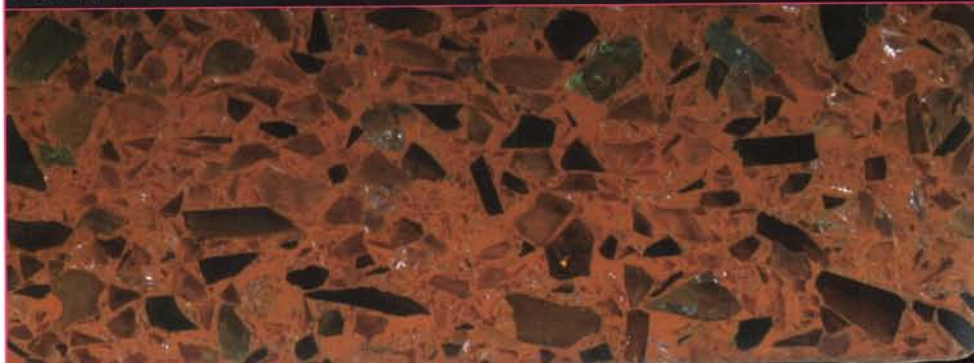


Ten years ago recycling was the height of fashion. Now a host of new initiatives mean those days could be back

By  
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retained its popularity. But I wonder if designers don't quite see the need to be green in the way they were 10 years ago when it was a mission."

While there are plenty of designer-makers who make ingenious use of recycled materials - Barley Massey and Inner Tube both turn discarded inner tubes into desirable consumer goods, and Spazzatura turns cardboard boxes filched from skips into striking furniture - the use of recycled materials has developed away from the purely evangelical to a more sophisticated approach.

In the current Crafts Council exhibition Home Made Holland, several of the Dutch exhibitors, in particular Jurgen Beij, use recycled materials, but their motivation comes not so much from a green perspective as an

intellectual one, creating a narrative by setting up tension between old and new. Beij incorporates old lamps behind new casings which, when illuminated, show through; Gijs Bakker's wallpaper has peepholes to reveal the previous decoration beneath.

The virtue of being recycled, while a novelty 10 or so years ago, is no longer enough - products have to look good. "There's added brownie points for being green but that's not the major motivation," says Wigglesworth of her recycled glass Ttura table. "I'd say the appeal was 50/50 - I think it looks really beautiful."

Made from 85% recycled glass, Ttura is an encouraging arrival on the scene, developed at Sheffield Hallam University in partnership with Resin Building Products.

"People are a bit wary of

## SMILE PLASTICS

Squeezy bottles, wellington boots and crisp packets are all transformed into the recycled plastic sheeting manufactured by Smile Plastics. Applications include furniture and counter surfaces ● 01743 850267 www.smile-plastics.co.uk

recycled projects," says Gary Nicholson, a researcher on the project and founder of Eight Inch, which is developing uses for the material.

"In the past they have either been inferior quality or had a bit of a dippy-hippy image. We could sell this material just on being a brilliant material but the fact that it's 85% recycled is icing on the cake. Architects, specifiers and designers are hugely interested in it."

"Being green on its own isn't enough anymore and it shouldn't be," adds Colin Williamson of Smile Plastics, adding that its products are sold first on their decorative quality and only second - although a close second - on their green pedigree.

There are plenty of other materials out there, according to Alastair Fuad-Luke (see also pg 9), a lecturer in sustainable design and author of the forthcoming Eco-Design Handbook (Thames & Hudson).

"There's a whole problem in how we value recycled materials. Perhaps we should be prepared to pay more to give them a second or third

life," he says. He predicts an increase in the use of recycled products from the biosphere such as grass and wheat with biodegradable polymers rather than those from the technosphere.

Another source is London-based Construction Resources, supplier of environmentally conscious products, including recycled paper-based insulation materials.

Initiatives like Wrap and the National Waste Awareness Initiative, which is this year seeking to challenge attitudes that recycled materials are inferior in quality, can help in developing new markets. But they need a willingness from more designers and architects to put the theory into practice.

"We're talking about trying to change the market and that calls for architects and designers to be more experimental and test them out on the public," says Fuad-Luke.

"Maybe we have to roll in building regulations and planners into the process - I see the debate as involving a lot of people around the table - but architects and designers can lead that debate." ■



## TTURA

Ttura, one of the newest products to be developed from recycled glass, has already found high-profile applications as a dining table in Sarah Wigglesworth's house and as an exterior pavement in designer Thomas Heatherwick's 1,300sq m Blue Carpet landscaping project in Newcastle.

Made in Hackney, it consists of 85% glass from bottlebanks, windows and windscreens combined with solvent-free epoxy resin. It can be cast or laid as a screed in a variety of finishes and textures ● Eight Inch 0207 503 3400 www.ttura.com

