



CRAiG
BRAGDY
DESIGN

the world's most spectacular
handmade ceramics...



A FAMILY RUN BUSINESS WITH HANDMADE CERAMICS AT ITS HEART

For over fifty years Craig Bragdy Design has been exploring the boundaries of ceramic art with ever larger and increasingly sophisticated works. Jean Powell was the founding partner with her husband Rhys. Two of her sons, Nick and Shon run the business, travelling the world to meet clients and discuss projects. They each have a lifetime's involvement with ceramics having been immersed in the family activities since the very early days.

It was thirty five years ago they first designed tiles for swimming pools. With this came recognition of a new artistic dimension that water brings to ceramic art - chiefly movement and magnification. Equally revealing was the vision and excitement of discovering that ceramic art, with free thinking and imagination, can bring a new dimension to swimming pool design.

Combined, ceramics and water has a magical quality.

Over time their work has expanded in size, ambition, technical achievement and design sophistication. Today, Craig Bragdy Design is a team of artists, designers, technicians, clay workers and administrators who combine, uniquely in the production of bespoke swimming pool artwork and ceramic wall murals, tailored to suit each project. Clientele are discerning individuals, appreciative of the bespoke vision and craftsmanship brought to their projects by Craig Bragdy Design's team.

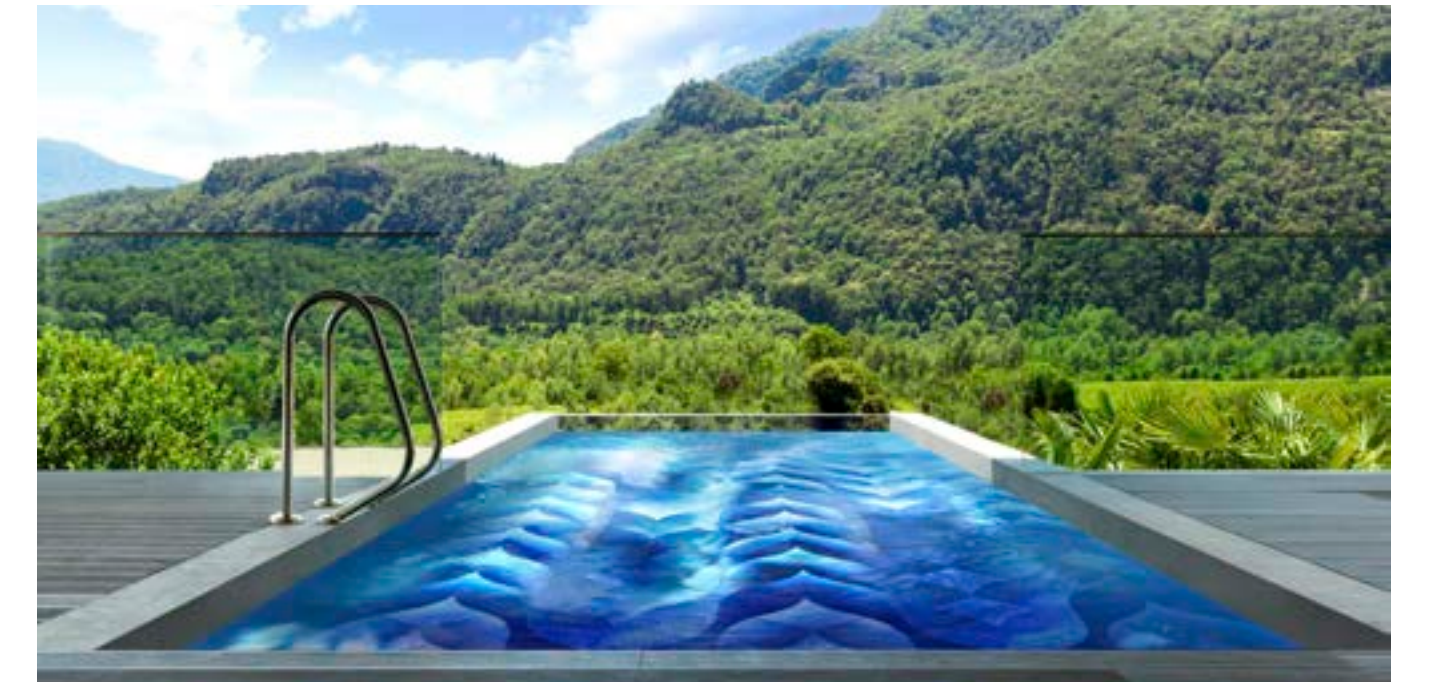


From left to right: Shon and Nick making ashtrays over a simple press mould - circa 1964, Jean in the 'flour mill' studio - Denbigh, Rhys (Taffy) Powell throwing pots, Shon and Nick - circa 1965.



CHEVRON

An initial glance at this swim lane friendly pool decoration belies its full 'content' and beauty. Whilst repetition is a powerful element of the design, so the glory is truly in the detail. A marriage of textures, beautiful and subtle fusions of colour, an elegant cut to the tile, a selective application of lustres and precious metals ensures individuality to each and every 'repetition'.



THE EQUESTRIAN POOL - WATER MOVEMENT BRINGS LIFE TO THESE MAGNIFICENT CREATURES

Classical sculptural work of the ancient Romans was the chosen inspiration for this private residential pool located in the heart of a traditional equestrian neighbourhood. The sinuous beauty of these majestic animals provides a spectacular vehicle for artisan craftsmanship; sculpture at the surface of the clay. Movement of water brings life to these magnificent creatures - a liquid motion, smooth and graceful, developing as activity increases and always returning to the still and magnified images of equine grandeur.

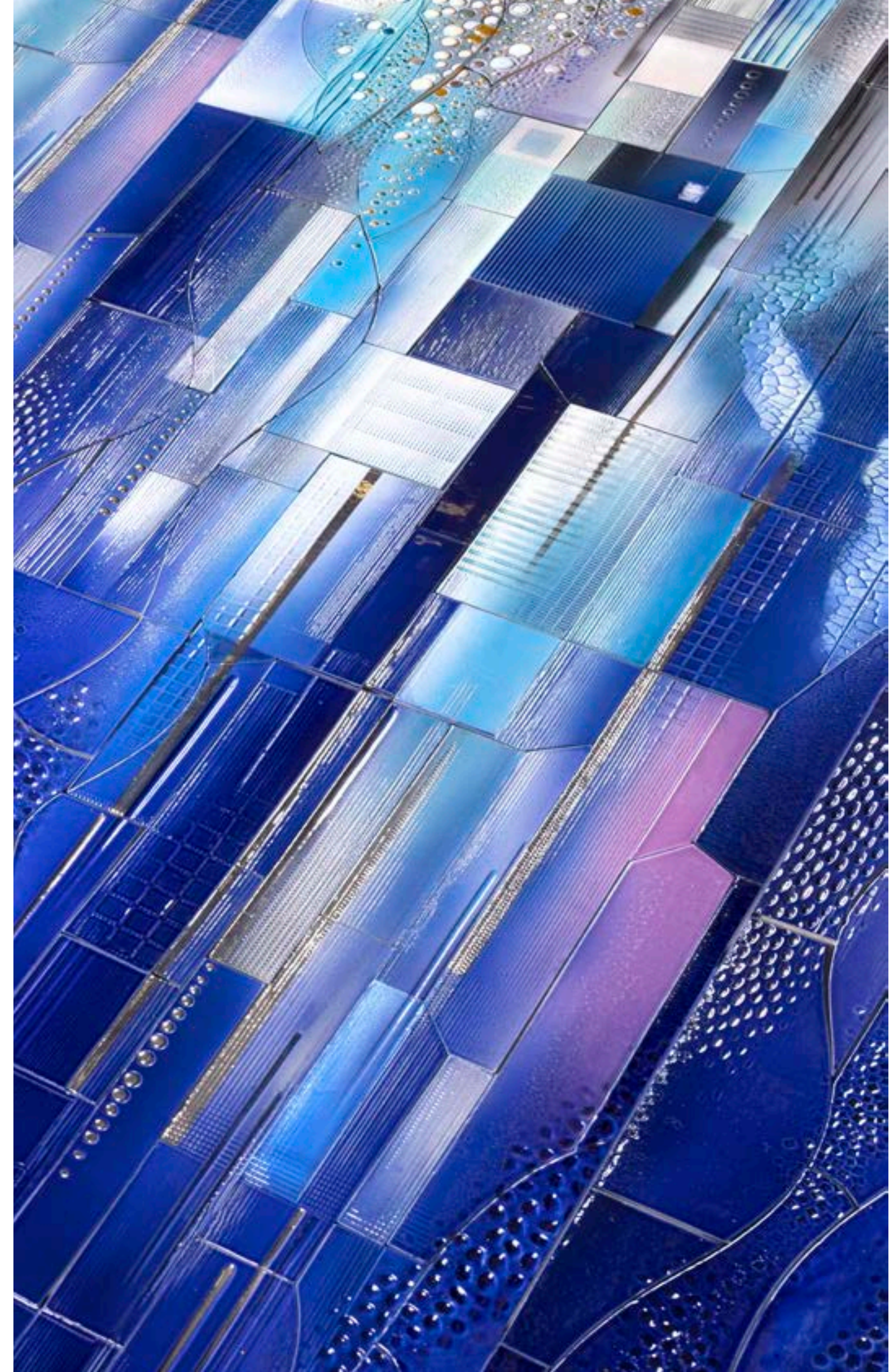




REGAL

This multiple exposure photograph (far right), taken after a final inspection of the work in our factory and just before packing for freight, shows this elaborate, golden and very personal design in glorious high resolution detail. The photograph, one of a series, enabled our client's representative to 'approve' the work remotely - before despatch. Classic, majestic, aristocratic, regal - the heraldic Royal Crest motif was, as requested, 'finished' entirely with 22 carat gold lustre. It became the enduring and decorative 'feature' of the pool and its central location - day and night.





