interiors

228

ZEN embossed panels, paired with FUJI HACHI ceiling tile, delivers design-led acoustic solutions.

Available in the UK through The Collective

THECOLLECTIVE

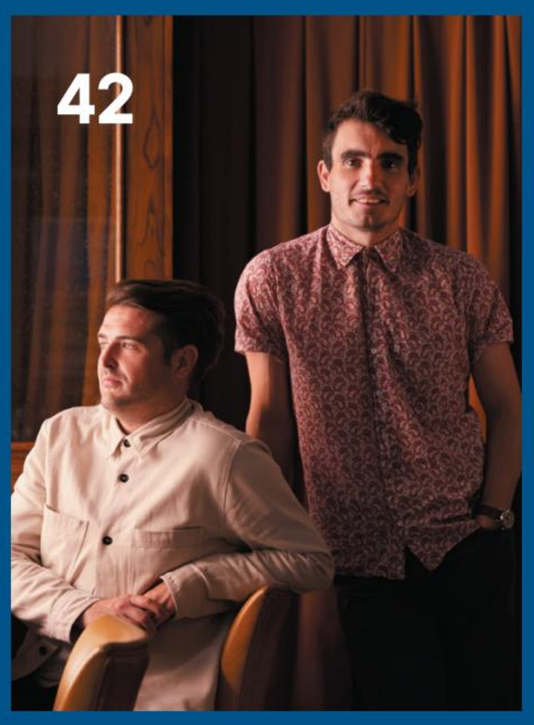
enquiry@thecollective.agency +44 (0) 203 633 3138

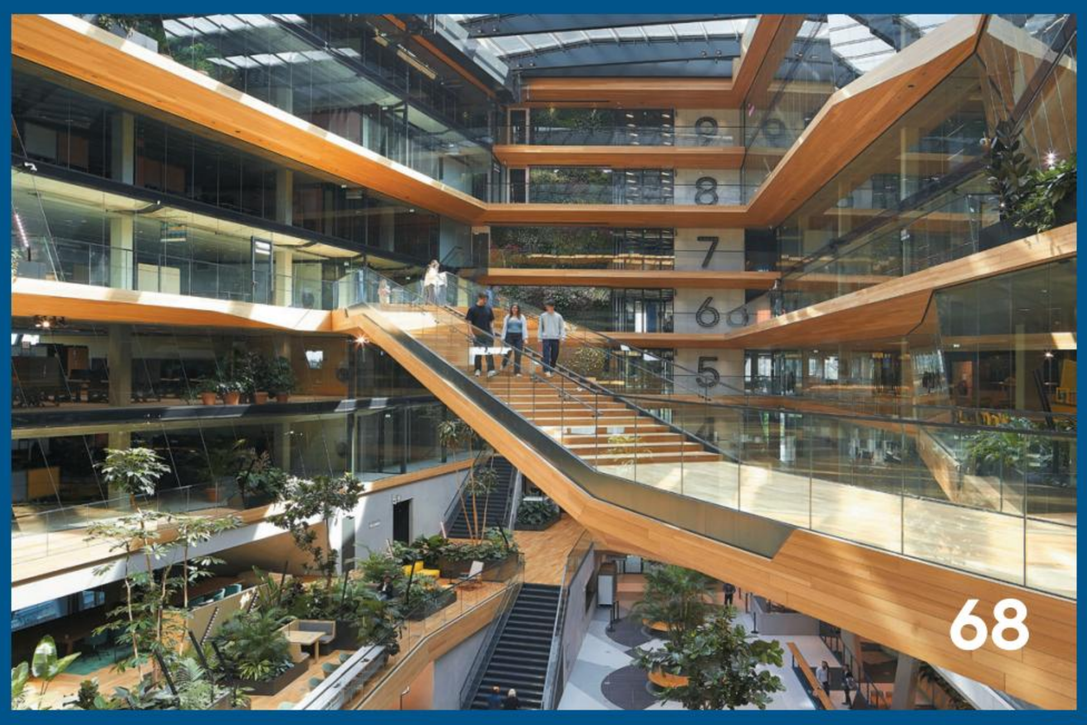
WOVEN IMAGE®

wovenimage.com

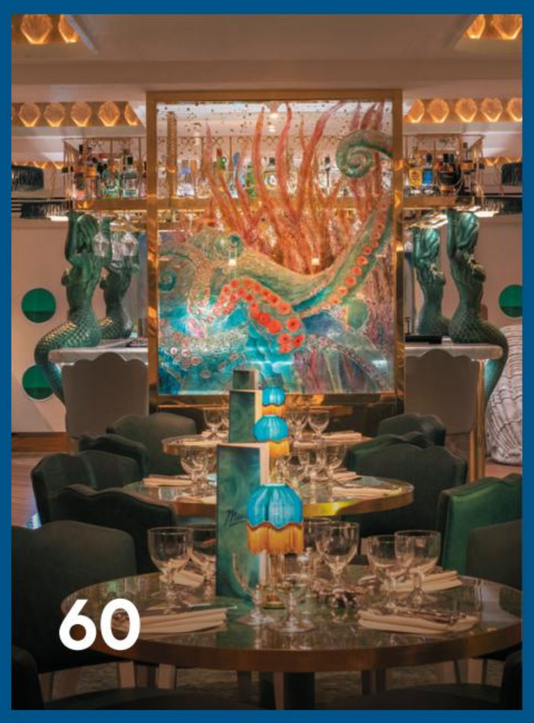
228

Contents





Contents



MADE IN BRITAIN

Kulture

STRENGTH & SIMPLICITY

GRESHAM

DESIGNERS & MANUFACTURERS
OF WORKSPACE FURNITURE

Colophon

The cover

Designer

"In our design, we started off wanting to explore both the elegant, finished geometry of the Woven Image product, whilst also communicating design potential, hinting at fabrics hung in design studios, clothing on the human form, and the way fabric hangs before it is pulled tight into a final design. We used our favourite colours from WI's new PICO range in our image." Adam Sparkes, dMFK Architects

dmfk.co.uk

Manufacturer

Pico embossed acoustic panels designed by Woven Image are high performance commercial interior finishes inspired by modern Japonisme. The ribbed design mimics the grooves of a Japanese Zen Garden while reflecting vertical linework and architectural trends in corrugated surfaces. The textured aesthetic has undulations of shadow and lighting that bring calm and comfort to a space, in a variety of on-trend colours.

wovenimage.com

Get in touch

Managing Editor
Harry McKinley
harry@mixinteriors.com

Deputy Editor
Chloé Petersen Snell
chloe@mixinteriors.com

Managing Director
Leon March
leon@mixinteriors.com

Account Manager
Stuart Sinclair
stuart@mixinteriors.com

Marketing Manager
Paul Appleby
paul@mixinteriors.com

Head of Operations
Lisa Jackson
lisa@mixinteriors.com

Events & Editorial Executive
Yasmin Waters
yasmin@mixinteriors.com

Design
Marçal Prats
marcal@marcal.net

Board Director
Marcie Incarico

Founding publisher
Henry Pugh

Columnists
Neil Usher
Tina Norden
Shawn Adams
Madeleine Kessler

Contributors
Dominic Lutyens
Rima Sabina Aouf
Lauren Jade Hill

Subscription

To ensure that a regular copy of Mix Interiors reaches you or to request back issues, call 0161 519 4850 or email lisa@mixinteriors.com

Annual Subscription Charges	
UK single	45.50
Europe	135 (airmail)
Outside Europe	165 (airmail)

Contact

Unit 2 Abito, 85 Greengate, Manchester M3 7NA

Telephone 0161 519 4850
editorial@mixinteriors.com
www.mixinteriors.com

Twitter	@mixinteriors
Instagram	@mix.interiors
LinkedIn	Mix Interiors

Mix Interiors
Issue 228
October 2023

Printed by
S&G Print
ISSN 1757-2371

MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C013417

Harry McKinley

Welcome

For a recent panel discussion on designing dangerously, I came dressed as the 1980s. Wearing my Warm & Wonderful vest (in a print made famous by Princess Di) and loose acid wash denim, I nodded to a decade notorious for social upheaval and notable for its radical creativity. My natty garb also said something about design at large, a discipline both cyclical and predicated on change – be it fashion, architecture or interiors. It made sense to me. I suspect it wafted over attendees' heads like so much hairspray.

Starting my career as a fashion editor (a surprise perhaps, considering my penchant for the naff and tasteless), I've been conditioned to welcome and celebrate change. This appetite for bold new ideas and brave, original perspectives has stayed with me, even as I segued into interior design. It's reflected in my views on the built environment: that our cities should not be treated like museums nor the spaces we inhabit like shrines to the past. We should always protect what's worth protecting, but where change is needed, it should be embraced.

Regular readers may notice that change has visited itself upon Mix Interiors, in our swish new logo and print ID – an evolution that will, in time, be echoed more vividly on our website, *mixinteriors.com*, and across the wider Mix ecosystem. A creative direction rooted in spatial design, our updated look is intended to speak more confidently and in a more considered way to the sector and audience we serve. Similarly, we've introduced a new suite of regular columnists to our existing stable – here, architect Madeleine Kessler and diversity champion, Shawn Adams. More will be unveiled in our next issue, but from the relationship between architecture and commercial interiors to 'designing for difference', we're broadening the conversation and making space for an expanded roll call of authoritative and disruptive voices.

As for what's worth protecting, well, much has stayed the same: the same blend of inspirational case studies, the same incisive thought leadership (in our interviews and Mix Roundtable) and the same thoughtful exploration of issues both timely and boundary pushing – from sustainability to interspecies design. After all, just like some sheep-print-emblazoned vests, cracking content never goes out of style.

Harry McKinley
Managing Editor

oval

A modular system that combines comfort with class.

Designed by Jehs+Laub, this collection allows for an extensive range of possible combinations, giving you complete freedom of design. Created with an emphasis on extraordinarily comfortable upholstery, this design allows for maximum levels of luxury.

brunner-uk.com

brunner ::

Captivating new colours that reflect the earth's natural wonders.

Expertly developed and mindfully curated to expand not just your colour palette but also your design possibilities.

New four colours available across all our product range.

- Cube™ Panels in Canyon

Autex Acoustics®

Scan below
to learn more

Going in circles is the best way forward

At Ege Carpets, we believe in circular thinking. Holding a top 1% Platinum ranking from EcoVadis, we're recognised as one of the most advanced companies in terms of sustainability practices. Most of our carpets are Cradle to Cradle Certified® and now we're taking another giant step forward with Ege CircleBack.

STOP CARPET WASTE

Something has to change in the carpet industry.
We can't let any more used carpets end up in landfills or go up in smoke.

That's why we've created Ege CircleBack.
A ground-breaking new carpet recycling program where we offer to take back your used carpets and the waste from installation.

Our carpets are made from recyclable materials allowing us to recycle 98-100% of the components in your returned carpets. This reduces CO_2 impact as much as 60% and brings us one step closer to fulfilling our ambition:

To offer you the world's most sustainable carpets.

Let's stop carpet waste together.

Ege
CircleBack

ege®

sustainable design
at your feet

Voted one of Europe's most elegant Restaurants, this Japanese-inspired space will not only tease your tastebuds but delight all your senses. The captivating interior is created entirely based on our in-house Parametric Design approach, effortlessly combining wooden elements with our high-performance acoustic material ARCHISONIC® Felt made from recycled PET bottles.

IMPACT ACOUSTIC®

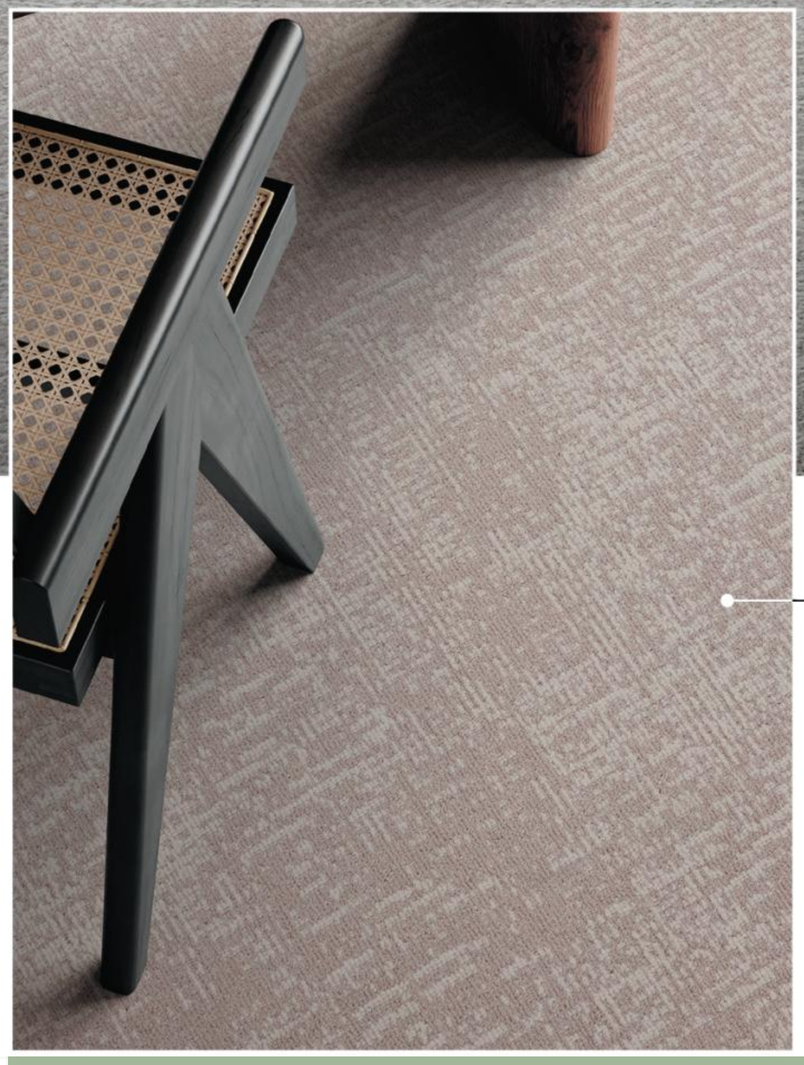
Bespoke **acoustic solutions**

All our acoustic products are made from waste materials such as post-consumer PET bottles.

Manufactured in Switzerland to your specific needs. Now available in UK and Ireland.

Visit **impactacoustic.com** or contact us today at uk@impactacoustic.com to learn more.

for the perfect
flooring
response in agile
offices



The adaptable and dynamic Tailored explores a self-controlled way of working.

Watch our video to be immersed in the dynamic textures of the new Pattern carpet tile collection

think

Pattern is the new carpet tile collection from IVC Commercial that reflects the individuality of working experience in three structured textures. Made with Thrive matter®, the world's only carbon negative nylon fibre.

ivc-commercial.com

COMMERCIAL

mixology NORTH23

CELEBRATING THE BEST PROJECTS, PRODUCTS
& PEOPLE IN COMMERCIAL INTERIOR DESIGN

30.11.23
MANCHESTER CENTRAL

MIXINTERIORS.COM/EVENTS

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

arper · Autex Acoustics · Bluestone Leasing · dyson · ege · EGGER · Gerflor GRADUS · Gresham · Johnson Tiles Made in the UK since 1901 · Interface · KI · Pedrali The Italian Essence

TICKETS
SELLING FAST

FIND OUT MORE AND
BOOK YOURS

Northern preservation

Labelled ‘one of the 12 most endangered heritage sites in Europe’, The Ice Factory in Grimsby, Lincolnshire formerly housed the world’s largest ice-making machines – producing up to 1500 tonnes of ice per day for nearby fishermen and trawlers. After being derelict for 33 years, developer Tom Shutes and Waugh Thistleton Architects have announced plans to turn the historic building into a public venue with a leading exhibition, conference and live performance area, as well as an office, studio and research and development space for the green maritime sector.

“We are thrilled to make this application to preserve and enhance a much-loved piece of the local community,” comments Andrew Waugh, founding director of the eponymous architecture practice. “We are able to secure the future of the Ice Factory by repurposing it as a key part of this epicentre of green technology, for the UK and beyond.” Waugh Thistleton’s involvement will see it draft masterplans of the wider site and design the office, conference, leisure and food and beverage facilities.

A survivor of the Victorian age, the restoration project supports the ongoing regeneration work in Grimsby and will promote the area’s fishing heritage. “Mr Shutes has brought together a project that will not only halt the deterioration of this unique building, but will be a tremendous asset for the town in years to come,” adds Vicky Hartung, chair of The Great Grimsby Ice Factory Trust.

waughthistleton.com

Famiglia / Pearson Lloyd
allermuir.com

Allermuir

Pushing boundaries

Defying most people's aesthetic notion of what constitutes a tap, British artist and designer Dr. Samuel Ross, industrial design studio SR_A and bathroom manufacturer Kohler have unveiled a limited-edition faucet in conjunction with Design Miami/ 2023. Composed of striking angles and realised in a bold Haptic Orange, the product symbolises Ross' avant-garde approach to art and celebrates Kohler's 150 year anniversary.

Titled Formation 01, the creative collective decided to cast the tap as one singular, sculptural object, rather than manufacturing it using traditional finish plating processes. Merging forward-thinking design with a retrospective look back at industrialism and molten iron, the tap uses advanced engineering by Kohler that works with its sharp angles, so users can experience the product with its intended waterflow.

The remastered bathroom essential celebrates a new design language for water solutions and removes preconceptions about what staple fixtures and fittings should look like. "The Kohler x SR_A Formation 01 faucet is the first tangible execution in our partnership and an experience unlike anything we have seen in the industry," says David Kohler, chair and CEO of Kohler. "The breakthrough ideas shared in our collaboration help drive our industry leadership forward and challenge us to expand our perspectives of product and process."

Formation 01 will premiere at Kohler's exhibition stand at Design Miami/ from December 6-10.

kohler.com

IMAGINE YOUR SPACE

Imagine a space where inspiration can run free. A world that tells your own story, every single day.

At RAK Ceramics we help create the perfect living space, for you and your loved ones.

RAK CERAMICS

RAKCERAMICS.COM

Imagine your space.

London debut

Known for his bouyant, whimsical design sensibility, Martin Brudnizki has designed his first UK hotel project, Broadwick Soho – with doors opening in November. For the 57-room retreat, the Swedish designer and his eponymous studio (MBDS) have translated the grit, glamour and energy of London's West End into an 'enticingly flamboyant' experience, in one of its most colourful neighbourhoods.

Each hotel room will feature bespoke furniture and individually selected artworks, partnered with rich geometric patterns and vibrant prints. A soft colour scheme is intended to create a 'sanctuary-like' experience for visitors. Adding to the charm, custom-designed beds, heritage-inspired herringbone floors and tassel-trimmed furniture conjure a sense of elevated domesticity – the rarefied comfort of a members' club or townhouse.

Guests will be able to enjoy a mix of restaurants and bars, each with a distinct and playful personality. The hotel's flagship lower-ground restaurant, Dear Jackie, will showcase Italian gastronomy, while the adjacent Bar Jackie will offer a more relaxed café experience. At the residents-only Nook, guests can luxuriate by the fireplace with a cocktail or coffee, while on the rooftop, Flute provides an extravagant evening with showstopping décor: mirrored ceilings, animal print upholstery and palm frond carpet. Sitting just above on the eighth floor is The Dining Room, a private, bookable space with views to St Paul's Cathedral and beyond.

broadwicksoho.com

DESSO

Grezzo Bloom & Vivid

CARPET TILES

DESSO Grezzo Bloom & Vivid carpet tiles draw inspiration from the organic beauty of natural structures and the rich pigments found in nature. Adding two stunning collections to the popular DESSO Grezzo range, both Grezzo Bloom & Vivid bring the restorative power of nature indoors to create a sense of calm energy. Mimicking the rugged textures, intricate patterns and vivid hues found in the natural world, each tile is unique – perfect for adding depth and seamless movement across expansive floor areas – or creating enduring appeal in smaller spaces. With 12 distinctive colour ways, Grezzo Bloom & Vivid spans from cool concrete shades to earthy greens and clay-like terracotta browns.

100% Recyclable Carpet Tiles

SCAN HERE TO SEE THE COLLECTION

Tarkett

Sustainability first

In a sizeable transformation, construction and consultancy firm Mace is turning Woolgate, a former 320,000 sq ft corporate headquarters in London into a modern all-electric office space designed to enhance the wellbeing of tenants.

