

# IT'S SHOW TIME

*Bath interior designer eClair Strong looks at emerging trends in highlights from the 2016 London Design Festival*

**THE GREEN ROOM:** the latest favourite shade is borrowed from nature, here KALAK tiles, made by a young Austrian design house using a combination of graphics and the ancient Japanese firing technique of raku

Recently made my yearly pilgrimage to the shows at London Design Festival. Also known as Design Destinations, there are a number of shows that take place over the duration of the festival. These are where all the top names in interior design showcase their products and launch new innovations. It's always an exciting and inspiring event and this year was no different. Here are just a few of my highlights:

#### DECOREX INTERNATIONAL

The 39th edition of Decorex International appeared to be its biggest yet. There were over 400 exhibitors at the rather grand Syon Park venue.

A highlight of the show is always the entrance, which this year was created by renowned British furniture designer, Tim Gosling. Gosling's exhibition *The Heritage of Chair Making* explored the links between architecture, interior design and the heritage of British Craftsmanship.

With so many exceptional exhibitors at one event, it's almost impossible to pick out the best. However, I was excited to see one of my favourite companies Bert & May launch a line of fabrics with patterns inspired by some of their most popular encaustic tiles. As with all of Bert & May's products, the focus was on craftsmanship and quality.

#### 100% DESIGN

More than 300 exhibitors fill the halls of Olympia London, a beautiful light-filled space. I like 100% Design for its straightforwardness; there's no fuss, no frills, just simple celebration of great design. I really loved the beautiful tiles of Austrian company, KARAK. This young studio produces tiles using an interesting combination of digital design techniques and the traditional raku method of firing. This low-temperature firing method is almost exclusively used to create Japanese tea ceremony pottery so its application here is very unique and the resulting tiles very beautiful.

Another great find was Bright Green, who are British designers, manufacturers and installers of artificial and living green walls. I've always loved the idea of green walls, particularly inside. There's something so textural and dynamic about them. Bright Green's creations are like works of art, and their artificial plants are incredibly convincing – I was quickly fooled.

#### LONDON DESIGN FAIR

London Design Fair plays host to the largest collection of exhibitors during London Design Festival. This year there were 501 exhibitors, 61% of whom were British. The Old Truman Brewery is a huge, sprawling space and I wasn't able to see everything. However, what I did manage to see was a testament to the variety and skill of craftsmanship in the UK and beyond.

I've always loved the work of Sandberg, a Swedish design company. It presented Signatur, beautiful wallpapers designed by four female artists. This latest collection is modern, graphic and playful featuring children's book characters, jazzy 1950s graphics and lucky four-leaf clovers.

I was also blown away by London based artist, Camilla Lee's Resound collection of beautifully handcrafted iPhone amplifiers in walnut, oak and ceramic. The gramophone-inspired amplifiers were created to put the warmth and interaction back into music listening.

#### DESIGNJUNCTION

And last but certainly not least; DesignJunction, held at its new Kings Cross location. On arrival at the first thing that caught my eye was the striking entrance to Cubbitt House. Designed by Satellite Architects, the 70 metre long by 7.5 metre high installation was made using Danish designer Peter J Lassen's grid system.

There were a number of areas within DesignJunction, including Cubbitt House, The Canopy, Granary Square and The Crossing.

Cubbitt House is the trade destination, showcasing more than 100 international design brands in furniture, lighting and accessories. The Canopy, a pop-up retail venue featuring 70 luxury companies (favourites included Another Studio and Elizabeth Rose). The Granary building based Crossing was home to a number of interactive installations and live demonstrations. And finally, Granary Square, which featured bespoke red Monopoly houses filled with conceptual installations, creative projects and workshops.

As ever the shows at London Design Festival were a feast for the senses. Inspiring, exciting and vibrant – it's always hard to leave. I'm looking forward to next year already. ■

**Clair Strong Interior Design is a small, friendly, creative business based in Bath and London, providing services for residential and commercial clients. Visit: [clairstrong.co.uk](http://clairstrong.co.uk) or contact: [clair@clairstrong.co.uk](mailto:clair@clairstrong.co.uk).**



PHOTO by Ruth Ward



**EYE CATCHING:** top the dramatic entrance to Cubbitt House created for DesignJunction; above, moody blues at Decorex; Sandberg wallpaper and, below left Resound No2 tabletop gramophone inspired amplifiers by Camilla Lee