

**TAJIMI  
CUSTOM  
TILES**

**TAJIMI CUSTOM TILES at Milan Design Week 2022**

**Installations by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec, Max Lamb and Kwangho Lee**

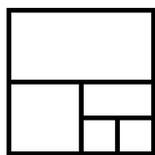
**Dates: 7 - 12 June 2022**

**Venue: Gallery Assab One, Via Privata Assab 1, Milano (MM2 Cimiano)**



**[tajimicustomtiles.jp](http://tajimicustomtiles.jp)**

**@tajimicustomtiles**



**TAJIMI  
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Based in Tajimi, the historic center of the Japanese tile industry, Tajimi Custom Tiles creates custom-tailored tiles catering to architects and designers globally. Two years after the brands debut in Tokyo in 2020, Tajimi Custom Tiles will exhibit for the first time outside Japan and show the acclaimed objects by renowned designers and modern-day craftspersons Max Lamb (UK) and Kwangho Lee (KR) and in addition, present a new collaboration with Ronan & Erwan Buroullec in the form of a large scale installation at Milan Design Week 2022.

Tajimi is home to more than 1300 years of ceramic history and tradition. The variety of skills and techniques passed down through generations, which has become the local industries defining strength, led to the concept of “bespoke” tiles: In the same way that a bespoke tailor draws on considered dialogue, quality materials and technical expertise, Tajimi Custom Tiles creates unique custom-tailored tiles in any size, shape, color or texture for architects and designers, combining careful consultation with innovation and the highest quality.

The exhibition, curated by creative director David Glaettli, will be held in a beautiful industrial space in a former printing factory, Gallery Assab One, now an up-and-coming art space off the beaten track of the Salone. The presented objects, conceived on the notion of tiles, were brought to life through the techniques and imagination unique to the artisans of Tajimi. They move beyond existing conventions, with the aim to offer a different perspective on tiles and demonstrate the vast possibilities for custom made tiles.

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**Date: 7 - 12 June 2022**

**Open: 10:00 - 19:00**

**Venue: Gallery Assab One, Via Privata Assab 1, Milano (MM2 Cimiano)**

**Press Preview: 6 June, 15:00 - 18:00**

**Party: 9 June, 18:00 - 21:00**

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### SOSEI by Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec



Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec created a series of vase-like objects whose parts are made using the special method of clay extrusion typical for the tile production in Tajimi. Geometrical elements are attached to a cylindrical body to create compositions of geometric forms and colors and glazes. The harmonising, deep colours of the typically Japanese glazes stand as a tribute to the beauty of Japanese ceramics. The installation is completed with a large, tiled podium standing on elements made with the same extrusion technique.

"Tajimi is like a candy store full of different flavors, in yellow, brown, pink ... Like a firework, it explodes with delights. It gives us indescribable pleasure to play around with them." -Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec

### WORKING TILE by Max Lamb



With this project, Max intends to showcase what makes Tajimi the unique manufacturing location and that TCT hopes to realise. He designed a set of modular, 3-dimensional tiles that can create countless shapes, with objects assuming functions from vases, to sofas, tables, benches or partition walls. He uses typical clays with characteristic earthy materiality, and special glazes with ambiguous colours derived from classic Japanese tiles. His production method is local pressure moulding which allows highly-precise 3-dimensional shapes and patterns.

### TIDE by Kwangho Lee



For this project, Kwangho was inspired by one of the typical production methods in Tajimi – the clay extrusion. He created a module with a section in the form of a looped line, that can be extruded in different lengths in order to assume different functions. The modules can be stacked horizontally or vertically to form various basic objects, like walls or benches. When the modules are aligned, the repeated loop with its almost hand-drawn quality, creates patterns reminiscent of knitted fabric. "Knitting" has been an important theme in Lee's work, which he often used in different materials and on diverse scales. With tiles, this creates references to the varying states of clay, from very soft in the making to very hard in the finished piece.



[profile]



photo: Alexandte Tabaste

## Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec

Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec, French designers born in Quimper (Brittany) in 1971 and 1976 respectively, have been working together since 1999. From industrial design to craft work, from large production runs to research, from the object to public space, Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec's creations span multiple fields of expression and have gradually entered our daily lives. Their career has been marked by collaborations from major international companies to artisans of ancestral skills from Europe to Japan. Multiple researches have also led them to work with the world's most renowned museums.

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



## Max Lamb

A modern-day craftsman, Max Lamb is a furniture designer with a design sensibility informed by extensive knowledge of manufacturing techniques, respect for materials and skills as a maker. A native of Cornwall, Max has been tinkering with objects and engaging with physical landscapes since he was a small boy. After earning a degree in three-dimensional design from Northumbria University in 2003, he went on to obtain a Master's degree in product design from the Royal College of Art. By 2008 he had started his own practice. Max explores both traditional and unconventional materials and processes, blending experimentation and reasoning to create furniture and products that are both honest and accessible. His work has earned him the Hettich International Design Award (2004) and the Peter Walker Award for Innovation in Furniture Design (2003), as well as collaborations with companies such as Deadgood and Sight Unseen. Max's designs are exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide, such as the Design Museum and Gallery FUMI in London, the Johnson Trading Gallery in New York, the Wolfsonian Museum in Miami, and Broached Commissions in Melbourne, Australia. Max teaches Design Products at the Royal College of Art and runs regular design workshops for companies and institutions around the world.

