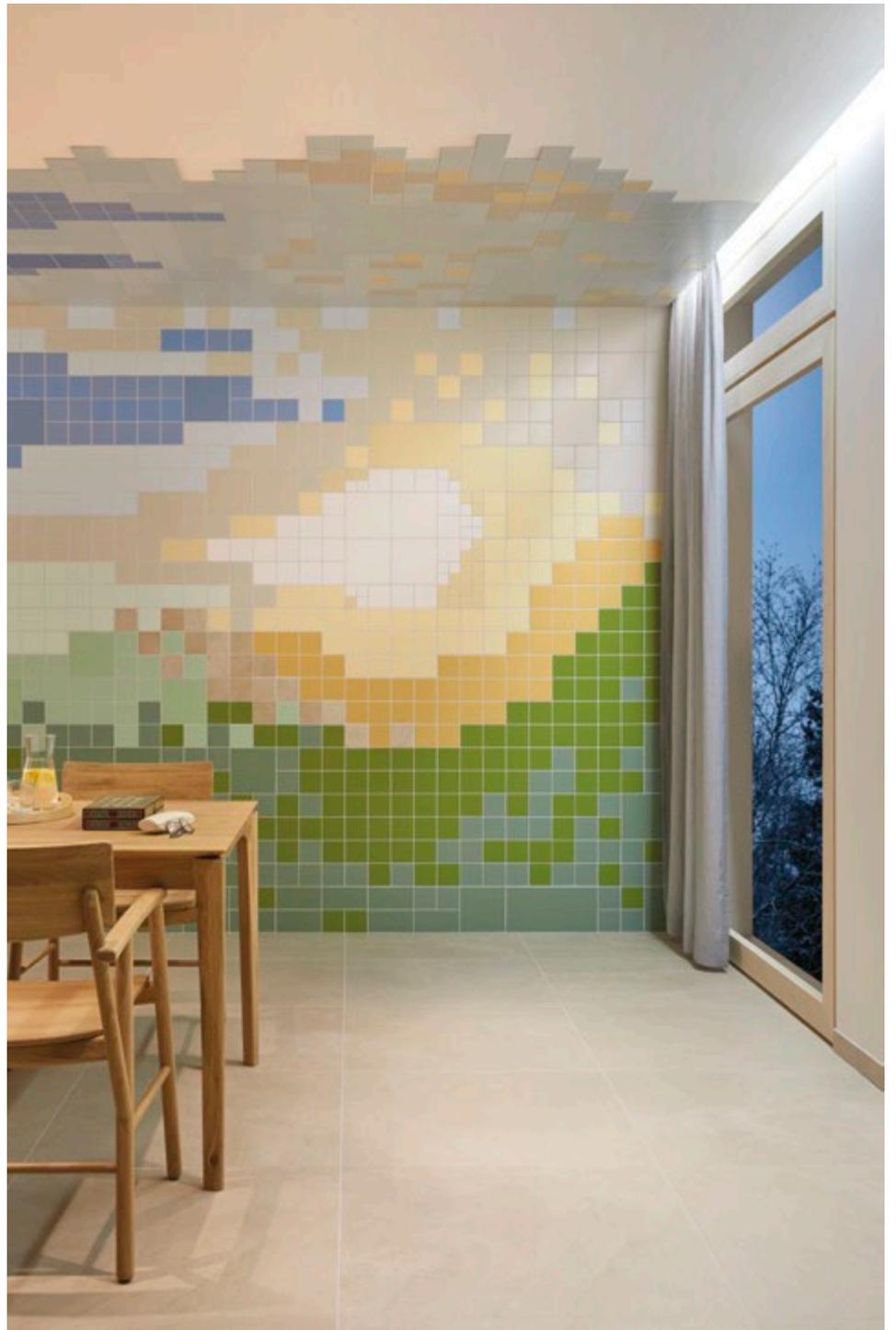
Color and psychology: in custom-designable rooms, the interior designer Agnes Morguet from Cologne spurs on memories and conserves history for residents in nursing or care homes. This creates communicative designs with emotional power.

“The core of the design is the deliberate use of color moods with reference to certain living spaces. Through their integration into the room, one’s roots, stories and memories are stored in the abstract color and composition of a traditional material: the tile. The tile patterns always harmonise with the furniture and interior design like in the concept for the group room.

Four mood boards are available based on image templates of different moods. A configurator demonstrates the possible tiles in terms of colors and sizes for the tile grid – from the Plural, Valley or Emotion series. The transition of the tile between the wall and the ceiling gives the emotion more depth. For floors, a natural, large tile was chosen in order to promote accessibility. An interplay of colors and silence thus comes together in creative harmony.”

Agnes Morguet





The Tile Award Panel of Judges:
 >> The work shows [...] a hopeful outlook in a difficult environment.







The Tile Award Panel of Judges – Michael Stoz:

»» The author of this work has made a successful connection between an idea that is not new, namely the pixelisation of large-size images in the form of a mural, and their potential use in nursing homes – and has shown great understanding in her realisation of this project. Especially through its element of abstraction, there is no impression of glaring kitschiness. The natural coloring is timeless.



photo set





Winner: Andreas Crynen, Ingenhoven Architects, Germany

RE:TILE POP SHOW

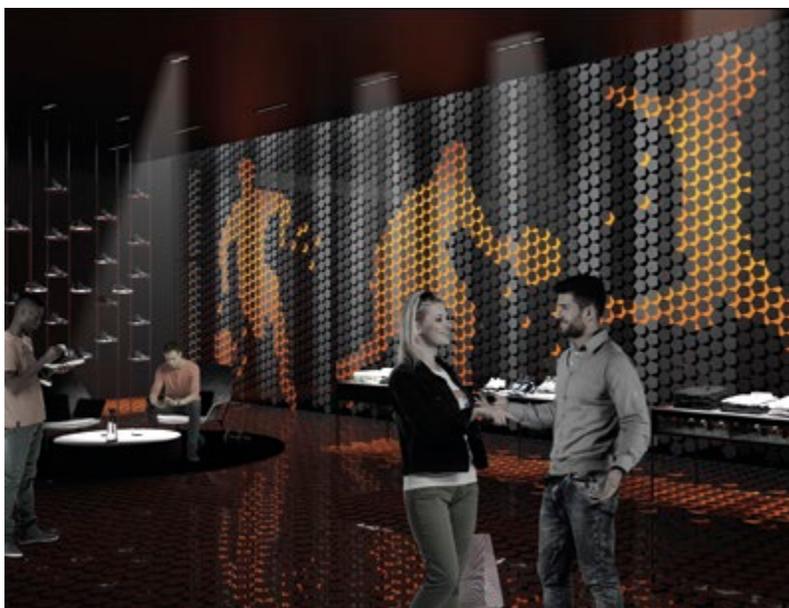
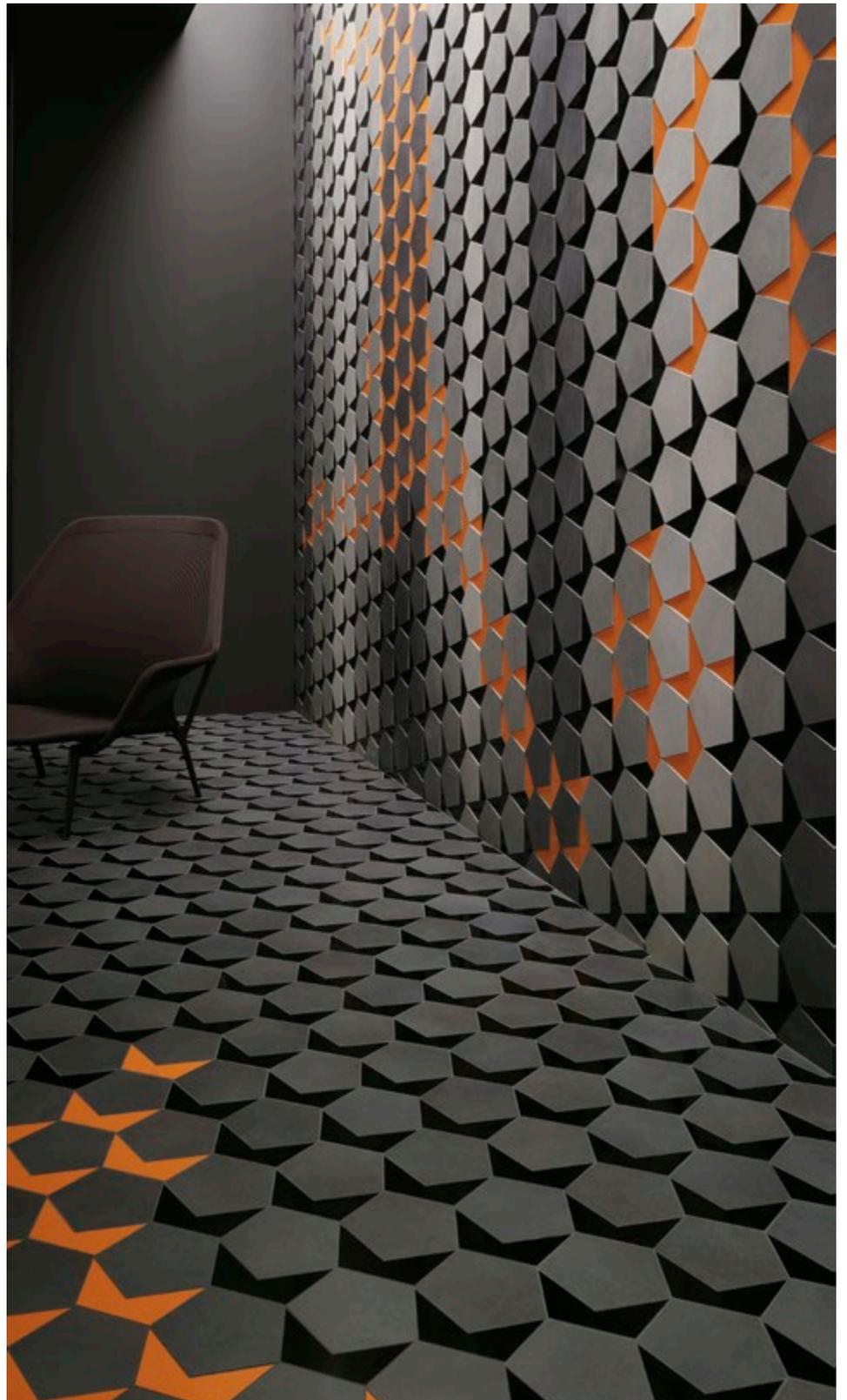
Creative games in a 3D look: the ceramic arrangements by the architect Andreas Crynen from Düsseldorf open up horizons for multi-dimensional design. In his sports shop, action and energy are combined into an atmospheric form – allowing dynamics to be experienced directly.

“The principle is simple and demonstrates the tile’s ability to exist in a highly modern context: skilful combination of 2D tiles creates 3D effects that turn homogeneous surfaces into dynamic walls and simple tiles into striking areas or brilliant silhouettes.

