# THE CURATED GROUNDED FORMS

A Curated Language of Architectural Clay

# From the Curator With a deep foundation in material science and firsthand experience across materials and finishes, I bring this inspiration book forward with conviction—as both a reference and a provocation. This is a curated visual study of how artisanal beauty intersects with architectural expression. Through THE CURATED mood boards, Curoq creates frameworks for spatial thinking, grounded in material logic. I believe that true innovation begins with collaboration between design vision and material intelligence.

Abdul Hameed Khan

Founder, Curoq

#### ARCHITECTURE BUILT WITH EARTH

Clay is not a trend. It is architecture's oldest surface.

In GROUNDED FORMS, CUROQ presents a curated selection of material systems rooted in earthen intelligence — from pigment-rich plasters to structural cotto and high-fired zellige. These are surfaces defined by mineral tactility, thermal mass, and visual silence.

This edition gathers works from Italy, Morocco, the UK, and California — materials selected for their architectural clarity and spatial performance. GROUNDED FORMS is a study in form, finish, and how clay informs spatial design without decoration.

This is not about handmade nostalgia. It is about engineered timelessness.

# MONOLITHIC CLAY FORMS

Architectural expression through thickness, scale, and density

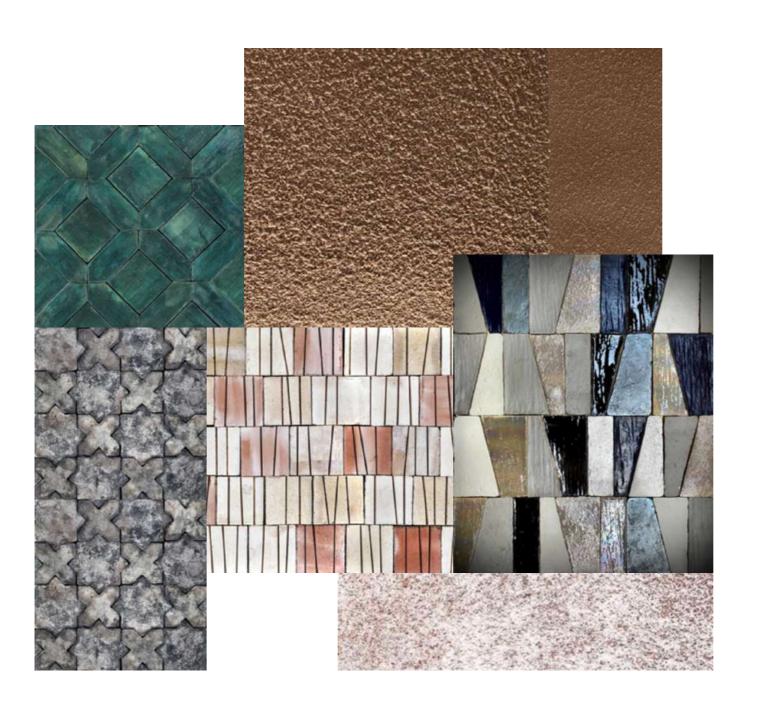


Clay not as a layer, but as an architectural body. These forms embody structure, shadow, and surface in one unified gesture — ideal for vaults, partitions, and elements where earthy materiality becomes spatial presence.



Mass in Dialogue Clay volumes speak in the grammar of scale and restraint.





The Built Earth Raw, fired, or patinated — earth becomes structure, not just surface.



Architectural Clay Thinking
Beyond finishes — a structural proposition in mineral and time.





Envelope and Emotion Clay merges façade with feeling, anchoring buildings to place.

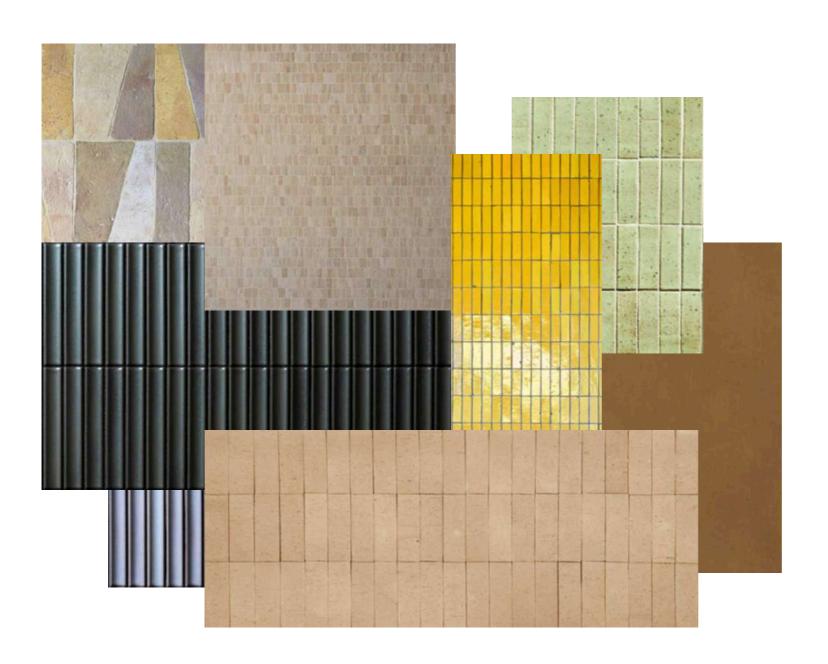
#### GRID + MODULE LOGIC

Order, rhythm, and surface control through modular clay geometries



Modularity in clay becomes a system of architectural logic. Whether hand-pressed or precision-cut, clay modules introduce a spatial rhythm — a grid that defines not just surface, but orientation and proportion. These are not decorative patterns; they are disciplined expressions of geometry.

The power of repetition, offset, or tessellation is heightened when modules are irregular or handmade. Clay/Cotto's natural imperfections work within the grid to humanise what would otherwise be mechanical. Architects can manipulate layout direction, joint thickness, and pattern scale to guide the user's experience.

