

**BELOW** LaGuardia Airport, whose Terminal B was lately renovated, sports a mosaic mural completed with Mapei products.

Queens (New York)

# LaGuardia Airport

ADHESIVES AND GROUTS TO CREATE A HUGE WORK OF ART



LaGuardia Airport (LGA) is an international airport located in the borough of Queens, New York, that spans across 680 acres (275 hectares) of land. It was originally built in 1939 and named after New York City's mayor at the time, Fiorello La Guardia. Today, LaGuardia Airport is the third busiest airport in New York City.

Over the years, parts of the airport interior became severely outdated and aesthetically too old-fashioned for a place such as New York City, which is known for its diverse, fast-paced, ever-evolving and unforgettable landscape. In 2019, to revitalize the layout of Terminal B, New York City's Public Art Fund teamed with LaGuardia Gateway Partners to commission an art program to capture the creativity, artistry and energy of the city.

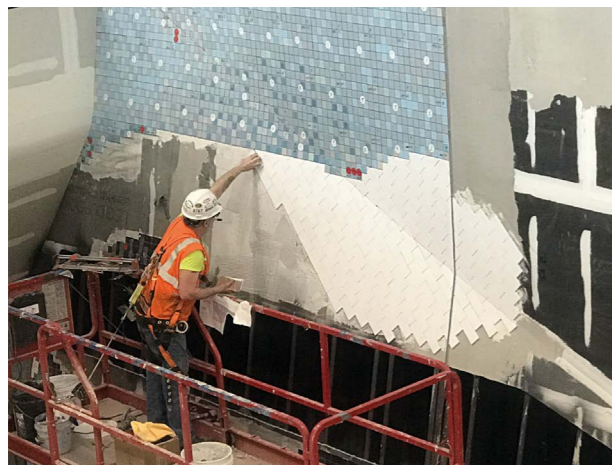
Revitalizing Terminal B was no small feat. Because the terminal is one of the largest and busiest epicenters for travel to and from New York City, construction would need to be functional but grand, unique yet universal, beautiful and iconic.

Four internationally recognized artists (Laura Owens, Sarah Sze, Sabine Hornig and Jeppe Hein) were chosen to design large-scale installations throughout the arrivals and departures hall of Terminal B. The mosaic mural was designed by Owens and serves as a celebration of the history, culture and architecture of New York City. It features 80 iconic images from New York City's five boroughs, ranging from the Statue of Liberty and the Staten Island Ferry to a MetroCard and a slice of pizza. Hand-made glazed ceramic and subway tiles (5 x 5 cm, 2.5 x 2.5 cm and 10 x 10 cm) were used to create the images, which are all connected by a backdrop of sky and clouds. 7.6 x 15 cm white subway tiles (a type of thin, low-fired and glazed tiles) were used to form the clouds.

#### 4 shades of KERACOLOR S

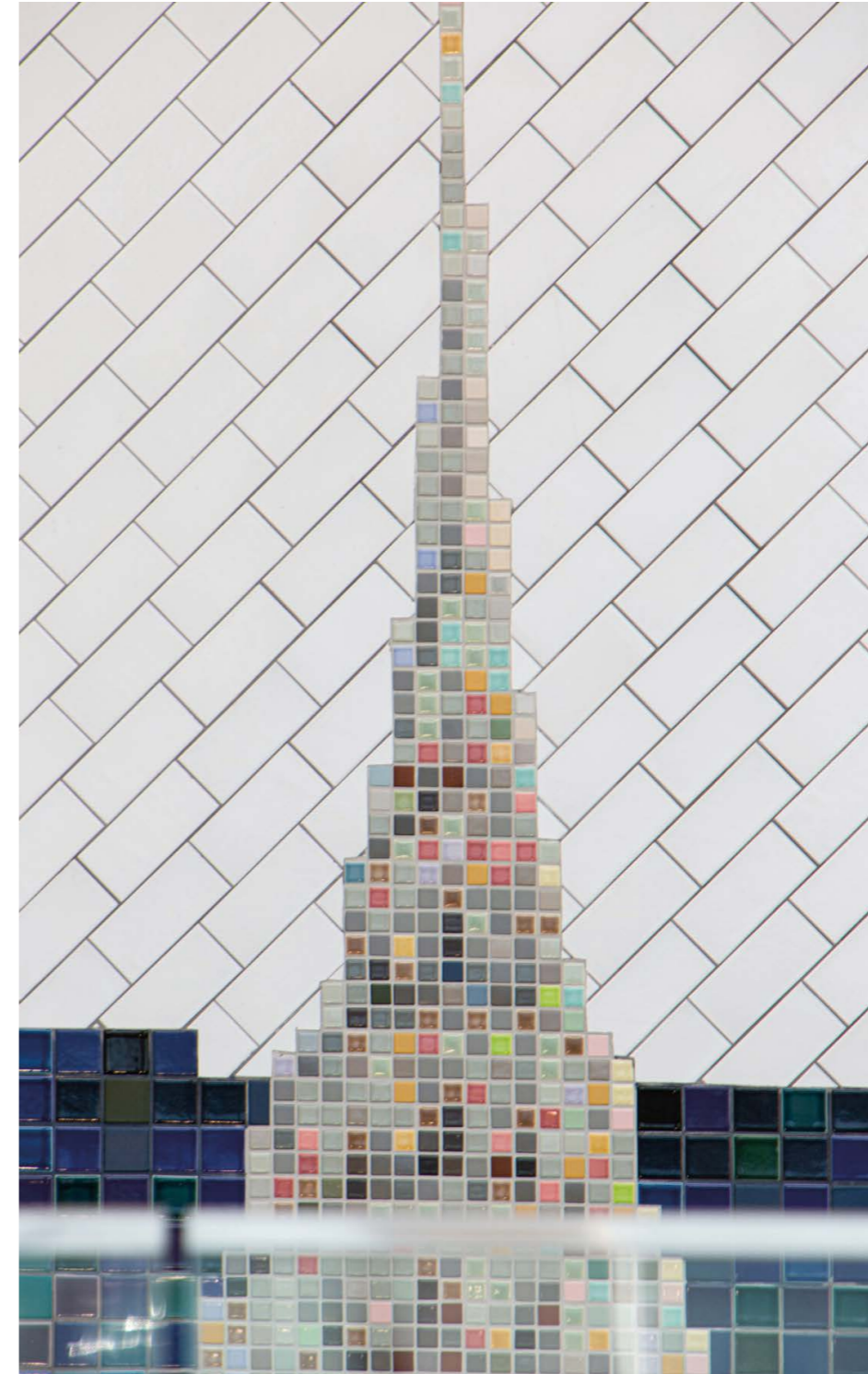
Products from Mapei Corporation's (a subsidiary of the Group) Tile & Stone Installation Systems line were put to work in order to complete the mosaic wall-tile project. Over 25,000 square feet (2,323 m<sup>2</sup>) of tiles – in various shades, sizes and colors – were installed by BRB Ceramic Tile, Marble & Stone Inc. from August 2019 to May 2020. The work was consistent, significantly detailed and a big challenge for installers creating this seamless design continuity.

