Knitted fibres

ARCHITECTS USE KNITTED FIBRES TO MAKE A BUILDING COLUMN

PROPERTY & CONSTRUCTION

A new process turns soft knitted fibres into hard materials that could be used in construction

Spotted:

Architects Bastian Beyer and Daniel Suarez have turned soft knitted fibres into hard materials. These could potentially be used in construction to make spatial dividers, columns, roofs and walls. Here's how it works: A soft textile structure is sprayed with an active bacteria culture, which reacts to a secondary treatment, creating a hard useable building column.

The work by Beyer, a researcher at London's Royal College of Art, and Suarez, is part of a larger project — ArcInTex — a training network of architects, designers, and textile makers working to create sustainable solutions for daily life.

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Takeaway:

The construction industry is one of the biggest users of raw materials, and not particularly environmentally-friendly ones. In the UK, where the research took place, construction accounts for 60 percent of all raw materials consumed, according to London-based design firm Arup.

Pressure on the industry to replace landfill materials with organic biodegradable ones has led to a boom in building innovations over the past decade -- a trend that will surely continue.