“We are delighted to be part of such an ambitious scheme that puts sustainability at its heart, providing world-leading office space for current and future City workers,” says Ged Simmonds, Mace’s managing director for offices. Simmonds will be working with developer and investor Stanhope to deliver the net zero carbon project, that aims to retain 98% of the existing structure.

With panoramic views overlooking St Paul’s Cathedral and the City’s most recognisable skyscrapers, occupiers will benefit from nine-storeys of workspace, complete with private terraces and a rooftop pavilion. Mace intends to bring urban greening to these outdoor landscapes through biodiversity, whilst providing first-class public realm for the local area.

Accessibility is also paramount at Woolgate. Plans have been made to enlarge dual access areas and receptions to form a thoroughfare between Basinghall Street and Coleman Street that will make it easier for workers to access one of the seven mainline stations nearby. Construction completion is expected early 2025.

macegroup.com

INTRODUCING

Aria

Focus on your work, not your reflection

Aria Glass-Wall is the glare-free, writable wall solution to achieving calm spaces in busy working environments.

SPECIALIST GROUP

To find out more, please visit **specialist-group.co.uk** or talk to us today.

e. mail@sjg.co.uk | **t.** +44 (0)28 7964 3021

Liverpool's next chapter

Eurovision brought exhilaration to Liverpool this year as 250,000-plus visitors flocked to the city's waterfront, embracing the festivities and exploring the historic landmark-peppered area that was, until two years ago, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. When Liverpool was unceremoniously stripped of the title, UNESCO blamed unsympathetic development that had resulted in an 'irreversible loss'.
It was an embarrassment for this one-time trading capital – now one of only three locations in the world to be demoted in the past half a century.

In a bid to turn things around, however, the city is now looking for a team of planning and placemaking specialists to steer the waterfront's development over the next 10 to 15 years. The home of the Royal Albert Dock, Tate Liverpool and the famed Liver Building stands ready to be transformed into a hive of considered workplace, hospitality and public facilities that could undo some of the damage wrought through poor construction choices and ill-considered planning – that put rampant development ahead of protecting character and building community. A focus on conservation and sustainability is imperative for the waterfront's future, as the city strives to encourage healthier lifestyle choices amongst residents and achieve net zero by 2030.

"This is an amazing opportunity and I hope the appointed team approaches the challenge with the imagination and verve befitting a world-class city," says Liverpool City Council's cabinet member for city development, Nick Small.

Inspire great work

HÅG • OFFECCT • GIROFLEX • RH • PROFIM • RBM • CONNECTION

HÅG Tion.
Containing 75% recycled &
renewable materials.

Gurvinder Khurana

Things I've learnt

Gurvinder Khurana is Director at M Moser. With over two decades experience, Khurana is known as a leader in workplace design, regularly speaking at industry events. She has also been involved in hospitality, mixed use and more recently, retail place making projects. A passionate voice on sustainability, wellbeing and diversity in design, she also adds to M Moser's focus on the design and delivery of low and zero carbon projects.

mmoser.com

Don't be afraid of falling and remember to look up!

Tumbling and bouncing back were regular occurrences during childhood, teaching us invaluable life lessons. Each stumble and tumble is a stepping stone for growth and learning. You might get it wrong and you might not know all the answers – it's neither failure nor success, but all a part of the process and, without it, you can't succeed.

Stepping beyond our comfort zones is one of the greatest gifts we can bestow upon ourselves. It gives us energy and grows our confidence. Of course, having a supportive network helps, but trust in your adventurous spirit, embrace the falls and remember to look up.

There is no such thing as a silly idea

When brainstorming, every voice should be acknowledged without regard to position. An idea can kindle inspiration in others. During those playful moments of madness and laughter, delve into an idea and encourage involvement from all.

Authentic creativity thrives on collaboration, where the finest ideas arise from diverse minds, not a solitary person or thought. Regardless of hierarchy, a team in which every voice feels valid and valued can spark a chain of innovative ideas. Stay receptive, embrace collaboration and listen keenly; multiple voices and perspectives often lead to a greater sense of team value and more creative solutions.

Kindness matters

Stay true to your authentic self and let kindness guide your actions; you'll inspire others to follow suit. It's essential to acknowledge everyone as sensitive beings with lives beyond work. Treating them with respect is paramount.

As a business we design for people and we recognise that happy and positive people are not only content, but also contribute to a prosperous environment. Let's be mindful and considerate of others, giving them the space and kindness needed to perform at their best. By doing so, we can create environments where people thrive personally and professionally, which in turn, benefits the organisations they work for.

Embrace your authentic self

Take ownership of your decisions, recognising them as uniquely yours. Authenticity is your strength; never hide your true essence. While it might present challenges in the journey, ultimately, being genuine sets you apart and enhances the quality of your interactions.

When networking amidst brilliant peers, authenticity makes you stand out and draws people towards you. Be proud of your true self, unapologetically. Celebrate your uniqueness and approach others with a genuine willingness to assist. In nurturing and supporting others, the balance of giving and receiving enriches you and your community.

Have fun along the way

In an industry where hard work is often the norm, infusing fun into your journey is crucial. Life is fleeting and the relentless, exhaustive grind isn't conducive to creativity. Even amidst intense work, find moments to break free. Head to a café or pub, share a laugh and let loose. Balancing dedication with moments of levity is essential. Remember to grant yourself the gift of laughter and respite amid heavy workloads. A touch of merriment, even during seriousness, can breathe vitality into your creativity and work.

RePlay

MADE TO *MOVE YOU*

Sportswear inspired recycled
fabric in 33 colourways

camira

camirafabrics.com

Sinta Tantra

The height of design

Sinta Tantra is an artist known for her colourful large scale public artworks and geometric paintings; bringing a creative dimension to the built environment. Living and working between her two studios in London and Bali, Tantra's work varies in scale and examples of this can be seen at the Al Majaz Waterfront in Sharjah (2019), Lee Tung Avenue in Hong Kong (2018), and across a 300-metre bridge in Canary Wharf in London (2012).

sintatantra.com

The item:
Eileen Gray, Screen, 1922

The why:
The screen embodies all that I love about modernism, an object that fuses the disciplines of art, design, architecture and sculpture. Minimalist yet human in its scale and sensibility, I see this piece as a moving Cubist painting – the various pivotal parts framing moments that conceal and unveil themselves to the viewer. I love the compositional lines, the positive and negative spaces and the highly glossed lacquered surfaces. Walking around, I find myself drawn to its magnetic power of form and function.

How does it inspire you or your work?
Gray perfected the Japanese tradition of lacquering, first in London and then with master craftsman Sugawara in Paris. So dedicated was she to the demanding time-consuming practice that she developed 'lacquer disease' on her hands. More than a design classic, the screen demonstrates how Gray subverted the cultural stereotype of what it meant to be a Western woman – an aristocratic one at that – exploring and experimenting with traditional techniques 'other' than her.

What do you think has been the impact?
A heavy, albeit decorative item, the screen reads more like an erect building than an ornamental object made (one would assume) by a man. At a time when it was incredibly challenging to carve a career as a female designer, to be noticed as a woman in a man's world, one sometimes had to appropriate masculine attributes. Gray's bravery in pursuing her practice as one of the first female architects certainly led the way for future generations of women.

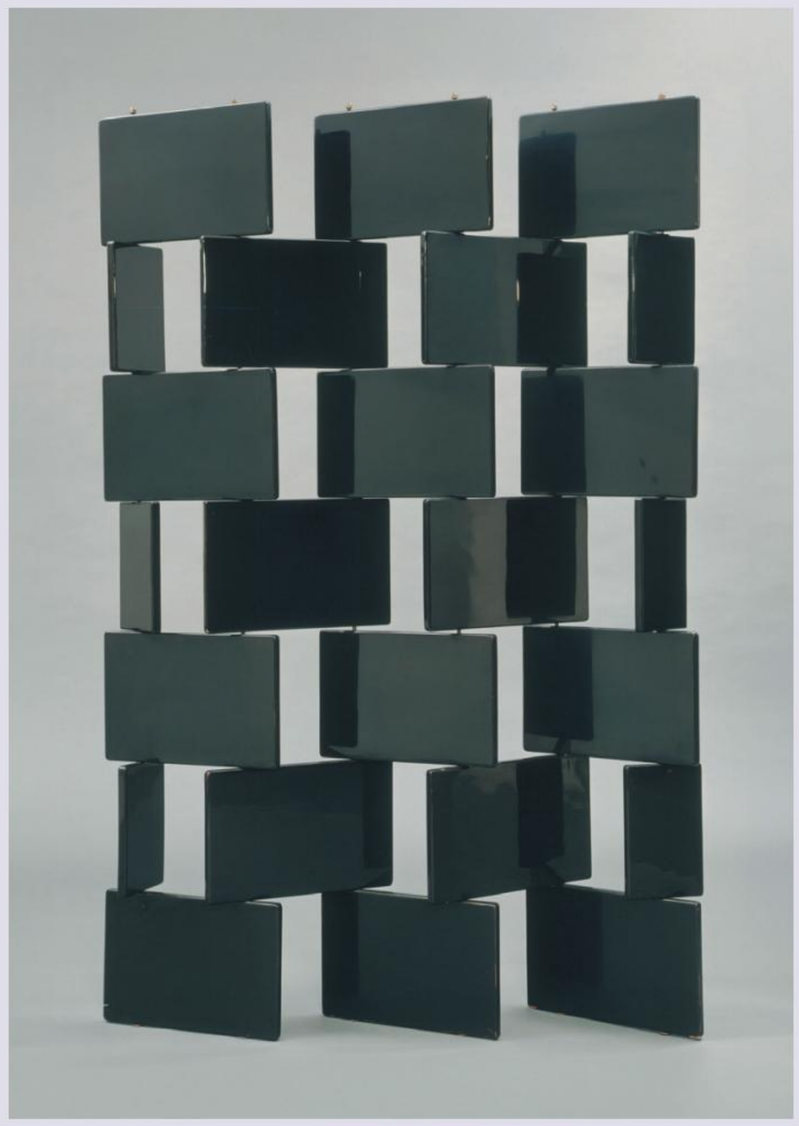


Image: MoMA

The personal connection:
My fascination with Gray's work led me to develop my own series of screens in 2015. These ranged from three to four-part panels of various shapes and sizes. Created from individual paintings, interconnecting and self-supporting, they stood in the middle of a room, displaying both the front and back of the canvas – the back rarely seen by viewers. Developing these Gray-inspired screens shifted my thinking, enabling me to introduce the more public art side of my practice into the gallery space.

experts in powering spaces.

STEVE // SOLUTIONS SPECIALIST

Looking to power a space and not sure where to start? At OE we've been designing and manufacturing innovative power solutions in the heart of Yorkshire since 1986. Get in touch to tell us all about your project and we'll be your guide... or sign up to our new BIID-acredited CPD to master the art of powering agile spaces yourself.

British Institute of Interior Design | CPD PROVIDER

scan & register your interest

www.oeelectrics.co.uk
+44 (0) 1924 367255

The last lock-in

Neil Usher is the VP of Places at software company Sage.

The first use of the expression 'Davey Jones's locker' was in Daniel Defoe's *The Four Years Voyages of Capt. George Roberts*, published in 1726. No one's really sure of the underlying reason for its use in denoting the harbour of the spirits of sailors past, in the depths of the ocean. Melissa Jones's locker, on the other hand, contains an unopened bag of crisps, an unreliable mouse, the last day book she ever used and three pens that have dried out. Melissa's got no idea what's in the locker, or even which one is hers.

Lockers represent the demise of personal physical space in the workplace. From private offices with cabinets and credenzas (possibly a fridge) to assigned desks with pedestals, the locker is the last remaining entity with the potential to have our name on it. During the pandemic, rather than the organisation taking the opportunity to further whittle away at ownership, unlike any other feature of the workplace transitioned from personal to collective use, we've started to abandon lockers unilaterally. In most cases, unconsciously.

Of necessity, we've learned the art of self-containment. This manner of existence was once the preserve of fleet-based sales, auditors and management consultants. Yet with variable attendance, leaving stuff we need day-to-day in the office now creates an awkward and outdated reliance. The miracle of the USB-C cable has finally rid us of the need to haul around a charger resembling a boa constrictor that's swallowed a vole. As for shoes, rather than slipping into something less comfortable when we pass through the revolving door, we now keep our trainers on all day. And a used gym kit left in there Thursday to Tuesday may risk creating an ecosystem that would interest David Attenborough.

Whether enabled by digi-locks or apps, lockers can now be used when they're needed – like a room, or a car – for an electric scooter or a designer outfit for Mixology (check the insurance). As with many other self-defeating strategies of the modern age, the 'smarter' they get (if we can consider a locker to have the capability for rational decision making) the less of them we need.

All of which has been excellent news for the Facilities team, who no longer have to dedicate a colleague to the maintenance of a list of who's been allocated what. A clear-down once a quarter is all that's needed; the analogue equivalent of switching them off and on again, only with some inevitable "you'll never guess what...." stories attached. Autonomous and self-sufficient nodes that we've become, we've created a paradox for ourselves: the desire to personalise our workspace, while having nothing left to personalise it with. We've transferred most of our self-expression online, with its flashing neon trail. What we haven't uploaded now neatly packs away into a rucksack, in keeping with the inexorable miniaturisation of our lives.

We'll always need a few, naturally. But they may soon be smart enough to tell us when we don't need them, either.

narbutas

SILENT ROOM

Your comfort zone

- Four sizes: S, M, L, XL
- Perfect sound absorption
- Ventilation, lighting control

A true acoustic oasis in the modern office. It’s suitable for individual tasks or phone conversations, teamwork or meetings. Different pod sizes are available to provide spaces from one to eight people. For every SILENT ROOM you choose, there is a wide range of design options in terms of the materials, colours and interior furnishing. For example, increasing or decreasing the number of the glass walls will create a more open space or greater privacy. It is also possible to install the desired equipment for video conferences. SILENT ROOM – everything you need for a high-quality and pleasant working environment.

Visit us in London showroom
3rd & 4th Floor, 46 Sekforde Street, London, EC1R 0HA
london.showroom@narbutas.com
www.narbutas.com

Building culture, together

dMFK's founding director Julian de Metz discusses getting back to the office, challenging convention and the relationship between outside and in.

Words:
Harry McKinley

We're only a few minutes into the working day when I arrive at dMFK's Charlotte Street HQ. It's a relatively new home for the much-accoladed architectural practice, the result of condensing its two previous London offices into one. Formerly the home of Channel 4, it's a nimble, ultra-tailored space with floor-to-ceiling windows; views across to an Italian sandwich bar and an elegant coffee shop. With cyclists and cappuccino-toting workers skirting by, there's a sense the surroundings are as much a part of the fabric of the place as the interiors.

Julian de Metz, dMFK's Founding Director, is propped up at a conference table near the door when I arrive, his tee wet in patches. He's darted to the office fresh from a morning swim nearby, part of a regular routine that sees his days start early. The office is already busy. Banks of architects are industriously tapping at keyboards, chatting to colleagues or prodding at the coffee machine. In the era of hybrid working, it's an uncommon sight. Then again, it's what the practice's workplace was devised for: a full house, or close to it.

Left:
dMFK's
Chancery
House

De Metz isn't a believer in working from home, at least when it comes to the business he helms. "I hated it," he says, of the days we didn't have any other choice. "Now that the team can return to the office, for us it's really important that they do. This is where we create our culture and we can't do that if we're not together."

Strolling around the mostly open-plan, U-shaped space, with its flexible meeting rooms, Zoom cubicles and rows of hot desks, it's obvious that much attention and care has been lavished. More than functional, it's exceedingly beautiful, all wooden walls and smart fabrics. The ambition was that the office become an asset, a means to attract and retain the best talent, while giving the firm's established cohort no excuses to want to be elsewhere – the comfortable surrounds of home included. "It's about enabling people to live a more humane life, within the office," de Metz explains, as we cross the street to DL/78 by Derwent London, a coworking hub with presentation and meeting rooms, casual workstations and a café. dMFK's team are free to trot over and use the building, on the rare occasions they need something their own home can't provide.

Though Charlotte Street is something of a test case, it's also a reflection of two of de Metz's drivers: a desire to unlock the power of the workplace and a belief that good design means getting under the skin of what people want and need. Indeed, it was a 'rubbish' office that proved formative in shaping his views on architecture and interiors.

"One of my first experiences of being emotionally upset by design was going into my first ever office job," he laughs. "The lighting was flat, the air quality wasn't nice and the acoustics were horrible. I just thought, am I going to have to spend most of my life in a building like this?"

Today, workplace represents about half of dMFK's project portfolio, and the studio's success in the sector is perhaps down to an early understanding that the traditional codes of office design are not a gospel to be slavishly adhered to.

"In the mid-90s [dMFK was founded at the turn of the millennium] there was the idea that you always had to have the reception desk, with someone sitting there on the phone, eating a sandwich or painting their nails; always a big foreboding reception desk," de Metz recalls. "Then there would be 500 plugs on rows of desks. It was boring or, at worst, depressing. It was clear that standardisation bred mediocrity."

De Metz remembers an early project, Power Road Studios, that represented a radically different vision: a place where big and small companies alike could go to share space, where workers could meet others from outside their organisation

Rosehill

Introducing

Artesia

With a classical silhouette, sober, minimalist lines and a firmly planted stance, the Artesia is a stacking chair that'll complement the most sophisticated and well-thought-out interior spaces.

Visit our showroom

Find us at
Rosehill-furnishings

Order online at **rosehill.co.uk**
or call our team on **0161 485 1717**

Left:
Inside 76
Charlotte Street

Opposite
Top image:
Four Acres,
Kingston-Upon-
Thames

Bottom image:
Salters Hall in
London

“Standardisation bred mediocrity”

and where, “the small companies could benefit from the big companies, and the big companies could learn from the small.” It was a pioneering model that de Metz worked on with his partner at the time, today describing it as, “probably one of the first shared workspace concepts in the UK.”

He’d later show Charlie Green around, the man who would go on to launch TOG (The Office Group). “He was thinking at the time to get into the office market and could see that serviced offices back then were perceived as being like post boxes,” de Metz explains. “But he wanted instead to nod to boutique hotels, where design was important and where there was a real sense of shared amenity. And so we started working with them and did their inaugural building.”

De Metz is the first to admit that the pilot was not perfect and had kinks to be pressed out, but it was the start of an abundantly fruitful relationship that has seen dMFK complete nine projects for TOG to date – each one getting “better and better”, as lessons are learnt and new ideas deployed. In turn, the practice has become something of a dab hand at creating compelling workplaces for others.

“Briefs have changed and now the focus of the workspace market is on providing lots of diverse and interesting environments, that incorporate distinctiveness,” he says. “They have to feel a bit homely too. When people were sat in their flats with duvets and curtains around to absorb sound, Zoom calls actually felt quite comfortable, for example. Then people came back to the office and the acoustics were horrible. So these types of things are getting brought into new briefs and are important elements of any design.”

Though fundamentally an architecture studio, de Metz is keen to stress that, as a practice, dMFK’s consideration of the connection between exterior and interior is what sets them apart.

“We've always liked doing interiors and over the years we've tried to have a specific interiors team, but what we prefer is to have architects who can do interiors as well,” he says, “because I fundamentally believe they're the same thing. If you have a really good piece of architecture, then the interior should just flow from it.”

We’re sat once more in the studio’s conference space, a large screen periodically flitting between polished photos of dMFK’s work: Unilever’s leadership centre fading to a gloriously modern synagogue; a majestically Brutalist Livery Hall to a community housing project. They’re buildings that, in their use, don’t have much in common. They don’t look much alike either. Granted, they’re all singularly handsome, but dMFK’s hand isn’t necessarily seen in any shared notion of aesthetics. Instead, it’s in how they’ve been treated: sympathetically, confidently and, dare I say, bravely. They might not look the same, but they also don’t look like the work of anyone else.

Below:
Supermax at
King's Cross

"The tradition when dealing with heritage buildings [which represent a substantial chunk of dMFK's portfolio] used to be: make the old bit look old and make the new bit out of glass," de Metz suggests sardonically. "I don't believe in that. We try to get inside the head of the person that designed it originally and ask: well, if they had another bite at the cherry, what might they do? How might they have some fun with it? What would it look like and what materials would be used? Even if a historic building seems unlovable, we try and understand where the love was in it, because we believe in growing and adapting. That requires accepting that we live in a city where there are multiple layers of architectural history, with complication and complexity. That doesn't stop at the exterior of the building, it moves into the interior as well, and so our focus is on being awake and alive to the way people use buildings today."

