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# Alea's global voices



**Kieron**  
Heffernan



**Kay**  
Sargent



**Amy**  
Leigh Hufford



**Rawad**  
Traboulsi



**Brian**  
Thornton



**Mirto**  
Antonel



**John**  
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**Chrissy**  
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**Kieron**  
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**A special thanks to our contributors for this first volume of Alea's Visioni**

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# Welcome to our first volume of **Visioni**

We choose an Italian name for this magazine because we want to maintain the connection to our origins, to the land where we come from. On the other hand, the meaning of VISIONI fits the purpose behind this volume and the ones that will come.

VISIONI in Italian means to get inspired, to have a vision, a dream (Cit. "I Have a Dream" Martin Luther King Jr August 28, 1963).

Often inspirations come looking outside the box. Often the best creations come observing other environments, realities or forms of art.

In this magazine, we bring VISIONS and ideas from the design segment but not limited to it. We provide a closer look into Alea "think tank", into the latest developments and project solutions of our company. We share expertise and opinions of designers and professionals that belong to the design and furniture community located in different parts of the world.

We hope you will enjoy the journey, get inspired and share your VISION with us.

Aldo Comelli & Rino Carlot  
Founders and Owners of Alea SRL.



Aldo Comelli



Rino Carlot



**Inspiration +** Exploration of colour, shape, dimension, typology.

Here **we think** about how **Design** influences **the world we live in**, shapes our thoughts as we create comfortable surroundings.

The effects **design** has on **our lives**.





# Alea at Orgatec 2016

Earthy colours and tactile experience, these and many other surprises is what you find this year at Alea's stand for Orgatec. We are very excited to participate at this show since customers have the opportunity to attend at the launching of 4 new collections and to discover new features on existing products.

The first of our new collections is Crono, a sit-to-stand system engineered and 100% manufactured by Alea. It features a telescopic structure regulated



by an electrical main frame which is integrated into a support panel. This solution is unique to Alea and it allows to hide the mechanism from view. An ABS vertebra conceals the cables for clean wiring management and functional design.

As furniture system that appeals to different vertical markets and user types, Crono has limitless applications. Additional enhancements such as size, shape, material and colour, all combined help define the job function, role or level in the organization or simply support the way we work today.

Crono distinctive feature is the multiple occupancy, an arrangement of space in a sit-to-stand system with impromptu meeting points all of which can be part of the same furniture system. Crono also showcases healthy workspace environments and helps use space wisely.

The height adjustable structures have two types of sections: square or rectangular.

The telescopic structures are made of extruded aluminium painted in Alea range of eleven epoxy colours.

The desks with step 1 start at a height of 734 mm (28 7/8") above floor to reach a height of 1134 mm (44 5/8").

The desks in step 2 start at a minimum height of 650 mm (25 9/16") and - within a 600 mm (23 5/8") of height range - reach a height of 1250 mm (49 3/16"). The height adjustable functions are individual user controlled and always driven electrically by a pushbutton with or without display.



wood covers with minimal metal reveal. The tops are available in wood veneer, leather and Italian melamine.

Knife features both conference tables, freestanding desks and benching solutions. Accessories like screens and modesty panels are also available.

Our second new collection is Knife, the very latest in Alea's quintessential and robust product offerings. The table top features a soft rounded edge with a chamfered edge contour which alone brings a heightened sense of style and exquisite sophistication to this new product. The top surface is connected to the structure with a patented spring system that allows quick installation. Knife leg supports are elegant "half boomerang" shaped and sit below the table top just enough to highlight the mixed materials and various arrangements of colour options. The steel structure can be finished with all Alea epoxy finishes with the additional laser cut details or wrapped in





The third Alea new collection is Oasi, the new C-suite executive line blending prestigious design and high-value materials. The desk, the service unit and the credenza are produced with a structure which is made entirely of wood veneer: in addition to those finishes available in the current Alea range, at Orgatec 2016 will be introduced a new essence of “Heat treated Walnut”.

Legs and tops feature a 20 cm (7 7/8”) band - facing visitor side - with a ceramic coating, leather or wood same as the desk. Also the service unit and credenza tops are available in ceramic, leather or wood. The credenza may also have glass or wood shelves.

The whole composition uses 60 mm (2 5/16”) thick panels for almost all its components. The distinctive feature of the collection is the 45° edge, which can be seen on the front edge of the top and on the upper edges of the mobile service unit and credenza.

At Orgatec we present a version with all doors and drawers equipped with an electronic lock that can be controlled via mobile phone using an application or via remote control.

Drawers and hinged doors feature a push and pull system, with no visible handles.



For the tradeshow we present also Ibis, a product prototyped in 2014, now available with new solutions and finishes.

