

# faience

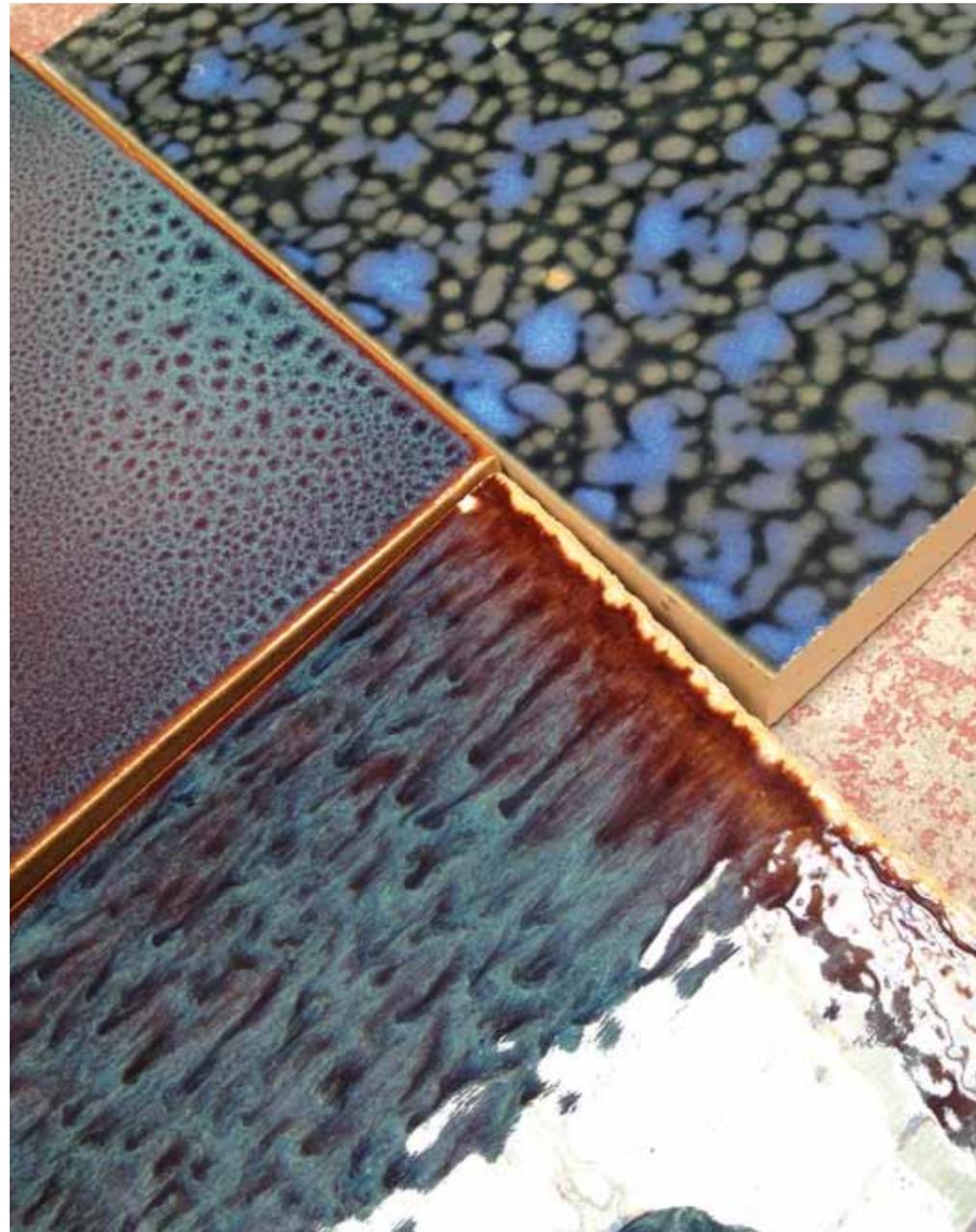
[www.szerelmey.com](http://www.szerelmey.com)



