

# Sign Up

**Sophie Steed**, director at Squire and Partners, gives us three of her specification favourites



## WHITE GLASS

In many non-residential projects we produce in-house graphics or artwork to create interest on what would traditionally have been white plasterboard walls. In recent years we have specified white painted glass panels, which provide a superb background for graphics, signage and artwork. In our headquarters building for UNISON, it was used to display bespoke navigation graphics throughout the building. The patented product we specify is not toughened but has a foam backing creating impact resistance whilst remaining very thin, making it ideal for small spaces such as lift cars.



## COLOURED STAINLESS STEEL

The range of coloured stainless steel on offer has increased dramatically over the last 10 years. I first specified black stainless steel for art and design units in Howick Place, Victoria. Traditional brushed stainless steel lift doors are no longer favoured for design-led projects where 'standard' materials won't work with the concept, but the colours now available make it more viable. Black stainless steel for lift doors, reveals and 4m high entrance doors to the galleries at Howick Place afforded the warehouse aesthetic we wanted, and contrasted perfectly with the weathered Corten panels.



## TERRAZZO

Terrazzo is a great alternative to concrete floors as a durable material which is easy to repair and refurbish. We have used it for entrance and reception spaces in residential schemes, for a clean contemporary look as an alternative to stone or marble. Cement or resin-based terrazzo can provide a seamless finish, avoiding tile joints and creating a 'carpet' effect to a floor area. Existing terrazzo can be repaired and refurbished with excellent results. In our project at 8 Greencoat Place for Derwent London, we used precast terrazzo stair treads fixed to a folded metal base, and used it in our own office.

# ...Sign Off

**Jan-Carlos Kucharek** enjoys three of this issue's out-takes



## SMILEY'S PEOPLE

God knows we could all do with something to smile about nowadays, but Alison Brooks is forcing out a real grimace with her gargantuan 'Smile' installation for this year's London Design Festival. The 34m long, 3.5m high curved Tulipwood structure is more Cheshire Cat than Chelsea College of Art, beaming away in the school's Rootstein Hopkins Parade Ground. But since sponsor American Hardwood Export Council is touting it as one of the most important innovations in CLT panels in the last 10 years, involving not only Stirling Prize winner Alison Brooks Architects but world famous engineer Arup, it probably has good reason to look so damn smug.



## METHOD IN MADNESS

Rural Energy's recently-installed biomass boilers at Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire are unlikely to run out of fuel any time soon, with the 18th century 4th Duke of Portland having planted hundreds of oaks because he thought the species was dying off. His son, the eccentric and reclusive 5th Duke, also used them to build a bonkers warren of tunnels under the family seat to ensure no-one ever saw him. His Grace sounds a total card; a mile of tunnels, underground ballroom for non-existent guests, huge braziers in his orchard to ripen fruit quicker and a roller skating rink for his staff. It's just the kind of entrepreneurial spirit a post-Brexit UK could really do with.



## THE SPAR PAVILIONS

What price art? Anything, it seems. It's not so much that this year's four small Serpentine pavilions are up for sale – the traditional means of balancing the annual commission's books – it's where they're being advertised that's interesting. Cue the architect's favourite estate agent website The Modern House, a chance to click guilt-free through impressive 20th century property porn. But since most of the site's punters are looking for a roof over their head – albeit a predominantly flat one – how long it will be before these roofless £100K pavilions are 'under offer'? Will Julia Peyton Jones get gazumped? Will Hans Ulrich Obirst be available chain-free? Watch this space!

NEIL HOYLE

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