

TURKISHCERAMICS PRESENTS

TILE MILE

AN INSTALLATION BY RUSS + HENSHAW

AT CLERKENWELL DESIGN WEEK

20-22 MAY 2014

DESIGN STATEMENT BY RUSS + HENSHAW

The 'Tile Mile' installation within the arch of St John's Gate has been conceived to celebrate both the products of Turkishceramics and reflect the built heritage of Clerkenwell.

St. John's Gate is over 500 years old and one of the area's most iconic architectural landmarks. In today's fast pace society, it is all too easy for people to go about their daily commute with a blinkered view and take for granted the built environment around them. Our vision was to create an intervention that would place a focus on this spectacular example of medieval design and engineering, and to remind people of the beauty within the city fabric that they navigate daily. Inspiration for the installation came from the use of ceramics in Turkish and Islamic architecture. In particular, we were fascinated with decoration that featured infinitely repeating mathematical patterns. These mesmerising designs contain both reflective and rotational symmetry; a form of patternation that inspired us to pursue the themes of infinity and reflection through the optical effects of mirrors.

Parallel mirrors reflect a space or object between them creating a series of reflections that appear to recede into an infinite distance. By reflecting the double vaulted ceiling of the arch infinitely, an illusion will be created of an endless crypt like space reminiscent of the Basilica Cistern in Istanbul. To further echo the theme of reflection, the tiled floor has been designed to represent a mirror image of the vaulted ceiling above. The lines of the ribbed ceiling structure divides the floor into 16 triangular segments that frame patterns inspired by the striking colour combinations and bold decoration of Iznik ceramics.

Each of the four different patterns are created using a single geometric tile format in order to demonstrate that by using a contemporary product creatively a diverse range of visual outcomes can be achieved.

We wanted to create a modern reinterpretation of traditional Iznik design principles and have chosen 10 complimentary tile colours that make reference to this rich heritage including: cobalt and oil blue, sage green, turquoise, scarlet red and yellow over white.

Tile Mile is the product of collaboration between architecture, engineering and specialist fabrication. By working with skilled makers, we have been able to resolve problems and find clever solutions to retain the idea's simplicity whilst overcoming the logistical issues of the site. The entire installation is prefabricated in a workshop, and by using a 3D survey, is perfectly tailored to fit the idiosyncrasies of the Grade I Listed arch structure.

Infinity mirrors are an exciting and intriguing demonstration of the law of reflection. They inspire interest, intrigue and a sense of playfulness which will invite the public to engage and interact with the installation. Upon stepping into the arch, the viewer will experience the illusion of an elaborate pathway to a place and space beyond the mirrors.

NOTES:

- The floor design features tiles from the Vitra Architekt and Kale Cube collections. These tiles were chosen because of the colours, surface finish and their potential to create interesting geometric patterns. The Kale Cube tile is a wall tile and as such, a floor treatment will be applied to ensure they meet slip resistance targets for the public realm.
- The tiled floor includes circa 7,200 tiles laid over 100 hours by craftsman Colin Barber.
- The tiled floor is laid in 32 pre-tiled segments over a rigid metal deck commonly used for stage sets.
- The mirrors are laminated to ply backing with an intermediate layer of safety foil to avoid shattering. The mirror panels are hung in vertical sequence from split batons.

KEY INFORMATION:

Client: Turkishceramics
www.turkishceramics.com

Architects: russ + Henshaw
www.russandhenshaw.com

Structural Engineers: Constant Structural
Design www.constantsd.com

Specialist Fabricator: setWorks
www.setworks.co.uk

3D Laser Survey: SES (Site Engineering
Services Ltd) www.sesltd.uk.com

Tiling: Colin Barber www.colin-barber.com

Selected subcontractors and suppliers:

Tile Border from Vitra Arkitekt collection
Tile patterns from Kale Cube collection
Anti-slip coating by Watco Tile-Safe®

#TileMile

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