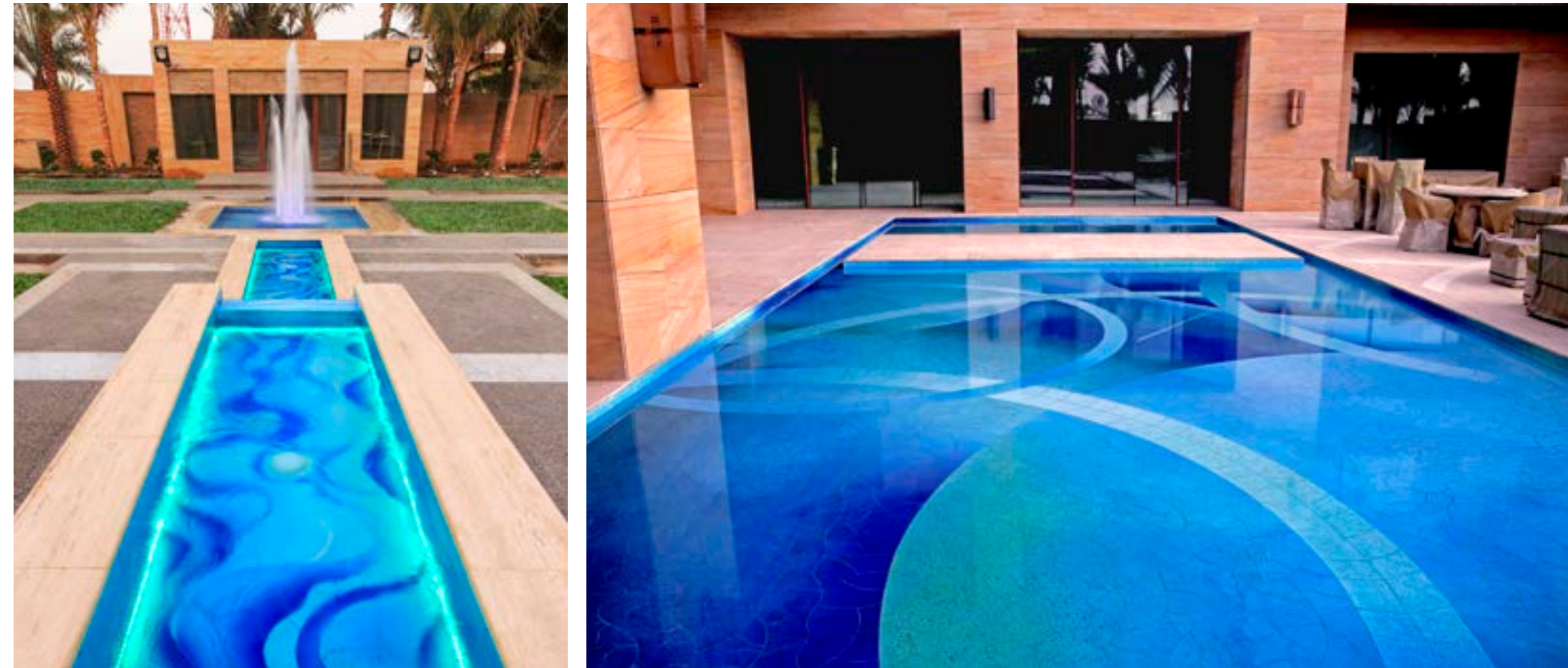
METROPOLIS

A basement pool and a decoration inspired by city structures, reflecting the visceral character of a dense urban environment and the location of this design's first client. The abstract, linear and blocky (industrial) cut line structure of the work was used to echo that of a high rise urban building cluster, though this was subsequently softened using texture and colour. Since, on request of others (*far left*), this principle design has undergone significant adaption and change - subtle alterations to its character and content, obvious alterations of the colour palette, to bring it in line with alternative interior schemes.



REFLECTIONS

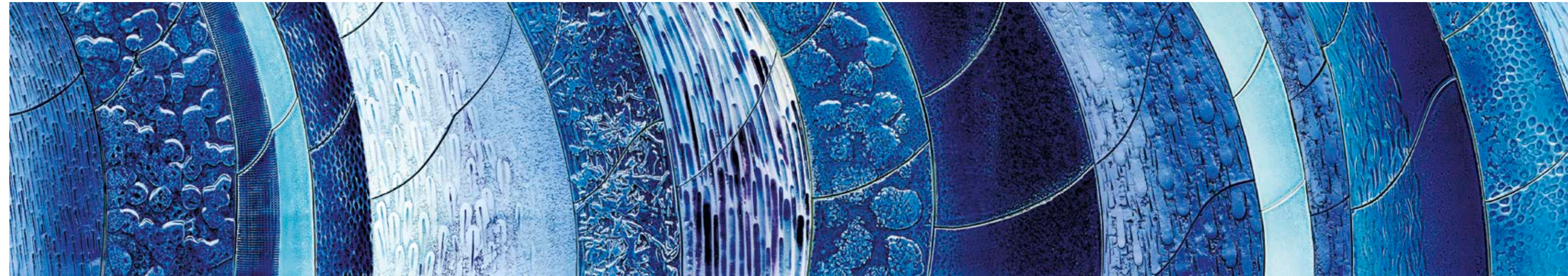
Reflections of the landscape architecture is echoed in the decorative pools of this contemporary residence. Clearly, the prominence of the landscapers 'feature' design spilled over into the pools whilst a soft fusion of colours provides separation and contrast. The pool decoration, carefully co-ordinated between landscaper, architect and client, was the dominant feature amongst numerous decorative pools, fountains and wall murals.





FOUNTAIN - MYRIAD SURFACE TEXTURES SPAN THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THIS VIBRANT WORK

Clay - an age old material and a beautiful, pliable, earthy substance - which with creativity, thought and design application sits beautifully and appropriately next to the most modern and contemporary of materials and settings. This pool's initial visual impact is strong - up close there is further fascination in the myriad surface textures spanning the length and breadth of the work - a delight for swimmers.