Ibis is designed for modern and functional workspaces and can be used for executive environment as well as modern workstations and meeting tables. The leg stops before the mid span and forms a 90° angle under the worksurface to give the structure additional strength. Large single or double uninterrupted worksurfaces cover the structural pedestals, which are available in different widths and come equipped with a hollow backspace that allows vertical cable management. Ibis features

also a structural storage unit available with or without metal feet. The version with elevated feet is made to host wiring under the bottom. At Orgatec 2016 Ibis presents new Italian melamine finishes: “Brown” and “Sand” with limestone pattern ●

**Orgatec 2016**

**Alea Office  
Hall 9  
Stand B050/C051**







***"Our past had interior designers and furniture specialists who devoted time and talent making the work place as convenient as possible. Everything was at our finger tips. We had efficiency experts telling us how to economize our movements so as not to walk unnecessarily. Today, it has all changed. We have become aware of how movement is directly related to our health. Designers and furniture manufacturers have responded. Design and furniture is now used in a way to encourage circulating, collaborating and most of all moving. This single contribution can determine the improved health of generations to come."***

***Dione Shears*** *Business Development Manager, ACI (Atlantic Corporate Interiors)*







**"We are one company and one group of professionals. We are passionate people that truly strive to help you create spaces with the perfect blend of beauty and function. We excel among our competitors for design and attention to details, quality and versatility of our materials, flexibility to adopt new designs. Welcome to Alea"**

## **Italian Melamine**

### **Wood grain finishes**

There are new colours in town. They are simply going to look great with all of our products established and new collections.

- 1. MM Dark Oak
- 2. MO Canaletto Walnut
- 3. MP Walnut
- 4. MY American Oak
- 5. MC Light Oak
- 6. ME Grey Oak





# A chat with Kieron Heffernan



Kieron Heffernan (32 y/o) works in Ovo Spaces since 2011. Now he is the Design Manager and he leads the Furniture Department. He was part of the winning team for Mix Interiors Award 2015 for Small to Medium Commercial project of the year.

## Let's talk about Ovo Spaces

With over 24 years experience, well-established within the Interior Design and fit-out industry, financially strong, Ovo Spaces is based in Sheffield - UK with clients and projects nationwide.



"We are a dynamic and extremely design-led organisation that works with a variety of commercial clients across many sectors, predominantly professional workspaces but including extensive projects in manufacturing, leisure, health and retail, provided directly to the end user. We offer a unique tailored approach to each of our

clients. Our capabilities are extensive including all aspects of interior design, space planning, full turnkey fit-out, refurbishment and furniture solutions. We are specialists in commercial Interior Design and bespoke interiors all handled by our in-house design team.

We listen, we evaluate how you use your space, what your current working practices are, understand how your departments need to collaborate. We also listen to what your business needs are and your growth plans and then we create conceptual plans and designs to ensure your new space is innovative and creative.

We provide space optimisation, 3D visualisations and renders, video walk through, ergonomics and efficiency, mood boards, digital and special finishing and specification to transform your workspace. All our designs are created using the latest BIM (Building Information Modelling) technology. Architectural Design and Build including feasibility studies, cost analysis, site and TOPO surveys, planning liaison, building regulations, consultation, conservation and sustainability studies."

## Which are the current trends to follow for an Interior Designer?

"Current trends in our world are very important, because they lead the conversation with the client and they inspire a better way to live the space. I would say there are 4 crucial points:

### Bringing the outside in (Biophilic Design)

The outside is having a serious effect on the inside. With some of the offices we work with don't have access to nature or even natural light we follow the biophilic design ethos. To allow the proposed scheme to have a bond with the people and nature



we have designed scheme which:

1) Have a visual connection with nature – (for example – introducing a living wall into a reception desk. Planters interspersed around the workplace. Reclaimed wood used for partitions etc;

2) Providing the presence of daylight – through eco-friendly LED daylight fittings;

3) Open plan office layout – allows the natural light rays to maximize their reach;

4) Sky ceilings – utilising luminous ceiling tiles, the illumination being reminiscent of daylight, which research shows, improves cognitive function and productivity;

5) Use of digital wall vinyl – displaying natural landscapes across the office provides a stress free environment.

## Encourage collaboration between departments

Providing a scheme which encourages interaction between departments – this is generally more of an issue for larger organisations.

For example recently we undertook a job for BOC Gases in the UK and there was very little

movement between departments and the majority of employees ate their lunch at the desk.

After a comprehensive consultancy process with the client we designed a space which incorporated various styles of adhoc meeting spaces (high and low level) and a lovely bright breakout space which celebrated the local countryside.

## Flexibility in the office

The office is an ever-changing landscape. Companies are always developing and evolving the way their business is run. Providing a scheme which is flexible and adaptable is a necessity in today's world. Collaboration pods, desking which is lightweight, furniture which shares components, hot desking means having things in place which offers the user innumerable combinations.

## Height adjustable desking

We are seeing an ever increasing requirement for height adjustable desks, this is not just a tick in the ergonomic box but offers a flexible and healthier approach to working, with studies claiming that sitting down for 8-10 hours per day can increase a multitude of health risks. Not only is standing up at work good for our health, but it can do wonders for our productivity too.





# Focus on the project: BOC

**Size:** 490 square meters

**Dealer:** Ovo Spaces

**Product:** Archimede, Atreo, Custom Made

**Location:** Barlborough

When Ovo Spaces had to develop this project, they started to work with BOC on a smaller one to turn a store cupboard into an informal meet space. It was their first opportunity to work with the blue chip company BOC and this put the Interior Design firm on their framework and agreed suppliers system. This store room was renamed the ideas room and featured a poseur height table with stools and brainstorming wall. Because meeting space is important.

**The pre-concept stage** included crucial points like windows to 3 elevations to celebrate the natural light, keep the corporate colours incorporating the concept of what they do, split the scheme into green/eco and gas and air, open plan office where



each department can work together, use of different types of informal meeting areas.

