designingways

ISSUE 307

KITCHENS COUNTERTOPS FURNITURE TRENDS



RSA R150.00




Xi'an International Football Centre by ZHA, AMP 2026 Best of Best Winner in Recreational Architecture
Photo credit: Hufton + Crow

Architecture MasterPrize Names Its 2026 Winners

Snøhetta's Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library takes the top honour; entries from 92 countries

The Architecture MasterPrize (AMP) today announces the winners of its 2026 edition. Thousands of projects, firms and products were entered from 92 countries, up from 72 in 2025, across the Architectural Design, Firm of the Year, Architectural Products and Architectural Photography programmes.

Now in its eleventh edition, the AMP recognises design excellence in architecture, interior design and landscape architecture across nearly fifty categories, judged by an international jury of practicing architects, designers, critics and academics. Entries are judged on design excellence, originality, function and sustainability, and the highest-ranked work in each category receives the Best of Best distinction.

From that group the jury selects the year's top titles and the Firm of the Year awards.

The 2026 titles

- Architectural Design of the Year: The top honour goes to Snøhetta for the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in Medora, North Dakota. Sited along a bluff edge in the Badlands, the building slopes to meet the land beneath a walkable, planted roof that opens toward Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Architects, landscape architects and ecologists shaped the site and the building as a single work.
- Interior Design of the Year: OAKV by Atelier Carle (Alain Carle), Canada Montreal practice Atelier Carle challenges traditional medical clinic design with OAKV. One skylight, one tall hall and a lot of walnut turn a dark Oakville office unit into the year's most composed interior.
- Landscape Design of the Year: Benjakitti Forest Park by Arsomsilp Community and Environmental Architect with Turenscape, Thailand. A former tobacco factory site in central Bangkok, now an ecological park with wetlands that store monsoon rain, a new urban forest and skywalks that open the whole site to the public
- Sustainable Design of the Year: Expansion Headquarter Windkraft Simonsfeld AG by Juri Troy ZT GmbH, Austria. A timber-framed office extension with a rammed-clay core for a wind-energy company.
- Architectural Firm of the Year: KPF (Kohn Pedersen Fox), United States
- Interior Design Firm of the Year: PMT Partners, China
- Landscape and Urban Design Firm of the Year: PLACE, United States

Best of Best highlights

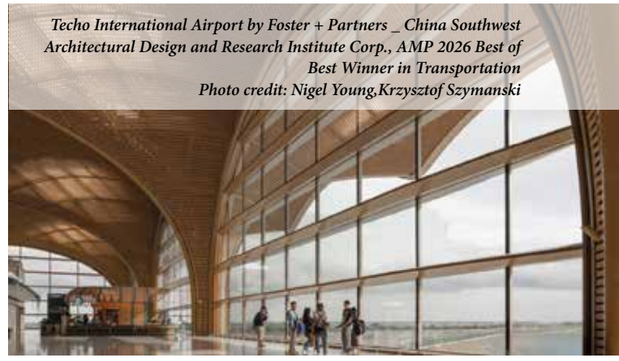
- New Grand Palais, Paris, by Chatillon Architectes, France.
- Anthony Timberlands Center for Design and Materials Innovation, University of Arkansas, by modus studio with Grafton Architects
- Techo International Airport, Phnom Penh, by Foster + Partners with China Southwest Architectural Design and Research Institute
- Xi'an International Football Centre by Zaha Hadid Architects
- Centro Direzionale Metro Station, Naples, and Parco del Mare, Rimini, by Miralles Tagliabue EMBT, Spain
- Media library and music school in Sarlat-la-Canéda by Dominique Coulon & Associés, France
- Nanchang Grand Theatre by PES-Architects, Finland
- Robert Mondavi Winery, Napa Valley, by Aidlin Darling Design with BAR Architects, United States
- Cantina Contramar, Las Vegas, by Frida Escobedo Studio, the Mexico City restaurant's first home in the United States
- Watertown Exploratory Labs by Elkus Manfredi Architects, United States
- Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport Terminal 3 by GDAD with Artelia Airports, China
- TCC DAKA Renewable Resource Recycling Center, Taiwan, by KPF
- Data Center ETH Zurich by Penzel Valier, Switzerland

www.architectureprize.com

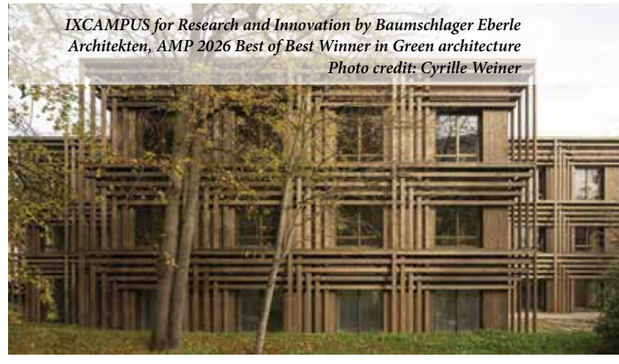

Centro Direzionale Metro Station by Miralles Tagliabue EMBT , AMP 2026 Best of Best Winner in Transportation
Photo credit: Roland Halbe


OASIS by ATELIER STEPHANE FERNANDEZ, AMP 2026 Best of Best Winner in Residential Architecture - Multi Unit
Photo credit: ATELIER STEPHANE FERNANDEZ


TCC DAKA Renewable Resource Recycling Center by KPF (Kohn Pedersen Fox), AMP 2026 Best of Best Winner in Mixed Use Architecture
Photo credit: Justin Szeremeta


Techo International Airport by Foster + Partners _ China Southwest Architectural Design and Research Institute Corp., AMP 2026 Best of Best Winner in Transportation
Photo credit: Nigel Young,Krzysztof Szymanski


Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport Terminal 3 by GDAD_ ARTELIA AIRPORTS , AMP 2026 Best of Best Winner in Interior-Public Spaces
Photo credit: GDAD_ ARTELIA AIRPORTS


IXCAMPUS for Research and Innovation by Baumschlager Eberle Architekten, AMP 2026 Best of Best Winner in Green architecture
Photo credit: Cyrille Weiner

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Between Two Suns Opens A New Pedestrian Connection Through Cape Town's City Centre

A collaborative urban intervention by Blok, Studio Kalki and TwoFiveFive creates a new link between the vibrant city centre and the lush Company's Garden.

Blok, Studio Kalki and TwoFiveFive have unveiled Between Two Suns, a permanent arched thoroughfare, public artwork and urban intervention at TENONV in Cape Town's city centre.

The collaborative project brings together residential property development, architecture and public art to open up a new pedestrian connection between upper Long Street, the Company's Garden and the surrounding network of walkable streets and public spaces in the CBD.

Conceived as both a practical route and an immersive public artwork, Between Two Suns reflects a shared ambition to make the city centre more connected and engaging for the people who live in it, visit it and move through it every day.

The artwork takes its spatial cue from the Company's Garden itself. The composition is framed by the rising and setting sun, while the ceramic language and colour palette reference the mountains, ocean, natural landscape and environment of the city. "The idea of the two suns became particularly important because it speaks to movement, time and the experience of passing through a space rather than simply looking at an artwork," says Troy Squires, Head of Marketing at Blok.

As people move through the arch throughout the day, the changing light reflects across the hand-glazed surfaces, creating a different experience of the artwork from sunrise to sunset.





Together with architects TwoFiveFive, Blok saw an opportunity to rethink a traditionally closed building edge and make it open and accessible.

André Krige, Architect at TwoFiveFive, says:

"The architectural move is quite simple: where there was previously a boundary, there is now a passage. But that shift changes the relationship between the building, the street and the wider city. The thoroughfare allows TENONV to participate more actively in the public realm and creates a stronger pedestrian connection through this part of Cape Town."

Adds van Embden:

"The best outcome for us is that the thoroughfare becomes part of people's everyday movement through the city. Someone may be walking home, heading to the Company's Garden, moving between Long Street and another part of the CBD, or simply discovering a new route. That's the value of an urban intervention like this: the building becomes more connected to the life of the city around it."

Between Two Suns is now open to the public at TENONV, 10 Vredenburg Lane, Cape Town.

For any media requests or interviews, please contact:

- El Broide, The Platinum Club



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Celebrate the arrival of spring. Pop open a tin of paint!

by Plascon



Winter is loosening its grip. The days are becoming longer and warmer, and as colour returns to the world through bud burst and bloom, the urge to reset your space is setting in.

One of the simplest, highest-impact ways to do that is to refresh the colour on your walls. Spring, with its returning greens, soft blossoms and clear open skies, is a naturally inspiring colour reference.

The 'fifth wall' and the art of colour drenching

Designers are increasingly treating the ceiling as a surface with as much potential to add personality and atmosphere as the four walls of a room.

Colour drenching, pulling a single hue across every surface in a room (walls, ceiling, cornices, skirting and trim), has been building momentum for a couple of years, but the trend has shifted. Homeowners once kept it safe with neutrals; now they're going bold. Think a room drenched in the blushed depth of Ruby Tuesday (R5-B2-2), or ceiling, walls and trim unified in the unapologetic red of Hot-N-Spicy (R6-B1-1), both from Plascon's Fashion + Candy Colour World.

If a full colour drench feels like a stretch, there is plenty of personality to be found in the details. Run a shade that contrasts your walls along your skirting boards and door frames for a finishing touch that makes a room feel considered and complete. If walls feel like a large undertaking, revive a tired set of dining chairs in the rich burst of Signal Red (G7) or give a side table a new lease of life in the warm glow of Good Day Sunshine (O6-A1-1) from Plascon's Orchard + Blooms Colour World. Even a bookshelf interior painted in Cave Painting (O2-C1-1) can completely transform a room corner. Small decisions, made with intention, go a long way.

Invite the outdoors in

Dissolving the boundary between indoors and outdoors doesn't always require structural renovation. It can be as simple as drawing inspiration from the landscape right outside your window: the rough grain of tree bark, the softness of moss underfoot, the cool smoothness of river stones. Translate these tactile references into the right paint colour to feel more grounded in nature.

Plascon's Land + Sea Colour World presents a colour palette that feels as though the hues have been lifted directly from the landscape. Rooted in the organic world of bark, moss, lichen and tidal water, it brings together shades such as African Mud (O2-E1-1), Olive (G2-E1-2), Frog Pond (Y6-D1-1), and Evening Stroll (G6-C2-1). Consider using them in a living area, a sunroom or a transitional space.

A vintage colour resurgence

Butter yellow has arrived alongside a broader revival of modernised 1970s colour sensibilities that feel warm, earthy and timeless rather than trendy. Julia (Y3-A2-2) from Plascon's Butter + Sky Colour World brings that signature softness to any room, while Blazing Sun (Y4-A1-4) offers a bolder option for those who want their walls to make a strong statement. For a grounded, nature-inspired take on the trend, consider the olive green of Wanda (Y4-C1-1) for an accent wall, or let your front door shout 'spring!' in the vibrant orange of Good Day Sunshine (O6-A1-1) from Plascon's Orchard + Blooms Colour World.

Whether you drench a room in an unexpected hue or bring the colours of the garden inside, a little paint goes a long way. Visit plascon.co.za to explore the full 2026 Colour Forecast and find the palette that makes your home feel like spring. dw

www.plascon.co.za





Coulisse takes smart shading outside after more than 30 years indoors

New Motionblinds motors for screens and awnings, paired with Serge screen fabric, bring indoor and outdoor shading together on one platform

Coulisse, the global specialist in smart shading solutions, is launching its new outdoor range, marking the company's first step beyond interior shading in more than 30 years. The launch pairs a compact range of Motionblinds outdoor motors, bringing Bluetooth setup to screens and awnings, with Serge, a new outdoor screen fabric collection. Fabricators, dealers, installers and end users can now experience the benefits of one motor platform with a single app, designed to simplify setup, control, and automation of every shade in and around the home.

Smart setup comes to outdoor shading

Motorisation is already common in the outdoor market, but setup and control have remained largely tied to radio frequency remotes. Motionblinds outdoor motorisation changes that. Every motor features built-in Bluetooth for easy smartphone setup, local control and automation with timers, as well as 433MHz radio frequency for reliable remote operation through walls and glass. Installers simply scan the motor's QR code, set the end positions in the Motionblinds app, and move on to the next job with no remote, no opening the cassette, and no need for the homeowner to be present.

With that same app, end users control their outdoor screens, awnings, awning LED lighting and every Motionblinds indoor blind. Adding the Motionblinds bridge enables control from anywhere and securely connects the entire system to smart home platforms such as Apple Home, Google Home, Alexa, SmartThings, Home Assistant and Homey via Matter, so screens can close automatically when the thermostat detects the indoor temperature rising.

Remote controls can be added optionally and easily paired via the app to operate indoor and outdoor shading together.

A compact range for screens and awnings

Six Motionblinds outdoor motors cover small and large (zip) screens and awnings. Every motor is available battery and solar powered or wired in 230V and 120V. For fabricators, the motors are designed to fit standard screen and awning hardware, with adapters available, so production does not need to change. Fabricators specify fewer motor types, while dealers and installers learn one system that works the same everywhere.

- **Battery and solar powered.** The rechargeable battery is built into the motor, inside the cassette. Solar panels charge in daylight, not only in direct sun, making battery motors suitable for every façade orientation.
- **Set up in a minute.** Scan the QR code with the Motionblinds app and the motor connects over Bluetooth. Set the end positions, swipe to any position, or set timers. No remote control is needed, and the cassette never has to be opened.
- **One app, inside and out.** Outdoor motors run on the same platform as Motionblinds indoor blinds. With the Motionblinds bridge, screens and awnings can be controlled by app from anywhere and connect to all major smart home platforms via Matter.
- **Local control, privacy first.** Motionblinds motors operate locally with no cloud dependency, providing optimal data privacy. The app and bridge are completely registration-free; no user account or password required.
- **Screens.** Obstacle detection stops the motor if something is in the way, and fabric stretch calibration keeps the fabric tight season after season.
- **Awnings.** A wired LED awning motor powers dimmable lighting in the awning directly from the motor, while solar-powered awnings can add a separate battery for wireless LED. An optional vibration sensor retracts the awning in strong wind, and empty-battery mode closes it before the battery runs out.

Motionblinds outdoor motors are the result of years of development and testing with outdoor shading specialists. The motors are IP44 rated, endurance-tested to EN 14202, certified CE, FCC, ETL and RCM, and backed by a 5-year warranty.

Quote

"Our partners who make both indoor and outdoor shading kept asking for one system. So we combined more than 30 years of Coulisse expertise with a decade of developing Motionblinds smart technology and engineered it for sun, wind and rain. These outdoor motors do almost everything from a phone: setting end positions, pairing a remote, adjusting settings. That saves the installer time on the first day, and a lot of trips after that."

– Bas Klein Tuente, Engineering Manager at Coulisse

Serge outdoor screen fabric

Alongside the motor range, Coulisse introduces Serge, the first fabric in its new outdoor collection. Made from a glass fiber and PVC twill, Serge reduces heat and glare while preserving daylight and the view outside. Glass fiber reinforcement gives it the strength and flatness that (zip) screens need in exposed outdoor settings, with stability in sun and wind and low maintenance.

- Developed for (zip) screens up to 320 cm wide
- 14 colorways in an architectural palette
- Two openness factors: 1% for maximum heat and glare reduction, 5% for more view and daylight
- Fire certified M1, B1, NFPA 701 and BS C1, for residential and contract projects

Availability

The new outdoor range is available now to fabricators and dealers, with a full trade fair introduction at R+T Stuttgart 2027. dw

www.coulisse.com
www.motionblinds.com

In Conversation with Sasha Kozinsky
Director, FINfloor SA
30 Years in Flooring


Sasha Kozinsky

Tell us about yourself and FINfloor's journey.

