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The Rebel House: Ceramic façade by Agrob Buchtal

Dwelling house on four legs with animal-like exterior

From 14 April 2022, Almere in the Netherlands will be the venue for the International Horticultural Exhibition Floriade Expo 2022 for six months. The Rebel House immediately catches the eye of visitors there: from afar, it looks like an Imperial runner from the Star Wars saga. Directly in front of it, it looks like an animal evolution from Jurassic Park. This is mainly due to the striking façade in shimmering brown and copper tones. It is reminiscent of the scaly skin of a giant fossil and consists of triangular ceramic tiles from AGROB BUCHTAL. The artist Christine Jetten has refined them with a special glaze. Floriade runs until 9 October 2022 and is open daily from 10:00 to 19:00.

The Rebel House by architect Cas van der Zanden is a Tinyhouse that breaks conventions, especially through the collaboration with ceramic artist Christine Jetten: sustainable in material and special in format.

Custom-made ceramics with special glaze

The Rebel House gets its sustainable concept and special look from the special façade ceramics with fine dust glaze. The fine dust is captured from the city air and recycled. At first, the architect and the artist wanted to produce the prototypes themselves and then look for a producer. But in the end, Christine Jette preferred to rely on the expertise of Agrob Buchtal's architectural ceramics, with which she was familiar. "I design custom ceramic glazes for building façades and interiors that are not commercially available. Therefore, I know about the material quality and was immediately enthusiastic about the idea of using unglazed tiles from Agrob Buchtal for the design. The ceramics team made it happen within a very short time, it worked out great."

House and façade breath

Cross-laminated pine is the basis for the façade, floors and roof. Additional wood fibre boards with 8 mm joints serve as insulation. A 4 mm thick plaster layer of hydraulic lime is applied to the boards. This allows the house and façade to breathe. The applied ceramics are also breathable and provide additional protection against heat loss. The choice fell on 30 x 30 cm and 8 mm thick unglazed extruded stone tiles. The glaze developed by Christine Jetten was applied on top.

Tile cutting with water jet

One sticking point was the asymmetrical, acute-angled shape of the ceramic triangles or "animal scales". For the trimming, a special company used water jet technology with high pressure. Conventional methods would have created too much tension, causing the long, pointed triangles to break. About 60 m² of tiles were laid for the outer skin of the rebellious living animal. The pattern was complex and challenging for the tiler. Therefore, the architect projected the façade pattern onto the little house. This enabled The Rebel House to be transported to Almere in time for the opening of the Floriade.

A soft spot for ceramics

Christine Jetten has made an international name for herself with her special glazes. She prefers to work closely with architects and the ceramics industry. She wants to contribute to the fact that more and more architects and students use the durable and robust building material and include it in their designs from the very beginning.

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