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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:****COVERING 2007: TRENDS AT THE LEADING EDGE OF TILE STYLE**

**Chicago, IL, Friday, April 20th 2007** - Trend spotters had a field day—four field days, in fact—at Coverings 2007, the premier international ceramic tile and stone show held at Chicago's McCormick Place from April 17 to April 20. Those in search of high style found the mother lode on an exhibition floor filled with fashion-forward examples of the latest design and technological innovations from around the world. As trend guru Maxine Laurer of Sphere Trending noted in her Wednesday morning lecture, "Tile Trends: On the Edge and Ahead of the Curve," this is an age of abundance and of high-end luxury, and today's design-savvy, globe-trotting, digitally linked consumers want to enjoy every aspect of every experience—in personalized environments filled with products customized to their individual specifications.

Many of today's most stylish tiles seem straight off the runways of Paris, Milan, and New York: metallic surfaces, particularly liquid-like gold, silver and platinum, are everywhere. So, too, are the eternally chic faux looks: faux marbre, faux bois, and faux skins, among others, are omnipresent, and often finished with a chic metallic sheen. Menswear seems here to stay, with linen looks, pinstripes, and herringbones dressing an array of new products. Yet the feminine mystique remains, with arabesque patterns, lace-inspired tracery, and flowers, flowers, flowers flooding the show floor. Organic themes abound, too, as do graphics, super graphics, and geometrics, particularly circles and dots. Texture, too, triumphs as a top trend—and in a wide variety of scales. Tiles today are awash in color, in a palette of bold brights and cheery hues that expands well beyond the traditional spectrum of the rainbow. Moreover, in this technologically transformed society where continuous change is the only constant, the desire for the tactile, the handmade, and the artful continues to resurface.

Trends being trends, overlap happens. Designers, like consumers, revel in the mix. Circular motifs, for example, may be limned in gold or silver leaf; texture and color may converge; exotic woods and linen looks may take on glimmering glazes; and so on. But art, as always, abounds.

**Metallics**

Coverings 2007 put on a heavy metal show, with gold, silver, platinum—and bronze, brass, and pewter—adding sparkle and shine to a host of new products. In its DesignTaleStudio program of ceramic art, Ceramiche Refin offered Pareti d'autore, a limited-edition series of two designs, one with platinum and one with 24-karat gold; each can be hung singly or used in multiples to create décor on the wall. Steuler Design introduced gold tiles in various shapes and sizes. Adex USA featured diamond-shaped tiles with lopped off corners and various textures (pillow, bevel, lattice) covered in liquid-like gold, silver, or copper glazes, as well as textured accent pieces (sphere, pyramid, flat) in the same metallic finishes. Stonepeak Ceramics introduced Gray Wool, textured tiles that resemble woven wool with a mod metallic finish. Artistic Tile introduced La Leaf, glass tiles backed in metal leaf, and Goldstone, with etched circular patterns filled with metal leaf. Eliane had metallic tiles with several different textures. Deltaker introduced a wide range of metal-finished tiles, including the Piedra Metallic collection, which includes both 10 x 10 pieces and a wide variety of patterned inserts. Favrile Glass Tiles featured two metal-heavy glass tile series: Favrile, and Gilded Age. Cobsa launched Codigo, a platinum-finished series of decorative tiles and accents. Monocibic introduced Brass, Graphite, and Mercury finishes.

**The Fabulous Faux**

Skin is in, in tile as in fashion accessories. From croc to alligator and snake, faux skin patterns are among tile's most telling trends. Kale Group's RepTile Collection, created by Can Yalman Design, features three styles of tiles, each representing one scale of a lizard, crocodile, or snake's skin. Sahara Designs offers a different type of skin-inspired treatment, with its Fish Scale series, offered in two sizes. Tau presented Serp, a lizard-textured tile in a wide range of colors and sizes. Garo introduced Vendome, a sleek textured tile with an alligator-skin pattern. Florim's Rex division rolled out Croco Tabac as part of its launch of Matouche, a collection of tiles with pronounced textures.

Faux marbres, or tiles that resemble marble and other stones, were all over the show floor. Marrazzi's Cimmaron looks like honed slate and is available in many colors. Florim Ceramiche's Cerim brand introduced the D.Stone Collection in a palette that includes chalk, rust, and charcoal. Floor Gres offered Stonetech/1.0, a faux-stone glaze treatment in a range of nature-inspired earthtones. El Molino Ceramicas presented JetAitana, with a surface resembling stacked shale, and Jet Sagunto, with the surface pattern and texture of Mediterranean stone mosaics.

Among the faux bois, or ceramic wood look-alikes, are Glam Wood, from Florim's Rex Ceramiche Artistiche division, Inalco's Hardwood Series (Nogal and Cherry), Land Porcelanico's Warm Series, and CasalGrande Padana's Metalwood Collection, which also includes patterned decorative panels with a mixture of "woods" that can be used to create wall murals.

### **It's Raining Menswear**

Apavisa and Majorca are among those launching tiles with menswear fabric themes ranging from wool to linen to pinstripe. On a less tailored note, Trikeenan featured a classic herringbone. Cerim offered the I Tessuti Collection, an interpretation of tweed available in four quietly elegant shades of gray. Atmosphere Stone Design featured Glasstek, a tile with a textured surface patterned after a mid-weight weave. Ceramiche Astor introduced the Klis Collection, a series of tiles with the texture of raw silk.