I started in the flooring industry after returning from the UK, where I lived for 12 years. Before leaving the UK, I replaced my unhygienic green carpets with a T&G laminate floor and was truly amazed by the transformation. When I arrived back in South Africa, I had the opportunity to purchase a flooring supply and installation franchise called Inovar Sandton, where I learned my flooring product, theory, and installation skills.

Fast forward a few years, and I had the opportunity to purchase FINfloor in 2014 with my brother and current partner, Jason Kozinsky. I have also served as the Vice-Chairman of SAWLFA for many years, actively working to grow skills within the local flooring industry.

What motivated you to build a business in flooring?

Flooring sits at the intersection of design, technology and practicality. A floor has to look beautiful, but it also has to perform. The industry never stands still - manufacturing technology, surface finishes, water resistance, sustainability and design trends continue to develop. That constant evolution has kept the industry exciting for me and creates opportunities to keep offering customers better solutions.

What sets FINfloor apart?

For me, it comes down to quality, knowledge, service, integrity, innovation and relationships. We have spent three decades developing relationships with leading international manufacturers and building ranges suited to the South African market. But a great product is only part of the equation. We invest in training, technical assistance and site support because the correct product still needs to be correctly specified and installed. When someone chooses FINfloor, we want them to know there is an established company standing behind the product.

Tell us about the FINfloor product portfolio.

One of our strengths is the breadth of our offering across laminate, engineered hardwood, SPC rigid vinyl and glue-down LVT. Our laminate ranges include Black Forest Plus, Parador Trendtime 6, Parador Herringbone and Chevron options, Authentic Herringbone, and AGT Armonia Large, Natura Line and Bella Neo. Our rigid vinyl ranges include Diamond Core SPC+ and Sapphire SPC Wide, while our glue-down LVT portfolio includes Galaxy II, Aurora II, Aurora II Herringbone and FINCrete. Our genuine timber offering is led by FINOAK engineered wood, including FINOAK Atelier, with prefinished, unfinished, herringbone and Oleum custom-finish options. The important part is not simply having many ranges; it is being able to recommend the right floor for the design, application and performance requirements of each project.



What are FINfloor's core values - and what will you never compromise on?

Quality, integrity and our reputation are non-negotiable. Price will always matter, but competing purely on price eventually means compromising somewhere. After 30 years, protecting the trust associated with the FINfloor name is far more important than making a quick sale.

How is FINfloor addressing sustainability?

Sustainability needs to go beyond a marketing statement. We work with established international manufacturers and look for recognised environmental and product certifications, including responsible forestry and stringent emissions requirements on applicable ranges. We also believe longevity is part of sustainability. A quality floor that performs for many years and does not require premature replacement is fundamentally more responsible than a disposable product.

AGT Wood addresses sustainability through a multi-layered environmental strategy that combines responsible forestry, waste reduction and strict indoor air quality standards. This includes certified forestry through FSC and PEFC certification, the use of manufacturing by-products to generate energy through its biomass power plant, and recognised environmental and emissions standards.

What trends do you see shaping flooring and interiors?

Natural-looking spaces will continue to be important. Consumers want the warmth and character of timber, with growing interest in warmer oak tones, larger plank formats, herringbone and chevron. At the same time, performance expectations are rising: water resistance, durability and low-maintenance surfaces are increasingly expected. Sustainability, transparency and digital specification tools such as product visualisation and BIM will also become more important.

Pattern flooring is another important trend, together with increasingly realistic laminate and LVT prints with less pattern repeat.

What is the biggest lesson 30 years in business has taught you?

Never become complacent. Markets change, products change, customers change and technology changes. I have also learned that people and relationships are fundamental. You can have excellent products and systems, but ultimately a business succeeds because of the people representing it and the trust they build. Protect your reputation - it takes years to build and very little time to lose.

What is your greatest accomplishment, and where do you see FINfloor going next?

Being part of FINfloor's journey and seeing it grow from one branch in KZN to having a national presence is something I'm extremely proud of. More than the scale of the business, I'm proud of the relationships we have built with customers, employees, suppliers and industry partners, as well as building the right team and teamwork that has supported our growth.



Looking ahead, we want to keep strengthening our national distribution, technical capability and relationships with architects, interior designers, developers, retailers and installers. We will continue investing in digital specification, visualisation and education while retaining the personal relationships on which the business was built.

We also see continued opportunity in serving the SADC region as FINfloor grows its reach beyond South Africa, while maintaining the honesty and integrity that have been fundamental to the business.

How do you define success?

Success is not simply turnover. A successful company should be financially sustainable, provide opportunities for its people, maintain the trust of its customers and suppliers, and keep improving. If you can build a company that people want to work for, want to work with and are comfortable recommending to others, that is meaningful success. dw

www.finfloor.co.za





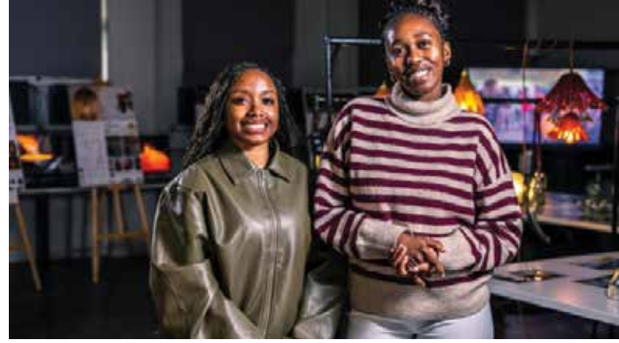
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Form, Fire and Light

Bringing cultural inspiration to life through glass.







In July 2026, Ngwenya Glass, in collaboration with the MOYA African Glass Network, hosted the Glass Safari 2026 Workshop in Eswatini. The initiative brought together international glass artists, Ngwenya glassblowers, and third- and fourth-year Tshwane University of Technology students.

As part of the workshop, Fine & Applied Arts Glass and Interior Design students from Tshwane University of Technology developed six commercially viable lighting concepts. Through collaboration, the students explored glass as a material for luminaire design, translating their ideas through hands-on experimentation and prototyping.

This interview focuses on the experience of two Interior Design students, Palesa Phake and Zaworita Sekepe, whose selected designs were Homestead Glass-Blown Pendant Light, created in collaboration with Welcome Shiba, and Symphony of Light, developed in collaboration with Tyrone Mudzanani. Their interviews reflect on the ideas, challenges, and collaborative processes involved in bringing the designs to life.

As Palesa and Zaworita's Interior Design Professional Practice lecturer, it is my privilege to interview these two Interior Design students and hear about their journey from initial conceptualisation, through iterative prototyping, to the development of their final design.

Palesa, let us begin with the story behind Homestead. What inspired the idea, and what sparked the journey to bring Homestead to life?

It all began with us drawing inspiration from the context of where Ngwenya is located and the rituals associated with royalty in that area. We quickly became fascinated with the construction of a hut, as it symbolises a home. From that point, the hut evolved into a representation of home, fire, community, and rituals. The overall concept is inspired by the shape of an emusha (traditional Swazi hut), while the lower part represents the ludziwo (vessel used for sharing during rituals and ceremonies).

As you just mentioned, your concept draws from emusha (traditional Swazi huts) and the ludziwo (vessel). Can you tell us what attracted you to these references and what they represent to you in terms of home, community, and shared cultural practices?

We were drawn to these references because my partner, Welcome Shiba, is from Eswatini and understands his homeland. He maintains a strong connection to his grandmother, who knows a great deal about the cultural practices of the area, including the building and crafting of emusha (huts) from her youth, when they lived that way. The traditional Swazi hut stood out to us as it symbolises a place of belonging, gathering, and connection. This inspired us to explore the concept of home as a physical structure and as a space where family, community, and cultural traditions come together.

The ludziwo (vessel) further reinforced this idea due to its association with sharing during rituals and ceremonies. To us, it represents togetherness and the significance of shared cultural practices. By merging the form of the hut with the ludziwo, we aimed for the pendant light to express a sense of home, community, and cultural connection, while translating these traditional references into a contemporary glass design.

I recall that there were many iterative tests done while we were at Ngwenya. What drew you to using glass straps for the design, and how did experimenting with the material influence the final form?

Initially, we considered using glass stringers because we thought it would be an easier alternative to work with. However, during the prototyping phase, it became clear that using a mould would be more practical. Unfortunately, due to the size of the top piece, there was no existing mould large enough to assist us, which led us to use glass lip straps instead.





Experimenting with glass on glass was incredibly interesting to witness, and the focus demonstrated by the artists was impressive. We created two prototypes of the top piece, and while the glass lip straps made sense, we found it challenging to make them as thin as our original vision due to the type of glass we were using. On the other hand, the glass lip straps worked exceptionally well on the bottom piece, as they were easy to manipulate and swirl around.

You worked closely with Welcome Shiba during the development of the pendant. Please tell us more about the interior design and glass collaboration?

Collaborating with Welcome Shiba has been a great experience from the very start of our project. The conceptual phase was enjoyable as we exchanged insights and learned immensely from each other's research. During the prototyping phase, we grounded ourselves in reality, realising that imperfections are part of the process. This journey has deepened my understanding of collaboration, and I am truly thankful for having a partner who guided me in exploring the intricacies of glass as a material.

Did the physical prototypes change your thinking around aspects such as scale, weight, balance, and light diffusion?

Yes, definitely. We began to understand what it means to prototype. Initially, we thought we would get our light design right on the first try. However, we soon realised that we needed to adjust the size of our top component because it was too wide, which made the overall design unbalanced. We also discovered that the weight of the recycled glass significantly influenced the sizing and scaling of our light fixture. As a result, our physical prototypes changed our perspective on many aspects of the design process, and we did not expect to go through multiple iterations of the product itself.

Ngwenya Glass has a strong focus on sustainability and the use of recycled glass. How did that influence your design decisions?

Sustainability formed part of our design process. To us, sustainability meant far more than only using recycled glass. The material pushed us to rethink our original ideas, work within its limits, and create a pendant that gives recycled glass a new purpose while expressing our ideas of home, community, and cultural connection.

Since we were working with recycled glass, we needed to consider its properties and limitations instead of forcing it to fit our initial ideas. While prototyping, we learned how the weight, thickness, and behaviour of recycled glass affected the size, balance, and structure of the pendant.

Zaworita, adding to what Palesa said, what is your view on sustainability as it pertains to this brief?

Sustainability is one of the aspects that inspired us the most, particularly because it is a driving core for Ngwenya Glass. We applaud Ngwenya's use of recycled glass and their use of cooking oil for the furnace.

Moving to your design, what was it about the calabash that made you want to use it as the starting point for Symphony of Light?

The pendant draws its inspiration from the organic form of the calabash. It transforms the idea of a vessel that carries nourishment to one that sustains life and light. This celebrates the cultural heritage of Africa through the expressive qualities of glass. It was these attributes that contributed to the development of Symphony of Light. Light brings hope and sustains life, whether it is light from the sun, fire, or a pendant light. Incorporating these aspects made it clear how important light is. Light from the sun, fire, or a pendant light reflected the communal significance of the calabash itself, where individual experiences come together around a shared source.

Finally, what did the Glass Safari Workshop teach you about the relationship between designing and making?

Design is something so imaginative. At the start of any project, most of the time, as students, we do not really get to interact with the spaces we are designing for. We just tell ourselves a story. We envision the places, and in this instance, the places we wanted these lights to go into. Seeing the designs come to life was such an eye-opening experience. We got to understand that prototyping is an art, a repetitive art where one explores different options. This iterative process involves going back and forth, exploring different ways to make the same thing, addressing design changes, and doing things that were never planned.

The Glass Safari Workshop taught that the correlation between designing and making is always a constant cycle of improving, adapting, and learning how to do things better. Each iteration informed the next, allowing the design to evolve through the making process.

Thank you, Palesa and Zaworita, for enlightening us with your experience. Reflecting, it was refreshing to see you move beyond the idea and work through the challenges of making. A special thank you to Ngwenya Glass, the MOYA African Glass Network, Tshwane University of Technology, and the participating glassmakers and students. Through your collaboration, the Glass Safari created a platform for knowledge exchange and creative development. I applaud the continued advancement of Southern African design and meaningful international cultural, educational, and professional exchange and collaboration.

dw

www.iidprofessions.org.za









KSA update, October 2026.

Cape Town was abuzz on the 7th October as the KSA took over the Building Centre at Northgate Estate for our 2026 Cape Town Industry Showcase. The KSA showcase events give valuable opportunities for various players in the built environment to network, learn about new products and attend CPD talks. Once again we had the valuable support of the IID who assisted us with the CPD side of the event.

We were blessed with beautiful weather, perfect for a day of outdoor engagements, food trucks and education. We had fourteen KSA supplier companies showcasing themselves and their products at the event: Grass, National Edging, PG Bison, Blum, Sonae Arauco, Hafele, Interslab, Upper Edge Products, Roco Fittings, Rubio Monocoat, Davidsons Boards, Kayline, Max on Top, and Vogue Doors.

Two CPD talks were held during the course of the event. The first focused on the specifications chain. Stephanie Forbes, National Manager of the KSA explained that as a consumer organisation the KSA had seen a growth in disputes linked to poor communication, specification issues and lack of understanding about materials and manufacturing processed between industry professionals and the cabinetry industry. The panel for the talk was made up of Maria Day from the IID, David Coupar from Max on Top, Jodie White from Interior Fusion, Stephanie Forbes from the KSA and Geoffrey Bennet from Collaboration. The panel unpacked some of the assumptions that often lead to conflict on site and how we can, as the build environment community, work to address these by improving communication, early engagement, respect for sector speciality knowledge, support of your designers, better product knowledge and relationships with suppliers and a proper understanding of a manufacturers standard processed and timelines.

Instead of a mid-day CPD talk we switched things up and had our first Interactive Education session. This saw five suppliers each get a fifteen minute slot to do something interactive with the audience to engage them with their product and teach them something new. Fun was had all around as guests got to burn product, tear and scratch it up, inspect it and create a lighting chain with it. Quiz sessions with prizes were help and the overall atmosphere was fun and relaxed.

We ended the day with our final CPD talk which was entitled Designing with Stone. The panel consisted of Shaw Pretorius from Granite Projects, Ryna Robertson from Afristone, Kyle Jones from Interslab and Stephanie Forbes from KSA. Stephanie explained the premise behind the talk – the issues the KSA is seeing that arises from a lock of knowledge by designers and specifiers about stone, its tolerances and applications. The panel unpacked the key stone materials being used in the industry at present and then ran through the key properties and tolerances that designers need to be aware of when it comes to natural stone, quartz or engineered stone, and porcelain or sintered surfacing. They then looked at key skills designers need to design respecting acceptable tolerances of materials and important fabrication considerations that need to be observed.

The showcase was a fantastic way to end our 2026 engagements in the Western Cape for the year. We now focus on our last event for the year – our industry gala dinner in KZN taking place at the end of October. dw

www.ksa.co.za

















Mamuli Restaurant Design

Krasnodar, Russia

SOIA Design unveils Mamuli, a restaurant in Krasnodar that redefines cultural storytelling through interior design. Drawing inspiration from Georgia's rich traditions while embracing cutting-edge aesthetics, the project transcends the boundaries of hospitality design. The result is a layered, immersive environment where heritage and modernity coexist in perfect harmony.

A Client's Vision, A Designer's Challenge

The clients approached SOIA Design with a bold request: to create a restaurant that honours Georgian culture yet avoids the clichés often seen in themed interiors. They wanted a space that would captivate a contemporary audience, stand apart from competitors, and elevate the dining experience into something memorable. Functionality was equally important - the venue needed to accommodate intimate dinners, lively cultural events, and family gatherings with flexibility, all without compromising its unique character.

