

## **FAB Fiandre Architectural Bureau, Castellarano is restyled with a new design by Iosa Ghini Associati**

**On the occasion of Cersaie 2019, the new FAB Fiandre Architectural Bureau in Castellarano is inaugurating the innovative showrooms and event facilities for the Iris Ceramica Group brand dedicated to professionals and designers. Fiandre contracted out the restyling to Bologna architecture studio Iosa Ghini Associati**

The aesthetic and technical development of its surfaces has led Fiandre Architectural Surfaces to completely restyle FAB Fiandre Architectural Bureau, the innovative showroom and event facility it has set up at the Castellarano factory to support and inspire designers and its professional and private clients.

The design, inaugurated on the occasion of Cersaie 2019, was entrusted to architecture studio Iosa Ghini Associati, with whom Fiandre worked to redefine the design language and display layout for both the interiors and the outdoors areas.

“Now, five years after the inauguration of FAB, we felt it was time to restyle our offices with a design which highlighted the ongoing evolution of the brand and its products,” says Federica Minozzi, Managing Director of the Iris Ceramica Group holding to which Fiandre belongs. “Iosa Ghini Associati drew up a very exciting design which was both new and highly functional, and which provides Fiandre and its public a place to host visitors with a strong statement of our identity, to show our products in all their forms and applications, and for entertainments.”

The restyling project covered both the interior showroom, at around 1500 m<sup>2</sup> and the plaza of 5200 m<sup>2</sup>.

Every single architectural detail features ceramic slabs, which have been worked into the design with the utmost care and attention.

The interior showroom has been divided by Ghini Associati into two large areas which host the two core products of the brand: large ceramic slabs and traditional tile sizes.

The first area includes the reception area and a bar/kitchen featuring an island surfaced with Fiandre's SapienStone 12 mm and Maximum 6 mm slabs. This area is dedicated to displaying Fiandre's Maximum range of large slabs, both on the walls and installed as furnishing elements. The visitor follows a route outlined by a skein of brushed brass tubes which also frames the products themselves, resulting in an almost metaphysical landscape.

The second area, on the other hand, displays the undiminished design potential of traditional tile sizes in an installation inspired by the rooms of a boutique hotel, including the hall, reception desk, wellness facilities and spa, as well as connecting areas such as the corridors leading to the rooms, the lift and stairs, a suite, studio, lobby and bathroom. The furnishings in the various rooms are surfaced with Maximum slabs. This choice highlights the brand's ability to service the requirements of the Horeca and luxury residential sectors with both floor and wall solutions and made to measure furnishings. There are also a number of technical display areas, which allow the client to realise his own ideas together with FAB's staff.

The showroom faces onto an elevated plaza measuring around 5200 m<sup>2</sup>, previously mainly used as a parking lot but now restyled as a pedestrian area with trees and urban furnishings coated with Fiandre ceramic products.

The exterior features Granitech outdoors technical solutions with Fiandre Architectural Surfaces and Porcelaingres ceramic surfaces. Special thickness 20 mm Solida slabs by Fiandre coated the elevated central island. Another area of elevated flooring has been coated with 20 mm Urban slabs by Porcelaingres, cut to size in lozenges, while Arabescato Orobico slabs from the Marmi Maximum collection have been used to coat the Granitech ventilated walls. The ACTIVE technology has also enabled the creation of a “green lung” and a semicircular wall clad with large Calacatta Light and Premium White Active slabs by Fiandre.

The design by Iosa Ghini Associati has thus succeeded in giving a new face to FAB, Castellarano, which now perfectly embodies the identity of Fiandre Architectural Surfaces, with its vast range of products able to satisfy any design requirement and the technological evolution of its products and processes, always with a view to environmental and social sustainability.

### **The project in detail**

The search for new solutions in advance of fashionable trends is a core value of Fiandre Architectural Surfaces, which offers designers and industrial and private customers a welcoming space in which to find support and inspiration for their projects: FAB Fiandre Architectural Bureau.

The aesthetic and technical evolution of Fiandre surfaces demands wide ranging, exhaustive and high impact representation to narrate the values of a brand driving towards the future and its DNA, firmly rooted in design. It was in response to this need that the decision was taken to restyle the showroom area at the Castellarano premises most representative of the Fiandre brand: FAB Fiandre Architectural Bureau.

The job of translating this desire into a concrete project was entrusted to architecture studio Iosa Ghini Associati, with whom Fiandre Architectural Surfaces worked to redefine the design language and display layout, as well as its functions, aimed at satisfying the requirements of the principal public of the facility: architects, designers, influencers, industrial customers and key account clients, as well as professionals and connoisseurs of design and image.

### **Showroom**

FAB occupies a total interior area of around 1500 m<sup>2</sup>. It is divided into two large areas.

The first area includes the reception and an extended display of the flagship Maximum large ceramic slab technology. In this mostly open space, the vast Maximum range is displayed in an orderly and yet light fashion on the perimeter walls, while the centre hosts a variety of applications of Maximum in cladding furnishing elements. The latter are apparently monolithic, but in reality these volumes, ordered sequentially and sometimes penetrating each other, conceal doors, hatches and openings which display the various ways in which large slabs can be used in furnishing applications.

The aesthetic leitmotiv of the display is an attractive skein of brushed brass tubes which connect the floor, ceiling and central volumes to delineate the direction to follow in viewing the display. In front of the display area is located a bar-kitchen area, featuring a large island kitchen counter completely surfaced with SapienStone 12 mm and Maximum 6 mm slabs.