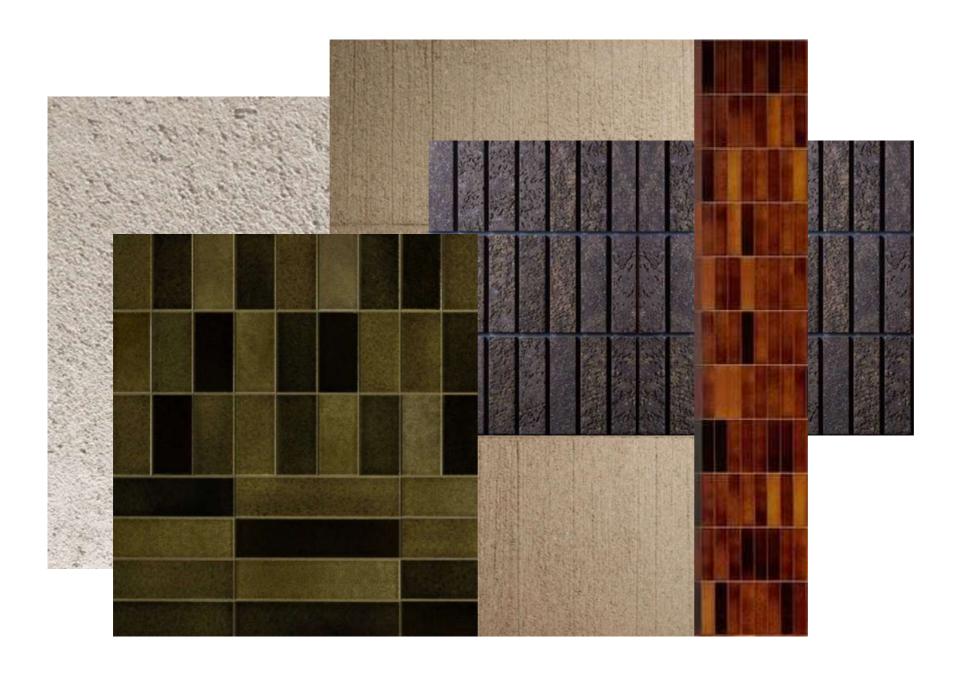




Modules Define Surface. Joints Define Scale

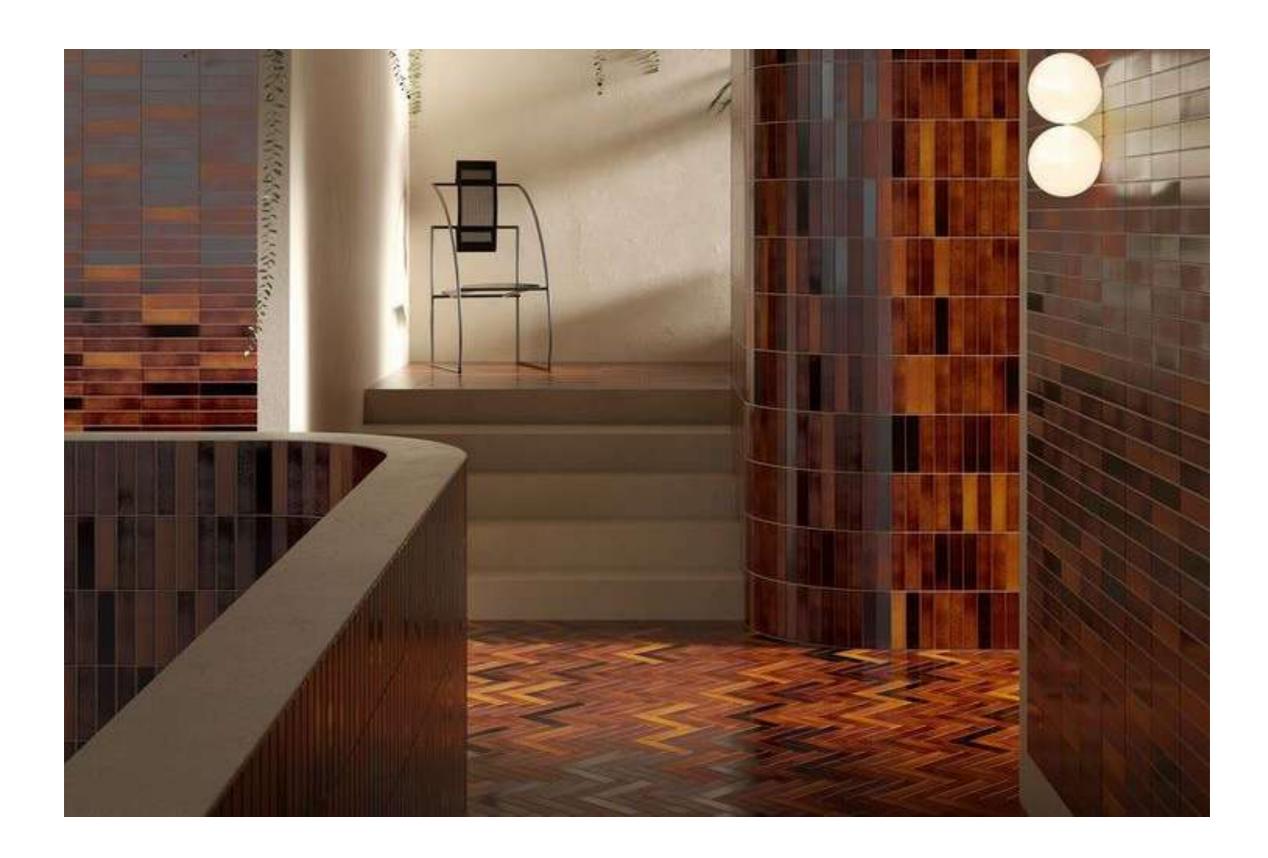








Structure Through Pattern



### RELIEF + SURFACE TOOLING

Architectural clay/ceramic as a sculpted skin through subtractive and additive techniques



Clay/ceramic surfaces gain architectural intent through manual tooling, carving, and ribbing techniques — transforming the material from a neutral plane into an activated field. These are not ornamental gestures but surface calibrations that register light, scale, and tactility.

