



Up close with Dallas Mexon, Director at Concrete by Design

Dallas Mexon, Director of National Precast member Concrete by Design, was recently interviewed by National Precast's Communications Co-ordinator Kate Moore. Here he tells of how he got started and why his passion for Glass Reinforced Concrete (GRC) still burns strong.

KM: How did you get started in the industry?

DM: I started in the industry many years ago in civil engineering and specialising in hydraulics structures. After 30 odd years I was keen to get into something more creative. My early works were cast in-situ steel-reinforced formed pieces, such as the 9 meter long curved cantilever bench top that appears to rise out of the floor. As part of the Australia Street Warehouse Conversion Project in Camperdown NSW, it has won several international awards and was featured on the cover of The World's Best Interiors magazine.

KM: And how about GRC precast, how did you get into that?

DM: The early in-situ projects led me to investigate further the manufacturing options to cast off-site. What was really interesting and exciting to me was to be able to manufacture pieces that were more decorative and innovative. I could see the benefit of bringing work away from the busy construction site, as well as the quality and safety benefits from being in a purpose-built, controlled factory environment. We started with conventional concrete and went to GRC. GRC allows better installation time on commercial projects as we can produce it in our factory and deliver to site. It can even be started before the on-site fitout if required.

KM: What's your favourite project you have worked on?

DM: The best one would be a white decorative GRC curved wall with custom-made ridge capping, which serves as a functional yet stylish dividing wall between two penthouse suites in Pelican Street, Surry Hills.

KM: Why do you use GRC rather than steel reinforced precast concrete?

DM: We do both, actually. Our specialty is really artistic concrete. Off-site manufactured GRC is an ideal medium that is light weight and allows incredible attention to detail to achieve intricate results. While we started with GRC, we have moved into conventionally (steel) reinforced precast concrete and are now manufacturing landscaping elements such as furniture and statues. One of our recent projects are statue monuments to be placed inside of a synagogue. As well, we have manufactured some decorative chairs. We love the variety.



KM: You're still very passionate about what you do.

DM: What really drives me is the constant chance of something coming along that's just a little bit different or challenging, something interesting where some thought has gone into the design. It's a great achievement to create someone's vision that really makes a statement.

Award winnings pushing the limits of GRC

Concrete by Design is a Sydney based company with a long, proud history. Involved in projects around Australia and overseas, Concrete by Design has consulted with some of Australia's leading architects, designers and consulting companies. Completing award winning projects for construction companies such as Abigroup, Thiess, John Holland and Leighton, the company offers bespoke design, manufacture and installation services.

Concrete by Design has won a total of four international awards including:

- International Best Polished Concrete for 11 cast in-situ and GRC benchtops and polished concrete floors at Castlecrag NSW for Albion Design & Construct;
- AGDA Design Awards 2018 – Silver for polished concrete flooring and the GRC feature panels, wash basins and seats for Brewster Hjorth Architects, Coogee Beach Pavilion.

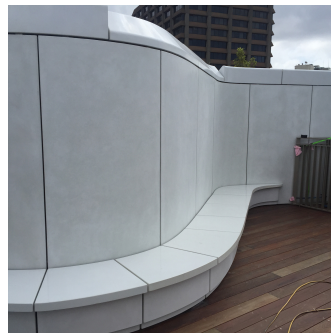
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