Any styles are possible – for interiors replete with dynamics, elegance or contrasts. The design is based on pentagonal tiles in various thicknesses, colors, shades and matt gloss effects, and whose arrangement leaves space for the M-shaped tiles between them. This opens up diverse, almost limitless design options for walls, surfaces and floors: pictorial elements such as the football and basketball players in the sports shop created – as well as 3D, haptic or relief effects.”

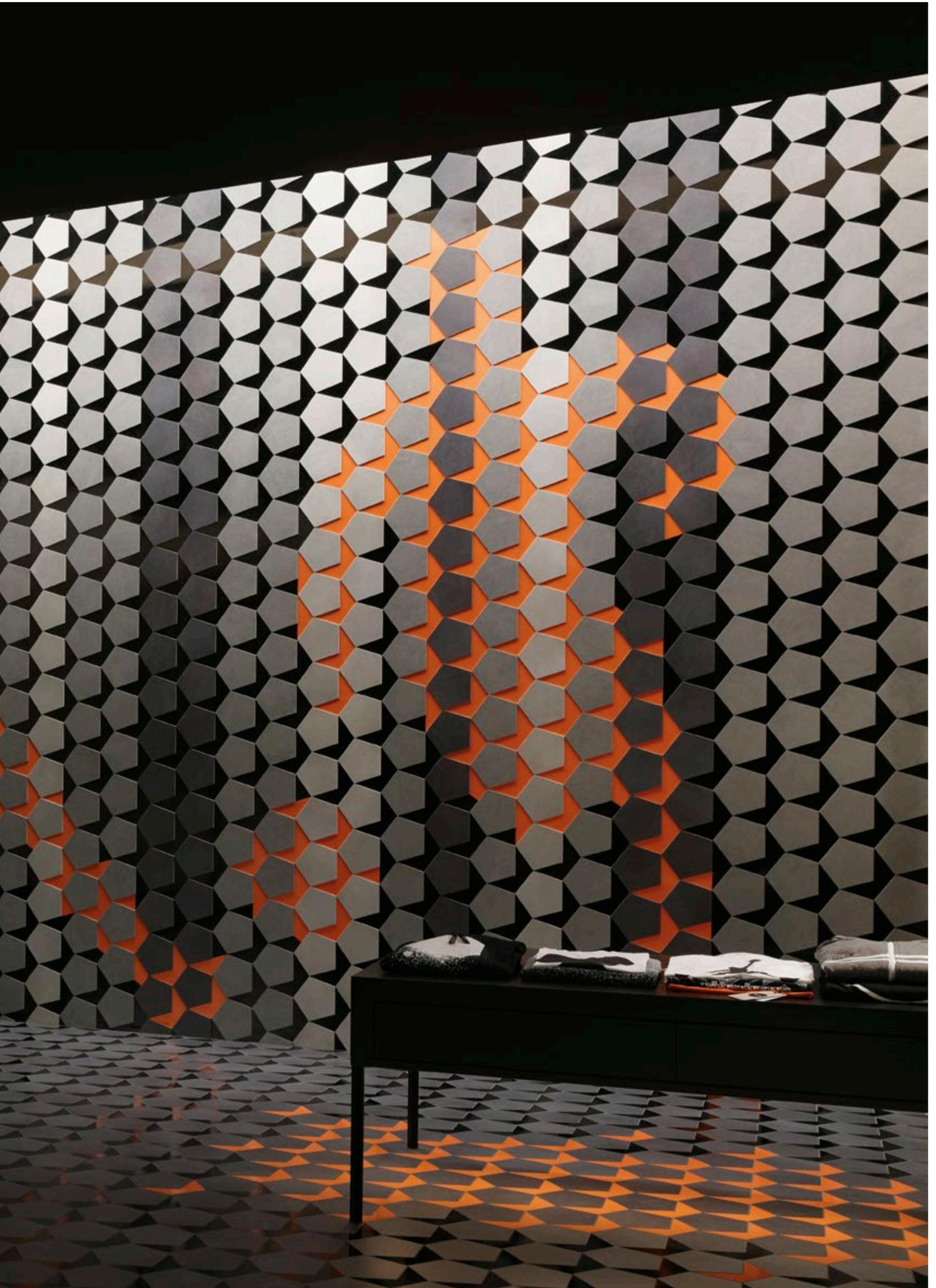
Andreas Crynen





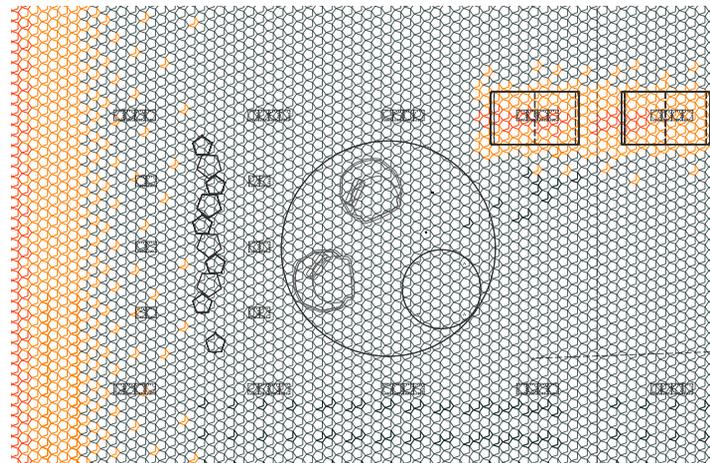
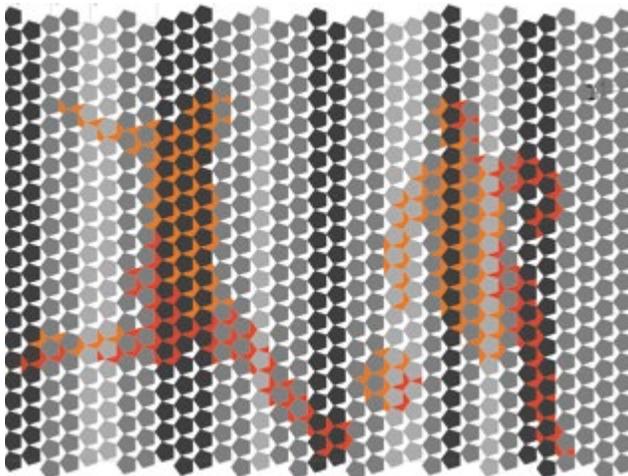
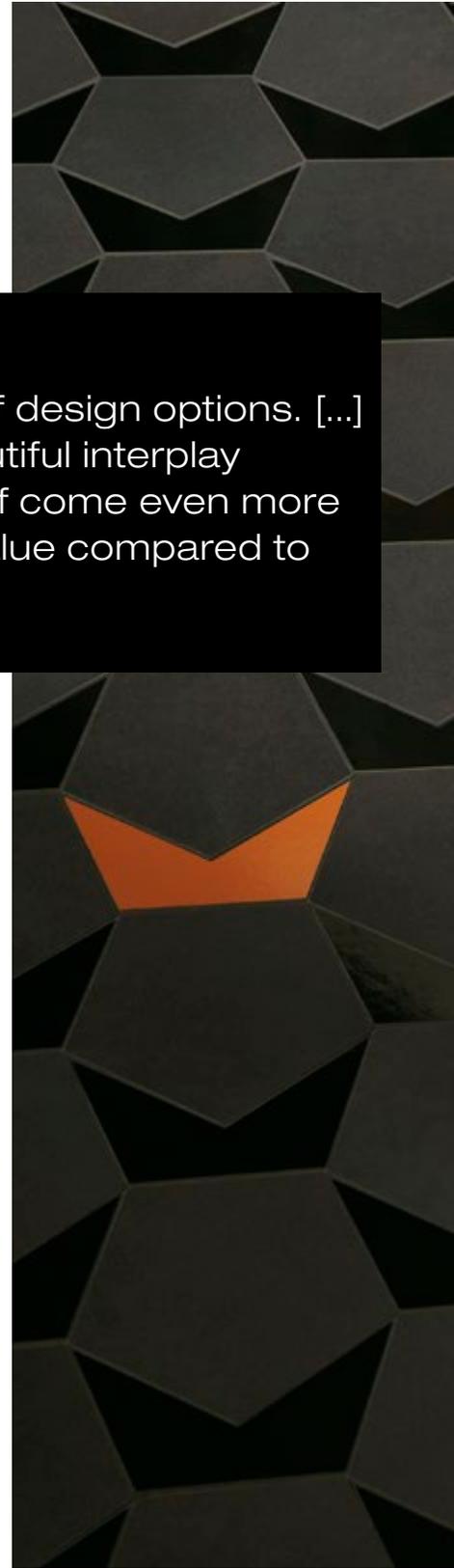
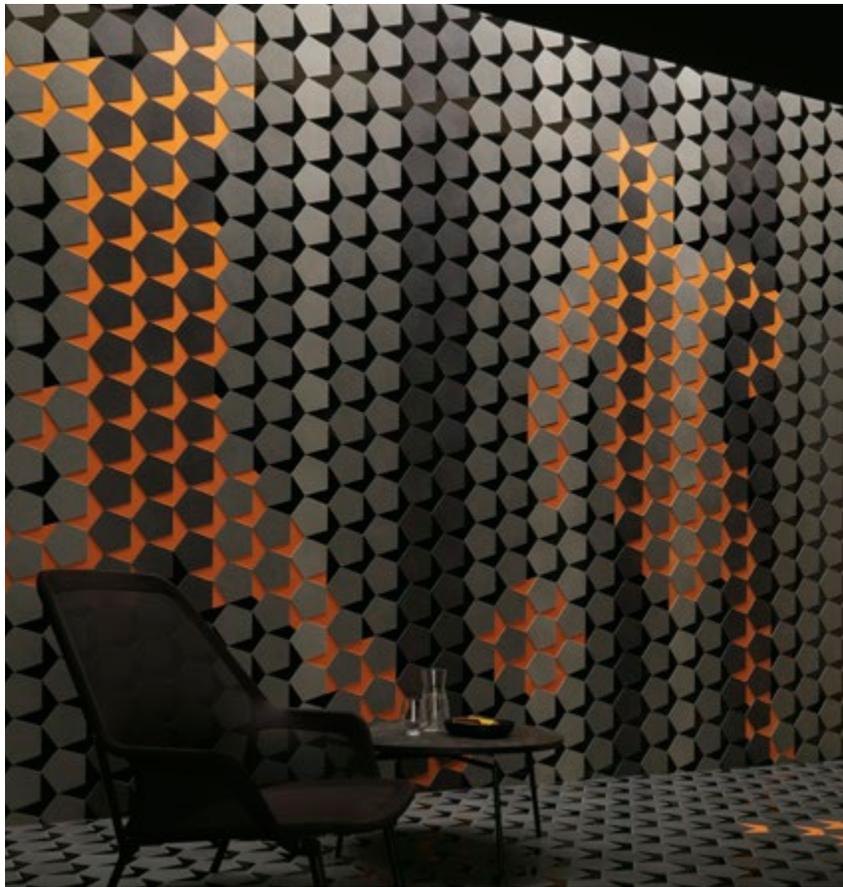
The Tile Award Panel of Judges:
» Re:Tile impresses with its simplicity.

