

SA architect Handre de la Rey's concrete sunglasses launch to market

Concrete sunglasses have for the first time been made available for commercial retail. The designer behind the range is South African architect Handre de la Rey, who was named the [2017 PPC Imaginarium Awards](#) Industrial Design Category Winner for the eyewear, titled CS Project.



He has since launched the design, along with his studio 20 Eight, for commercial retail, making it the world's first pair of concrete sunglasses available to the public for purchase. Although other examples of concrete sunglasses exist, from studios such as XYZ Integrated Architecture and artists such as the UK's Daniel Sinsel, this is the first pair that has successfully been brought to the market.

CS Project has gained recognition due to being showcased at a number of prestigious galleries and events throughout the year as part of PPC Imaginarium's travelling nationwide exhibition. The competition strives to assist emerging artists and designers in launching their careers through mentorships, cash prizes to the value of R500,000 and public exposure. The South African art and design competition challenges emerging creatives to express their talents by incorporating Portland cement-based concrete as the primary medium in their respective industries.

CS Project inspiration

Through the CS Project, De La Rey set out to explore the possibility of creating a pair of ultra-thin sunglasses that push the perceived boundaries of cement. The inspiration came from the work of Japanese architect Tadao Ando, whose use of bold geometry, clean proportions and concrete informed the design process. Developed over a five-year period and starting with numerous conceptual sketches, CS Project was digitally realised through the use of 3D modelling and desktop prototyping. The modelled prototype was then optimised for 3D printing and moulding.



Production of the current sunglasses design is limited to 1,000 units, with each pair being handcrafted and individually numbered. To produce the sunglasses, conventional clay and resin moulding techniques are used, after which a 1mm-long silicon skin is added around the master rim to prevent breakages. Once the cement is properly cured, the components are sanded and sealed. To assemble the frame, two concrete rims are connected to a 3D-printed bridge and interchangeable temples. Crafted out of cement, stainless steel and 3D printed metal, the sunglasses weigh only 100 grams, making them lightweight and functional.

“Developing CS Project has been a challenge, albeit one that we have thoroughly enjoyed. We’re extremely happy with the finished product and are currently shipping our first batch of sunglasses to Canada. We’re also in the process of developing a Nylon version. Being announced as the Industrial Design Category Winner in the 2017 PPC Imaginarium Awards has given our design studio incredible exposure. CS Project has been on display at numerous esteemed galleries and has been featured widely in the media – we’re now receiving an influx of inquiries regarding our work. The awards pushed us to work hard on a design that is unique and out of our comfort zone,” says De La Rey.



2018 PPC Imaginarium Awards open for entries

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The concrete sunglasses are available in stone grey and black. They recently went on sale at the Guild, located at the Silo District at the V&A Waterfront in Cape Town, and can also be purchased on the [20 Eight website](#).

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