Now late morning, our conversation drawing to close, discussion turns back to understanding people – what they want and need. For de Metz, it's here that BBC Radio 4 has provided surprising, but solid, guidance – as he paraphrases a rabbi he heard some years ago on Today's Thought for the Day.

"It was in the early days of the pandemic and she was predicting how disconnected we would all become; how blunt digital communication is. She explained that when we sit together our hearts synchronise. It may be a metaphor, but she was highlighting that something more happens when people are together, that we want to be near others. I think that's fundamentally what good design is: something that makes people feel good and which lifts their spirits. Ultimately buildings and spaces can do that."

Interface®

CHOOSE CARBON NEGATIVE FLOORING

Our goal is to make products with the lowest carbon footprint possible. Products that go beyond neutral to help restore the health of the planet. In 2021 we launched our first carbon negative product. Now, our carbon negative product offer is expanding by adding CQuest™ BioX backing to even more products.

378 CARBON NEGATIVE COLOURS

38 CARBON NEGATIVE PRODUCTS

For more information:
+44 (0) 800 313 4465
ukcustomerservices@interface.com

Photography: Helen Cathcart

A tale of two cities

Fettle's Andy Goodwin and Tom Parker on transatlantic collaboration and bringing history back to life.

Words:
Chloé Petersen Snell

For most of us, especially those lucky enough to be familiar with the North of England, to be in fine fettle is to be in good health. A lesser-known meaning though, is to shape, craft and prepare. Fitting, then, for design studio Fettle, which has become well known for its layered and bespoke approach to projects, from hospitality to coworking. Founders Tom Parker and Andy Goodwin were friends and colleagues before business partners, reflected in a relationship that can withstand an eight-hour time difference across two studios: Parker based in Los Angeles and Goodwin in London.

With Goodwin hailing from Sheffield and Parker from Reading, the duo met at United Designers in London, both moving to Martin Brudnizki's London studio (MBDS), with Parker eventually relocating to the US to help set up the MBDS New York outpost. They recall dreaming about their own studio from almost the moment they met – working together for another seven years before taking the leap and starting Fettle in 2013. Like most life-changing adventures, it happened more through coincidence and opportunity than by design. As the pair started to work on their own projects outside of work at MBDS, Brudnizki began to transition into the more maximalist style so familiar today,

Fettle

Image on previous page:
Fettle co-founders, Andy Goodwin and Tom Parker

Left image:
San Carlo Alderley Edge

Right image:
Private dining at San Carlo, Liverpool

putting any clients he didn't feel were a right fit in touch with the newly formed Fettle. Parker moved back to the UK as the studio was born, going on to split his time between London and the US, until the amount of projects Fettle secured overseas necessitated a full-time base in L.A. Years later and the studio is making serious waves on both sides of the Atlantic, designing the likes of the Marylebone Hotel London and The Draycott in LA, as well as Hoxton and Locke hotels, from Rome to Portland.

As alumni of MBDS it's no surprise that Fettle embraces the maximalist and luxurious, with a design language that layers different styles, textures and patterns – which resonated with the duo more than the more minimalist and clean approach of United. For Parker and Goodwin however, it's less about defining their style as 'maximalist', and more about making a statement. "Creating an experience is what it's all about," says Goodwin, "and to do that properly, you can't really be safe. If you want to get a reaction, being vanilla and middle of the road isn't going to get you there."

"Martin's focus on history has definitely influenced both of us," Parker continues. "When things are super clean and crisp and modern, there's only so much range. We like to reference the past and the more traditional. Reviving history while adding modern touches really appeals to us."

The result is a portfolio of projects that are interpretations of the past, rather than pastiches. At The Elder, Bath (created within a Grade I listed series of Georgian Townhouses within the same site at the Hotel Indigo Bath), the design

art direction: studio FM milano
photo: Andrea Garuti
styling: Studio Salaris

pedrali.com

PEDRALI®

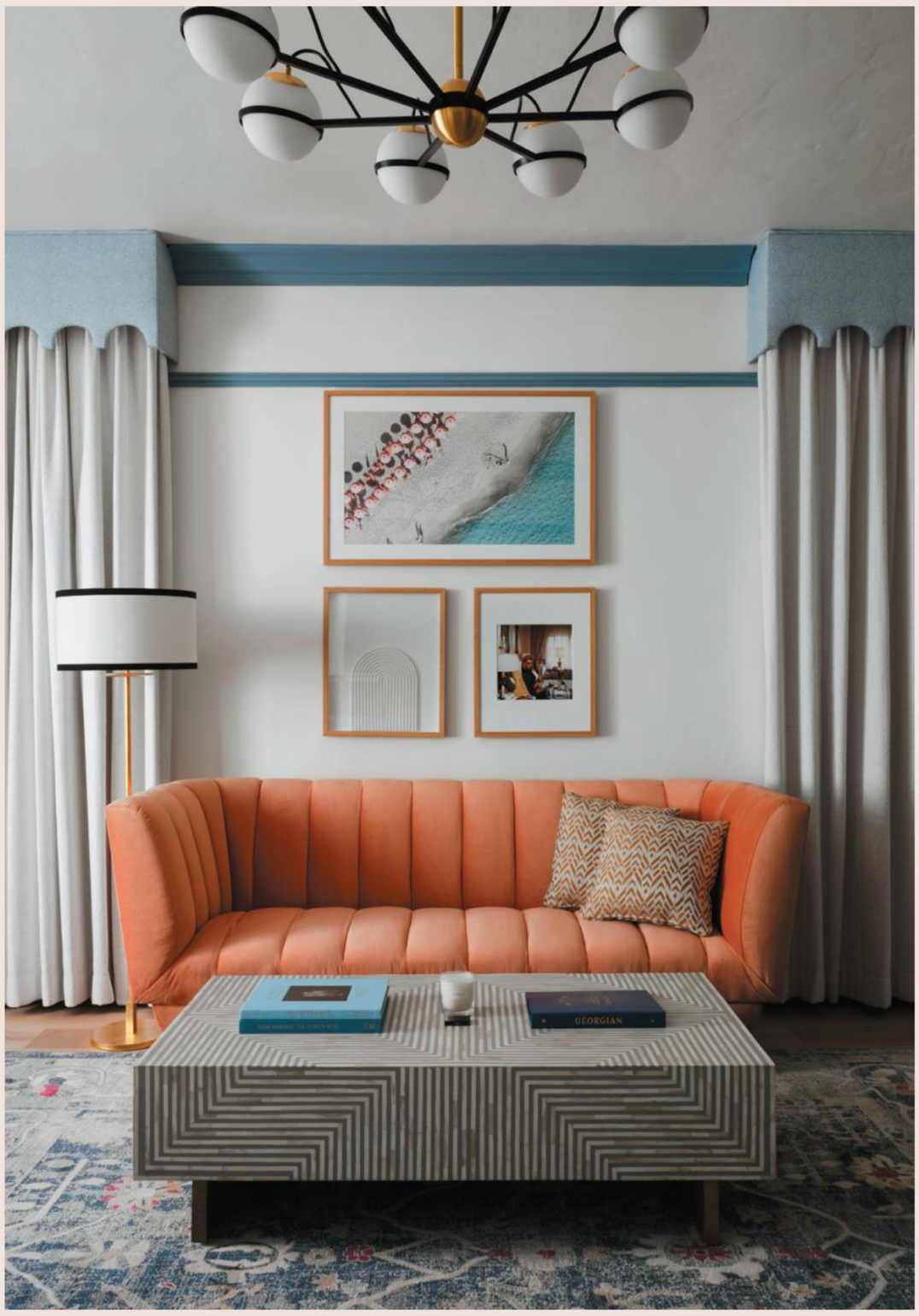
Workspace at 1 Warwick, Soho

San Carlo, Liverpool

centred the history of the building and its local neighbourhood – including Bath's strong literary history and decadent past. "We weren't interior designers at some points during that project, more like archaeologists," Goodwin laughs. And at San Carlo, Liverpool, a reimagined take on traditional Italian dining takes reference from the avant-garde architecture of Piero Portaluppi – a palette synonymous with northern Italy, partnered with classic Italian mid-century furniture.

This enthusiasm for history and restoring buildings to their former glory extends across the pond – relatively young in comparison to the UK. At The Georgian hotel in Santa Monica, California, Fettle restored the classic art deco turquoise façade, using the original style to inform the interiors. High ceilings are accented by the distinctive West Coast deco-style chandeliers, and the geometric pattern of the floor references the designs of the 1930s. The building was built in 1953 – which by LA standards is fairly old, Parker notes.

The pair are often asked about each other's respective countries more than their own; perhaps reflective of the unique relationship that the two have with each other – the grass is always greener after all. Due to its size, the US projects are more varied than their UK cousins; the LA studio currently embarking on a series of diverse projects, from a Las Vegas restaurant to a rustic Utah cabin. Even East and West Coast are strikingly different – coworking space The Malin in New York holds more in common with London than LA. Despite this, the two teams are constantly inspired by each other's work, and for the duo it's this geographical spread that makes the studio so



The Georgian, Santa Monica

San Carlo, Alderley Edge

special. “The atmospheres we create in the US are the same as they are here in the UK, and it’s always relevant to its locality,” Parker says. “There’s a lot of cross-pollination across multiple countries, and for a small studio of just 15 it’s rare to have two pre-established studios. We’re lucky.”

Both teams are involved in all projects and are not siloed to any one country, to ensure the language and style of the studio’s projects are aligned – and although designing collaboratively on different continents has its challenges, Goodwin and Parker’s friendship and similar skillset make sure the studios run consistently side by side. “We spend way too much time speaking every day,” Goodwin laughs, “it’s relentless – sometimes we speak more to each other than to our partners.”

We meet at the Fettle-designed Nessa, a plush and eclectic restaurant and bar inspired by Soho’s bohemian history, which takes up the ground floor of private members club 1 Warwick. Upstairs is a mix of both shared and private workplace and hospitality settings that allow guests to create, work and unwind in equal measure. Common in Fettle projects, a residential atmosphere comes from a mix of bespoke and vintage furniture, offering a home away from home to members. While the studio primarily focuses on hotels and restaurants, the convergence of hospitality and workplace hastened by the pandemic allows the studio's hospitality-oriented interiors to seamlessly transition into shared coworking spaces, perhaps more than ever. But for Goodwin, the pleasure of designing for hospitality is the luxury of time to create something special. “When it comes to hospitality, the

Above image:
Sunset Terrace at The Georgian, Santa Monica

time that you have to spend per area is so much bigger than what people who design offices will typically be given to design the same amount of space. [Workplace designers] are asked to design thousands of square metres worth of office space, whereas we will be doing hundreds of square metres of F&B space – because the level of detail that you have to put into every element is immense. Every piece of FF&E in [Nessa] is bespoke. If you were to apply that to an office environment, it doesn't necessarily work."

> "If you want to get a reaction, being vanilla and middle of the road isn't going to get you there."

Combining work and play, future plans for the studio includes its next project for Locke in Paris, which will see a historic property in the city's fifth arrondissement transformed into a boutique aparthotel, due to open early next year. Working to Locke's unique hybrid concept, a sensitive redevelopment of the 18th century mansion and adjacent factory will result in activated social spaces – comprising a high-concept restaurant and bar set under a restored glass atrium, coworking and a coffee shop. And across the pond, a destination restaurant in the heart of downtown Palm Springs will be Fettle's biggest US opening for 2024. From the team behind The Draycott, the studio's first US project, Bar Issi will be a kitchen and maximalist restaurant using largely recycled and sustainable materials, including a backlit recycled plastic bar top with recycled inlaid tinsel. And so, with a sleugh of upcoming projects on both sides of the Atlantic (and beyond), it seems the continued success of the studio is in fine fettle indeed.

Visit the
Formica Group Showroom

5 Clerkenwell Road, London, EC1M 5PA

THE FIRST AND ORIGINAL

Est. 1913

INSPIRED BY LIFE. EVOLVING WITH THE TIMES

FORMICA®

formica.com/ukshowroom

Madeleine
Kessler

In praise of the public toilet

Madeleine Kessler is an architect, curator and urbanist dedicated to designing joyful people-centred places that contribute positively to our planet.

I have just come back from Portugal, where I was not only impressed by the wonderful landscapes, architecture and culinary delights, but also the consistent examples of interesting and well-designed public toilets. From marble and stone cubicles along a remote mountain trail in Serra da Estrela, to sculptural conveniences carved into the landscape at Alvaro Siza's Leca Pools, there is a real pride in the design of these everyday conveniences, which are integral to making our towns and cities more accessible.

In practice my work centres around designing joyful public spaces, finding opportunities to celebrate everyday places. Public toilets are one such type of space, yet they are all too often neglected. There is somewhat of a societal taboo around discussing the toilet, highlighted by euphemisms such as cloakroom, powder room and conveniences. Luis Buñuel questioned these rules in his film Le Fantôme de la Liberté, where a bourgeois family sits on toilets talking to one another around the dining table, discreetly scurrying to a small utilitarian cubicle to eat alone when hungry. Why aren't our toilets designed with the same grandeur and pride as a dining room?

Britain's first paid-for flushing public toilet opened in the Great Exhibition of 1851, inviting visitors to 'spend a penny'. Since then, public toilets have evolved to become an essential part of our urban infrastructure. But with a lack of legislation and public funding, toilets are disappearing from our cities. The Royal Society for Public Health found that over half of people restrict fluid intake before going out for fear of not being able to find a toilet, whilst more than 90% of respondents to The London Assembly Health Committee survey felt that toilet provision in London was inadequate. A lack of public toilets is forcing people to either stay close to home, pay to use a toilet in a private establishment, or to use the street itself as a toilet, leading to inequality in how we access and use the city.

Public toilets are essential to creating a healthier, more accessible and economically viable city. The urgent need to address the provision of toilets is something I explored as co-curator of the British Pavilion at the 17th International Venice Architecture Biennale. Within our exhibition, The Garden of Privatised Delights, the installation To-i-let aimed to open up the pavilion's toilets for the public to use. Italian building regulations prevented us from doing this, so the toilet was instead put on display, highlighting opportunities to improve access to existing underutilised toilets and create a network of toilets within public and private spaces for everyone to use.

Public toilets are an essential piece of urban infrastructure, allowing freedom to explore and use public space on our own terms. They liberate us to venture further from our homes. Investing in the design, provision and maintenance of public toilets is investing in the wellbeing and quality of life of all society. Let us once again take pride in the humble public toilet and lead the way in creating palatial spaces of safety, dignity and comfort, for everyone to use.

Designed for Every Body

Most chairs are made to fit the “average” body. Path instantly adapts to every body straight out of the box — no manual adjustments needed.

Learn more at humanscale.com/path

Path™

by Humanscale

Case Study Special Projects

Words: Lauren Jade Hill
Photography: Colin Ross

Empathetic interiors

The innovation studio, Special Projects, centres its values in the design of its new Richmond home.

When the founders of Special Projects, previously based in Shoreditch, decided to make Richmond their innovation studio's new home, the leafy streets of this West London borough became much of the inspiration for the site's design. In partnership with Studio Rhonda, co-founders Clara Gaggero Westaway and Adrian Westaway set out to reflect the ethos of the design and invention agency, which is built on a commitment to fusing empathy and wellbeing with meaningful design and invention.

"We didn't want to recreate the studio that we had in Shoreditch," says Gaggero Westaway. "That was a very different space and setting. Here, we tried to create something that is very natural and almost like a continuation of the outside. Richmond is one of the greenest boroughs in London. We really wanted to translate this botanical nature of Richmond into the studio's interiors. You know that here you're really in touch with the seasons and with nature. You see a lot of the sky because it's less built up and you see a lot of greenery. When we moved here, we felt it was therapeutic – the space a reflection of that change."

The studio is a part of The Vineyard community in Richmond, among a variety of other creative businesses and in a first-floor space overlooking a courtyard home to a collection of vintage cars. In this studio space, a colour palette chosen for the tranquillity and warmth it exudes combines serene pastel tones (such as pink and teal), encouraging creativity to flourish – with pale terracotta referencing the local architectural vernacular and the sky blue of the canopy emphasising that connection with the outdoors.

Image on previous page:
Neutral tones inside Special Projects' studio

Below image:
The main workspace

Studio Rhonda

tessera® union collection

accord | harmony | infused

www.forbo-flooring.co.uk/tesseraunion

- Series of three individual yet tonally linked ranges
- Made & stocked in the UK using 100% renewable energy
- 60% recycled content by weight
- Works perfectly with Allura Flex LVT for integrated work space designs

T: 0800 731 2369
E: samples.uk@forbo.com

forbo
FLOORING SYSTEMS

creating better environments

Left image:
Storage space

Right image:
White-washed wooden floorings

Image on following page: A workspace for collaboration

These soft colours complement the space's white wooden floorboards and walls, with abundant plantlife, in terracotta pots, adding to the botanical component. Clean-cut modern furnishings, like its white work tables, contrast with more rustic elements of the space such as worn wood and exposed brickwork. Ensuring the serenity and organisation of this space is retained throughout its use, white curtains section off the studio's storage areas.

This studio space encompasses a workshop—where ideas take their tangible form—and a functional kitchen that's designed as a communal hub complete with a large oval dining table drawing on Special Projects' belief in the power of sharing meals. A sliding door and curtain transform this kitchen space into a meeting room that's separate from the main work area when required. The zoning of this studio allows for the transition between the separation of private work areas and its expansion into a fluid working environment for collaborative sessions.

All of this comes together to embody the core values of this studio, from the pursuit of empathy (through the curation of a layout that encourages connection and nurtures the free flow of ideas) to

the meticulous organisation of each space, ensuring clarity across its diverse portfolio of projects. A sense of optimism comes through playful design elements, like the sky-blue ceiling, and magic is woven into the overall concept with the inclusion of scattered objects of interest.

“Empathy in particular is really important for us because at the core of our practice is really trying to understand the problem, frustration or a desire that different user groups have with different products or technologies,” says Gaggero Westaway. “We want to foster empathy with our clients, as well as staff members in our studio. Often in the tech and innovation sector, you either see these cold futuristic offices, or you see those pretend playgrounds. We wanted it to be much more human and much more like a kitchen, where you gather and collaborate naturally. We wanted to create a space that felt a bit like home.”

She reveals that one early source of inspiration for this type of studio space came from a past visit to the Maggie’s West London cancer counselling centre at Charing Cross Hospital, which was designed by Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners, based on the concept of a heart nestled in the protective wrap of its four walls.

“We want to foster empathy with our clients as well as staff members in our studio”

“Even though it’s on the grounds of the hospital they made it feel like a home,” she says. “It felt like such a contrast from the hospital. That visit was 15 years ago and it has never left my mind. After that, I always wanted to create a workspace that has that vibe, that sense of calm, that way of making people feel at ease.

“With the new studio, it feels like you're coming to a space that reflects our values,” she concludes. “Hopefully people feel that they are at ease when they’re here and clients feel free to discuss their joys and frustrations. This studio has a really homely feel to it.”

onnade

kieurope.com
info@kieurope.com
020 7404 7441

The old Man and the Sea

At Soho restaurant Manzi's, Fabled Studio writes the next chapter of an already-storied institution.

Words: Harry McKinley

Case Study Manzi's

In Hemmingway's seminal 1952 novella, The Old Man and the Sea, death is an inescapable force; an ever-present spectre looming over man and beast alike. If this sounds a tad macabre, it also teaches that beauty and dignity can come from battling its inevitability. Though the book was more of a visual reference for the exuberantly designed, newly opened Manzi's, it's also a fitting thematic one – a one-time West End institution rescued from the chilly abyss of history.

The original Manzi's opened its doors in 1928 on the edge of Chinatown, a shrine to seafood with a cheeky character. Above the dining space, guest rooms were reputedly rentable by the hour. It was as democratic as it was colourful, drawing a diverse audience, but eventually shuttering a couple of years shy of its 80th birthday, in 2006.

Now, a hop and a skip away in the heart of Soho, Manzi's has been revived as part of The Wolseley Hospitality Group, with conversation-starting interiors by Fabled Studio. Spread across two floors in a vast site off Bateman Street, it is one of the neighbourhood's largest dining destinations, determined to make its presence felt in both scale and spectacle.

