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Students Awarded for Concrete Innovations

Students at the Royal College of Art have pushed the boundaries of preconception to prove that there is more to cement and concrete than a grey, utilitarian building material. The *Innovations in Concrete* awards, sponsored by the British Cement Association (BCA), challenged students to demonstrate versatility and innovation in the use of cement and concrete.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Mike Gilbert, Chief Executive of the British Cement Association, said: “The judges were very impressed by the range, inventiveness and overall quality of the entries. The BCA has sponsored this event for four years, and we hope the students will continue to use and develop their original and inspiring designs to make the physical environment we all share a more interesting place.”

The first prize was awarded to a concrete paving solution that allows people to help shape their public spaces. Slowly changing its appearance in reaction to wear, *Spacetime Slab* provides a visual and tactile record of pedestrian traffic. The designers, Francesca Maffei, Alastair Steele and Nick Turvey, believe that this responsiveness renders concrete less alienating, reduces vandalism, and that the inscribed history of use will improve city navigability for both sighted and visually impaired pedestrians.

Second prize winner Aneta Deleu Regel created a material based on a mixture of high alumina concrete and granite components, which becomes semi-translucent once fired. *Transformed with Light* is easy to form and good for large, flat surfaces, which makes it ideal for architectural detail, particularly interior and exterior wall panelling that reacts to light changes.

Two third prizes were awarded: Amanda Moore produced a number of small, curved tiles in open rubber moulds which have a feathered, almost fossilised wing detail on one side. These tiles can be locked together and cast full-size to form the walls of a cathedral-height outdoor structure or modern relic. Henry Hobson devised and produced a technique allowing the screen printing of cement, which

achieves flexibility, superfine image reproduction and colour matching. When combined with a light sensitive agent, the cement printing can reveal surprising patterns or information on concrete surfaces when subjected to suitable light sources.

Professor Sir Christopher Frayling, Rector of the Royal College of Art, commented: “Our partnership with the British Cement Association and Concrete Centre helps us to achieve our ambition to bring together creative ideas and commercial realities. This affiliation has evolved to include a concrete innovation workshop and support within the technical curriculum to develop fresh ideas and design solutions.”

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Photographs are available from the Press Office.

Further information:

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Notes to Editors:

1. The **British Cement Association (BCA)** is the trade and research organisation that represents the interests of the United Kingdom’s cement industry in its relations with Her Majesty’s Government, the European Union and relevant organisations in the United Kingdom. The members of the BCA (Buxton Lime Industries, Castle Cement, Cemex Cement UK and Lafarge Cement UK) are the major domestic manufacturers of Portland cement producing over 90% of the cement sold in the UK.

The cement industry has an annual turnover of £775 million and is a major supplier to the construction industry. It employs around 3,400 people directly with a further 15,000 jobs depending upon its operations. Website: www.cementindustry.org.uk

2. By providing a focal point for the entire UK concrete sector, **The Concrete Centre** aims to assist all those who design and construct in concrete whether they work for national or local government, client bodies, architectural practices, civil and structural engineering consultancies, main and specialist contractors or house builders. Website: www.concretecentre.com.

3. The **Royal College of Art** is the world’s only wholly postgraduate university of art and design, specialising in teaching and research and offering the degrees of MA, MPhil and PhD across the disciplines of fine art, applied art, design, communications and humanities. There are over 850 masters and doctoral students and more than a hundred professionals interacting with them – including scholars, leading art and design practitioners, along with specialists, advisors and distinguished visitors. Website: www.rca.ac.uk