**Important areas - meeting spaces.** The existing meeting space was too small, so the need going forward was to add more meeting space. Ove Spaces' idea wasn't to just design rooms upon rooms of meeting areas. They wanted to welcome the collaboration era and encourage communication and creativity between departments, changing the mindset of the employees, not having lunch at desk but interacting with one another, relaxing, collaborating, creating. One of the aims was to correct the amount of meeting and working areas turning them into a more flexible solution for brainstorming, stand up meet, formal meeting with conferencing facilities ●



## A world of choices of standard finishes and colours.

"Based on volume, we are able to match custom finishes with Veneers or Italian Melamine."



From left to right: Francesco Bosa - Technical Department, Kocis Meneguzzi - Technical Department, Francesca Comelli - President Alea USA



# The rise of hospitality - Infused workplaces



Kay Sargent, in her 30 years of experience has worked with Fortune 500 companies on their global real estate strategies and designed workplaces of the future. ASID, IIDA, CID, LEED® AP Senior Principal and Director of Strategic Accounts - HOK

Technology has given us the ability to work anytime and anywhere, forever blurring the lines between work and home. But a desire for work-life balance, combined with those hazy lines, means many are seeking to find elements of home in the office. The result is a new hybrid of corporate, residential and hospitality space: “corpitality”.

Most of us gravitate toward human-centric spaces that have personality. We feel better, more conversational and at ease in workplaces we can relate to - spaces scaled to be lighter and flexible, casual and engaging, colourful and comfortable.

People also want to have authentic experiences and make genuine connections at work. Putting everyone into an open space filled with work stations does not automatically generate the collaboration required to drive innovation and productivity. Innovation is much more likely to occur when people trust each other, and that bond happens after they connect in meaningful ways. Many companies are looking to more casual workplace settings, or “corpitality” spaces to create environments that encourage interaction and an entrepreneurial spirit.

For HOK’s new Toronto office, the design team infused the space with warm and inviting breakout

areas that help employees feel at home. The design also creates a comfortable, hospitable environment for visiting clients.

We’re also living in the time where people are more connected globally than ever before. Not only are corporations looking to manage the real estate globally, but there has been a spike in the migration of people across borders. Travel-savvy staff are more aware of, and open to, the way things are done in other cultures and regions of the world. Hence, there is an increased desire to reflect that cultural diversity in our spaces today.

## Materiality, texture, colour and aesthetics all play roles in these customized “corpitality” settings



As workplace planners replace or enhance cubicle farms with a wide variety of spaces that give employees choices and opportunities to engage with each other, we’re seeing the introduction of more lounge furniture throughout the workspace—not just in reception area. Materiality, texture, colour and aesthetics all play roles in these customized “corpitality” settings. To achieve the new “corpitality” feel, clients are seeking more customised, unique, specialty pieces. Materiality, texture, color and a desire for aesthetics all play a role in creating successful environments today. These pieces add flair and can serve as focal points in a space and provide relief and emphasis in sharp contrast to the image many corporate spaces evoke - bland, repetitive row of workstations.

The open office space at Teach for America’s new headquarters in New York is equipped with a variety of comfortable, collaborative areas that serve the

daily needs of staff. Centrally located lounge spaces encourage interaction with visitors. To introduce a more relaxed feel, HOK sourced brightly coloured residential furniture designated for these cozy, communal areas.

Forward-thinking corporate real estate and facilities groups are seeking sophisticated, cultured approaches to creating these experiential environments. Beautifully crafted, stylized and culturally diverse pieces provide the aesthetic and boost to collaboration that they are seeking. Interweaving these signature elements into the workplace to evoke a “corpitality” feel in the environments where we spend most of our waking hours is a welcome relief ●







From left to right: Laura Nunzella - Sales Department, Dario Delle Grottaglie - EDP

"From acrylic, fabric, embossed and epoxy finishes, glass, leather, veneer to Italian melamine, Alea can make your space look inviting and a great place for people to work, visit and do business."

# An exciting time to be a designer



Amy Leigh Hufford, after graduating from Philadelphia University (Interior Design), started to work for NELSON's Philadelphia headquarters, working on both healthcare and corporate projects

**Awards:** 2016 IIDA Student of the Year, Philadelphia University's IIDA Design Excellence Award, 2nd place IIDA Design Bowl Competition.

I was at a restaurant a few weeks ago and I was, of course, eavesdropping on the couple talking loudly in the booth. "I swear, nobody knows how to build anything anymore. You remember craftsmen homes? Everything looks the same now." But do they have to? I found myself considering this for much longer than I expected to. I am still thinking about it. I thought to myself about complicated panel molding and trim, about meticulously detailed country homes, and about Michelangelo painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel for years, lying on his back. How many skilled millworkers are left, and how many young designers know anything about blueprints and drafting everything by hand?

Now, I am not suggesting we go back to these methods and ideas – time has moved forward, and we are onto more modern things. But sometimes I wonder whether or not it's a good thing that we have programs like Revit to do our projects for us, and what the limitations of these programs are. Do they make it more daunting to design a custom element? Perhaps they do, it's so easy to just import and move furniture around, to use detail lines to

fake the look we want in our drawings. For time and money's sake, shouldn't we just go with the buzzwords "huddle" and "collaboration" and throw in some fancy furniture with a high back and call it a day?



