

Introducing bFRIENDS: desk accessories in 100% recycled bioplastic waste

Bene's new collection embraces circular production, with design by Pearson Lloyd and 3D printing by Batch.Works



Bene's bFRIENDS collection by Pearson Lloyd explores new materials and new forms made possible by 3D printers Batch.Works. Photography by Alex Sarginson.

Embargoed until 9am 11 November 2021

Available from 11 November, bFRIENDS by Bene is a collection of desirable and intuitive desktop accessories – made from discarded food packaging. Comprising pen pots, trays and a stand for mobile devices, the collection is 3D-printed from 100% recycled PLA, a cornstarch-derived bioplastic, diverted from landfill. At the end of the products' lives, they can be easily returned to Bene to be recycled again – creating a complete, closed-loop production cycle.

A compelling demonstration of the viability of 3D-printing as a means of manufacturing mass-appeal consumer products, the launch marks a small but significant step forward in the global drive to shift manufacturing from linear production methods to sustainable, closed-loop systems.

Designed by Pearson Lloyd with equal attention to user experience and aesthetic appeal, bFRIENDS products make useful and characterful additions to both workplace and domestic settings, so whether you're upgrading your home workspace or keen to jazz up your desk for your return to the office, bFRIENDS has you covered.

Expressing a new materiality and circular-design aesthetic

A combination of function-led design and engaging organic appearance drove the design of the bFRIENDS product range. The collection's name alludes variously to the eco-friendly nature of the products, the warmth of their aesthetic, and the spirit of collaboration in which they were created.

The five objects – two pen pots, two trays and a stand – wear the story of their material and manufacture with pride. 3D printing is an additive process, meaning that the products are built up layer by layer in a single continuous line of bioplastic, rather than cut away from a larger material block or injection moulded, which leaves delicate and tactile horizontal ridging on the vertical surfaces. Pearson Lloyd were determined that this should be a key design feature, and thus decided to use a larger nozzle on the printer to emphasise the ridges as each layer was formed. This also had the effect of making the products stronger and more durable, thus extending their longevity.



The forms within the bFRIENDS collection were designed by Pearson Lloyd to express the layer-by-layer 3D printing manufacturing process. Photography by Alex Sarginson.

A palette of 10 colours, spanning warm, cool and neutral tones was carefully chosen to convey an approachable and tactile appeal that complements the organic curves of the pieces without becoming loud, garish or unsubtle.

“The language and identity of the bFRIENDS collection responds closely to the manufacturing limitations of 3D printing, which we embraced fully. A single continuous line traces the silhouette of each product and truly demonstrates the additive nature of the printing process. The colour palette mirrors the physical language of the collection – both playful and rational, able to deliver bright accents or monotonal collections.”

– Tom Lloyd, Pearson Lloyd

The result is a collection of versatile, value-led accessories that transform the desktop into a practical, organised and engaging space and that inspire their users to adopt similar values in their own work, while elegantly demonstrating the possibilities of 3D printing as a sustainable design process.

Low-energy, zero-waste, fossil fuel-free circular design

The 3D printing technology used to create bFRIENDS represents a hugely important step towards a genuinely circular model of production.

“At Pearson Lloyd, we are developing various projects that use circular-design principles in their inception. Using 3D-printed post-consumer bioplastic fits into the new models of production and consumption that we all need to embrace in our search for viable responses to the climate emergency.”

– Luke Pearson, Pearson Lloyd

Batch.Works’ manufacturing process sources raw materials from a local existing waste stream (post-consumer food packaging), requires no tools in production, generates no waste itself, and manufactures on demand, minimising any need for storage or warehousing.

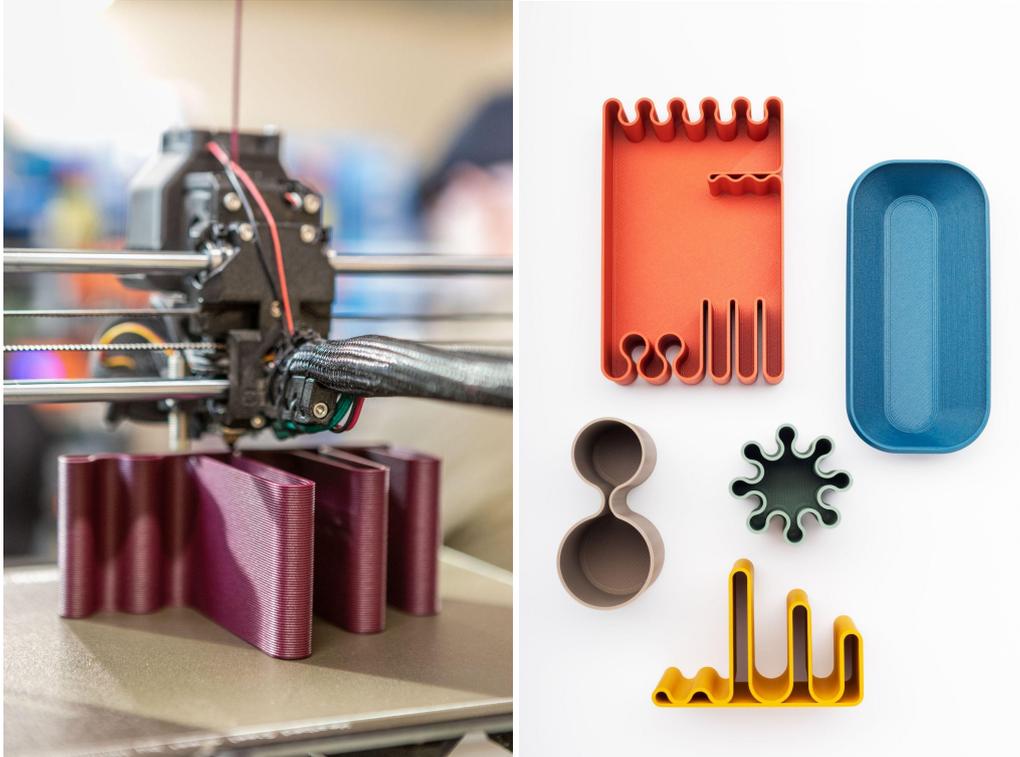
“3D printing has enabled us to create an entire accessory collection with no tooling whatsoever. Other processes – such as injection-moulding – demand significant amounts of embedded energy just to create the moulds and tools needed to manufacture a single item. The energy saving offered by 3D printing is extraordinary in comparison.”

