



Ceramics of Italy

**CERAMICS OF ITALY ANNOUNCES WINNER OF THE EXHIBIT DESIGN CHALLENGE**  
***Competition to Design a 3,000sf Italian Tile Exhibit for Coverings 2012***

**(New York – October 2011)** Every year at Coverings – the premiere tile and stone show in the U.S. – attendees flock to the Italian pavilion as the center of hospitality on the show floor. In a new twist this year, the 3,000 square foot pavilion will be transformed into a striking topography-inspired piazza, as envisioned by **e+i studio**. The NYC-based architecture and design firm was selected as the official winner of the **Ceramics of Italy Exhibit Design Challenge** and will design the next Ceramics of Italy pavilion at the fair in April.

Sponsored by Confindustria Ceramica, the Association of Italian Ceramics, and hosted by Architizer, a dynamic online community of architects, the **Ceramics of Italy Exhibit Design Challenge** called on architects from around the world to submit their designs for a 3,000 square foot pavilion to be built at Coverings this spring. Given relatively free artistic reign and a reasonable budget, entrants were asked to incorporate a restaurant and café, space for an information desk and re-usable components to reflect the Italian tile industry's commitment to sustainability. Over 80 architecture firms signed on for the challenge. Proposals were reviewed by representatives of Confindustria Ceramica, Architizer, and an advisory committee of previous exhibit architects including Bernard Tschumi, Laurinda Spear, and Michael P. Johnson.

After much deliberation, **Eva Perez de Vega** and **Ian Gordon**, founders of the dynamic architecture and design practice **e+i studio**, were chosen as the overall winners of the competition for their inventive "**Piazza Ceramica**" design. Based on the idea of an Italian piazza, their proposed design features a large open gathering space with gradual steps reminiscent of a piazza church. According to e+i studio, the topographic mounds can be recreated into many different piazza-like configurations. They will be awarded a \$10,000 design fee and \$15,000 project management fee to oversee fabrication and installation of the pavilion.

As stated by Vittorio Borelli, Vice President of Promotional Activities at Confindustria Ceramica, "We are so pleased with the level of creativity and design excellence generated from all over the globe. It's a pity we could not build them all!"

Michael P. Johnson, principal of Michael P. Johnson Studio and an advisor for the competition said, "The proposal by e+i studio is a clever concept of carving out the functional requirements of the project. A landscape of tile-clad topography 'steps' will successfully draw attention to the booth while the plaza located in the valley between the hills will create a rich experience."

Laurinda Spear, founding principal of Arquitectonica and also an advisor, adds, "Piazza Ceramica' is unique for the way it utilizes the edges of the pavilion. The two corners that have been 'lifted' off the ground provide quick access to the cafés along the corridor, while the embracing central gathering space is reminiscent of a valley within the pavilion."

**Tony Leung**, an architect based in Hong Kong, was also recognized as a runner-up and will be awarded \$1,500 for his undulating exhibit landscape, "**Ceramics Carpet**."

Ceramics of Italy is now working with the design team at e+i studio to finalize the plans for the pavilion. It will be on view at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida from April 17-20, 2012 during Coverings.

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Ceramics of Italy is the trademark for Italian manufacturers of ceramic tiles, sanitaryware and tableware, that are members of Confindustria Ceramica. For more information on the ceramic tile sector, visit the gateway [www.italiantiles.com](http://www.italiantiles.com) with links to our three key industry sites: [www.laceramicaitaliana.it](http://www.laceramicaitaliana.it) (the official website of Confindustria Ceramica), [www.italytile.com](http://www.italytile.com) (the official website for the Ceramic Tile Department of the Italian Trade Commission) and [www.tilecompetition.com](http://www.tilecompetition.com) (a digital guide to the Ceramics of Italy Design Competition). For instant updates on Ceramics of Italy, visit [www.facebook.com/CeramicTilesOfItaly](https://www.facebook.com/CeramicTilesOfItaly) or <http://twitter.com/tilesofitaly>.

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