

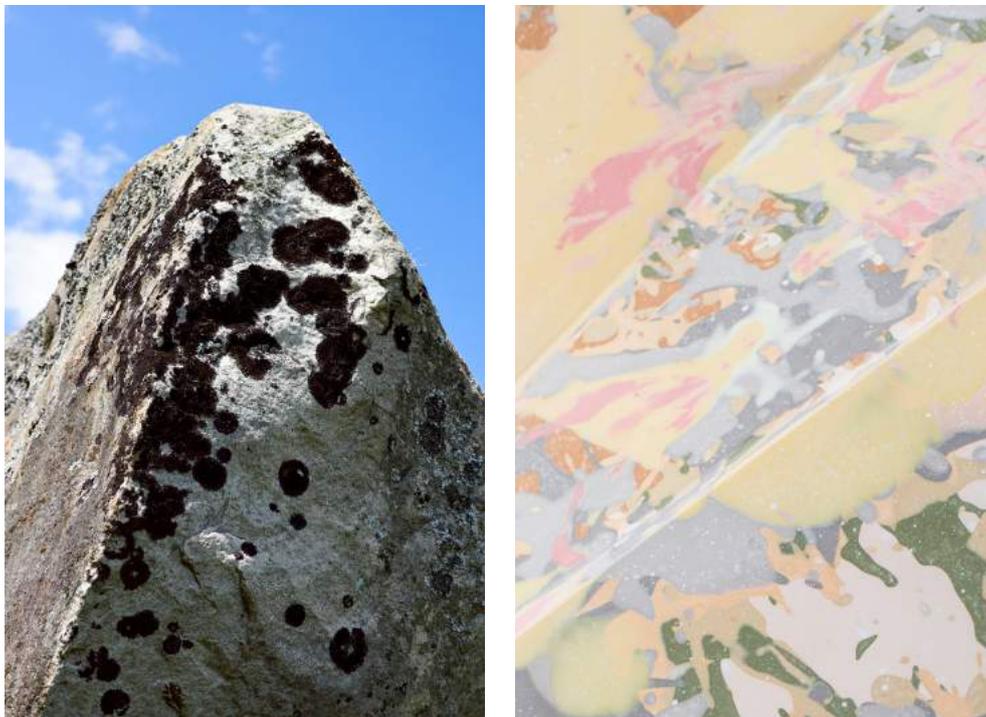
MATERIAL OF THE YEAR: Jesmonite

PRESS RELEASE, 4 September 2017

Material of the Year at London Design Fair

LICHEN X JESMONITE

A symbiotic installation by Zuza Mengham and Seb Camilleri



Untitled by Seb Camilleri (left).

Xanthoria Parietina by Zuza Mengham. Photography by Jonathan Middleton (right).

Lichens are one of the most prolific but overlooked features of our natural environment, blooming everywhere from the most barren mountain slope to the concrete walls of the biggest cities. The result of a unique symbiosis between algae and fungi, as organisms they exist in a category of their own, filling the forgotten corners of our landscape with their peculiar fractal beauty. Throughout history, lichens have been used as indicators of pollution, as dyes, for their antibiotic properties, and – now – as the basis for a unique sculptural installation.

Invited by curators **Hole & Corner**, artist and designer **Zuza Mengham** presents a new series of sculptures that combine British lichens with the fair's inaugural **Material of the Year – Jesmonite**. Using lichens

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obtained from across the UK, Mengham has created a series of five works, each incorporating and responding to a different British species, namely: *Punctelia subrudecta*, *Xanthoria parietina*, *Physcia adscendens*, *Evernia prunastri* and *Flavoparmelia caperata*.



Xanthoria Parietina by Zusa Mengham. Photography by Jonathan Middleton (left).
Punctelia Subrudecta by Zusa Mengham. Photography by Jonathan Middleton (right).

'The sculptures use colours and abstracted patterns informed by what we came across, with sections of mulched lichen. There are some you'll have to really inspect to see which areas are lichen and the dappled outcome of the inclusion. Some you can see the lichens more clearly, as they are so beautiful in themselves it would be a shame to disorder the natural patterning.'

– Zusa Mengham, designer

Those patterns and colours are captured in forms cast from **Jesmonite**, the acrylic-modified gypsum composite that **London Design Fair** has identified as the most influential making material for the designers of today. For an artist used to working first in steel and then resin (as seen in her 'Sculpting

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Scents' exhibition with Laboratory Perfumes for last year's London Design Festival), Jesmonite represents a new creative opportunity for Mengham, and a new palette of material possibilities.

'I've heard of Jesmonite a great deal in the last few years so it felt natural to see what it I could do with it. The project lends itself to the exploration of natural materials so it felt apt to find a sympathetic material that was gentler to use. Jesmonite is water-based so much kinder to the environment, easy to sand, quick to cast, and creates such beautiful and varied characteristics that you can achieve with different applications and material additions.'

– Zuza Mengham, designer



Physcia Adscendens by Zuza Mengham. Photography by Jonathan Middleton.

