

# *Crafting bespoke identity through your dental clinic*

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As an architect who comes from a family of dentists, I like to think I've got an eye for beautiful and creative dental practice design. In this feature, we visit 3 innovative practices across the globe to see what makes them tick and what separates them from the rest of the crowd.

Ben Lee is a qualified architect based in London who runs Vita Architecture, an award winning architectural design practice that specialises in dental practice design.

On one of Sydney's high-end retail streets Pedra Silva Architects were invited to design a high-level state of the art dental clinic. The actual space and the brief provided by the client posed a few challenges that got us thinking. An aesthetic is something that may be mistaken as an additional

almost cosmetic layer to a design, but in our projects, the aesthetic is a clear response to problem solving.

In this particular case the client requested two receptions with two entrances that could function separately but without compromising the sense of spaciousness and it's relationship with people passing by. In the same space we also had a stubborn structural column that seemed to impose itself in all the attempts of trying to integrate it into the design. The solution? Answering the brief and magically making the column disappear!

To achieve this they created a sculptural wooden element that serves as a filter between the two reception areas.

In summary this is a space where complex procedures are performed and we tried to create a corresponding space that communicates this level of sophistication leaving a positive and memorable impression on the patients who used it.

**Figure 1:**

The public accesses the clinic via 2 entrances and receptions. The waiting areas are composed of two lounges, one for general dentistry and the other for dental implant practice.



**Design Team:** Pedra Silva Architects — [www.pedrasilva.com](http://www.pedrasilva.com)

Luis Pedra Silva

**Architects:** André Góis, Dina Castro, Hugo Ramos, Hugo Ferreira, Maria Rita Pais e Ricardo Sousa

**Project name:** About Smiles

**Client :** Dr. Christopher Ho

The public accesses the clinic from Archer Street, leading towards the appropriate reception desk and waiting area. The waiting areas are composed of two lounges, one for general dentistry and the other for dental implant practice.

The remaining space of the clinic is arranged around a central corridor that starts in the reception area that connects all the intricate parts of the dental clinic, from examination areas, surgeries, client areas and technical spaces. In the middle of this corridor you find a transparent central core made of glass allowing for natural light to penetrate the interior of the space.

At the far end of the clinic you find the main surgery where advanced oral procedures are performed. As a national reference in the dental arena, the client Dr Christopher Ho requested that this space be designed in a way that would allow for these complex procedures be seen by peers sharing the experience and knowledge. This was achieved by placing an observation room on a higher level with a large window towards the surgery and connected with a camera allowing for fellow surgeons to view procedures from close-up on a large screen.



**Figures 2 to 4:**

A sculptural wooden element serves as a filter between the two reception areas. This element serves a dual function: allowing for partial vision between spaces by separating them and at the same time making the concrete column vanish! Built from suspended wooden planks that start with narrow elements that then widen to engulf the existing column, this element was a response to a premise and became the predominant feature working as a space generator, influencing the ceiling and other elements.



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On the streets of Porto lies a unique and subtle dental surgery by Ren Ito+Ren Pepe Arquitetos. Contextually, the local facades are lined with traditional tiles which served as an inspiration for the clinic,, which has a concept of the typical geometric pattern of tile in the city.

The main challenge of the project was to apply the concept inspired by windmill form geometric tile pattern. This pattern, composed of triangles, was applied in the walls, furniture, and also in illumination and doors.

The triangle patterns on the wall of the clinic are made of three materials, plaster wall, PVC panel and typical Portuguese wool textile known as Burel. The Burel is applied in the wall with the same pattern, worked as absorbent of noise, odor and dust.

In the waiting room, the indirect illumination lamps are integrated in the windmill pattern on the wall. The benches in this room were also designed with triangle pattern, applied even to the stitches of the cushions or door handle of storage.



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**Figures 5 to 11:**

Internally, the tiled geometric is repeated throughout creating a consistent brand throughout the spaces.

A door with the same pattern screen separates the waiting room and the treatment room. Four of the five treatment spaces are separated by low partition walls and only one space is completely isolated for surgery with an X-Ray system. The low partition walls have illumination on top to avoid the direct radiation of the light to patients during treatments. The element of the ceiling is carefully designed to give visual comfort for the patients. The colors of the treatment chairs are different in each space for patients and dentist to identify with easily. The combination of the fixed furniture and movable furniture gives the flexible use of the treatment area.

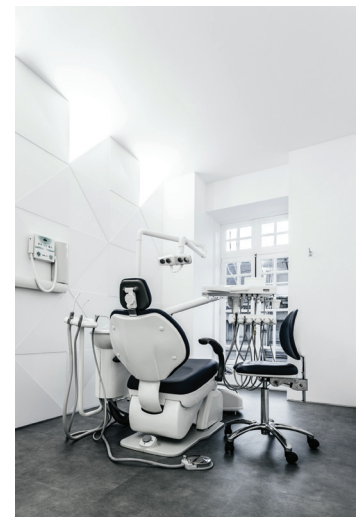
In addition to these rooms, there are a small office, a workshop, a locker room and bathrooms. Originally designed ORIGAMI series illuminations are installed in these rooms.



