ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
USA

A Case Study

Milliken™

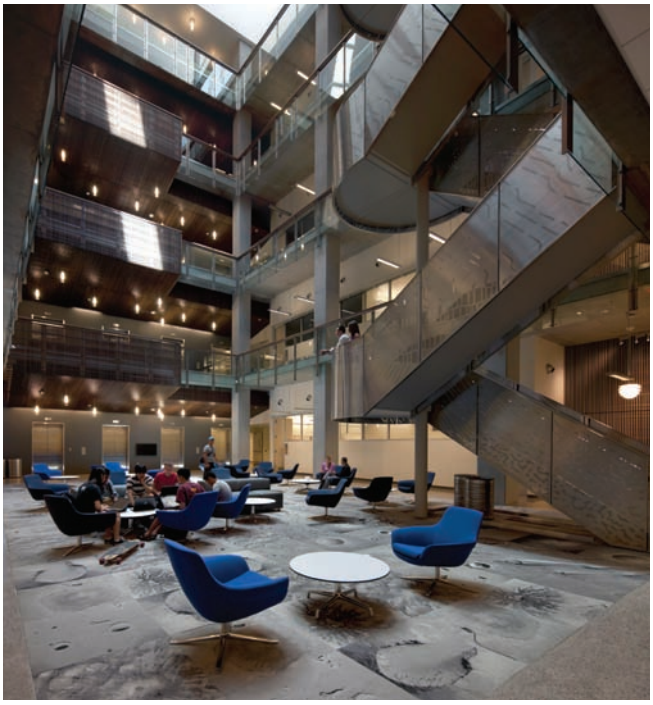
INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BUILDING, PHOENIX, ARIZONA, USA

Communal areas for socialising, Arizona State University's Interdisciplinary Science and Technology Building.

Unique carpet design takes University to the moon and back

Arizona State University's Interdisciplinary Science and Technology Building provides a home for the School of Earth & Space Exploration, sustaining vital research activities and housing astronomers, physicists and system engineers. It was designed to increase science and technological literacy among staff and students, as well as individuals from other disciplines at the Phoenix-based campus.

Designed by Ehrlich Architects, a leading Los Angeles design and architecture practice, the new building had a specific vision at the heart of its design. A dramatic atrium space created an inspiring and eye-catching environment which captured the building's purpose. To achieve this, a bespoke floor covering was required that could tie all of the levels together, while combining gallery space with interactive areas. Having previously worked with global textiles innovator Milliken on customised carpet installations, Ehrlich Architects turned to Milliken's designers for this new project.



"We wanted to offer those who inhabit the space an informal learning centre. In the end, it was a fun challenge to see how we could incorporate beautiful imagery into an environment that would be appreciated, understood and learned by many"

Kip Hodges, School of Earth & Space Exploration Director at Arizona State University

Design approach

"Since the atrium served as a focal point that could be viewed from all floors above, it really drove how we designed the ground floor," comments Patricia Rhee, AIA, associate at Ehrlich Architects. "It was helpful to have worked with the Milliken team before and have a history of customised projects. Our relationship supported collaborative activities, and they knew what we were looking for."

The floor space with the Science and Technology Building required a floor covering of approximately 16.5x10 metres. Carpet design and construction also needed to meet specific constraints, including withstanding high traffic levels, enabling small sections to be easily replaced and featuring a pattern that could be both visible from a distance and also enjoyed by visitors up close.

With a design vision of communicating a dedication to earth sciences and active space missions, Milliken's designers were tasked with incorporating 3D images of meteor impact craters taken from a Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter Camera into the carpet tiles. This theme aimed to bring realistic crater formations to life in the School of Earth & Space Exploration, creating an authentic lunar look by replicating the gradients, scale, shades and colours found in the high-resolution images. Conveying the accuracy captured in the photographs was crucial to achieving a dramatic and engaging space.

Kip Hodges, School of Earth & Space Exploration Director at Arizona State University, adds: "We wanted to offer those who inhabit the space an informal learning centre. In the end, it was a fun challenge to see how we could incorporate beautiful imagery into an environment that would be appreciated, understood and learned by many."

Using its large scale carpet tile combined with a variety of textured loop bases and high-resolution printing capabilities, Milliken perfectly captured the detail in the lunar images and designed a photo-realistic interpretation of crater formations on each tile. When placed together during installation, 20 separate tile designs combined to create a unique mosaic with striking imagery which met the high standards of the project.

Milliken integrated creative thinking and a technologically advanced approach to carpet tile design and construction with scientific subject matter, working closely with Ehrlich Architects and the university to create a unique and practical flooring solution. The 'Crater Carpet' design offers great presence within the building, while also inspiring discussions and thoughts among the visitors.

"We secured the project due to our design capabilities and technology," concludes Lisa Bailey, designer at Milliken. "To see the project come to life and provide a dramatic first impression that offers a backdrop for so many interactions and learning experiences was a great achievement, and really showcases what's possible with customised carpet tile. This project was an interesting example of creative problem-solving and, by working with a client team who knew exactly what they wanted, we could identify the product, base and technology that would provide the best solution. All with a fast turn around and stunning design-led result."

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