This challenge resonated with SOIA Design's philosophy. For Anton and Ekaterina Baklan, founders of the studio, the project became an opportunity to craft a narrative where traditional motifs are not replicated but reimagined, giving







the space both emotional resonance and modern appeal.

Weaving Heritage Into Modern Design

At Mamuli, every design decision reflects a dialogue between past and present. Warm tones dominate the material palette, creating an atmosphere of hospitality that is both comforting and sophisticated. Walls finished with subtle gold plaster bring a soft glow, suggesting luxury without ostentation.

Custom-designed beehive-shaped chandeliers, inspired by Georgian architecture, hover above the dining hall as sculptural centrepieces. In contrast, the black peppercorn-shaped balusters pay homage to the country's deep-rooted love for spices, adding an unexpected tactile detail. Together, these elements express cultural identity through symbolic artistry.



The furniture and millwork are equally bespoke. From zigzag-patterned wooden column cladding to tables carved from tree trunk slices, every piece is designed to highlight craftsmanship and material authenticity. A fireplace built directly into a dining table creates a surprising focal point, merging intimacy with spectacle. The bar counter and shelving were tailor-made to frame the restaurant's vibrant social life, while one-of-a-kind chandeliers function as luminous works of art.

A Multifunctional Experience

The spatial planning balances aesthetic ambition with pragmatic flexibility. Varied seating arrangements allow for both private dining and communal gatherings, while a dedicated tasting room immerses guests in the nuances of Georgian wine and cuisine. A stage anchors the cultural program, transforming the restaurant into a venue for live performances, tastings, and celebrations. Families are also embraced in the design, with a children's playroom seamlessly integrated into the plan.







Even the restrooms continue the storytelling, designed with the same rigour and authenticity as the main dining areas. Every corner of Mamuli reinforces the brand's identity, ensuring a cohesive, immersive experience for visitors.

Beyond a Restaurant

For SOIA Design, Mamuli is more than a dining destination - it is an architectural and cultural statement. By weaving traditional references into a contemporary framework, the studio created a space that embodies Georgian warmth while appealing to a cosmopolitan audience.

The result is a restaurant that doesn't simply serve food but stages an atmosphere: one that celebrates heritage, embraces innovation, and leaves a lasting impression on every guest who steps inside.

Technical sheet

- **Name of project:** Mamuli
- **Opening date or renovation completion date:** 2024
- **Unit size (square footage) and number of seats:** 9,200ft² restaurant, 4,600ft² kitchen, 265 seats (855 m²)
- **Photo:** Misha Chekalov

www.soiadesign.com









Kitchens & Breakfast Nooks

Material Spotlight

by Stienie Greyling

Kitchen trends in 2026 focus on warm minimalism, replacing cold sterile whites and greys with tactile natural woods, earth neutrals (like clay, mushroom and sage), soft curved islands and hidden disappearing appliances that make the kitchen feel like a seamless extension of the living space.

A kitchen is a central room used for storing, prepping and cooking food, as well as dining and gathering. A functional space relies on a smart layout, dedicated work zones and practical materials to make daily tasks safe and easy.

Kitchens are also now a central hub of household activities. Kitchens can now be the warm heart of a family get-together, a place to entertain friends and loved ones, or somewhere for quiet contemplation.

As kitchens evolve into more comfortable personalised spaces, small luxuries such as bespoke home bars and dedicated breakfast stations are becoming popular features that truly elevate everyday living. From mirrored cocktail cabinets to discreet coffee stations, these effortlessly functional yet gorgeously indulgent touches to the home are a way of bringing everyone together, encouraging meaningful conversation and connection over a glass of wine or a delightfully crafted cocktail.







Fluted Glass





While serving different purposes, both features prioritise organisation and design-led functionality. Home bars are designed for storing glassware and drinks, creating an inviting setting for entertaining, while breakfast stations provide a convenient, well-organised space for coffee, cereals and everyday essentials. Together, they enhance the rhythm of daily life, transitioning seamlessly from relaxed mornings to social evenings.

Europe does not have one kitchen style. It has many, each shaped by a different climate, culture and relationship with food and home life.

A Danish kitchen design finds warmth in simplicity. An Italian kitchen is bold, sculptured and built to impress. A French kitchen is layered with character and patina. A German is kitchen is engineered to perform.

Each approach is distinct, but they share a common thread: the belief that a kitchen deserves to be designed with intention. This guide breaks down the defining characteristics of each European kitchen idea.

Kitchen cabinets do more than provide storage, they shape the entire look and feel of the space. Since cabinet fronts take up so much visual space in a kitchen, the style you choose can make the room feel cohesive, modern, warm or timeless. Get it right, and the whole kitchen comes together effortlessly.

Large kitchen backsplashes ideas have dominated trends recently, especially with heavy grout lines for a more authentic look. It still works beautifully in the right kitchen, but if its overuse in properties that don't suit the style, it has made the trend feel less inspiring.

So far, 2026 is proving to be the year of disconnection – not from people, but from technology. And kitchen trends have seen the strongest shift, with homeowners gravitating away from high-tech features towards a more analogue way of living. From appliances linked to phones to having a television in your cooking space, these once-coveted features are now being left off the wish list entirely.

Smart features seem to be everywhere these days and kitchen appliance makers are certainly heading this trend. Everything from smart fridges (that create your grocery list for you) to icemakers to ovens to dishwashers is being marketed to home owners as another way to make life easier and faster.

At the start of the year, oversized kitchen islands were having a moment, but unless the scale of the kitchen calls for a larger centrepiece to balance proportions, it's a trend that feels forced and can often impede the flow and function of the kitchen layout.

Kitchens have been moving toward larger and larger islands, often becoming sculptural centrepieces with dramatic stone applications and exaggerated proportion. While they can be beautiful, many have started to feel more performative than practical.

Open shelving continues to define kitchen design in 2026, encouraging home owners to display everyday items as part of the décor, instead of packing household belongings out of sight, open shelving invites them into the spotlight, turning everyday items into thoughtful expressions of personality.

This year soft, natural lighting is set to become a staple in kitchens, with LED lights being integrated inside pantry cupboards, shelving, cabinet, boot rooms, bar units and under breakfast bars. Soft, warm lighting enhances texture and depth while crating a calm, atmospheric environment. Smart lighting solutions and flexibility, allowing kitchens to transition seamlessly from functional workspaces to relaxed social settings.

Fluted glass remains a timeless feature in kitchen design, offering texture, light diffusion and subtle elegance. It enhances visual interest while maintaining a refined, understated aesthetic.

As well as offering spaces a gentle allure, fluted glass works beautifully with open shelving, allowing personal objects to be displayed in a thoughtful, elevated way. It celebrates craftmanship and brings character into the kitchen with a delicate, refined touch for a space that perfectly blends timelessness with modern sophistication. dw



SEASIDE BREEZE

Florida kitchen balancing contemporary design and coastal spirit

Nestled in the refined yet relaxed atmosphere of Seaside, along Florida's picturesque coastline, Officine Gullo interprets with natural elegance a kitchen that perfectly balances contemporary design and coastal spirit. The extraordinary natural light that defines the area pours through expansive windows, enhancing the architectural volumes of the space, characterised by soaring ceilings with exposed wooden beams, and creating an airy, sophisticated, and deeply welcoming atmosphere. The kitchen stands out for its "Lily White" finish with satin chrome details, an elegant palette that recalls the soft tones of the coast and blends harmoniously with the residence's natural materials. The project unfolds around an open and fluid layout, conceived to combine conviviality, functionality, and strong visual impact. At the centre of the space is a large marble-top island designed as both an operational hub and a gathering area. The washing zone is completed by a single-control mixer tap with an arched spout and "Lobo" knob handles crafted from solid chromed



















brass. On the main side of the kitchen is the "Fiorentina" cooking suite, equipped with a cooktop featuring 6 burners with adjustable dual controls up to 4.5 kW, a professional stainless-steel fry-top, and two multifunction ovens. Adjacent to the cooking area is a three-door refrigerator-freezer, while the integrated base units house a practical undercounter oven, a built-in microwave drawer, and a 60 cm undercounter wine cellar.

Along the opposite side of the kitchen, lower cabinets with backlit glass doors introduce an elegant display element, showcasing decorative objects and glassware through a soft ambient glow. The illuminated upper display cabinets further define the space's scenic character, creating sophisticated focal points beside the cooking area while visually lightening the composition through the transparency of the glass surfaces.

Metallic finishes, artisanal detailing, and the balance between warm materials and luminous surfaces contribute to an atmosphere that is both sophisticated and welcoming, perfectly in tune with the elegant and relaxed lifestyle of Seaside. dw

www.officinegullo.com













An Ego kitchen in the heart of the Dolomites

Stainless steel and wood come together in a bespoke composition, crafted in perfect harmony with the Alpine atmosphere of the home

In San Candido, in South Tyrol, the kitchen blends into the architecture of a private home thanks to an entirely custom design, which pairs the precision of stainless steel with the warmth of wood. The star of the show is Ego by Abimis, chosen by architect Pavlína Sasínková to develop a composition devised in relation to the space and the requirements of day-to-day life.



The kitchen stretches along a wall-mounted composition and a large central island, establishing a well-balanced dialogue between the stainless steel of Ego and wood, which echoes the character of the home without attempting to camouflage it. Along the back wall, the doors and storage compartments alternate with the stainless steel worktop, which runs along the front beneath the windows and incorporates the washing area, creating a generous and continuous work surface. In the preparation area, the stainless steel worktop develops in the shape of an "L", following the geometry of the space and shaped specifically around the sturdy exposed beams, structural elements that contribute to creating a direct relationship between the kitchen and the architecture of the home.

At the centre, the island made entirely of AISI 304 stainless steel is the focal point of the composition and brings together the main operational functions: the hob, which occupies the short side, the integrated appliances, a generously sized worktop and the sink with professional-grade taps. On the side facing the living room, the snack top complete with stools suggests a sociable dimension. Above the island, a stainless steel cover integrates the hood and extends as a suspended element, completed by the utensil rail.

The result is an elegant, understated and welcoming setting, where a rigorous and contemporary solution blends in naturally with the Alpine surroundings, which are traditionally associated with natural materials and finishes.

The collaboration with Abimis stems from the expertise the architect gained on a previous project, during which she had the opportunity to visit the company and appreciate the quality of its craftsmanship, the attention to detail and the possibility of developing unique and entirely bespoke solutions. When it came to designing the kitchen for this private residence in San Candido, the choice of Ego therefore came naturally. The ability to define dimensions, materials and configuration according to the space made it possible to create a kitchen designed specifically for this home, without compromising on creative freedom.

"Stainless steel immediately proved to be an extraordinary alternative to the more traditional solutions of the Alpine context, where stone and wood predominate. In the design for the property, the request for a contemporary kitchen made the choice a natural one: Abimis made it possible to create a bespoke element, distinguished by craftsmanship precision and a sleek yet sophisticated aesthetic, capable of integrating seamlessly into the architecture of the space."

Pavlína Sasínková.

- **Kitchen line:** Ego
- Material and finish: AISI 304 stainless steel
- **Location:** San Candido, Italy, private home
- **Photo credits:** Colin Dutton dw

www.abimis.com





Diamond Core SPC Plus – Onyx



Aurora II Herringbone Celeste LVT

The Foundation of Beautiful Kitchen Design

Discover the possibilities with FINfloor

The kitchen has evolved into much more than a place to prepare meals. It is the heart of the home, where families gather, conversations flow and everyday living takes place. As kitchen design embraces open-plan spaces, natural textures and seamless finishes, flooring plays an important role in bringing the entire space together.

At FINfloor, we believe beautiful interiors start from the ground up. Our extensive collection of laminate, luxury vinyl tile (LVT), SPC and engineered hardwood flooring offers solutions that combine contemporary design with practical performance.

Designed for Everyday Living

Kitchen flooring needs to work as hard as the space itself. From busy mornings and family gatherings to everyday spills, choosing the right floor means balancing aesthetics, durability and ease of maintenance.

FINfloor's Diamond Core SPC+ and Sapphire SPC Wide collections offer durable, water-resistant rigid-core flooring with realistic wood-look finishes. Diamond Core SPC+ features a 0.5 mm wear layer, providing added durability for busy households, while its integrated underlay contributes to comfort underfoot.

For those who prefer glue-down vinyl, Galaxy II LVT offers natural timber-inspired designs with a durable 0.5 mm wear layer and Class 33 commercial wear classification. The Aurora II collection, including its elegant Herringbone range, offers water-resistant, easy-to-maintain flooring with a 0.3 mm wear layer. Its classic herringbone pattern adds character and visual interest to contemporary and traditional kitchens alike.

Natural Beauty, Practical Performance

Warm wood tones, subtle textures and organic finishes continue to influence kitchen design, creating welcoming interiors that feel both sophisticated and timeless.

FINfloor's laminate collections bring the character of natural timber into everyday spaces, with selected ranges offering enhanced moisture protection.

Black Forest Plus features AC5 durability and 72-hour water resistance, while Parador Trendtime 6 combines AC5 performance with 48-hour Aqua-Proof protection.

Whether paired with sleek cabinetry, stone countertops or statement kitchen islands, the right flooring can complement the overall design while creating a seamless transition between kitchen, dining and living areas.

Where Design Meets Practicality

Every kitchen is different, and selecting the right flooring depends on how the space will be used. FINfloor offers a wide variety of colours, plank formats, textures and finishes to suit different design preferences and performance requirements.

With technical expertise, product guidance and a nationwide distribution network, FINfloor helps homeowners, designers and flooring professionals find the right solution for their projects.

FINfloor – A World of Possibilities Underfoot. dw

www.finfloor.co.za



Black Forest Plus Laminate floor – Wych Elm



Parador Laminate Floor – Oak Castell Limed



Kitchen & Bathroom Countertops

COUNTERTOPS

Kitchen Countertops

by Stienie Greyling

Kitchen countertop trends 2026 focus on warm neutrals, tactile matte finishes and organic stone, a movement that replaces sterile, cool-toned minimalism.

Countertops are the star of the kitchen, setting the tone for the design with their veining, palette and texture. However, while many styles like marble and soapstone are timeless, others can become dated – especially if they rely on a particular trend or are impractical.

Waterfall islands became coveted features in homes during the early and mid-2000s, thanks to their seamless look. While they haven't completely gone out of vogue, there is more of an emphasis on practical features.

Slimmer edge profiles and mitred details are also being favoured on islands.

A waterfall edge can still be stunning, but today's most sophisticated kitchens rely on proportion and restraint rather than dramatic gestures.





More and more homeowners are turning to quartz for surfaces that look curated and perform reliably day after day. Its blend of expressive veining and dependable quality makes it a natural choice for kitchens and bathrooms. Quartz countertops continue to evolve with new interpretations of veining, depth, and tone that complement everything from streamlined modern layouts to more layered, traditional interiors.

Quartz countertops have dominated the kitchen and bathroom market for the past decade, and for a good reason. They are durable, low-maintenance, and available in hundreds of colours and patterns. But not all quartz is created equal. The brand one chooses affects the quality of the slab, the warranty coverage, the colour options available and the price.

While neutral still dominate the quartz countertop colour story, the tone is moving from cooler greys and stark whites to warmer colours. This move toward warmer, natural tones isn't unique to countertops. We have seen this shift over the past few years throughout the home. With countertops we have seen a larger appetite for colours like butterscotch, caramel and cream. Some homeowners even go for bolder veining in their quartz counters, like cognac and coffee.