"We obviously wanted to nod to the original Manzi's, but we didn't actually have much to go on," explains Fabled co-founder Steven Saunders, noting that there are little or no images of the previous interiors. Instead, it was another book, Memories of Manzi's, that provided a creative springboard.

"It was written by someone who had never been to Manzi's," Saunders explains, "but he recreated the place vicariously through stories, interviewing past patrons. From that we gathered something of an emotion; a feeling of what Manzi's was and what it meant to many people, as well as what it looked like to a degree."

Red gingham tablecloths, a gold statue of Neptune, draped fishing nets and mermaids in mirrors, were some of the design details mentioned for a venue that, shy of some new discovery, is memorialised only in the recollections of those who visited.

Image on previous page:
Mark Sands' staircase mural

Right image:
Embossed leather seating

Isle.

Isle table with Wish chairs

Introducing Isle, a statement table with a softer more domestic feel to modern-day commercial furniture design.

We create **exceptional furniture** through **intelligent designs** and innovative materials to **revolutionise workspaces** across the world, inspiring the **creativity** and **productivity** of its users.

Showroom:
5 Sycamore Street,
Clerkenwell,
London EC1Y 0SG

frovi.co.uk

Far from limiting Fabled's vision however, the enigma of Manzi's previous face was liberating – an opportunity to develop a truly original, rampantly vivacious design that is a new chapter in the story, not a knowing (or even knowable) pastiche of what came before.

Granted free creative rein by Wolseley Group, the studio first sought to root the 240-cover restaurant in its surroundings, and provide a response to them. "It had to speak to Soho by offering glamour and decadence, as well as not take itself too seriously," continues Saunders. "We wanted it to capture an ephemeral romance, something nostalgic and an element of escapism; nostalgic, yes, but also theatrical." A pre-opening hard hat tour saw the London Gay Men's Chorus drafted in to deliver a series of high-camp musical standards – evidence, if ever needed, that Manzi's would leave humourless solemnity to others.

If theatricality and escapism was the ambition, then the end result is one successfully defined by melodrama. Where some restaurants may have a singular set piece to harangue the attention of diners, Manzi's is an extraordinary embarrassment of design riches. A taxidermy marlin greets arrivals, set against a vivid mural of a raging, angry wave and desolate fisherman by Mark Sands. In the adjacent dining room, rendered in soft blues, a sculptural Poseidon towers over a table, clasping a swaying light fixture in one hand, his trident in the other. Venture to the even more grandiose space upstairs, and vaguely life-size mermaids prop up the

“We wanted to capture an ephemeral romance”

Image on previous page:
A sculptured Poseidon

Above:
Added texture from rope

Left:
Life-size mermaids prop up the bar

bar, conger eels snake around wall lamps and a gallant glass centrepiece depicts an enormous octopus in teal and shades of red. Eight kilometres of rope have been used throughout the restaurant, adding texture and dimension to walls and columns.

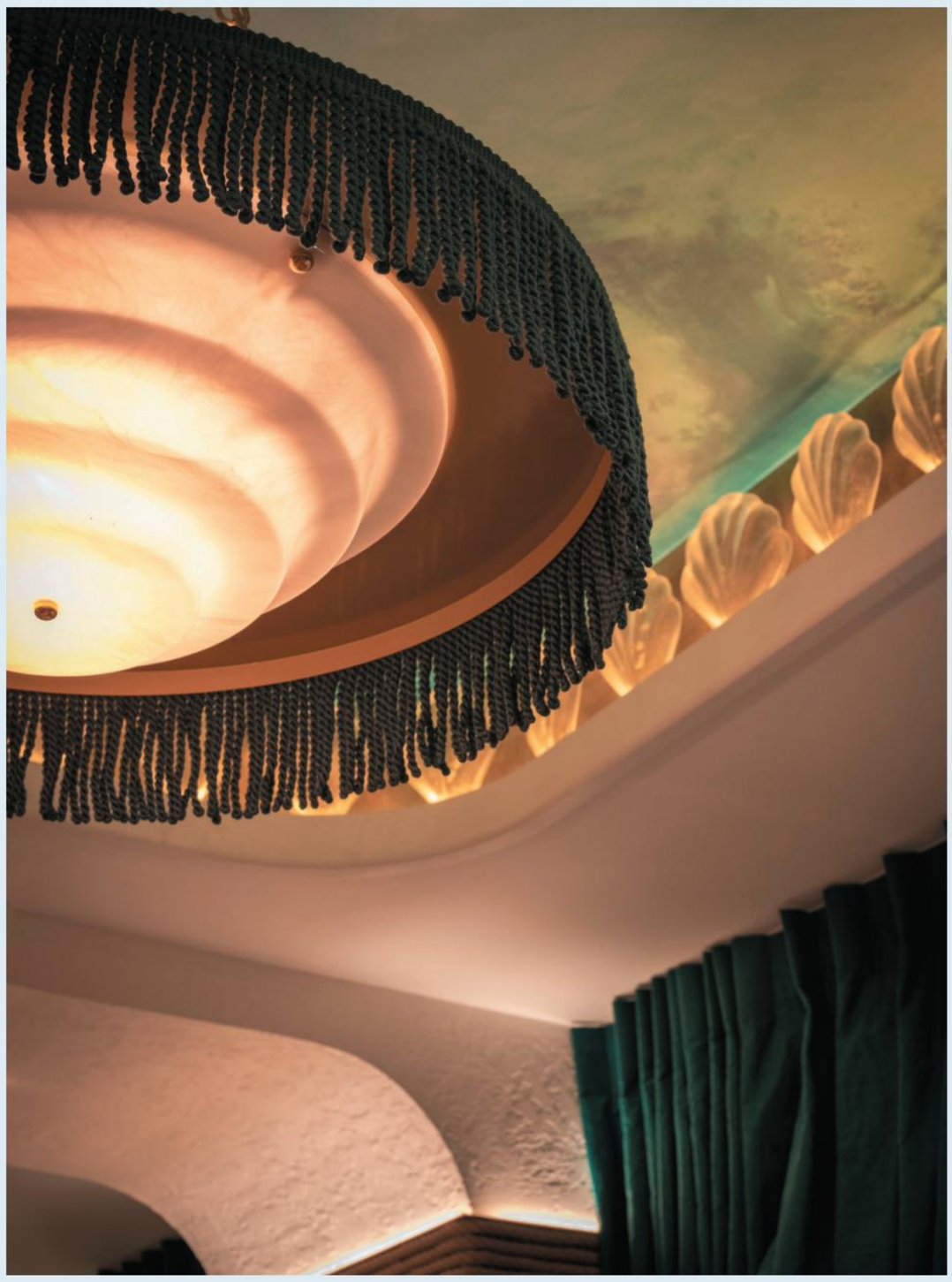
Fabled unconventionally collaborated with a set design and modelmaking company to bring many of these elements to life – the Bristol based Cod Steaks. Famed for its work with Aardman Animations and having just finished work on Tokyo's Harry Potter studio tour, Cod Steaks partnered with Fabled in hand sketching, clay modelling, digitally artworking and ultimately producing the likes of the mermaid bar, Poseidon and the immense clamshell DJ booth. All of the custom decorative lighting was helmed by Atelier Lighting's Tim Henderson, while bespoke manufacturer Noble Russell led on the furniture – from the scallop edged barstools to the embossed leather seating on the ground floor.

But what makes Manzi's so particularly, agreeably immersive is the commitment to design intricacy, as much as to those bold statements. There is as much love and attention lavished on the barely-noticed as the can't-miss, be it aesthetically or in the layers of storytelling. The mermaid motif in the mirrors, for example, was recreated from an original Manzi's menu found on eBay, floors feature hand cut mosaics and even the salt and pepper shakers are manifest as twin metal crabs.

"It's not just the obvious. Yes, you've got the big-ticket theatre pieces, but then you've got the background, with its layers of texture and purpose and meaning, which bring it all together," concludes Saunders. "It's not just one token gesture, it's everything. That's what makes it such an enveloping experience; that's why it works."

Below left:
Soft blues evoke the sea

Below right:
Decorative lighting by Atelier Lighting



Balsan
BALSAN

Designed & Made in France

Balsan, French manufacturer of textile floor coverings, offers a wide colourful range of high-quality carpets, carpet tiles and LVT solutions for every public and private setting.

Color your dreams with Balsan! *

* Colorez vos rêves avec Balsan

FLAIR
FASHION
HOSPITALITY
WORKSPACE

www.balsan.com

@Balsan_UK

Going Dutch

Booking.com's new Amsterdam campus brings together the work of ten design studios for a collaborative journey like no other.

Words:
Chloé Petersen Snell
Photography:
Hufton+Crow, Philippe Sarfati

Booking.com's much-anticipated HQ has arrived in Amsterdam, bringing all 6,500 of the travel tech giant's employees together in the same building for the first time in more than a decade. And at over 65,000 sq m, this state-of-the-art, neck-craning campus is no mean feat.

Located on the historic waterfront at Oosterdokseiland, or Eastern Dock Island, the impressive new structure reflects the industrial nature of the harbour, with a detailed glass façade reflecting the surrounding water and generous sky. Contrasting with the imposing nature of the architecture, inside the interior design is warm and lively – the building broken down to a human scale through an abundance of natural materials, diverse zoning and layers of greenery.

Booking.com

Image on previous page:
Living walls in the main atrium

Below:
A coffee break in the Amazon

"While the individual interior spaces enjoy a truly international flavour that reflects Booking.com's core business, we wanted the overall concept for the building to serve as a reflection of Amsterdam – its location and the Dutch travel company's homebase since its inception," comments UNStudio's Ben van Berkel, who led the architecture and spatial planning of the building. "The architecture combines the robust qualities and the industrial history of the harbour, while the interior is designed to characterise the vibrancy of Amsterdam's central neighbourhoods."

Architects UNStudio and lead interior designers HofmanDujardin, collaborated with ten different international practices, on the concept of 'Booking Home' – the project encompassing workplace and F&B offerings, and with the aim of creating an environment that considers the physical and mental health of Booking.com's employees.

"We aimed to create a home for all employees and realised that every place on earth is home to someone," explains HofmanDujardin's Willem Wopereis, referencing the 100+ nationalities that work under the one – albeit monumental – roof. "The nature of Booking.com as a travel platform was then translated into a concept with several destinations. The building invites us to explore and offers a journey with many places to discover."

On entering, a huge atrium offers views up a dramatic staircase flanked by a green corridor of plants and digital screens, encouraging visitors to traverse the light-filled space and second floor. Throughout the building breakout workspaces are divided into 28 themes based on holiday destinations. Guests and employees can step away from their desks to collaborate in New York City, brainstorm in Panama, or have a coffee break in the Amazon, allowing for the traditional workspaces on each floor to remain relatively quiet for more focused work.

Each breakout area consists of a similar set of configurations that support working requirements – a pantry, high table, lounge tables, nooks, an open stand-up meeting space and closed meeting rooms. With this in mind, the diversity throughout the different destinations is achieved by a variety of finishes, materials and furniture elements. To create continuity throughout the project despite the various design voices involved, HofmanDujardin created a masterplan for the entire building, looking at each

work beautifully.

DNA. Elegantly designed and crafted, this award-winning table and desk range cleverly combines flexibility and functionality to help create dynamic office spaces that flow.

verco.

01494 448 000
verco.co.uk

Left image:
A playground-like 'Connector' space by Studio Modijefsky

Right image:
A Cape Town themed 'Connector' meeting room by Studio Modijefsky

space individually and creating key words and mood boards – working with Booking.com to select different design studios to take on different spaces. Additional studios were tasked with designing so-called 'layers' to tie everything together, from planting selected by Makers of Sustainable Spaces (MOSS), to inclusive wayfinding by Bureau Mijksenaar, and colourful floor coverings by Stefan Scholten and Carole Baijings.

"The biggest challenge was to ensure that the diversity wouldn't turn into chaos," comments Wopereis. "By sticking to the clear starting points of the masterplan, which ensured a certain harmony between the different areas, we tried to keep control. One can see the work of different designers coming together [from the atriums], and for us that was an exciting moment."

Along with the breakout zones, 'connector' spaces on each floor offer important respite from computer screens and support collaboration. Local studio Studio Modijefsky has designed some of the more interesting of these versatile areas, transforming what might have been plain meeting rooms close to staircases into a dynamic

‘playground’ that offers employees the chance to switch off their minds and move their bodies instead. “These aren’t gyms: fun is the goal here,” notes Studio Modijefsky’s Rhea Stroink. “By filling the connectors with unusual but enticing tools for movement, play and interaction, employees are just a hop, skip and a jump from a positive and physical mind state.”

Studio Modijefsky was also tasked with one of the three on-site restaurants, the fifth floor ‘Five Islands’, which has been designed as five joined but individually themed zones (or ‘islands’). Each island zone incorporates different elements such as flooring, lighting, partitions, colours, textures and materials to create unique environments that seamlessly flow into one another, thanks to a natural stone floor that acts as the ‘sea’.

Within a city that prides itself on being one of the most sustainable cities in the world, thanks to its green transportation and infrastructure goals, an eco-conscious thread runs through the Booking.com building. MOSS developed a visionary green masterplan for the campus, featuring thousands of plants and several trees, a botanical staircase, a seven-storey green wall, vibrant rooftop gardens

Booking.com

Below image:
'Layers' of planting, wayfinding and archictecture on the second floor atrium

complete with insect hotels, and vertical farming facilities in the restaurants that help to provide healthy dining experiences (no poffertjes here) that are majority plant-based. Constructed to BREEAM Excellent standard, sustainable materials have been used throughout the interiors, with HofmanDujardin taking on the challenge to reuse existing furniture from the previous Booking.com offices, while sticking to the initial mood boards. 832 solar panels adorn the roof, and cutting-edge ground-coupled heat exchanger technology is used for heating and cooling the building.

In such a vast space, rich with detail and experiences, the real power of this project is not only the creative diversity, but also the collaborative design journey that happened along the way – the makings of a new standard practice for the industry?

Fixed furniture and joinery
Intos interior solutions
Keijsers Interiors

Loose furniture
Interior Works
(Andreu World, Arco, Creafort, Devorm, DUM, Functionals)

Flooring
Wurks
(Ege, Desso/Tarkett, M4four, Portego, Shaw)

Curtains and upholstery
Kvadrat

Lighting
Studio Rublek
(Ferm Living, Piet Hein Eek, Tonone)

mochi & hanabi

Burmatex®

MANUFACTURERS OF CREATIVE FLOORING

osaka® carbon neutral carpet tiles

Inspired by the modern and yet traditional Japanese city. Available in 12 colours.

To explore more about **osaka**®, find inspirations and more images
visit **www.burmatex.co.uk/osaka**

Using Universal Fibers® ground-breaking Thrive® matter yarn, the **world's first carbon negative recycled** yarn, and our unique **BioBase® recycled** backing, **osaka**® is **carbon neutral**.

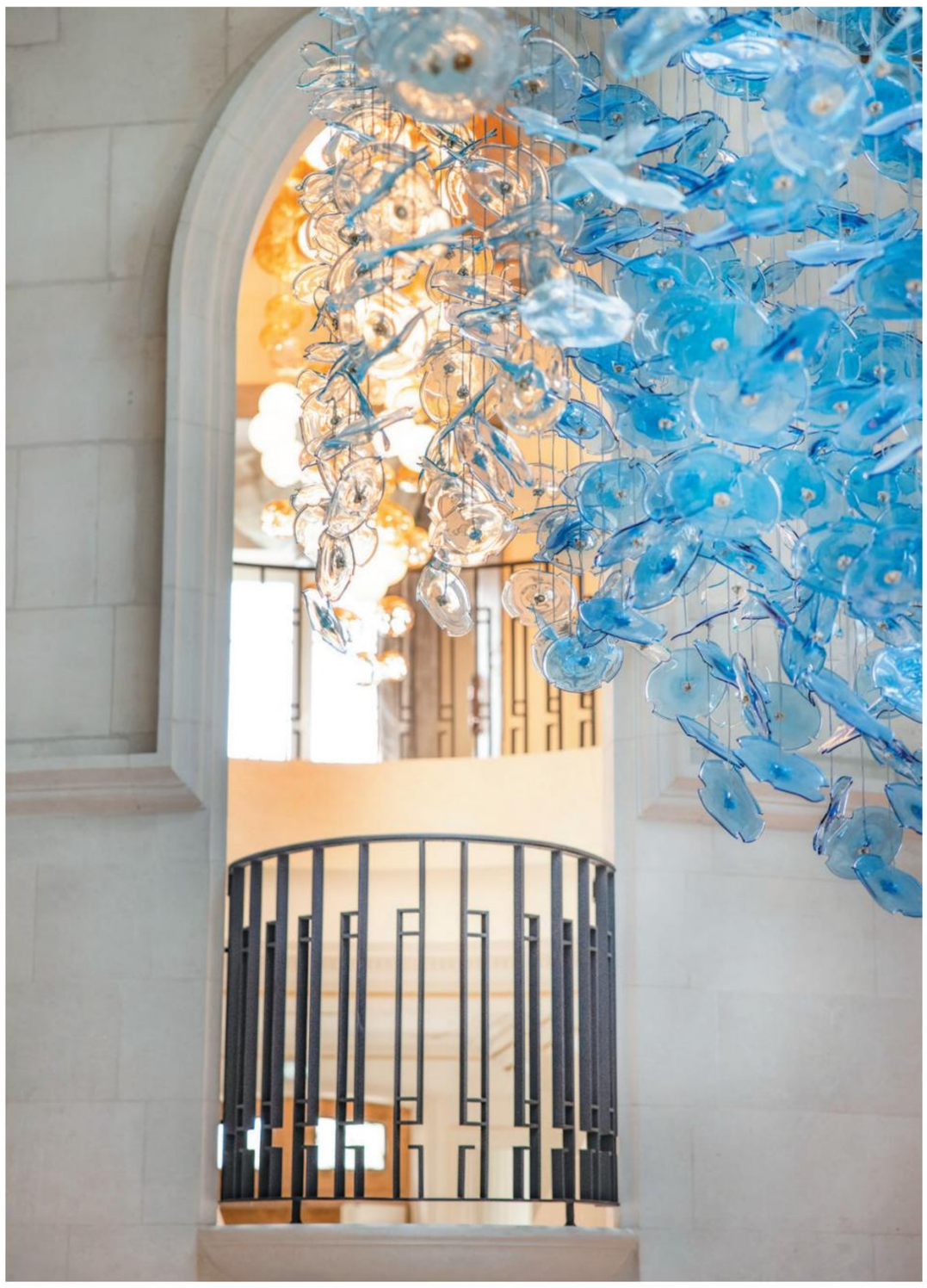
The Spirit of Charente

The latest property from the Almae Collection, La Nauve heightens its connection to Cognac through design that's informed by this spirit-producing area of France.

Words: Lauren Jade Hill

A name given to both a town and commune found in the Charente department of southwestern France, Cognac has long drawn attention for its historic old town, which sits on one side of the River Charente – along with its landscape of vines and, most famously, the namesake spirit made from grapes grown across the region. Heritage and craftsmanship are woven into the identity of this area north of Bordeaux where in 1494 François I, King of France, was born in Château de Cognac—a monument that's now also a site for Cognac production—with many more historic Cognac houses dotting the town.

A celebration of Charentais heritage, it was a Belle Epoque manor and distillery in sprawling grounds running down to the riverside close to Cognac town that caught the attention of the Almae Collection's owners, and subsequently underwent its transformation to become the group's latest luxury hotel. La Nauve Hôtel & Jardin, a Relais & Châteaux property, now tells a story of local craftsmanship through interiors combining the work of artisans in the Charente region with luxurious modern design.



The local architect, Éric Daigre, led the four-year restoration and reimagination of these two 19th-century buildings, sourcing much of the materials and many of the artisans involved from a 50km radius. In this way, La Nauve was renovated almost entirely by local craftsmen, ensuring a narrative connection to the area. “There is no pretence,” commented Daigre on the launch of the property. “Mouldings, glass, wrought iron, marble, granite, wood… everything is authentic, created or reproduced with respect to traditional craftsmanship.”

For the overall design concept, the architect took inspiration from the French bourgeoisie as well as the Prairie movement — a style recognised for the extensive use of wood and stone that was introduced by Frank Lloyd Wright at the end of the 19th century, to unite man and nature through architectural design.