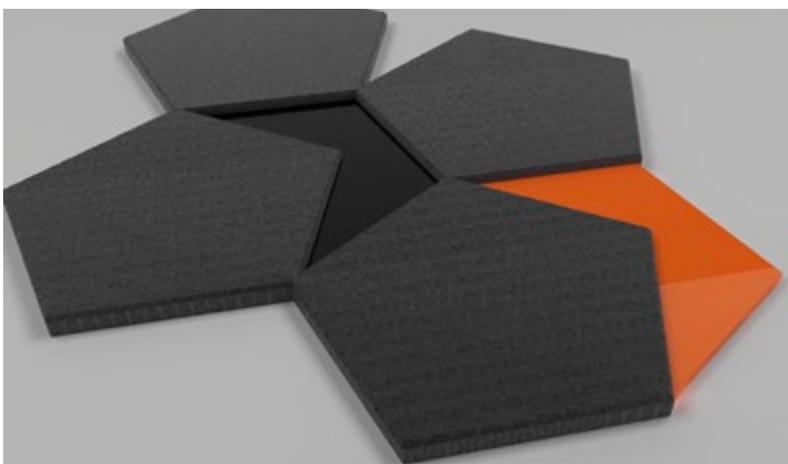
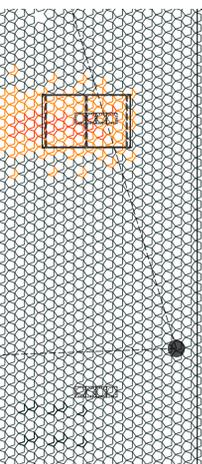




The Tile Award Panel of Judges – Christian Waldner:

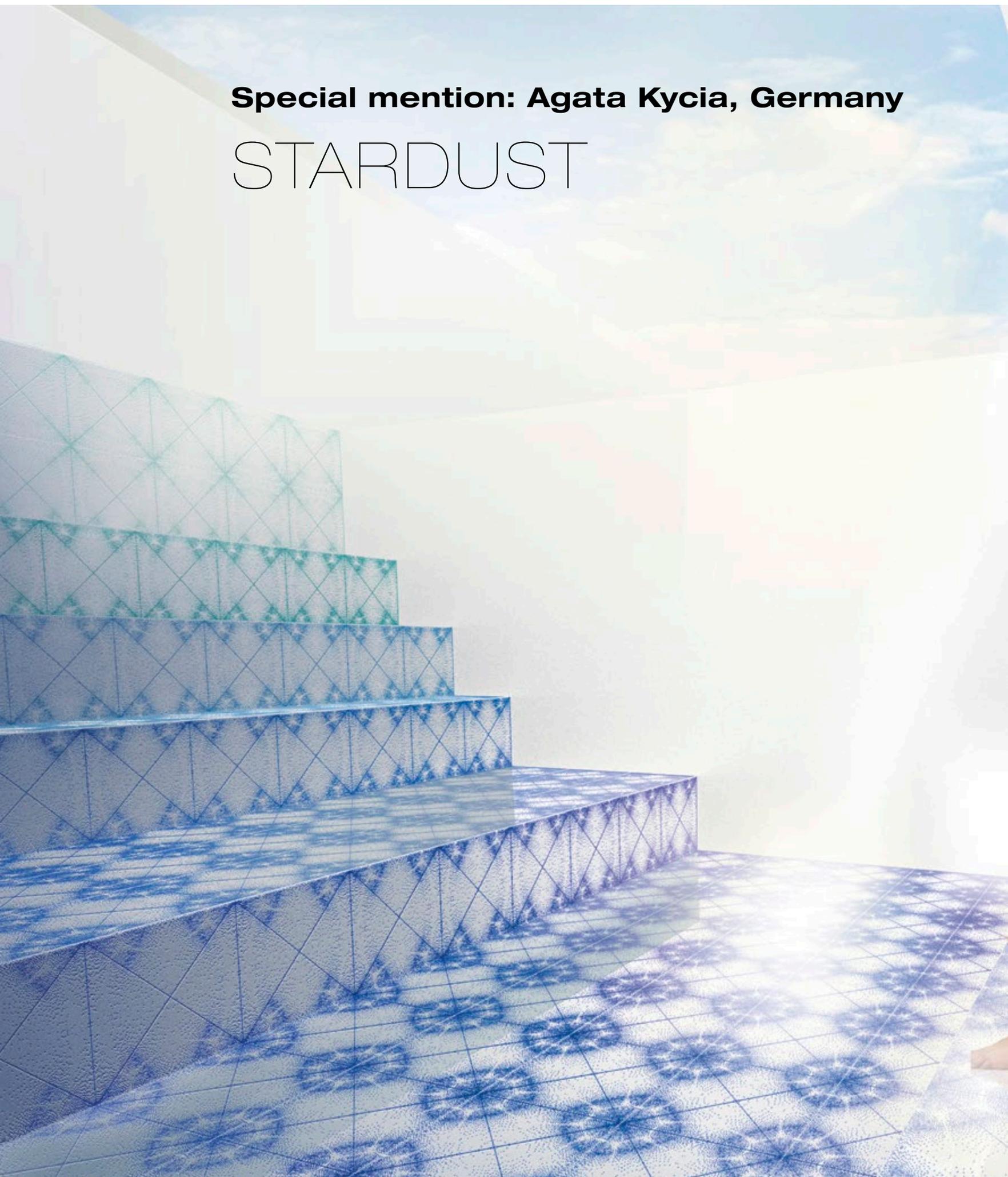
» The composition of a few different tiles offers a vast array of design options. [...] Through [...] the ambience created by the light and the beautiful interplay between matt and gloss effects, the wall and its subtle relief come even more to life. [...] The use of tiles thus provides significant added value compared to a purely graphic design.





Special mention: Agata Kycia, Germany

STARDUST

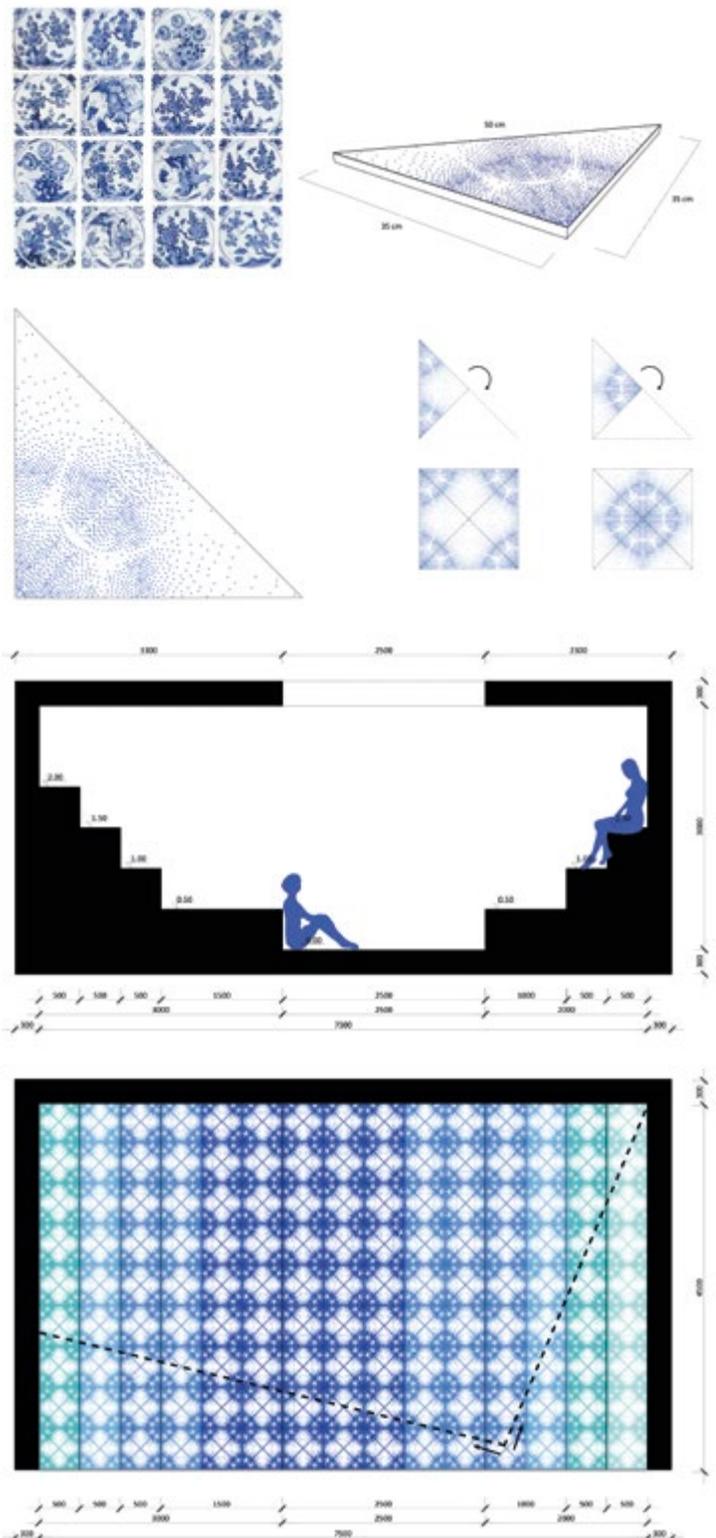
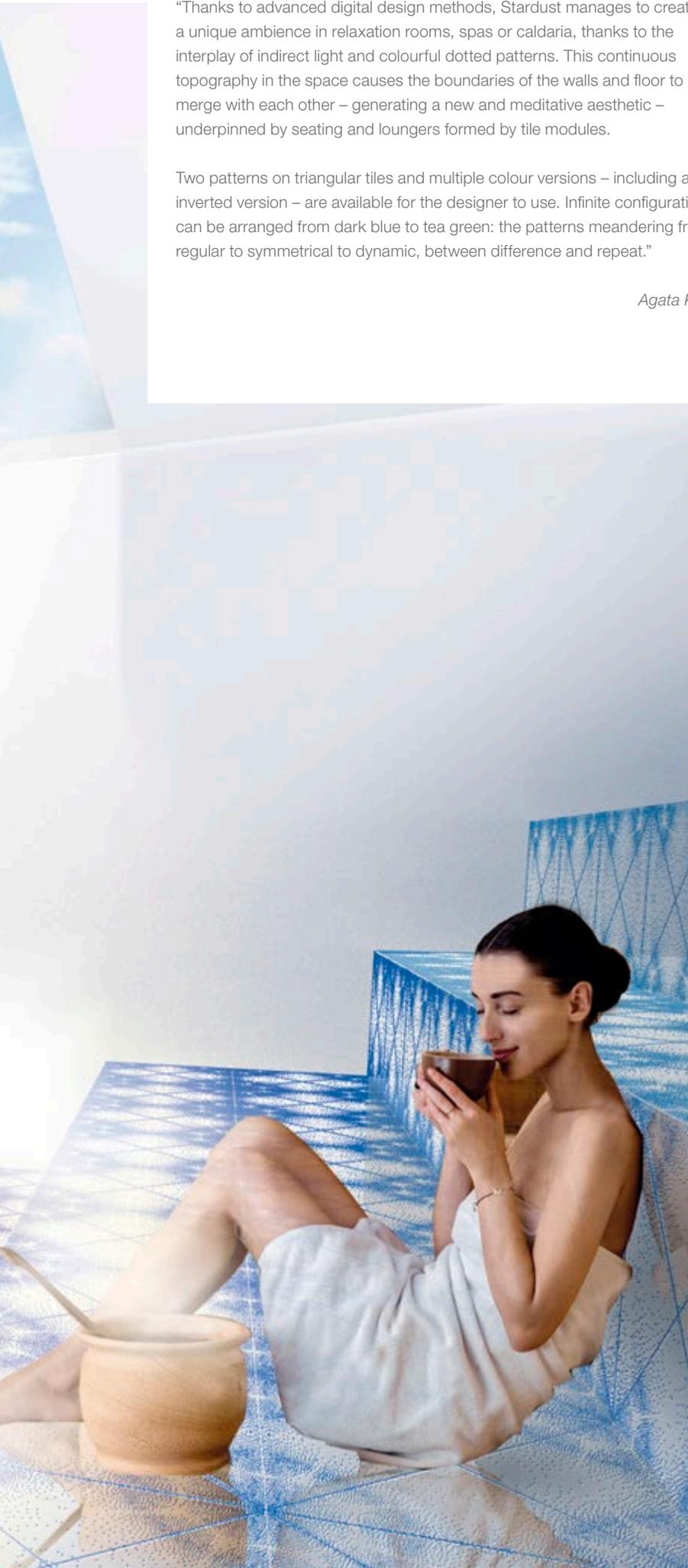


Ornamental complexity, meditative ambience – the traditional blue and white ceramics feature a contemporary layout in this design by Agata Kycia. The delicacy of the handmade ceramics is retained and enhanced with a digital dimension.