BLOOM

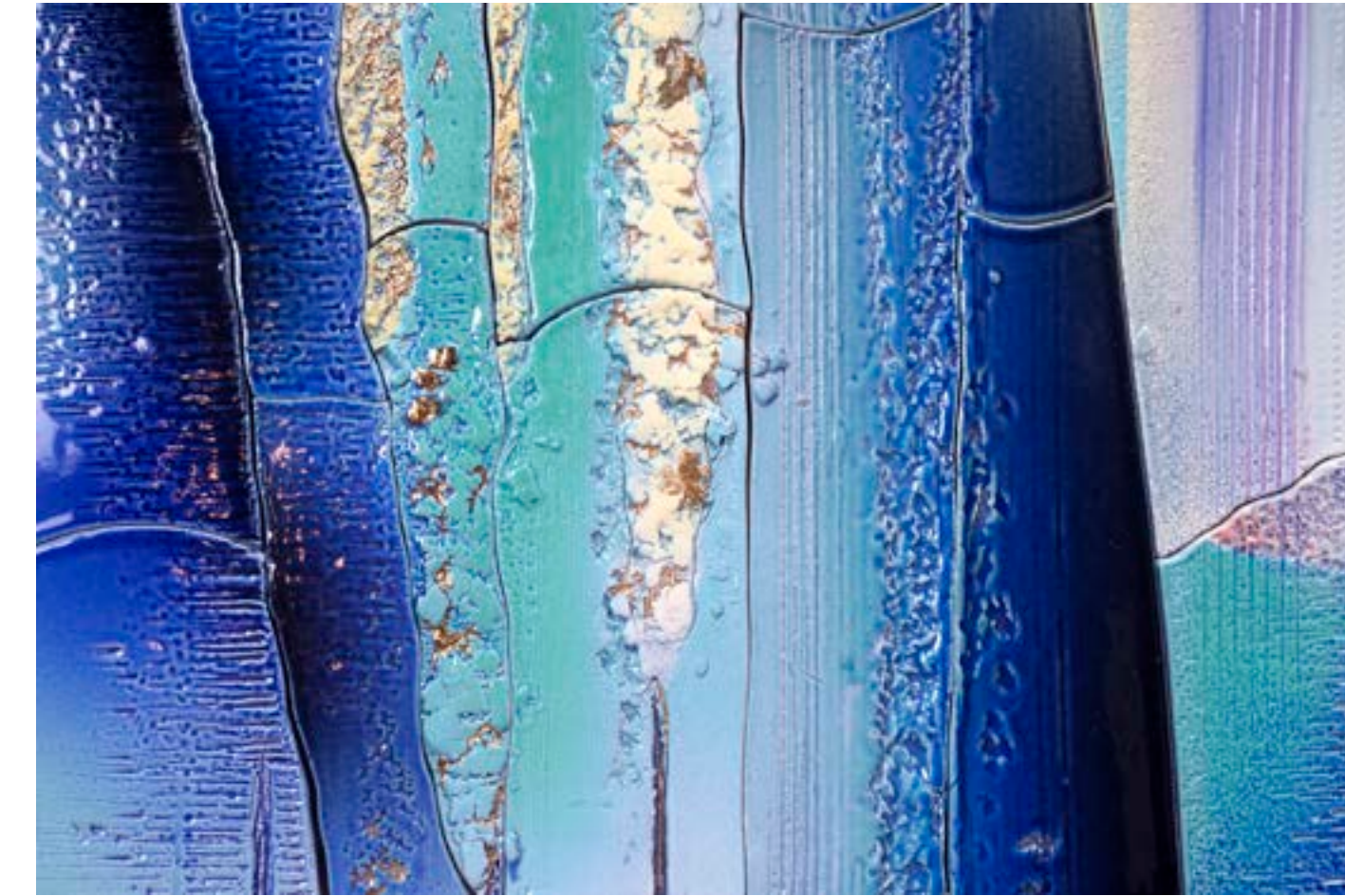
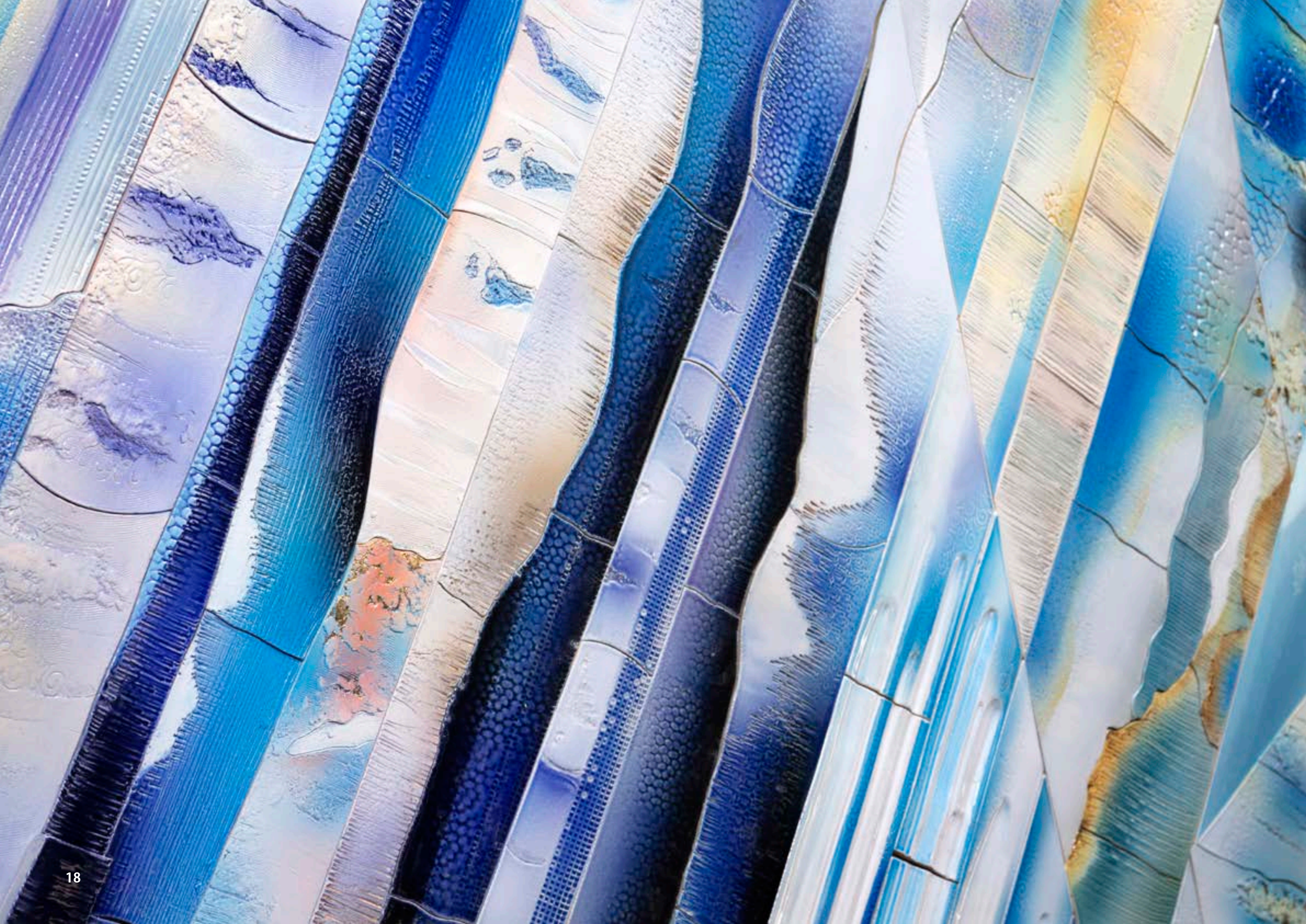
Simply flowers - here, beautifully adapted to the handmade ceramic process. Softly sculptural at the surface with smooth fusions of colour and subtle highlights of mother-of-pearl, these works have a close affinity to water colour paintings. And yet, robust in 'finish' and suitable for wet walls, fountains and pools.



LOTUS



Symbolizing peace and tranquility and exuding beauty and grace, what more appropriate 'feature' for this health spa and pool. Designed with 'tranquillity' and 'enlightenment' prominent in our brief, the 'passionate' red of the Lotus flower seemed the perfect vehicle for this artistic expression - perfect for the client brief, perfect for well-being. Mother of pearl finishes the work and glints across the petals. Detailed, platinum (silver) highlights decorate the back cloth!



SILVER BIRCH

Imagine, a tranquil oasis two worlds away from the urban frenzy of commercial city life, as this client did when working to create a personal retreat amongst a landscape dominated by Silver Birch. To live life after the city. An oasis indeed.

Craig Bragdy's commission was to decorate the floor of this rectangular pool, to enrich the visual experience and to complement the landscape. Each sq meter, each 'lap' carries extensive detail, colour, texture, mother of pearl and platinum (silver) intended to evoke the landscape's character and its true natural beauty. A swim lane equivalent to a ramble through the woods!



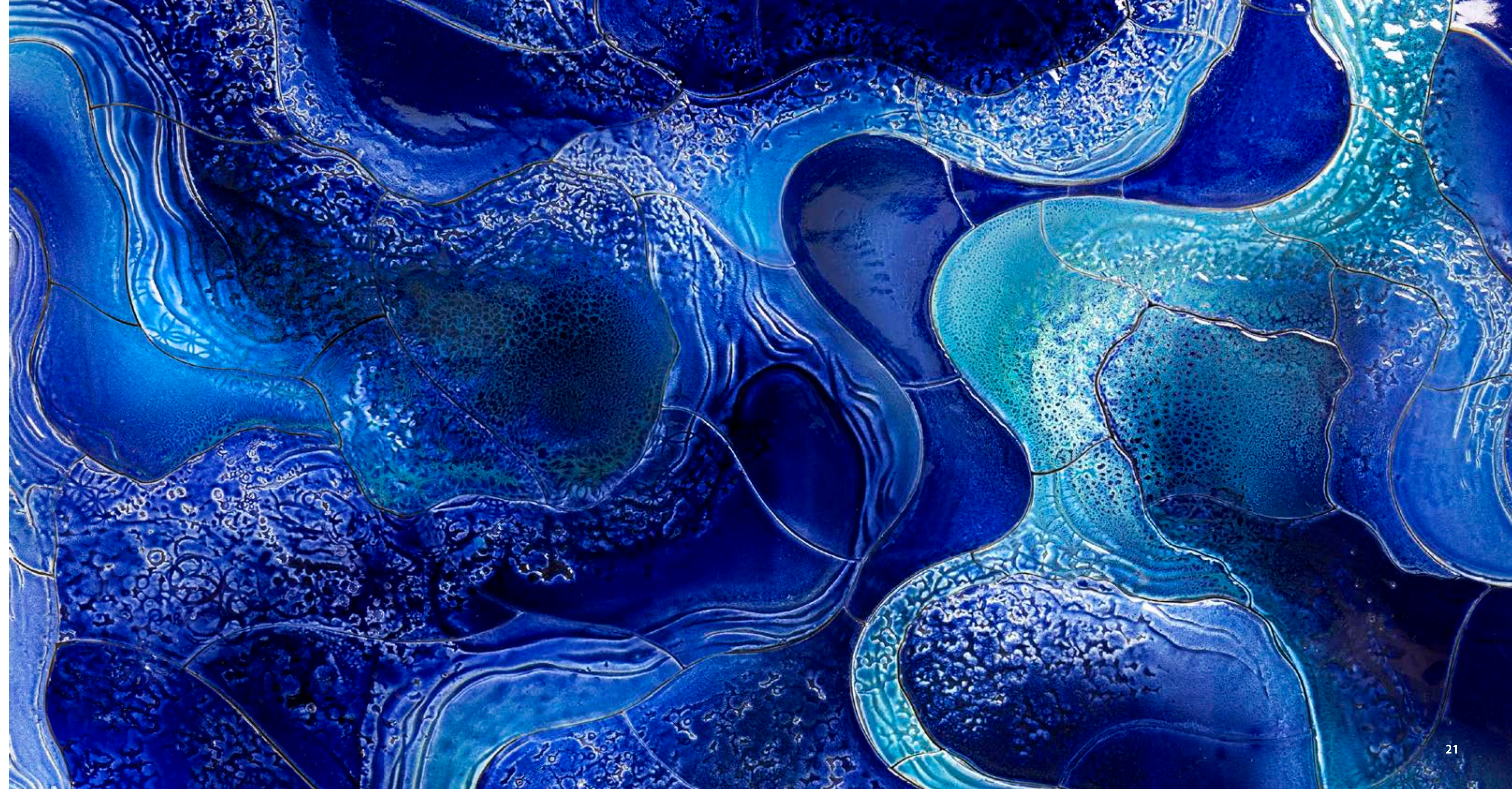
SWIRL - INTENSE COLOUR AND RICH DETAIL, MAGNIFIED IN THE POOL



It is vital for swimming pool design to create impact and excitement at first sight. Equally so - detail. Explore the vibrancy of another world of glorious colour and unexpected character brought about by the fusion of glazes, magnified beneath the still water.

