

Building Sounds – Transcript - LFA on-location: sculptural installations in Central London

0:00:10 - Eliza

Hello and welcome to Building Sounds, the podcast exploring the stories, people and projects that shape London's built environment. I'm your host, Eliza Grosvenor, Head of Programme at the London Festival of Architecture. 2024 marks 20 years of the Festival, so for this June, we're bringing you a special series of podcasts which highlight the unique and exciting people and organisations we're proud to be working with. To do this, we've tasked each of the LFA team to take you on site to share some of the projects they've been working on over the course of the last 12 months. I'm handing over to Katya, who will explore the unique design installation that formed part of Gaggenau's Wigmore Street showroom. Over to you, Katya.

0:00:51 - Katya

Thanks, Eliza, for the introduction.

One of our key missions at the LFA is to platform the work of emerging designers, showcasing the sustainable and forward-thinking design that's happening in universities, collectives, classrooms and small practices across the city.

This month, we're back with two installations in Gaggenau's Wigmore Street showroom by designer Titilayo Abiola, who's going to talk you through her inspirations for each of the two pieces. You can find more information and images of the pieces online, or why not head to Gaggenau to see the installations for yourself? For more information about the pieces and how long they're on display? For, head to lfa.london/gaggenau.

0:01:37 - Titilayo

My name is Titilayo Abiola. I am a multidisciplinary designer and also the founder and creative director of Titilayo. The pieces that I created for Gaggenau are called The Dance and Digital Artisans. I was really inspired by Reimagine. I mean, it really conjures up so many creative ideas and I specifically was drawn to the function of Gaggenau's ventilation systems and how something seemingly mundane as cooking was really brought to life. I wanted to bring form to the steam, and that's how I reimagined it for The Dance. So all the undulating curves. They represented not only the outer work of Gaggenau but also the inner work where a lot of the creativity happens.

The second piece, which is Digital Artisans it takes a completely different aesthetic and I literally pulled the name Digital Artisans from the write-up at Gaggenau because that is how they describe their team, and it was an incredible fit for me as a designer, because I too, with my craftsmanship, I rely a lot on handcraft, but also on technology as well, and so I thought that the beautiful dance between technology and craftsmanship in Gaggenau products is such a great balance, and craftsmanship in Gaggenau products is such a great balance, also in keeping with the design circularity.

Aluminium is one of the most environmentally friendly metals on earth and it can be recycled repeatedly without losing its properties. With the second installation, digital Artisans, I chose mountboard, which is biodegradable and recyclable, and I love both pieces. They both represent something different and communicate a different form of craftsmanship. The Dance and Digital Artisans both differ in aesthetic and mode of production. They give multi-layered insights into the workings of Gaggenau products and heritage. Digital artisans draws inspiration from modern technology and artisanal craftsmanship. Aesthetically, I was inspired by the trees found in Black Forest, specifically oakwood. The grain was used to symbolize Gaggenau's legacy as the world's oldest luxury home appliance brand.

Something that's important for me as a designer is to imbue traits onto a material that you wouldn't necessarily associate with that material. So, for instance, with the mount board, it's quite solid and it's considered to be a heavy material, but with the lace-like patterns of the oak wood cut into it, it's very delicate and it's very clean and aesthetic. I really, really love this project because, as a designer, there are certain projects where they're such a great fit. So, first and foremost, with the theme reimagined, and then with Gaggenau, and when I was doing the research and how the craftsmanship was also very similar to how I work, because my training is very traditional, so I took the very traditional route when you train as an artist doing a foundation, spent a lot of time in the Philippines working with artisans, but I was I'm always using my hands, but specifically with this, with this project, I love the fact that it stretched me. I have to say it was my first time creating a sculpture at such a great scale, so I really love that. And with digital artisans as well, it's a process that I've used before, but the exacting detail was on another level and I really loved with both processes that the waste was very minimal. So, from everything that has been cut from digital artisans, I've kept and I'm going to create a new artwork from it, because it's very much a way that we have to be working just for sustainability, for the health of the earth. So I really love the fact that this project also promotes that, because it's not just something that's fashionable, it's a necessity, it's really, really needed.

The next steps now is how these pieces evolve. So, with Digital Artisans, I propose that it becomes traveling work, that it's housed in the different Gaggenau's, injecting a sense of play into the everyday. And as for The Dance, again it being housed in a lobby in a

different context. It's based on kind of like the domestic beauty that's created by Gaggenau products. How will it be housed in? I don't know, a hotel lobby or another creative platform. So the whole principle with this is rehousing the art pieces so they can be appreciated on another level.

I really want people to realize the art of life, and I know that that sounds like a really grand statement, but there is beauty in our day to day and I think that it can be really missed because of the busyness of life. So, you know, it's very rare that someone will stop when they're cooking, like, oh my gosh, the beauty of the steam. It's very rare, and so I really want people to stop and be like, huh, that's beautiful, because so much work goes into these appliances. So I really want people to for it to pique their interest, for them to go in and for it to evolve into a greater discussion and understanding of, kind of like, the beauty behind the product. Taking that pause to enjoy the beauty of day-to-day and not to just speed past things. That's what I really hope they get from it, because that's what I got from this project.

0:06:19 - Eliza

You've been listening to Building Sounds, the podcast brought to you by the London Festival of Architecture. We'll be back next month with a new conversation. In the meantime, head to lfa.london to find out all the exciting news and updates from the festival. If you've enjoyed this conversation, you can follow Building Sounds on Spotify, Apple Podcast or wherever you find your favourite conversations. Until next time.