Special Mention in the Architecture Category

Runnymede College Campus (La Moraleja, Alcobendas - Madrid)

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Photo: Luis Asín

MOULD, MODULE, SERIES & SYSTEM

CERAMIC MATERIALS AS A WORK PROCESS

A CAMPUS revolves around a joint central outdoor space that is nonetheless open, continuous and amorphous. Around it, architecture is scattered here and there, merging into a series of pavilions and green spaces. It is an open environment, with no rigid geometrical order or lined up elements, so as to foster the right atmosphere for a knowledge campus–for an academic space where order and freedom coexist.

The project features new pavilions, built from scratch, and other renovated ones, taking advantage of existing buildings by extending or altering them. That is why a strategic limited number of materials was deliberately chosen for the whole project to ensure order and unity.

Each material helps to create a specific setting. In the interiors, wood, resin and glass infuse the space with warmth and colour, each with their different state of transparency. Outside, glazed ceramic materials and perforated galvanized corrugated metal sheets guarantee the necessary coherence, in material, texture and colour-related terms, to link the different pavilions and their ceramic features.

In a quest to find a material with adaptable modular potential, both formally and from the perspective of its finish, we discovered how amazing glazed ceramic materials are as an architectural tool. Thanks to their flexible formal makeup, superior quality, and broad-ranging surface characteristics, ceramic materials act as a unifying linking thread, meeting the campus' different requirements and lending a certain hallmark to the whole ensemble.

Taking MOULD/MODULE/SERIES/SYSTEM as our design concept, we developed a series of ceramic materials from an initial tubular-shaped mould with a hollow 7cm round diameter. Conceived originally as a freestanding element which could be used to create different louver-like surfaces of assorted versions and densities, this tube was transformed into a MODULE. This, in turn, could be combined with others to make a SERIES or SYSTEM, based on an analysis of dimensional variations and differing makeups (object,

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surface, louver etc.). In this way, a coherent, integrated solution could be found to meet the project's different needs, based on geometry and modular variations to the initial MOULDED tube.

The custom-made 70cm-high glazed ceramic tube, with a diameter of 7 cm, is the basis of a modular system used throughout the campus. In this system, the same tube can be used to create an opaque wall or louver-like tubes.

In the case of Building 1, thanks to an inner metal liner, the tubes hang in the style of a façade, with the necessary gap between them to provide the right degree of privacy or transparency. Each tube covers the whole height of the building (3.5 metres), standing 12 cm in front of the glass façade, which it protects.

In the case of Building B, the same tube forms a surface through groups of 6 modules or waves that decorate its different façades. By sparking off harmonious geometrical interplay with the façade's galvanized corrugated metal sheets, in addition to a sensation of modular and dimensional continuity (the tubes and corrugated metal have the same sized curve), the glossy ceramic and galvanized metal surfaces merge into one, both geometrically and dimensionally, hence meeting the envisaged unity and coherence mentioned earlier.

Indoors, the ceramic surface is still modular but its original curve has been flattened to form superior-quality walls, thanks to the material and its surface characteristics, suitable for public and joint spaces like refectories, multipurpose rooms and lobbies.

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