A key 'tool' in the ceramists armoury is an intimate knowledge of glazes and the manner in which they 'mature' during the process. In effect, application is blind and the manner and the sequence of applying these glazes is all important.

As a still pool this design is a vibrant mix of rich colour, subtle transitions and individual handmade character.



CORAL REEF - LIGHTING BECOMES TRANSFORMATIONAL FOR EVENING EVENTS



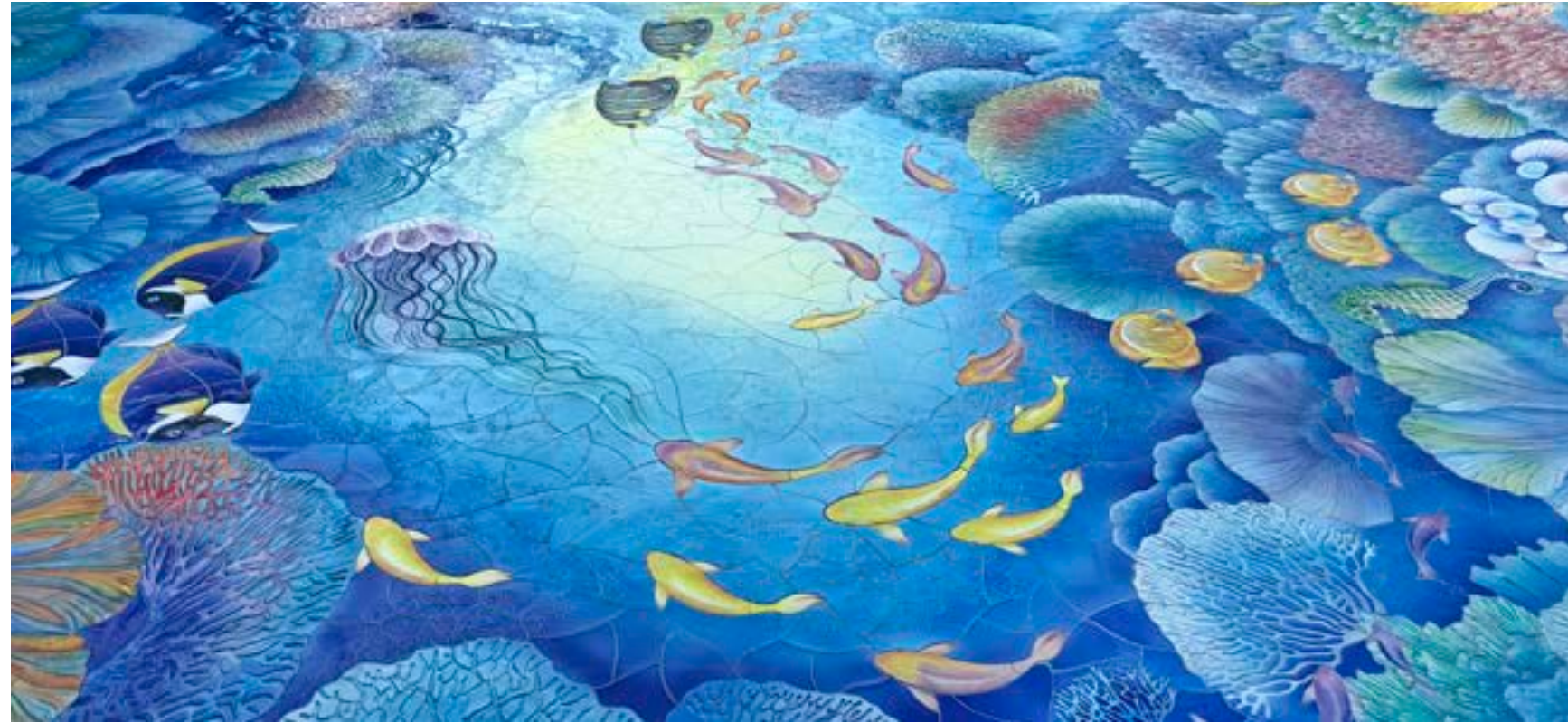
Inspiration for pool design is often focused on the underwater life of a coral reef. A world of vivid colour, fascinating activity and endless diversity are rich pickings for the designers and clay workers at Craig Bragdy Design. Crystal still waters magnify the detail (usage and movement bring animation). An evening event can be transformed by atmospheric lighting.

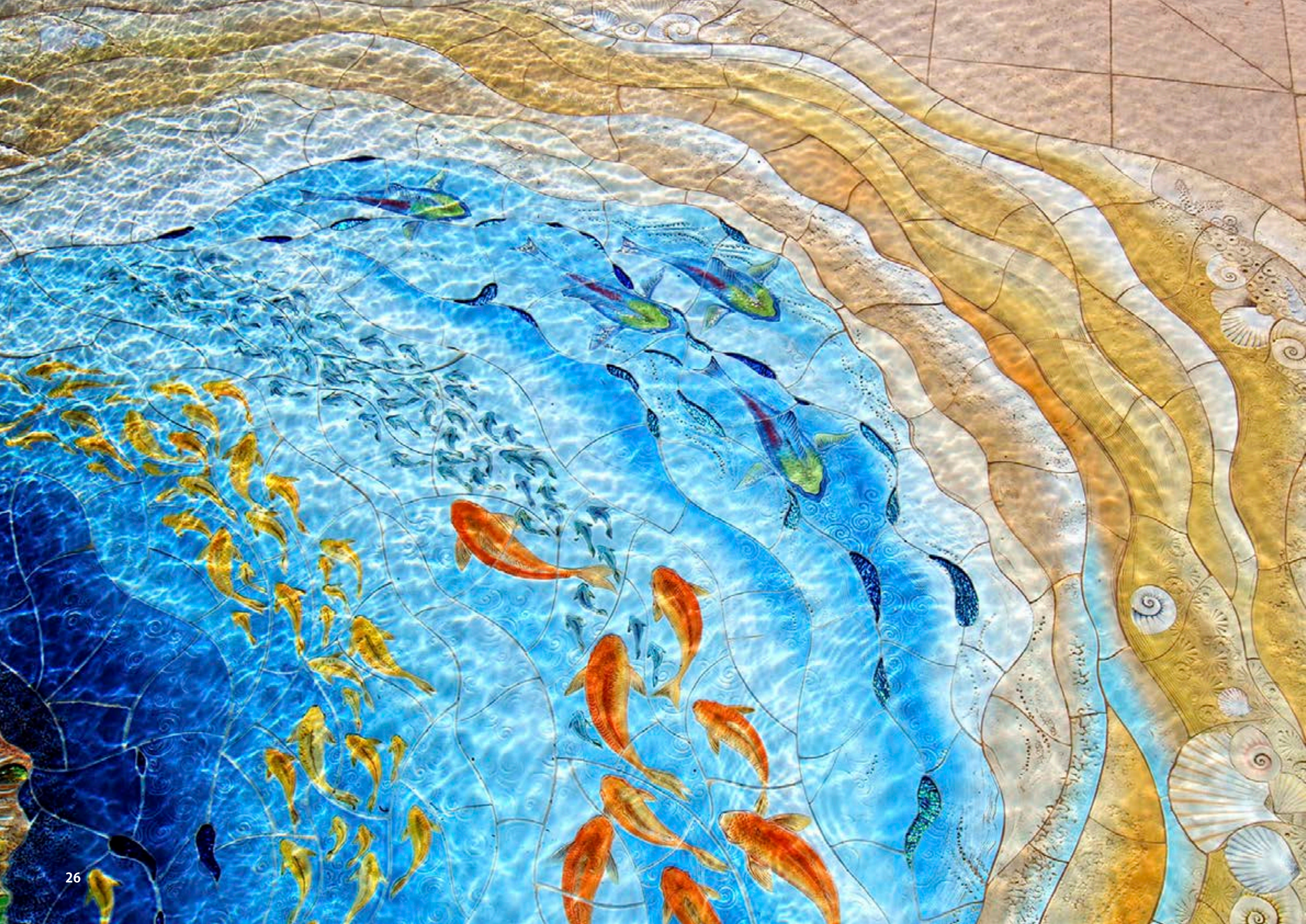




STINGRAY

Undeniably immersive as a wonderland of natural colour, this client's pool is transformed into a scene evocative of Jacques Cousteau's deep water diving experiences - here our stingray takes 'full charge' amongst crabs, shells, angel fish and others. These works truly come to life with water. It's a changing reality once the pool is filled. In static water, often with just the faintest shimmer emanating from pumps and filtration systems, these works are magnifications of the approved artwork, enhancing the detail. Usage of the pool and so water movement then transforms the work into a beautifully fluid animation of abstract colour, movement and realism. Later, as pool activities subside, so the approved artwork returns, again glorious in its detail and magnification, fascinating in its original crafted art form.





