

PRESS RELEASE

NEW OPENING OF THE “ICG RENAISSANCE HUB”, THE IRIS CERAMICA GROUP RESEARCH CENTRE

Inaugurated on Friday 21st June in Castellarano, in the presence of the Mayor of Castellarano, Giorgio Zanni and the Councillor for Economic Development and the Green Economy of the Emilia-Romagna Region, Vincenzo Colla. This unique, innovative and interdisciplinary R&D hub was created in partnership with the Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano

Castellarano, 21st June 2024. As part of the ICG LogiPack research project, funded by the Ministry for Business and Made in Italy with the Innovation Accords (2nd Call), comes the new **technological and scientific “ICG RenaisScience Hub”**, a tangible example of Iris Ceramica Group’s clear mission: **reengineering ceramics to improve the interaction between humans and the environment**. A pioneering and far-sighted space where science is applied to ceramics in order to develop unique projects and solutions. The innovation hub aims to **develop integrated solutions for and with ceramics, with a special focus on logistics and packaging systems**.

The hub will explore the new paradigms of Industry 5.0, the “collaborative industry”, representing a crucial step in a far-reaching, multiannual research project. The project, which in 2023 obtained funding from the Ministry for Made in Italy, was recognised for its high technological and unique design contents. The first field of research will focus on the traceability of ceramic slabs throughout their life cycle.

As an innovative research centre, access to the hub is reserved for a team of multidisciplinary experts from the company – particularly the engineers of Iris Ceramica Group solutions led by **Claudio Bizzaglia, Project Management & Engineering Director**, and a group of researchers from **Polifactory, Makerspace of the Politecnico di Milano**, coordinated by **Prof. Stefano Maffei, Laboratory Director and Deputy Rector for Social Innovation**. The hub will also receive the precious support of many local consulting companies, aiming to study and develop pioneering technological solutions supporting a fast technological transition to the paradigm 5.0. The multidisciplinary cooperation promoted and coordinated by the hub will facilitate the spread of the results of the innovations produced, to the advantage of the whole ceramics industry.

The very name of the **ICG RenaisScience Hub** embraces the intention to promote an authentic **ceramic renaissance** through scientific research. An approach to the material that goes beyond conventional standpoints underlies the idea of creating an innovative space devoted entirely to industrial experimental research. **Here, ceramics are treated as an intelligent material**, overcoming the concept of an inert matter or finished product and paving the way for previously unexplored technological developments and interpretations.

ICG RenaisScience Hub promotes a culture of innovation based on a hybrid system of know-how and practices applied to the ceramics world, aiming to create solutions that improve people’s quality of life. The space fosters cooperation between Iris Ceramica Group, research centres, businesses and professionals from different sectors and disciplines, including design, engineering and logistics.

The **800 sqm** hub is divided into **4 different research areas: Training & Workshop, 3D Printing/Digital & Electronic Design, Digital Manufacturing and Making, Factory Testing Lab.**

The opening ceremony on 21st June was attended by the **Mayor of Castellarano, Giorgio Zanni, the Councillor for Economic Development and the Green Economy of the Emilia-Romagna Region, Vincenzo Colla** alongside **Federica Minozzi, CEO of Iris Ceramica Group** and **Prof. Stefano Maffei** representing the **Design Department of the Politecnico di Milano.**

“The ever-distinctive soul of Iris Ceramica Group comes to the fore in a project extends the company’s research and development even further, covering every part of the production and logistics processes as well as the material,” Federica Minozzi explains. “This approach is part of our close collaboration with an Italian excellence like the Politecnico di Milano, pooling a precious synergy of skills and different points of view that will take ceramics beyond their limits and towards new meanings and new explorations, in an authentic Renaissance.”

“ICG RenaisScience Hub is a real revolution in the ceramics sector, redrawing the boundaries of innovation through the integration of digital, electronic and advanced production technologies,” explains Stefano Maffei, adding: “In this context, the close collaboration between the company and Academia is fundamental for fuelling innovation and, combining academic skills and industrial know-how, we have set the target of paving new ways for new technological applications, with unique interpretations of ceramic materials that push creative and functional limits even further to achieve increasingly ambitious results.”

Like ICG LogiPack, the **ICG RenaisScience Hub** project has become reality through a strategic medium-long term partnership coordinated by the **Fondazione Politecnico di Milano**, the Politecnico’s department that fosters local and business competitive performance through innovation projects.

Notes:

Iris Ceramica Group

Sustainability, innovation and excellent quality for pioneering technical ceramic slabs and surfaces: Iris Ceramica Group is a world benchmark in the design and development of high-end natural ceramic materials for innovative solutions and architecture, design and furnishing projects. With over 60 years of business experience, the Group works in over one hundred countries, with a very clear vocation: to re-engineer ceramics to improve the interaction between people and the environment they live in thanks to this natural material, one of the most noble and high-performing in the world. Iris Ceramica Group, which has around 1500 employees worldwide, has its headquarters in Fiorano Modenese, and production sites in Italy, between the provinces of Modena and Reggio Emilia, in addition to two production sites abroad, in Germany and the United States. The Group works in the high-end market with different historical brands, recognised as some of the most important players on the international scene. Among the most prestigious in the design and architecture field: Ariostea, Fiandre Architectural Surfaces, FMG - Fabbrica Marmi e Graniti, Iris Ceramica, Porcelaingres, SapienStone and Stonepeak Ceramics.

Design Department - Politecnico di Milano



Italy's main scientific research centre in the design field. Founded in 2002, it has given an institutional grounding to the long-standing design development works of the Politecnico di Milano, and many of its students and professors have become key figures in the construction of a design culture.

The Department places design at the service of contemporary challenges, enhancing its potential as an agent of change through new development paradigms focusing on innovation and environmental, social and cultural sustainability. According to the QS World University Rankings, Politecnico di Milano ranks seventh worldwide and first in Italy in the "Art & Design" area, confirming its scientific and cultural leadership in the academic design field, as well as its role in steering and dialoguing with the international socio-economic system.

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