

Press release

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Tree of Reflections auctioned in support of children affected by HIV and AIDS

Foster + Partners has designed a state-of-the-art Christmas tree for the Designers Christmas Trees exhibition in Paris, which will be auctioned today to raise money for SOL EN SI, an organisation that assists children and families affected by HIV and AIDS. The Tree of Reflections will be one of over 40 original works on show by designers including Jean-Paul Gaultier, Paul Smith and Stella McCartney.

Foster + Partners approached the design very much like a building, considering the structure, scale, envelope, light and shadow to create a striking and innovative Christmas tree. The concept is derived from the conical form of a Christmas tree as it is instinctively drawn by children and the structure of a natural tree, with its layers of leaves and complex geometry. The colour was chosen to echo the red ribbons worn as a symbol of solidarity with people living with HIV and AIDS.

The surface of the cone is dissolved into an intricate leaf-like filigree. The main body of the tree is encapsulated in nanocrystalline Copper prior to Nickel and Silver plating to reflect light from a light source at its base through the triangulated openings. Breaking down the visual impact of the cone, and lending a sense of organic form and movement to the geometric construction, these layers of white-nylon leaves create a dynamic play of light and shadow on the trees surface, illuminating the surrounding space with shimmering patterns. The structure tapers as it rises, crowned with a bright crystal star.

The team has collaborated closely to research the design and production of the tree, developing new technologies specifically for the project. Pushing the boundaries of parametric modelling a three-dimensional computer modelling process that allows the designer to specify or capture the geometric relationships between design features the full-size tree is printed using rapid prototyping.

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