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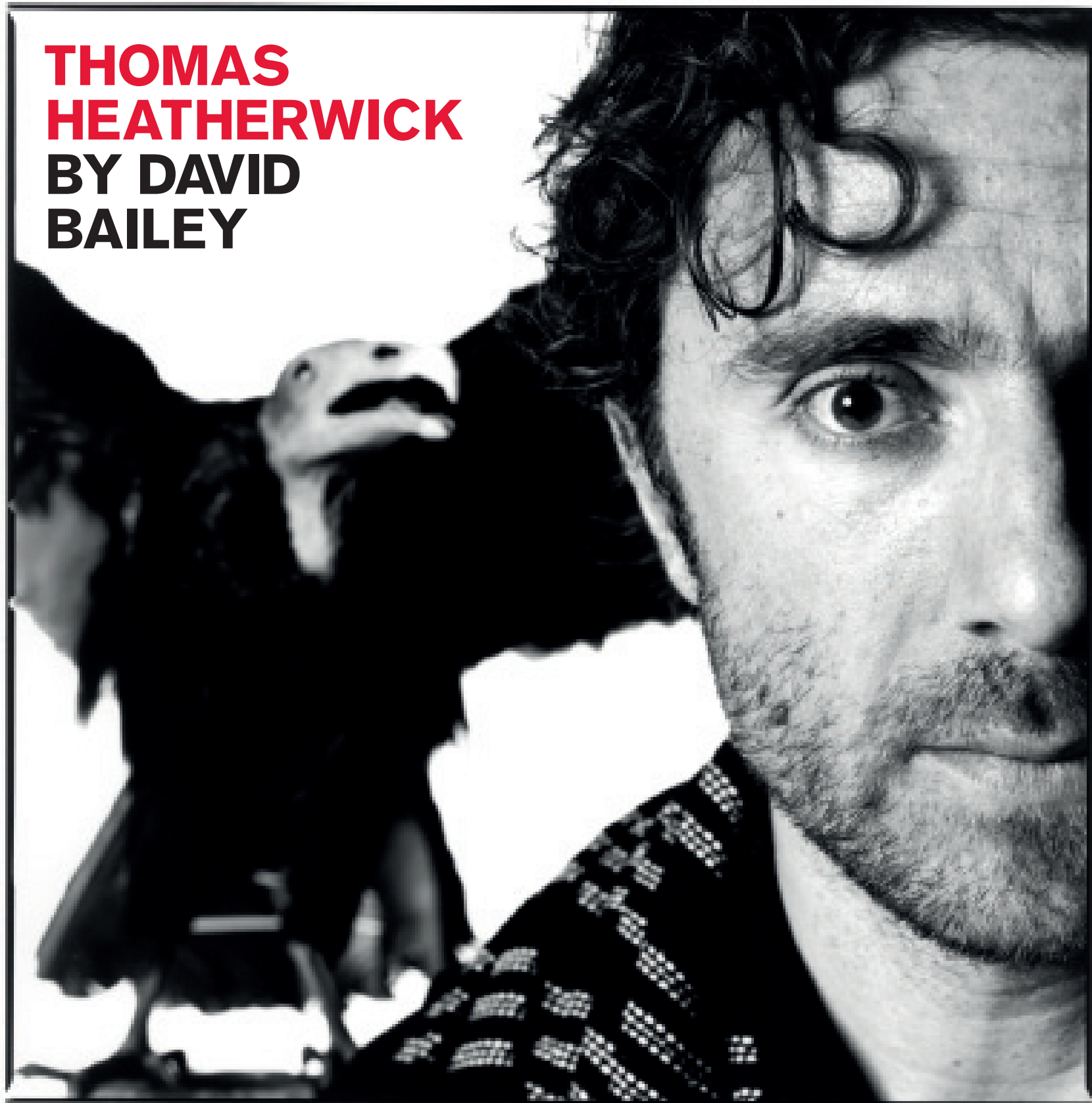
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THOMAS HEATHERWICK BY DAVID BAILEY



NEW

Bisazza Foundation for Design and Architecture



Italian mosaic producer Bisazza has spent 20 years amassing pieces by leading designers. Now it has a space to show them



A 6,000 sq m space for contemporary design and architecture will soon be opening its doors near Vicenza, Italy, and every piece in its permanent collection uses mosaics. Mosaic tiles may seem an odd material choice for designers, but tile manufacturer Bisazza's ample permanent collection boasts names such as Tord Boontje, Jaime Hayón, Ettore Sottsass, Studio Job, Patricia Urquiola, and Marcel Wanders. "Over the past 20 years we approached these designers because we appreciated his or her style," says Rossella Bisazza, vice-president of the Bisazza Foundation for Design and Architecture. "They saw mosaics as a challenge, and we have gotten some outstanding results."

The Bisazza family has been the leading producer of glass mosaics for over 50 years, but has always had an interest in architecture and design. Rossella says: "It was natural for us to begin collaborating with designers, because growing up I was always surrounded by design." Located in Montecchio Maggiore, the Foundation not only houses the family's

WORDS:
Kelly Pollard

eccentric permanent collection, but also has a space dedicated to hosting exhibitions and installations from prestigious foreign institutions.

Architect Carlo Dal Bianco was responsible for renovating the company's old production facility and creating a suitable exhibition space. "Some of the space has been adapted, but new spaces are built around the collection. Each room is dedicated to a single designer," says Rossella. A large-scale mosaic dresses the exterior, immediately reflecting the luxury brand, and giving a nod to what is housed within. Industrial elements remain in the interior, but the white walls, dark floors, and abundant natural light create a subtle backdrop for the colourful >

Above
Pixel Ballet,
Jaime Hayón,
2008



collection. The large-scale pieces are as varied as their designers and are unlike any other design collection in the world.

Architect John Pawson will create a site-specific piece for the foundation that will remain part of the collection. And the Design Museum's exhibition John Pawson: Plain Space will be the first travelling show at the foundation, opening when the building opens on 8 June. The ultra-minimal Pawson is sure to be a stark contrast to the flamboyant collection, but the Bisazza family says this is part of a commitment to work with the best architects and designers, regardless of style. "His passion for details and materials makes him a good fit for the Foundation," Rossella explains. "He was excited to work with mosaics for the first time."

The family believes that this collaboration with Pawson – and their previous collaborations – helps develop new uses for the tiles. "We think it's important to share our collection with the public because Italy does not have many institutions dedicated to design," Rossella says. "Design is something we are passionate about, and that we want to share this passion with Italy, and with the rest of the world." ❧

Above
Bisazza Motel,
Marcel
Wanders,
2004

Right
Il Cavaliere di
Dürer,
Alessandro
Mellini, 2001