The second part of the showroom gives visitors a glimpse of the unlimited applications of Fiandre's more traditional surfaces, with a display space inspired by the rooms of a boutique hotel. Meticulous attention to detail has been paid to the design of the hall, welcome desk, wellness area and spa, corridors, lift and stairs, suite, studio, lobby and bathroom to provide a platform for flooring and cladding from the more standard collections, with bespoke furniture made using Maximum surfaces completing the look.

Now more than ever, the Horeca and luxury residential sectors demand ultra-high levels of customisation when it comes to interior design projects. The Fiandre showroom provides concrete examples of how ceramic surfaces can be used in a plethora of different settings, constituting an irreplaceable support for the designer.

The area is rounded out with a technical display area in which visitors can admire the range of Fiandre's offering in all its colour variety. The option of testing combinations, of touching surfaces and appreciating their various finishes, while accompanied and supported by FAB staff, make this a place in which the customer is sure to find the ideal solution for his project.

## Outdoors area

The plaza in front of the entrance to FAB has also undergone something of a transformation and will now be an external reception area and display space for the Fiandre, Granitech and Porcelaingres outdoor collections.

The first area of transformation regards usability and reception: previously a parking lot, the entire area is now pedestrian, equipped with urban furniture and decorated with plants and trees of moderate height to create areas of shade in which the visitor can relax during the summer.

The entire area has a new layout, with a round central island floored with the Granitech raised dry installation flooring system supporting Fiandre's 20 mm Solida ceramic slabs. The special feature of this flooring consists in the patterning of the elements, formed like traditional roof tiles, used in the laying pattern. The floor supports urban furniture elements, themselves coated with Fiandre and SapienStone ceramic tiles.

The rest of the area is laid concentrically from the central circle to the perimeter walls giving onto the various divisions: FAB showroom, Porcelaingres, Granitech and Technoriunite. A vehicle traffic road is followed by a large area tiled with the Granitech rised flooring system, with cut-to-size lozenges of 20 mm Urban Porcelaingres. This platform is bounded by a 4.5 m semicircular wall, completely clad with large Calacatta Light and Premium White slabs treated with the Active technology. This large area, surfaced with anti-bacterial and anti-pollution material, constitutes the "green lung" of the project, and sets the stage for the buildings facing onto the plaza itself.

The external cladding of the buildings surrounding the area has also been renewed, with the installation of Granitech ventilated walls made with Arabescato Orobito slabs from the Marmi Maximum collection.

Every single architectural detail features ceramic slabs, which have been worked into the design with the utmost care and attention.

## Iosa Ghini Associati explains the concept

"The project was divided conceptually into two areas: indoors and outdoors. Our idea was to use the two settings to illustrate the extraordinary versatility of the new generation of ceramic products and shine a light on their sustainability and beauty.

The project is divided into two sections: the first, the interior design project, regards the main Fiandre Architectural Surfaces showroom, while the second consists in a complete refurbishing of the plaza onto which the showroom faces, which also houses the Group's other activities.

## Showroom

The concept is based on the need to redesign the brand's display paradigm.

The space was divided into two macro-areas: a main room, dedicated to displaying the extra large size products from the Maximum line, and another room for more traditional tile sizes.

In the main room, we've adopted a conceptual approach to product display. Large masses with organic shaping - clad in porcelain stoneware - are framed by a skein of brass tubing, creating a spacial design which accommodates the needs of the display space while simultaneously conjuring up the feeling of being in a startling, almost metaphysical space." This sensation is enhanced by the sections of reflective mirror ceiling which explode the confines of the space and duplicate its contents.

The generous dimensions of the clad masses highlight the potential of the large size products (1.5 m x 3.00 m) and their diversity of textures and finishes. These geometrical masses have two purposes: on the one hand, they provide space to display the products covering them, and on the other they also act as units containing samples and catalogues, which can be accessed via the doors and sliding panels seamlessly integrated into the pure forms of the units themselves.

The combination of materials (porcelain stoneware, brass, bronzed mirrors) and furnishings and the carefully designed lighting make for a comfortable setting for the displays.

In the second area, the display system changes with the type of product, while maintaining the family feeling with the Maximum display area.

The traditional size tiles are presented in a more conventional manner, using settings.

The various scenes on show are inspired by luxury hotels, and feature their various functional areas: reception, lobby lift, corridor, rooms, meeting rooms and outdoor spaces. The areas are designed not simply to represent their functions, but rather to evoke the concept of "Hotel" in an architectural expressiveness which goes beyond the confines of any single setting.

For instance, the ceramic wall cladding sometimes slides downwards towards the floors, or extend upwards towards the ceilings, giving a sensation of folded planes and characterising the spaces with the use of no more than traditionally sized ceramic tiles.

The scenes are rounded out with a system of furnishings designed specifically for the display and clad with porcelain stoneware, which clearly expresses the potential of ceramic as a cladding product for furnishings.

### **Outdoors area**

The showroom faces onto an elevated plaza of around 5200 m<sup>2</sup> previously used as the parking lot for the various business in the complex. Here, it was necessary to give an identity to the space by characterising it as the outdoors extension of the range of materials and applications of the ceramic products on show.

First off, it is a pedestrian zone, leaving just one annular vehicle traffic road for loading and unloading. The plaza has been redesigned with a scenic curtain or diaphragm composed of vertical panels interposed between the centre of the area and the surrounding buildings, thus creating a circular central space which makes a strong visual statement. The panels alternate sections completely clad with large porcelain stoneware slabs and slatted sections which lighten their effect and favour a view over the rest of the area.

The project's "green touch" consists in the tasteful inclusion of climbing plants on the wall panels, the use in various points of the flooring of low plants like hedges, grass, shrubs and aromatic plants, as well as the trees distributed throughout the plaza.