



While Scribit itself uses plastic, it is designed to last for a very long time over repeated usage | Photo source Carlo Ratti Associati

Innovation > Architecture & Design > World's first fully compostable marker pen

## WORLD'S FIRST FULLY COMPOSTABLE MARKER PEN

 ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

### A new marker pen could reduce the use of plastic in the global pen industry

**Spotted:** Italian design and innovation firm Carlo Ratti Associati (CRA) has just unveiled the world's first, fully compostable marker. Plastic marker pens are a surprisingly large source of waste: it is estimated that around 35 billion of them end up in landfills annually, an amount that could cover the entire island of Manhattan more than 11 times. In 2019, CRA launched Scribit, a drawing robot that uses markers to write on any vertical surface. Disturbed by the amount of plastic in the markers the robot used, the team decided to create a sustainable solution.

The new Scribit pen uses 100 per cent eco-friendly and compostable components. The barrel is made from wood, bioplastic or anodised aluminium. The ink cartridge and nib are crafted from natural fibres and are replaceable, to extend the life of the pen body. The ink is water-based and non-toxic enough to be certified as edible, as well as being washable and high-performance.

CRA's goal is to promote a circular economy and a more sustainable approach to production and consumption. While Scribit itself uses plastic, it is designed to last for a very long time over repeated usage. The pens, however, run dry after a period of use, so they represent a much bigger source of waste.

Carlo Ratti, director of the MIT Senseable City Lab, who led the Scribit Pen design team, [explains](#) the motivation behind the push for a sustainable pen. "We are proud of Scribit's success, and how it has empowered thousands of people around the world to change the way they draw. However, we were troubled by the amount of plastic produced by the markers that the robot uses. By developing the new Scribit pen, we can turn one of humankind's primordial acts – drawing – into a fully sustainable one."

Reducing plastic is a key part of the fight against global warming, and it is something that everyone can do. At Springwise, we are also seeing a huge number of innovations that will make this easier. These include ideas that offer consumers further plastic-free options with everything from eyewear made from castor beans to plastic-free liquid [cleaners](#).

Written By: Lisa Magloff

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### **Takeaway:**

While marker pens may not seem like a product that is urgently in need of a sustainable approach, Scribit is a good example of why it is important to consider sustainability within the design of every product. The company sends out 24 markers with each of its wildly-popular robots, which is a lot of waste. In the future, compostable marker pens could also be found in every classroom and home – and that would represent a huge reduction in the amount of plastic waste as a whole.