

MAKING A SPLASH



SHOOT BY SPLINTERWORKS



ANJI CONNELL
TAKES A LOOK
AT DECORATIVE
SLIDES, WHICH
ARE GROWING
EVER-POPULAR,
AND TELLS US
HOW YOU CAN
BRING THESE
INTO GARDEN
DESIGNS

Slides can add a playful touch to a garden whilst also appealing to families with children. Along with this, decorative slides designed as one-off pieces are becoming more popular, created to make a statement and attract an audience.

Instagram-centric art and photo opportunity experiences show no sign of abating, and immersive, fun, photo-ready installations continue to pop up, with visitors lining up to snap them. At Maryellis Bunn's and Manish Vora's Museum of Ice Cream (alternatively standing for Movement of Imagination and Creativity), a millennial pink slide plunged guests into a pool of multi-coloured sprinkles. The first permanent Museum of Ice Cream will open in New York on 14 December, and it is slated to have a large slide that will plunge riders down three floors into a pool of colourful miniature objects.

Coming from another design perspective, the Vidre-Slide is the brainchild of British design

practice Eckersley O'Callaghan (known for the Apple stores' glass stairs) and Spanish glass fabricators Cricursa. The Vidre-Slide merges glass design and cutting-edge engineering, creating a 4m-high drop using a single piece of laminated glass.

Extravagantly, in downtown Los Angeles, you can experience the 'skyslide' – a glass box slide hanging from the US Bank Tower. Daredevil visitors to the 70th storey can hurtle down the clear square glass tube to the 69th level below.

“SLIDES CAN ADD A PLAYFUL TOUCH TO A GARDEN WHILST ALSO APPEALING TO FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN”

Where play meets art

Though these statement slides are just that, many slides mimic functional sculptures, adding not only fun but also beauty to a garden design. Miles Hartwell and Matt Withington, owners of sculptural design company SplinterWorks, are passionate about creating products that reimagine familiar objects – using and transforming them into ambitious and beautifully-crafted, functioning sculptures.

The design duo strives to enrich lives and enhance the environment by elevating experience with engaging, inspiring, artistic, and fun-to-use products. This is true of their collection of bespoke luxury sculptural indoor and outdoor waterslides that add the ultimate 'wow factor' wherever they are placed.

SplinterWorks is currently the only company making sculptural pool slides. To date, most of the work has been with residential clients, but the company now has pieces being installed into hotels.



VERTEX POOL SLIDE BY SPLINTERWORKS

TYPES OF SLIDES

Straight leg slides

These have a broad curve at the pool end that comfortably delivers the slider into the pool. This is ideal if you're looking for a simple slide and have a smaller, shallow pool.

Moulded leg slide

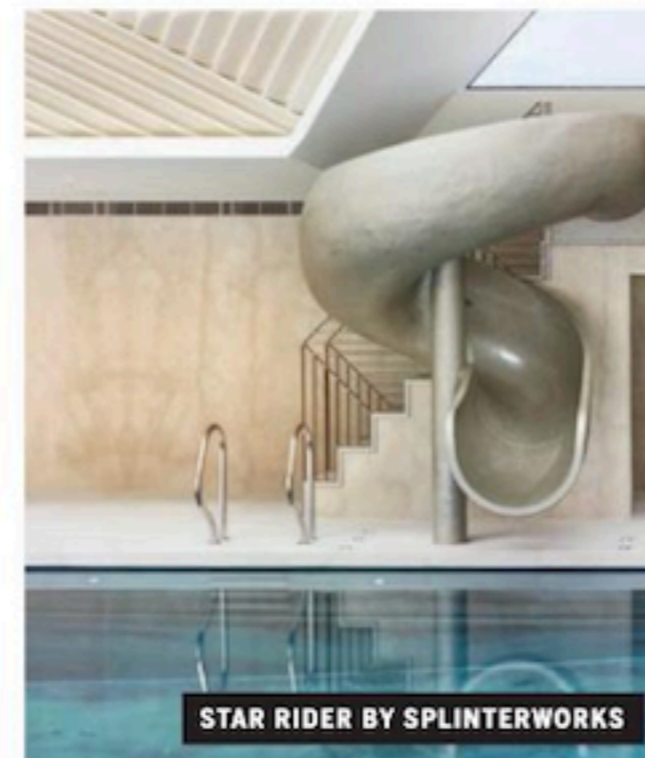
These typically have a larger curve and are steeper than the straight leg slides, which adds to the slide thrill. With their compact design, they take up less ground space.

