

## **AUTOMATICA: Discover, Dispense, Design – Italgraniti and Simon Astridge unveil interactive tile vending machines at Clerkenwell Design Week 2025.**

B Corp certified Italgraniti, one of Italy's most innovative tile manufacturers, joins forces with London-based architect Simon Astridge to present AUTOMATICA, a joyful and thought-provoking installation for Clerkenwell Design Week (20–22 May 2025).

Three bespoke vending machines, clad in Italgraniti's porcelain tiles, will appear at key Clerkenwell locations – Farringdon Station, The Priory Church of St Bartholomew the Great, and Clerkenwell Green – offering designers instant access to Italgraniti tile samples and the opportunity to Discover, Dispense, Design.

The installation is inspired by Italgraniti's state-of-the-art automation at their Emilia Romagna-based factory – a place so vast, employees use bicycles to travel between coffee breaks and vending machines. AUTOMATICA brings this concept to life in London's streetscape, reframing the sample selection process as a sensory, hands-on encounter.

Visitors can redeem a tile sample with a token available from the Solus showroom, encouraging engagement with both the installation and the people behind it. The vending experience evokes a kind of tactile nostalgia, a flash of childhood delight reimaged for the design community.

"The main intention is for people and machines to come together to create something they couldn't do on their own," says Simon Astridge. "That's Automatica, and that's Italgraniti."

Astridge, known for architecture that activates all the senses, designed the vending machines to be haptically engaging as well as visually arresting. The use of Italgraniti tiles on the machines themselves bridges the digital and physical, underscoring a human-machine collaboration that reflects both Italgraniti's automation prowess and its B-Corp-certified commitment to sustainability and circular production.

"Despite the certifications and technical performances of our products, we knew we needed something quite different to make an impact in the London market," says Gabriele Masetti, Italgraniti's Commercial Sales Director. "AUTOMATICA offers a playful but purposeful way to connect with the design community."

### **Project Highlights:**

- Interactive sampling: Italgraniti tile samples vended instantly with a token from the Solus showroom.
- Three key locations during Clerkenwell Design Week: Farringdon Station, The Priory Church of St Bartholomew the Great, and Clerkenwell Green.

- Design-led automation: Inspired by Italgraniti's vertical automated warehouse and in-factory vending systems.
- Multi-sensory design: Machines clad in tiles and designed to encourage touch, curiosity, and response.
- A token of Italy: Experience Italian innovation through a moment of architectural joy and discovery.
- Film and events: A short film by Superbeam Agency documents the creative process, and further events will take place at the Solus showroom during CDW.

## **Collaboration and support**

Sam Frith, Creative Director of Solus, played a pivotal role in initiating and facilitating the project, bringing Simon Astridge together with Italgraniti and providing coordination, materials, and showroom support. Tiling specialists Arcitile enabled the unique cladding of the machines, overcoming challenges to adapt them for porcelain surfaces.

## **About Italgraniti**

Based near Modena in northern Italy, Italgraniti is a global leader in porcelain tile manufacture, combining design innovation with environmental responsibility. The company is B-Corp certified, adopting circular production principles and investing in the latest sustainable technologies across its €60 million upgraded facility.

## **About Simon Astridge**

Simon Astridge Architecture Workshop (SAAW) is a London-based studio celebrated for its tactile, atmospheric approach to design. SAAW creates buildings that make both people and planet feel good, choreographing space, light, and material with intentional care.

## **Contact**

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