

Bene expands Red Dot-winning circular-design accessories collection bFRIENDS, designed by Pearson Lloyd – just in time for Christmas

New, affordable, 100% recycled products point towards a sustainable, 3D-printed future



The colourful accessories in the bFRIENDS collection serve a huge variety of functions, while sharing a common design language inspired by the additive nature of 3D printing. Photography by Bene GmbH | Alex Sarginson.

Leading international workspace furniture brand Bene reveals the latest additions to bFRIENDS, the 3D-printed product range, designed by Pearson Lloyd.

First launched in November 2021, bFRIENDS represents an important demonstration of the commercial viability of 3D-printing in the manufacture of mass-appeal consumer products, and an important step forward in the large-scale adoption of circular-production models. Using 100% recycled – and recyclable – post-consumer bioplastics from food packaging, manufacturer Batch.Works printed an initial

collection of 21 products in 10 colours. The collection's versatility and dedication to sustainability earned it a Red Dot award in 2022.

Now, Pearson Lloyd has introduced 12 new bFRIENDS designs in partnership with Bene, extending the collection from desktop accessories such as trays, hooks and phone stands to include more decorative and domestic products – including vases, plant pots, bowls, coin banks, cable tidies, and even a family of ornamental animals.

In addition, the colour palette of the bFRIENDS collection has been expanded to include three new engaging and playful hues: pearl, raspberry and soft blue.

"We had a great response to the original launch of bFRIENDS last year, and all of us – Pearson Lloyd, Bene and Batch.Works – were excited to push the collaboration further. We realised that we only just scratched the surface of what is possible in the first collection, and identified a variety of new tabletop functions that could be fulfilled beautifully with bFRIENDS – as well as more playful applications, such as the animals."

– Tom Lloyd, Pearson Lloyd

Playful, process-derived design language



New additions include three decorative animal families, introducing a fresh note of playfulness to the bFRIENDS collection. Photography by Bene GmbH | Alex Sarginson.

The bFRIENDS collection combines function-led design with an endearing organic appearance. This is due to the way that Pearson Lloyd have leaned into the additive nature of the 3D printing process, so the products clearly tell the story of their making. Printed products are built up layer by layer in a continuous line of bioplastic, rather than, say, cut away from a larger material block or injection-moulded. Pearson Lloyd's designs consciously reflect this process, following the logic of the single unbroken line to determine the formal language that unites the collection.



3D printing technology allows for a wide range of colours to be quickly and easily introduced, allowing for an expanded bFRIENDS palette, now including pearl, raspberry and soft blue. Photography by Bene GmbH | Alex Sarginson.

The process of printing in layers leaves a tactile horizontal ridging on the vertical surfaces – a key design feature, emphasised by Pearson Lloyd's conscious choice to use a larger nozzle on the printer. This also makes the products stronger and more durable, thus extending their longevity.

Innovations in method and material

Several of the new products presented Pearson Lloyd with new design challenges, such as requiring them to modify design details to ensure the plant pots would be watertight – offering an insight into still more potential new applications for the technology. For the vases, which comprise glass vessels held in place with

configurable printed-plastic brackets, Pearson Lloyd had to consider the interaction of two materials and implications the respective tolerances demanded – a first for bFRIENDS, previously a mono-material collection.

For designers such as Pearson Lloyd, one of the principal advantages of 3D-printing is that it facilitates experimentation, iterative design processes and rapid prototyping, by allowing makers to try new things with little investment and minimal lead times. This means that Pearson Lloyd could push the boundaries of the material, explore new product functions and play with different colours. In addition, the process is closed-loop – plastic can simply be melted down and reformed, so such experimentation is waste-free and resource-light.

“3D-print technology is moving very fast – even since the first launch of bFRIENDS, there’ve been significant leaps forward. The quality of the filament is improving and the speed and quality of the printing is much better due to new hardware developments. This is great news for us, as it both speeds up the design process and minimises waste, which allows us to be bolder, nimbler and more experimental, and great news for the industry as a whole, as it means that fully sustainable, carbon-minimal circular production is growing ever closer to becoming a global commercial reality.”

– Luke Pearson, Pearson Lloyd



The new bFRIENDS vases introduce glass into the collection for the first time, creating a versatile modular display system for plants and flowers.
Photography by Bene GmbH | Alex Sarginson.