Only a decade ago were projects considered great if they looked nice, had a good colour palette, and the plan worked. Today, I find myself most drawn to projects with that aspect of craftsmanship. I love the look of projects that make you think "how long did it take them to detail that ceiling element?" because it makes them unique and, in my opinion, truly great. Designs that are rich in detail are so fascinating. We've all been in a space with so much to see, designed down to the smallest detail, where even the shelf supports are beautiful. They're spaces with an artist's touch we, as designers, are all artists, and it is so beautiful when we show that off.

At NeoCon this year, it became so apparent to me that the time of formulaic projects is slowly coming to an end. So many new changes are coming: contract furniture is so heavily influenced by the hospitality and residential sectors, colour schemes are getting broader, and spaces are being branded



in ways other than just signage. The showrooms were borderline cluttered with not only furniture, but accessories, art, and decorations as well. They were highly experiential, and each had its own unique style. Manufacturers are coming out with textiles in colours we haven't seen in years, like mustard, peach, and mint green. It's a good sign that we, as designers, are opening ourselves up to broader schemes and an even wider variety of furniture looks. It gives us more possibilities to create something special. It's a truly exciting time to be a designer; the opportunities to learn are so vast and unending, because the field is just getting bigger, and there is so much more to feel inspired by.

While our technology is excellent in expediting the design process, allowing us to crank out projects faster than ever before, it's easy for us to become lazy, using a formula every time. We can get caught up in value engineering and coordination with other design professionals, and of course, not every project is going to be an award-winner. It's about taking those great risks, those opportunities to design as best we can, for those awesome clients who want us to detail the space down to the core. It's about continuing to learn and never being completely satisfied with what we think we know.

If I learned anything from school, it's to never let the big picture overstep the importance of the finite details.

Instead of thinking big, maybe we should be thinking small ●



## International Interior Design Association

IIDA is the Commercial Interior Design Association with global reach and supports design professionals, manufacturers of interior design products, educators, students, design firms, and their clients through a network of 15,000+ Members across 58 countries. IIDA advocates for advancement in education, design excellence, legislation, leadership, accreditation, and community outreach to increase the value and understanding of Interior Design as a profession that enhances business value and positively impacts the health and well-being of people's lives every day.

IIDA has presented educational programs and panel discussions at international trade shows in Chicago, Las Vegas, Miami, Paris, Milan, Dubai, Singapore, and Bogota. In October, IIDA returns to Orgatec 2016 to present a program on Wednesday October 26th, titled: "People. Place. Performance: Defining Global Workplace Culture".

IIDA also celebrates excellence in interior design by presenting numerous international design competitions, including Global Excellence Awards, Best of Asia Pacific Design Awards and Best Interiors of Latin American and the Caribbean. To date, IIDA has recognized and showcased award winning projects in 43 countries.

IIDA is a global community dedicated to elevating the profession of Interior Design. Connect. Learn. Explore. [www.iida.org](http://www.iida.org) ●

I I D A  
INTERNATIONAL  
INTERIOR DESIGN  
ASSOCIATION





# Focus on the project: Bayer

**Dealer:** CFI furniture  
**Designer:** Gensler  
**Product:** Atlante  
**Location:** Whippany, New Jersey

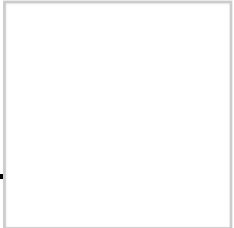
Bayer HealthCare opened their U.S. headquarters on a 94-acre campus in Whippany, New Jersey. The offices are housed in two spacious, environmentally friendly buildings, connected by a 5-story glass atrium. The 70000 square meter office space features Alea open plan workstations for approximately 2,400 employees.



The stations were designed by the New Jersey office of Gensler, the award-winning global design firm. Alea's product designers and engineers collaborated closely with them to achieve the desired result. Ergonomic properties, sophisticated wire management and sit-to-stand desks are some of the features of Alea products ●



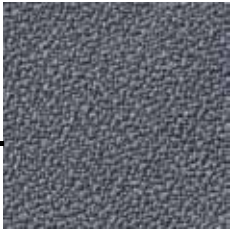
**Material:** Aluminium  
**Name:** Wedge aluminium pull



**Material:** Italian melamine  
**Colour:** White  
**Code:** MB



**Material:** Italian melamine  
**Colour:** American Oak  
**Code:** MY



**Material:** Fabric  
**Colour:** Grey  
**Code:** GG



# Meeting Rawad

## A snapshot from the Middle East



Rawad Traboulsi, 35 y/o, from Lebanon, is the co-founder and owner of Mobili Emirates Furniture in Abu Dhabi since 2009. He also established 2 showrooms, one in Abu Dhabi and one in Dubai.

Rawad is a very important figure for Alea, he is our main dealer for the Middle East region. We got the chance to have a chat with him and learn something more about his impressive career and his bond with Alea.

### How did you start collaborating with Alea?

I've been introduced to Alea from my cousin Elie Traboulsi who was already in the furniture business at that time, while we were visiting together a tradeshow in Dubai in 2010. I immediately had a nice feeling about the people in this company.

### What do you like about your collaboration with Alea?

As I said I really like the people and the human aspect of this relationship with the company, here you're not a number but there is a connection and a good feeling with people. Of course, I believe in the design and products Alea manufactures. The capability and flexibility this company has, is essential to deliver successful projects especially when we talk about big contract installations requiring high quality standards.