Granite countertops are a classic choice for homeowners and designers wanting to balance beauty, durability and a timeless look. While countertop trends come and go, granite remains a staple of modern design, offering fresh looks that feel both current and classic all at once.

Granite countertops remain a durable and stylish choice in 2026, provided one selects modern colours and finishes rather than outdated early-2000s styles. White is the most popular granite countertop colour because it brightens rooms and matches many design styles.





Sustainability Influences Design Decisions.

Today's homeowners are increasingly conscious of the materials they bring into their homes.

Because granite is a natural stone with nearly unparalleled longevity, many view it as a sustainable investment compared to surfaces that may require replacement more frequently.

Granite's sustainability benefits include:

- Long lifespan.
- Minimal replacement needs.
- Timeless design appeal.
- Natural composition.

Choosing durable materials that last is becoming a key priority for homeowners planning long-term renovations.

Laminate countertops this year, bridge the gap between high-end aesthetics and budget-friendly renovation through advanced texturing, matte finishes and realistic stone lookalikes.

White and off-white marble-look laminate options, such as Wilsonart, White Carrara and Calcutta or CALACATTA marble designs are currently the most popular laminate countertop.

When installing wood-style kitchen laminate countertops, one gets the warmth of wood with the convenience, ease and hygienic nature of laminate surfacing.

As stone-look laminate countertops have skyrocketed in popularity, wood styles lag beyond. However, wood-grain options still occupy a modest footprint in the collections of major laminate manufacturers.

Traditionally, laminate countertops are attached beneath the sink because the weight of the sink needs to be supported by the countertop. However, with new high-pressure laminates and waterproof, rolled edges, under-mount sinks can now be successfully and safely bonded to the bottom of these countertops. Just make sure to use an approved sink.





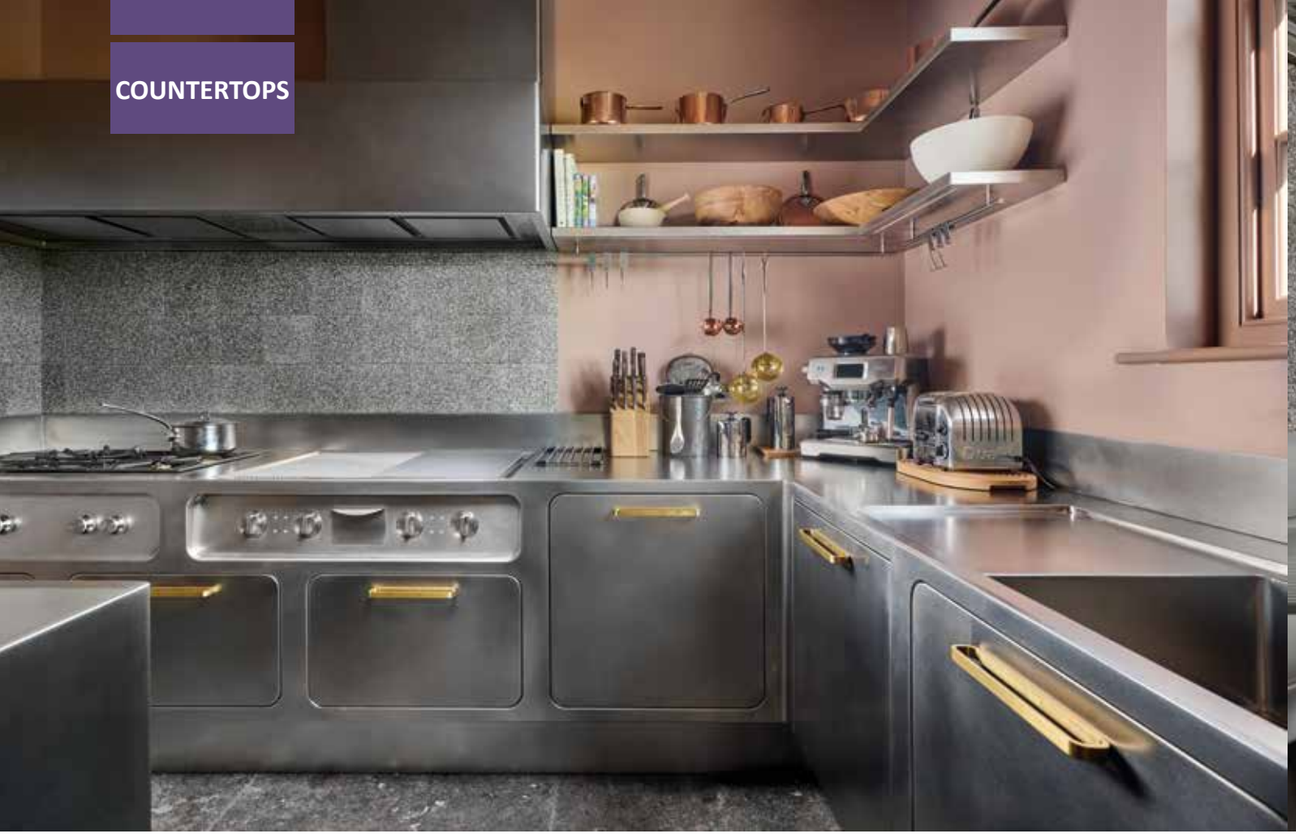














Abimis reinterprets the charm of a London cottage

With Ego, a refined stylistic balance takes shape between the charm of English architecture, the textured appeal of stainless steel and the rigour of a professionally-derived kitchen.

There are projects in which the kitchen surpasses its original function to become the heart of the domestic space, around which the experience of living is built. This is the case of this London residence, created within a former building once used as stables.

In this context, the Ego kitchen becomes the meeting point between two sensitivities: the Italian one of Abimis, which is rooted in the experience of professional kitchens, and the English one of architect Fiona Lawrenson - who curated the project - attentive to enhancing the authentic character of the existing architecture. The result is a bespoke creation, in which proportions, details and finishes construct a measured dialogue between tradition and contemporaneity. AISI 304 stainless steel becomes the distinctive feature of the project, in harmonious contrast with the warm tones of natural plaster, stone and wood. The continuous surfaces and sleek volumes lend the room a discreet elegance, where the rigour of the professionally-derived kitchen meets the comfort and atmosphere of the home. The orbitally polished by hand finish of the stainless steel delivers a surprising textured appeal: soft to the eye and almost silky to the touch, it captures and reflects the natural light of the setting. The brass handles add further chromatic accents, rendering the whole balanced and sophisticated.

"In this setting, it was fundamental to preserve the authentic character of the cottage, whilst at the same time introducing a contemporary language and performance levels to professional standards" says Fiona Lawrenson. "I chose Ego by Abimis because it succeeds in combining aesthetic rigour, construction quality and great functionality. The possibility of customising every detail allowed us to design a kitchen perfectly calibrated to the requirements of the property: a sleek, elegant space that is intuitive to use every day, yet also capable of welcoming a professional chef and supporting the preparation of a dinner for many people. It is precisely this ability to unite design, technical precision and planning flexibility that makes Abimis a reliable choice."





COUNTERTOPS

Ego is a completely bespoke solution, conceived to accompany everyday life and, when required, capable of offering professional performance levels such as to allow a chef the best possible preparation.

The available space, deliberately compact, required a careful study of the layout. Every element was conceived to optimise activities and functions, whilst maintaining a tidy appearance. The peninsula configuration extends the operational surface and integrates the household appliances, creating a spontaneous connection with the dining room, so as to make service more straightforward during sociable occasions.

The organisation of the elements follows a precise logic: one wall is dedicated to preparation and cooking, the other to washing, while the central module houses a generously sized worktop and the ovens. The large professional hood completes a 'system' designed to ensure superior performance without compromising domestic comfort.

Customisation extends to every detail. A large-capacity oven, a teppanyaki grill, instant hot water taps and fixtures typical of professional kitchens coexist within a rigorous aesthetic, in which every function finds its place without altering the formal clarity of the whole.

This ability to combine technical precision with ease of use represents one of the distinguishing aspects of Abimis. The experience gained in the world of professional catering translates, in fact, into a thorough understanding of the dynamics of cooking and into a standard of construction that eliminates critical points, facilitating cleaning, hygiene and durability over time.

Photo credits: Colin Dutton

www.abimis.com/en











Victorian Bathrooms showcases a mid-century masterpiece by Vaniti House and Moment Architecture & Interiors.

A Layering of Colour, Texture and Subtle Nostalgia.







A Layering of Colour, Texture and Subtle Nostalgia.

Interior designers Leigh-Anne of Vaniti House and Kristin of Moment Architecture & Interiors collaborated with their client and Victorian Bathrooms to create a vibrant home defined by sculptural forms, considered materials and subtle mid-century influences.

Marble, warm metallic accents and layered finishes carry through adjoining rooms, creating continuity throughout this art-filled home. Sculptural statement lighting anchors each space, while Victorian Bathrooms' fittings and sanitaryware are integrated with precision, allowing each element to feel embedded rather than applied.

The interiors embrace an expressive palette of softly honed marble, reflective finishes, creams, salmon hues, taupe and deeper greens. Each selection balances texture and colour with a subtle sense of nostalgia. In the master bathroom, marble slabs inlaid with green glass mosaics form a softly curved statement border, echoed by the sculptural Oslo bath. The Britannia bath mixer introduces a refined classical counterpoint, while curved vanity edges and botanical motifs soften the solidity of the stone.

Bespoke joinery and carefully selected marble define the vanity areas, while polished nickel Britannia Collection tapware unifies basins, baths and showers with its classic profile. Framed mirrors and concealed lighting create a soft, atmospheric glow.

The shower areas each have a distinct identity, from layered blue tiles shifting between pale aqua and deeper tones to fluid pink and pistachio marble, grounded by green mosaic inlays. Reeded glass and warm metallic fittings complete the composition.

In the cloakrooms, deep green botanical wallpaper, detailed marble fascias, mid-century timber cabinetry and brass-toned fittings create an intimate, atmosphere.

The result is a considered collaboration where Victorian Bathrooms' fine bathroomware complements the classic architecture, combining proportion, material and detail in interiors of enduring character and timeless elegance. dw

www.victorianbathrooms.co.za

Furniture & Furniture Trends

by Stienie Greyling









Current furniture design trends favour comfort – first modular pieces, curved organic silhouettes and rich warm earth tones over stark minimalism.

Key Furniture Trends.

- **Sculptural Curves:** Sharp corners are out replaced by soft, rounded edges, arched headboards, and cloud-like sofa profile.
- **Comfort – First and Modular:** Sink-in, oversized modular sectionals and power-motion recliners with integrated tech and storage are dominating living.
- **Warm Earth Tones:** Cool greys are taking a backseat to chocolate browns, deep olive, warm ochre, and universal khaki.
- **Mixed Texture and Details:** Textured weaves, full-grain leather, bouclé statement pieces and subtle decorative fringes or trims are adding tactile depth.
- **Natural Materials:** Light-to-mid tone solid woods (like ash and oak) paired with stone, glass and woven natural fibres remain top choices for longevity and warmth.

Comfort as a design priority.

Among the most defining interior design trends of 2026 is the growing demand for furniture that genuinely prioritises comfort. This is not just physical comfort, although ergonomics remain essential. It is also emotional comfort: the feeling that a room welcome, supports and calms its occupants.

The trend is driven by broader behavioural shifts. As people spend more time at home, host in more intimate ways and seek refuge from overstimulated daily lives, furniture is expected to offer a stronger sense of well-being. Designers are creating deeper, more enveloping sofas. Dining chairs are being designed for longer, more relaxed moments around the table. Armchairs and ottomans are being shaped to encourage pause, conversation and rest.

Curves, continuity and visual calm.

Soft sculptural forms continue to gain relevance in the furniture trends for this year, but their appeal goes beyond a passing preference for curves. In a world defined by hard edges, digital saturation and constant motion, rounded silhouettes and organic volumes bring a welcome sense of calm. The creature visual softness and help interiors feel more humane.

This trend is especially visible in seating, tables and accessory pieces that use continuous lines to create a more fluid spatial language. Curved furniture can make a room feel more open and approachable while also adding architectural interest. In hospitality settings, these forms often enhance the sense of privacy and intimacy. In residential projects, they create a more relaxed domestic atmosphere.

The appeal of soft sculptural furniture lies in its dual nature: it feels contemporary, yet timeless. It can be bold without becoming aggressive, refined without becoming cold.







Flexibility for changing lifestyles.

Modular furniture design will remain central in 2026 because contemporary life rarely fits into fixed patterns. Homes are working as offices, lounges, guest spaces and social hubs. Hospitality environments are also becoming more fluid, with layouts that need to adapt to changing occupancy, activities and expectations.

This is why adaptable furniture is becoming a critical part of the design conversation. Modular sofas, reconfigurable seating, multifunctional tables and versatile ottomans all answer to a growing need for flexibility. They allow interiors to evolve without requiring a complete redesign.

The appeal of modular furniture is not simply practical. It also reflects a more responsive and intelligent approach to space. Designers are now expected to create environments that feel considered in use, not just in image.

In hospitality projects, modularity offers operational advantage as well. Furniture that can be rearranged or repurposed help spaces remain efficient while preserving atmosphere. In residential projects, it gives clients the freedom to adjust a room as their needs change.

Adaptability is no longer a niche request. It is one of the clearest indicators of future-facing design.

Warm Minimalism.

Minimalism is not disappearing, but is evolving. This year, warm minimalism is becoming one of the most important interior design trends because it offers a softer, more liveable interpretation of restraint. Rather than stark surfaces and visual emptiness, warm minimalism emphasises natural materials, tactile finishes and tonal subtlety.

This direction speaks to a broader desire for interiors that feel calm without feeling sterile. Wood, fabric, leather and stone-like finishes are being used to introduce depth and warmth. Forms remain clean, but not severe. The result is a more generous and approachable version of minimalism, one that accommodates everyday living.

Warm minimalism is especially relevant in residential furniture design, where clients increasingly want spaces that feel peaceful and emotionally grounded. It is equally effective in hospitality interiors, where a sense of calm and sophistication can be created through reduced visual noise and thoughtful material combinations. dw



Frigerio - Novelties 2026

Metamorphosis Collection



Savoir-faire and imagination, tradition and modernity, heritage and experimentation: Frigerio rediscovers the charm of memory and introduces new projects moving with ease between different worlds and historical periods, in a harmonious balance between rationality and decoration.

In recent years, after having launched the new Felix sofa by Calvi Brambilla, Phil sofa by R&D Frigerio and Dao Soft sofa by Gordon Guillaumier, the latter further expanded, the company is now focusing its attention on creating furniture elements such as armchairs, pouffes, dormeuses, chaise longues, lounge chairs, coffee tables, tables and chairs, designed to complete and enhance its proposal for the living and dining areas.

In Casa Frigerio 2026, the language of objects becomes an expression of encounters and continuity, but also of poetic metamorphoses and change: a domestic stage suspended between past and future, where timeless sculptural furnishings, rooted in the collective imagination, open up to unexpected interpretations and contemporary perspectives.

Linda small armchair, R&D Frigerio 2026

The Frigerio living area is enriched by Linda, a lounge chair in curved wood featuring a lively formal expression and refined spatial complexity. Made of two wooden "sheets" in ashwood or glossy lacqured finish, with steel details as feet and a pendant with a Frigerio logo, Linda appears almost sculpted: a harmonious assembly of continuous surfaces, whose organic contours shape the backrest and seat, which extends naturally to provide a comfortable footrest. It is available in glossy lacquered colours or in ashwood colours of the collection, to which a burgundy and green colour are added, Linda completes the living space with its soft, enveloping silhouette and bold character. Featuring a padded seat with polyurethane straps, covered in fabric or leather, and available also in the version with armrests, Linda unfolds like a flower: light in appearance yet solid in structure.

