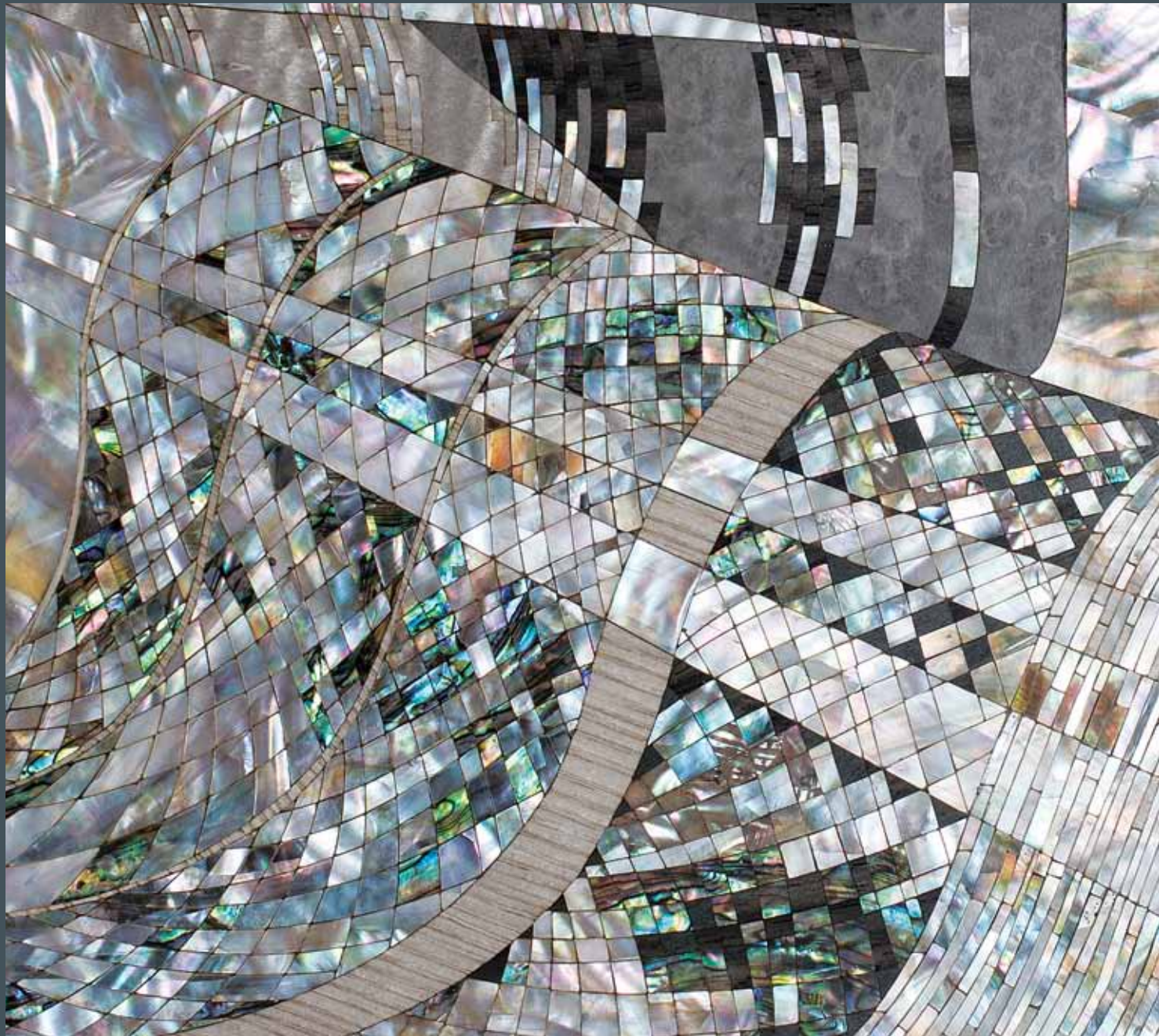


# Superyacht

INTERIOR DESIGN

EXTERIOR SPACE

CREATIVITY AND ARCHITECTURE



# DESIGN

## CASE STUDY

Espen Øino discusses his design philosophy and reveals his favourite project.