BEACH ENTRY - CARVED, SCULPTED AND DECORATED BY HAND AND OFFERING ENHANCED GRIP FOR SWIMMERS

Create a hand carved ceramic replica of a Caribbean beach, remarkably similar in both appearance and feel. The tactile surface finish of these ceramics offers enhanced grip for swimmers entering the pool. Craig Bragdy's craft techniques have been specifically developed to aid slip resistance and can be applied to a broad scope of designs.





CHIFFON - A DELIGHTFUL ANIMATION OF A CAREFULLY CRAFTED ILLUSION

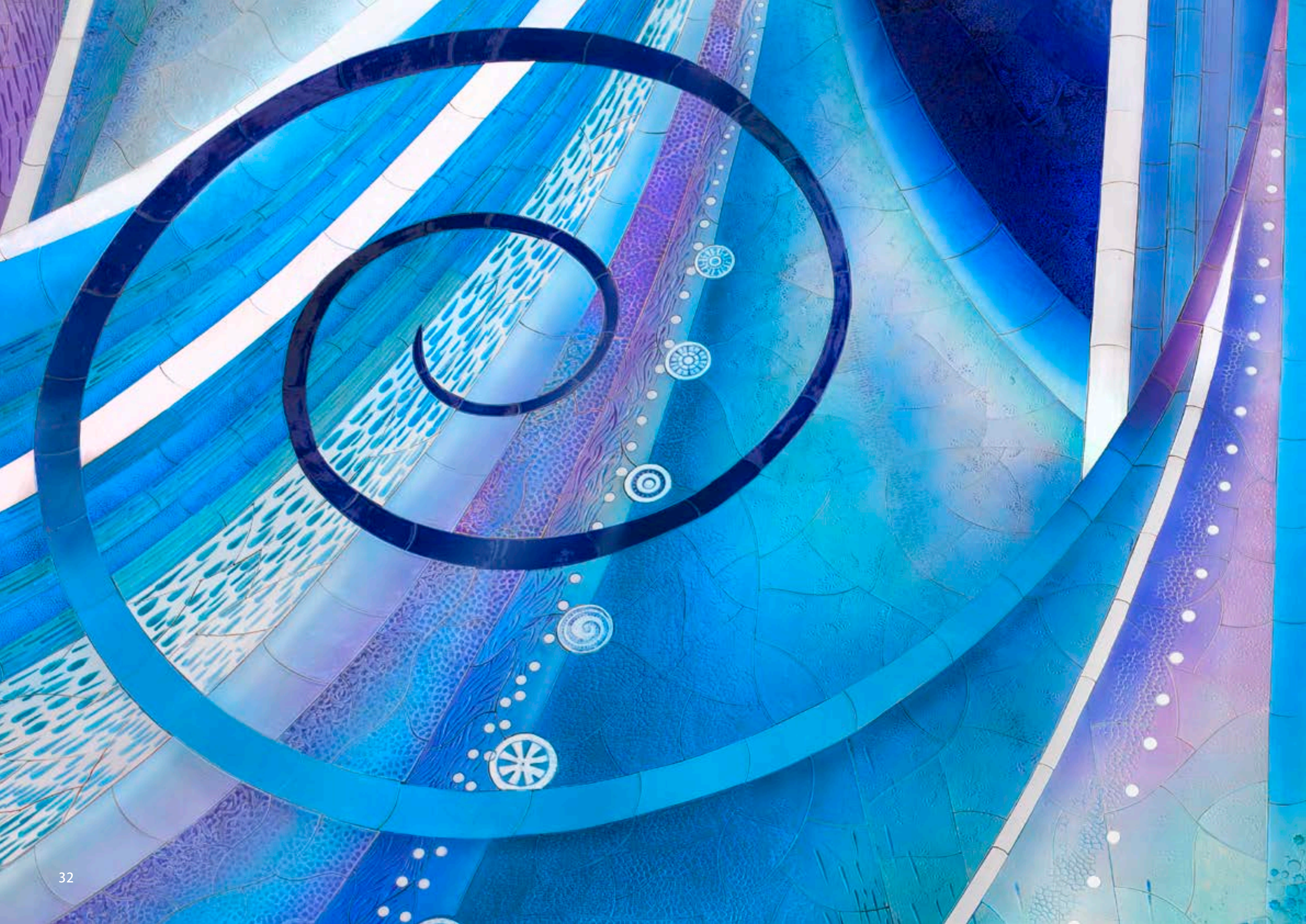
Trick the eye - a silk chiffon floats at the surface, a swathe of decorative linen flows effortlessly into the water, seemingly anchored to the surrounding deck. A playful, fun and elegant ceramic decoration and the movement of the pool's water adds folds, furls and twists. A delightful animation of a carefully crafted illusion.



SHELL - A MAGICAL CANOPY, LAVISHLY DECORATED WITH MOTHER OF PEARL LUSTRES

Suspended across a swim-through channel and the vertically sliding door of an oval indoor pool, this handmade structure forms a magical canopy, lavishly decorated with mother of pearl lustres. As swimmers pass beneath there is a delightful echo from within the structure, of every splash and sound. Required to be lightweight in appearance, its structural integrity was one challenging aspect of the project. A yacht builder was commissioned to help with the engineering and the structure (stainless steel inside a fibreglass envelope) and the whole three-piece structure was bolted together onto a specially designed foundation on site. All ceramics were formed to fit snugly into the shape of the shell and its front lip was kept slim and delicate to further establish the sense of a shell's natural lightness.





ART DECO - A BEAUTIFULLY DECORATIVE APPROACH TO SWIM LANES IN THE POOL

Glorious and glamorous, the eclectic Parisian style of Art Deco makes a stylistic statement and a beautifully decorative approach to swim lane disciplines in the pool. Surface reflections play with the image, but as curiosity develops and focus sharpens, increasingly the detail, textures and subtleties of aquatic colour become the fascination of this design.



KALEIDOSCOPE

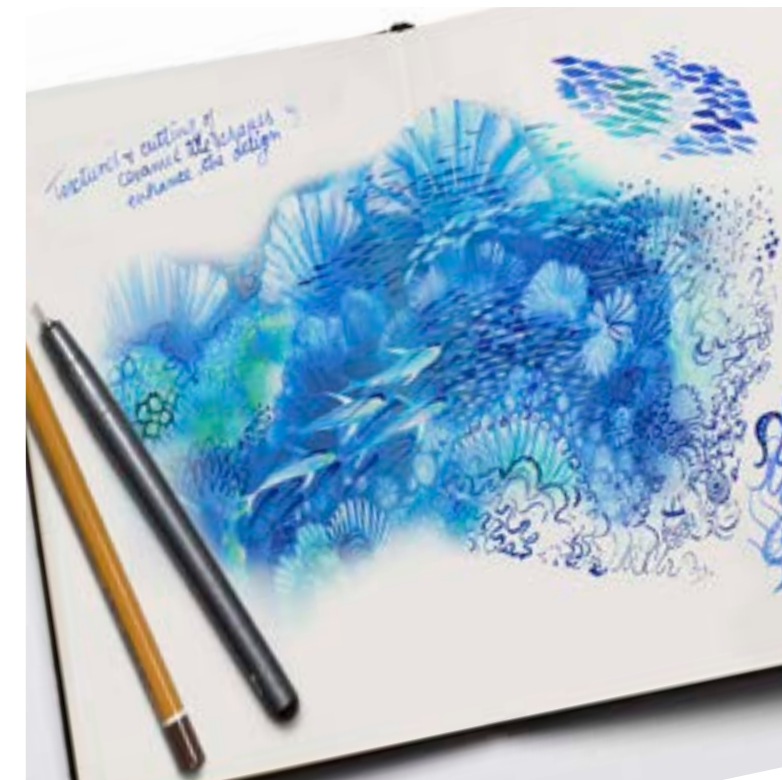
Selected by our client to be the dominant theme for their pool, the wheels of gold in this kaleidoscopic decoration are lavishly enhanced using 22 carat gold and mother of pearl lustres. The constantly changing light of this outdoor pool brings ever changing characteristics. Night lights and water movement carry that through day's end and into evening activities around the pool.





DESIGN

Craig Bragdy Design begins each commission by listening to their client, architect or designer. It is likely that this initial conversation will provide inspiration for the artists of Craig Bragdy. Translating words into illustrations is a rare skill and one that quickly realises direction. Concept sketches are the first stage of development and provide the client with an immediate impression of how an idea could develop. Further consideration and comment at that stage then forms the basis for developing a full and formal design presentation, incorporating ceramic samples, models and 3D renders.