Technical Description.

- **Dimensions:** Armchair W. 80 cm x D. 93 x H. 71 cm. Armchair with armrests W. 98 cm x D. 93 x H. 71 cm.



- **Structure available in the following versions:** Curved wood veneered ashwood Wengé, Tobacco or Greige colour. Curved plywood glossy lacquered colour Burgundy, Lino, Curry, Corallo, Oliva, Oceano, Salvia, Cipria, Tortora and Nero.
- **On demand, available in:** veneered ashwood Liquorice colour veneered ashwood Sand colour, veneered ashwood Bordeaux colour, veneered ashwood Forest Green colour.
- **Base:** metal grey colour.
- **Cushion:** non-deformable polyurethane foam covered with synthetic fibre thermo-bonded with velveteen.
- **Cover:** removable in fabric, fixed in leather.
- **email:** barbara.barbato@r-w.it dw

www.frigerio.com/en















Love Collection

Istanbul, Türkiye

Istanbul-based designer Sami Savatlı introduces LOVE, a two-piece collectible design collection comprising the LOVE Chair and the LOVE Side Table, presented by ARKOBJECT in Istanbul.

Conceived at the intersection of design and sculpture, the collection explores how functional objects can move beyond utility and take on the presence and autonomy of sculptural works.

Developed through fluid, continuous forms, both pieces reinterpret familiar furniture typologies through a structural language in which lines extend, branch, and reconnect. The resulting forms retain their function while establishing a distinct spatial identity.

Cast in aluminium and individually finished by hand, the pieces retain subtle variations in surface and texture as part of their material character. Rather than concealing the traces of making, these variations are preserved, giving each piece a degree of individuality.

In the LOVE Chair, the outline of a heart emerges from the structure itself rather than being applied as a decorative motif. The asymmetric backrest moves



Sami Savatlı, designer

between line and volume, allowing the familiar symbol to become part of the object's structure and silhouette.

The LOVE Side Table translates the same formal language to a different scale, creating a clear relationship between the two pieces through movement, material and form.

Positioned between collectable design and sculpture, LOVE retains the function of furniture while establishing an autonomous presence within space. The collection is conceived to engage not only the body that encounters it, but also the architecture and atmosphere around it.

Technical sheet

- **Collection:** LOVE
- **Year:** 2026
- **Designer:** Sami SavatlÍ
- **Pieces:** LOVE Chair, LOVE Side Table
- **Material:** Cast aluminium
- **Finish:** Individually finished by hand
- **Presented by:** ARKOBJECT, Istanbul
- **Photography:** Sinan Çırak dw

www.arkobject.com













Gigi XVI

The Contemporary Language of Inlay by Ferruccio Laviani

With a deliberately irreverent gaze toward tradition, **Ferruccio Laviani** continues his long-standing collaboration with **Fratelli Boffi** by introducing an unexpected imagination into the grammar of historical cabinetmaking. The new **Gigi XVI** chest of drawers reinterprets the classical Empire-style cabinet in two bold versions, where iconography inspired by contemporary culture, graphic patterns, and chromatic compositions replace the traditional decorative repertoire while preserving its compositional rigour.

"This project stems from a natural continuation of the research on classical furniture developed for Fratelli Boffi and on the expressive use of wood. The starting point is the archetype of Lombard furniture – the Louis XVI cabinet, inspired from Giuseppe Maggiolini's woodworking tradition – reinterpreted through new inlays. Classical decorum is turned into contemporary iconography and patterns, or into almost mosaic-like chromatic compositions, maintaining and amplifying the central role of woodworking and the inlay technique."

Ferruccio Laviani









Gigi XVI Mosaic – Cabinet

With the **Gigi XVI Mosaic** cabinet, Ferruccio Laviani revisits the archetype of **Louis XVI furniture**, not to reference it, but to reconstruct its decorative logic through a completely redesigned system. The inlay, composed of irregular tiles in different woods and finishes, creates a continuous yet dynamic surface, where colour is not simply applied but structured. The shades – pink, acid green, and cream – are arranged according to an almost mosaic-like principle, where each element contributes to the overall balance. The black base introduces a clear counterpoint, accentuating the design and giving the piece a graphic yet three-dimensional presence.

Gigi XVI Hip-hop – Cabinet

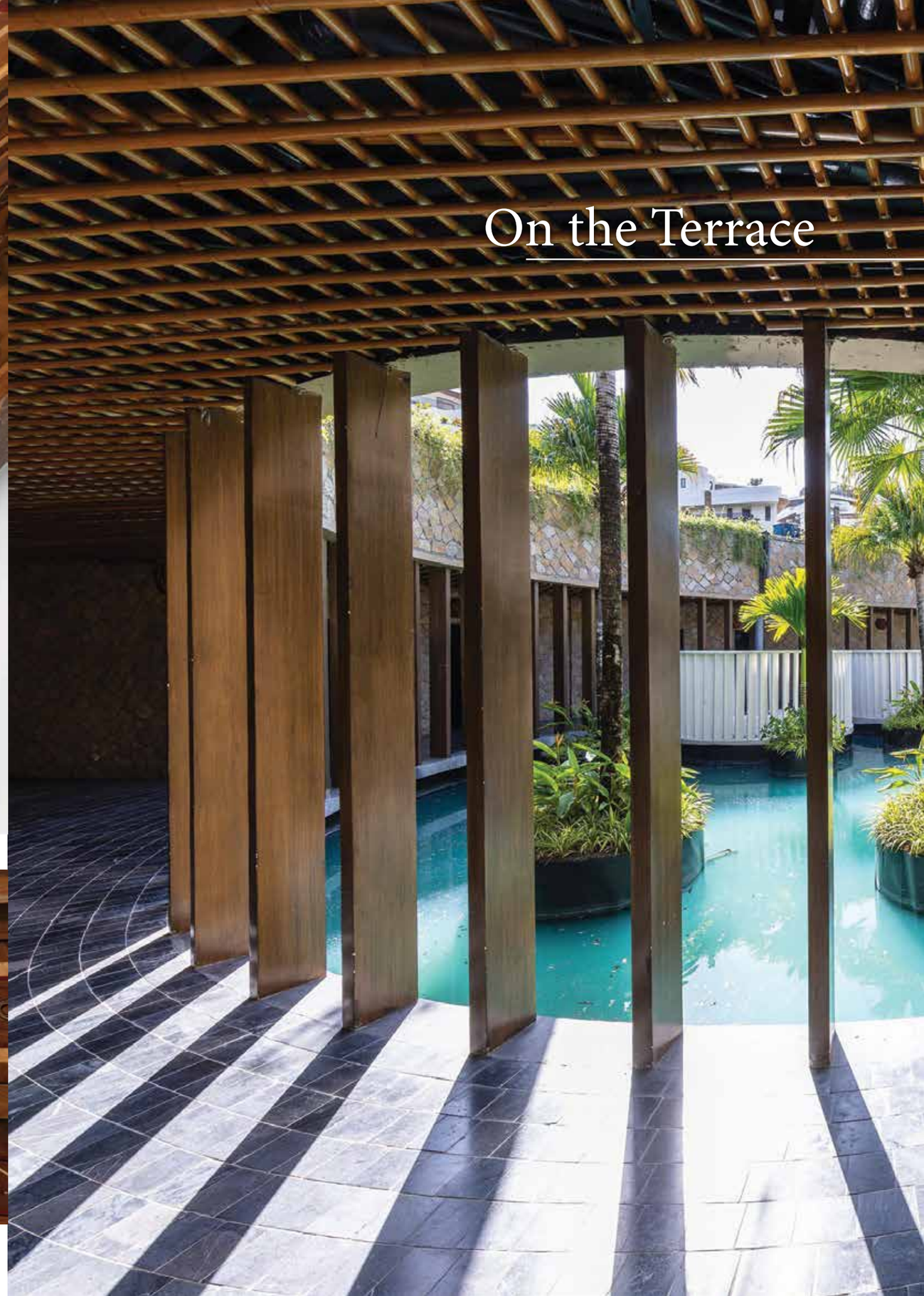
The structure, with frames and inlays in carved solid wood, features a complex composition executed with different wood species and traditional metal inserts – elements that belong to the decorative lexicon of the Empire style design. Classical iconography gives way to pop symbols from the contemporary music culture – cables, earphones and microphones – translated into the same compositional discipline reserved to historic ornament. The surfaces emphasise the depth of the texture and the precision of the drawn pattern, while the raised top, conceived as a console, integrates functional elements into the structure. dw

www.fratelliboffi.it/en

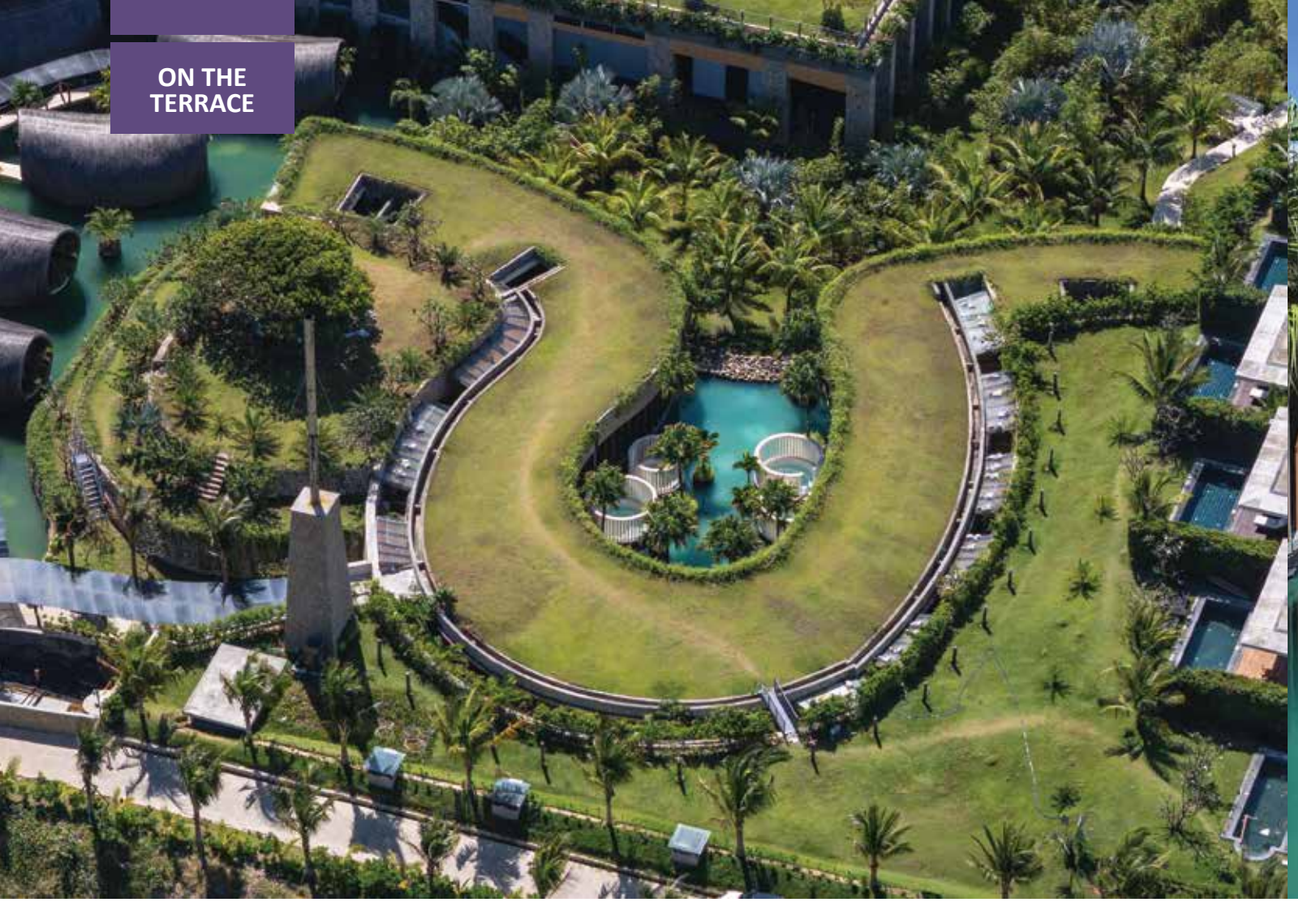








On the Terrace



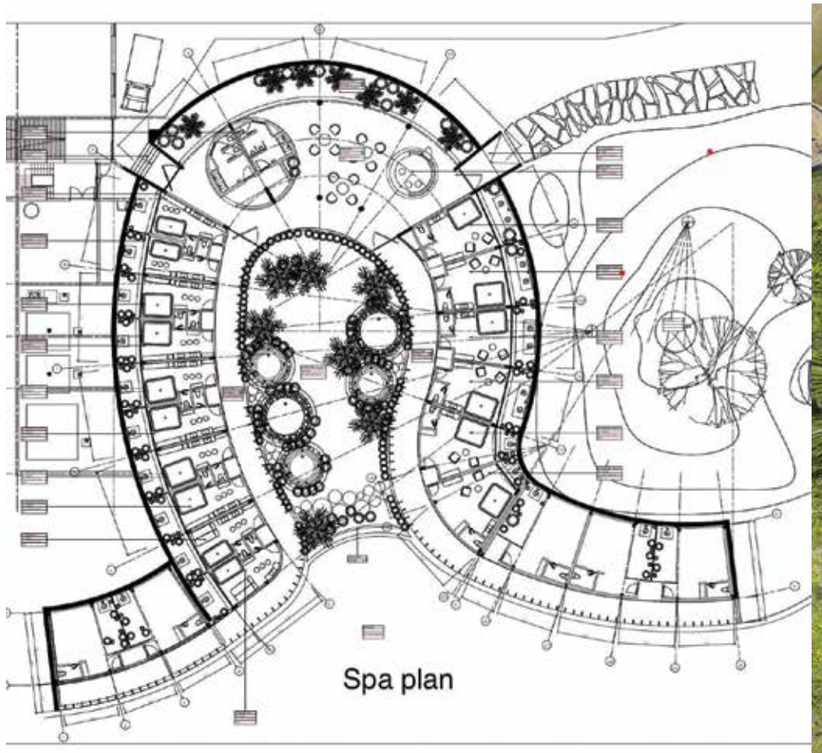


Hidden Spa - Water Hope

Cam Ranh, Vietnam

Nestled within the coastal sand dunes of Bãi Dài, Cam Ranh, Vietnam, Hidden Spa - Water Hope is a spa and mud bath complex designed by IDEE Architects as an extension of the landscape rather than an object placed upon it. Instead of imposing a new form onto the site, the project embraces the natural topography, allowing the architecture to disappear beneath the dunes while creating a calm environment dedicated to wellness and contemplation.

The site presented an extreme natural environment. Strong coastal winds, intense tropical sunlight, and barren sand dunes offered little shade or vegetation. Rather than resisting these conditions, the architects sought to transform them by introducing water, planting and carefully controlled microclimates.



Spa plan



At the heart of the project is a central water courtyard that serves as both the spatial and environmental core of the spa. Reflecting pools, planted islands and shaded walkways create a sequence of spaces where temperature, humidity and light gradually shift as visitors move through the complex. Water is not treated as a decorative element but as environmental infrastructure, cooling the surrounding spaces while enhancing the sensory experience.

The building is organised as a continuous, curved structure that embraces the courtyard. Its roof follows the existing sand dunes, allowing visitors to walk across a planted landscape while minimising the architecture's visual impact. By adapting to the natural terrain rather than flattening it, excavation was significantly reduced, preserving the relationship between architecture and landscape.