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New advanced materials will allow designers to push boundaries further than ever before.

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RUBELLI HAS ITS OWN MILL IN COMO, ALLOWING IT TO INNOVATE AND CREATE.



RUBELLI

as time consuming as one might assume. "We start with a hand sketch, then all the weaves are done on the computer and the design is automatically sent to the mill, they do a quality test and then off we go. Even on complicated projects, we are fairly fast." The fact that Rubelli has its own mill in Cucciago, Como, makes all the difference on projects like this. It gives the company an edge in general, enabling it complete flexibility on bespoke projects as well as allowing it to innovate, creating new weaves and blends. "Luxury is not a nice word any more but it is hard to avoid it," says Nicolò when asked what he thinks luxury means today. "At the heart of the word these days, luxury really means exclusivity—something that is bespoke, unique and custom. People want things that are made just for them." With this in mind, Rubelli quite often works on bespoke projects for high-

profile clients. For example, it was contracted by a prestigious Middle Eastern client for a significant number of custom designs for her residence. "In the past we have created fabrics with real gold threads running through them," says Nicolò. "We love working on projects like that or with clients like this Middle Eastern one. Fabrics are the soul of a building and whereas on hotel projects you need to fight for the pennies, big bespoke projects mean that you can do something special and help give an interior real soul." Nicolò argues that superyacht designers are one of the few groups to really understand the importance of textiles in creating this sense of soul. On typical projects Rubelli is brought in when the furniture has already been purchased, but on yachts fabrics are very much a part of the process from the start. "The process is so streamlined on yachts," he

says. "We liaise with the yard and the designer. There are not too many people involved. The designer has the final word and tends to be confident with what the *armatore*, owner, wants." Rubelli works a lot with Benetti and other Italian yards as you would expect, but also does work across the pond with the likes of Palmer Johnson for example. "The budgets also mean that we can supply some of our most special textiles to private owners," adds Nicolò. "Our hand-woven velvets, our top production fabric range costing thousands of dollars per metre, tends to be only requested for yachts now." ■

## HIDE AND SLEEK

In recent years, Rubelli has begun to align itself with other brands in order to enable it to reach new contemporary audiences without watering down its own historic aesthetic. One such company is Studioart, an Italian company that produces tiles for interiors using leather from its own tannery.

The brainchild of brother and sister Nadia and Gianfranco Dalle Mese, Studioart is deeply rooted in a long tradition of leather processing at their family tannery in Vicenza, Italy, founded in 1967. The tannery has been producing hides for high-end fashion houses for years but in 2006 Nadia, an architect by training, was intrigued by how the leather could be used in interiors.

"Leather always adds new dimensions to interior design," Nadia says. "But we wanted to take our understanding of leather to the next level and create something special for use in interiors." The result is a series of leather tile collections that can be used in a variety of spaces and ways.

The Leatherwall collections use different lines of the tannery's leathers to create a

strikingly contemporary take on surfaces. The possibilities are seemingly limitless, with myriad patterns, finishes and colours available in tiles that come in squares, rectangles, triangles or trapeziums in various sizes. The tiles can come padded or flat, enabling designers to create extremely tactile, textured statement walls. Studioart's latest additions to the collection are Star, tiles featuring a full grain, transparent leather in natural shades, and Outland, a series of tiles in a natural aniline leather that has been hand-buffed to create a worn look that Nadia promises will only get better with time. The company also offers a special range aimed at the hospitality sector called Active Leather, which has been researched to be harder-wearing yet still extremely tactile and soft.

"We are constantly experimenting and innovating," Nadia explains. "Leather is so versatile and using it on the walls can add an unexpected element to any space. It is contemporary without being something that will look dated in a couple years."

**"We wanted to take our understanding of leather to the next level and create something special for use in interiors."**

OUTLAND FROM THE LEATHERWALL COLLECTION