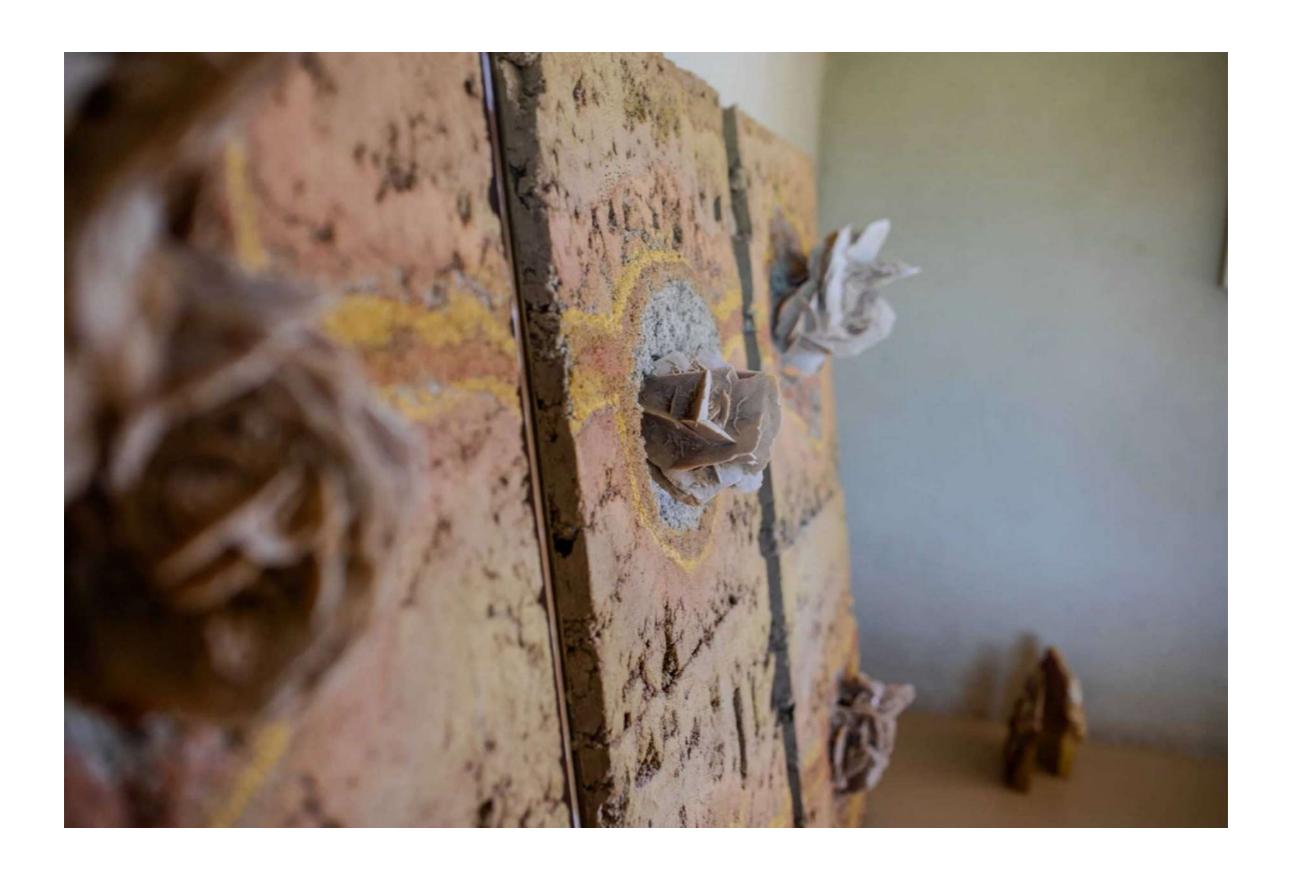
Tooling adds narrative to the wall — grooves, linear incisions, or tactile roughness all become part of the architectural rhythm. The gestures can be uniform or irregular, shallow or deep, yet always tied to the spatial context: a surface that performs both visually and materially.

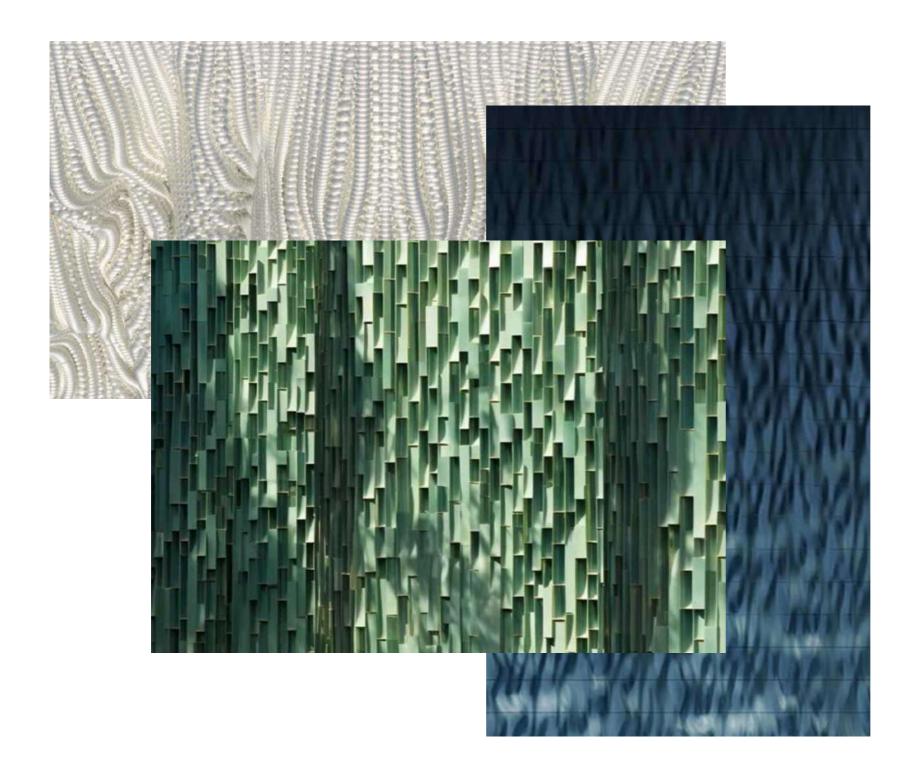
In parallel, sculptural lacquer treatments — especially micro-ribbed or relief-based lacquer finishes — echo the tooling logic of clay. The contrast between matte clay textures and gloss-lacquered forms creates depth through opposition, amplifying spatial hierarchy and sensory variation.