Material selection was guided by durability, locality and environmental performance. Locally sourced stone, timber and bamboo form a restrained architectural palette that responds

ON THE TERRACE

naturally to the tropical climate. Thick stone walls provide thermal mass, while open corridors and bamboo ceilings promote natural ventilation. A vegetated roof further reduces heat gain, while rainwater collected from the sloping roof is reused for landscape irrigation.

One mature tree standing on the dune before construction became a symbolic anchor for the entire project. Rather than removing it, the design evolved around its presence. Over time, the introduction of water, shade, and vegetation has gradually transformed the once-barren landscape into a small oasis where architecture and nature continue to grow together.

Hidden Spa – Water Hope reflects IDEE Architects' broader design philosophy: architecture should emerge from its context rather than dominate it. Instead of relying on iconic form, the project focuses on atmosphere, climate and human experience. It demonstrates how architecture can regenerate a fragile landscape while creating meaningful spaces for rest, healing and connection with nature.

Recently awarded the Architizer A+Awards 2026 Jury Winner in the Spa & Wellness category, Hidden Spa - Water Hope represents a contemporary interpretation of tropical architecture, where sustainability is achieved not through technological complexity but through a thoughtful dialogue among landscape, climate, and architecture.

Technical sheet

Project Information

- **Project Name:** Hidden Spa - Water Hope
- **Project Type:** Spa & Wellness / Hospitality
- **Location:** Bãi Dài, Cam Ranh, Khánh Hòa Province, Vietnam
- **Status:** Completed
- **Completion Year:** 2025
- **Gross Floor Area:** 3,000 m²
- **Client:** Amiana Cam Ranh

Design Team

- **Architect:** IDEE Architects
- **Principal Architects:** Tran Ngoc Linh, Nguyen Huy Hai
- **Architecture Team:** Tham Duc Hung, Nguyen Dac Nguyen, Vu Thi Thanh Tam
- **Structural Engineer:** Nguyen Quy Nam











ON THE TERRACE

- **MEP Engineer:** Nguyen Trong Hung
- **Landscape Design:** IDEE Architects
- **Interior Design:** IDEE Architects (nếu đúng)

Materials

- **Local natural stone**
- **Timber**
- **Bamboo**
- **Exposed concrete**
- **Planted green roof**
- **Water features**

Environmental Strategies

- **Passive cooling**
- **Natural cross ventilation**
- **Green roof**
- **Rainwater collection for irrigation**
- **Preservation of existing mature tree**
- **Reduced site excavation**
- **Local materials**
- **Landscape regeneration**

Key Project Features

- **Hidden architecture integrated into coastal sand dunes**
- **Central water courtyard as environmental core**
- **Walkable planted roof**
- **Naturally ventilated circulation**
- **Low-impact intervention on existing topography**
- **Tropical passive design strategies**

Project Credits

- **Architecture:** IDEE Architects
- **Photography:** Trieu Chien
- **All rights reserved © IDEE Architects**











Historical Garments Reimagined in Hand-Knotted Rugs

With his DRESSES series, Jan Kath transforms the silhouettes and patterns of historical garments into textile works of art. Traditional Uzbek Chapan coats, Japanese kimonos and Boro textiles, as well as Byzantine silk brocade coats, serve as the inspiration for his designs.

Jan Kath first digitally deconstructs these historical references into individual pixels. The patterns are then reinterpreted in his workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal, and translated into rugs, meticulously crafted knot by knot in wool and silk.

The rugs also retain the original contours of the garments, deliberately breaking away from the classic rectangular shape. In doing so, Jan Kath brings centuries-old textile traditions to life in a new and unexpected form.



Usbekischer Chapan





Japanischer Seiden-Kimono

TEXTILE ART EXHIBITON



Japanischer Boro



Frühmittelalterlicher byzantinischer Seidenbrokatmantel

The DRESSES series will be on view at the INNOVATIVE ART FAIR, presented by contemporary art ruhr (C.A.R.), from 16 to 18 October 2026 at the UNESCO World Heritage Site Zollverein in Essen. The anniversary edition of the art fair brings together contemporary art from a wide range of disciplines.

- **Jan Kath Design | C.A.R. – INNOVATIVE ART FAIR:** UNESCO World Heritage Site Zollverein, Essen, 16–18 October 2026
- **Opening hours:** Friday, 16 October: 7 pm–10 pm (Opening Night), Saturday, 17 October, and Sunday, 18 October: 11 am–7 pm
- **Venue:** UNESCO World Heritage Site Zollverein, Building C88, Heinrich-Imig-Straße 11, 45141 Essen, Germany. dw

www.jan-kath.com



Jan Kath

All About Art

SOLEILS in Saint-Norbert: How Digital Public Art Helps Pass On the Spirit of a Quebec Village

Saint-Norbert, Canada

The Municipality of Saint-Norbert, its residents, and artist Étienne Paquette are pleased to invite the public to discover SOLEILS, a permanent sculptural and digital artwork that unfolds around, inside, and across the façade of the village's former church, now known as the Espace culturel Jean-Pierre Ferland.

Saved from closure at the eleventh hour through community mobilisation and a benefit concert, this storied site now takes on a new collective purpose at the heart of the village through this contemporary public artwork.

This bet on art as a tool for village renewal speaks to a broader story: the effort to safeguard the identity and heritage of regional communities - a cultural issue of real significance in Quebec and beyond. In Saint-Norbert, the gesture is both concrete and symbolic: turning a church that nearly disappeared into a living place, rooted in its collective memory and open to the future.



"SOLEILS was the result of sustained cultural and artistic development efforts, and of a collaboration that I think is fairly rare — between an artist and a municipal institution in a rural, agricultural setting. Saint-Norbert is the village where I grew up, and where I chose to come back to raise my children. Seeing my neighbours and fellow residents work to bring their heritage church back to life, I wanted to take part in that transformation in my own way,"

says artist Étienne Paquette.

Saint-Norbert Mayor Sonia Desjardins adds:

"With SOLEILS, we have far more than an art installation: we are giving voice to the soul of Saint-Norbert, through a place where memory meets the future, where heritage meets innovation, where daylight meets the more intimate light that lives within each of us. I am extremely proud of this project, which brings our community together and carries it forward."

An artistic gesture that transforms the purpose of a church, SOLEILS restores a collective function to the heart of the village.

Built around themes of inner life and the rituals that shape community living, SOLEILS offers an immersive experience where heritage, light, digital creation, and collective memory converge on the grounds of the Espace culturel Jean-Pierre-Ferland. Through four artistic zones, both outside and inside the former church, the work invites residents and visitors to explore the site, interact with the installations, and turn this space into a true gathering place for celebration and contemplation.

Outdoors, the components are accessible and visible year-round, through every season, and to passersby.









On warm summer evenings or during the village's major collective moments - farmers' markets, concerts, and other activities - the work reveals itself fully: it becomes part of the village's public life, strengthening connections between people and fostering a setting conducive to community life.

SOLEILS: Four Artistic Interventions Bringing the Village to Life

SOLAR ORGAN: Tuning In to the Light

A new circular space on the grounds of the Espace culturel welcomes residents and visitors daily, offering a peaceful spot to rest along the pond's edge. At its centre stands the Solar Organ, a monumental interactive steel sculpture that produces gentle sounds by interpreting data related to temperature, UV rays, and luminosity. Rooted in the cycles of sunlight and an agricultural metaphor, the work reflects local history and reaches for the essence of the Norbert community. Interactive by design, it lets visitors take part in creating a soundscape conducive to contemplation. Around it, resting areas have been created using four benches (one wood, three stone) and two stone platforms.

MUSICAL ANEMOMETERS: Expressing in Harmony

Arranged in an arc within the former church's main hall, the Musical Anemometers bring together six monumental musical instruments, crafted in wood and worked metal, activated by breath or by hand, composing an immersive, interactive soundscape. Following a set programme, visitors play with voices and sounds drawn from two musical repertoires. One, inspired by the soundscape of a garden, is generative and lets visitors create their own meditative environment; the other reinterprets five well-known songs by Jean-Pierre Ferland, celebrating the community's rich cultural heritage.

The Musical Anemometers are on permanent display in the former church, and also travel to various cultural venues across Quebec.

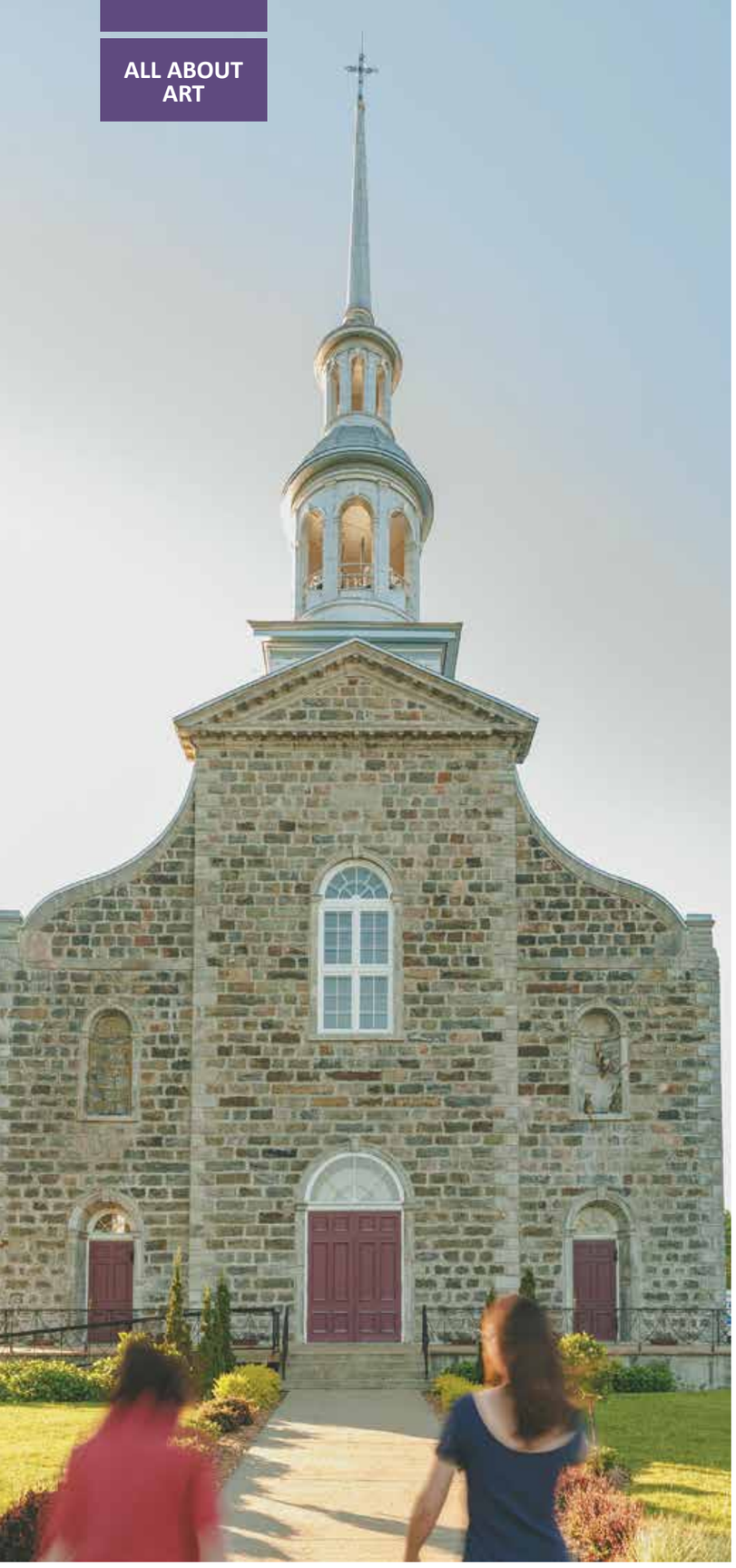




IRIS PORTAL: Seeing the World Through the Village's Children's Eyes

Installed at the entrance to the site, the Iris Portal is a monumental Corten steel sculpture created from photographs of the eyes of 105 students at the village's elementary school. Created following a community engagement day with the children in the spring of 2024, the two-panel work becomes a symbol of welcome and of passing the torch between generations.





NARRATIVE FACADE: Celebrating Memory and Collective Life

Each evening at sunset, the Narrative Façade brings the church to life through the activation of the bell tower and the illumination of the façade. Like an age-old ritual, the audiovisual and sculptural composition marks the rhythm of daily village life. Programmable hammers were added to the bell tower - while preserving the original manual mechanism - through a collaboration with one of Quebec's few campanologists (bell specialists).

Sculptures inspired by the musical worlds of Jean-Pierre Ferland and Angèle Dubeau also adorn the façade, paying tribute to Saint-Norbert's popular and classical musical heritage.

A Major Collaboration

The fruit of five years of conception, development, and creation, SOLEILS brought together - alongside creator Étienne Paquette - a dozen collaborators from a wide range of disciplines, from digital lutherie to ornamental ironwork, woodworking, campanology, and interactive programming. The project also brought together regional artists and craftspeople who had previously known little of each other's work, opening the door to new artistic collaborations.

Through its strong focus on cultural mediation and citizen participation, SOLEILS also helped bring a rural community closer to contemporary technological art, and introduced an entire generation of village children to digital creation.

Discovering SOLEILS

The outdoor components of SOLEILS remain accessible at all times, around the Espace culturel Jean-Pierre Ferland, at 2111 Rue Principale in Saint-Norbert. Only the Solar Organ is paused during the winter.

The public can access the indoor component of the work, the Musical Anemometers, during free, open visits on summer Friday mornings, as well as during events held at the Espace culturel Jean-Pierre-Ferland, including the Saint-Norbert Farmers' Markets.

Partners

SOLEILS was made possible thanks to the unwavering support of the Municipality of Saint-Norbert and its elected officials, as well as the trust and generosity of major financial partners: the Government of Quebec, the Government of Canada, the MRC de D'Autray, and Caisse Desjardins.

About Étienne Paquette

A media and digital artist with a doctorate in communication, Étienne Paquette has created sound sculptures and immersive audiovisual environments in a remarkably diverse range of settings - public institutions, urban spaces, repurposed industrial sites, and heritage locations - from the Parliament of Ottawa to a water tower on Lac Saint-Jean, by way of downtown Montreal and a rural village's former church.

His works include Mégaphone, a political piece on public speech and public space created in collaboration with Moment Factory in 2013 in downtown Montreal; Instrument à vent, a popular and critical success on our relationship with noise pollution, presented at the Quartier des Spectacles in 2018 and 2019; and Rêve Profond, an interactive work exploring the future of dreams in the age of artificial intelligence, created in collaboration with Mylène Chabrol and presented each summer on the forecourt of Mont-Royal metro station since 2025.

The inauguration of SOLEILS marks, for him, the culmination of a creative cycle that began in Montreal in the early 2010s, amid the social mobilisation of the Maple Spring. Following his doctoral thesis on the mediatisation of violence (2010), public art became, for him, a field for peaceful action - aimed at shaking up everyday indifference and fostering social innovation and civic well-being in shared spaces.

Recognised in the field of interactive and immersive experiences (NUMIX, MUSE Awards, Société des Musées du Québec, Boomerang, Stereopsia) and cited in academic research, including a publication by MIT Press, his works - conceived as interactive tools or living pieces rather than static objects -invite the public to actively transform their environment, and to transform themselves in turn. dw

www.etiennepaquette.com/soleils-en







Samantha Gallacher of Art+Loom (left) and Katrien Van Der Schueren (right) - Photo : Andy Gallacher





Art+Loom Unveils New Collaboration with Artist Katrien Van Der Schueren

Six handwoven rugs transform the artist's tactile language into collectible art.

