

This is how the new Leon was camouflaged

- SEAT's new compact inspires camouflage based on the broken tile technique just days before its global premiere
- 20 square metres of special cast vinyl was used to conceal the design secrets of the fourth generation SEAT Leon
- The new model will be shown for the first time without its protective camouflage on 28th January

Martorell, 24/01/2020. Developing a new model is a process that involves years of dedication from designers and engineers. A job that must be absolutely confidential until the day of its presentation. Just a few days prior to its worldwide unveiling, the new SEAT Leon will be shown with camouflage inspired by Modernism and the city of Barcelona.

From Cubism to Modernism. The origin of the camouflage technique comes from a military tactic used on ships during World War I, the Dazzle Camouflage. It consisted in painting them with black and white geometric patterns to blur their shapes and confuse the enemy. **“The story goes that the artists who designed these camouflage patterns drew inspiration from Cubist paintings. It is the same principle used to camouflage cars”** says Edgar Aneas, an expert in vehicle camouflage.

A sculpture on wheels. In this case, the inspiration comes from the broken tile technique (trencadís in Catalan), and was used by SEAT's Color&Trim designers. **“The new SEAT Leon has a lot of personality and is very difficult to camouflage because it's a sculpture on wheels that expresses SEAT's emotional nature. The Leon was born here and because of the special relationship we have with Barcelona, we looked to the city for inspiration”** explains Jordi Font, head of SEAT's Color&Trim Development.

From black and white to full colour. The challenge of breaking with established designs pushed the Color&Trim designers to perform several preliminary tests. The design used until now had always been in black and white. Each brand has its own, and some even patent them. **“This is the first time we didn't use conventional camouflage. It was a challenge, because the main goal is to distort the shapes of the car. We worked on several versions to blur the lines but send a clear message - that we are Barcelona, that we are Mediterranean, and that we are colourful. We want to give meaning to our sculpture”** says Jordi.

45° heat treated design. Not only does the camouflage have an aesthetic function, but it must also withstand extreme weather and driving conditions. The material used is a special cast vinyl that resists these conditions. **“The cars are camouflaged so that they can be tested in different weather situations, sub-zero temperatures, long exposure to the elements, rain and desert heat. This vinyl is made with a very durable material and has special characteristics that prevent it from peeling off or deteriorating”,** says Edgar Aneas.

20 square meters of vinyl were used for this model. The window and light sections are micro-perforated to allow light to pass through and see the outside, but not the other way around. The camouflage vinyl is applied with heat at 45 degrees so that it fits snugly to the shape of the car.

Breaking away from traditional moulds. In order to disguise a new model, a prior study is required of the vehicle's most representative elements and what the main changes have been. The more chaotic the camouflage, the more it conceals, so you have to break up the lines and colours. The most complicated sections to cover with vinyl are the mirrors and the parts with curves and spoilers. And the major aspects that must be camouflaged? **“The headlights, the shape of the taillights, the tension lines... They are the sculptural features of the car, our DNA”** says Jordi Font.

The finished piece will be unveiled on January 28th, without its camouflaged exterior.

SEAT is the only company that designs, develops, manufactures and markets cars in Spain. Member of the Volkswagen Group, the multinational has its headquarters in Martorell (Barcelona), exports the 80% of its vehicles, and is present in 80 countries on all five continents. In 2019, SEAT sold 574,100 cars, the highest figure in the history of the company.

The SEAT Group employs over 15,000 professionals and has three production centres – Barcelona, El Prat de Llobregat and Martorell, where it manufactures the highly successful Ibiza, Arona and Leon. Additionally, the company produces the Ateca in the Czech Republic, the Tarraco in Germany, the Alhambra in Portugal and the Mii electric, SEAT's first 100% electric car, in Slovakia.

The multinational has a Technical Centre, which operates as a knowledge hub that brings together 1,000 engineers who are focused on developing innovation for Spain's largest industrial investor in R&D. SEAT already features the latest connectivity technology in its vehicle range and it is currently engaged in the company's global digitalisation process to promote the mobility of the future.

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