# FAIENCE IN FASHION

## An ancient material for modern times

Faience, or glazed terracotta, traces back to techniques developed in the ancient world, initially to produce decorative objects and artefacts. By the time of the European Renaissance the process of producing brilliant tin oxide pottery glazes and applying them to ceramics before firing was in widespread use particularly in Spain, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Italy; the term faience comes from the Italian town of Faenza, a centre of production. Terracotta and its glazed counterpart, faience, became popular as an architectural material during Victorian Britain. Faience soon overtook terracotta in popularity due to its resistance to pollution, its versatility and the ease with which it could be cleaned; London's historic underground stations are characterised by their oxblood red tiled facades. Faience remained popular until the 1940s and was a favourite with architects of the Art Deco period, although following WWII its popularity declined – until the 21st century. In recent years faience has made a resounding comeback and is fast becoming the modern material of the new millennium, albeit one with ancient roots.



**Images above**  
Examples of colours and finishes for faience tiles

*Faience is supremely versatile and can be moulded into virtually any shape, colour or design; it is a bespoke, hand finished and artisan product.*



**Images above**  
Craftsmen at work applying glazes and carving details

## Colour, bold designs, endless scope

Faience is back and making a bold statement; Szerelmey are delighted to be a key part of this through our design, technical and installation departments. Recent years have seen some leading architects revisiting this supremely versatile material so prized in smog ridden Victorian London for its washable, pollution resistant qualities. While these attributes are still an undeniable draw, it is the versatility and diverse aesthetics of this material that is proving so attractive to today's architects. Faience pieces can be produced to virtually any specification, colour and finish. In addition the product is hand finished by craftsmen and bears the mark of the artisan – this makes it a unique and bespoke product.

## New life for old buildings

The trend for faience cladding and detailing on new buildings is in ascendency, mirroring an upturn in the high end development market, and an increasing assimilation of art and architecture. London is also peppered with historic buildings still wearing their original faience facades. The Szerelmey restoration team have worked on some of the finest of these iconic landmarks to return them to their former splendour; one such being the exuberant Michelin building.

**Szerelmey is a specialist contractor for the design and installation of new build cladding and the restoration of historic buildings.**

# FAIENCE

VERSATILE, HAND FINISHED,  
LUXURIOUS



## Ideas and Designs

Working with one of the leading faience specialists, Szerelmey will meet with the client/architect to discuss initial ideas/designs, colours and textures and offer advice before full scale drawings are produced. The Szerelmey design team begin designing installation methods and suitable fixings.

## Model Making

Faience specialists create models using CAD software. These are CNC produced in polystyrene from which a reverse plaster mould is created in the traditional way. Alternatively models are made by hand from clay. Moulds can be produced to a high degree of complexity ensuring maximum versatility, and are overseen by a team of skilled craftsmen.

## Clay Casting

Typically a liquid slip is produced using finest quality clay and poured into pre-conditioned moulds. The thickness and condition of the clay is stringently monitored for performance and consistency. For intricate pieces hand pressing is used instead of a clay slip.

## Hand Finishing

Before the clay dries completely the piece is removed from the mould and entirely finished by hand by craftsmen using traditional methods and tools. Finished pieces air dry naturally at room temperature before being moved to fully automated, humidity controlled drying rooms.

## Colour and Texture

Szerelmey work with specialists such as Shaws of Darwen and Tichelaar who have their own colour laboratories where unique finishes are developed for each client. Colour is applied in the form of an engobe – a thin clay slip – and/or a glaze. Several layers of glaze may be applied to deepen the colour or to achieve a mottled effect. The glazes are applied by hand, by craftsmen. Colour and texture can also be generated through the use of heat-applied transfers to the faience pieces, which offers further versatility.

## Kiln Firing

After glazing the pieces are kiln fired in state of the art computer controlled kilns. Firing takes approximately 30 hours at temperatures of around 1200°C.

## Dry Laying

Each fired piece is individually checked for quality and consistency before being dry laid in sections as they will appear on the facade for the client/architect to inspect. At this stage each piece can be approved, or changes made if required.

## Fixing and Installing

Szerelmey's specialist team custom design all fixings and installation methods for external and internal faience cladding to accommodate virtually any design. Szerelmey then manages and implements the installation following the agreed dry lay.