[maxlamb.org](http://maxlamb.org)



## Kwangho Lee

Kwangho Lee (born, 1981) completed his studies in Metal Art & Design in 2007, before establishing his own design studio in Seoul. Since childhood Kwangho has greatly enjoyed making things by hand, a passion he inherited from his grandfather. His grandfather was a farmer who crafted daily household goods from the natural materials he found nearby. His grandfather's influence formed Kwangho's perspective and way of working. In his work, Kwangho is always trying to discover, revise and reinterpret the ordinary to give new meaning and function to everyday objects. He does this with a particular interest in the physicality of materials and the joints uniting them, working with artificial as well as natural materials, such as styrofoam, PVC, marble, copper, enamel, steel and ceramic clay. Kwangho was nominated for Jury's Selection of Designer at the Future at Design Miami/Basel, 2009, was selected as Artist of The Year in 2011 by the Korean Ministry of Culture, and Young Craftsperson of The Year by Yeol-a Society for Korean Cultural Heritage, 2013. His works have been shown at Commissaires, Johnson Trading Gallery, Victor Hunt, Karena Schuessler, Clear Gallery & Edition and Gallery Seomi, as well as with group and international exhibitions such as Design Miami/Basel, and Design Days Dubai. Kwangho's work is in the permanent collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, while a number of features of his work have been released in major design publications worldwide.

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



## DIVERSE CRAFTSMANSHIP ROOTED IN HISTORY AND TRADITION

Tajimi City spreads along the southern side of Gifu Prefecture in central Japan. Its soil contains clay rich in minerals suitable for ceramic production. A pottery industry emerged as long as 1300 years ago, and out of that history came Mino Ware, regarded as one of Japan's most distinctive and influential types. With that background, large-scale tile manufacturing began in the early twentieth century. Since then Tajimi has grown into the centre of tile-making in Japan, accounting for around 90% of production. The majority of local companies specialise in high-volume production of standard tiles, but there remains a number of smaller, highly-specialised manufacturers using both alternative production methods and traditional Japanese glazing and firing, in a combination rarely seen elsewhere. We work with the most skilled craftspeople allowing us to realise almost any kind of tile, whatever form, size, glaze, texture or colour, using a range of raw materials, production and firing methods.

## SPREADING THE FASCINATION OF TILES WORLDWIDE

TAJIMI CUSTOM TILES was launched by X'S Corporation under the creative direction of David Glaettli to be a platform from which to realise unique, innovative tiles to customer designs and specifications targeting international architects and interior designers. X'S operates globally. Founded in 1994, by its CEO Masashi Kasai, who strongly believes tiles made in Tajimi have huge market potential. Unlike other trading companies, X'S has its own laboratory facilities where tile prototypes can be developed and tested in-house. This allows us to offer competitive pricing, and products in small quantities. In combination with a network of local

manufacturers, this creates a unique manufacturing environment with short lead times, stable supplies and high-quality output. X'S has also taken the initiative in enhancing environmental sustainability by developing a system to recycle incineration slag into new tiles, thereby reducing landfill.

## VARIETY OF TECHNIQUES FOR TAJIMI'S TILE PRODUCTION

Tajimi tile makers have a variety of techniques for production, glazing and firing. Resulting Tajimi tiles are characterised by a warm, hand-made look. Their slight irregularities in colour and texture are often perceived in keeping with Japanese aesthetics. Firing method strongly influences appearance, as well as nature of tiles. Globally most mass-produced tiles are fired in a so-called roller hearth kilns, providing a completely uniform output. In Tajimi however, tunnel- and shuttle kilns are used. Their fluctuating firing temperature and firing times of 20 hours or more, result in variations in colour among the same tiles, giving them their typical, vivid sense. In addition, a method known as reduction firing (as opposed to oxidation firing) can be used in combination with special glazes so as to create unique textures and colour effects like those found in traditional Japanese pottery.



David Glaettli / creative director

After interdisciplinary studies in art, communication and Japanese language in his hometown of Zurich, David Glaettli was trained in industrial design in Milan and Lausanne, where he graduated from ECAL.

He worked as a product and interior designer in Zurich before moving to Japan in 2008, where he joined the design studio of Teruhiro Yanagihara as designer and design director. In 2013, he founded Glaettli Design Direction Ltd. in Kyoto and since 2016. In 2021, he moved to Zurich, Switzerland where he founded 'Studio David Glaettli', while keeping a second mainstay in Tokyo. Studio David Glaettli specialises in creative direction, branding, curation, design consulting and design management for Japanese and international manufacturers, brands and institutions. In Tokyo, David Glaettli has been teaching at Tama University as a guest tutor. David Glaettli is the creative director of the brands Karimoku New Standard, Sumida Contemporary, Tajimi Custom Tiles and Mino Soil. [www.davidglaettli.jp](http://www.davidglaettli.jp)

## X'S Corporation / Founder

TAJIMI CUSTOM TILES was launched by X'S Corporation under the creative direction of David Glaettli. It is the company's platform from which to create unique, innovative tiles from customer designs, specifically for international architects and interior designers. X'S was founded in 1994 by its CEO Masashi Kasai, who strongly believes tiles made in Tajimi have huge market potential. X'S operates globally, and unlike other trading companies, it has its own in-house laboratory facilities where tile prototypes can be developed and tested. This allows X'S to offer competitive pricing, and products in small quantities. In combination with a network of local manufacturers, the company's in-house laboratories create a unique manufacturing environment with short lead times, stable supplies and high-quality output. X'S has also taken the initiative to enhance environmental sustainability by developing a system to recycle incineration slag into new tiles, thereby reducing landfill.

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