“Thanks to advanced digital design methods, Stardust manages to create a unique ambience in relaxation rooms, spas or caldaria, thanks to the interplay of indirect light and colourful dotted patterns. This continuous topography in the space causes the boundaries of the walls and floor to merge with each other – generating a new and meditative aesthetic – underpinned by seating and loungers formed by tile modules.

Two patterns on triangular tiles and multiple colour versions – including an inverted version – are available for the designer to use. Infinite configurations can be arranged from dark blue to tea green: the patterns meandering from regular to symmetrical to dynamic, between difference and repeat.”

Agata Kycia



Special mention: Joa Herrenknecht, Germany

DISPLAY STUDIO

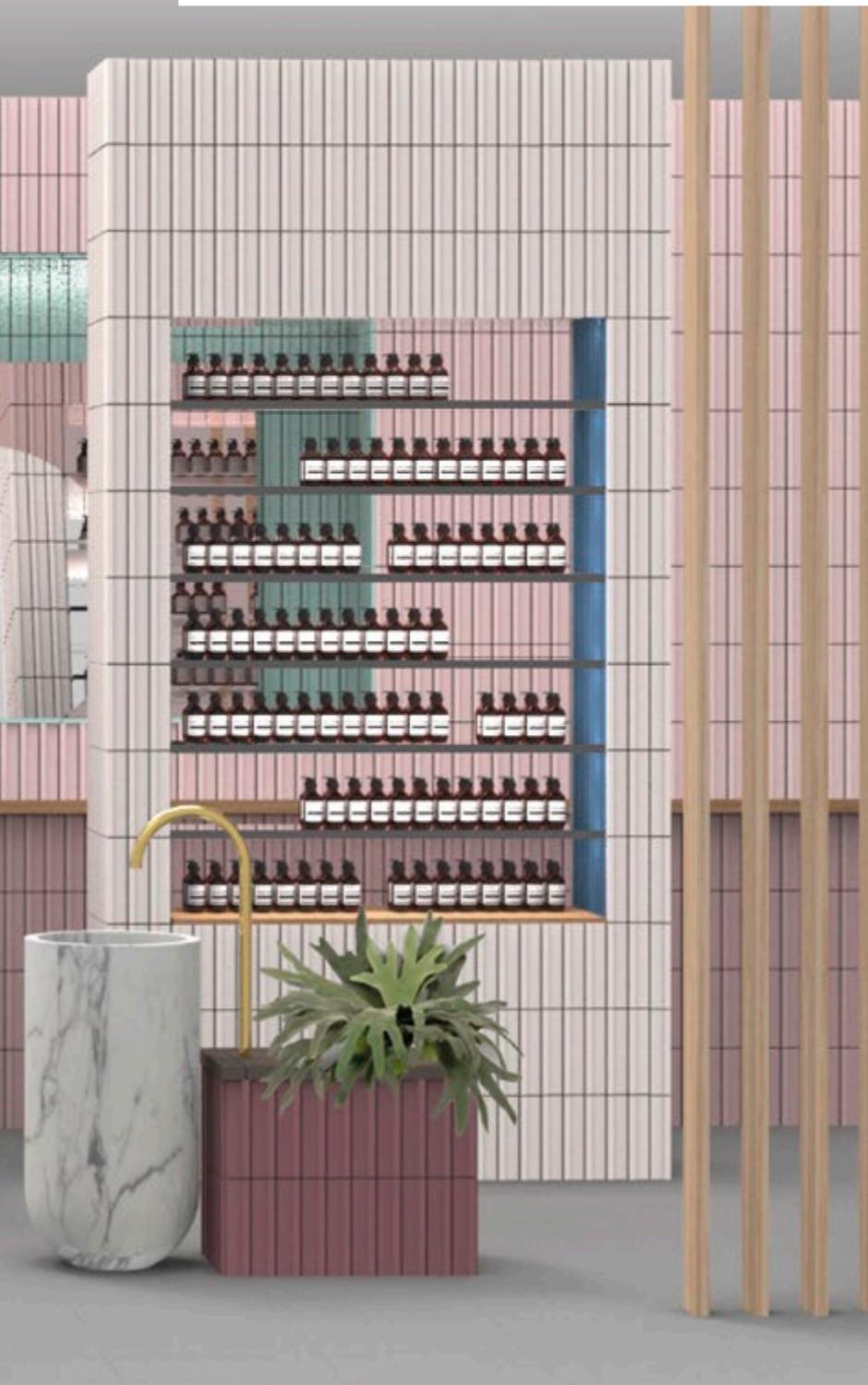


Standard in laboratories – innovative as a shelving element in shops: Joa Herrenknecht uses genuine technical tiles in a completely new way in Display, extending their normal uses – and creating an interior architectural perspective or collage effect in the space.

“The central idea is to use parts of a tile collection designed for laboratories in the interior architectural design of a retail or concept store – on walls, counters, mirror frames, free-standing store elements, like tables, and even to clad recesses. This gives greater emphasis to the beauty and quality of the tiles, contributing to the collage character of the store with its different ‘layers’.

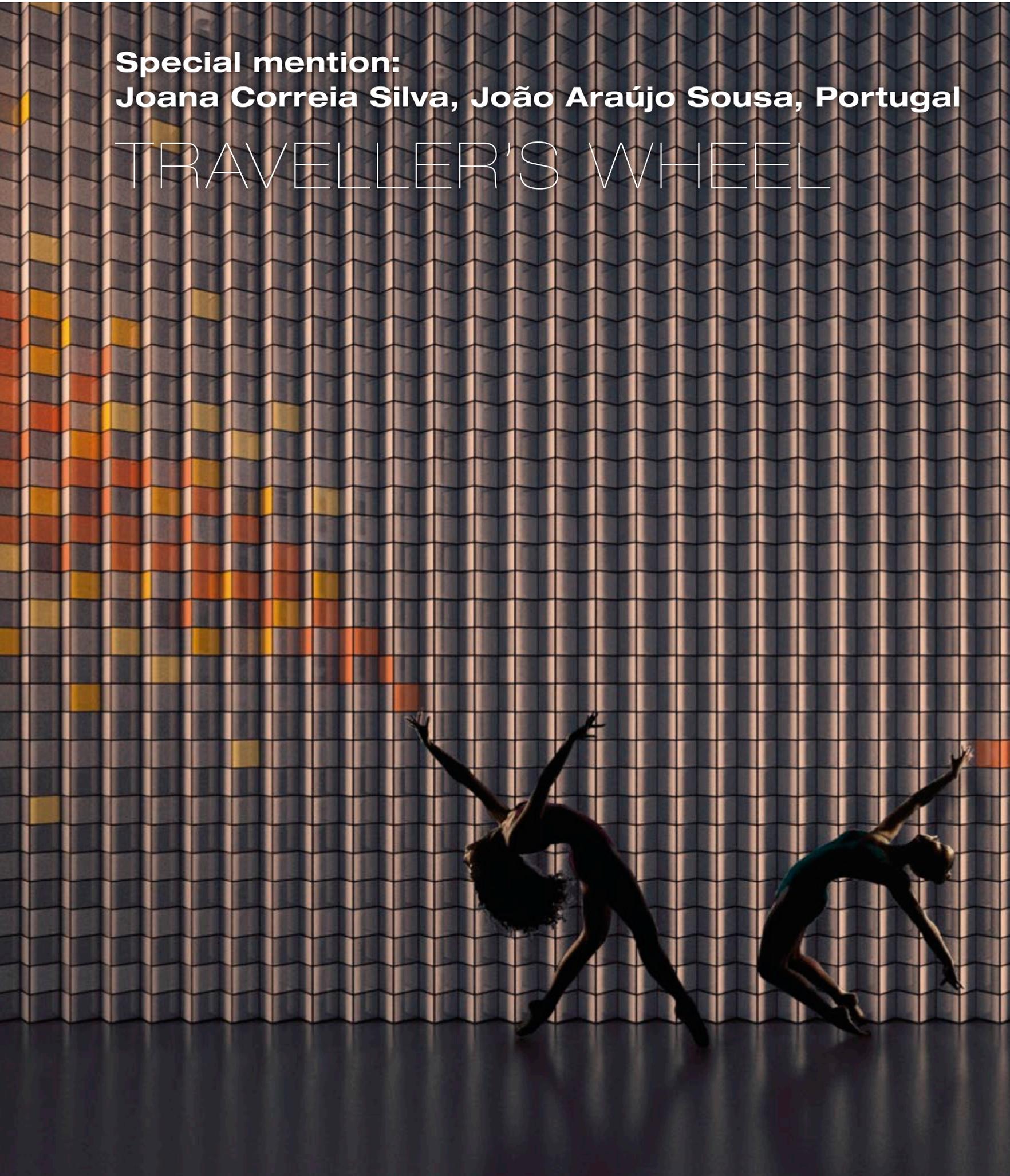
The basic element of the design is a white 3D standard tile: linear and with a raised edge – which is enhanced by other types of tile from the collection. Apart from their unusual use, the subtle colour shades of the tile collection are given a new direction – inspired by the colours and material islands.”

