



Terra Matter Innovates-Part 1

Lü Magazine June 2006

By: Danelle Marqui Brown of Verte

It truly was an incredible meeting of creative and intellectual minds on May 19th and 20, 2006 at Material Connexion's 2nd annual design symposium Terra Matter: Inspire [Innovate] Sustain. The two day conference held at the Equitable Auditorium in New York City, merged diverse and unique designers, artists, and scientist from various fields and provided a platform for which they were able to educate, inspire, and converse with the symposium's attendee's.

Laeitia Wolf, Senior Design Editor and Design Director, of Surface magazine, moderated the 1st day of the forum. One by one, Ms. Wolf introduced an incredible speaker after the other. Mr. Rich Varda, VP of Store Design for Target, gave a brief presentation to kick off the day. Target also happened to be one of the forum's sponsors and provided the attendees with bags made out of recycle Target Ads from Times Square. Although Target has not announced a formal "green" campaign as its competitor Walmart, its seems as though Target already has a strong environmental initiative and are striving to incorporate environmentally conscious design with their mission of great design at an affordable cost.

With over 10 lecturers on day one of Terra Matter, included is an overview of some of those speakers.



The Innovative Sweet Heart From Alabama

Natalie Chanin's essence is truly different from any other Fashion Designer I have met. After taking a big leap of faith and reclaiming her sweet southern bell roots, Chanin left the big city life for a more serene and comfortable environment in Alabama. What started off as a documentary called "Stitched", highlighting the local Alabamian quilting circles, Chanin quickly realized that she had embarked on something truly unique and sustainable. Her fashion Label Project Alabama launched in 2000 and is now quickly becoming a well-respected label in the Fashion World. Sweet home Alabama is truly what makes this label different than anyone else. Chanin along with her amazing team of local Alabamian's have turned their tradition and passion for the technique of quilting into high fashion. By using old T-Shirts, clothing from Goodwill, and other reclaimed textiles, Project Alabama, brilliantly restructures what once was an bland piece of fabric into a unique gem that stands as a true work of art. The stitching details and craftsmanship of each garment truly demands respect. These women put their love and passion into each piece they create down to the thread, which by the way they massage each thread before sewing which shows dedication.

Project Alabama truly is sustaining a community, reclaiming the concept of beauty, and showing us that the concept of reuse is just as ever as unique and innovated as recycling.

www.projectalabama.com

Sophistication Meets Edge

To listen and watch Michele Oka Doner's presentation was like watching a ballet. Her poise and grace added softness to the lecture, but upon seeing her work, you quickly realized that there was more that met the eye. This amazing artist has fluidity, yet a fierce strength. Doner's main inspiration as a multi-faceted artist is the ocean. She photographs and x-rays sea life and invokes the beauty of the aquatic life she admires so in to her works of art. From ceramics, to metal, to wood, Doner is very skilled in many media. She labels her self as a hunter gather, a seeker of nature gifts if you will. If she sees a strange branch floating down the Hudson River, she will hike up her sleeves and pull it out can sculpt it into a light fixture. It is as if she is searching for lost souls in washed up or abandoned items of nature to breathe back life into or honor what it is that she has found in that object or creature.

Having created many works of art for such elite as Steuben Glass and Christlofe, Ms. Doner is in the top echelon of fine artists. In her next exhibition coming up in 2007, she is reaching within to craft her exhibition in away that is loud, bold, and fierce. The reason for this new approach is for her sacred muse, the ocean is being abused and desecrated, and she does not want to stand by and watch that happen. It is her goal to draw attention to this matter and create a change through her art.

www.micheleokadoner.com

PROJECT ALABAMA



The Message: They Give a Dam

Jill Dumain gets down to the nitty gritty. As Director of Analysis of Fabric for Patagonia, she oversees the development and efficiency of the textiles used in Patagonia's sports apparel. It is her mission to produce durable, timeless design that is geared for her main demographic, the die heart athlete and outdoors person. She knows that her clients sweat, hang off of cliffs, get knocked by the waves of the sea, and most importantly she understands that just a typical shirt, pants, or shoe won't be enough for her customer. The end use for this genre of clothing provides a challenge for anyone whether the company is environmentally conscientious or not. Developing technology that can with stand such demand and wear is no easy task. The fact that Patagonia, not only has a durable collection of proper attire, they do this as well while giving a dam about the environment. With in your face ads and initiatives, it is Patagonia's goal to raise awareness about the state of our environment and giving back to it.