### How important is the tag "made in Italy" in an area like the Arab countries?

I think Italian design is always associated with latest trends, this occurs all around the world. When you think about Italy the first image is elegant design that leads in several branches, clothes, shoes, design, furniture, cars, architecture. Beyond the pure design I believe there is also another very important association which is the quality. So, in my experience I can say without any doubt that the tag "Made in Italy" has the best price, design to quality ratio in the globe.

### Let's do an identikit (typical/synthesis) of your typical client and type of project.

I work a lot with the public sector so for me it is very usual to furnish big spaces. We do that also taking in consideration cultural aspects in fine tuning and customizing our standard products.

### Which are the projects that have satisfied you more in your career?

The projects that excited me more are for sure ADCO, New Presidential Palace, Zayed University in Abu Dhabi and ADNOC HQ which is probably the most challenging. It has been realized between 2014 and 2015, and has been a project that has required a lot of energy and focus, but at the end, it gave back a great satisfaction. The main features have been the attention for design, the very big scale of the space we have furnished (we are talking of a total 2800 executive desks), the complexity of the specifications, the ergonomic and the certifications we provided.

### You are now a 35 y/o man with already a big experience behind you. What is the event in your life that makes you proud most?

I think the main experience that left a mark in my life is the period while I was attending Notre Dame University in Lebanon studying Business. During that period I had three jobs so I was working and studying at the same time as a lot of students do in NDU, this meant so much for me, it made me more mature and helped in shaping what I am now. It really built my personality. When I graduated in 2004, I knew I did all by myself, and I think this is one of the best feelings you can have in life.

# Focus on the project: ADNOC

**Dealer:** Mobili

**Product:** Custom Made

**Location:** Abu Dhabi

The new headquarters for Abu Dhabi National Oil Company symbolizes the company's importance in the development of the United Arab Emirates.

Located on one of Abu Dhabi's most prominent urban sites, the tower will create a new city landmark while articulating ADNOC's role as one of the world's most dynamic, influential petroleum companies. The proximity of the Emirates Palace Hotel adds to the site's exclusivity, with the tower serving as the primary view for VIPs and patrons at the Emirates Palace complex.





The structure's design maximizes views of the Arabian Gulf and takes advantage of the site's prime location through careful massing of the tower and placement of the surrounding courts, plazas and landscape.

HOK's design combines majestic spaces and high-quality materials. To maximize flexibility, offices are organized with a modular approach that is interchangeable and repeatable.

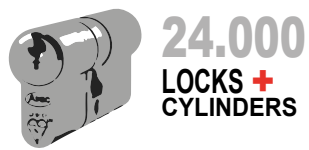
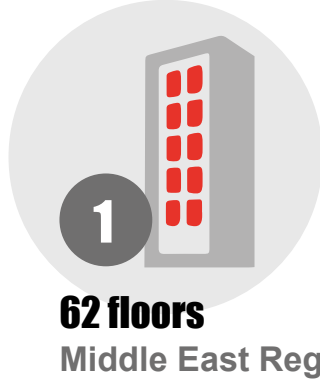
The tower's north-south orientation minimizes the ground-level footprint, leaving ample room for landscaped amenity space. A rectilinear podium extends from the base of the tower. A curvilinear auditorium adjacent to the tower acts as a contrasting sculptural element.

Extending south of the tower structure, the three-level rectangular podium houses employee service retail space, the service loading area, a heritage

museum, and the main lobby and circulation space. The roof of the rectangular podium extends south across the access road to connect to a new mosque. The building – whose total height is around 360 metres - consists of 62 floors where more than 3.000 employees are accomodated ●



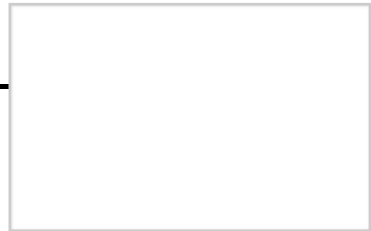
# ADNOC Parts & Pieces: THE PROJECT IN NUMBERS