CLAY

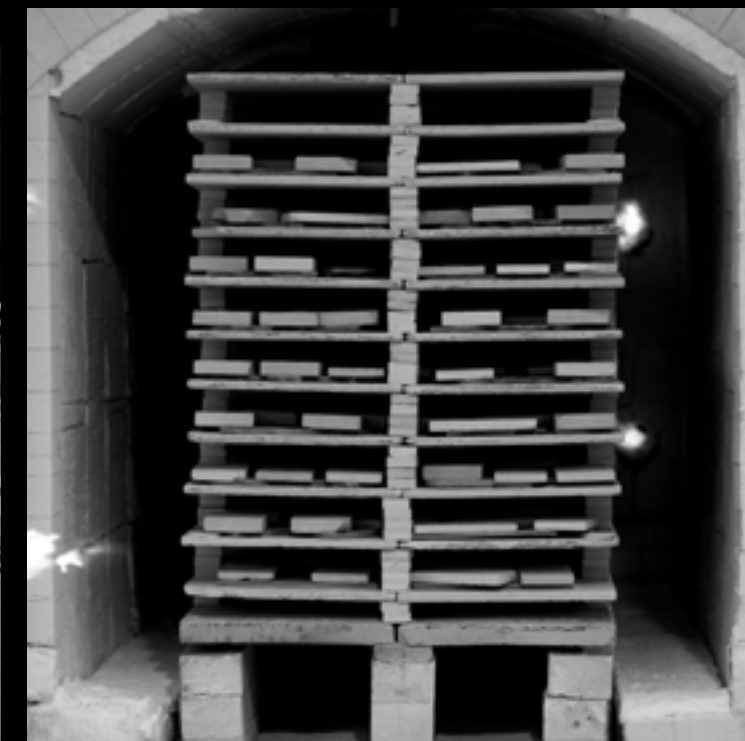
Clay is a raw and pliable material that has been used to make tiles for thousands of years. Its strength and longevity is well documented. Today technology has refined and improved those qualities and Craig Bragdy Design has a specifically developed clay recipe that is perfectly balanced for its style of work.

After being laid on the factory floor as a huge single sheet, experienced artists will map out the approved design before the modelling and sculpting of the surface begins. All the work is completed by hand - no enlargements, photocopies nor tracings are involved in production. Each work is a full-scale iteration of the approved design, transferred to the surface of the clay, by a skilled team of experienced artists.

As surface work is completed so the sheet of clay is cut, a crucially important discipline, which divides the sheet into tiles and brings character, rhythm and pace to the finished work. Cut lines are as much part of the design as they are a practical requirement. Cutting is drawing with a knife.

The character and rhythm of the design will be reflected through the shape and size of the tiles. No two will be the same.





FIRE

Firing can be by gas or by electricity. Gas firings are ideal for initial, high temperature firings and electric firings are preferred for the lower temperatures and cleaner atmospheres required by some glazes, enamels and lustres. CBD's clay body requires a firing of 1240°C to fully mature, to become completely vitrified and therefore be frost proof. Tiles will require several firings, all at different temperatures at different stages of the process. The first firing is of the unglazed clay tile. Following each firing the swimming pool (or mural) is laid in its entirety on the factory floor - always, to be considered as one. Glazing is a layering process beginning with higher firing mixes and working down in temperature. It is during the firing that the final finished quality of the glazes is accomplished and only then that full colour emerges. Glazes can be quite different in appearance before firing and so glaze selection and application is reserved for experienced artists.



GLAZE

All glaze at Craig Bragdy Design is mixed specifically for each project - each design requiring a particular palette of colour. Records of each glaze used are retained for use at any stage in the future if ever matching tiles should be required.

Glaze is applied as liquid and can be brushed, sponged, layered, sprayed, piped or poured on to the surface. Layering for reaction in a single firing regularly occurs as does layering between firings - each process bringing subtly different results.

A wide range of surface finishes are available in a broad spectrum of colours, from high gloss through to earthy mattes. Gold, platinum, copper and lustres can be applied in the final phase of decoration. They are equally robust and Craig Bragdy Design offers a ten year guarantee to cover fading or delamination. Once tiles and glazes have completed their firing cycles they are permanent and strong and are able to withstand incredible weights. Glazes, even in extreme conditions or harsh sunlight, will never fade.





ETIHAD - DARTS OF INTENSE SUNLIGHT FLICKER ACROSS THE SURFACE

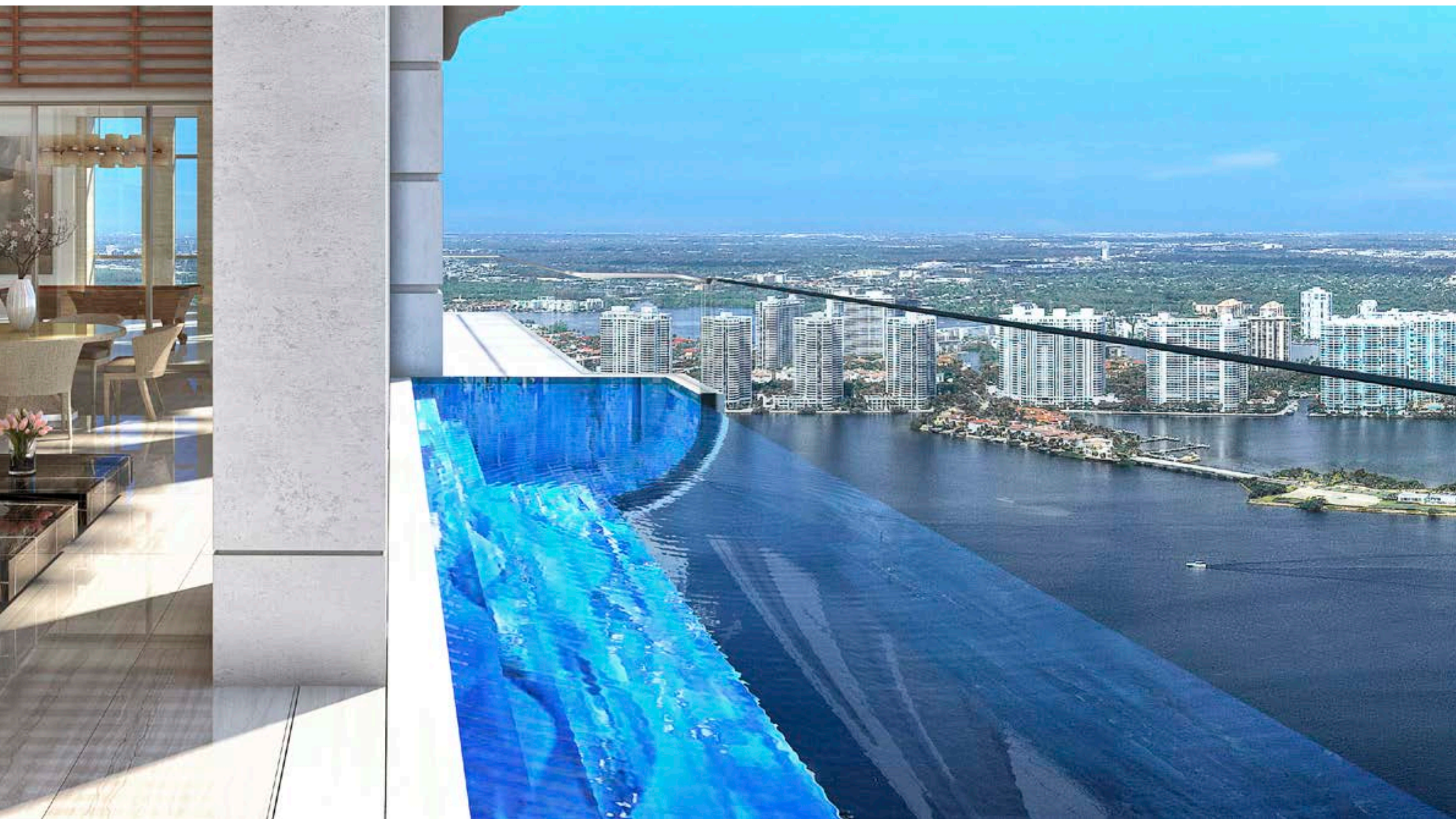
Abu Dhabi - this hotel lobby, reception and meeting area has a broadly contemporary feel; separated from the Gulf seas and beaches by a huge glazed curtain wall. The six metre wide decorative pool brings coolness and there is the gentle sound and slight movement of water. Spaces between the vertical window shades allow darts of intense sunlight to flicker across the surface and reflections from columns and glass shimmer on the water. Two centimetres beneath are handmade ceramics. Stylised reef motives are sculpted into the surface and colours transition seamlessly and subtly from vibrant, electric powder blues to accents of light white marble softness predominant in the adjacent surfaces.



COMET - A POOL FOR ALL - A UNIQUE VISUAL STATEMENT INCORPORATING A SPECTACULAR BIRDS-EYE VIEW

This spectacular abstract, graphic imagery was inspired by the appearance in 1986 of Halley's comet and the birth of our client's daughter. It is a 35 metre long pool for use by the combined residents of the 72 storey, 252 metre Highcliff development in Hong Kong. Whilst the pool water is still the glorious detail is magnified, when in use the vibrant colours of the changing imagery permeates through the shifting water. Later, as darkness falls and stillness returns, over two hundred and fifty fibre optic lights appear, clustered to follow the path of each comet.