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**Designer:** Ren Ito + Ren Pepe Arquitetos

**Project coordinator:** Michela Piddiu

**Design Team:** João Ramos, Cátia Cunha, Marta Machado, Ricardo Leitão

**General Contractor:** Manuel Faria, Sérgio Batista (Decmodil [www.decmodil.com](http://www.decmodil.com))

**Photographer:** Ricardo Loureiro ([www.ricardoloureiro.com](http://www.ricardoloureiro.com))

**Materials:** PVC, plaster board, Burel (<http://www.burelfactory.com>)

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**Figure 12:**

Colour tones of pink and blues seep from the public functions into the treatment areas.

**Figures 13 to 14:**

Parquet flooring and carpets aim to create a warm and home like environment to soothe and welcome clients.

**Designer:** VEVS interior design

**Brand identity:** Cristina Zanon



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**Figures 15 to 16:**

Pastel tones and the use of homey type floorings help to tie the spaces together as you wander around both public and private functions.

VEVS Interior Design developed for dentists Frank Poorter a distinctive practice. A balanced interior with a contrast between the clinical treatment zone and warm homey waiting room.

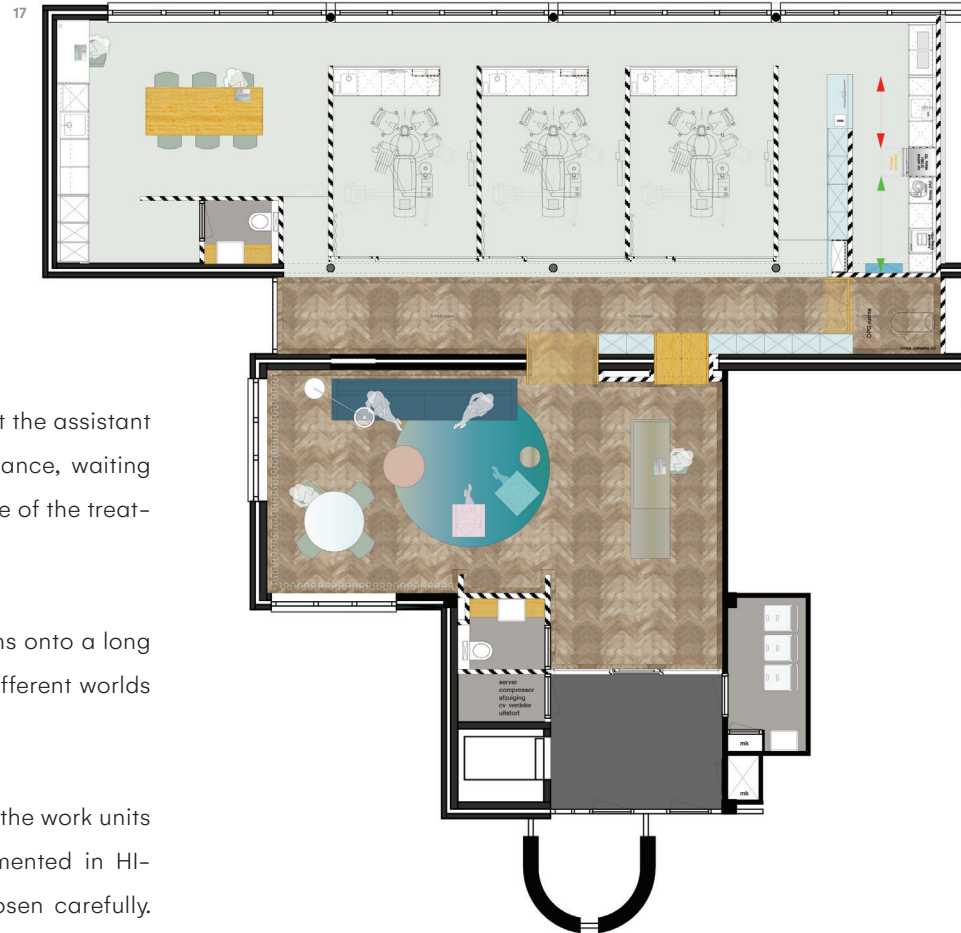
The whole practice reflects the process, vision and progressiveness of Frank Poorter / Poorter Dentists.

In a creative dialogue with the client the core values were set: distinctive, professional, reliable, accessibility, transparency, hospitality and service where set. This, together with the specific program requirements formed the starting point for the development of the interior and the brand identity.

The main public functions such as the reception desk and waiting area are brought together through the use of parquet, carpet and different seating areas creating a home like setting. The

**Figure 17:**

Floor plan of the office.



reception desk is positioned so that the assistant has a continuous view of the entrance, waiting room and through the wide passage of the treatment zone.

The generous oak portal, with opens onto a long corridor and connects these two different worlds in a smooth manner.

The treatment rooms are compact, the work units custom designed and fully implemented in HI-MAC. Color and materials are chosen carefully. Minimal contrast for the eye of the practitioner is essential. Due to the warm-gray Walton floor and the subtle soft pink wall, the white-clinical setting is completely broken and a perfect balance struck.

The abundance of light, the circulation of staff to and from the sterilization area and the transparent separation contribute to the comfort of this space.

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