Joa Herrenknecht



**Special mention:
Joana Correia Silva, João Araújo Sousa, Portugal**

TRAVELLER'S WHEEL

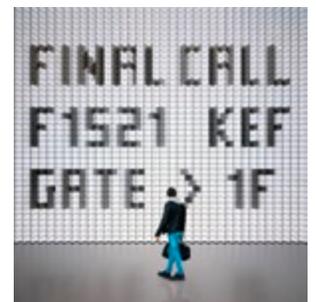
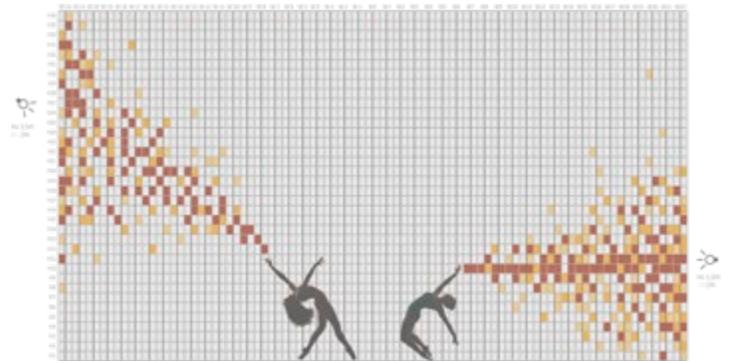
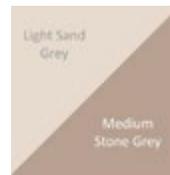


The changeability of the surfaces generates an extraordinary dynamism and harbours creative potential: with Traveller's Wheel, we experience ceramic as a playful, flexible medium that can be used for interaction, decoration or information.

"The central idea of Traveller's Wheel is the creation of a surface which is available for active design by passers-by or visitors – or acting as an information or inspiration medium for visitors, rather like a public display. It can be used, manually changed or programmed, or it can serve all three purposes simultaneously.

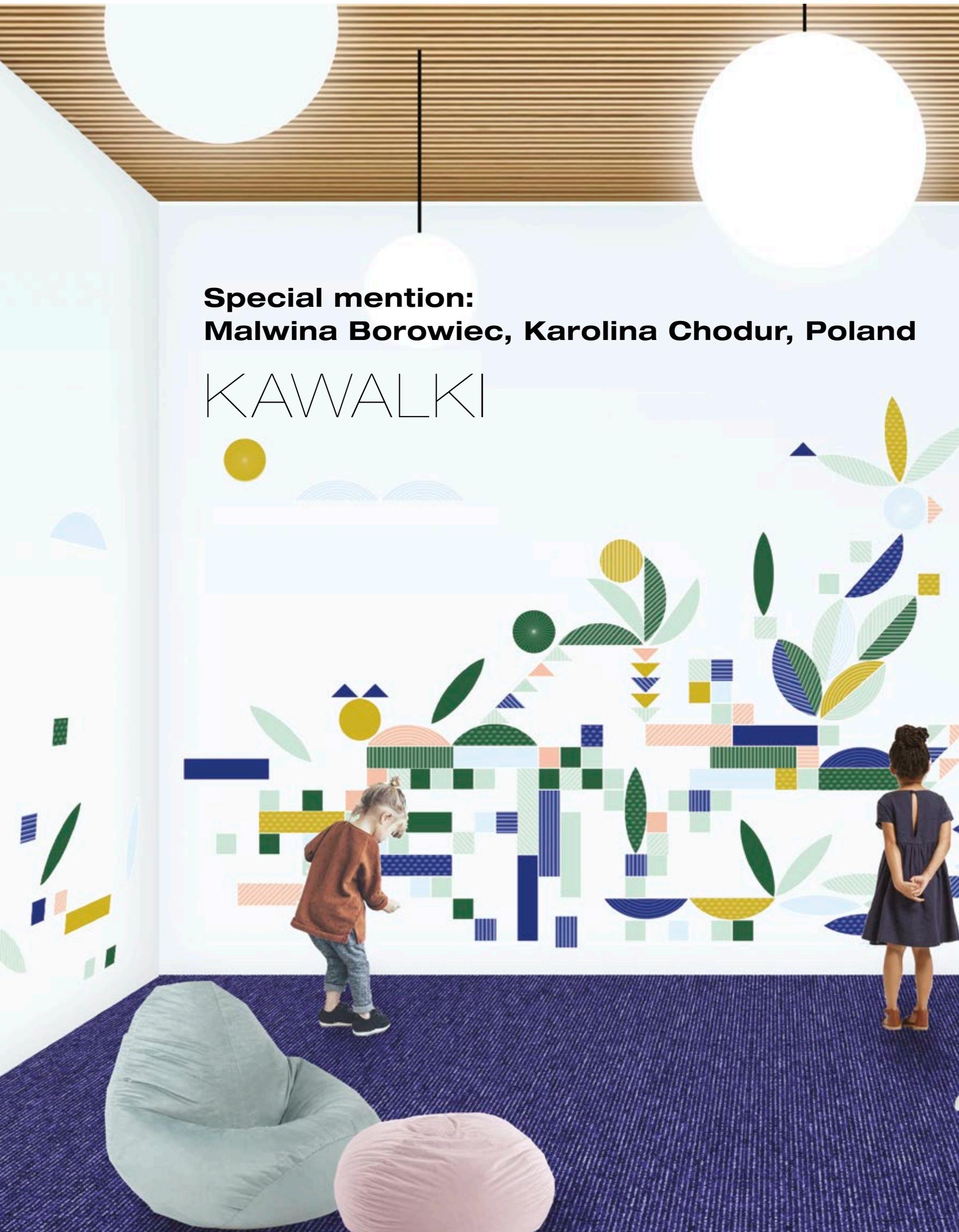
The architecture of Traveller's Wheel consists of a wall construction featuring rotating ceramic cubes. Each of the cubes' four sides have different colours, enabling numerous compositions to be created through the choice of colours and their combination with the other sides of the cubes – manually or digitally, with different control options, such as via touchscreen."

Joana Correia Silva, João Araújo Sousa



**Special mention:
Malwina Borowiec, Karolina Chodur, Poland**

KAWALKI



A world of tiles for children and by children: Kawalki by Malwina Borowiec relates to the stimulation of the senses, imagination and independent combination of many worlds and decorations – and, at one and the same time, pays homage to the mosaic fashion witnessed in Polish architecture during the last century.

“The sense of touch has shown itself to be a primary source of experiences for children when discovering their environment or establishing emotional bonds to each other. Thanks to the different tile finishes, Kawalki motivates children to interact with the tiles, discover and analyse their environment, and stimulate their senses.

The children themselves act as the designers: based on the fundamental forms of circle, rectangle, square and their subtraction, there are six shapes and five different tile surfaces available to be combined. The children draw the tile design based on these shapes and possibilities. Replaced by real tiles and bonded to the wall, the children’s own design becomes an artistic reality in ceramic – whether in the classroom, corridors, outdoors or at home.”

Malwina Borowiec, Karolina Chodur



**Special mention:
Olga Solomatina, Russia**

ICELANDIC SHOP

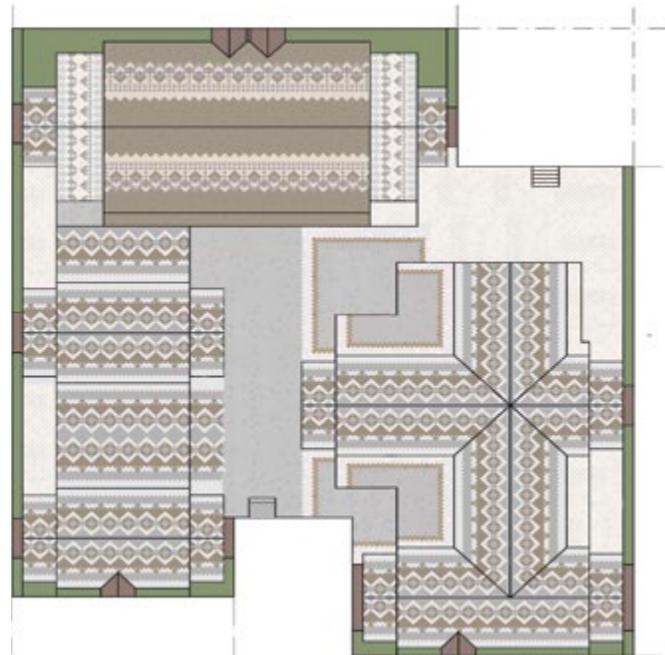


Earthy colours, warm shades and traditions: the style of the country comes together in the knitted pattern of an Icelandic sweater. Unmistakeable, typical, rustic. Olga Solomatina skilfully transposes the balancing act between architecture and textile naturalness into her ceramic creations.

“The traditional symmetrical pattern of the Icelandic Lopapeysa sweater, with its multi-coloured hues and round yoke at the neck, are the source of inspiration for the Icelandic Shop. Its ceramic translation is perfect for interior walls, angled walls, outdoor spaces, corridors, ceilings and seating. The pattern lends visual diversity and flowing transitions to various architectural elements – from one level to the next, with the smooth and cool ceramic material creating the effect of a carpet with a somewhat textile appearance.

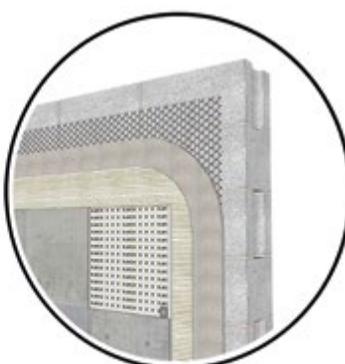
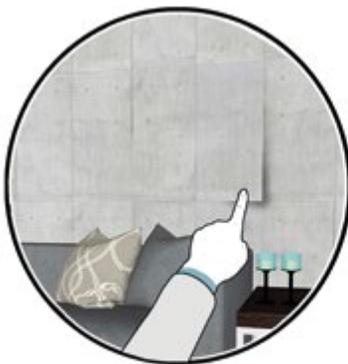
Different earthy shades of tiles – from grey to brown – form the ceramic base material for the Icelandic Shop.”