Elephant leg slide

Reaching up to 14ft, these are the largest and fastest, and are often the best choice for older children looking for a biggest thrill as they slide.

Each slide is considered and inspired by its setting, using materials to suit the client's style, budget and surroundings. "We often work in mirror-polished stainless steel as it has the most incredible reflection, and visually integrates into different environments beautifully. We also create our own finishes, and we've just designed a concrete slide," Matt explains.

"This was a new challenge and aesthetic for us. We'll be unveiling that in a couple of months," adds Miles. SplinterWorks recently collaborated with New York architect Rafael de Cárdenas and London-based architecture office Purcell on a pool house for the owners of a mid-19th century English country manor. To fulfil the brief, the architect designed a pair of symmetrical slides that spiral down to the water for the client's children to race



STAR RIDER BY SPLINTERWORKS



HALO SLIDE BY SPLINTERWORKS

each other down. Working with SplinterWorks, it created a fun slide that doubles as a fabulous architectural feature.

Jacksons Leisure Supplies fibreglass slides are made in the UK to all required standards, but are not commercial grade. It does, however, sell SR Smith Resin Slides (made in the US). SR Smith has been making swimming pool slides for over 80 years, and its full-sized slide stands 7'4" tall and is available in sandstone and grey granite. Its unique GrandRapids water delivery system generates rushing water, ensuring a fun ride. For commercial pools, a good choice would be the Vortex slide – a 360-degree model.

Building slides

Slides require installation onto a wooden or concrete deck for stability and security, so make sure you allow space for this. Don't forget to check the weight they will withstand, and if in a commercial setting, you need to ensure the slides are commercial grade.

You can create a unique slide by adding a flume into a customised raised level. Looking at SR Smith, the Garden Ride, River Run, and BYOS2 Landslides are all made with resin transfer moulding (RTM), which is UV resistant, salt friendly, as well as being strong and durable.

SR Smith is happy to work with designers on custom pool designs – just submit a drawing to its technical experts. For example, the SR Smith BigRide landscape swimming pool slide has an extra-long, deep runway with an abundant water supply, and the SR Smith Build Your Own Slide has 11 colour choices and seven sections to combine to make your own super slide.

The quality and durability of the slide depend on the construction material. Earlier models were made from fibreglass or acrylic. In contrast, today they tend to be made in polyethylene – a heavy-duty plastic that stands up to the harsh sun that has some flex in it to avoid cracking.

A water connection reduces traction giving a faster slide. Water can also effectively turn your slide into a water feature for year-round interest. However, slides are fun, with or without water. They really come into their own as a piece of garden sculpture, and are attractive to look at throughout the year.



WAHA SLIDE BY SPLINTERWORKS

“DECORATIVE SLIDES DESIGNED AS ONE-OFF PIECES ARE BECOMING MORE POPULAR, CREATED TO MAKE A STATEMENT AND ATTRACT AN AUDIENCE”



REFLEX POOL SLIDE BY SPLINTERWORKS

SAOTA MIAMI BEACH SLIDE
AT PINE TREE HOUSE

ABOUT ANJI CONNELL

Internationally recognised interior architect and landscape designer, Anji Connell, is a detail-obsessed Inchbald graduate, and has been collaborating with artisans and craftsmen to create bespoke and unique interiors for a discerning clientele since 1986. Anji is a stylist, feature writer and lover of all things art and design.
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