Miami, FL - Continuing its mission of transforming contemporary art into extraordinary rugs, Art+Loom announces its newest artist collaboration with Los Angeles-based sculptural artist Katrien Van Der Schueren. The exclusive collection translates Van Der Schueren's expressive exploration of material, texture, and form into six handwoven designs that blur the line between fine art and functional design.

Van Der Schueren is a Los Angeles-based artist whose practice spans sculpture, architectural intervention, lighting, and functional forms. Her work moves between autonomous sculpture and site-responsive installation, exploring how form can carry emotion, history, and lived experience. For this collaboration, Art+Loom selected 6 original art pieces and translated them into wool and silk, preserving the movement, relief, and irregularity of the original works while introducing a new material expression of her practice.

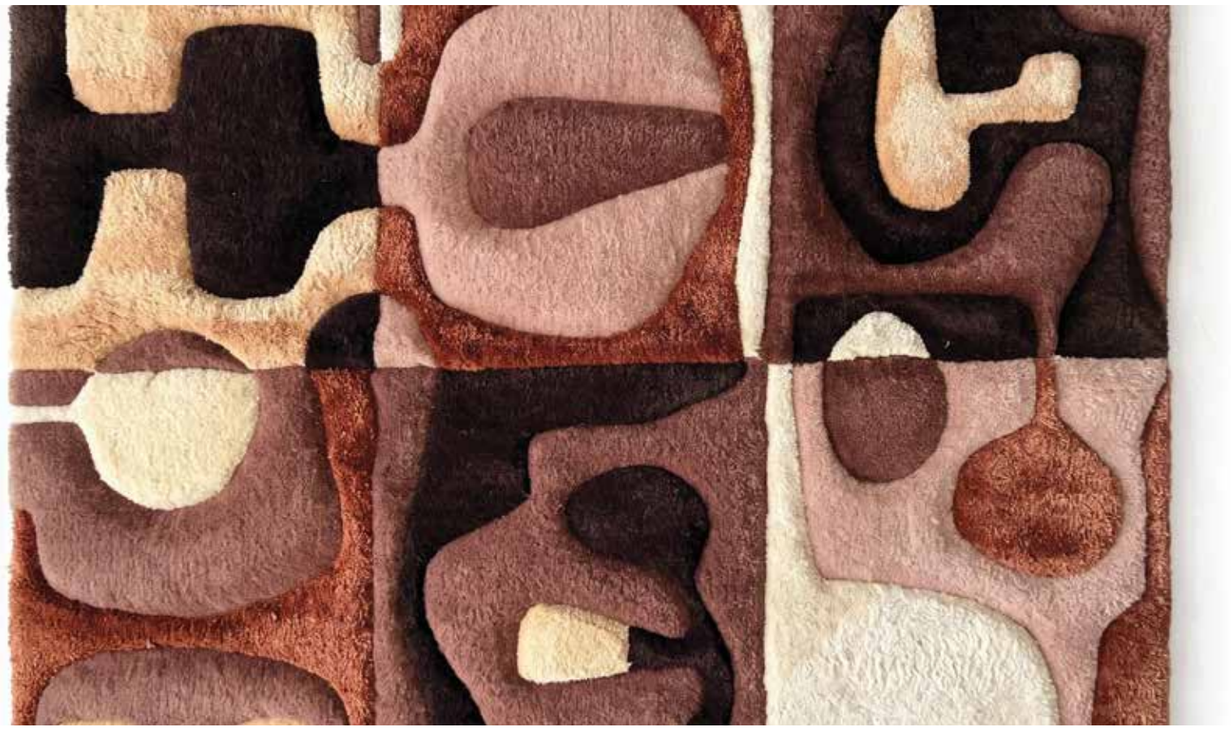
The collection features six designs, Bloom, Curio, Sundays, Rise, Circle, and Life, each inspired by original artworks and brought to life through Art+Loom's meticulous handcraftsmanship. Rich textures, sculptural relief, and tonal variation echo the dimensional qualities of Van Der Schueren's work, allowing the compositions to retain a sense of depth, movement, and physical presence in a new medium.











"My work has always been about exploring the emotional language of materials,"
says Van Der Schueren.
"To see these compositions transformed into handwoven rugs has been incredibly rewarding. Art+Loom understood that this wasn't simply about reproducing an image, but about preserving the texture, movement, and quiet imperfections that give each work its soul."

Each rug is individually hand-knotted using traditional techniques that capture the collection's sculptural qualities through carefully layered pile heights, intricate carving, and subtle shifts in texture. Rather than flattening the original artworks into two-dimensional surfaces, the rugs retain a sense of relief, tactility, and movement, creating a physical experience that echoes the dimensionality of Van Der Schueren's work.

"Van Der Schueren's work immediately resonated with us because of her thoughtful exploration of form, composition, and craftsmanship,"
says Samantha Gallacher.
"She approaches sculpture in much the same way we approach rug making, with curiosity, a deep respect for materials, and an appreciation for the handmade. This collaboration became an exploration of how sculptural forms can be reimagined through weaving, preserving the depth, movement, and artistry that make her work so distinct."

Like every Art+Loom piece, the collection reflects the studio's belief that rugs can serve as original works of art rather than decorative accessories. By partnering with contemporary artists across disciplines, Art+Loom continues to push the boundaries of textile design, creating collectible pieces that bring fine art into everyday living environments. dw

www.katrienvanderschueren.com

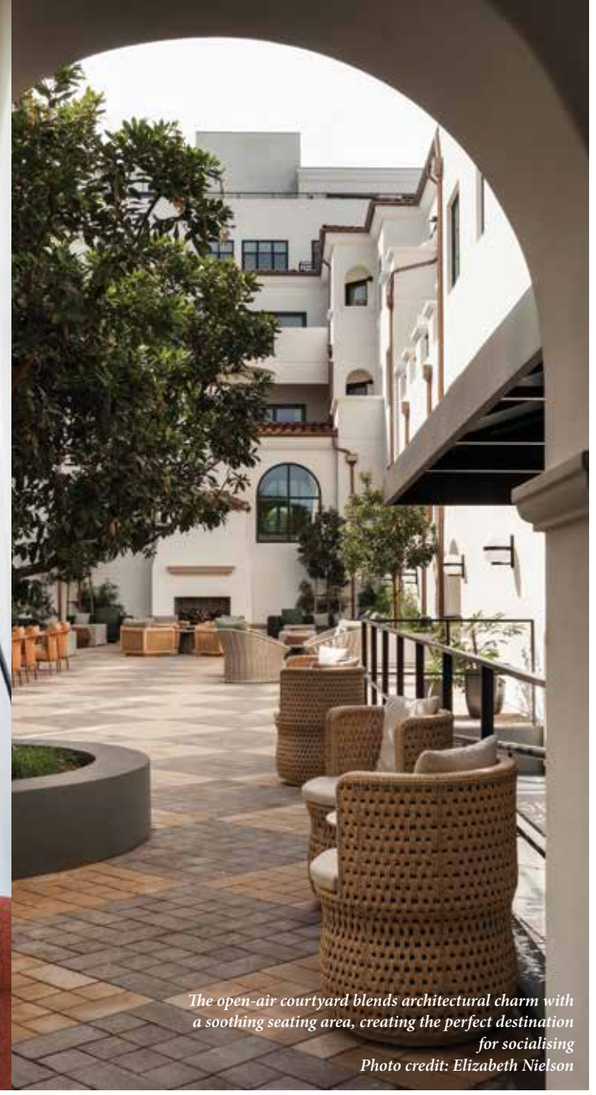


Narrative Design Studio's Design for the Kimpton Mirador Pacific Grove Unites Sophistication and Simplicity

Pacific Grove, United States



The lounge's striking fireplace and expansive windows create an inviting atmosphere that encourages relaxation.
Photo credit: Elizabeth Nielson



The open-air courtyard blends architectural charm with a soothing seating area, creating the perfect destination for socialising
Photo credit: Elizabeth Nielson

Narrative Design Studio's Design for the Kimpton Mirador Pacific Grove Unites Sophistication and Simplicity

Pacific Grove, United States

Narrative Design Studio, a San Francisco-based interior design firm founded by Shannon Niehenke, has brought attention to Pacific Grove - one of California's coastal hidden gems. Having historically been overshadowed by Carmel and Monterey, Pacific Grove proves to be a small town with prominent architectural character, according to Niehenke.

Immersed in the fog-kissed landscape, the newly designed Kimpton Mirador hotel blends sophistication and simplicity for its guests. The hotel provides comfort and serenity, with inspiration from the region's natural beauty. Featuring 99 uniquely designed rooms and its signature restaurant, The Caledonian, the space acts as the perfect base for travelers hoping to immerse themselves in the surrounding Pacific Grove area and beyond.

Rooted in Spanish Revival architecture and inspired by the region's stunning views, the hotel offers a refined yet approachable experience for guests seeking a soulful retreat. As part of Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, the property embodies the brand's signature hospitality, blending style, comfort, and local culture.



The bathroom's double vanity pairs elegant stone surfaces with sculptural mirrors and refined fixtures.
Photo credit: Elizabeth Nielson

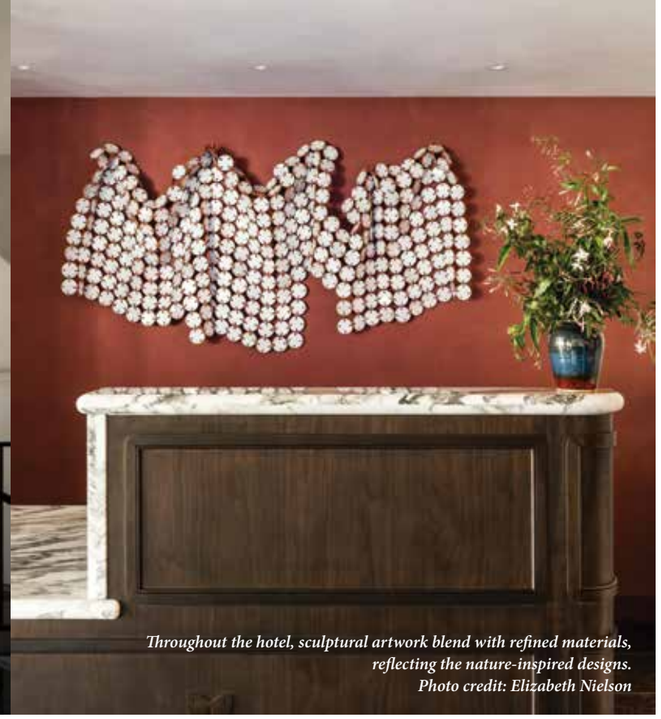


The guest room blends contemporary craftsmanship with organic textures, offering a tranquil retreat.
Photo credit: Elizabeth Nielson





The breezeway highlights the hotel's emphasis on architectural character, natural light, and connection to place.
Photo credit: Elizabeth Nielson



Throughout the hotel, sculptural artwork blend with refined materials, reflecting the nature-inspired designs.
Photo credit: Elizabeth Nielson



The guest bathroom pairs a freestanding tub with rich tiles, offering a space for renewal.
Photo credit: Elizabeth Nielson

Inspired by the monarch butterfly, the hotel embodies a sense of wonder that is evident through its unique design. Upon entering, guests are welcomed by a serene colour palette featuring textured walls, stone floors, wood ceilings, and more. The space emphasises community, as the work of local artists is featured amongst the Spanish-style details also on display.

Guests are truly immersed in the surrounding California land, as the rooms offer earthy tones and easy access to the outdoors with balconies that overlook the sea. As stated by Niehenke, "The guest rooms at the hotel are conceived as quiet sanctuaries, intimate retreats that balance the social energy of the hotel with a sense of rest and restoration. Rooted in the rhythms of the surrounding coastline, each room offers a moment of pause, inviting guests to reconnect with themselves and the natural environment beyond."

"Our vision for the hotel was to create a place that mirrors the quiet beauty of its setting," says Shannon as well. "Just as the monarch butterfly returns each year, we wanted the hotel to feel like a place guests would return to—drawn by its tranquility and the sense of renewal it inspires. Grounded in a serene, neutral palette, the interiors are punctuated with accents of chartreuse and berry—hues chosen to infuse the spaces with vibrancy when the coastal fog rolls in."

Artworks On Site

The artworks thoughtfully integrated throughout the hotel are rooted in a deep connection to the Central Coast, bringing the textures, light, and rhythms of the Pacific Grove landscape into the interior experience. Collectively, the artists represented, including ceramicist Vanessa Cowdrey, textile artist Jessica Bovert, painter Ethan Walsh, Ann Artz, Sahar Jabr, and illustrator Maria Schoettler, share a sensitivity to material, process, and place - each translating the surrounding environment through a distinct, handcrafted lens.

www.narrativesf.com



Warm wood tones and layered textiles create a comfortable seating area for rest and reflection.
Photo credit: Elizabeth Nielson



The suite's living area balances comfort and sophisticated through its curated artwork and thoughtful styling.
Photo credit: Elizabeth Nielson



The bathroom's carefully curated palette blends stone, tile, and contemporary fixtures.
Photo credit: Elizabeth Nielson

Collège de Maisonneuve - Interior Garden

Montreal, Canada

Collège de Maisonneuve - Interior Garden

Montreal, Canada

At the heart of the Collège de Maisonneuve lies a unique and hidden gem; a large sunken garden under a glass roof which provides lush greenery and an incomparable living area. The space was in need of an upgrade, however, in order to magnify all that the garden has to offer.

The original garden was created in 1972 as a result of expansions made to the building and a Brutalist-style courtyard that was created between the two pavilions. The addition of the glass roof transformed this five-storey space into an all-weather greenhouse that is accessible year-round. Over time, the garden has become a haven of lush greenery and mature trees, making it a popular spot for students.

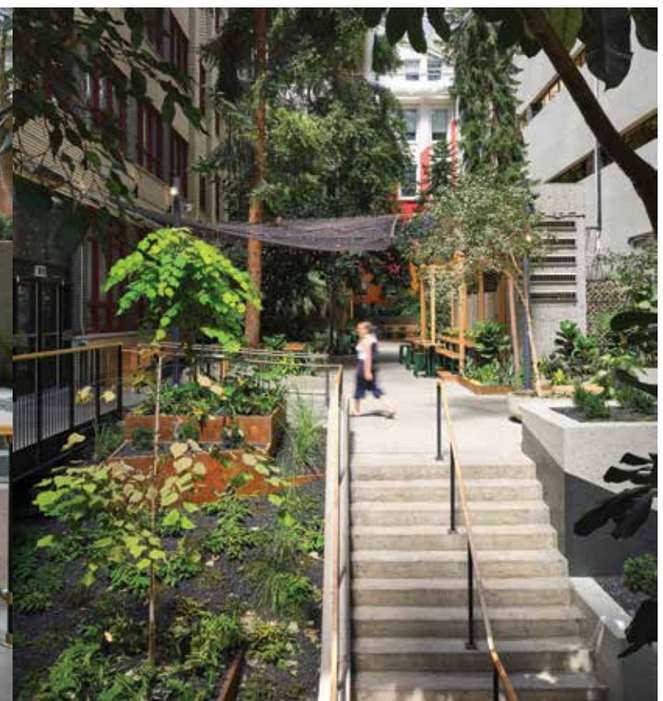
Light, grandiosity, and the predominance of plants were at the forefront of the conception of the renewed interior layout, providing a vast green space for people to use. The aim was to create a piece of immersive art that would combine the benefits of greenery with the pleasures of the human experience.