### **The Fabulous Fems**

From lace-inspired tracery to arabesques in all scales to florals, the feminine influence flourishes. El Molino Ceramicos offered Décor Flores, a cheery floral pattern with a hand-drawn quality. Garo grew a garden of decorative floral tiles, both two-toned and multi-colored, in its Habitare Series (jasmine), Mood Series (tulips, orchids), and Sena Series (roses). Florim's Cerim division introduced Floreale, a bouquet of floral patterns large-scale and small in shades of white, cream, taupe, and gray; it also featured Millerighe, some with allover flora, and others with just several stems. Toprak Seramik cultivated the floral market with Elisa Dekor and Pella Gardenya. Viva offered a wonderful blue-and-white floral designed by Paola Navone, as well as the photo-transfer tiles of its Luminescent Nouvelle Vague series.

Arabesque patterns also spread delicately across the show floor. Florim's Rex Ceramiche Artistiche division launched its Metaux Collection, which included two arabesque designs, one large-scale and one small. Roca featured Pietra Damasco, and Tau also had an embroidery look, with Ranger.

### **Organics, Graphics, Supergraphics, and Texture, Too**

From Dom's Tonic Collection, designed in collaboration with Catherine Braconnier of MUDstyle, the Montreal-based design firm, to Decorativa's Aichi, Kyoto, and Fuji, to Favrile Glass Tile's Textured Antique, to N&C Live Tiles's Perla 8 Glass Floor Tiles, texture triumphed at this year's show. PT. Bintang Cakra Kencana introduced a series of limestone surfaces for interior walls in textures that resembled various basketweaves.

Garo offered Tate, with interlocking M.C. Escher-inspired designs in large scales and striking colors, and Fifth Avenue, with a Saul Steinberg-esque squiggle. As part of its Matouche

Collection, Florim's Rex Ceramiche offered le rythme de l'ombre, a porcelain tile with inset porcelain leaves.

### **Beyond the Color Spectrum**

Vitra introduced a hot saturated palette and Dayglo colors to its Arkitekt line of colored porcelains; the collection is also available with speckled glazes in the same range of Tropicana tones. Among the hues that Gamma Due added to its offerings were a cool Lime, a warm Aubergine, a mad shade of red called Bull, and a soft shade of sage green called Moss. El Molino Ceramicos introduced its Onda Collection, tiles with wavy textured patterns in white, turquoise, scarlet, orange, and pistachio. Duomi Marmi introduced ArdoMix, a tile that incorporates small stones into a colored resin matrix: translucent saturated hues include tecno orange, tecno red, blu ocean, and giallo tecno. Crossville introduced a host of new colors and stripe tonalities to its Color Blox collection.

### **May the Circle be Unbroken**

Circles, squared circles, and ovals are ubiquitous these days, both as tile shapes and as patterns on glazes. Pamesa Ceramica's Malla Lhasa, for example, is a square tile with a pattern of incised circles. In its Steelwork Collection of metallic tiles, Ceramica Fioranese (Ceramiche Coem) highlighted Target, a tile with a pattern of concentric circles, and Pixel, with a surface glazed to resemble the dots of digital pixels.

### **Art and the Imperfect**

From artisan looks to tile murals to large works of ceramic art, this trend encompasses great variety. Motawi Tileworks from Ann Arbor, Michigan, for one, exemplifies the American artisan movement, with polychrome tiles in arts-and-crafts-derived patterns that can be used as accents and pieced together for murals. New at Coverings were Louis Sullivan-inspired designs, as well as patterns derived from Art Deco wallpapers. Ceramiche Refin takes an equally artful, but entirely different approach, producing large-scale, hand-made ceramic artworks for the wall in its DesignTaleStudio program. Some feature metal glazes in abstract designs or organic-inspired themes, such as gingko leaves (see Pareti d'autori in metallics); others are strictly black and white; still others are composed of color harmonies. Deltaker Ceramica introduced Manuel and Open, two production tiles with artfully imperfect surfaces that make them virtually indistinguishable from traditional handmade. Savcor Tile launched a tile engineered with digital coatings and strong lacquered finishes that permit image transfer with impressive clarity; designers can transfer the image onto just one tile, or create wall-size murals with multiple ones. Desire Flooring presented handmade tiles crafted with techniques derived from the traditional and ancient art of cement tile making; patterns incorporate a range of colors, designs, and inlays of South Sea mother-of-pearl. Syzygy mixes glass, shell, and stone. Duomi Marmi offered an interesting take on tile as art, with images essentially laminated in a high-performance resin matrix.

### **About Coverings...**

Coverings, the premier international trade show and conference dedicated exclusively to showcasing the newest in ceramic tile and natural stone, has grown to be the largest and most important show of its kind. Coverings features 1,200 exhibitors from more than 65 countries and attracts more than 33,000 distributors, retailers, fabricators, contractors and specifiers, architectural and design professionals, builders and real estate developers, plus the press and journalists who cover this vital and growing industry. Coverings is the stage for introducing some of the most innovative products in the world related to tile and stone. The exposition also serves as a valuable resource for continuing education for all categories of attendees, with informative, accredited seminars and live demonstration sessions conducted throughout the four days.

In 2008, Coverings is set for April 29 to May 2, and returns to Orlando and the Orange County

Convention Center. For more information on attending or exhibiting at Coverings, please visit [www.coverings.com](http://www.coverings.com) or contact NTP, Coverings Show Management, at 703.683.8500.

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