– Luke Pearson, Pearson Lloyd

With no need for centralised global production, bFRIENDS products can be produced via a distributed network of local manufacturing hubs – including London and Amsterdam – cutting shipping distances for both raw material and finished product.

“We are delighted to be pioneering this vision with Bene and Pearson Lloyd, enabling localised closed-loop production and fast-to-market products through our hubs in London and Amsterdam.”

– Julian Vaissiers, founder and CEO, Batch.Works



Batch.Works' custom 3D-printing process produces Pearson Lloyd's bFriends collection from 100% recycled bioplastic. Photography by Alex Sarginson.

Because PLA is a non-oil-based bioplastic derived from cornstarch, no fossil fuels are involved at any stage of production. This, combined with the fact that Batch.Works' print facilities are wind-powered, means that production is energy-efficient, demanding 1.35 KW for every kilogram of printed product, and ensures that carbon emissions during production are kept close to zero.

PLA is 100% recyclable, so any bFRIENDS product can, at the end of its life, be returned to the production cycle and reformed into a new product. The fact that all products are of a single colour and material and require no disassembly makes remanufacture especially easy, maximising material value and further extending the carbon lifecycle. Each product will be packaged with details of drop-off locations for the user to return it to the production cycle at the end of its life, thus creating a closed-loop production cycle. Alternatively, bFRIENDS products can alternatively be disposed of as part of normal household recycling.

“The launch of bFRIENDS is exciting new territory for us, and makes Bene one of the very first furniture brands to offer a 3D-printed accessory line. Pearson Lloyd’s design brilliantly demonstrates their capacity to balance form and function, and responds honestly and elegantly to both the material and the process of 3D printing. The circular manufacturing model being pioneered by companies such as Batch.Works offers real hope for the sustainable future of design and production – and this collection is proof that it works. bFRIENDS is only the beginning.”

– Michael Fried, Bene

Bringing together Bene’s resources as an international leader in workplace innovation, Pearson Lloyd’s design vision and user experience expertise, Batch.Works’ forward-thinking circular production model and material understanding, bFRIENDS elegantly demonstrates the viability – indeed, the necessity – of circular-design models as a response to climate emergency.



bFRIENDS’ circular production model offers hope for the future of sustainable design and manufacturing. Photography by Alex Sarginson.

The launch collection

The entire product portfolio will be available at Bene from November 11th. Five selected bFRIENDS products will be available at the bFRIENDS webshop: two pen pots of different sizes, a pen tray, an accessories tray and a device stand/organiser. Prices range from €15 – €59.

Visit bfriends.shop to view the collection and order.

Notes to editors

For more information on bFRIENDS, product images and interviews with Bene or Pearson Lloyd, please contact Rupert Evans-Harding at rupert@zetteler.co.uk.

Bene

A specialist in the design and furnishing of office and working environments, Bene defines the office as a living space, and its concepts, products and services turn this philosophy into a reality. The Bene Group is a globally active company with its head office and production facilities in Waidhofen an der Ybbs, Austria. A significant market player in Europe, Bene stands for innovative concepts, inspiring offices and high-quality design, and develops and produces customised solutions for all company sizes – from one-person companies to SMEs and global corporations.

bene.com

instagram.com/beneoffice

Pearson Lloyd

Founded in East London in 1997 by Luke Pearson and Tom Lloyd, the design office Pearson Lloyd works with manufacturers, brands and public bodies to identify and build products, spaces and services that respond to the challenges of the day and enhance our experience of the world. Their philosophy of 'Making Design Work' emphasises the studio's passion for the act of making functional, beautiful and efficient solutions that serve equally the needs of their clients, their users and society.

pearsonlloyd.com

instagram.com/pearsonlloyd

Batch.Works

Founded in 2018, and based in a repurposed bus depot in Hackney, East London,, Batch.Works specialises in distributed manufacturing using 3D-print technologies to make consumer products from recycled and responsibly sourced materials. As well as manufacturing and selling stationery, lighting and homeware products from its own team of designers, Batch.Works partners with international designers and brands to find new ways of incorporating biodegradable and recycled materials into commercial production processes. By using the latest technology to make local design and manufacturing available globally, the company aims to upend conventional production models and pioneer a new way of making that is efficient, zero-waste and eco-friendly.

batch.works

[instagram.com/batch.works](https://www.instagram.com/batch.works)