Their garments themselves are made from recycled polyester and other textiles, the company uses offset wind energy and energy efficient building techniques, and they have made a big difference in the world of print advertising. For the most part if a company has printed their catalogs on recycled paper, it most likely was on only 10% post-consumer paper, where as Patagonia now uses 40% post consumer paper and a cover that is FSC certified and 100% post consumer paper. Patagonia is also making a pledge to help save the Ocean with their new campaign "Ocean as Wilderness". They have partnered up with the non-profit organization Oceana for the project.

www.patagonia.com



Out of Synergy Comes the Fusion

Renowned designer Yves Behar has a brilliant sense of design. Influenced by nature's magic and mystery, he sees the world from above and approaches design problems in his own unique way. As the founder of Fuse Project and the newly appointed chair of Industrial Design at California College of the Arts, Behar explores the vast boundaries of technology, design, and humanitarianism. The products that he creates whether it be shoes, helmets, furniture are so beyond innovative. One such unique prototype is a pair of men's underwear which are packages in unique material that requires the male purchaser's to wash their underwear 1st and then the packaging dissolves; then one has a brand new pair of tights. His new lamp for which he designed for Herman Miller, the "Leaf" is beautiful form that metamorphoses according to the task required of itself. Using LED technology, the lamp is very energy efficient and does not generate a lot of heat. If you wanted to you can just touch the light itself. The Fuse project is currently working on another very interesting project called "One Laptop Per Child". This open-hearted project's mission is to provide laptops to children in under developed countries to help educated and connect the children.

We have not heard the last of Yves Behar, his name will be written about for many years to come. His dynamic definitely inspires

www.fuseproject.com



The Scientist

As said by Dr. Michael Braungart, "...there are no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, they are here in America and their names are Polly Pocket Dolls." This statement produced a few laughs but yet really came into perspective as a valid truth. The chemicals used for the production of these children's toy are off of the charts toxic. After a child gets bored with the toy and the parent throws away the toy, it ends up in a landfill, the chemicals from the plastics run off into the waters and the soils, and affect even kills children who are that of the same age as the Polly Pocket owner, maybe even herself.

Chemist, Dr. Braungart is the Co-Founder of MBDC, McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry. With his partner William McDonough, Dr. Braungart Co-wrote the industry changing book Cradle To Cradle.

Dr. Braungart's main point during his presentation was that designers need to step out of the box and stop creating "stupid design". Why recycle? Nature doesn't recycle. Flowers grow, they bloom, then they die biodegrade in the soil and the cycle of life begins again. The bio mass of ants is 4 times greater than that of the earth, yet there means of construction and irrigation does not destroy nor poison the planet. Dr. Braungart encouraged a new way of thinking about materials and the chemicals used to create such materials and their after math. His whole lecture was quite puzzling, yet inspiring, informative, yet on the edge. A wake up call that our own health is being violated for no one is regulating the chemicals in our everyday products such as a Coke bottle. After listening to his humoristic yet blunt lecture, I was left thinking that the worlds of science and design have to merge once again. Both industries must work together and educate one another so that a synergy and bond can be created. With out this unison, there is little hope. Our education system has to mirror that same concept. Along with design studio, chemistry and biology have to be enforced and not just push aside in the curriculum. Corporations should not only have their marketing team, designers, and staff in attendance for corporate product launches. Scientists need to be present as well to educate those who do not understand the make of the chemicals in certain plastics and what it morphs into once it is in a land fill.

www.mbdc.com

In Connexion With the Environment

Dr. Andrew Dent, VP of Material Connexion's Library and Materials Research informed attendees of new innovative "green" materials. He added a forethought what's missing as to inspire viewers to invent and fill any gaps we as designers saw missing. Below are brief descriptions of some of the new innovative materials:

Bio Polymers: Metabolix

PHA Polymers

Ingeo Fibers

Fermented Corn Sugar converted into textile or plastics substitutes

Purebond Plywood

Waterproof Plywood with soy based binder

PaperStone

Made from 100% post consumer paper and resin from cashew nuts used as a solid surface

Sketka Stone

Made from 100% recycled paper from magazines, this "stone can be nailed and is very durable, no glue added

Palm Fiber Packaging

Made from palm fiber waste; biodegradable, and certified compostable

Bamboo textiles

Grown without the use of synthetic chemicals nor fertilizers

www.materialconnexion.com

Material ConneXion®

