

Title:

Transforming Textiles to Testimonies

Organizers:

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Abstract:

Almost fifteen years ago the fabric industry started thinking about end of life and recycling scenarios. If at all there was a short success when it comes to solutions for recycling vinylcoated polyester fabrics. The separation of Glass fibres and PTFE coatings still isn't solved sufficiently. Unfortunately it turned out that clients of new membranes weren't willing to pay for the recycling of replaced material nor were there visionary enough to pay for an end of life scenario and pay an extra amount for the option of recycling the material they just bought. At the same time the weaving and coating industry developed material with extended durability, somehow postponing the need for recycling to a far extent and therefore weakening the need to find immediate recycling solutions.

There needs to be another approach to recycling that concentrates on the consumption of raw material. Whereas many architects believe that PVC is not a suitable material for today's eco-building industry, there is –to date- no alternative at hand that combines the positive properties of Polyester in conjunction with PVC. At the same time there are vast amounts of used PET bottles that can easily be found all over the world – unfortunately even in the oceans. It is most apparent that these PET bottles are a perfect raw material for fabric façades for example. There have been tests on mesh fabrics made of recycling yarns as compared to new material. Even with a slight loss of tensile strength, these textiles are an absolutely suitable alternative to what we have at the moment. If black is the chosen colour for a fabric façade, the recycled fabric can even be coated with recycled PVC pastes – the left overs of other production processes.

The lecture will of course tackle the question how these new recycling applications can be implemented more efficiently in the fabric architecture business. One answer could be to find regulations that prescribe the use of a certain ratio of recycled material. Experience has shown that the industry is not willing to deliberately spend money on recycling or reusing material. As in other areas, too, a binding commitment might be the only solution to bring forward recycling processes.