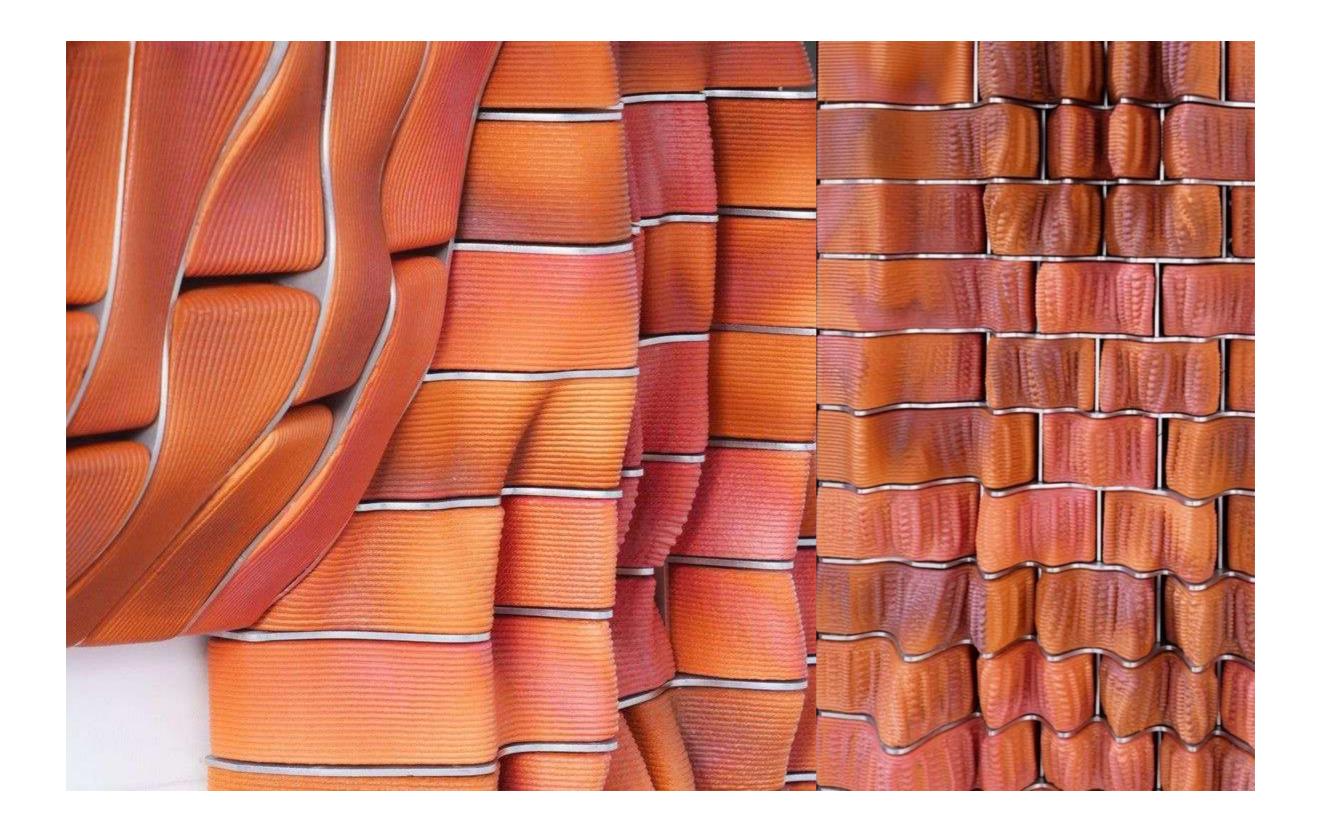


Sculpted from the earth, rhythms of nature, the beauty of imperfection and the processes of deep time













Designing with Discipline, Expressed in Earth

#### SEAMLESS EARTH SKINS

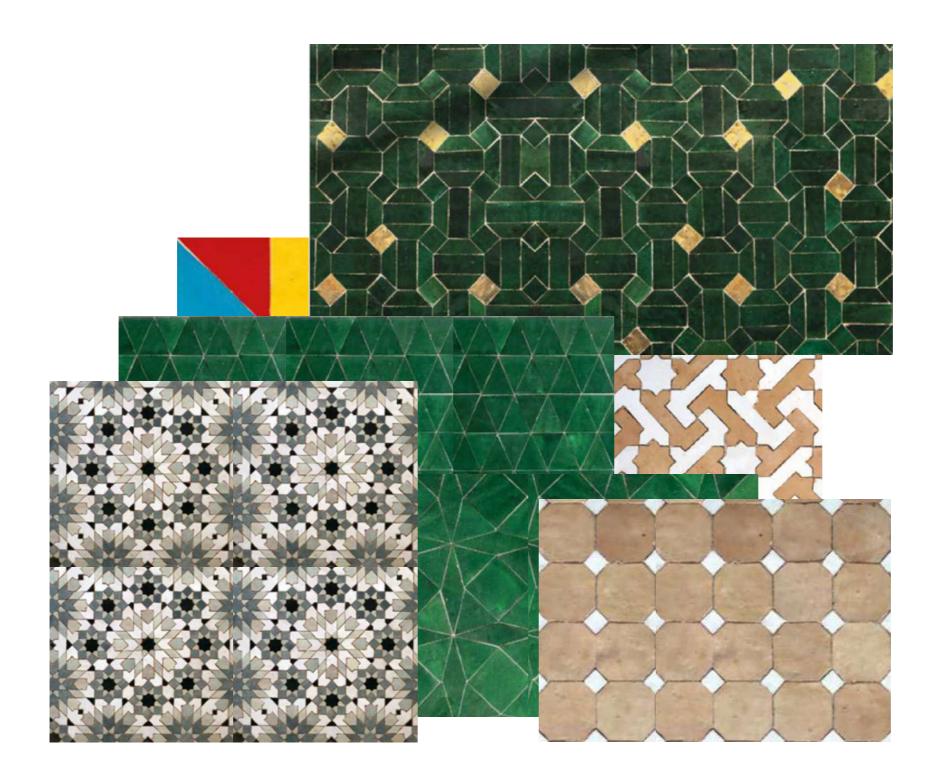
Tactile wall-scale finishes in clay/ceramics—continuous, mineral, atmospheric



Clay/Ceramics becomes architectural when it moves beyond the brick or tile — into a continuous, seamless expression of surface. These earth-based skins breathe, absorb light, and respond to the spatial mood with quiet strength. Applied by hand, they retain tool marks, tonal variation, and raw texture — becoming spatial atmospheres, not just finishes.

