

Alexander Lichtveld

Variable tile design

The idea

The design of the variable tiles is based on a combination of four different tiles, whereby a well nigh infinite number of designs is possible. Although the size of the tile is not fixed, the proportions are.

Many different patterns can be designed by switching these tiles around in a variety of ways, thereby enabling different atmospheres to be created. For example, the pattern can be regular (classical / geometric) or it can be irregular and diffuse. Or a combination can be created in which the two overlap. These possibilities are further augmented by the use of different colours.

Materials

The material of which the tile is made is not necessarily fixed. Ceramic and concrete tiles are possible, but the design also lends itself to other materials such as wood, bamboo, stone, synthetics and residual materials.

Infinite possibilities

Asked how many patterns can be laid using this set of tiles, Jos de Bruin of the Institute of Artificial Art Amsterdam responded as follows: 'If there is no limit to the moment at which the pattern is repeated for the first time (i.e. to the size of the space to be filled), the number of variations is infinite, because I can then always delay the moment at which the pattern is repeated. This applies even to a series of zeros and ones – 0101, 001001, 00010001, 0000100001, and so on – and the number of patterns is virtually infinite even if the floor area is not infinite but contains many hundreds of tiles. Let's say that we use just two different square tiles: with 100 of such tiles you can make 2^{100} different patterns (in other words 10 with around 30 zeros). And if you use two of those combinations where each has a repeat of a 10 x 10 square in, for instance, a floor of 30 x 30, you have a virtually limitless number of variations that still contain a regular pattern.'

Bamboo

In collaboration with the importer, Moso, the concept of the variable tile has also been developed as bamboo parquet. This system makes it possible for everyone to design a unique floor, in both a classical and a modern environment, for a residence, an office or a museum gallery. Just like wood, bamboo has a grain, which gives the tile a direction and therefore allows for an extra design factor. It is also possible to create different atmospheres, from classical to modern, from regular to random, and from exuberant to restrained, but always with the warm, natural appearance of bamboo.

Bamboo floor in the office of AIM bv in Amsterdam

The tiles used in this case measure 20 x 20 cm, with a thickness of 5 mm. The tiles were glued to a 12 mm chipboard underlay. The floor was finished with a wear-resistant heavy-duty lacquer, making it easy to maintain. Two colours of bamboo are currently available: natural and caramel. The caramel colour was chosen for this project.

Further technical information about bamboo can be found on the importer's website:
www.moso.nl

Patent

The variable tile design has been patented under number 1033482.