

Designers Turn to Environment-friendly Materials

今回は、自然素材を活用した持続可能な製品デザインの話です。展示会では、環境にやさしい素材で作られた家具や建材などが紹介され、なかでも海藻を使った照明や断熱パネルが注目を集めました。記事で紹介されている「insulation」は「断熱材」という意味で、wall insulation（壁の断熱材）や good insulation（優れた断熱性能）といった形で使われます。もし自然素材を使った製品を選ぶとしたら、あなたはどんなものに興味がありますか？講師と話してみましょう。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

Designers are increasingly using different kinds of materials to produce products that do not harm the environment.

Reusable plastic bottles, wood, plant fiber, and even [seaweed](#) are being used in place of traditional materials for household goods and clothing.

Unusual materials

Nina Edwards Anker's sconces and chandeliers look like ancient pieces of paper placed around electronic lights known as LEDs.

But a closer look shows that they are made of [algae](#).

Anker came up with the idea while working on a doctoral research project at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design.

Anker chose not to hide the dried algae. “From the beginning, we wanted to keep the integrity of the material, and display its unique [properties](#),” Anker said.

She is one of many designers thinking about traditional materials. She wants to find ways to mix design ideas with production and supply methods that do not use up resources.

A show for new materials in Germany

Heimtextil is an international trade show, or fair, for new [textiles](#) in Frankfurt, Germany. This year’s fair placed attention on making new products that came from reused materials.

Olaf Schmidt is Heimtextil’s vice president of textiles and textile technology.

“We’ll see companies demonstrating how inorganic materials like nylon, plastic and metal can be reused – for example, carpet tiles that can be dismantled at the end of their life and used as a raw material for new tiles,” he said.

He added, “And there’s seaweed, used to produce acoustic mats and panels that provide great [insulation](#), are fire-resistant and regulate humidity well...At the end of their life, the panels can be shredded and reused.”

Fashion industry expert Veronika Lipar described the field’s most important change – a move to sustainability. She said, “The industry is trying to minimize its” effect “on the environment and no longer be the biggest polluter.”

Many companies using other materials

Patagonia, North Face and Timberland are among the companies now using natural materials to produce goods.

Italian company Frumat has developed a plant-based leather made from the waste created by apple juice makers.

Two Mexican developers, Adrian Lopez Velarde and Marte Cazarez, have created a leather they call “Desserto” using nopal cactus leaves. Cactus plants are of interest to new material developers because they can live in hot climates and poor soil.

Pinatex helps support farms in the Philippines by using waste from the pineapple harvest to create material that is sold to makers of shoes, clothing and other products.

And Bolt Threads, a company based in California, created Mylo, a mycelium-based leather that is used by companies like Adidas, Lululemon and designer Stella McCartney.

I’m John Russell.

Kim Cook reported on this story for the Associated Press. John Russell adapted it for VOA Learning English.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

- 1. seaweed (n.)** a category of algae; plant-like living things that grow in water

Certain kinds of seaweed, such as *nori*, have many health benefits.

- 2. algae (n.)** plant-like living things that grow in water

Large amounts of algae grow in the ocean near the coast every summer because of pollution.

- 3. property (n.)** a basic physical characteristic of something

One of the interesting properties of water is that it gets bigger when it freezes.

- 4. textiles (n.)** materials that are used to make clothing or cloth

Our company sells beautiful textiles from Southeast Asia.

- 5. insulation (n.)** material that helps to keep the temperature the same

Our energy bill is low because our house has thick insulation in the walls.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What is Heimtextil, and what is its focus this time?
2. What are some examples of some of the products on display? Who made them, and where were they made?
3. According to Olaf Schmidt and Veronika Lipar, what are the benefits of using these kinds of materials?
4. Would you like to own a chandelier made of algae?
5. Do you know of any products in Japan that are made from materials like the ones mentioned in the article?