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What Are the Current Trends in Rail Fabrics?

From the welcoming warmth of a wool moquette to the sleek finish of a flat woven fabric and timeless luxury of pure leather, the upholstery featured in a rail carriage's interior plays an integral role, not only in its aesthetic, but the place a commute holds in a passenger's day. In this article, Ciara Crossan, Group Design Manager at Camira – a transport textile manufacturer with over two centuries' experience – discusses the trends and changes they are noticing in the industry today, and the influence this has on the fabrics they create.

“Following the coronavirus pandemic, and the isolation and crowd avoidance this necessitated during the various periods of lockdown, many passengers may feel increased levels of anxiety when travelling during busy times. As we begin to return en masse to the office, operators are working to address the impact the past 24

months has had upon our daily lives and make the commute to work as appealing – and relaxing – as possible. One of the first to implement a solution, in October this year the Docklands Light Railway in London announced the launch of 12 carriages dedicated to mindfulness, equipped with meditation corners and designed

with natural scenes, such as forests, across the interior walls, and we're certainly beginning to see an increased desire for carriages to be calming, soothing spaces – places where passengers can take a moment to unwind, rather than feel as though they must be permanently switched on and connected to their devices.



For so long we've treated our commute as part of our working day, and, whilst it can be a great place to focus, some passengers prefer – and perhaps need – to use it as a space to relax and take a moment to prepare for the day ahead, or reflect on the day passed. As part of this shift in what passengers want, carriages are now being designed to embrace the natural world – there's a reason why biophilia has remained such a popular form of design, it has been proven time and again that an increased connection to our environment reduces our levels of stress and anxiety – and this is certainly feeding through into rail interiors more than ever before. Part of this is through the colours chosen for the space,

tones of green and brown are becoming more popular, as seen in the DLR project, and also through other design elements, such as increasing the levels of natural light in carriages. Whilst artificial lighting will always be necessary, particularly for evening and winter travel, there is a movement towards optimising the amount of sunlight in carriages, and embracing the impact this has upon our wellbeing.

All of these elements have an impact on the textiles we create – softer, woollen fabrics in delicate hues, such as deep taupes and pebble greys work beautifully in these more understated, relaxing environments. Wire woven fabrics

in particular are a popular choice – the ability to create a variety of different surface textures means that these types of textiles can have an intricate, micro detail, alongside providing irresistible tactility, which really helps to create a welcoming, comforting environment which is stylish, without demanding attention – allowing customers to practice the mindfulness which has become ever more important. Plus, as they are woven with a wool rich composition, the natural fibres perfectly complement the biophilic trend.”

Explore Camira's textile capabilities at www.camirafabrics.com

Deutsche Bahn's Ideas Train, 2021

One of the industry's most forward-thinking companies, sustainability is a core focus for German rail operator Deutsche Bahn – having long asserted its ambition to be 100% climate neutral by 2040 and, already achieving 61% usage of renewable energy, it is one of the most eco-conscious transport organisations in the world. Sharing this ethos with Camira, earlier this year, the two companies came together with leading transport design studio Neomind to create a new

textile for inclusion in the DB Ideas Train – developing a sophisticated grey, wire woven fabric with a cut and loop surface, the strikingly modern construction reflected the appearance of a flat cloth, whilst also creating a tactile finish through its contrasting textures.

Watch the video below to learn more about the inspiration behind the design of the Ideas Train textile, and what the future of rail interiors may hold.



Textiles for an exceptional rail experience

Designing and manufacturing fabrics which transform seats and spaces, provide an optimal passenger experience, and meet the highest of performance and safety standards, Camira is the ideal partner to create the perfect upholstery solution for your rail interior.

Explore what is possible at www.camirafabrics.com/rail

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