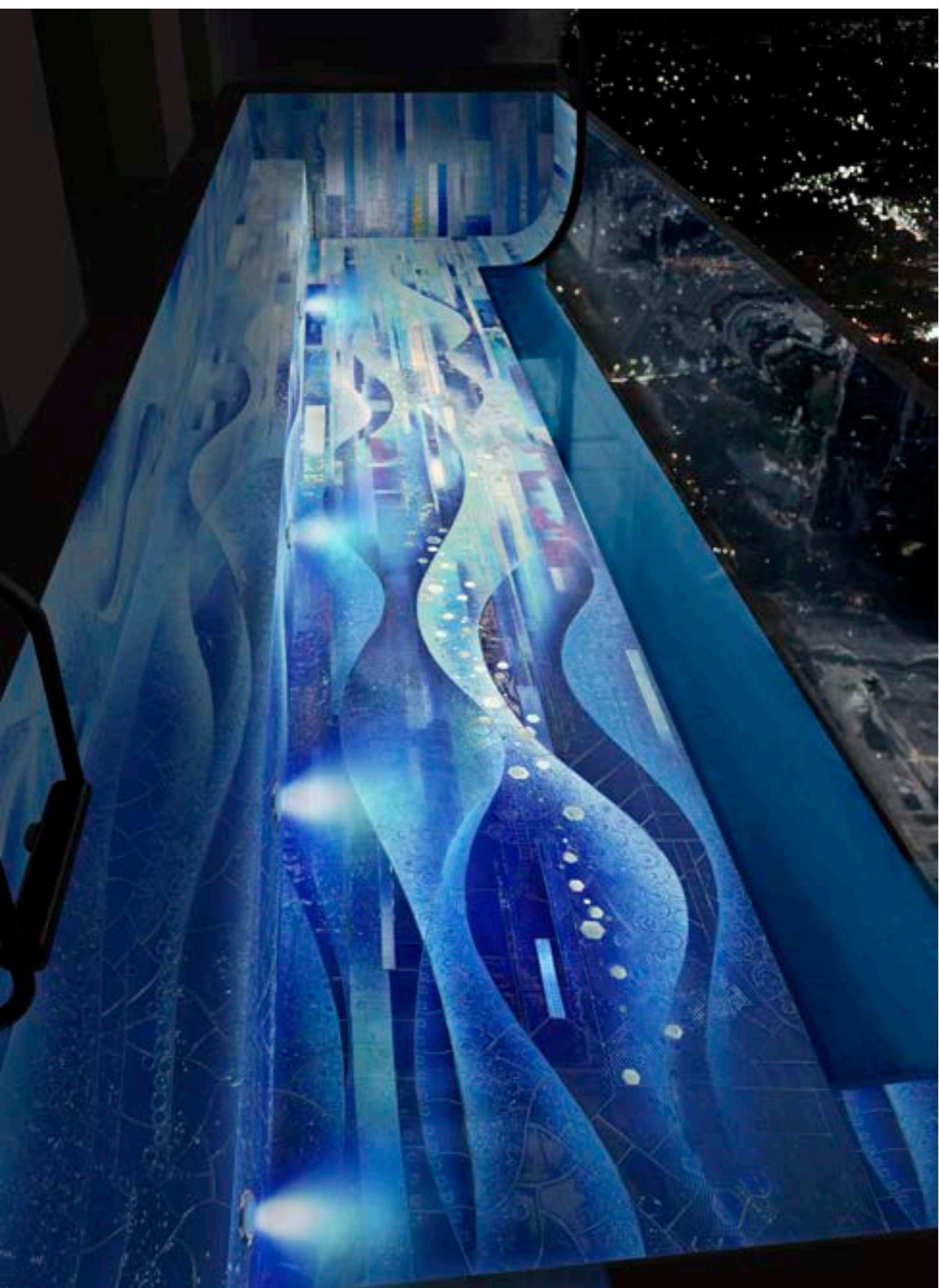


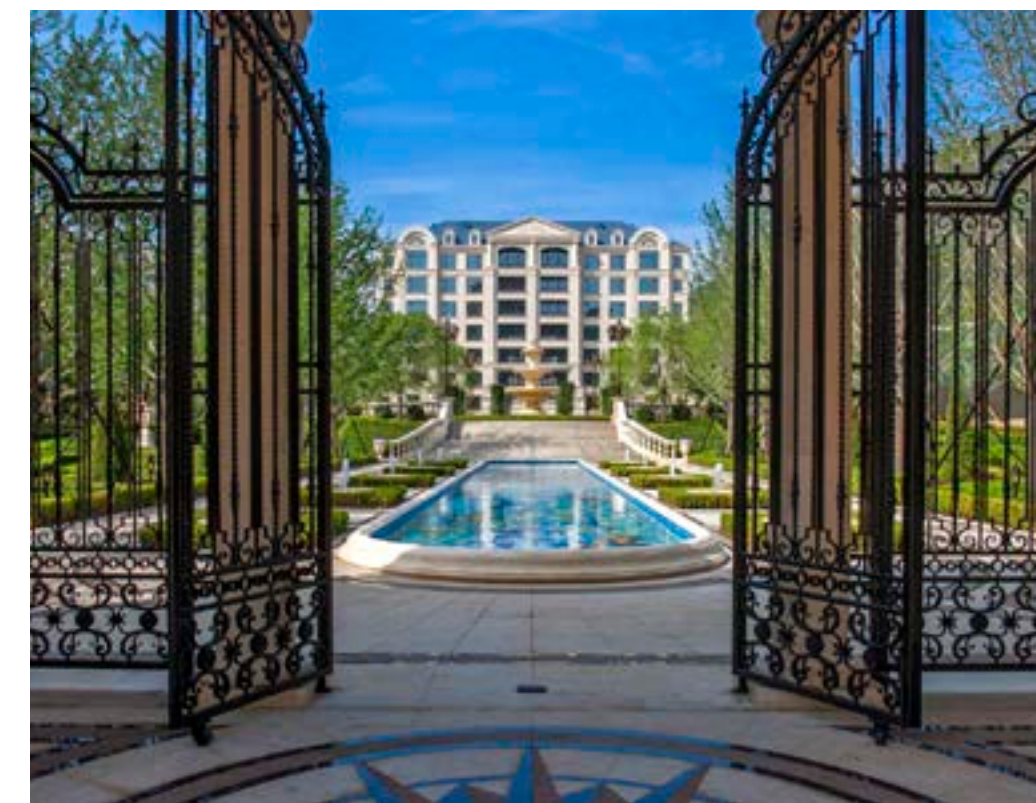
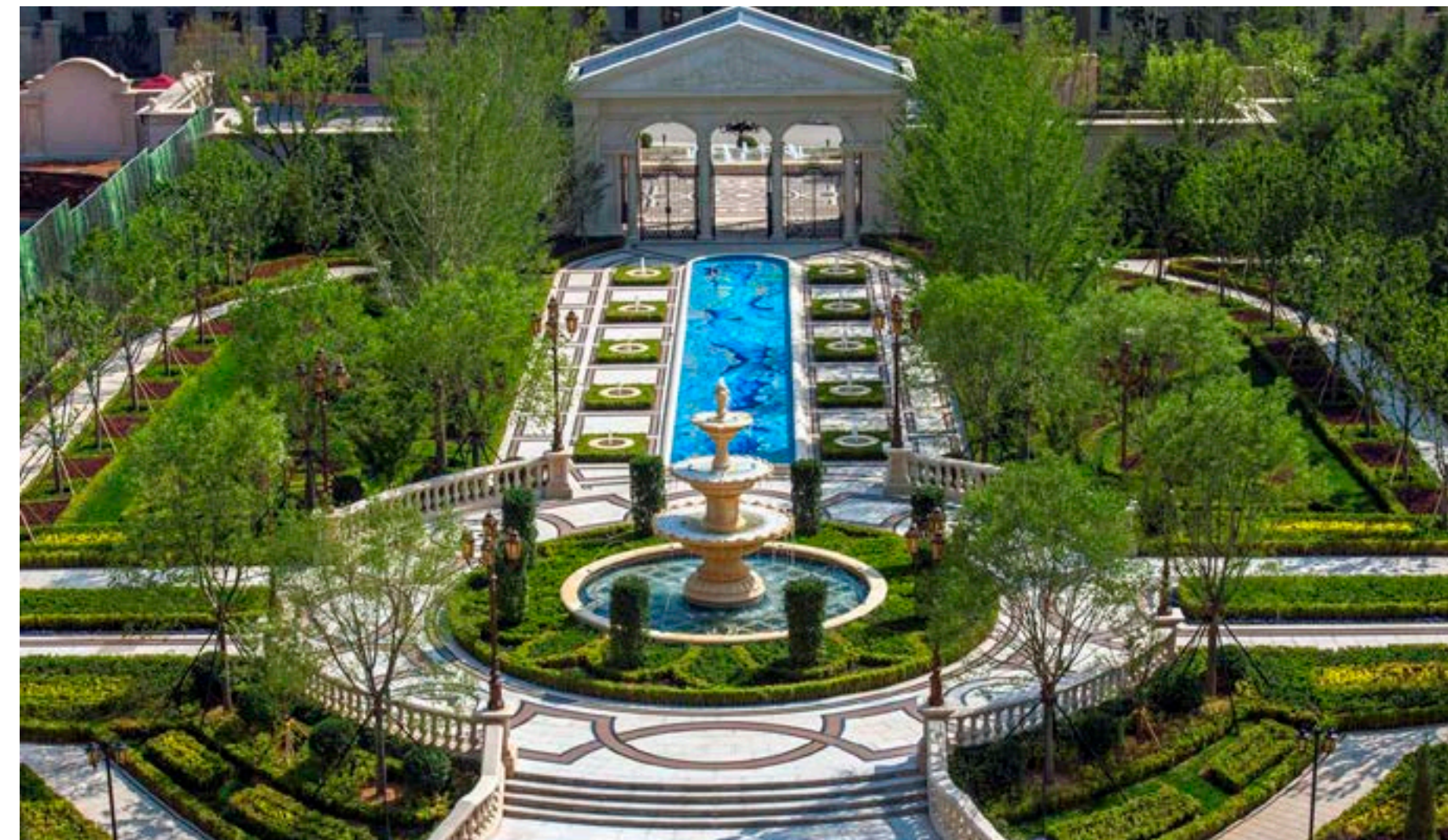


MIAMI - A KEY SALES COMPONENT



In the main, Craig Bragdy clientele emanate from an elite group of well off and discerning individuals. Though from time to time our client may be a developer - servicing those few - as with this project, an exclusive development in south Florida on which our simple brief was: "this pool needs to look a million dollars!" After some consideration and discussion on design (finally, it was selected from half a dozen possible directions), the finished work you see here became one of the key 'sales components' for this expansive and exclusive accommodation, its pool cantilevered 47 floors above Miami.





