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#interzum

interzum 2023: innovations for neo-ecology

Working sustainably is one of the biggest challenges for the furnishing industry as it looks to the future. With its new leading theme “Neo-ecology”, interzum from 9 to 12 May 2023 presented ground-breaking innovations in resource- and climate-friendly production processes, materials and components for the furniture and interiors industry. Right at the beginning of product cycles, the leading international trade fair and its exhibitors thereby make an important contribution as the industry moves towards a more environmentally friendly and circular product culture.

The trade fair appearance as a holistic concept

Many companies in the furnishing industry place great importance on using renewable raw materials, reusing resources and establishing circular business models. Companies striving to take sustainability seriously must view the topic holistically. Numerous exhibitors at interzum 2023 have therefore not only applied high sustainability standards in the development of their new products, but also in their trade fair appearance. Vauth-Sagel adopted a special “green” stand concept this year: the entire space was designed for maximum recyclability and in the form of a polygonal garden landscape. Other industry giants either reduced their resource use or eliminated it altogether, or had their entire trade fair appearance certified as CO2-neutral.

Circular design: towards the circular economy

Because a large percentage of the ecological impact of a piece of furniture is determined by its components, there lies an enormous potential here for transformation towards a circular economy. For example, Egger sources 71 per cent of the wood used in its TM9 PerfectSense Smoothtouch Matt lacquered boards from the circular economy. This new product is 100% recyclable at the end of its life cycle and can be used to produce new boards. And with its A.NEXT Arise, AGRO international presented what it claims is the world’s first circular-economy, mass-market pocket innerspring for mattresses that is made almost completely from recycled materials.

Alternatives from nature: innovative materials for furnishing

As part of an industry-wide evolution of materials in furniture and interiors, a number of exhibitors presented sustainable alternatives to conventional materials. The OrganiQ drawer insert developed by Kesseböhmer as an alternative to solid wood consists largely of natural fibres. This concept of alternative materials was



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taken further, right down to the last detail, at interzum. Boyteks Tekstil also makes a contribution to healthy homes with its BioGreen mattress materials from sugar cane and cellulose waste and a new nettle yarn. And Wagner presented furniture gliders made of biocomposites with natural fibres to interzum's international trade audience.

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Bio-based cover fabrics: upholstered furniture is becoming greener

The term "bio-based materials" was often used to present new components for upholstered furniture at the trade fair. MAL Germany has developed bio-based moulded parts made of rubberised coconut fibre for various applications such as seat cushions and back- or arm-rests. Peel, a material produced by the Portuguese exhibitor Monteiro Ribas using 65 per cent chestnuts, organic cotton and natural oils, is perfect as an upholstery fabric. And Continental also presented an unusual cover fabric at interzum: for its breathable material skai VyP Coffee, the company is processing used coffee grounds as a raw material for the first time.

From the oceans: plastic recycling in furniture and mattresses

In those instances where plastic is still used, it is often already recycled. furnipart, for example, uses plastics from the maritime industry in its new series of handles and knobs OceanIX. BekaertDeslee also uses plastic waste from the oceans in its mattress enhancer SmartSleeve Circular. The product features an NFC tag that gives recycling companies full transparency about the material composition when the product reaches the end of its lifecycle. Schattdekor presented a modern and environmentally friendly furniture surface with its product Fineflex, which is made of up to 80 per cent recycled PET.

Sustainable sleep: the transformation of the mattress industry

The circular principle is applied increasingly often in mattress manufacturing as companies seek to conserve valuable raw materials. That became clear with new products presented at interzum such as the Vita First mattress. The innovative mattress is produced by the Vita Group using sustainable technologies and without any adhesives, making it easier to break down and recycle the product at the end of the lifecycle. LAVA Textiles from Belgium exhibited CiCLO fibres for mattresses, which biologically degrade far more quickly than untreated polyester fibres. The Stellini Group is also keen to reduce its environmental impact to a minimum with a new knitted fabric for mattress materials made of polypropylene fibres that can be fully recycled.

Tried-and-tested and brand-new: product ideas for the "construction transition"

Newly developed and tried-and-tested materials can both make a significant contribution to a sustainability revolution in architecture and interior design. One product line belonging to the "tried-and-tested" category is the wall and façade panels made of purenit, which the insulation pioneer puren presented at its interzum debut. The material made from production and construction site waste and material residues has been produced on a polyurethane hard foam basis for more

than 40 years. Classen Holz Kontor's new Ceramin tiles, which are made of 65 per cent recycled material and are free of PVC, plasticizers and pollutants, are perfect as a lightweight alternative to ceramic or stone tiles. And the Italian exhibitor 3B presented its UNIKO Mineral Clad - an innovative plastic-free and solvent-free surface finish - at interzum. The mineral cladding is applied onto recycled wood panels or used as a skin on vertical surfaces.

With these and many other innovations, exhibitors at this year's interzum presented everything furniture makers, designers and interior designers need to put neo-ecology, the trade fair's main theme, into practice. We can look forward to further developments in the field of furniture production and interior design - and to the innovations that will be presented at the next interzum.

Koelnmesse - Global Inspiration for Living, Contract and Public Spaces

Koelnmesse is the world's top trade fair organiser for the areas of Living, Contract and Public Spaces. At the trade fair hub of Cologne, in addition to imm cologne and interzum, other trade fair formats such as LivingKitchen, ORGATEC, spoga+gafa, FSB and aquanale are among the internationally renowned and established industry meeting places.

These fairs comprehensively represent the interior and design segment, the furniture and interior construction industries' supplying sections, the kitchen world, all topics for the modern working world, garden lifestyle as well as public space, sports and leisure facilities and also sauna, pool and ambiente.

In addition to the events in Cologne, Koelnmesse is strategically expanding its portfolio in key growth markets around the globe like with the successful shows ORGATEC TOKYO in Japan, interzum bogota in Colombia and interzum guangzhou in China.

Further information: www.interzum.com/trade-fair/interzum-home/industry-sectors

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