



Art as a driver for sustainable innovation

Nature has many shapes and forms that are completely unknown to us. We often try to find innovative solutions in technology while sometimes the solution is right before our eyes in nature. We just need to look past what we know and look harder and dig deeper.

If any of this makes any sense to you then you will love the sustainable art of Mandy den Elzen. This Dutch Artist uses the organs and unused parts of Animals to create art objects. And by doing so she creates a material that no one would ever have considered: Organ leather.

Respect for the animal

For the artist it is all about understanding where material comes from. The artist explains: The way we use materials these days is so processed and clean that it creates a distance between the product and the source, in this case the animal. By using every part of the animal we acknowledge that there is beauty in every part of nature and it reminds us to respect the animal that gave us the product. That is why part of the process of my art is to go to the slaughterhouse to get the materials for the objects myself. I get to see the animal and respect the fact that my art came from a living being.

Besides that, the textures, shapes and essence of these unused parts of the animals show us a richness and beauty that people do not know. I often get asked how I digitally process my art. When I explain that the art is 100% natural, people often have a hard time believing that something so rich and beautiful is all natural.

Organ leather

Why would you consider using only the skin to make leather, but discard the so called by-products of an animal as useless? They came from the same animal and should be considered just as useful and beautiful.

With this thought in mind Den Elzen's art does not only create value in an artistic way, it also creates something that is of great value in another way. It creates a new material: organ leather. Both beautiful and functional it creates a new perspective for designers: new applications, new textures and new ways of looking at the functionality of material. While the ideas of Den Elzen were born from her artistic expression, the result is a range of new possibilities for a multitude of industries. The acknowledgement of the sustainable material has led to a number of requests from manufacturers interested in using the material for new product applications.

Stahl EasyWhite Tan™

Tanning these materials with traditional tanning methods would not fit with the natural origin and concept of the art and materials. When Den Elzen contacted Stahl to help her with preserving the material in the best yet most sustainable way, the solution was evident. Stahl EasyWhite Tan™ would be the perfect solution to tan her Art and to preserve the material. Stahl EasyWhite Tan™ completely fits the intention of the artist to keep the objects in their purest and most natural form without adding (traditional) components.

Den Elzen's ambition is to meticulously research other unused parts of the animal that cannot be processed now and find ways to create new art and create new materials that show the complexity and the beauty of nature in all its honesty. Something we hope Stahl can contribute to by working together with Den Elzen to find the solutions that allow her to continue her research and art.

But for all of those who say that art is just in the eye of the beholder they are proven wrong. Art proves once again to open up possibilities that no one thought about. This case has proven to be the driver for sustainable innovation and we are proud that we have been able to contribute to this development.

More information about Mandy den Elzen and her art can be found on <http://www.mandydenelzen.com>