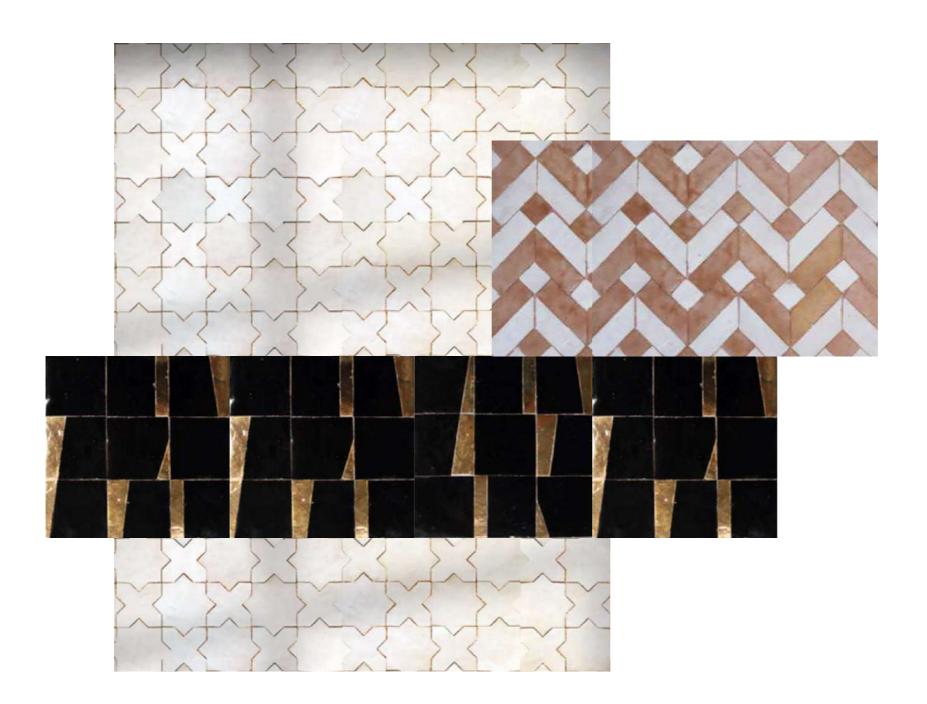
Whether executed as thin plasters or thicker mineral renders, the aim is unity — a field of earth that transitions across walls, niches, and volumes without break. Within this seamless field, tile insertions or relief cuts offer rhythm and scale, making clay/ceramic a material of both background and statement.

The beauty lies in the imperfections — the shifts in tone, the meeting of edges, the slight ridges of hand-crafted labor. Together, they soften architecture, introducing depth, tactility, and stillness.





Imperfection by Design Zelige celebrates the asymmetric discipline of the handmade.





Ordered by the Hand The geometric tradition softened by human variation.





Geometry with a Soul Grids fracture, patterns ripple — repetition becomes resonance.





Fractals in Clay
Zelige becomes micro-architecture — a module with infinite reach.

## THERMAL SURFACE MOVEMENT

Fired clay/ceramics textures shaped by smoke, oxidation, and the alchemy of heat



Clay carries memory — not only of hand, but of flame. When exposed to fire, smoke, and oxidation, it transforms from earth to artefact. What emerges is a thermal imprint — shades of blackened bronze, ash white, carbon grey, and scorched sienna — shaped not by pigment but by process.

These effects are not flaws but intentional textures, used architecturally to soften perfect geometries or anchor minimalist forms with elemental depth. The surface becomes narrative: a record of firing conditions, fuel choices, and atmospheric accidents. Each tile or panel tells a slightly different story, making architecture that feels both ancient and experimental.

Thermal textures are particularly suited for spaces where stillness meets drama — corridors, thresholds, niches — places that invite the gaze to pause and trace.





Controlled chaos in every baked layer

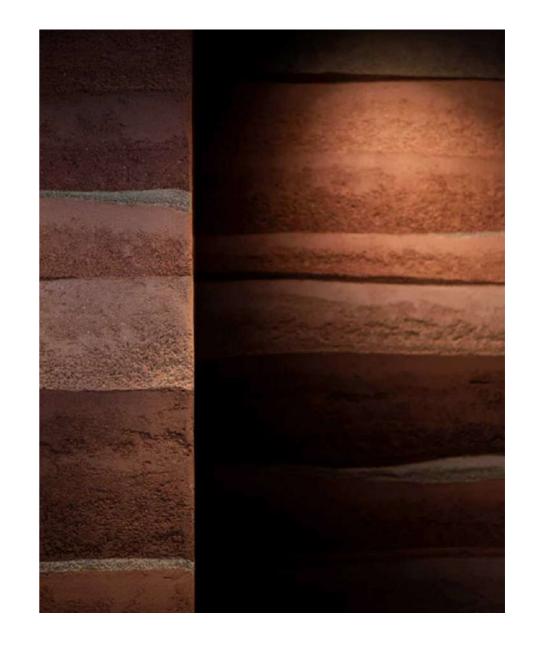




Where oxidation defines the finish

#### CLAY IN STRUCTURE & SURFACE

When clay is not cladding — but architecture itself.



Clay is increasingly being used not only as a surface treatment but as a primary structural and spatial material. Compressed earth blocks, rammed earth, and high-density extruded clay units are now part of a larger architectural system where material performance and thermal regulation intersect with design.