AA American  
Walnut veneer



Reverse edge  
aluminium trim



Side cabinet  
Quartz top



Waterfall veneer  
arrangement  
folding detail





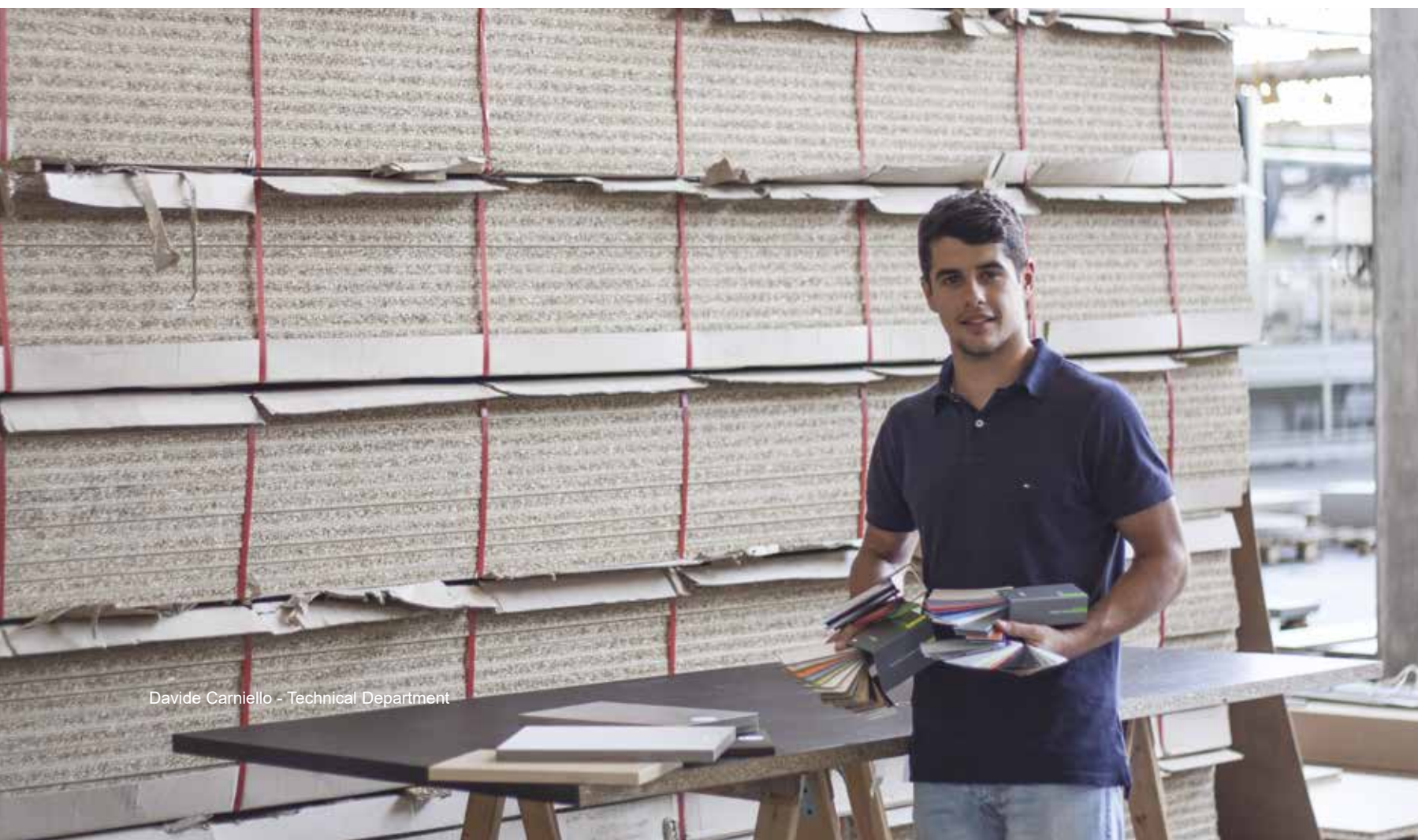
# What's CARB 2?

It starts with Carb 2 and then we work out.

Wood particle board to produce flat panels such as work surfaces (tops) and panels for cabinets and other parts of furniture.

All Alea core material is subject to CARB2 (with the exception of 6 cm Titano table tops).

The use of CARB2 particle board fulfills the requirements for LEED IEQ 4.5 Low-Emitting Materials - Systems Furniture and Seating and the requirements for ANSI/BIFMA X.7.1-2011 •



Davide Carniello - Technical Department

**"Who wants to sit at a desk and stare at a computer all day?  
Creating an office space is easy. Creating an office space that works for everyone is not."**

**Chrissy Thompson Designer**



"Design works for your  
organization, this is  
what we know.  
Give it a spin"





# The art and science of design



Brian Thornton's design studio in Las Vegas Nevada produces upper-end residential and hospitality projects. He is also the founder of designMINDS, a networking consortium to foster relationships among creative people.

After thirty-seven years in the design industry I am tasked with reflecting upon what I have personally experienced as a creative leader and professional industry servant. I say it like that because we as designers or architects must walk the fine line between art and science. Another aspect of our profession must also address the legality of what we create. Are our creations ultimately used by our end users legal? Is it safe and is it being properly used for the intent of the client who commissions the work. Does it responsibly function for the purpose intended?

It is ultimately our responsibility to create something that embraces the aesthetic, and yet operates and functions well under its intended use. One could go on ad infinitum about form follows function, the theorem popularly accredited to American architect Louis Sullivan. Sullivan was the employer of later iconic architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. In searching more for the true meaning, I learned that Sullivan later attributed the core idea to Marcus Vitruvius Pollio the Roman architect. Pollio's quote translates as: (a structure), "must be solid, useful, beautiful".

So as I embrace those words and look back on all of the buildings, environments, spaces and objects I have been fortunate enough to design, I believe I subliminally delivered by the law form follows function.

The art and science of design requires me to start where I am now in my career. I've worked in the public sector, the scholastic milieu, private specialty firms and in large corporate design houses before settling in on my own private practice. The learning I've gained is priceless. I have had great mentors that may not have espoused the "three F's" but by listening and emulating and expanding, the design process prevailed. I describe my career path as architect, educator, interior designer, and career industrial designer.