“The ground floor remains very traditional and in keeping with the period of the original building, but for the upper floors a more Art Deco style is taken, influenced by Frank Lloyd-Wright’s Prairie style to highlight the correlation between the design and the extensive gardens of the hotel,” says Daigre. “This is carried through the design, with branches seen on the staircase and through the atrium.”

Daigre sourced white Avy stone from nearby Jonzac to adorn the manor house, with this cut stone from Atelier de la Pierre also used to make the dramatic central staircase. Pierre Seguin also brought in onyx, veined with

Previous page:
Classical floral motifs

Above left:
Wrought ironwork by Bruno Hyvernaud

Above right:
An exterior view

KEUCO

AXESS

Accessibility meets design

Design by
STUDIO F·A·PORSCHE

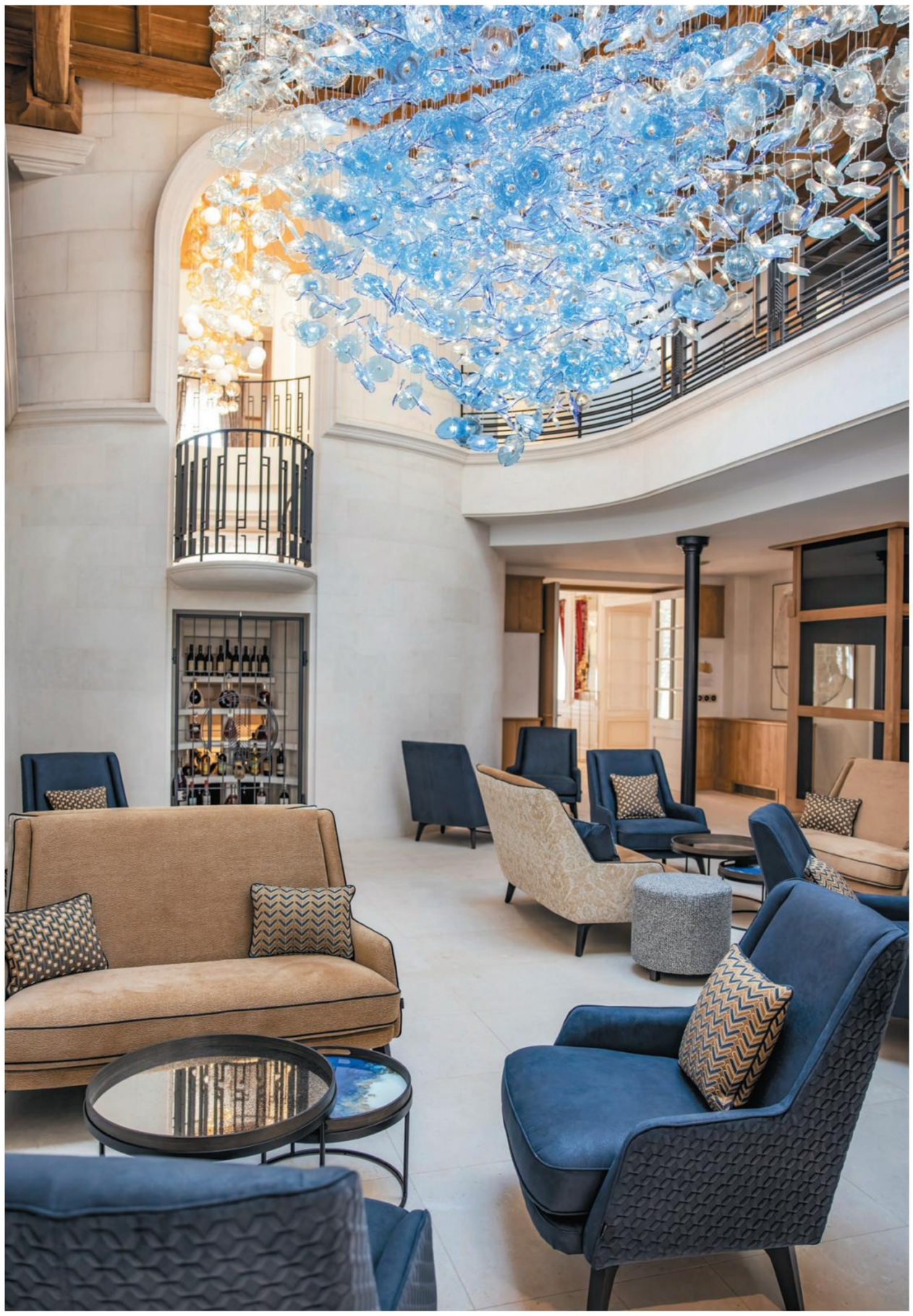
amber when backlit, for the bar and bedrooms, along with cloud marble for the bathrooms. Another key element, the use of oak, saw cabinet-maker Christian Thierry Drevelle craft the marquetry found all the way throughout the property, with redwood from the estate then used for russet squares punctuating décor with the hotel's motif.

Artist Bruno Hyvernaud of Atelier Soleil then created the hotel's wrought iron detail, both in the house and outdoors, from the garden's pergola and orangery to the central staircase's railings. Adding to these dominant design elements is then the Murano glasswork of glassmakers Barovier & Toso—including the Hexagone chandelier hanging above the staircase—along with objects and furnishings by Eichholtz and textiles by Rubelli and Pierre Frey, which were selected by Jarnac-based upholsterers Jérôme and Alexandrine Harduin.

Left image:
Brasserie des Flâneurs

Right image:
Murano glasswork from Barovier & Toso

Bottom image:
Cloud marble in the bathroom



La Nauve

Below:
Oak by cabinet-maker
Christian Thierry Drevelle

Throughout the main house you'll now find the fine dining restaurant Notes, its neighbouring cocktail bar and a wine cellar, which lead off one side of the lobby, and the library and breakfast room and terrace leading off the other side. Eight of the 12 guest rooms are found upstairs, with the remaining four guest rooms in another of the grounds' buildings. The standalone distillery building houses the hotel's already-popular-with-locals Brasserie des Flâneurs.

While the 20-cover restaurant exudes classic French elegance with its interiors that are inspired by a Napoleon III salon, the more casual 50-cover brasserie comes with a more modern design concept integrating original features, like the pulleys, of this beamed distillery building – also encompassing a 16-seat communal table and spilling out to an outdoor dining area.

A small canal runs towards the riverbank and a 150-year-old Sequoia tree overlooks the main house in the estate's 4.5-hectare grounds, which also reflect the hotel's drive for local connection. The hotel's chef Anthony Carballo led the restoration of the estate's former fishery, planting fruit trees, vines, vegetables and herbs as well as installing beehives. The hotel has its own private dock, where the gardens meet the river, along with a boat for taking guests on cruises along this waterway to the old town. Through the experience it affords guests, as well as its design, La Nauve has succeeded in representing the culturally rich region it's a part of.

Drift

Our Quietest Launch Yet

Discover more

Connection Furniture

Connectionfurnitureltd

Connection

Connectionpin

Connectiontweet

connection

New media

Words: Chloé Petersen Snell
Photography: Jurrit van der Waal

Studio Sluijzer and 88 Projects give nature a leading role at this harmonious Amsterdam workplace.

Amsterdam, a city woven with canals and rich culture, traces its roots to the 12th century. From fishing village to global trading hub, the city is now known for its iconic architecture, creative heritage and progressive spirit, a happy marriage of history and modernity. A perfect example is Oud-Zuid (Old South) – one of Amsterdam's most well-heeled neighbourhoods – where 19th century apartments, boutiques and artisan coffee joints line serene leafy streets, a stone's throw from the city's famous Vondelpark and museum quarter. It's here that media and content agency &. media group has found a home in a former car garage, which was previously an empty shell before being completely overhauled by local studios Studio Sluijzer and 88 Projects.

For the two design studios, creating a diverse and multi-functional workplace that felt comfortable and productive was imperative. "This project challenges the traditional workspace by prioritizing wellbeing, flexibility and sustainability over conventional office norms," comments Studio Sluijzer's Robin Sluijzer. "A lot of work has gone into dividing the spaces into different working areas, with flexible workstations, comfortable seating areas, and quiet zones incorporated into the design."

The office sits across one large open floor plan, divided up into different zones that flow together in a manner similar to a coworking offering, encouraging people to move around and work nimbly, in addition to a permanent desk space in their own 'neighbourhood.' "We view the key design story as a space that feels like home, but also aligns with modern needs where, again, flexibility and wellbeing are paramount," says Sluijzer. "The central theme revolves around creating a workspace that adapts to contemporary work requirements – we have consistently conveyed this narrative throughout the project, from collaborative areas to conference spaces, by emphasising natural materials, adaptable layouts, and a strong focus on employee comfort and sustainability. This human approach ensures that our design speaks to and supports a way of working that is consistent across all areas of the workspace."

Natural materials are abundant and make a striking impression on entering the space – warm woods, marbles and natural plaster create a neutral colour scheme that, along with soft lighting and plenty of acoustic consideration, contribute to a harmonious atmosphere. The central bar's distinctive finish is crafted from a combination of micro-cement and shells, to create a durable and long-lasting product that is as beautiful as it is environmentally conscious. In equally green fashion, the majority of the fabric, upholstery and acoustics interventions are made from recycled PET bottles.

Previous page and right:
A greenhouse-style meeting room

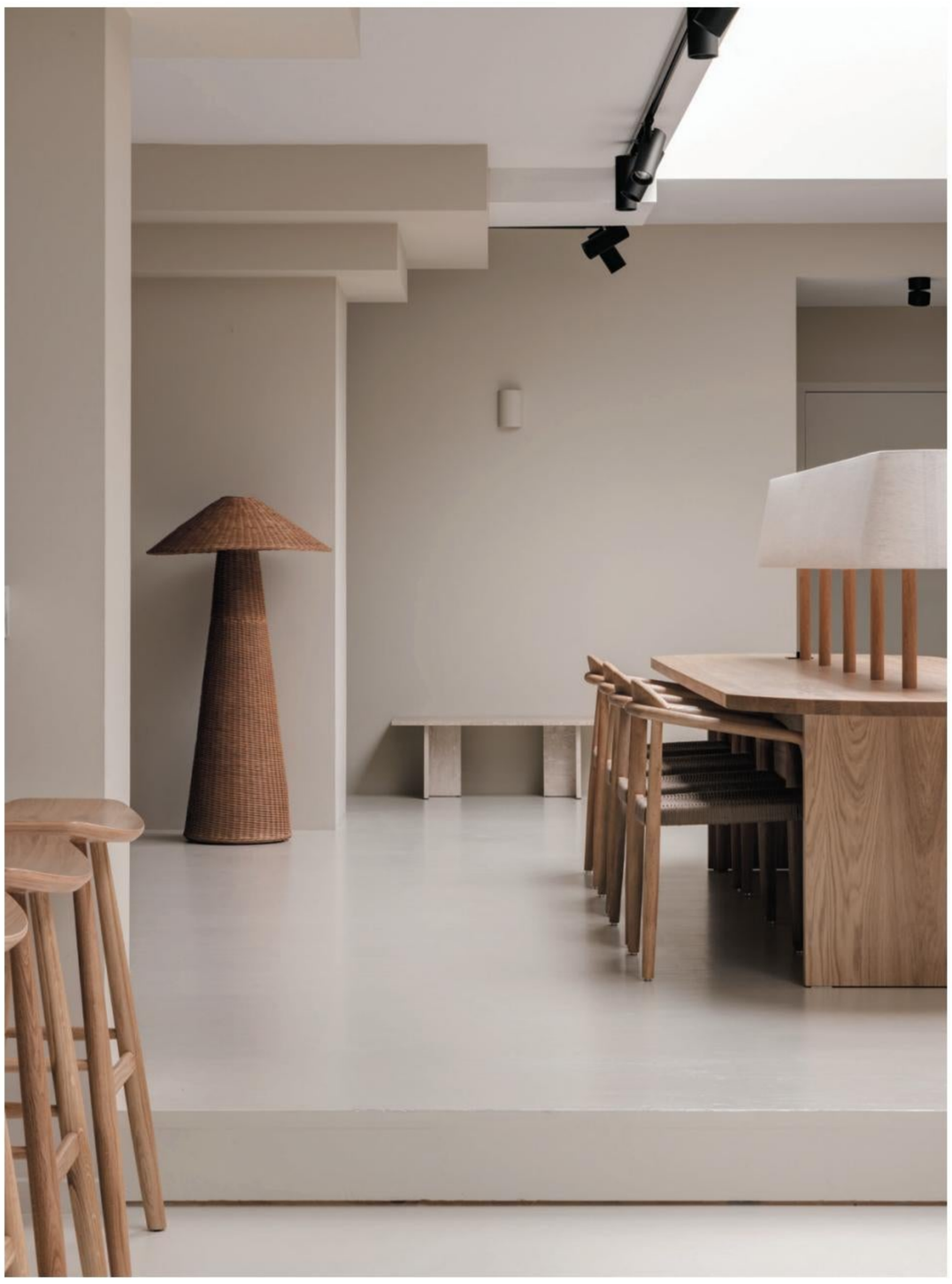
HEKTOR

ELITE OFFICE FURNITURE UK LTD

T. +44 (0)1405 746000 Head Office, Factory & Showroom.
T. +44 (0)20 7490 4909 London Office & Showroom.

www.elite-furniture.co.uk
E. sales@elite-furniture.co.uk
E. londonshowroom@elite-furniture.co.uk

Elite_Furniture
Elite Office Furniture LTD
@EliteOfficeFurn
eliteofficefurniture



Top image:
Bespoke timber screens

Bottom left image:
The central bar made from micro-cement, shells and marble

Bottom right image:
Flexible coworking-style workspace

In the centre of the office space, natural light cascades down onto two greenhouse-style meeting rooms, breaking up the open floor plan and allowing for plenty of oversized planting to thrive. These glass-covered 'garden' rooms sit side-by-side and are used as meetings rooms and a relaxed flexible workspace, complete with neutral-toned soft seating and wooden tables that complement the extensive greenery and wooden structures.

"The social aspect plays a bigger role in the workplace, now more than ever"

As a youthful, cool and disruptive media group (the average age of the employees is late 20s) the social aspect was key: leisure spaces take up half of the floorplate, allowing more room for staff to work, play and entertain. Previously lacking any client-facing facilities, &. media group can now entertain collaborators, host product launches and staff parties. Proving that adaptability can also be playful, as well as practical, it's possible to transform the bespoke reception desk into a DJ booth by night.

An impressive marble bar greets guests and employees on arrival, surrounded by café-style seating, complete with fresh flowers on each table. Softly lit banquet and soft seating around the perimeter provides further options – serving as retreats for relaxation and informal collaboration. Nodding to hospitality tropes, it's perhaps more reminiscent of a stylish hotel lobby or independent restaurant than a standard office cafeteria.

Client
&. media group

Interior Designer
Studio Sluijzer
in collaboration with
88 Projects

Flooring
InOpera, Grestec

Furniture
Studio Jasper

Furniture provider
Flinders

Surfaces
La Nena
Pure Natural Stone
Jabo

Lighting
Ay Illuminate
Lightboxx

Other
Houten Roomdivider
Onel Window Dressings
Plnt

Above:
Soft seating

A bespoke timber screen-wall separates the social area from the more traditional office space, while still allowing for light to diffuse around the different zones. The slatted screen is divided into separate ‘doors’ that can be opened individually – each door can remain fully open, closed or rotated for varying levels of privacy, creating ‘corridors’ that flow into the space, once more perfect for hosting parties in an environment intended to function meaningfully beyond traditional office hours; the space facilitating the building of culture and community.

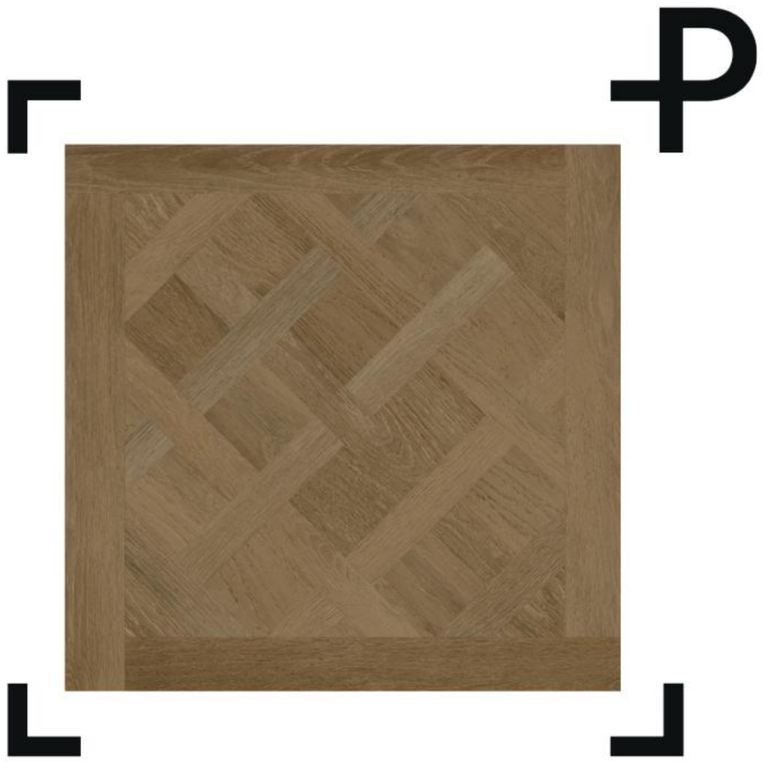
With a harmonious blend of leisure and productivity, the project showcases how comfortable, human-centred design can contribute to a business’s growth and success. “The social aspect of a workplace plays a bigger role, now more than ever, not only for clients but also to keep employees happy and productive,” adds Sascha ter Haar, founder of 88 Projects. “Coming to work is no longer about sitting at a desk all day.”

Trust us, it’s vinyl.

Client	Mindspace
Location	Warsaw, Poland
Sector	Workspace
Product	Versailles Marseilles

Inspired by traditional French parquet flooring, our PlusFloor Versailles offers a premium, heritage finish.

Available in four authentic colours and finished with our signature TrueGrain embossing, PlusFloor Versailles is the perfect nod to the classical design.



PlusFloor®

Contact
+44 (0) 1524 481 118
info@plusfloor.com
plusfloor.com

London Showroom
66a Turnmill Street
Clerkenwell
London, EC1M 5RR

Innovation + Distribution Centre
11 Oakwood Way
Carnforth Business Park
Carnforth, LA5 9FD

Repair not replace

Why, when it comes to product design, ‘throwaway living’ should be consigned to the past.

Words: Dominic Lutyens

Repair not Replace

Image on previous page:
CoLab by Pearson Lloyd for Senator

Below image:
TAKT soft lounge chair

A circular economy is defined by the European Parliament as "a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible". Now many brands and designers are endorsing one of these strands – repairing – as part of a widespread rejection of the linear economy, traditionally based on a take-make-waste approach that is ravaging the planet's finite resources.

The repair-don't-replace philosophy has echoes of Make Do and Mend, the World War II pamphlet encouraging British citizens to darn and alter clothes in the face of rationing, save that the latter sprang from economic not ecological expediency. By contrast, in post-war America profligacy (and by extension waste) was encouraged: in 1955, Life magazine coined the phrase "throwaway living" – heedless consumerism – a positive term. It took sceptics such as Vance Packard, American author of The Waste Makers (1960), to draw attention to planned obsolescence. The hippie counterculture's clarion calls against wasteful consumerism in the 1970s, in particular in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis, served as another wake-up call, matched today by mounting evidence of the consequences of climate change, from rising sea levels to droughts.

One British brand endorsing the repair-don't-replace principle is Pearson Lloyd. "Multiple factors across consumers, business and governments are driving the move towards circular design," says co-founder Luke Pearson. "Ecological values in response to the climate emergency are changing the demand for products."

ASPECT

TABLES

Aspect Tables

TIME FOR COLOUR

Head Office:
Imperial Office Furniture Limited.
Bankfield Business Park,
Quebec Street, Bolton. BL3 5JN

Showroom:
9 Portland St,
Manchester.
M1 3BE

Contact:
Tel: 01204 364602
imperialfurniture.co.uk
info@iimperialfurniture.co.uk

IMPERIAL
OFFICE FURNITURE

Even so, arguably this is partly because businesses are being opportunistic, primarily out to satisfy a younger generation's consumer habits. "The economic opportunity to sell to younger consumers who list environmental concerns as major factors affecting purchasing decisions is getting the attention of larger corporations."

