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News Release

The Living Atlas: A sculptural, interactive mural in Corian® by The Agency of Design for Liberty Specialty Markets (LSM)

January 2017 – When one of the world’s leading specialist insurers commissioned an installation to reflect both the identity of the organisation and the vital data that informs their business, one particular material met all the aesthetic and performance demands of the brief. Created by The Agency of Design, a digitally augmented, sculptural mural made from DuPont™ Corian® now greets visitors to the London offices of Liberty Specialty Markets. Corian® is the multi-talented advanced surface material that enables unrestricted creative freedom in design, in virtually any application, sector or setting.



The Agency of Design has created a Living Atlas made from Corian® for Liberty Specialty Markets. A 3D faceted map of the world, it features projected animations of specialist global data. Photo Jake Fitzjones for DuPont™ Corian®, all rights reserved.

In order to manage an international portfolio covering a range of high-value items from artwork to aircraft, Liberty Specialty Markets evaluates a significant amount of global information on a daily basis. The concept for the 5.7 x 2.8m wall behind in the reception of LSM’s headquarters at 20 Fenchurch Street (also known as the ‘Walkie-Talkie’ building) was to embody the essence of this expertise and its source data in an artistic, distinctive and adaptable way.

The design team worked in a fully consultative process with the client to develop the ideas; “Liberty Specialty Markets had a creative approach to working with us, respecting our abilities and giving us breathing room, while supporting with ideas and information when we needed it,” says Matthew

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Laws, co-founder of The Agency of Design. Thus the dramatic vision for an impressive and interactive 'Living Atlas' began to take shape.



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“Through the abstraction of the Earth’s surface into triangular facets, live and historic data can be explored with a new kind of three dimensional pixel,” Matthew explains “this leads to a ‘living’ surface, inviting the viewer to explore the data with an aesthetic that blurs boundaries of what we perceive as physical and digital.”

For Matthew, Corian® was the obvious choice of material with which to bring the concept to life. “We wanted to create something permanent, with a sense of longevity, almost like a marble sculpture, but which would also be totally flexible. Corian® has that feel but also looks great when projected onto - the material absorbs and refracts a little bit of the light - almost as if it’s glowing. What’s more, it’s very stable when it is machined and we needed the parts to be cut to sub-millimetre precision to match both our 3D model and the computer program we created to drive the projections. There are basically no other materials that we could have made this from without far exceeding the manufacturing budget.”

In order to fabricate the Corian® panels to the precise dimensions and specifications required, expert Corian® Industrial Partners Cutting Edge Ltd were called in. Further customised parametric software was developed to achieve the particularly sharp vertices on the edges of each individual 3D facet. Matthew believes that this was previously thought to be beyond the limits of CNC, and claims, “This piece may be unique as machines cannot normally be operated in this way. Cutting Edge stepped up to the challenge of making the artwork in a way that far surpassed our



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expectations and had the skill and foresight to write custom programs in order to machine the Corian® to achieve the best possible finish.”



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The five separate panels in the Glacier White colour of Corian® were digitally cut and carefully glued and hand finished to form the faceted 3D surface. The animations and textures appear by using a high resolution projector exactly mapped to the faceted surface. The physical surface is designed to look equally beautiful and complete with or without projection, thus meeting a key requirement of the brief from LSM, which was to be able to ‘switch off’ the data. It is this integration of information, however, that gives the installation a key and very personal part of its unique fascination.

Although striking backlit effects are among the many possibilities of working with Corian®, it became clear that projecting onto the material offered greater versatility in this case. Early explorations were based on a much larger faceted map lit from behind using RGB LEDs,” explains Matthew, “but as time progressed we realised projection from the front gave us vastly more options and flexibility into the future. The client loved the idea that as their business changed the artwork projections could also change. There is an ongoing dialogue, we manage the codebase of the artwork and will be able to make changes in the future.”

To develop the animations that are currently projected onto the mural, The Agency of Design continued to work closely with LSM through a series of creative workshops, both to gain a clearer understanding of the essence of their business and to foster a sense of collaboration and ownership over the project. Completely customised software was then created in order to make the vision a reality. Final animations included hundreds of flight paths, millions of insured locations, and 100 years of storm path data, including a ‘current storm’ animation that references a web-based dataset of live GPS storm locations.



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The beauty of the project is more than skin deep, however, and lasting performance was also a crucial consideration. "Equally important from a functional perspective," emphasises Matthew, "Corian® can be cleaned and even repaired on site, if needed, which is essential for a busy office environment. Perhaps in 50-100 years when we are not around a Corian® representative will be able to come and patch up the piece, if necessary! The material has a longevity that can surpass its initial application. We could have called in an arts fabricator to make this from plaster, but it would have been much more expensive and fragile, and could more easily fall into disrepair in the future."

According to Matthew the client is delighted with the final result, an elegant, enduring and sophisticated installation for a business at the leading edge of today's insurance industry. As testament to the imagination and faith invested in the project by both designer and client, the Living Atlas is a finalist in the Commercial Interior Surface category of the UK's Surface Design Awards.

About The Agency of Design - The Agency of Design works at the junction of our physical and digital worlds designing new products and experiences. A group of designers, engineers and strategists with a track record of bringing products to market, their work is recognised at an international level. A hybrid creative and technical process enables the group to work with clients ranging from medical start-ups to global organisations such as Liberty Specialty Markets.

About Liberty Specialty Markets - Liberty Specialty Markets offers specialty and commercial insurance and reinsurance products across key UK, European, Middle East, US and other international locations. We provide brokers and insureds with a broad product range through both the Company and Lloyd's markets and have approximately 1,000 employees in 22 offices. libertyspecialtymarkets.com.

About Cutting Edge - A family run business established in 1992 with an excellent reputation for offering Corian® fabrication and installation to the highest standards. Cutting Edge has an in-house design team offering a complete design, templating and installation service. A DuPont Quality Network Industrial Partner and fully approved fabricators and installers, the company provides an extensive range of solutions for both residential & commercial environments from homes to healthcare, hospitality, marine and much more, including interior and exterior cladding. Cutting Edge has worked with many of the leading architects and designers to achieve their visions in Corian®. www.cuttingedge-uk.com

About DuPont™ Corian® (www.corian.co.uk) - First created as a high performance material for kitchen and bathroom worktops, DuPont™ Corian® is now - thanks to its unique combination of functionality, versatility and beauty - a leading global brand in surfacing materials for interior design and architecture. Over the years, DuPont has established DuPont™ Corian® advanced surface as an exceptional design tool for every application one can imagine. Kitchens, bathrooms, lighting, furnishing, facades, seating, radiators, home automation, touch control surfaces: today, DuPont™ Corian® can be found almost everywhere in Commercial, Residential and Public Space applications.

To know more, and stay in touch with DuPont™ Corian®: corian.co.uk / endlessevolution.corian.com
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About DuPont – DuPont has been bringing world-class science and engineering to the global marketplace in the form of innovative products, materials, and services since 1802. The company believes that by collaborating with customers, governments, NGOs, and thought leaders we can help find solutions to such global challenges as providing enough healthy food for people everywhere, decreasing dependence on fossil fuels, and protecting life and the environment.

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