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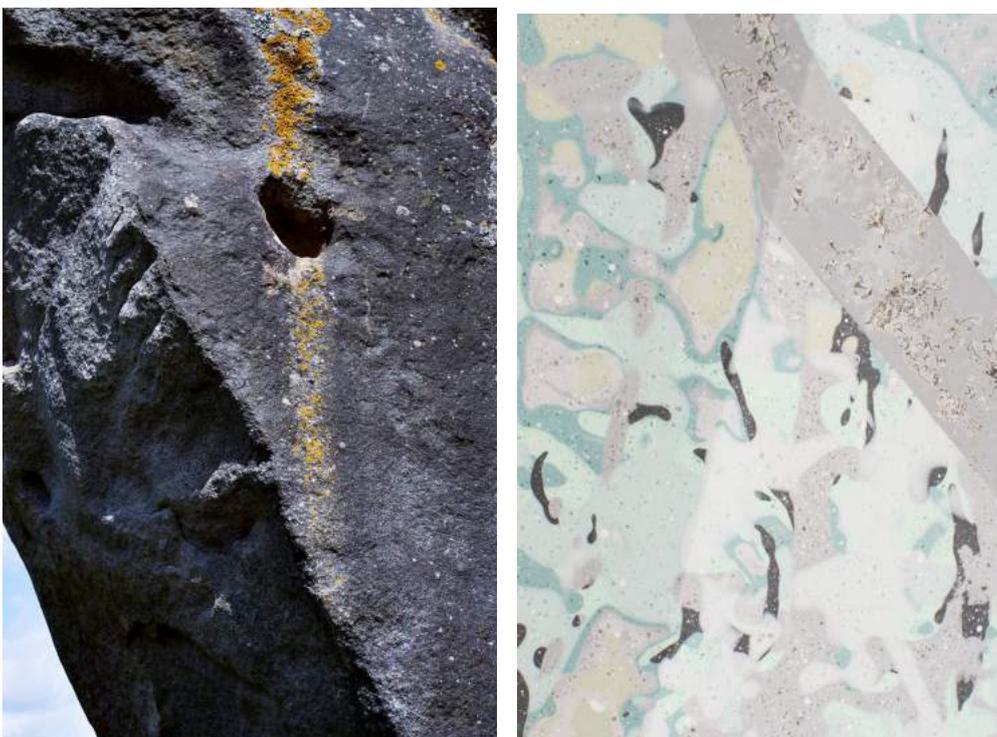
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By using **Jesmonite** in this way, **Mengham** has been able to emphasise the organic beauty and patterns of the lichen – a balance of the natural and synthetic that mirrors the symbiotic relationship embodied by lichen itself.

Adding another layer of duality, Mengham has collaborated with the visual artist **Seb Camilleri** to provide context for the sculptures and introduce an additional dimension to the exhibition. Through photographs of the pair's lichen-hunting forays into nature and images of the lichen in its original habitat, Camilleri adds depth to the sculptures' stories and creates a sense of place.

The connection to habitat is also referenced in the multi-tiered structure of the display. With lichens thriving at all levels of the landscape, from ground to forest canopy, positioning the pieces at different elevations encourages viewers to explore their surroundings and become immersed in them – just as Mengham and Camilleri did while researching the exhibition together.

Mengham's sculptures form a counterpoint to **Rustiles**, **PRIN London's** site-specific **Material of the Year** installation, which also features a hybrid Jesmonite material. While Ariane Prin's brick-like tiles blend Jesmonite with another synthetic material, metal dust, to achieve their unique aesthetic effect; Mengham and Camilleri offer another perspective on its versatility. Through these five sculptures and accompanying photographs, they build a bridge to the natural world and the beautiful mystery of lichen.



Untitled by Seb Camilleri (left).

Evernia Prunastri by Zuza Mengham. Photography by Jonathan Middleton (right).

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Zuza Mengham and **Seb Camilleri**'s installation will be on display on the ground floor of **Hall G5** at **London Design Fair**, Old Truman Brewery on **21–24 September**. The sculptures will be available to buy after the fair, with prices from £2,300, and Camilleri's photographs will also be on sale, each in an edition of three.

For images and more information on **Zuza Mengham** and the **Material of the Year** project, please contact me (Jodi Moss) at jodi@zetteler.co.uk or on +44 (0)7910 705147.

Notes for Editors

About London Design Fair

Set in Shoreditch, the creative heart of London, the London Design Fair is a four-day industry event that brings together 500 exhibitors from 28 countries, including independent designers, established brands, international country pavilions, features and exhibitions. Launched in 2007, the London Design Fair has earned itself the reputation as the go-to trade show during the annual London Design Festival, hosting the largest collection of international exhibitions, designers, brands, country pavilions, features and exhibitions. Each year, over 27,000 influential retail buyers, producers, architects, interior designers, press, designers, and design-savvy public will attend to see the very latest in furniture, lighting, textiles, materials and conceptual installations, from all around the world.

londondesignfair.co.uk

Twitter: @LDNdesignfair

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About Zuza Mengham

London-based artist and designer Zuza Mengham is fascinated by materials. She makes sculptures and installations that explore what constitutes a 'space' and objects that toy with the suggestion of function. Often incorporating traditional craft techniques into new settings and methods of making, Zuza creates modernist, abstract works that seem intriguingly out of sync with reality. Her recent work has seen her shift from steel to resin and Jesmonite, alongside a jewellery series that uses powdered copper and slate to create unique marbling effects. For London Design Festival 2016 she collaborated with Laboratory Perfumes on Sculpting Scent, a series that transformed five fragrances into hand-crafted resin sculptures. She has also asked to develop a crystal for FKA during her Radiant Me2 Tour, and was named as one of Maison & Objet 2017's Rising Talents, nominated by Tom Dixon.

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About Seb Camilleri

Photographer and image-maker Seb Camilleri is a graduate of Central St Martins and the founder and co-creative director of SATORI magazine. His work characteristically explores the transient nature of inhabited spaces, drawing on his own experiences to explore the behavioural and emotional impact of urban and rural architecture.

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