Walls become monoliths — rammed earth builds with weight and time

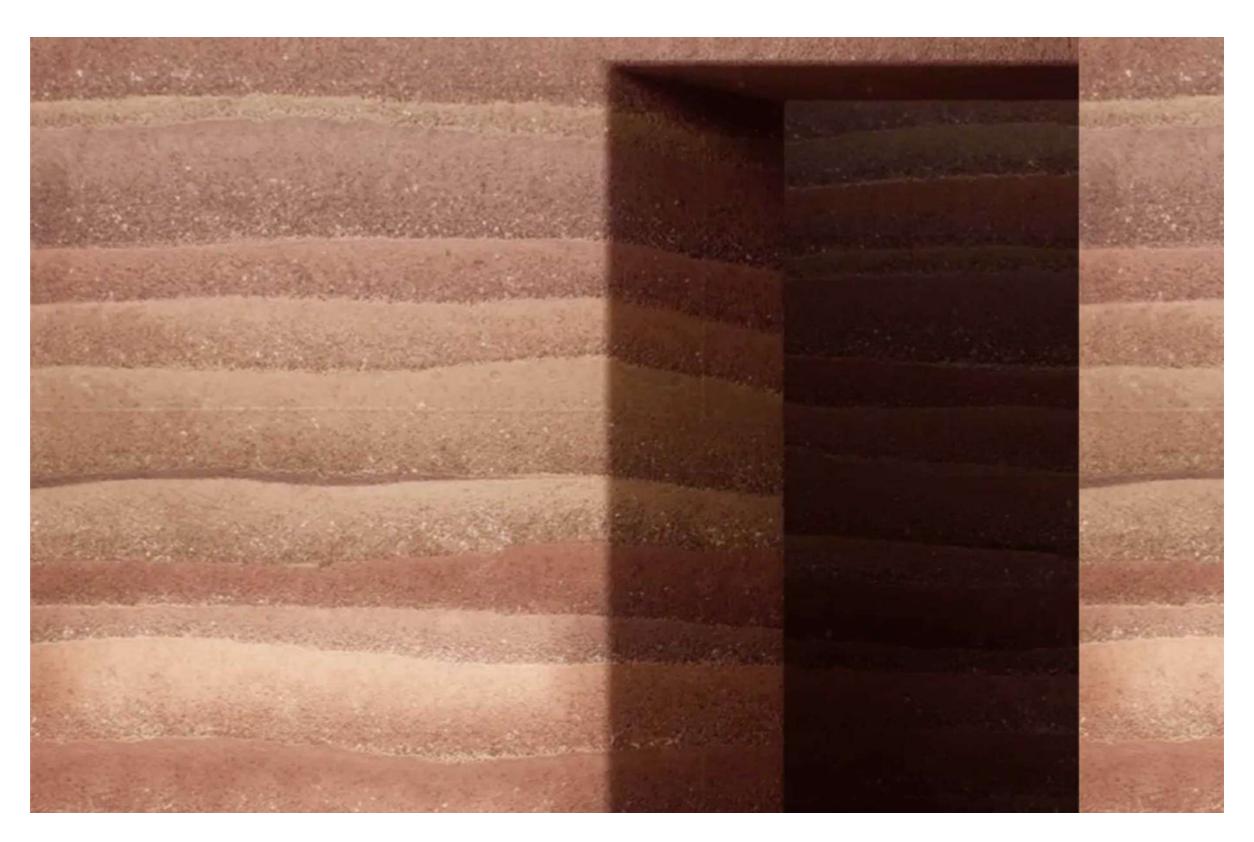








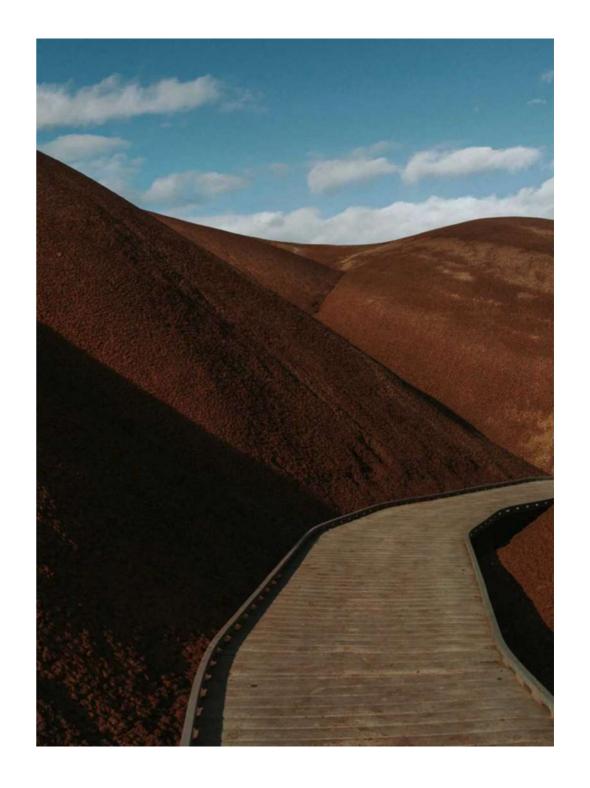
From soil to structure — a tectonic expression of place



Earth is cast, not coated — architecture begins in the formwork

# SCAPES AS SPATIAL NARRATIVES

Our scapes are curated spatial compositions—landscape systems that merge architectural intent with material mood. From the restrained minimalism of dry-set formats to lush, gardeninspired assemblies and wild organic tiling patterns, these outdoor surfaces are more than finishes; they are invitations to reimagine terrain. Each scape defines a new atmosphere—crafted through texture, layout, and tone—offering architects and designers a starting point for building meaningful, immersive environments.



#### '58

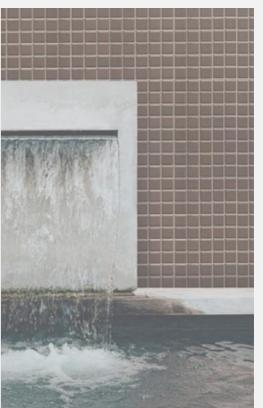
The year America broke with the past, when all seemed new, fresh, possible. As old rulebooks got tossed, nature came indoors and the indoors ventured out. A time of Eames and Neutra and Wright, mad men and suburbs, of cocktails on the deck, pool parties that lasted till dawn.





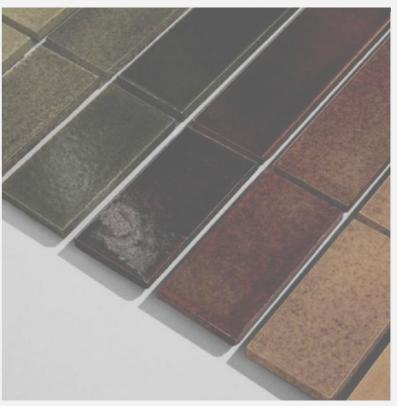






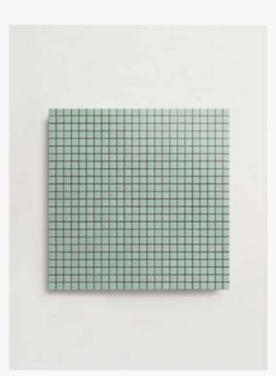








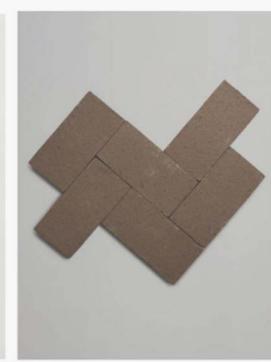




Lido



Dzek + Formafantasma: ExCinere



BrickWorks



Belgian Reproduction Privé



Dolce Vita Terrazzo



Tivoli Tech



Colorwerks

# **KENJO**

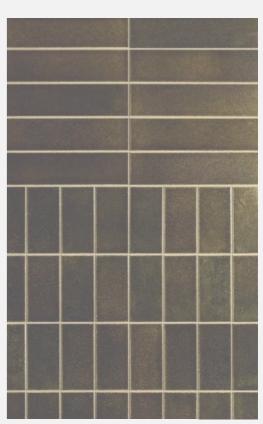
Round the corner, slide open the door... into stillness. Silence. Calm. The sublime. Your pulse slows. Welcome to KENJO. The essence of the Japanese garden, more a philosophy than a set of motifs, the place where art and nature are so entwined that together they're reborn.