Having worked in hospitality design, I realized many passions for creation. The ego of hoteliers demands that their product be a stand alone, never repeated twice and unique to the world. Well, we all know that is not only untrue, but in most cases would bankrupt the wealthiest of hotel moguls. Yet, putting a new twist on that which is tried and tested is paramount as a designer. For me it requires careful scrutiny of scale, texture, colour, mass and form. In sort of "mid-career" I took on a position as design director for large entertainment company MGM Design Group in Las Vegas. There, I was not necessarily initiating all design but more honestly responding to associate hired designer's solutions to our projects. As a design judge and enforcer, it was my task to understand our brand (the law and science) and push design (the beauty and aesthetic). Then as the express function was met, we had a unique response to the design call.



In 2009, I was asked by Pfister bathroom fixture brand to develop a series of faucets. Determined to think of this as a maintenance and efficiency exercise I began sketching my designs for a custom faucet. I developed Tactus referring to the tactile touch aspect of the product. The one element I wanted to express subtly was a reveal where the metal met the deck...it would be recessed by a minimal amount so it appeared to float or hover a few millimeters. This was a forgiving trompe l'oeil gesture for the housekeeper to have one less task in the process. By recessing the point of contact, visually, there was less build up. Less build up meant that even in every day cleaning, the faucet would be cleaned with out a necessary daily scraping at its base. Does that mean it's that much more sanitary, not really. But the perception to the guest was indeed impressed upon a cursory look. Again a very small micro detail, but overall it was pretty and practical.

## "The science of the design process is ever evolving"



With the advent of sophisticated programs for generating three dimensional spaces, fly-throughs, surface modeling, myriad colour renditions, and ultimately, high tech lighting programs, we can now create photo realistic illustrations that fool many of our most seasoned and demanding clients. As a small firm, this design-approval process could have easily been extrapolated over a period of four months, and we we're now able to turn this around with a minimal team in about half that time.

With no immediate thoughts of slowing my pace, I hope that I can still inspire learn and teach even more about our profession. I have clearly benefitted by some of the best and brightest in the interior design profession ●





# Focus on the project: Engel & Volkers



**Dealer:** Sara Grech  
**Designer:** Model  
**Product:** Atreo, Archimede, Atlante, Italo, Custom Made  
**Location:** Malta

One of Alea's latest and most successful projects in Malta, has been made for Engel & Volkers Sara Grech Centre – in Mriehel suburb, La Valletta. Model projected the interior design of a four-

story building made up of open spaces, interior glass walls, private meeting rooms and other collaborative areas as well as private rooms. Contrasting colours and natural light are all key design elements for this location.

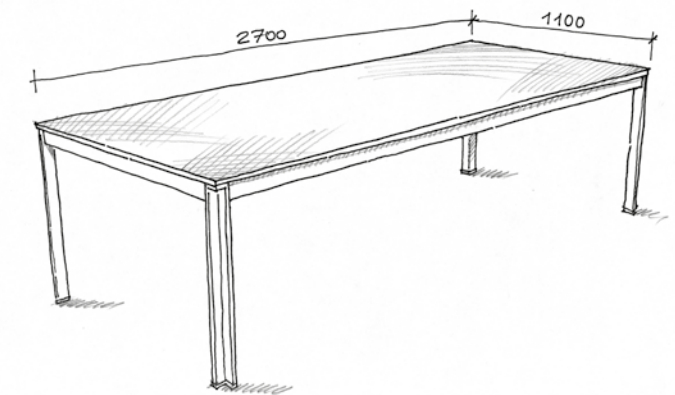
The interior landscape furniture is also the brainchild of Model, the local Architecture and Design firm. Model selected Alea Office for interiors based on clean lines, the Alea fit, finishes and equally as important, our ability to deliver and outfit the entire space. This very cornerstone of Alea's business model secured a successful project for all ●



Photography - Chris Sant Fournier



# Essential shapes identify the function



Mirto Antonel, architect and designer. He collaborates with Alea since 1998, putting his signature on several collections, of which Zefiro, furnishing system selected in the volume ADI INDEX 2003.

This principle for me is the basis for the new architecture. An architecture which is no longer looking at ostentation and complexity of the result as the goal to achieve, but provoking a new way to create, able to generate buildings and objects made of essential and flawless shapes designed to identify the function.

As for architecture, design has the same influence, because art has consequences that reflects onto its several shapes.

When I think about the inspiration that has always been next to me in so many years, one phrase comes in my mind: “Less is more”, from the genius Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

Human being does essentially three things: thinking, living emotions, acting. This explains why we are fascinated by objects, they unleash emotions. But industrial design goes beyond pure beauty, it is also meaning and to obtain it requires responsibility and skills, people, ideas and team work.

When I create a new design, the input I get can be provoked by client’s needs, structural issues, sometimes it develops from an apparently banal sketch. Either way the result has to cause an emotion.

What is relevant now compare to the past, is the opportunity to design with new tools and materials. The materials used to make objects are not only functional, they now need space for narration so design becomes the medium to make it happen ●

Shiny, linear and organic aluminium and steel.  
Steel building - Miami, Florida





# Challenge the expected, inspire smart design



John Campbell AIA, RIBA LEED AP is a Principal and Director of Workplace Strategies at Francis Cauffman, architecture, design and planning company in Philadelphia and NYC.

In his career, John Campbell has spoken about workplace strategy and design at CoreNet, IIDEX, Tradelines, Urban Land Institute, Worktech and other industry events and authored numerous articles on the subject.