The future of making

The manufacturer of bFRIENDS, Batch.Works is a London-based start-up specialising in circular manufacturing using 3D-printing. Their raw material is recycled PLA (polylactic acid), a bioplastic, sourced from Reflow in the Netherlands, who recycle materials used in products such as food packaging into 3D printer filament.

PLA is 100% recyclable, so any bFRIENDS product can, at the end of its life, be returned to the production cycle and reformed into a new product. The fact that each product is of a single colour and require little or no disassembly makes remanufacture especially easy, maximising material value and further extending the carbon lifecycle.



The new additions to bFRIENDS expand the collection's scope from desktop accessories to a range of other applications around the home and workplace. Photography by Bene GmbH | Alex Sarginson.

Because PLA is a non-oil-based bioplastic derived from cornstarch, no fossil fuels are involved at any stage of production. This, combined with the fact that Batch.Works' print facilities are wind-powered, means that production is energy-

efficient, and ensures that carbon emissions during production are kept close to zero.

bFRIENDS therefore diverts a local waste stream, requires no tools in production, generates no waste itself, and manufactures on demand, minimising any need for storage or warehousing.

With no need for centralised global production, bFRIENDS products can be produced via a distributed network of local manufacturing hubs, cutting shipping distances for both raw material and finished product, and significantly shortening supply chains and lead times.

The new products

2022 additions to the bFRIENDS collection are:

- **Stand XL** – for personal items and stationery, with ridges large enough to hold a laptop
- **Trio Pot** – for storing small items such as; pins, magnets and personal effects including jewellery. Its central pinched form allows for easy pick-up, accommodating a thumb and two fingers for comfort/secure handling
- **Desk Pots** – a flexible storage system including small cups that can be individually removed and reassembled.. Desk Pots can be combined with bFRIENDS Plant Pots to create lively landscapes on the table or on the shelf
- **Coin Bank** – an interpretation of the classic piggy bank
- **Coin Collector** – for organising small change, sorted by size
- **Cable Box** – a practical and decorative way to store and secure wires
- **Tidy Box** – for small everyday items such as business cards
- **Tilted Set** – a combination of a tray and a pot with a striking surface design
- **Pizza Clip** – for arranging photos or postcards
- **Plant Pots** – a flexible planter system, ideal for housing small plants in the office or home

- **Vases** – an ingenious and reconfigurable bracket system holding glass vases in place and allowing for countless combinations
- **Decorative Collections** – Three playful animal families: Wildlife (giraffe, elephant, crocodile, hippo, and bird); Aquatic (penguin, shark, whale, seal, and fish); and The Town Musicians (a tribute to the Musicians of Bremen fairy tale, comprising a stackable donkey, dog, cat and rooster).

All of the above, as well as the original collection of bFRIENDS desk accessories, are available to order at bfriends.shop and bene.com/bfriends.

For more information on bFRIENDS, product images and interviews with Bene, Batch Works or Pearson Lloyd, please contact pearsonlloyd@zetteler.co.uk.

Notes to editors

Bene

A specialist in the design and furnishing of office and working environments, Bene defines the office as a living space, and its concepts, products and services turn this philosophy into a reality. The Bene Group is a globally active company with its head office and production facilities in Waidhofen an der Ybbs, Austria. A significant market player in Europe, Bene stands for innovative concepts, inspiring offices and high-quality design, and develops and produces customised solutions for all company sizes – from one-person companies to SMEs and global corporations.

bene.com

instagram.com/beneoffice

Pearson Lloyd

For over a quarter-century, Pearson Lloyd has designed functional, beautiful and efficient systems that serve the needs of clients, users and society at large. Operating across multiple sectors, from healthcare to transport and workspace to architecture, the studio has produced an enormously varied body of work, navigating the rapidly evolving design landscape with drive and innovation. Today, Pearson Lloyd is one of London's most admired and accomplished studios, with a proven record of preempting changing social and workplace behaviours, embracing innovations in materials and manufacturing, navigating trends in a rapidly transforming world, and helping its clients do the same.

pearsonlloyd.com

instagram.com/pearsonlloyd

Batch.Works

Founded in 2018, and based in a repurposed bus depot in Hackney, East London,, Batch.Works specialises in distributed circular manufacturing using 3D-print technologies to make consumer products from recycled and responsibly sourced materials. Batch.Works partners with international brands to find new ways of incorporating biodegradable and recycled materials into commercial production processes. By using the latest technology to make local design and manufacturing available globally, the company aims to upend conventional production models and pioneer a new way of making that is efficient, zero-waste and eco-friendly.

batch.works

instagram.com/batch.works