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textile 2.0/

For a long time, technical textiles were hidden within sandwiches of material, their only function being to reinforce the polymer and composite structures, to insulate multilayered panels against the cold and noise, to strengthen the exterior walls of pneumatic systems. For some time, the design of industrial components has been heading towards technical products with aesthetic values, that appear on the surface of the finished products. The styling of sportswear, amongst others, has drawn our attention to 3D textiles on gym shoes and backpacks. Similarly, upholstery found in car interiors or on office chairs promotes the use of textiles that integrate padding and a coating. This phenomenon concerning the spectacularisation of technical products was also pushed by the approach of several fashion and interior designers, who have for example taken materials made from bees nests and technical textiles and turned them on their head towards applications which are more aesthetic.

In many cases, the exercise had been above all a discovery of original graphics, but in certain cases, the use of very technical products for components of decorative objects succeeded in exploiting the added value by taking advantage of the inherent technology of the material.

On another level, we're assisting in the borrowing of the simple look of technical textiles, there, where the real integration of textile material has not yet arrived. A good example being the last generation of tiles and stone slabs for covering walls and floors, which evoke textures reminiscent

of linen, lace or jeans. One could almost claim that the textile here is completely misrepresented, it's only aesthetic value being as a means of heat, flexibility and style. Nevertheless, the tile, with its textile decorative surface is a real winner, even leading us to imagine this type of coating there where in the past we used textile wallpaper or a real carpet. Thanks to the technology of porcelain stoneware, the industrialists have for example finetuned specialised printing systems which open the doors to new market niches... This phenomenon also leads to new possibilities of joint ventures between textile and tile producers or other products, and ultimately a broader offering for the market.

Another original approach, 'Girli Concrete', was born out of a collaboration between Patricia Belford and Ruth Morrow at the Centre for Research in Art Technologies and Design attached to the University of Belfast. This is a research and development project on the integration of textile materials in concrete which aims to create new products for the interior which are both technical but soft. The challenge is shifting the textile coating to the inside of the construction material. The final composite acquires soundproofing characteristics through technical textiles while combining the raw aesthetics of concrete to the softness of textiles. The hard touch of cold concrete becomes soft and warm, its appearance enriched by the noble decorative magnitude of the textiles.



Déchiré Collection by Mutina : Born out of a collaboration of Mutina with the designer Patricia Urquiola, the large format stoneware tile reminds us of a lace patchwork.
www.mutina.it



Girli Concrete produces panels by placing textile (cashmere, flocked fabric and even lace from Northern Ireland) in a mould with cement poured over and left to dry over a period of almost a whole month. The material has an intriguing visual and tactile aesthetic, but has the possibility to provide acoustic insulation as well.
www.ulster.ac.uk