Companies spend a significant amount of time and energy on business strategy with a predominant focus on customer interaction and process delivery. However, few invest the time to develop a 'space' strategy as part of the overall business strategy. In our world of rapid change and disruptive technologies, the old 'space' paradigms are no longer relevant. We are no longer tethered to a single desk, yet most companies still provide a desk for every individual even though the average office occupancy is less than 45% at any one time. It is not that the other 55% are not working, they have taken the initiative as professionals to choose an alternate space. When you consider that the largest cost for corporations is their employees, it is strange that most companies do not provide the workplace that optimizes the performance of their employees: designing the best spaces for the work being done. Every company is unique even across the same business sectors; processes maybe similar, but the company values and culture maybe completely different.

Our approach, before any plans are drawn, is to work with our clients to fully assess and understand their vision, values, culture, brand, processes, degree of accepted mobility and challenges they face. It involves a deep dive across their company at multiple levels from visioning sessions with leadership, surveys, observation and focus sessions with employees. Through this in-depth process, we challenge the expected to inspire a new 'workplace accommodation strategy' in alignment with the overall company business strategy.

For most companies, implementing the 'workplace accommodation strategy' involves significant employee engagement along the journey of transformation to one consisting of choice in work settings to accommodate different workstyles. They vary from individual focused work, to the different modes of collaboration, (informative, evaluative, generative), learning and social. Each setting caters for different social behaviors that require a detailed understanding of the appropriate furniture posture and ergonomics interfaced with technology associated with the particular setting. It is our experience that prototyping furniture solutions in working pilot projects are an essential part of the process especially where new and unfamiliar furniture solutions are being implemented.

Prototyping is important on two levels; it enables the designer and client to gain live feedback on all the little things, as we like to say, 'The devil is in the details' and equally important, employee input during a "test drive" builds invaluable engagement and ownership in the process; reinforcing buy-in for the final implementation.

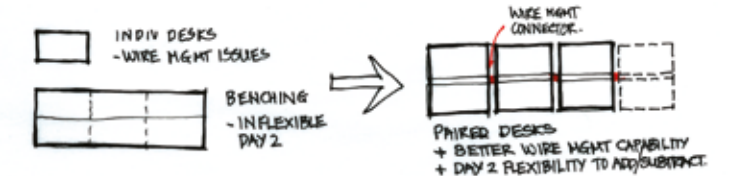
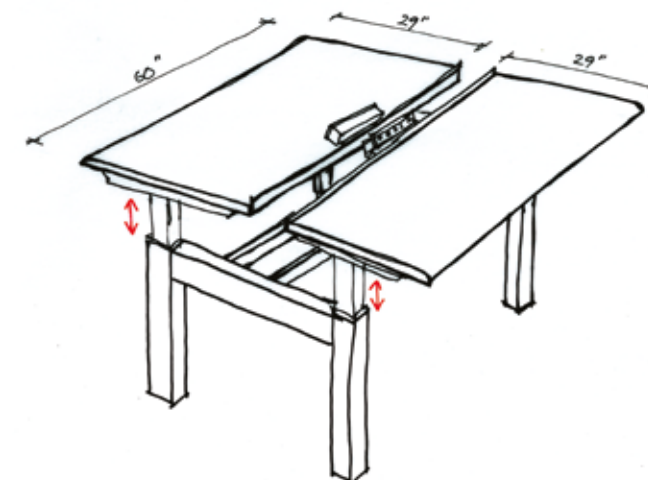
Workplace transformation is hard, introspective and ultimately very rewarding. Its foundation needs to be challenging and thoughtful. The companies that have engaged us to lead them in this journey are diverse in culture and industry. The result is a mixture of workplace settings tailored to their culture and brand accommodating their employee types and habits, whether resident or mobile in an environment where the architecture and furniture also embraces wellness through choice, strong ergonomics, natural light and exterior views. The results are overwhelmingly embraced.

While as a society we have recognized the need for work/life balance and its quality of life benefits, is it not only logical that we should 'challenge the expected and inspire smart design' in the workplace itself? ●

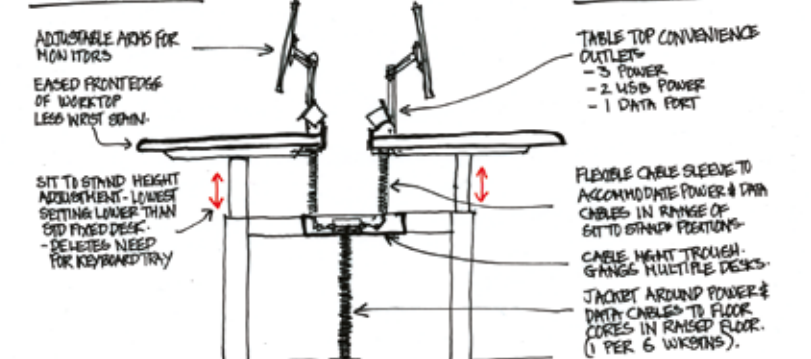


## WORKSTATIONS:

- CRITERIA:-GOOD ERGONOMICS
- UNASSIGNED SEATING- NEED TO BE EASY & INTUITIVE TO ADJUST.
  - PLUG & PLAY
  - GOOD WIRE MANAGEMENT
  - FLEXIBILITY DAY 2: TO ADD/SUBTRACT DESKS.



## ERGONOMICS





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**Communication + Marketing Department**