The aim of the redevelopment was to make the area more user-friendly, functional, and organised in order to allow larger numbers of people to take advantage of the space. For students, this environment would become a place for studying, replenishing one's energy, socialising, and resting during the week. In the evenings and on weekends, various events open to the public would take place. The primary consideration was to create a space where diverse worlds could come together under one roof.











The central area comes equipped with modular furniture offering the versatility needed to host a multitude of events, with the possibility of adding a stage if required. Most of the concrete flooring was replaced with cobblestones, and an irrigation system was installed to facilitate the maintenance of the garden. For the visual comfort of its users, the lighting system was completely refurbished and now adjusts itself automatically according to seasonal variations in luminosity.

A chill-out zone, set back from the action and featuring wooden deckchairs, allows students to take a break in the shade of a palm tree. At the foot of this configuration is the old waterfall, which was transformed into low Corten steel walls by the team of Albert Mondor and Wallemi, creating an oasis of tranquility surrounded by vegetation where one can take in a breath of fresh air.

Wooden decks and structures define the subspaces, rendering the area to human-scale. The mortise-and-tenon joints recall the ingenuity of hands-on craftsmanship. At the north end of the garden, C2V Architecture added a polished concrete mezzanine, enabling two additional layouts. On the roof of the mezzanine, the largest of the four wooden structures overhangs the site, offering fresh perspectives and reinforcing the versatility of the environment. The area under the mezzanine becomes a new collaborative room surrounded by windows overlooking the multi-level landscaping and design of Chantale de Menezes.

Custom-made, multi-functional furniture made of Douglas fir, Corten steel, and galvanised steel embody the project's vision of sustainability. Forest Green was chosen as the sole colour of the furniture in order to match the greenery of the site. This also gave way to artist Jason Cantoro and his creation of three enormous murals that are rich in vivid colours and free-form shapes, offsetting the Brutalist traits of the space and adding brightness, joy, and a positive spark to the inner surroundings.

A pigeon, common to Montreal, was chosen as the garden's totem animal. Some forty sculpted pigeons dot the space, bringing added colour while cohabiting with the users and imbuing a touch of playfulness to their day. Originally an experiment, this project has come into its own over the years thanks to the participation of several key players who have lent their imaginations to helping reshape it.





The project also stays true to the concept of biophilia, which is Taktik's flagship concept. It inspires us to continue imagining vast green spaces in tomorrow's institutions with the goal of breathing more light, pure air, and life into the daily lives of students.

Technical sheet

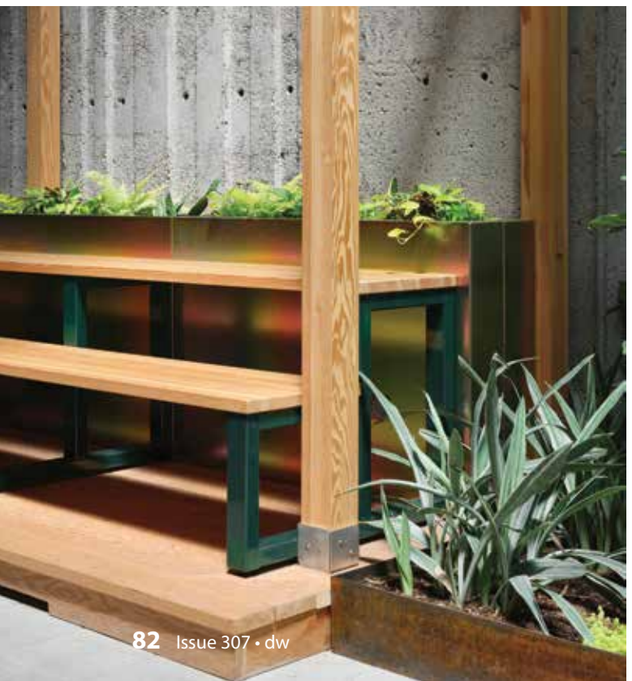
- **Official Project Name:** Collège de Maisonneuve_Jardin Intérieur
- **Location:** Montreal
- **Project Completion Date:** Spring 2023
- **Surface Area:** 9000 ft²
- **Customer:** Collège de Maisonneuve
- **Project Manager:** Noémie Giroux-Carpentier
- **Collaborators:** Nicola Tardif-Bourdages, Cynthia Papineau and Jonathan Allen
- **Photographer:** Maxime Brouillet

Suppliers

- **Architecture:** C2V Architecture
- **Interior Design:** Taktik Design
- **Custom Furniture:** Taktik Réalisation
- **Landscaping:** Chantale de Menezes et Albert Mondor
- **Main Contractor:** AGL Construction
- **Wood Structures:** Harkins
- **Lighting:** BEGA and Technilum, distributed by EDP
- **Murals:** Jason Cantoro
- **Pigeons:** Atelier Décor 3d
- **Horticulturists:** Wallemi
- **Irrigation:** Irrigation Charron
- **Cabinetmaker:** L.I.S.T.
- **Graphic Printing:** Jean-Yves Arcand
- **Chairs:** Artopex
- **Stools:** Nuline

dw

www.taktikdesign.com





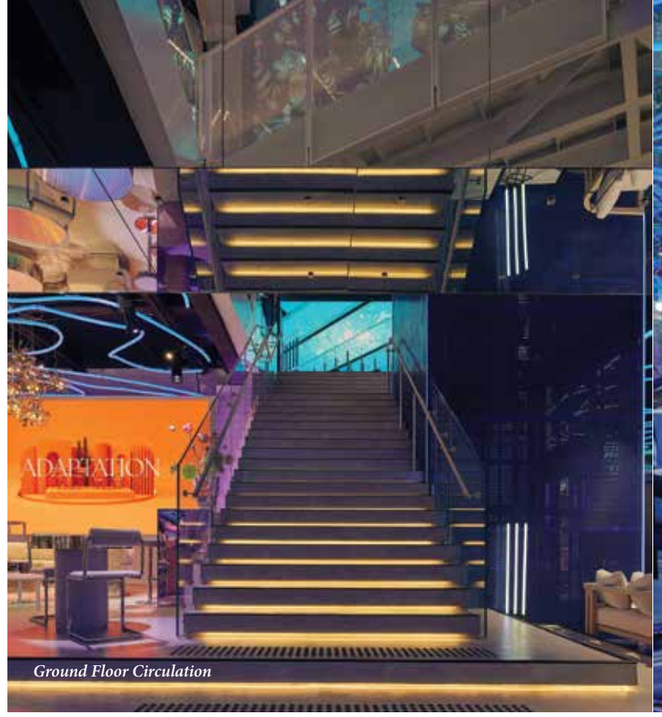


Harry the Hirer Headquarters

Melbourne, Australia



Central Void



Ground Floor Circulation



Showroom



Lift Entry



Central Void

Harry the Hirer Headquarters

Melbourne, Australia

Harry the Hirer engaged RCA Studio as lead design consultants to fit out four levels of a century-old cotton mill in Abbotsford. As the company's new headquarters, the project was realised from concept to construction. As a company running some of the country's largest events, the intervention needed to reflect a high operational pace with an engaged culture.

The heritage building had sat largely neglected for years. The deep floorplate provided an opportunity to introduce natural light via a new central void. Cut through the height of the building, the intervention connects all four levels visually, acoustically and physically. A powder-coated perforated steel lift anchors the void.

Existing imperfections were highlighted instead of concealed. Epoxy floor finishes patched existing concrete and timber intersections, and plywood flooring marks where factory machinery once sat. While the existing structure was retained, movement was encouraged throughout the intervention. Robots mapped the tube light installation, undulating LED panels were installed to millimeter tolerance, and a custom carpet finish reflects activity throughout the workspaces.

RCA Studio worked closely with contractors and subcontractors to balance design intent with the inevitable challenges posed by the existing fabric. The result reflects the nature of the company, supporting client involvement in showrooms and accommodating employee collaboration in the same building.



Staff Room



Central Void



Meeting Room



Bathroom



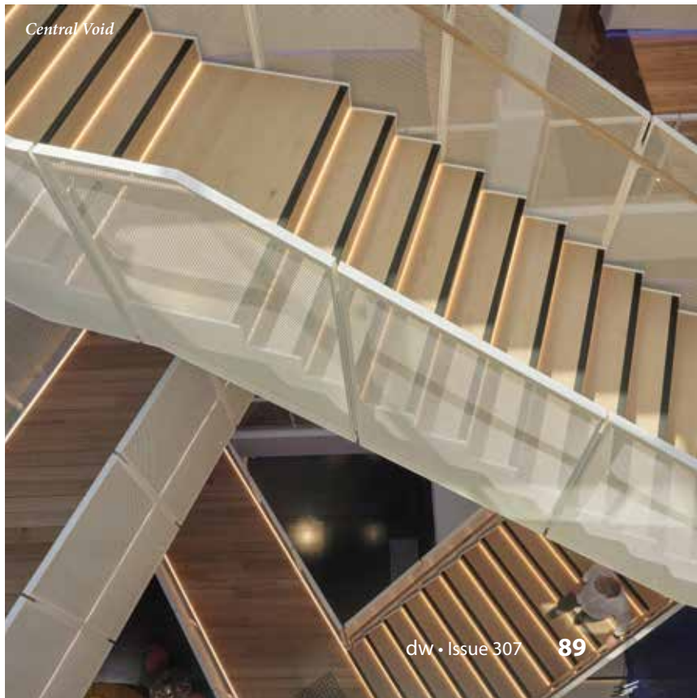
Showroom

Techincal sheet

- **Scale** - 4,800 m²
- **Location** - Abbotsford, Victoria, Australia
- **Type** - Commercial
- **Client** - Harry the Hirer
- **Materials** - Steel, Concrete, Timber, LED Lighting, Epoxy, Stone
- **Year** - 2025
- **Photography** - Veeral Patel
- **Builder** - Amicus
- **Structural** - O'Neill Group

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TAIL OF THE DOG

Pavement Specials

The Chelsea Flower Show this year boasted not one square foot of mown lawn. This trend has affected Jozi the same way, judging by the pavements.

Most pavements (officially property of the Johannesburg Council, managed by the Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo division) are kept clean and tidy by the owners of the adjacent properties. The City Parks and Zoo do not have the funds or manpower to manage the pavements and barely keep the sides of the motorways under control.

Some suburban pavements are immaculate, with trimmed edges and clean gutters, perfectly mown lawns, currently sprinkled with beautiful jacaranda flowers, which probably annoys the manicurists. Others are planted to full coverage, beautiful but pedestrian unfriendly, and dangerous, as they create perfect vision barriers for cars trying to see past the lavish foliage.

Most are left to their own devices and as a result are charming meadows, with little blue and yellow flowers, clover coverage, very much in line with the Chelsea Flower Show stands of 2026.

Then there is the attack mode created by other divisions of the Joburg Council, principally City Power and Joburg Water. Trenches are cut, paving stones pushed aside, all planting vandalised, leaving behind muddy trenches and dying plants. The ethos seems to insist that there is no need to reinstate what was there before. Desperate homeowners try to recreate order and some semblance of calm, but often the Council comes back to create chaos all over again.

A community-driven initiative called Pave the Way has put together teams of workers to specifically clear the traffic islands, pavement edges and street gutters of growth and litter along major roads, and in some areas has lifted solid rooted carpets of grass from these overgrown gutters. Actual trees have been found growing in stormwater drains. This has been in association with a community collaboration called Cross the Divide, which uses sponsorship to provide work on short projects. Workers get a meal, and in some instances, a chance to have a shower and wash their clothes. This has moved beyond roads and pavements and has been involved with clearing the litter from the rivers that run though Johannesburg, making the parks nicer places for all who go there.

Many smaller parks are run with the local residents' associations. They are responsible for the safety of people and children who use the parks, keeping them clean and litter free, and safe from unwanted visitors. Johannesburg may be a gritty city, but it has a number of green spaces that help keep us all sane.

Gill Butler



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Photo credit: Valérie Paquette

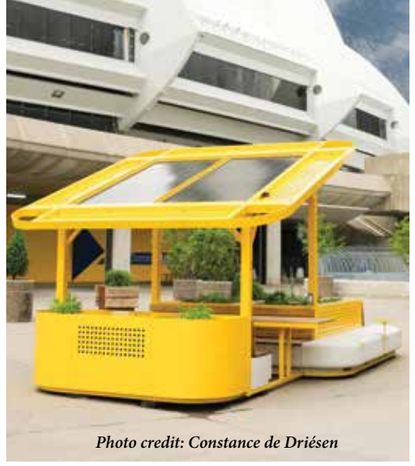


Photo credit: Constance de Driésen



Photo credit: Valérie Paquette

Aire Commune Unveils Espace Solaire at Montreal's Olympic Park

Montreal, Canada

Aire Commune unveils Espace Solaire, Quebec's first outdoor public space powered entirely by solar energy. Since this summer, visitors have been able to experience this new permanent installation in the heart of Montreal's Olympic Park.

At the intersection of urban design, landscape architecture and energy innovation, Espace Solaire explores how energy production can be integrated directly into the design of a public space.

The site was conceived as a place to gather, relax and work outdoors. Shaded structures, integrated furniture, Wi-Fi-enabled workspaces, electrical outlets and landscaping create an environment designed to accommodate a variety of uses throughout the day.

Rather than treating energy infrastructure as a separate technical component, the project integrates it directly into the architecture of the site. The solar panels become a visible part of the design, contributing to both the function and identity of the space.

"Espace Solaire embodies our vision of creating meaningful, sustainable and accessible public spaces. By fully integrating solar energy into the design, we are demonstrating that innovation, conviviality and the energy transition can go hand in hand,"

says Philippe Pelletier, co-founder of Aire Commune.

When energy becomes part of the design

Developed in collaboration with Sunbird Énergie, the energy system combines solar power generation, energy storage and intelligent power management to supply the site's various amenities.

From the earliest stages of the design process, this infrastructure was considered an integral component of the project, alongside furniture, vegetation, shade and lighting. This approach makes the energy infrastructure visible while exploring its architectural potential.

"Espace Solaire at Olympic Park represented a great opportunity for us to demonstrate, on a smaller scale, the important role infrastructure will need to play in the energy transition. More than a showcase for technology, this project provides a tangible example of how on-site solar generation, energy storage and intelligent power management can help support the province's energy transition,"

adds Simon Lafleur, founder and president of Sunbird Énergie.

A new destination in the heart of Olympic Park

Located within Olympic Park, one of Quebec's most iconic architectural landmarks, Espace solaire contributes to the site's ongoing transformation into a vibrant, accessible urban park that can be enjoyed year-round.

"With the arrival of Espace Solaire, our public urban park continues to evolve to better meet the changing needs of our visitors and contribute to the vitality of the area. This permanent outdoor installation perfectly reflects our vision for the future of Olympic Park: a vibrant and accessible destination featuring sustainable design that enhances the visitor experience,"

adds Joëlle Brodeur, President and CEO of Olympic Park.

A showcase for Quebec's solar potential

While solar energy is growing rapidly around the world, Quebec still has significant untapped potential. With Espace Solaire, Aire Commune offers a human-scale demonstration of what a new generation of energy-autonomous public spaces could look like.

By integrating energy production directly into the urban landscape, the project demonstrates how infrastructure can actively contribute to the energy transition without compromising architectural quality or the user experience.

Technical sheet

- **Project name:** Espace Solaire
- **Location:** Montréal Olympic Park, Montréal, Québec, Canada
- **Year of completion:** 2026
- **Design and implementation:** Aire Commune
- **Project partners:** Government of Québec (Ministère des Affaires Municipales et de l'Habitation), Montréal Olympic Park, Sunbird Énergie.
- **Technical collaborators:** Atomic Soudure, Béton Multi Surfaces, CR34TE, La Fabrique Allwood dw

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