

Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec design sculptural ceramic installation for Tajimi Custom Tiles



Cajsa Carlson | 8 June 2022

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French designers Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec have created Sosei, an installation of pastel-coloured ceramic sculptures that is currently on show at Milan design week.

Made together with Japanese brand Tajimi Custom Tiles, the sculptures have a cylindrical body with added square and rectangular tiles and are sat on sand-covered ceramic tiles.





In Milan, the sculptures are on show at Gallery Assab One, a gallery in a disused printing factory, in an exhibition curated by Tajimi Custom Tiles creative director David Glaetli.

They were designed to showcase the potential of ceramics by using the company's tile-production machines to create items that weren't products.

"We made objects like this to see tiles from a different perspective and show the technical possibilities," Glaetli told Dezeen.



Ronan Bouroullec described the tile colours as "candy-like". Photo is courtesy of Studio Bouroullec

The Bouroullec brothers began the project with Tajimi Custom Tiles, which makes custom-designed tiles for architectural projects, during the coronavirus lockdown.



striking tubes made from extruded clay.

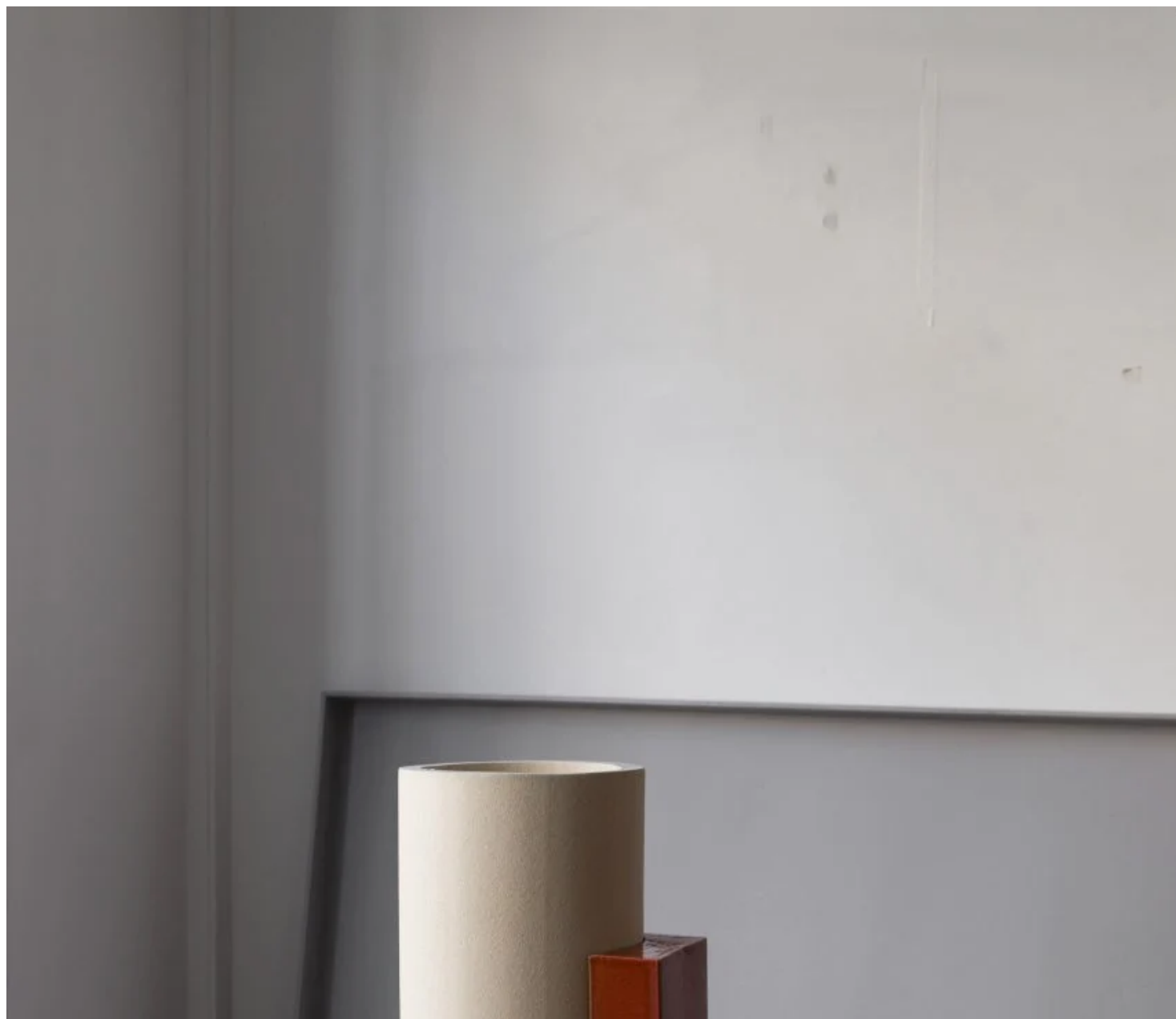
"We did everything in cardboard in Paris," Ronan Bouroullec said. "We did tonnes of projects; this one is the result of two years of work."

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The shapes in the collection, which is named Sosei – a word suggested by one of the brothers' Japanese studio assistants, which means assembly – got their forms both from the designers playing around with different combinations of tiles and from the process of making the clay itself.

"The time to dry was very short so there was a lot of movement in the piece, which made the shape move a bit," Bouroullec said. "I think that's part of the beauty of it."





The sculptures have circular and rectangular shapes. Photo is courtesy of Studio Bouroullec

The collaboration between Tajimi and Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec came about after Ronan Bouroullec saw Tajimi Custom Tiles' 2020 exhibition featuring designs by Max Lamb and Kwangho Lee, which are also on display at Milan design week and were originally shown in Tokyo.

"I knew [the Bouroullec brothers] well and was following their work, especially Ronan's artworks and ceramic objects," Glaetli said.

"As the original exhibition was made during Covid, people couldn't see it in person, but images of it spread online and Ronan sent me a message to congratulate me. And I said, well actually, do you want to join?"



Designs by Kwangho Lee, first shown in 2020, were also on show in the exhibition. Photo is by Jonathan Mauloubier

For Ronan Bouroullec, creating the sculptures was a chance to explore his passion for ceramics but also to draw attention to craft skills that are on their way to disappear.

"We know that this world is fragile everywhere, we can see it – the craftsmen disappear, and we need to be careful of that," he said.

"It's the role of the designer to fight to continue to search and feed this technique with new approaches and new ways, it's important," he added. "It's because of that that this technique, this way of working and these people will survive."

Other recent projects by the Bouroullec brothers include a contemplative folly in a French river and a chair for furniture brand Koyori.

Milan design week takes place from 6 to 12 June 2022 in Milan, Italy. See our Milan design week 2022 guide on Dezeen Events Guide for information about the many other exhibitions, installations and talks taking place throughout the week.

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