That said, if meeting the needs of a younger generation helps to cement today's paradigm shift towards manufacturing products that aren't disposable, but can be repaired, is this necessarily unwelcome? This year, Pearson Lloyd launched its furniture range CoLab for British brand Senator, designed with Gen Z in mind and for classroom environments. "Its modular chairs and tables can be combined at will, are robust and demountable," says Tom Lloyd, Pearson Lloyd's other co-founder. "Its components' screws are clearly visible, so its elements can be easily disassembled and repaired."

The ability to repair products is essential to the ethos of London's Jan Hendzel Studio. "When designing our products, we've taken a more focused approach to how our pieces come together, with a view that sections can be replaced should they become damaged," says founder Jan Hendzel. "Also, by using natural oils across all our products, clients can refresh the timber with minimal effort."

Furniture brand Very Good and Proper's CEO Ed Carpenter emphasises the importance of the attention it pays to good quality materials and craftsmanship, such that repairing needn't be necessary: "We aim to achieve sustainability through longevity – a product that doesn't break doesn't have to be replaced. There again, a product that can be repaired or refreshed doesn't have to be recycled. We design all parts to be easy to replace or refurbish just in case. This approach does mean we sometimes lose sales to people selling our products on the second-hand market – a bittersweet but ultimately rewarding result – as our design ethos ensures longevity."

Carpenter describes Very Good and Proper's Canteen Utility chair, comprising a bent tubular steel frame made without welding, and an FSC-certified beech plywood seat and backrest, as "easy to repair and maintain".

Similarly designed to be easy to repair is Norwegian company Flokk's HÅG Tion chair. Should its seat or backrest upholstery become damaged, it can be replaced, avoiding the need to buy a new chair. The seat isn't irrevocably attached to the chair with staples or glue, but secured with string that can be tightened or loosened. The backrest can be removed using an Allen key. The company can provide customers with replacement upholstery fabrics.

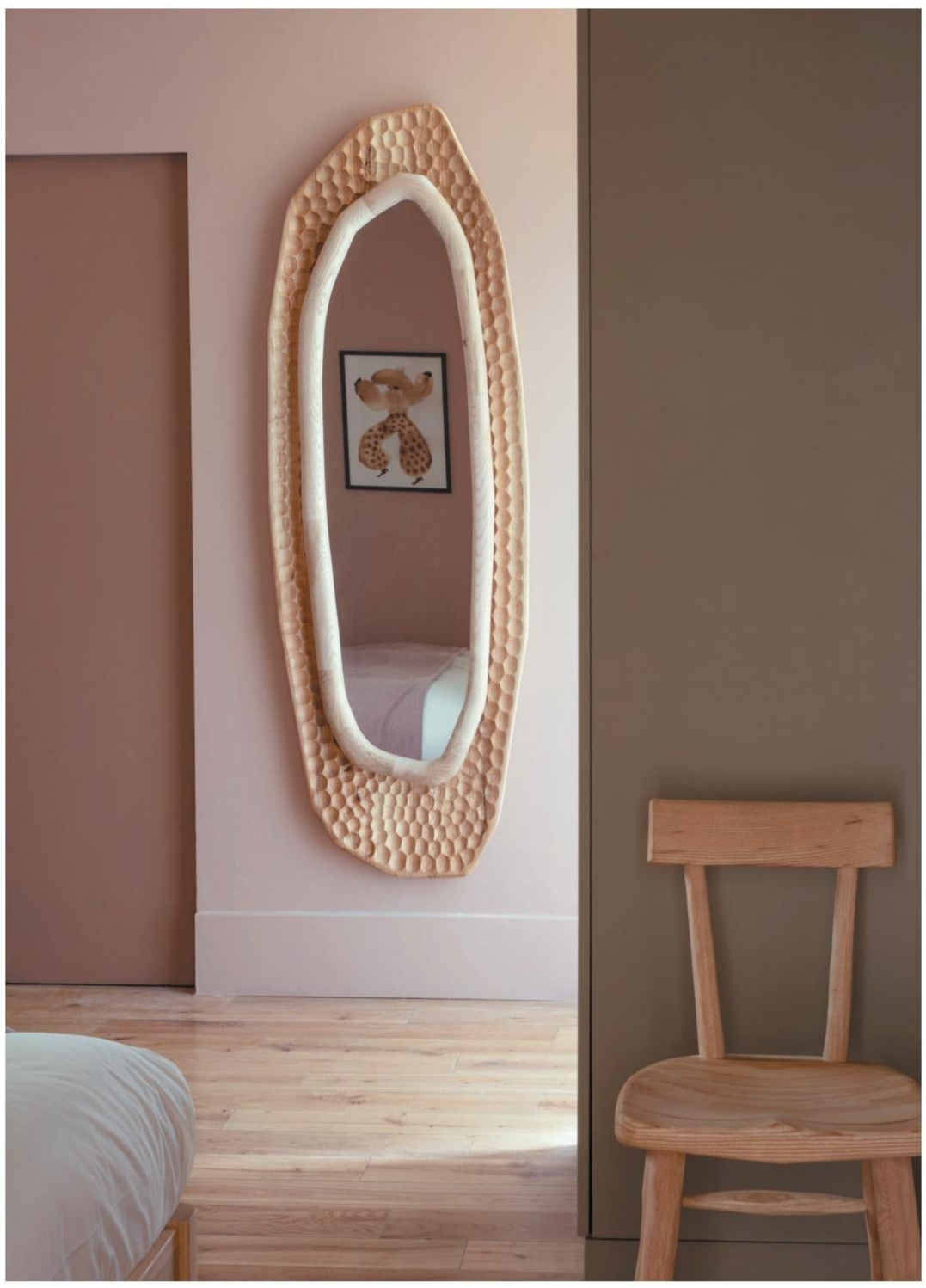
Opposite page:
Very Good & Proper
Canteen Utility Chair

Top image:
TAKT Spoke sofa

Middle image:
Jan Hendzel
coffee table

Bottom image:
Very Good &
Proper Latte chair

Below:
Gallions Reach
mirror by Jan
Hendzel



Above image:
USM Haller

Copenhagen-based company Takt also wholeheartedly takes onboard the repair-don't-replace approach. Its Soft Lounge Chair Leather is straightforward to assemble and each of its components can be easily replaced. "This year, we made a commitment to what we call 'Perpetual Sustainable Design', which ensures all products are designed for repair with replacement parts stocked so our furniture can be handed down from one generation to the next," says Henrik Taudorf Lorensen, Takt's founder and CEO.

Meanwhile, a core value of Swiss brand USM Modular Furniture, maker of the iconic USM Haller range, is longevity. It now offers a maintenance service, says Ian Weddell, the company's Sustainability Executive. "All USM products are made of parts that can be dismantled and reassembled. So, for example, if the front door of a piece is damaged, the company will replace it at a relatively low cost." While this may not constitute a repair in the strictest sense, since providing a new part is involved, it obviates the need to replace the existing piece with an entirely new one.

To date, the repair-don't-replace movement has perhaps been mainly driven by enlightened companies placing importance on longevity. For this to be more widely applied, some think that more legislation needs to be introduced. So believes Luke Pearson: "Legislation is lagging behind. It's essential that it catches up to force all manufacturing to take on circular principles that ensure all products are designed with sustainable materials that can be reused, repaired and recycled."

Viewgo Pro.

Big specs, small price

datarflex

feeling at work

آموزشگاه انگلیسی مینو جدیدترین اطلاعات ، مقالات و دوره‌های آموزشی دکوراسیون داخلی

Eneksas.Academy

Eneksas.Academy

Photography: Tomás Saraceno in collaboration with Web(s) of Life

Spaces for people, and beyond

Should we be taking an interspecies design approach, creating public and commercial environments fit for more than humans?

Words: Rima Sabina Aouf

Interspecies Design

This summer, London's Serpentine Galleries ran a landmark experiment. It turned off its air conditioning for the comfort of spiders. It used only the intermittent energy from solar panels for energy, so as to avoid the habitat destruction in parts of the world where lithium is mined to make batteries for energy storage. And it turned one of its galleries into an indoor-outdoor space, opening up one wall of French doors to Hyde Park beyond, while installing sculptures made especially to invite birds, squirrels, insects, dogs and other non-human visitors inside.

These changes were part of an exhibition by environmentally focused artist Tomás Saraceno titled Web(s) of Life, and they marked the first time that a cultural institution has altered its interior environment explicitly using a new approach, coming to be known as interspecies design.

Interspecies design involves decentering the experience and needs of human beings in favour of those of other animals and insects, or even fungi, plants and microbes. It's not about putting one species above all others, but about designing for multiple species within a shared ecosystem, and trying to understand the perspective of another creature with as much seriousness as we might another person's.

"To design for humans is also to design for the microbes that make up 70% of us"

According to Serpentine's Head of Ecologies Lucia Pietroiusti, the gallery's report of the Saraceno exhibition records attendance by magpies, crows, ravens, pigeons, two Persian cats in a cat buggy, spiders, wasps, ants, ladybirds, dragonflies, a parrot, a butterfly and "every breed of dog". She says Serpentine is now looking to incorporate elements of the exhibition's approach into its building in more permanent ways and is buoyed by the possibility that the organisation may grow to consider itself as having both human and "more than human" stakeholders.

"It might be a charming quirk at the beginning, but if you repeat a charming quirk often enough, it goes into the DNA of how the institution thinks of itself," she said.

Pietroiusti is also a lecturer in the Geneva University of Art and Design's Interior Design masters course, where she says the students are being asked to apply interspecies thinking within a unit called Interior Ecologies. For inspiration, they draw on fields where the approach has made more headway, such as in

Photography: Tomás Saraceno in collaboration with Web(s) of Life

Image on previous page:
Web(s) of Life at London's Serpentine Gallery

Top image:
Living 3D structures by BLAST Studio

Bottom image:
Web(s) of Life

landscape architecture and urbanism, as well as art, object design and speculative design. Buildings built with bricks that bees can nest in and Singapore's famous Gardens by the Bay "supertrees", with their lush biodiversity, can be considered examples of interspecies design – as can some recent attempts to "co-design" objects with other species such as silk worms, bacteria and algae as they engage in their natural processes.

Blast Studio is a London practice that is known for this kind of work, making objects grown from mycelium on a 3D-printed substructure. Co-founder Paola Garnousset says interspecies design is a subject her team have become more and more interested in, starting from when they had to envision architecture that would meet the growth preferences of fungi. Now, they see the complex folds and interstices within their tree trunk-like structures as an ideal home not just for mushrooms, but potentially for bees, ladybugs and birds. They are working on making a living form of this structure into an outdoor pavilion promoting urban biodiversity, but in their dried form, the pieces make compelling interior objects like lamps and table bases.

Garnousset believes the aesthetic of these kinds of biodesigned projects — which tend to share a gnarly, biological look — will come to influence interior design in the coming decade. "So many new living biomaterials are being developed at the moment to furnish our homes and I think that we need to imagine new shapes adapted to these materials and living organisms," she said. "Designing pieces that reflect the story of these materials makes them so much richer and interesting."

As the Serpentine's exhibition suggests, there are many ways interspecies considerations may come to influence our interior worlds. It's easy to imagine an overall questioning of the impermeability of interior space, with indoor-outdoor settings becoming more common in schools, some cultural institutions and eco-focused hospitality venues, where a loosening of barriers doesn't threaten hygiene or safety. Pet-oriented design could become more empathetic and less anthropomorphised, with fewer miniature high-end sofas and more genuine appeals to animal senses. Nina Woodcoft from leading sustainable interiors studio Nina&Co points out that "to design for humans is also to design for the microbes that make up 70% of us", and to this end, reducing the toxicity of materials we are in contact with will be key in the coming years.

The uniting feature in interspecies design isn't necessarily what is done but why it's done: with a view not to save the planet for the human race but to better it because its other beings are just as deserving of living full, healthy lives. What would make a dog, bird, tree or silk worm happy? It's time to come up with some answers.

Self-reflecting on diversity

Image: Tobi Sobowale

Shawn Adams is an architect, wirter and lecturer. He is also co-founder of the socially-minded design practice POoR Collective.

Every company can benefit from self-reflection. If we are to create a more inclusive design industry, practices need to take a hard look in the mirror and think seriously about diversity and equality in the workplace. By doing so businesses can build stronger relationships, become more equitable and ensure future success. While many companies have the right intentions, where they often go wrong is by looking externally instead of internally. It is one thing to attend good-intentioned ED&I events but another to take a critical look at oneself.

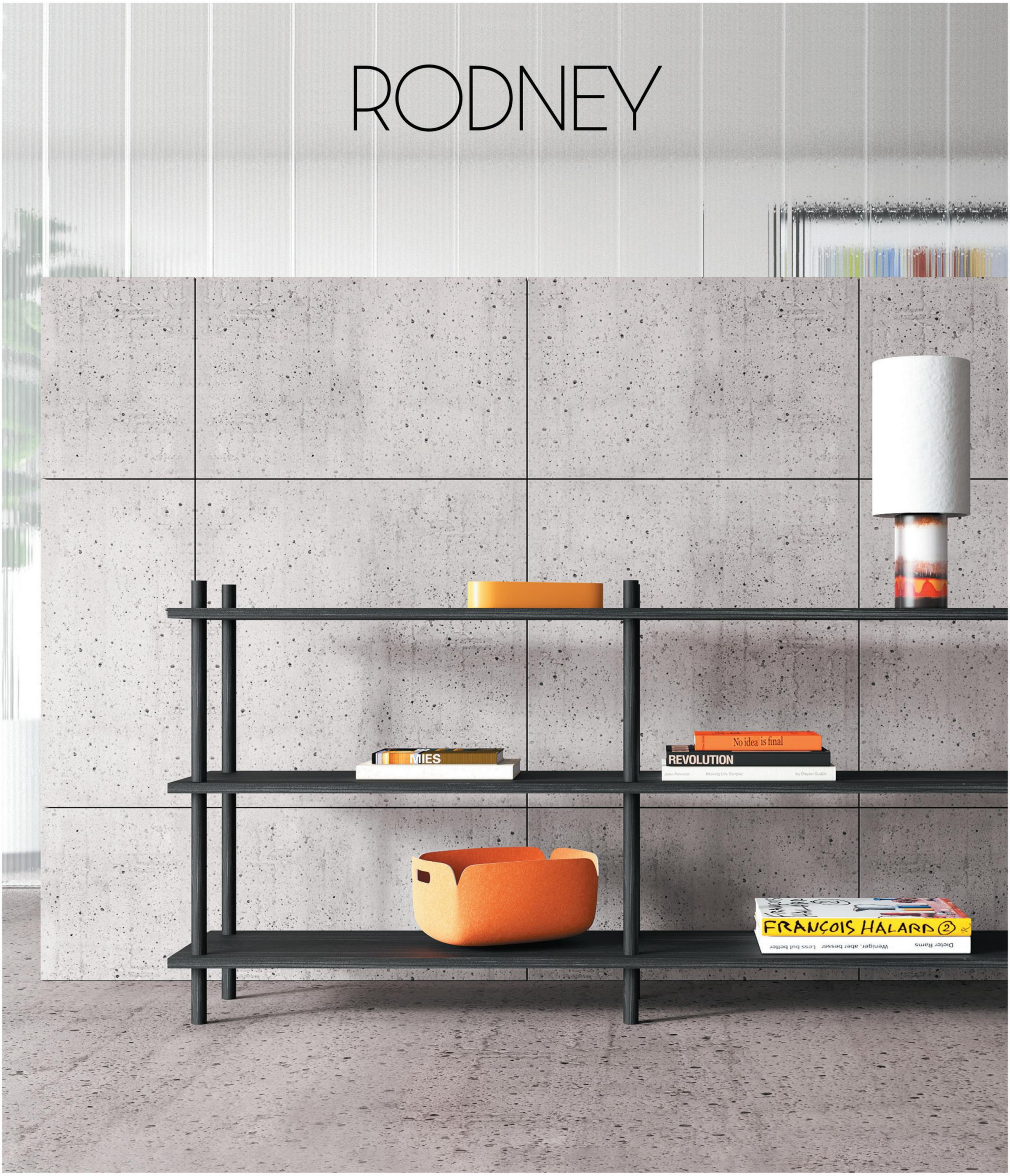
When self-reflecting it is important to be honest. Is there a diversity issue in your practice? Are your senior members of staff all the same demographics? Are you attracting a diverse range of talent? By acknowledging any shortcomings, you will then be able to take the necessary steps to improve your practice. I recommend that every organisation develops an ED&I strategy. This should sit next to a business plan and carefully outline the steps needed to make your company more equitable and inclusive. This strategy needs to be clearly communicated to employees, agencies responsible for your recruitment and any collaborators. Furthermore, all members of staff, both senior and junior should have access to EDI training to raise awareness and to ensure that they are aware of the current legislations.

While ED&I targets are crucial, practices must also hold themselves accountable. Genuine and meaningful change can only happen when commitments are acted upon and evaluated. Are you meeting your targets? What is working well? What isn't working so well? It is important to assess any commitments to see what can be achieved and how long it may take. Sometimes it may be easier to have someone externally come in and hold you accountable.

Senior staff set the tone in any business. If they are actively promoting inclusion and diversity in the workplace, then they can positively mould office culture. Members of staff are the most valuable assets of any organisation, so it is vital that they feel heard and are celebrated. Therefore, practices must be ready to take on different perspectives and listen to their employees. In-house mentoring programmes are one way to help support staff and help them feel valued.

It is no secret that self-examination can be a difficult task. It means having uncomfortable conversations and forking out money and resources to make a genuine change. However, this process has the potential to make your business much more equitable and in turn more fruitful. By critically reflecting and acknowledging your shortcomings you can recognise what steps need to be made in the future. By looking at recruitment, training, mentoring, staff progression, the make-up of senior teams and the office culture your company will undoubtably improve for the better. While it is not an easy task, we must all self-reflect if we want to have a much more equitable and inclusive design industry.

RODNEY



RAWSIDE.CO

In partnership with dyson

How can nature inspire our spaces?

In this Mix Roundtable with Dyson, we explore biomimicry, the emerging role of thoughtful technology and ask how the natural world can meaningfully influence commercial interior design to deliver healthier, more sustainable spaces and places.

Words:
Harry
McKinley

Harry McKinley
Mix Interiors
Managing Editor

Kathryn Nicholson-Brown
Dyson, GB&I Senior
Specification Manager

Maria Papadopoulou
Perkins&Will
Senior Associate

Ben Channon
Ekkist
Director

Understanding how nature can inspire commercial spaces means shattering misconceptions.

For many, ‘nature inspired’ interior design means the introduction of certain tropes: a green wall perhaps, or an assortment of foliage. And while there’s nothing inherently misguided in this approach, it does render the natural world down to its most superficial and one-dimensional guise. For our assembled experts, truly understanding the benefits of nature and the design blueprints it can provide, means looking at its systems in a more fundamental way.

Ekkist’s Ben Channon pushed back on the notion that meaningful nature inspired design is rooted in aesthetics or, as he described, “that it has to be soft and curvy.” Similarly, Zaha Hadid Architects’ Kar Hwa-Ho riled against a shallow definition, one defined by ‘using lots of timber, straw and mud’. “We have to explore this in a modern way,” he explained, “by first considering function and how nature can be adapted architecturally and spatially. It doesn’t have to be ugly.”

Agreeing, Perkins&Will’s Maria Papadopoulou emphasised the value of drawing from nature’s mechanisms, not simply its looks: “Nature manages to be resilient, sustainable and grounded in health and wellbeing.” While, for Oliver Heath, of Oliver Heath Design, a misconception that warrants dismantling is that, as human beings, we sit apart from the natural world. “We've forgotten the interconnectedness, the circularity and the delicacy of the web of life that surrounds us,” he described. “We've forgotten how dependent we are on it and the role it should play in how we look at spaces, products and buildings.”

Kar-Hwa Ho
Zaha Hadid Architects
Head of Interior Architecture

Oliver Heath
Oliver Heath Design
Director

Lisl du Toit
Universal Design Studio
Associate Design Director

Technology and nature together offer value and solutions.

