

# COUNTERTOPS<sup>SM</sup> & ARCHITECTURAL SURFACES

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Inspection!



It's pretty simple, really. Whatever the customer wants, find a way to do it. And if you are Joel Miller of Sterling-Miller Designs in Brockton, Mass., you find a way to do it with style. "We are not designers and we are not engineers," he said, "but we know how to make a design become a reality."

#### New Museum

A case in point is the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York City. Architect, Martin Finio of Christoff:Finio Architecture, was just about ready to scrap the idea of using modular Corian tables and bookshelves on the 5th floor of the museum because he couldn't find a company with the expertise to build the project. Then, he learned about Sterling-Miller Designs.

"Probably one of the reasons they felt comfortable with our company was that we had been working with the same 3-D design software that the architect was using for this project," Miller explained. "This

told them we were able to quickly understand their exact design intent without anything left open to interpretation. This was critical especially since so much time was initially lost trying to locate a fabricator able to complete the project."

Ten Glacier White tables slide on aluminum tracks to make a single larger table, or any combination of smaller independent tables, as needed. On the foot of each table leg is a Teflon insert that indexes into an aluminum groove built into the floor, and which enables the tables to slide effortlessly. The insert is made so that it can be replaced as needed. Thus, the tables have no parts to wear out, except for the Teflon inserts, which are easily replaced.

Modular Glacier White Corian bookshelves line the walls of the room, and are mounted together to look like a single, integral structure. "The Corian itself is heavy, and when you add the books, these shelves carry a lot of weight," said Miller. "The support system had to be invisible, making the shelves look like they are floating. In addition to the custom aluminum tracks for the tables, we also had custom steel brackets fabricated, which were concealed in the shelving. It was an engineering accomplishment."



*The bookshelves were built as modular units that nest together.*

# High End





*Sterling Miller mounted Teflon inserts to the table legs, which glide in specially fabricated aluminum channel embedded in the floor.*



*Although each table is independent, they slide effortlessly together to create a single larger table when needed.*





*As a load-bearing element, the lower deck section was built to have zero deflection.*

# Vila, N.M.

## Vila, N.M.

As you might have guessed, Sterling-Miller Designs tends to specialize in the type of 3-D projects that require an intricate fit combined with elements of structural engineering. "I could count on one hand the number of conventional kitchen countertops we have done in the past year," Miller said. "But, we don't turn anything away, because you never know what it could turn into."

Like the thermoformed kitchen island made of Peach Corian, designed by Amsterdam architect, Ben van Berkel of UNStudio. Designed to mimic the shape of the house, the 12-ft.-long island features dual Mixa sinks with custom-made Corian covers. The countertop deck is 1-1/4-in.-thick, which required some engineering to fabricate because Peach Corian is available only in 1/2-in thickness. The lower section of the island was constructed as a weight-bearing piece with no deflection whatsoever. Tight fitting doors in the base of the island create an effect that is almost invisible to the casual observer.



*The shape of the kitchen island echoes that of the house, which was designed by Dutch architect Ben van Berkel.*



## Five Franklin Place

As often happens on a custom project, the Vila, N.M. residential kitchen led to a high-end commercial project in Manhattan, called Five Franklin Place. Sterling-Miller fabricated a Glacier White Corian reception desk and library stand for the post-modern condominium project. As with the Vila, N.M. project, Ben van Berkel designed the building and the architectural surfaces.

"The entire project was thermoformed," Miller explained. "All the molds were custom."

LED lights concealed at the bottom of the structure give it a hovering appearance. Internal bracing within the reception desk supports the solid surface to create a feeling of weightlessness in the design of the structure.

# Five Franklin Place.



*Flowing, curved lines and internal bracing inside the overhang make this reception desk an engineering marvel.*