PLANITOP 330 FAST rendering mortar was used to level the wall substrates and taper the transitions for an easier installation. Used to bond the tiles, TYPE 1 adhesive provided excellent adhesion, extended open time and low



**TOP OF THE PAGE.** In the arrivals and departures area a big mural mosaic was created by using over 2,323 m<sup>2</sup> of tiles. **ABOVE.** The mosaic tiles were installed with TYPE 1 adhesive before grouting joints with four different color shades of KERACOLOR S cementitious grout.

VOC (volatile organic compounds) emissions. The mural consists of 135 colors (36 of which were custom developed by the tile makers) and required three different shades of KERACOLOR S cementitious grout (in the colors “Rain,” “Pearl Gray” and “White”) and “LaGuardia,” a customized gray grout color that is unique to this project and was developed and supplied by Mapei Corporation. To create depth in the sky portion of the mural, the grout color “Rain” was used predominately in the clearer sections of the sky; “Pearl Gray” was used inside the entire cloud area and acted as a transition color between darker shadows. In addition, “LaGuardia” was used in the darkest parts of shadows (generally underneath clouds) in the mosaic, while “White” was used alongside cut subway tiles in curved areas for a smooth transition. To touch up joints and create a uniform transition between colors for a clean finish, ULTRACARE GROUT REFRESH ready-to-use, polymer-modified colorant and sealer for grout joints was applied. MAPESIL T 100%-silicone sealant was also used, offering excellent elongation and flexibility as well as aiding in the prevention of mold and mildew. All the products mentioned in the article are manufactured and distributed in the US market by Mapei Corporation, Mapei Group’s US subsidiary. The mosaic mural now gracing the walls of LaGuardia Airport’s Terminal B is iconic, historic and unique. In addition, the mural is now a candidate for designation by the Guinness Book of World Records as one of the largest indoor murals in the world.



**LEFT.** The mural features 80 iconic images from New York City’s five boroughs, ranging from the Statue of Liberty to the Empire State Building by using handmade glazed ceramic and subway tiles grouted with KERACOLOR S epoxy grout in 4 different shades.

**PROJECT INFORMATION**  
**LaGuardia Airport,**  
 Queens, New York  
**Period of construction:**  
 2019-2020  
**Period of Mapei intervention:** 2019-2020  
**Owner:** Port Authority of New York and New Jersey  
**General contractor:** BRB Ceramic Tile, Marble &

Stone Inc.  
**Installer company:** BRB Ceramic Tile, Marble & Stone Inc.  
**Project manager:** Ed Connors  
**Mapei coordinator:** Darin Shocker, Mapei Corporation (USA)  
**Photos:** Virtual360NY

**MAPEI PRODUCTS**  
**Preparing substrates:** Planitop 330 Fast\*  
**Installing mosaic tiles:** Type 1\*  
**Grouting tile joints:** Keracolor S\*  
**Sealing expansion joints:** Mapesil T\*  
**Finishing joints:** UltraCare Grout Refresh\*

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For further information on products, please visit [mapei.com](http://mapei.com) and [mapei.us](http://mapei.us)