“Technology is sometimes seen as the big bad wolf; something that isn’t sustainable and which doesn't support a natural environment,” opined Dyson’s Kathryn Nicholson-Brown. “But actually, there's an important marriage of the two that is necessary within environments, to make sure that technology is supporting what nature in some instances can't.”

On this sentiment, there was tangible consensus at the table, all acknowledging that while technology – and its artifice – may seem at odds with nature-founded design principles, it’s often a vital tool, and one which will only grow in relevance and importance.

“Technology can help us gather data, observe how people work and design systems that can be easily adapted and react more readily to change,” continued Papadopoulou. “Nature responds to shocks and this is something we’ve mostly removed from design, as we saw during the pandemic.”

As Universal Design Studio’s Lisl du Toit highlighted, much of the perceived disconnect between technology and the natural world has been its traditional or historic ‘failings’, even if we didn’t recognise them as failings at the time.

“Spaces used to be lit in a certain way, for example, that simply wasn’t good for us and which disrupted our circadian rhythms,” she said. “So technology was once disruptive. But it doesn’t have to be that way and technology has advanced to help us control elements, such as lighting, in a much more subtle way, that better mimics the natural world. In turn, that supports health and wellbeing throughout the day, and so technology is a solution and not the problem.”

“Nature already has the answers to many of the problems we’ve created in the built environment,” continued Nicolson-Brown. “We just need to find them in those natural systems.”

Expertise is key: we need greater levels of knowledge and more people leading the charge.

While our table undoubtedly represented specialists in the field, their expertise isn't necessarily something evidenced across the broader spectrum of design – and amongst designers at large.

"We do need to educate people on why all of this is important, both wider design teams and clients. The knowledge is out there to share with them and we have the data – which shows biomimicry creates healthier, happier spaces and is good for business, because healthier people, in workplace settings for example, are also more productive

"Biomimicry creates healthier, happier spaces and is good for business"

people," explained Channon. "We need innovators. We need companies like Dyson. We need architects who are trying to push the boundaries and we need to make the case to developers and to the general public as well." Plus, "every project should have a healthy building consultant!" interjected Ho.

"Having scientifically backed design is vital," said Nicolson-Brown, "as it allows designers to make informed choices, and to develop and adapt as the knowledge we're equipped with evolves and grows."

Designers need to consider the invisible, as well as the visible.

“There is an issue fundamentally, that a lot of interior design is seen as an extravagant layer to lavish on top of a building. It's seen as something that's relatively surface level; about expressing power, wealth, identity or other extrinsic messages,” enthused Heath. “Good design requires an understanding that, actually, the quality of the air, views to the outdoors and the lighting are all natural forces that need to be considered and incorporated; either utilising nature itself or counteracting potential issues through the use of product. We've got a connection with nature that can have a tangible benefit to physiological and psychological wellbeing that will, as Ben mentioned, represent a return on investment.”

It poses the question as to what responsibility designers have to consider layers of experience, and the impact spaces have on their users.

“It’s a difficult arena, because the impact of commercial spaces is often invisible and intangible. The connection between a person’s exposure to daylight and their sleep at night isn't direct enough for us to always make the connection, when making these design decisions,” offered du Toit. “We can’t see air quality, so it's really important to seek out and interrogate data, and then to connect that with design in an emotive way. Again, technology has a role to play there, such as visualising the invisible impact that our environments have on us, so that we can better understand it – both pragmatically and emotionally – and then respond to that in how we design spaces.”

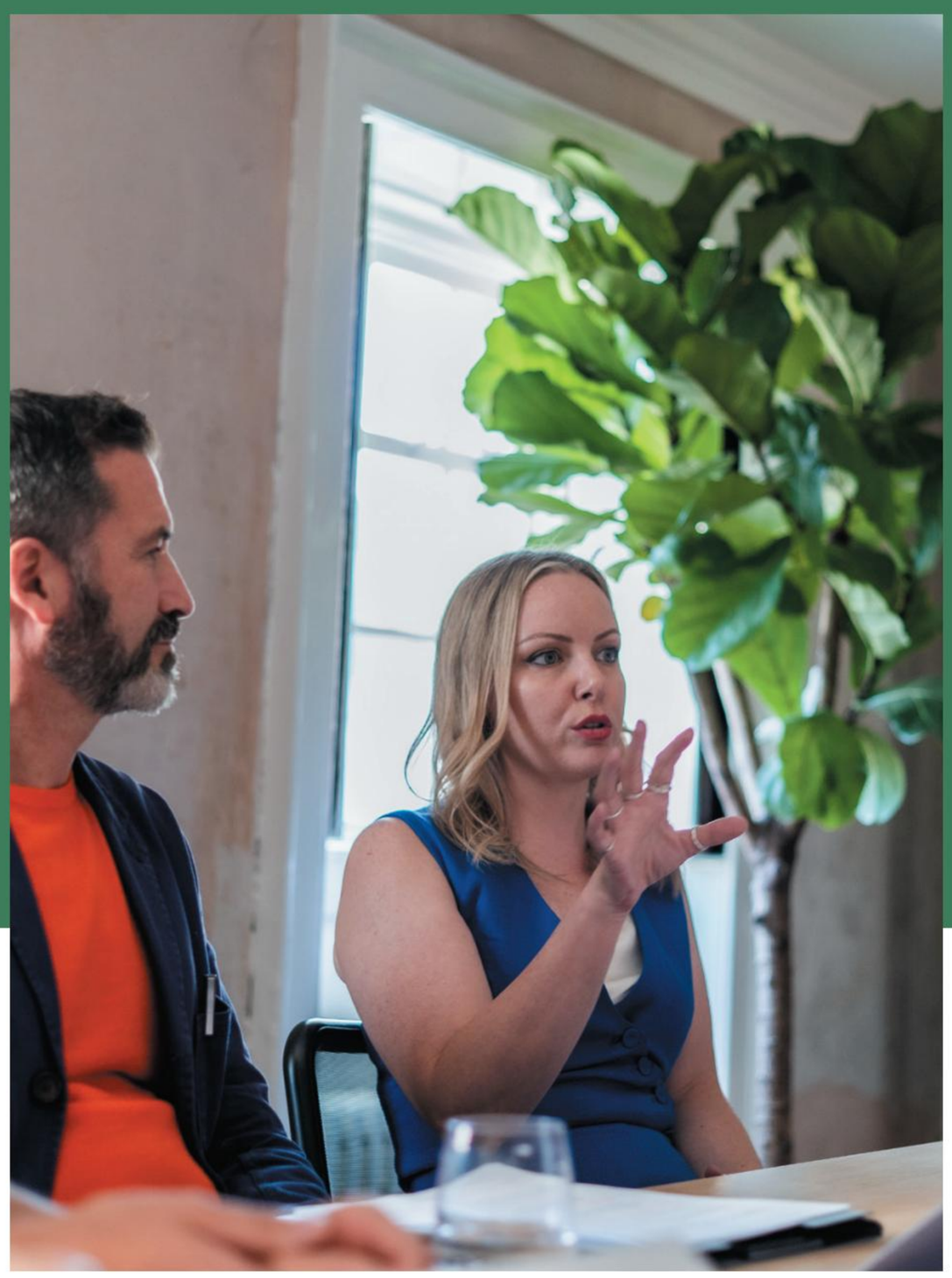
Nature influenced design is ultimately good for the planet as well as people.

“I think the real question is, are we open to accept these ideas?”

Though the benefits to individuals and communities by drawing from natural systems is established, the table agreed that these benefits are rendered redundant if this same design approach cannot help mitigate our impact on the environment – cities, and the spaces they host, arguably the places where there’s the most opportunity for change.

“We’re at a powerful moment where we are assessing our resources and looking at how we can use them efficiently; how we can reuse elements,” said Papadopoulou.

“Yet the whole idea of the climate crisis strikes real fear into us, because it's all about scarcity. But if we look at how nature deals with reciprocity, then there's enough to go around,” continued du Toit. “In commercial design we have to draw inspiration from that idea of circularity and using only as much as we need, not too much.”



“Which is where authenticity is key,” explained Nicholson-Brown, citing plastic plants, as an egregious example. “We need to find ways to utilise technology and design to support human wellbeing, while not simultaneously destroying the nature that inspired this approach to design.”

For Kar-Hwa Ho, the discussion, in all of its breadth, comes down to our willingness to upend orthodoxy and embrace change: “I think the real question is, are we open to accept these ideas? I mean, they’ve been with us forever. Why haven't we made biomimicry an established design principal across the board, with all the beautiful stories it can create? I think that's because of our mindset. And perhaps now that we're more aware of sustainability and our impact on each other, the world and the climate, we're beginning to open up to taking cues from nature and using them to find solutions. They’ve been there all along.”

MIX interiors ROUNDTABLE

in partnership with

dyson

30 under 30

In celebration of
design's future leaders

In partnership with

SENATOR | Allermuir

Headline Sponsor

amtico flooring

EGGER

Hunters

30 under 30

For its eighth year, Mix's 30 under 30 festivities arrived in Clerkenwell in September, celebrating our previously announced list of the industry's greatest design leaders aged under 30.

The event was supported by Hunters, Egger, Amtico and headline sponsors Senator and Allermuir, who hosted the evening at its flagship showroom.

Awards were handed out to the year's chosen recipients for their approach to creativity, commitment to innovation and relentless work ethic – all qualities that their nominating practices felt set them apart from the crowd. Featuring a blend of large and smaller studios, and specialists from across the industry, the future leaders were applauded one-by-one by their respective peers before segueing into a high-octane party, with the lights turned down and the music turned up.

"Being a part of Mix 30 Under 30 is a really big achievement for me," shares Ashton Holmes from Peldon Rose. "It's been a milestone in my career that I've wanted to achieve for a while, so to have finally made it is really exciting and I'm very happy." Recognising not only the talent and achievements to date of an extraordinary group of people, the class of 2023 also represents immense potential – with previous recipients rising to extraordinary heights within the design industry.

When asked what the future of design looks like to them, the responses were diverse. "I'm really excited about the evolution of biomimicry," adds Holmes, "We've seen biophilia come in, but now architecture is starting to develop into these beautiful [natural] designs and [it's exciting to see] how we can evolve that into interior spaces." Holmes is also enthusiastic about the role technology plays in the industry


Mix Interiors
30 under 30
The rising stars of commercial


Mix Interiors
30 under 30
Class of 2023
SENATOR
Allermuir
amtico
Hunters


amtico
EGGER
Hunters
Mix Interiors
SENATOR
Allermuir


SENATOR
Allermuir
amtico
EGGER
Hunt


Hunters
Mix Interiors
SENATOR
Allermuir
amtico
EGGER


Mix Interiors
30 under 30
Class of 2023
SENATOR
Allermuir
Hunters
amtico
EGGER


Mix Interiors
The rising stars of commercial


amtico
EGGER
Hunters
Mix Interiors
SENATOR
Allermuir


amtico
EGGER
Hunters
Mix Interiors
SENATOR
Allermuir


amtico
EGGER
Hunters
Mix Interiors
SENATOR
Allermuir

30 under 30

and how it could shape how designers work, favouring a future of blended realities and VR headsets.

Looking at the coming years through a more emotive lense, tp bennett's Nathalia Garcia believes in the increasing need for connectivity across projects, as studios and practices seek new ways to develop relationships with clients, to bring visions to life. "Being connected is my passion in design," exclaims Garcia, who was partially nominated for her 'role model' qualities, including her considered approach to support future generations, in particular with regards to sustainability. MoreySmith's Will Nock continues the eco-conscious thread with pragmatic ideas that blend historical construction techniques with new methods: "There's been a lot recently about 3D printing and how we can use it to build using materials locally [sourced]." Nock is also invested in using artificial intelligence as a tool in design, to collect data and form commercial environments that support multiple personality types and neurodiverse needs.

"What's really exciting at the moment is 'resi-mercial'," says Wood Bagot's Jenny Olver, referencing the crossover of hospitality and residential in the workplace. Having worked on projects such as Convene – the 50,000 sq ft HQ at Bishopsgate in London – Olver describes how the growth of hospitality and residential mixes takes the 'high end' comfort of these experiences and translates it for a more traditional workplace setting. Already acknowledged to be beneficial for employees' wellbeing and productivity levels, this 'resi-mercial' blend lends itself to the development of extraordinary future design concepts – continuing the shift in workplace design from uniform and monochrome to personalised and characterful. Sharing her thoughts on being part of this year's 30 Under 30 class Olver explains that "it feels really amazing to be in a group of [talented] young people. It's full of companies that have worked on amazing projects and I feel really lucky to be a part of it."

Tomorrow's future design leader – does this sound like someone you know?

Don't miss the chance to shout about your team's rising stars by nominating a colleague to be in 2024's Mix 30 under 30 class. Since its launch in 2015, the accolade has created a dynamic network within the industry, supporting and elevating the next generation of talent. Providing design studio principals and directors with the chance to publicly recognise tomorrow's leaders in their teams, recipients are afforded the opportunity to celebrate with their peers at an annual presentation, as well as exposure within the Mix Interiors community, both online and in print.

All submissions should feature a sound explanation of why the person has been nominated and what projects they have worked on in the last 18 months, where their contribution has been demonstrably invaluable. Nominees must also be aged under 30 on and before the deadline of 28 April 2024.

To find out more and to nominate for 2024, go to **mixinteriors.com/events**

Top image:
2LG's 'You Can Sit With Us' exhibition

Left image:
Mix Interiors at London Design Fair

Right image:
Adam Nathaniel Furman on radical design

London Design Fair

From 21-24 September London Design Fair brought together interior designers, architects, specifiers and design enthusiasts to explore influential works from established brands and boutique or independent makers.

Hosted in Shoreditch's Truman Brewery, this edition amplified the topic of sustainability, with 200 eco-conscious exhibitors and a strong programme of thought leaders, designers and trend forecasters on the LDNdesign Talks stage. Joining the roster was Mix Interiors' managing editor, Harry McKinley, who moderated a lively panel discussion with designer and cultural change maker Simone Brewster, artist Adam Nathaniel Furman, Citizens Design Bureau's director Katy Marks and partner and director of White Arkitekter, Michael Woodford. The five discussed radical design perspectives in front of a full house, querying if originality is dead within the design community. The talk ended on a considered point from Brewster on the next generation of radical thinkers and designers: "If we're going to tackle and change bigger problems and systems, it's only going to happen through cross-generational and industry-wide collaboration and collective agitation. This also requires the wise older heads who have already experienced many of these problems."

Elsewhere, notable displays included 2LG's creative exhibition 'You Can Sit With Us', a collection of avant-garde seats from Stockholm-based Stamuli's Tagada furniture collection and a 14-seat dining table – with a tabletop designed and fabricated by Smile Plastics. Craftspeople from a number of countries were represented throughout the fair, including Ukraine, South Korea and Romania – the latter through eleven exhibitors, including House of VLAdiLa by Aesthetic Indesign, a creative collective responsible for characterful collections of wallpaper, fabric, furniture and artwork.

Next year's Fair will take place 19-21 September at the Truman Brewery in Shoreditch. Applications to exhibit open Tuesday 17 October.

londondesignfair.co.uk

London Design Festival

For nine creativity-filled days, London Design Festival (16-24 September) brought the UK's capital to life with the latest in design, showcasing the best the industry has to offer. Here are our top picks from the 21st edition.

Highlights from this year's Landmark Project includes artist and designer Simone Brewster's 'Spirit of Place' at The Strand throughout LDF23, a collaborative project made in partnership with the world's largest cork producer, Amorim. Using the opportunity to travel to a cork forest in Herdade de Rio Frio, Portugal, before starting her work, Brewster discovered how four key traits define the material: upright expression, drought resistance, regenerative growth and biodiversity conservation. This in turn led her to create 'pillars of work in the forest' – 2.5-metre-tall, sculptured vessels that promote the qualities of cork and the family-led work of Amorim.

Not to be missed thanks to its extended date (running until 29 October), Spanish artist Pablo Valbuena's profound live installation 'Aura' can be found inside St Paul's Cathedral. Seeking to highlight the potential of time, sound and light, the masterpiece responds to sound inside the Cathedral and transforms it into a pulsating line of light projected at an architectural scale as an 'aura'.

Over in Egerton Gardens, Brompton Design District commissioned creative not-for-profit All In Awe to develop an installation that reflected its theme of 'Conviviality - The Art of Living Together'. The installation – titled 'All Together' – was inspired by recent findings that the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea comprises some of the highest numbers of single-person households and the most profound economic disparities in the UK. Aiming to get more people talking about loneliness, All Together was displayed alongside a series of creative community workshops that delved into the subject.

Continuing the theme of community development in Brompton Design District, social enterprise POor Collective presented 'Powershift', a group exhibition featuring the works of emerging artists, architects and designers. Focusing on the concept of social conviviality, the exhibition was a dynamic reminder of how power can shift when people come together and lend a voice to those often left unheard.

In an eclectic expression of the capabilities the UK has to offer, Shoreditch Arts Club transformed into the Localist Café thanks to design studio, Six Dots Design. Supported by Buckley Gray Yeoman, the functional space surrounded people with design objects from over 40 London and UK-based designers, manufacturers, makers and artists – from chairs crafted in Peckham to cutlery from Sheffield and plates originating in Hackney. The exhibition highlighted sustainable, local design and the relationships between maker and consumer.

London Design Festival

Mix Interiors was a guest at the Norwegian Ambassador's Residence in Kensington, for an evening of networking and discovery. Featuring a selection of highly-acclaimed contemporary furniture and interior design brands harking from the Nordic country, seating manufacturers Flokk and Fora Form were presented next to labels such as Hydro – which also displayed its new recycled aluminium Bello! Bench at Material Matters.

Making a comeback after its debut in 2022, Material Matters took over five floors of Bargehouse, Oxo Tower Wharf, for a magnificent display of installations that honed in on the importance of material in design and architecture. Milan-based manufacturer Isola was amongst the exhibitions with 'Nothing Happens if Nothing Happens'. A solemn nod towards the planet's climate crisis, the company embedded the need for repurposing waste materials and creating true circular economies in the manufacturing process. Elsewhere, Pearson Lloyd Material Change exhibition delved into the renowned London studio's commitment to research that improves the circularity of its mass-produced products.

Products

The Collective Agency

UK-based design and manufacturing studio for acoustics, The Collective, has expanded its UK presence with a new London Shoreditch Studio based in Rivington Street. The second office in its growing portfolio – including the studio's flagship residence in Folkestone – was unveiled during London Design Festival and supports the company's growing team. The space (hosted by The Office Group) embraces The Collective's latest designs, including Swell – acoustic cladding influenced by waves – and two new bespoke ceiling design solutions.