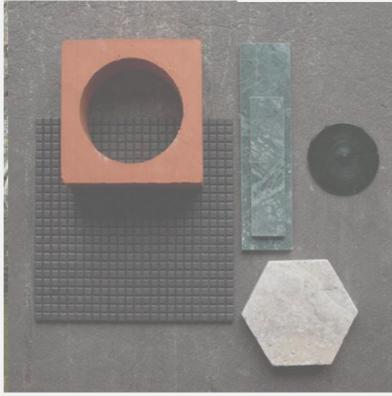












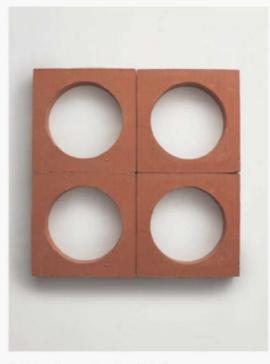








Eastern Expression: Tempera



Belgian Reproduction Privé



Lapidary



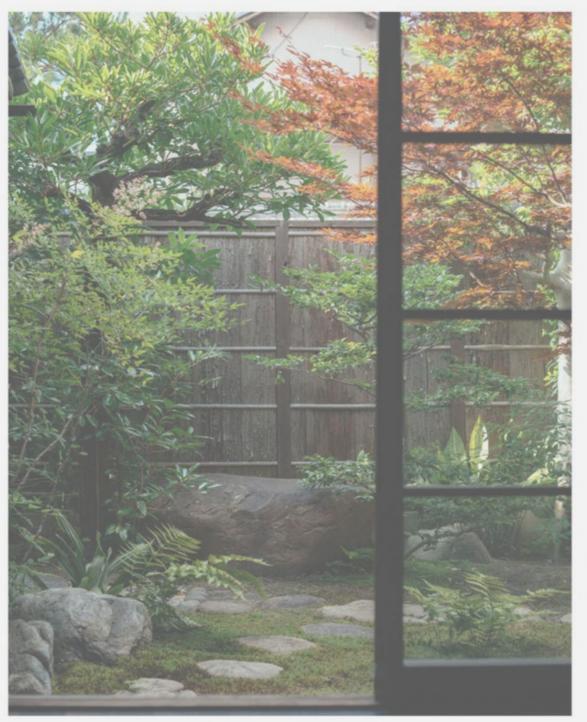
Dzek + Formafantasma: ExCinere



Cement Origami



1970s GlassWorks: le Disque

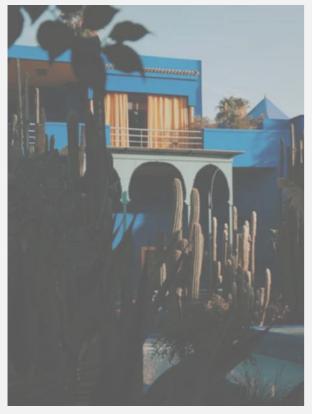


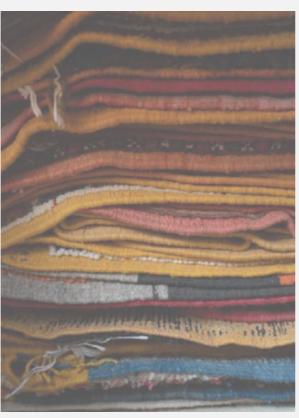


# MAROC

Look around. The gifts of Moorish culture are everywhere: the architecture of the Mediterranean, the magnificence of tile—and the mastery of the art of outdoor living and hospitality. In MAROC, pleasure is the essence of life, senses are nourished, passions kindled



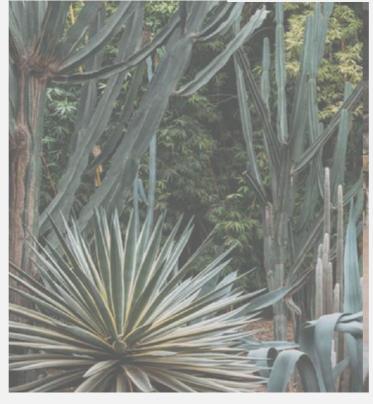






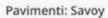






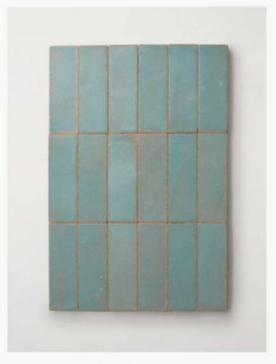








FezBrick



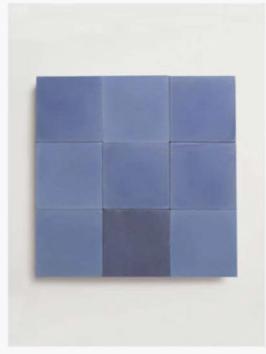
Eastern Expression: Tempera



Eastern Expression: Heraldry



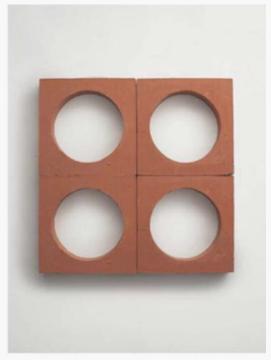
Eastern Expression: Henna



Colore Frattura



Pavimenti: Lanterni



Belgian Reproduction Privé



# NORDIK

Scandinavia: the land of apparent contradictions. NORDIK is where light meets dark, hygge meets minimalism, where the harshest climes meet a fierce love of outdoors and nature. An otherworldly allure springs from the very juxtaposition and tension—and it fascinates, soothes, renews.