Olga Solomatina



**Special mention:
Piyush Prajapati, Dubai**

L.E.T.: LIGHT EMITTING TILES

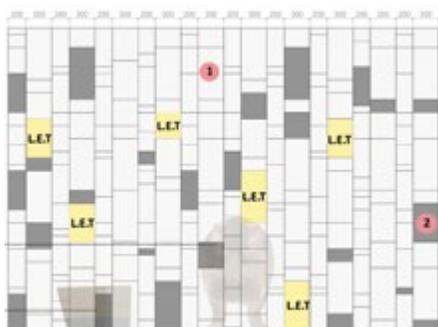
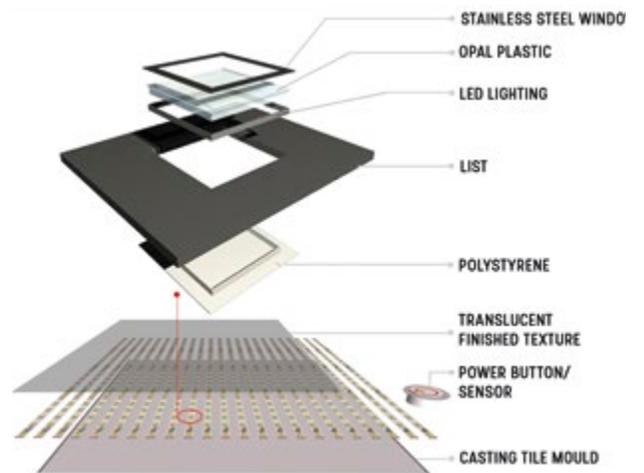
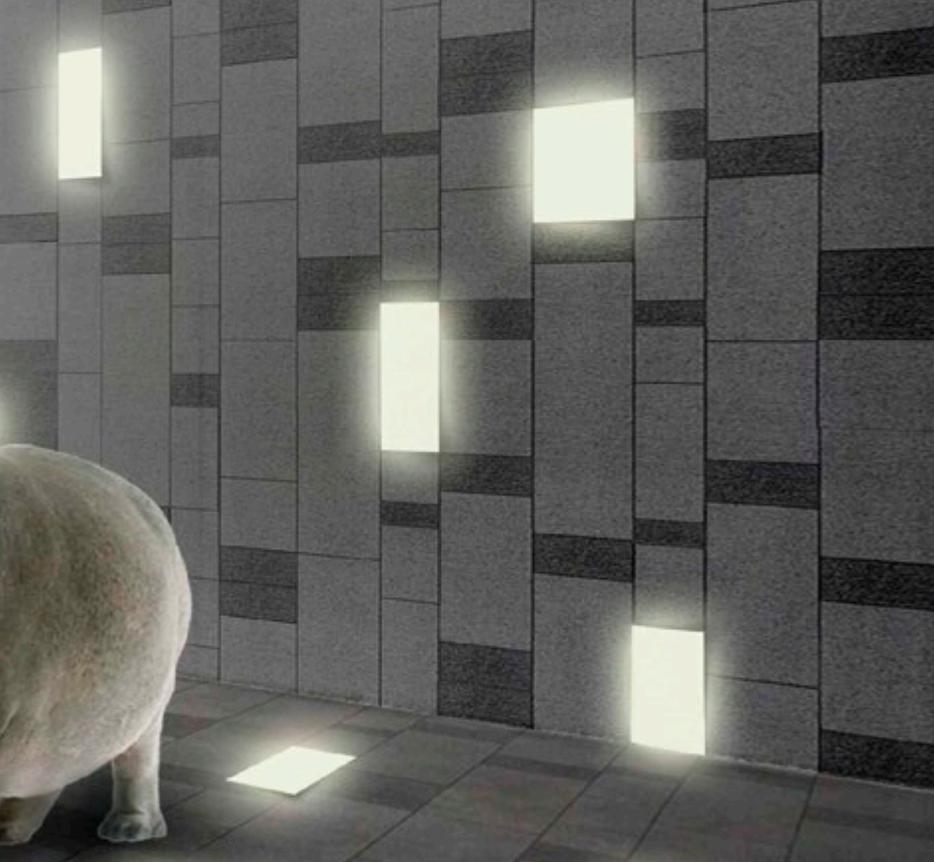


Tile and light, illumination meets innovation: Piyush Prajapati develops a futuristic design concept, which adds yet another functional component to enhance “tiles” as a material – for modern spaces that seamlessly integrate the lighting elements into the design.

“L.E.T.s are tiles with a lighting function. In an unlit state, they perfectly match the surface texture of the other tiles. They therefore blend perfectly into the overall ambience of buildings, offices, restaurants or museums. The only difference is the raised edge to switch them on and off.

LED strips are installed on the L.E.T. tiles under a translucent layer. Their luminous intensity per surface can be set variably – between 500 and 4,500 lux. In the updated version of these tiles, the L.E.T. tiles can also be controlled and programmed via smartphone. The typical laying method using mortar enables the L.E.T.s to be flexibly integrated on walls, floors or ceilings.”

Piyush Prajapati



AN ARCHITECTURE OF UNDERSTATEMENT

Text: Hans Ibelings
Photos: Jack Hobhouse

As the second phase of a larger transformation, Hawkins\Brown has designed the swimming pool for a private school in Ashted, southwest of London.

— Ceramics are ubiquitously present in most swimming pools, as the go-to products for wet interiors. Waterproof and durable, they can easily withstand moisture and the wear and tear of heavy use. However, even if a pool abounds in ceramics, their presence does not always constitute a dominant feature. A case in point is the swimming pool for the City of London Freemen's School, designed by Hawkins\Brown, as part of multi-phase development plan for this school complex in Ashted, which is listed as a heritage site. The two next phases will include the creation of new dining and kitchen facilities, boarding accommodation, and teaching spaces in the Main House.

Hawkins\Brown, written with a backslash, is a large architectural firm based in London and Manchester and boasting an extensive portfolio of wide-ranging projects, most of which in the United Kingdom. Among their recent projects are the new building for the Bartlett School of Architecture of the University College London, Burridge Garden, a large residential project also in London, and the regeneration of Park Hill, a vast Brutalist housing estate in Sheffield.

The swimming pool for the City of London Freemen's School replaces a previous building that burnt down in 2014. Previously, Hawkins\Brown completed a building containing the music school and boarding house for 60 pupils.

Like this first building, the architecture of the new swimming pool carefully compromises between the wish to harmoniously blend in with the existing architecture, and the campus landscape, and simultaneously offer a contemporary and sustainable setting for today's students. The new sports building houses a six-lane, 25-metre swimming pool, additional training facilities, and locker rooms.

While its exterior is rather dark and heavy, dominated by dark copper cladding, the interior is surprisingly light, with large windows allowing the swimmers to experience the world around them. According to the designers, the swimming pool building 'nestles into the landscape by partially submerging the lower ground floor. A dark copper-colored, standing seam cladding with





vertical ribs helps to meld the building and landscape. Standing seam cladding is utilised because it is a more traditional form of construction, which responds to key features of the listed Main House. The deep columns of the all-timber construction and wrap-around glazing, which afford direct views from the water into the woodland, give the sense of swimming amongst the trees.'

In the interior, much has been done to make this architecture equally understated as its subdued exterior. The interior of the pool is defined by the sophisticated ton-sur-ton combination of neutral colors and the application of natural materials. The color palette of the pool can almost be called an absence of color, with greys, beiges and white, using Agrob Buchtal tiles from the Chroma range, combined with the Finland II pool edge system. As Hawkins\Brown's project architect, Harriet Redman explains, 'In relation to color – we wanted to avoid the cliché swimming pool "blues"; and so the dark grey contrast tiling was perfect. To keep the tank color as neutral as possible, we chose a simple white tile. We also used the integrated step tiles to create flush exit ladders. These create a more durable finish and limit the amount of stainless steel around and in the pool tank, which is prone to corrosion.'

Redman praises the quality of the non-slip finish products of Agrob Buchtal, which she considers 'far less abrasive than those of other manufacturers'. And she adds 'We are also keen that the tiles last as long as possible and we believe that the Agrob Buchtal's self-cleaning surface will help to keep the pool looking good throughout its lifespan.'

Hovering over the pool is a series of glue-laminated wooden frames, which support a low-pitched roof. The ridge of the roof is slanted diagonally, thereby introducing a subdued spatial dynamic into an otherwise orthogonally structured hall. The effect of this modest spatial gesture is as low-key as the color scheme of the ceramic products that have been applied here. The subdued presence of the Agrob Buchtal products in this swimming pool crucially contributes to Hawkins\Brown elegant architectural understatement, which embodies the paradoxical quality of standing out through its distinguished unobtrusiveness. —





»» In relation to color – we wanted to avoid the cliché swimming pool ‘blues’, and so the dark grey contrast tiling was perfect.



INCREASING SCALE, TURNING TABLES

Text: Isabelle Priest

— The late 19th and early twentieth centuries saw architectural ceramics used on a previously unseen scale. Whereas until this period ceramics had been used largely as an indoor decorative and facing material, say in the example of Delftware wall tiles, the advances in industrialised and mechanised manufacturing meant they began to be used to envelope entire buildings externally, as well as internally encrust them too. In Britain, companies such as Royal Doulton in London and Burmantofts Pottery in Leeds thrived off a flourishing demand for glossy, textured and colored bricks and panels that came to be seen on every pub on every street corner. The fashionable and wealthy transformed their homes into Arabesque worlds of eye-popping pattern and color. The new materials on offer chimed with a proto-modern sensibility concerning the honesty of materials that came to be known as structural polychromy, where color was more than a surface treatment.

Nowhere better was this exhibited than in the United States, with architects such as Louis Sullivan demonstrating how the material could be exploited to its fullest potential by creating buildings that were dripping in all-over intricate pattern work with a visual and textural complexity that had substantially

been the preserve of cathedrals and major state projects. Suddenly, prolific decoration came to adorn banks, offices, industrial headquarters and more – while skyscrapers could be cloaked to look like stone for a fraction of the cost.

Indeed, as the boom in skyscrapers took off, architectural ceramics came to be associated more and more as a material for vastness – an association which has, with some recent idiosyncratic exceptions including FAT and Grayson Perry's House for Essex (2015) and Assemble's Seven Sister's Tube entrance refurbishment (2017), re-emerged in Britain in recent years.

But whereas the vast architectural ceramic buildings of the earlier period were built by private companies to help convey state-built greatness, in this era of Britain it is most often the state, not private companies, that builds in ceramic. What we see is architectural ceramic, mostly in its interlocking cladding panel form, becoming the material of choice for hospitals, universities, schools and museums. After a long period in which none of these facilities were being built at all, the material caught on during the boom of the early 2000s and then has inspired a generation of them since.

Architectural ceramics have a long and prosperous history in Britain but there are always innovations along the way.

And in a move away from the glassy buildings that took shape from the 1960s, architectural ceramic is increasingly being used to give a long-lost solidity to projects that today is as much about aesthetics and presence as it is about creating efficient and sustainable environmental performance.

The latest of these projects, as well as one of the largest, is the work that PLP Architecture is doing for the **Imperial College London's new western campus** in White City. The university, which was founded in South Kensington in 1888, is developing the former BBC Woodlands seven-acre site into a new mixed-use urban quarter named Imperial West with a postgraduate focus to overcome the physical constraints of its existing city centre location.

Masterplanned by Allies and Morrison, PLP Architecture is developing two of the area's most important buildings; a mid-rise technology transfer building that provides lab and office space for research-focused companies and a 35-storey residential tower marking the entrance to the campus that combines private and key worker accommodation for lecturers, researchers, trainee doctors and their families.

Alongside another mid-rise building on the masterplan for engineering, Agrob Buchtal KeraTwin® terracotta panels are being featured throughout the project in combination with glass fixed panel glazing and curtain walling, giving the buildings a solidity and creating a distinctive yet continuous thread between them. However, at the same time as giving the grouping of buildings a strong identity, Agrob Buchtal facade ceramics are being used to optimise internal environmental conditions too. Terracotta flanks the southern elevations to prevent too much solar gain. On the tower, which also stands out for its shard-like appearance, the ceramic northern facade also aims to reduce heat loss and maximise privacy for the apartments inside. The tower is also an early example of a project being constructed in the UK using a unitised facade system where terracotta panels are pre-mounted off site in the factory.