Tala lighting

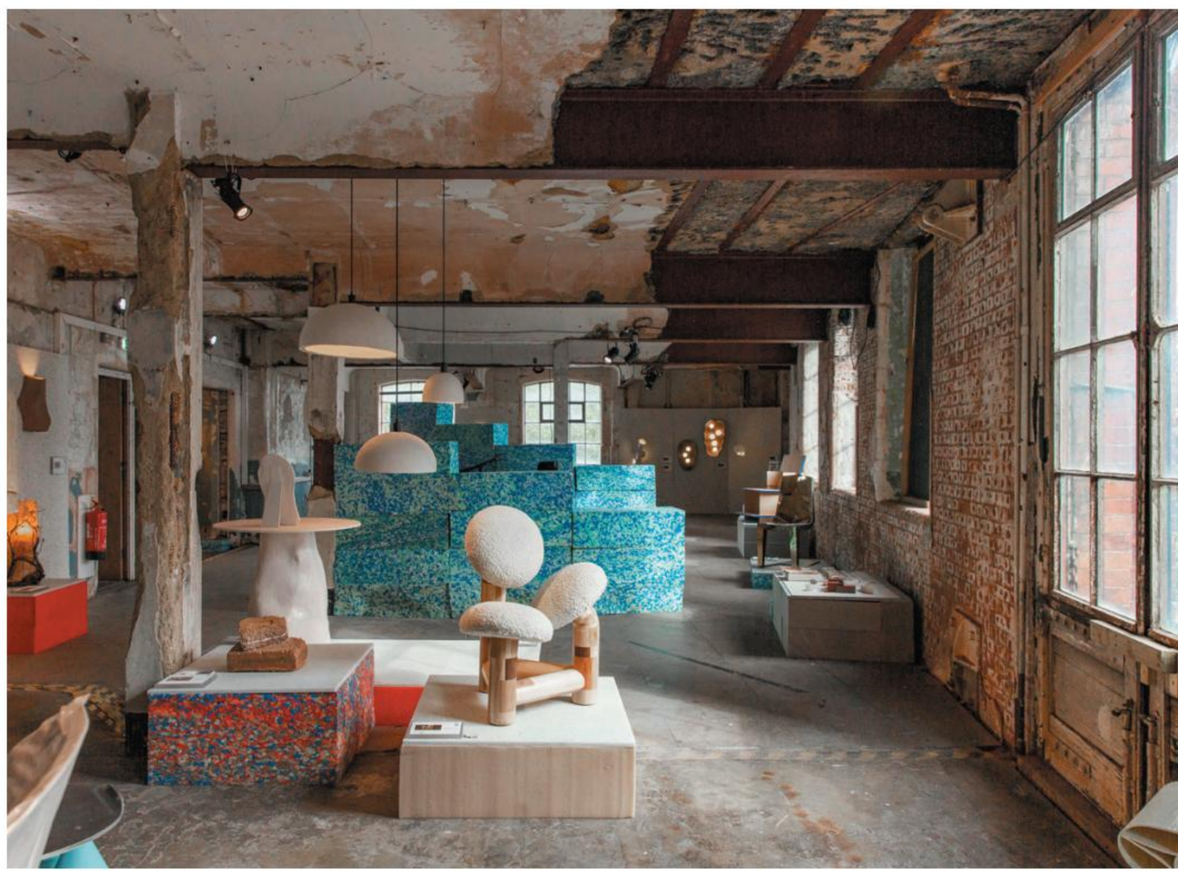
In the heart of the Shoreditch Triangle 40 Rivington Street is the new home to Tala. Designed by local architect Thomas Longley, the former men's fashion boutique showcases the latest of the lighting manufacturer's products, including its new indoor/outdoor portable lamp, Mantle. Longley used recycled and low-impact materials throughout to meet Tala's strict brief and its ambition to be the world's 'definitive zero carbon lighting brand'.

Kaldewei

Bathroom manufacturer, Kaldewei, used London Design Festival as the platform for its latest product launch 'Avocado Dreams', devised in collaboration with Bethan Laura Wood. Described by Kaldewei as a designer who can transform the ordinary into the extraordinary, Wood curated a bathtub, shower tray and washbowl, available in three bespoke colourways. Specifiers can opt for green 'Avocado Swirl', purple-blue 'Avocado Sea' or select 'Avocado Disco' – an unbridled explosion of colour.

London Design Festival will return next year from 14-22 September.

londondesignfestival.com



Top image:
Simone Brewster 'Spirit of Place'

Middle image:
Isola exhibition at Material Matters

Bottom image:
Anwyn Howarth at Material Matters

Fount

The Fount collection consists of solo, duo, bench and conference tables and enables different ways of working. Eight types of legs have been developed, each with its own unique look.

ahrend

17 Charterhouse Buildings, London, EC1M 7AP

It's a date

Mixology North is returning to Manchester for its 15th edition

Book tickets

A night of cheering the best products, projects and people from the North of the UK, for one night only on Thursday 30th November guests will be transported to Cirque de Lumiere for an evening of world-class entertainment, topped and tailed by industry celebrations including the announcement of this year's Mixology North winners.

Starting the night with a fanfare of trapeze artists, acrobats and tightrope walkers at Manchester Central, guests can expect a theatrical fusion of light and sound that envelopes the room and invites them to lose themselves in commercial interiors' biggest night.

The now-iconic curtain drop will unveil the main room, as 1300 guests are led to their table for the evening. Following a lavish three-course dinner, the year's winners will be revealed. Mix Interiors' managing editor Harry McKinley will be hosting, taking to the Mixology stage to kickstart the awards and share who'll be taking home the famous yellow ball.

Covering a blend of projects across workplace, hospitality, commercial residential and public sector, as well as products – from surfaces to seating – the ceremony will finish with a bang as 2023's Manufacturer of the Year and Design Practices of the Year are revealed. Of course, the celebrations will not stop there, with back-to-back anthems from a renowned DJ to keep everyone on their feet until the early hours.
Don't miss your chance to be a part of commercial interiors' event of the year. Whether you're a finalist, first timer, or part of the returning Mixology community, we look forward to welcoming you there.

mixinteriors.com/events


RAZZAMA JAZZ WALTZER

Chloé
Petersen
Snell

Placemaking or gentrification?

Chloé Petersen Snell
is the deputy editor of
Mix Interiors.

‘Gentrification’ was vague and undefined until the second half of the 20th century, repositioned over the decades from a dirty word to one that conjures up hope under the guise of neoliberal urban ‘regeneration’, and then back again. It’s always been around, evolving over the years, and becoming much more recognisable, expansive, systematic; seen by many as a class conquest that displaces people from their homes and communities. My father was using the term at its nascent stage in the early 70s, evicted from his apartment in Toronto’s Yorkville neighbourhood, the area once a sanctuary for Canada’s iconic counterculture movement and now a high-end shopping district. In August 2023, the average price of a home in Yorkville was CAD990,000.

In contrast, the concept of placemaking allows for growth and development without replacing or displacing, transforming the public realm (inside and outside) to strengthen the connections between people and these places. It’s behavioural and physical, and the two shouldn’t be siloed; they determine each other. Designers and developers can’t create a beautiful space in a vacuum, slap a logo on it and expect social and behavioural habits to follow suit. So instead should we be asking how the existing community could be brought into the process to bring equitable social value? What do these areas actually need, and is there something for the people already there?

For a growing number of architects like Mark David Flynn, who works on socially conscious placemaking projects at London studio We Made That, successful places mean a mix of uses, diversity and variety. “Projects should be multi-faceted – a mix of ‘hard’ interventions (physical improvements to spaces) and ‘soft’ interventions (programming and cultural activation) that address the spatial, economic and social issues in an area. All of this should be participatory and inclusive, and should be shaped by local people.”

Involving the local community and stakeholders in every step of the design process is key, whether that’s building a brief as a community and even holding co-design workshops. “It’s important to seek the voices of under-represented groups,” he adds. “Be intergenerational. Speak to younger people. Make space for girls, minorities and the traditionally underrepresented. Speak to local makers, fabricators and artists and use them as part of the construction process. It doesn’t stop when a space is delivered. You need onwards stewardship of spaces by the local community for them to be successful. They need skin in the game.”

There are challenges along the way when it comes to embracing this ‘authentic’ definition of placemaking, wrought with white-washing, misguided placebranding, corporate greed and even conspiracy theorists – but as our cities grow and public spaces come under more scrutiny than ever, taking communities on the journey from start to finish and beyond could be the key to delivering inclusive, long-lasting results that are socially – and ultimately economically – sustainable.

LOWE&FLETCHER
LOCKING SYSTEMS FOR INDUSTRY

Smart locks for more intelligent spaces

How people use their spaces is changing.

Smart lockers or intelligent locker systems are reshaping the way you work by delivering security, convenience, and an outstanding user experience. Whether you're looking to make life easier for customers, staff or visitors, our range of intelligent locker systems helps make every interaction more efficient.

Contact the experts at Lowe & Fletcher to discuss your requirements today!

T: 0121 505 0400
E: sales@lowe-and-fletcher.co.uk
W: www.connectedlocking.com / www.lowe-and-fletcher.co.uk

The rest is history

Two years after Herman Miller and Knoll joined forces under the MillerKnoll brand, we look back to the interconnected beginnings of modernism's most prominent designers.

Herman Miller and Knoll have long been leaders in the world of design, both sharing similar human-centred values and an iconic design heritage. A merger created the newly named MillerKnoll in 2021, now a collective of dynamic brands that come together to 'design for the world we live in', from office furniture to living spaces.

With shared goals and a shared vision, the merger isn't the first time Herman Miller and Knoll's DNA has been intertwined. It began at Cranbrook Academy of Art in the early 20th century, where Florence Knoll, Eero Saarinen, Harry Bertoia and the Eames' (who met and married on campus) became colleagues, collaborators and lifelong friends. Individually, they crafted some of the most important designs that defined an era and still resonate today: the beginnings of mid-century modernism.

An educational community founded in 1932 by philanthropist George Booth, The Cranbrook Academy of Art opened as the Bauhaus closed, amid the oppression of Nazi Germany. Cranbrook arose as the 'American Bauhaus' and offered a vision centred on independent mixed media experimentation and critiques from practising designers rather than academics. This foundation and collaboration defined the two brands' long history of innovation, with Knoll crafting the standard for the modern workplace and Herman Miller going on to introduce pioneering, health-positive furniture, such as the Aeron chair designed by Bill Stumpf and Don Chadwick. Nearly 100 years later, it seems inevitable that the two companies would come together today.

Left:
A MillerKnoll collaboration space

Bottom middle:
Womb Chair by Knoll

Bottom right:
Fuld Nesting Chairs paired with other agile products from Herman Miller

For the newly formed MillerKnoll, it was imperative that each brand in the collective stand alone, with its own unique voice and identity – all astutely chosen to complement each other. "MillerKnoll is the overarching organisation and even though our brands have a shared DNA of great design, all have a distinct identity," comments Nikos Liapis, MillerKnoll Regional Director for the UK & Ireland. "We want to maintain the individualism and character of our brands to serve a wide variety of our customers with the best and most diverse design solutions, and continue creating beautiful and distinctive designs."

The group now aims to offer a variety of expertise all under one roof – responding to the different needs of the market, from workplace to hospitality. Herman Miller and Knoll still sit under the umbrella as individual brands, joined by the likes of ergonomic experts Colebrook Bosson Saunders and popular furniture names HAY, Muuto and NaughtOne, to name a few. "Our industry – and the world in general – is changing rapidly," says Liapis. "In coming together as MillerKnoll, we define and lead this transformation like we have led others throughout our history. Together, we are even better suited to anticipate and shape the future through problem-solving design." Indeed, thought-leadership and sustainability continue to be essential drivers for MillerKnoll, recently transitioning to 100% renewable hydro and wind energy at its largest facilities and incorporating ocean-bound plastic in some of its most celebrated pieces (including the Aeron chair from Herman Miller). "Our brands are united by a belief that, through design, we can create a better world," Liapis adds. "Our care shows up in everything we do – from the spaces and products we make to the ways we think and actions we take."

millerknoll.com

Is designing for gender now *passé*?

Tina Norden is a principal and co-owner at Conran and Partners.

People referring to spaces or design as ‘feminine’ or ‘masculine’ has always annoyed me. I like black, concrete and have an aversion to pretty patterns – all traditionally labelled as ‘masculine’. Sometimes I like lush velvet and soft lines or the contrast between all the above. To my mind this has nothing to do with gender but simply personal preference and taste, as well as appropriateness to the context.

Referring to design or style as gendered, particularly in today’s non-binary world, is completely meaningless; a lazy and shallow way of describing visual clues.

Sorry to break the news, but not every girl likes pink frills (with due respect to Barbie) and not every boy likes black leather. Many boys like pink and have all right to do so. Taste and choices elude gender. The argument could simply stop here, but it is interesting to understand why such antiquated notions are still so prevalent – cropping up in way too many conversations about design.

It starts with little girls dressed in ‘pretty’ dresses and boys having to like diggers – our upbringing is deeply gender-stereotyped, which thankfully many parents are working against today. For us only slightly more mature designers and architects, unfortunately it often continued in design education, with institutionalised teachers clinging on to talking about design in gender or other inflammatory terms. Hopefully that is no longer possible given today’s students are a lot more clued up and aware of the implications of these tropes. Our industry is also often dominated by older white males still, in particular in corporate settings, which doesn’t help the situation – though female clients resort to these phrases as well.

So it is high time to shake up these outdated modes of thinking and simplistic stereotypes and find new ways to talk about design that are more accurate and descriptive. The beauty of design and our visual world is that it is multi-faceted: colourful or monochrome, biophilic or hard edged. There may well be spaces tailored to one over the other gender, even though current discussions about non-gender specific bathrooms show how difficult a subject this can be. It could simply be that a requirement for spaces perceived as safe and reserved for just one gender are simply more necessary in some contexts or locations than others. But this should relate only to the function, whether this realm is for men, women or anything in between, has no impact on the way it should look. What should matter is designing meaningfully for the intended functionality and not just assuming the user must like something simply based on a stereotype.

If we want a space to be soft, why not say that? Talk about sinuous lines, tactility and desaturated colours. If we want something more hard-edged, we can describe it in that way. It just requires a bit more thought and consideration; a very good thing. So it goes back to the initial point – using gendered descriptions is simply lazy and now completely out of sync with our times. Here’s to a language that reflects our modern world.

To your postbox and your inbox

The best of commercial interior design

View our subscription options
mixinteriors.com

Benni Allan

Material Matters

Benni Allan is the Director of EBBA, an inquisitive architecture and design practice based in London, creating buildings, places and objects that sit at the juncture of architecture and visual arts. At the forefront of the studio's work is a focus on making spaces that reflect a particular poetic and material ambition that can carry meaning and have a direct emotional effect on the user.

eb-ba.co

Solid oak

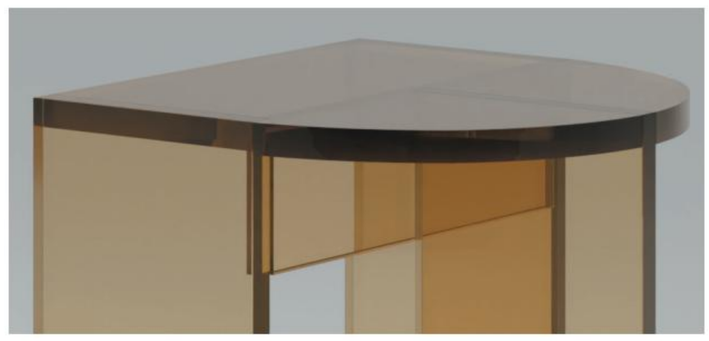
We are drawn to the beauty of timber and use it as the primary material of choice in most of our work. The Low Collection (available through Béton Brut, London) is an example of the way in which solid oak can be celebrated. The sculpted yet precise lines allow the qualities of the wood to shine through, whether it's in the character of the face of the timber itself or the clear cross-cut seen through its end grain. Very few materials would be able to offer a tactile feeling while also giving the objects a sense of weight.

Chipboard

As part of our search for sustainable ways to create cultural projects that have a finite use, we enjoy the potential of exploring the expressive properties of a material such as chipboard. Rarely used as a raw finished product, we wanted to re-create the sense of being in the workshop of the potter Richard Batterham. The exhibition design looked to transform a gallery at the Victoria & Albert Museum by creating wall panels that would help to offer space for large objects to be displayed while giving an earthy texture to the room.

Expanded cork

Originally created to be used as insulation, expanded cork is 100% natural and can be sourced as panels or blocks. As well as having good thermal and acoustic properties, the cork can be used as a lining to give a space some warmth and an inviting feeling, such as the walls of the retail space we created at Liberty for the fashion rental brand Rotaro. The brief required an easily buildable design that could create maximum impact and later be disassembled and re-used. Limiting ourselves to using blocks of a specific size and format helped to give the space an order.



Eco-resin

The studio has always been interested in the opportunities that our projects have offered to explore and question materials, and how they can apply to new applications with improved environmental properties. The Tri-Stool – one of our original pieces – was recently commissioned to be made in a type of transparent resin. While resin is widely used in products within the industry, we are helping to develop alternatives such as eco-resins that have zero harmful chemicals. We hope that our ongoing development into material technologies helps to find ways in which all our products can be both beautiful and sustainable in equal measure.

Material
Innovation

Ashes to ashes

‘Biofuel Waste is Bliss’ transforms wood ash waste into circular ceramic materials.

The Biofuel Waste is Bliss project – a collaboration between materials designer Agne Kucerenkaite and environmental scientist Marija Spokaite – reimagines the otherwise unwanted ash from bioenergy waste streams, creating new circular materials and products such as tiles and bricks. The ashes in question are sourced from Lithuania, at the Vilnius Heat Plant, where by-products from foresting are converted into biomass for energy production. In a month the plant generates around 460 tonnes of wood ash, contributing to the 476 million tonnes generated globally from such production – a costly problem for the science community, with this mostly ending up in landfill.

In an effort to find a use for this waste, the idea came to integrate it into ceramics. Wood ash glazing dates back to 1500BC China – the first glaze used in East Asia, combining only ash, clay and water. Today, it’s challenging to find a consistent source of wood ashes, which are often replaced by controlled synthetic ashes. It takes a large volume of wood or plant matter to make even a small amount of ash, and secondary raw materials typically don’t meet the ‘industry standard’ or are contaminated and therefore dumped. By incorporating up to 55% ash content in ceramic glazes and clay bodies, the project aims to replace the need for newly extracted materials while reducing the industry’s CO_2 footprint.

The next challenge for Kucerenkaite and Spokaite is focusing on refining biofuel-ash based formulations for use on a larger scale, as well as involving other international bioenergy companies to tackle similar waste streams, such as biochar production.

Biofuel is Bliss forms a part of Ignorance is Bliss, a continuous design project founded by Kucerenkaite in 2016 that gives a new identity to waste and its role in the built environment.

ignorance-bliss.com
@makewastematter

Can work travel be smart travel?

Harry McKinley is
Mix Interiors
Managing Editor

Not long ago I was at a design conference in a pre-earthquake Marrakech. I'd invited friend, colleague and climate activist Juliet Kinsman to speak. With a raised voice and a strident stance, she declared to an audience of designers, operators, architects and suppliers that – as an industry – we simply aren't doing enough to avert the coming environmental catastrophe.

She isn't wrong, of course, but her message was all the more pressing when so many of us had hopped on planes to get there – spewing carbon dioxide into the skies for a few days of networking and talks at a smart resort. Many delegates would never leave the grounds, save the journey from and back to the airport.

Personally, after years of guilt-laden, blink-and-miss-me work travel, I now try to do better. Gone are the days that a long-haul flight to Dubai or Singapore for a few hours of meetings could even vaguely be rationalised, though for many of us, however irresponsible, this was once common practice. For many designers and architects, it still is.

Conference in Marrakech over, I didn't flee the country. I left the big brand name hotel and checked in at an eco-conscious riad in the medina. For the next few days, I spent my tourist bucks at local restaurants, museums and market stalls, determined that my presence – and the environmental toll it exacted – should deliver some economic and social benefit.

Understand, I don't expect a gold star, but it did get me thinking about one of the most important world-of-work trends to emerge post-pandemic: the rise of 'bleisure' travel. This rather blunt portmanteau needs no explanation but, put simply, it means increasing numbers of us – most of us in fact – are now tacking holiday days onto business trips. This might seem a positive development, but the question becomes: in an era of sustainability, is it the right kind of travel and are we making sensible, thoughtful choices?

Recently a colleague here at Mix had to journey to Amsterdam and found, despite her best efforts, there was simply no cost-effective model that would allow her to choose a train over a plane. What to do? Well, though it doesn't necessarily balance the scales, she did at least opt for an 'eco-sexy' stay – a hotel featuring only materials that are certified cradle-to-cradle, recycled or reused; where the energy consumed is generated exclusively from Dutch windmills; and which has been awarded 'Green Key Gold', the highest sustainability mark in the Netherlands' tourism industry.

We all know that the commercial interior design sector is one of the planet's great polluters. When we look at the full lifespan of a building, we're increasingly recognising that it's at least equal to its construction, if not worse. But we do have a tendency to forget the additional layers of consequence – an industry where international client meetings and site visits are the norm. We can choose to travel slower and we can, of course, ask if if that travel is necessary at all. Because if, as Juliet suggests, we're not doing enough, perhaps we don't have all that much longer to do better.

BISLEY

LockerWall: designed to fit around you.

Inspired by the traditional locker system, but re-imagined for the contemporary office space, LockerWall gives you the scope to create an efficient, stylish storage system for any kind of environment.

NEPTUNE

Compact in-desk power module with wireless charging.

Multi-function charging for all of your personal devices at once. Dual port Type A/C adaptive fast charger with a maximum PD65W for charging laptops, tablets and smart phones. Designed to fit in a standard 80mm desk grommet

LUNAR

Collaborative power sharing with a discreet profile.

A fixed format in-desk power module offering 2x UK socket, 2x resettable 3A circuit breakers and a dual port Type A/C adaptive fast charger with a maximum PD65W for charging laptops, tablets and smart phones.