CENTREPIECE

Craig Bragdy was introduced to this exclusive residential development by one of the world's leading landscape architects. The pool was prominent, located at the entrance, within extensive and elaborate landscaping and was in clear view from the residential units. Throughout development its pathways, its landscaping and the pool was always a key feature of this private project - exclusive apartment buildings servicing wealthy individuals. Set in two feet of water, this tropical coral reef soon became a signature feature for the development - photographs of the area used regularly and extensively as promotional material.



THE GLOBE - A 27 METRE CONCRETE BALL - HOUSING A 220 SEAT AUDITORIUM

We were excited to be included for this most unusual development constructed in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - for the Saudi Press Agency. The structure is one component of a new head quarter building. It is an auditorium with a capacity for over 220 people formed as a giant concrete ball (twenty seven metres in diameter). Craig Bragdy was asked to design, manufacture and install bespoke ceramics for the exterior. To replicate the world. The Globe. A challenge indeed!

Land masses were bespoke handmade ceramics, the oceans mosaic.

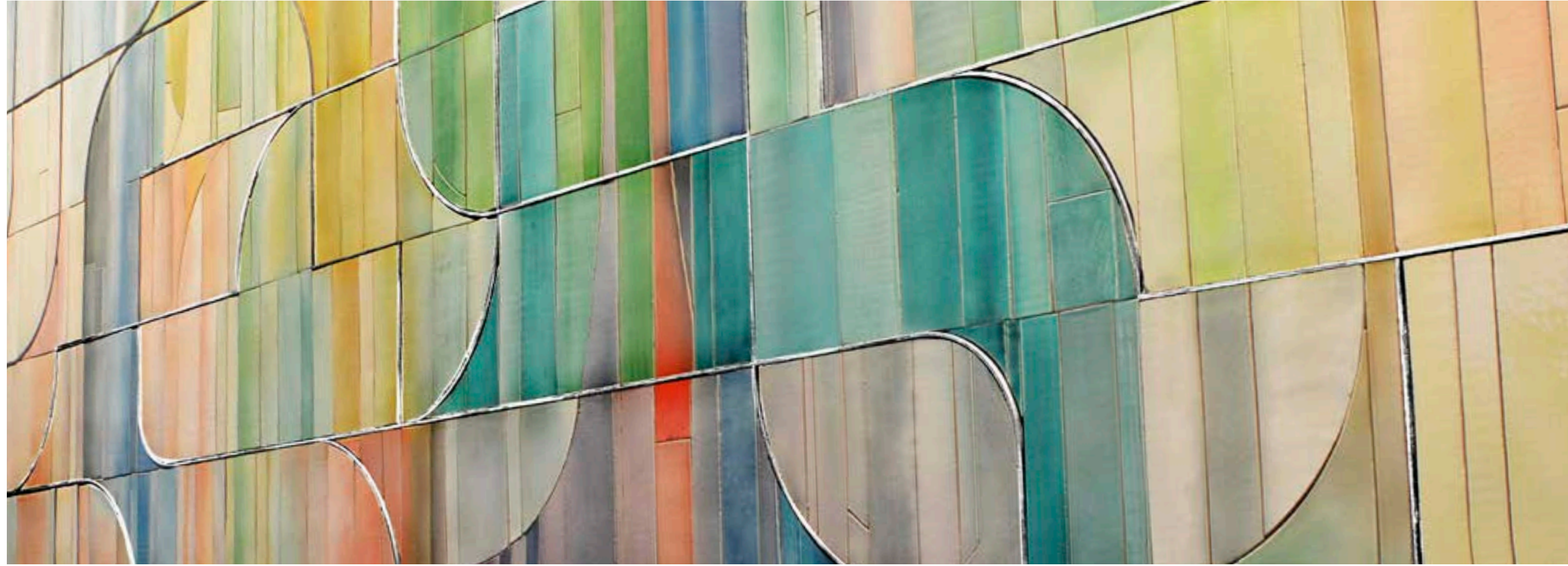
For manufacture the first step was to construct a 'former' replicating the curvature of the globe to ensure the 'fit', the 'shape' and the adhesion of the tiles. The 'former' was to be large enough for the biggest continent - Africa, Tunis to Cape Town - 12,000 km in life, 18 metres in wet clay!



All rivers, valleys, mountain ranges and coastlines were plotted accurately and sculpted on to the surface of the clay by hand. After first firing, all individually mixed colours were applied and fired again. Once through this process of all colours are permanent. They will not fade nor change in any way. Not in sunlight nor in rain (nor even frost) - they are vitrified and they are permanent.

The project was both challenging and rewarding, its manufacture taking place in Wales over an intense twelve week programme and installed using local labour and Craig Bragdy supervision.





TAIKOO PLACE - DECORATION FOR THE BUSY PUBLIC AUDITORIUM

This is a twelve by nine metre high mural decorating the busy atrium of a Swire Group high rise office complex in Hong Kong. It was designed by Michael Santry and uses the footprint of the building as a key element of its appearance, it being reflected in the matrix of stainless steel bars that dissect the work.



NCB - DESIGNS FROM THE COUNTRY'S CURRENCY FOR THIS REGIONAL H.Q.



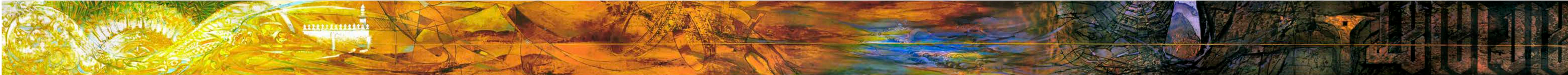
An artwork commissioned for the foyer of a spectacular regional headquarters building of the NCB bank in Riyadh. Every element of the design can be found on currency notes in daily use in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Woven within that are key aspects of their monetary history, significantly the golden 'penny', fore-runner to the existing Saudi Riyal.

Forty five metres long and two metres high, this mural depicts the story of the Prophet Mohammed's journey from Mecca to Medina, from darkness to enlightenment; from pre-Islam to the modern day. It decorates one wall of the bridge that connects two parts of the museum, one half containing pre-Islamic exhibits and the second half containing treasures from Islam in the modern day. Whilst the work contains all of the key events of the journey, it does so using abstract imagery, texture, colour and scale to tell the story. One of the key criteria was to ensure the work was accessible to a broad spectrum of visitors - from school children through to academics, local people and those from around the world.

NATIONAL MUSEUM - RIYADH

A CLASSIC STORYLINE

EXPLORED IN HANDMADE CERAMIC



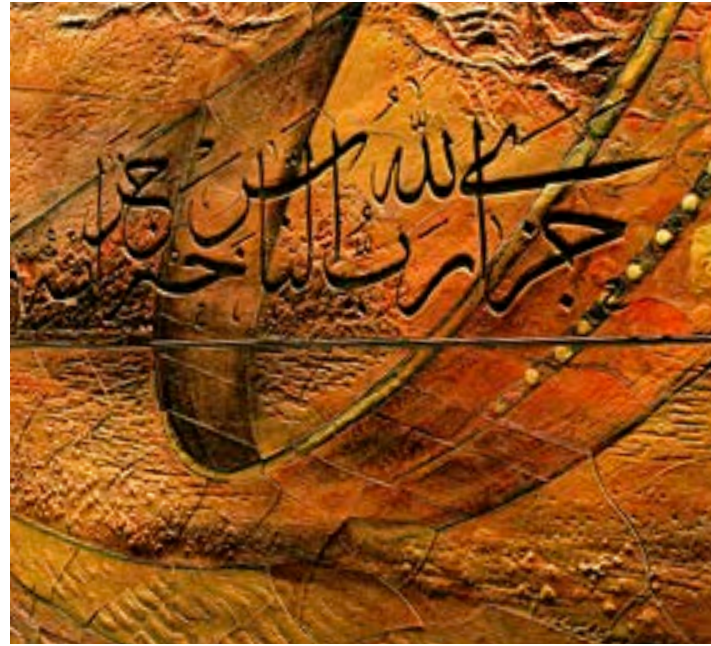
Finally the oasis city of Madinah, the welcome, the celebration



Selected texts from the Holy Quran are carved into the surface of the mural using the Thuluth style



Desert plains, Bedu and the life saving appearance of goats, their udders full with milk



Bracelets



The Red Sea coast



The cave and the spider's web



Mecca and the black stone of the Kaaba

The mural's design, to be read from right to left in this illustration, follows the prophet's journey to enlightenment and begins on the right with the Bismillah etched into the clay. A golden thread dissects the mural across its full length, representing Islam - bright, strong and eternal.

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WAFI
GROUP