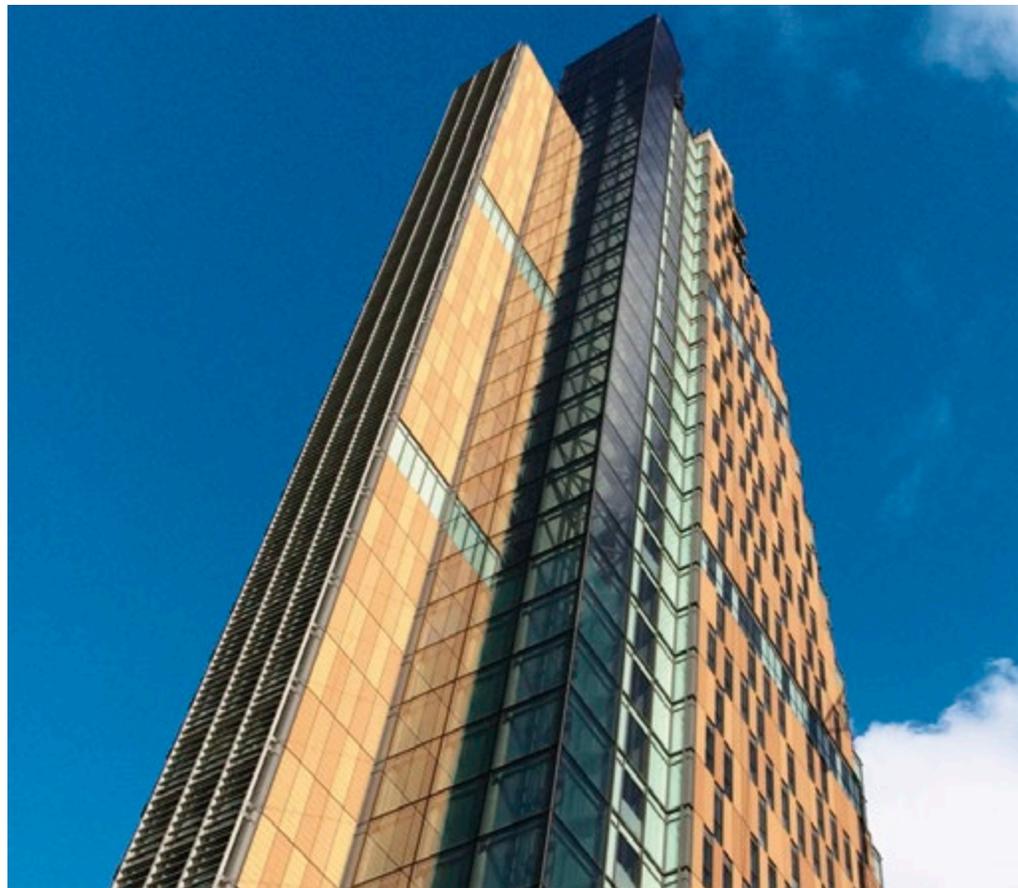
Despite a lot of common ground among these buildings, the reasons for choosing architectural ceramic are remarkably various. Whereas in early 20th century America, ceramic products were manufactured and desired to mimic stone, today their earthenware materiality seems to inspire an earthy approach, less concerned by outmoded hierarchies of materials and more by a sensitivity to context. Be the setting urban or rural, ceramics have a knack assimilating easily into all manner of environments with exact specifications adjusted sometimes only subtly between sites.

Downing Students City Village, designed by Manchester-based architectural practice SimpsonHaugh, in Coventry, for

example, is located in a dense historic Midlands urban setting, which is well-known for its red brick architecture.

The scheme, which has been developed by private student housing company Downing Student with Coventry University, comprises four connected volumes of varying heights arranged around landscaped courtyards and vistas to a grid masterplan. Providing a total of 600 student bedrooms, 49 private apartments as well as retail units and student facilities at ground level, the project uses KeraTwin® terracotta panels to unify the appearance of three new mid-rise blocks with the existing surrounding area – a mix of offices, multi-storey car parks, and detached and semi-detached housing that survived the notorious bombing the city suffered during the Second World War. These blocks are made to blend into the urban fabric because of their external appearance, even referencing traditional details around the window openings with pronounced lintels and architraves. Likewise, at the Imperial West project mentioned above, a matt natural terracotta finish was selected to reference the low-rise terraced Edwardian red brick housing of neighbouring North Kensington and East Acton.

Imperial West



Telegraph Works, Greenwich,
Great Britain | Architect:
Allford Hall Monaghan Morris

At the **Orchard Hotel**, on the other hand, which was completed for the University of Nottingham in 2013, a very similar palette of brown KeraTwin® facade panels is used to integrate a new 200-bed hotel into a completely contrasting setting of expansive parkland, rolling hills, orchards, greenery and trees, working equally as successfully.

Designed for the university's main 330-acre campus to be located near an existing university conference centre, the Orchard Hotel's architect RHWL (now part of Aedas) feared that any new construction on the site would spoil the existing landscape, which was endowed to the university to provide a place of recreation for residents of the city and is crisscrossed by footpaths.

To break down the size of the building, the project is designed as two almost mirror-image solid volumes either side of a connecting glass volume that together fan out across the site and nestle into the hillside. Hard landscaping gestures and a plinth made from local silicified sandstone bed the building into the setting, as well as provide the tonal cues for the three colors – very pale to dark brown – of the ceramic panels for the two side volumes. Whereas in the city terracotta can be made to feel urban, here it is a tribute to the geological layers of the existing environment and natural setting.

The same goes for colored and glazed architectural ceramics, where in Britain blues and greens have been a favourite choice for architects keen to blend new buildings into natural landscapes since architect Halsey Ricardo's 1907 Peacock House for department store owner Ernst Ridley Debenham. There, an Italianate style of architecture was created in variegated Royal Doulton Carrara ware and inset panels were faced with Burmantofts bricks – green for the lower garden-level storeys, blue for the upper storeys that rise above the trees.

Photos: Martine Hamilton Knight Photography

Orchard Hotel





Similar approaches are still to be found all over the UK today. For example, whereas RHWL was inspired by the geological context in Nottingham, Murphey Philipps Architects in conjunction with designer Frances Tobin derived a color concept for the facade of the **Finchley Memorial Hospital** in North London from the mainly green surrounding open space and therapeutic gardens.

The practice is a specialist in healthcare buildings, and this community hospital, which was realised in 2012 to embrace Department of Health guidance for flexible and adaptable healthcare facilities, has a layout based around generic modular clinical rooms and clusters.

Here, green and blue glazed ceramic panels and tubes have been applied in a random pixel-like horizontal arrangement across the lower storey of the building, as well as featured vertically in front of glazed entrance pavilions to act as filigree curtains. From a distance, this introduction of ceramics at ground level to an otherwise white-rendered three-storey building suggests the upper part is floating above trees and overall reduces the scale of the 10,000 m² gross internal floor area. In order to meet the high requirements of the project, Agrob Buchtal specially developed 3,500 of the ceramic panels and 2,000 of the square-cross section ceramic tubes in ten shades that corresponded between vertically and horizontally hung products, despite their different manufacturing processes.

What's more, in a similar fashion to why the glazed materials were selected at Peacock House for their age-resistant properties to the polluted London air back in 1907, KeraTwin® products are imbued with a special HT coating that has self-cleaning properties, decomposes exhaust fumes produced by industry and cars, as well as has an anti-bacterial effect to prevent algae formation, making them particularly appropriate for hospitals. The building won a Civic Trust Award in 2014.

Photos: Benedict Luxmore

Finchley Memorial Hospital





At Jamie Fobert Architects' 2017 refurbishment of **Tate St Ives** on the coast of Cornwall, however, the focus for its modest visible extension is, like the upper storeys of Peacock House, primarily on blue tones to capture the ever-changing Cornish weather and colors of the sea beyond.

Jamie Fobert Architects was commissioned to carry out an extensive renovation of Evans and Shalev's 1993 museum and extend it to include a new contemporary gallery, educational suite, offices and transition spaces. However, because of its highly contested and desirable location, much of the new space is sunken into the cliff edge, with only a modest – and the smallest among these recent Agrob Buchtal projects – component for art handling allowed to be visible externally. In reference to the history of ceramicists in St Ives such as Bernard Leach, the building is clad in long, horizontally hung Agrob Buchtal ceramic tiles that have the effect of making the extension that is visible from the town disappear in the glint of the sun.

Photos: Simon Hadley

Tate Gallery St Ives





Meanwhile, back at **City Village** the tallest of the four volumes on the scheme that rises above the city – a 20-storey tower – is at once designed to stand out and disappear by being designed with the same cladding composition as the other terracotta elements, but carried out in a high-gloss light blue terracotta tile. The tower reflects the colors of the cityscape and sky, giving the project an unexpected lightness.

Photos: Simon Hadley

City Village





Nevertheless, the use of architectural ceramics in Britain is not only about architects wishing buildings to disappear or blend into their immediate surroundings, be that city, greenery or sky. In many ways the best projects are those that make the qualities of the material stand out and sing; reflectivity, matt-ness, texture and variety. The **New QEIL hospital** in Welwyn Garden City, completed by Penoyre + Prasad in 2015, is one of these projects that showcases the enormous possibilities of ceramics..

The hospital is part of a new generation of local NHS services aimed at keeping key healthcare functions close to the community while moving specialist acute and inpatient care to fewer, larger centres. It replaces an existing slab-style 1950s seven-storey district hospital with a lower, four-storey building under a varying pitched roofline arranged around a central courtyard.

The building plan comprises three connecting L-shapes that each contain two hospital departments. Clad using a combination of timber, render and ceramic tiles, Agrob Buchtal KeraTwin® ceramic panels are used to give different appearances to different departments. For example, metallic-effect shimmering grey-brown tiles are combined with a timber-lined colonnade to catch the eye and announce the main entrance, while these fade to matt along other elevations and in the courtyard.