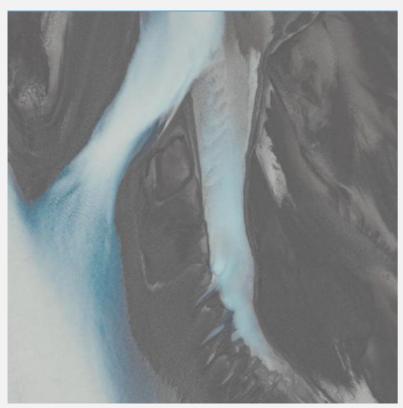






















Eastern Expression: Tempera



Grangestone



Belgian Reproduction Privé



BrickWorks



Dolce Vita Terrazzo



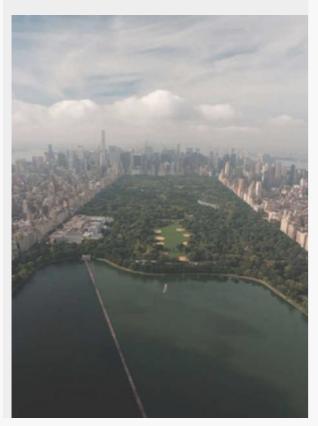
Lido



# URBANE

New York: city of storied neighborhoods—and unexpected outdoor spaces. Upper East Side elegance. Industrial modern in Tribeca. Brooklyn brownstone romance. Harlem's bohemian eclecticism. Opera, jazz, funk, punk: URBANE is all the moods of the city that never sleeps.











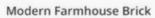


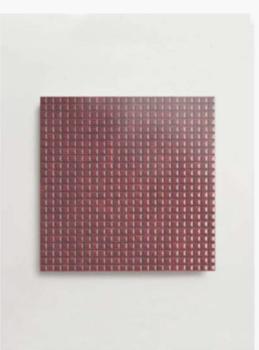












Lido



1970s GlassWorks: le Disque



Lapidary



Dzek + Formafantasma: ExCinere



Dolce Vita Terrazzo



Pavimenti: Savoy



Cement Origami



# LOGGIA

The Italian way of life, where the small pleasures—particularly outdoors—become extraordinary. Meals that taste of the surrounding earth and the cook's hand – spare but expert. A dip in the pool holds the day's heat at bay, while the cooler nights roll into the same, tomorrow.



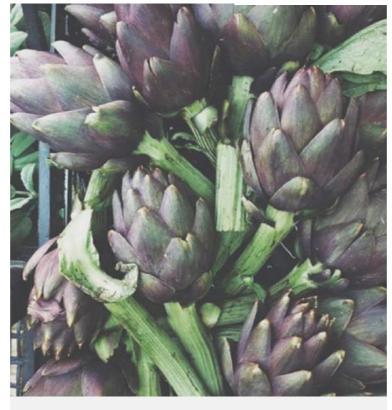


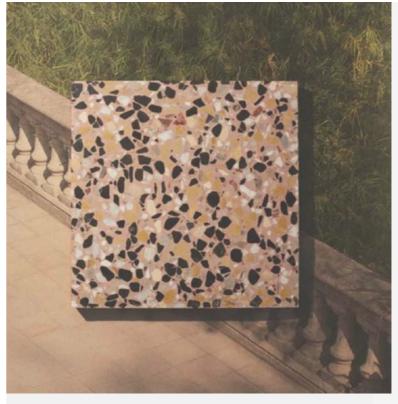




















Dolce Vita Terrazzo

Tivoli Tech

Pemberly Pavers

Lapidary









Eastern Expression: Henna

FezBrick

Grangestone

Lido





# ARCHITECTS DON'T NEED PRODUCTS. THEY NEED INTELLIGENCE

#### CUROQ works upstream with architects:

- 48-hour curated responses
- Co-design mood board support
- Bespoke editions of THE CURATED for studio libraries
- Exclusive access to rare and collectible materials



We speak your language — before the project begins.



A fluent design dialogue across time zones and traditions



### OUR GLOBAL-LOCAL NETWORK

CUROQ connects global avant-garde with regional resonance.

# Tools for Intelligent. Curated Design Decisions

CUROQ is Not a Library. It's a Lens.

"We don't provide 'options' — we provide direction. Each palette is a statement. Each material has been lived with and selected for a reason.



#### 1. Signature Palette Access

Receive access to our limited-edition, pre-curated palettes — composed from CUROQ's world-class material and object library. These are not generated; they are chosen.

#### 2. Reference Catalogue (Digital)

Detailed digital sheets including surface descriptions, origin, maker context, finishes, and use-case insights — ready to inform mood boards or client pitches.

#### 3. Scaled Mood Board Visual (High-Res JPEG)

A refined, visual composition of the full palette — formatted for your own decks or internal presentation. No extra styling needed.

#### 4. Sample Loan Support

Material samples are not distributed freely.

We offer a **curated loan-based sampling service** —

delivered with intention, and always tracked — for approved projects only.

#### 5. Application Guidance (On Request)

We assist with clear, minimal notes on usage — whether it's plaster lighting strategy or how to transition from lime to brass. No excess, just essentials.

# FOR DEEPER INSPIRATION

Beyond the Palette: CUROQ Look Books

#### **TEXTURED SILENCE**

A study in stillness, mass, and shadow.
Where stone speaks, and space listens.
For lovers of minimalism, sculptural scale, and quiet power.





#### SCALES OF GREY

An architectural essay in tone, texture, and timelessness.

Five chapters of grey, from pale to graphite — curated to evoke memory and restraint.

#### CADENCE (Coming Soon)

Rhythmic material pairings across wall, object, and space.

For design thinkers who move with intention.

#### WELLNESS BY CUROQ

Water, lime, and elemental grace.

Vanities, basins, accessories, and spaces that soothe and restore.

#### ARTISAGE (Coming Soon)

Limited edition objects and materials by the rarest hands.

Collected, not produced. Timeless, not trendy



A Note from CUROQ This inspiration is a reflection of our ongoing material dialogue with architecture.

For selections, collaborations, and curations that align with your practice, connect with us at: www.curoq.com | info@curoq.com



Where material speaks, and curation defines architecture. Engage with Curoq to access rigorously selected surface and material solutions—curated for architects who seek authenticity, depth, and precision in design.