# FAIENCE WORKING WITH ARTISTS

*Faience represents the perfect marriage between the clean, contemporary lines of modern design with the warmth and creativity of an artisan approach.*

Collaborations between architects and artists are always exciting, particularly when faience is involved. This is seen to striking effect in the Piccadilly facade of Eric Parry's St James's Gateway. Turner Prize winning artist Richard Deacon joined with Parry to design the stunning and controversial faience cornice comprised of 120 individual sculptural pieces in brilliant colours.

Another stunning project is that between FAT architects and charismatic Turner Prize winning artist Grayson Perry for a private residence outside London. The house will be clad externally in detailed faience tiles to Perry's totemic-like design.

## Case Studies

### Michelin Building Restoration

In addition to new build services, Szerelmey are specialist masonry and terracotta restorers and have worked on many of the UK's finest buildings. Recently Szerelmey undertook extensive cleaning, replacement and restoration of the famous Michelin Building with its colourful and distinctive faience facade. This included removing a large number of the bespoke, hand crafted faience tiles and replacing them with individually colour matched tiles to blend with the existing pieces. Further cleaning work was carried out across the facade to return it to its original splendour.



Images above  
10 New Burlington Street  
Photography: Rob Parrish

**10, New Burlington Street**  
**Client: The Crown Estate**  
**Developer: Exemplar**  
**Architect: Allford Hall Monaghan Morris**

The Burlington Mews facade of this redevelopment of a prestigious block in Regent Street is clad in 400 stunning, 1m-tall white faience tiles. The effect is pristine and dynamic set against the historic character of the surrounding area. The tall, vertical tiles were fixed with a 9mm horizontal joint and 12mm vertical joint and pointed with white grout. Faience tiles feature extensively in the interior too, with the atrium from levels 2-6 clad in 1600 striking blue-green tiles that match those on the exterior in size. Szerelmey designed an open jointed fixing system for these tiles, setting them against black painted concrete, which produces an unusual grid-like effect from a distance.



Image above  
Michelin Building, Fulham Road,  
restored faience facade

# FAIENCE UNIQUE, BESPOKE, ARTISAN



**One Eagle Place, Piccadilly,  
St James's Gateway**  
**Client: The Crown Estates**  
**Architect: Eric Parry Architects**

The Piccadilly facade, designed in conjunction with artist Richard Deacon, is clad in faience tiles with a wildly extrovert faience cornice. Deacon's cornice is composed of 120 handmade sculptural pieces each brilliantly coloured and featuring a totally random design. The design was transferred onto each faience piece through screen-printed waterslide transfers using a process originally used in the pottery industry. The facade is clad in pristine white tiles with blushed red tiling around the window inserts. Szerelmey's specialist team led the entire faience process from design to installation.

**Left**  
St James's Gateway,  
Piccadilly, Eric Parry  
Architects



**Lambeth North Station  
Restoration**  
**Client: Transport for London**

Architect Leslie Green designed over 40 of London's underground stations in the early years of the 20th century using distinctive oxblood red faience tiles on the exterior facades and green and white faience tiles in the interiors. Faience was used on the stations due to its resistance to pollution and the ease with which it could be cleaned – both factors that continue to be highly valued. Szerelmey have restored a number of these stations, including Lambeth North, cleaning, repairing and restoring the tiles and returning the station to its former striking appearance.

**A House for Essex, Wrabness**  
**Client: Living Architecture**  
**Architect: FAT**

This stunning new house designed by Turner Prize winning artist Grayson Perry and FAT Architecture, is clad in almost 2000 faience tiles to several different designs. The house is part domicile, part art gallery and part homage to Essex, tracing the life of a fictitious Essex character, Julie. Deep green faience tiles featuring original Perry designs predominate on the exterior with further white and green tiles featuring different sculptural motifs interspersed and a faience chimney pot. Szerelmey provided support and advice from the early stages of the design through manufacture, dry lay, fixings and installation.

**Top Right**  
CGI A House For Essex,  
Wrabness, FAT Architecture  
© FAT/ Living Architecture

**Bottom Right**  
Lambeth North Station,  
restored faience facade

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