As part of the building's aim to be BREEAM Excellent, natural materials have been used where possible and laser cut metal screens with tracery by artist Charlotte Mann have been incorporated to protect against too much sunlight. Like at Finchley, QEIL was also recognised with a Civic Trust Award. —

Photo: Tim Crocker

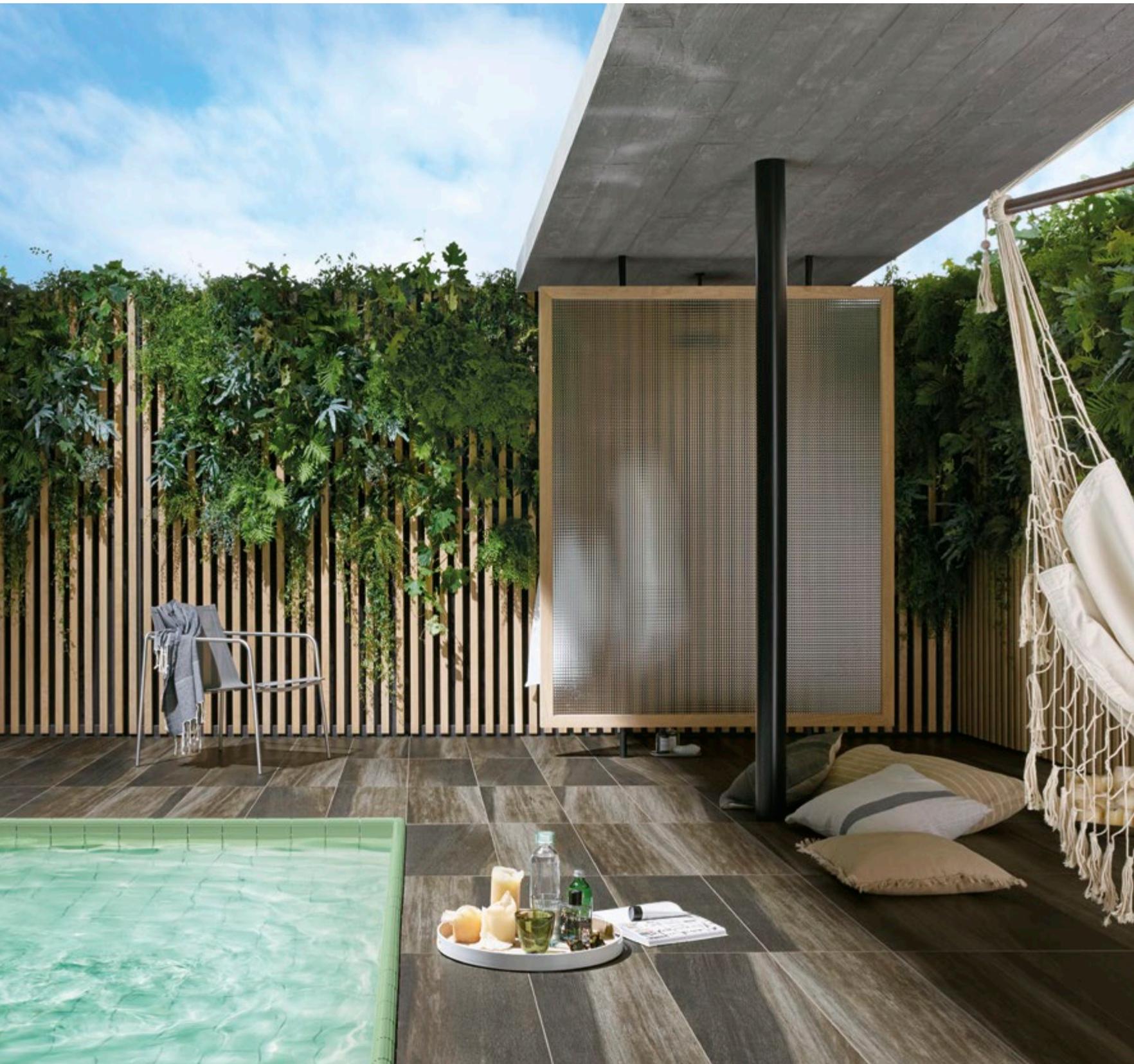
New QEIL hospital





**VERSATILE AESTHETIC APPEARANCE AND
PRACTICAL USES**

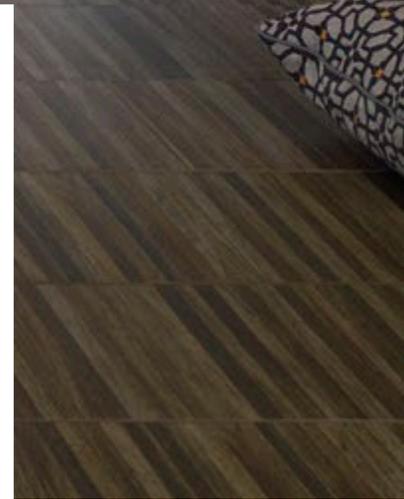
NEW CERAMICS FOR INDIVIDUAL DESIGNS





Architect: VSBL, Belgrade, Serbia
 Photos: Jochen Stüber

new



Architect: VSBL, Belgrade, Serbia
Photos: Jochen Stüber



**THE ELEGANCE OF WELLNESS
AND LIVING**

**FINE
GRAINING**

— Akazia creates an elegant ambience with a pleasant feel and hints of the multifaceted appearance of acacia wood. Thanks to its graded slip-resistant rating, this stone tile range in a brown-mix color is ideal for designing wellness zones and walkways surrounding swimming pools. The 30 x 60 and 30 x 90 cm tiles are complemented by a skirting and a slip-resistant mosaic (5 x 5 cm). The Stripes pattern in brown-mix and natural-mix have proved themselves as a durable alternative to traditional parquet flooring in shop-fitting, in the catering sector and in the home. The innovative HT finish makes the range especially easy-clean and environmentally-friendly.

AKAZIA



brown-Mix



brown-Mix
Stripes



nature-Mix
Stripes



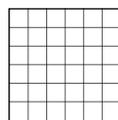
Floor tile
30 x 60 cm
R10, R11/B



Floor tile
30 x 90 cm
R10, R11/B



Skirting, rounded
6 x 60 cm



Mosaic
5 x 5 cm
R11/B

new

MODERN TERRAZZO LOOK

MODULAR DESIGN



— The modular design of the non-slip Nova porcelain stoneware range allows you to create individual solutions in the most diverse applications. Their appearance, inspired by terrazzo floors, includes six finely matched shades from creamy beige to mid-grey and anthracite. The formats range from 5 x 5 cm mosaics, to large-format 120 x 120 cm tiles and also include 10 x 60 and 15 x 60 cm decorative strips. The stair tiles (35 x 135 cm) introduce sophisticated innovation into the range: the front edge is slightly rounded and decorated in the design of the respective tile. The HT finish minimises cleaning and reduces air pollutants.

NOVA



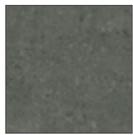
cream beige



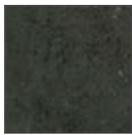
mid-brown



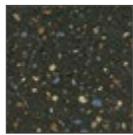
mid-grey



basalt



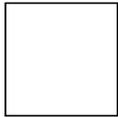
anthracite



multicolored anthracite



Floor tile
15 x 15 cm
smooth, coated
R10/A, R11/B



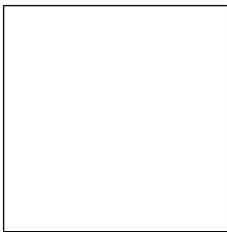
Floor tile
30 x 30 cm
smooth, coated
R10/A



Floor tile
10 x 60 cm
smooth, coated
R10/A



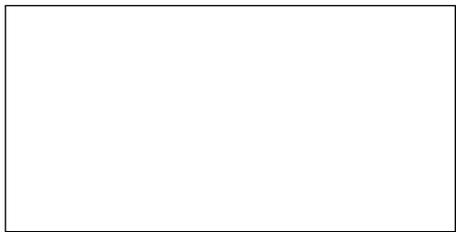
Floor tile
15 x 60 cm
smooth, coated
R10/A



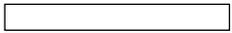
Floor tile
60 x 60 cm
smooth, coated
R10/A



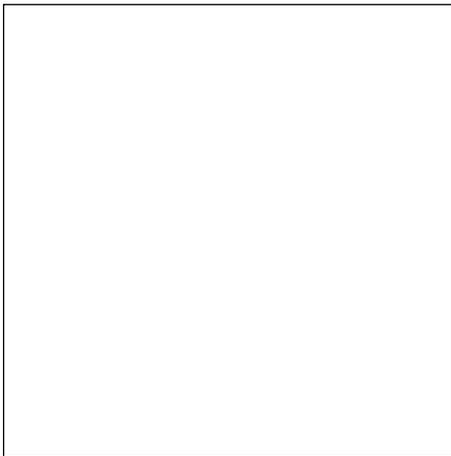
Floor tile
30 x 60 cm
smooth, coated
R10/A, R11/B



Floor tile
60 x 120 cm
smooth, coated
R10/A



Skirting, rounded
7 x 60 cm
smooth, coated



Floor tile
120 x 120 cm
smooth, coated
R10/A



Stair tile
30 x 60 cm
grooved, coated
R10/A



Stair tile
31 x 135 cm
smooth
R10/A

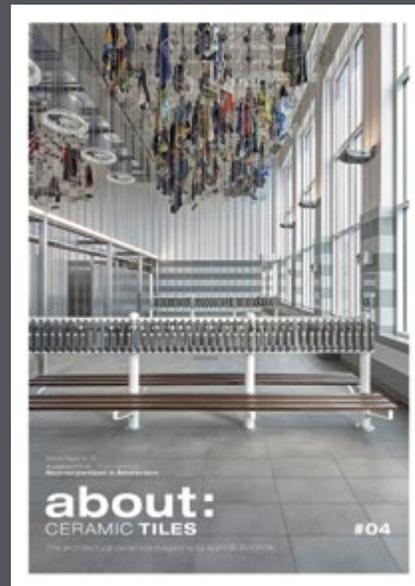
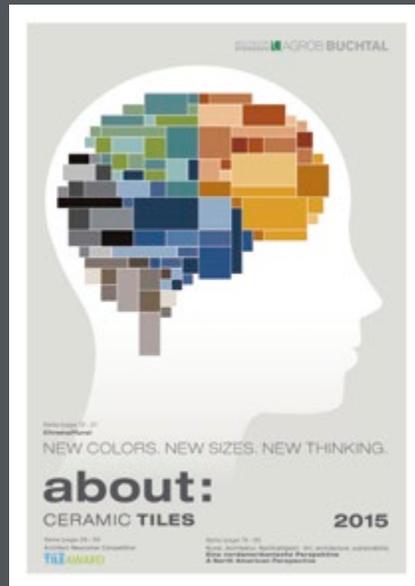
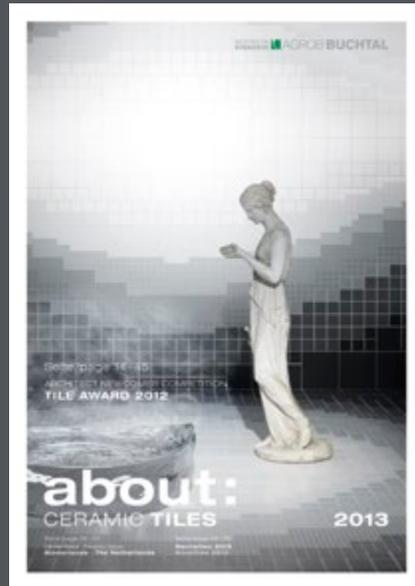


Terrazzo look with colored pigments

Architect: VSBL, Belgrade, Serbia
Photos: Jochen Stüber

NEWS





The Agrob Buchtal magazine is published once a year and offers a combination of issues concerning our core competence of architectural ceramics: projects, design concepts, awards and trends. If you would like to receive the magazine automatically, please register at www.agrob-buchtal.de/register.

Imprint

Published by:

AGROB BUCHTAL GmbH
Buchtal 1, 92521 Schwarzenfeld
Germany
Tel.: +49 (0) 94 35-391-0
Fax: +49 (0) 94 35-391-34 52

architects@agrob-buchtal.de
www.agrob-buchtal.de

Editorial staff / writers

Christoph Schulze (Ed.),
Hans Ibelings, Isabelle Priest,
Peppercorns

Photos

Tim Crocker, Simon Hadley,
Martine Hamilton, Knight Photography,
Jack Hobhouse, Infinitude,
Benedict Luxmore, Jochen Stüber

Layout

assenmacher network gmbh
Oberländer Ufer 192
50968 Köln
Germany
www.assenmacher.net

Printing

Krüger Druck+Verlag, Merzig
www.kdv.de

Circulation

7,500 Copies

